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A PLAN
FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF LIBRARY SERVICES
FOR STATE GOVERNMENT

Submitted to

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and

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Prepared by

The Committee on Library Services to State Government

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In today's complex decision making environment, access to information is critical to the effective operation of state government agencies. Libraries provide a formal structure for the systematic delivery of information to support state government decision making.

The organization and delivery of library services in Iowa state government has been a concern for a number of years. Even though it has been mentioned in previous reports, the General Assembly, in the reorganization of state government, found it necessary to call for the development of a specific plan to address library services to state government.

Sec. 2070. The department of cultural affairs shall submit to the governor and the legislature by January 1, 1988 a plan for the improvement of library services for state government. The plan shall consider, but not be limited to, coordinated collection development, acquisitions, library technical services, circulation, and reference and information services. (1986 Iowa Acts, Chapter 1245, Section 2070)

The Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs appointed a committee to inquire into the present state of library services to state government agencies, to identify problem areas and to recommend improvements. The committee members include:

* Mary Jo Bruett	Department of Education
Roger Chapman	Department of Public Health
* Michael Coveyou	Department of Public Safety
* Kay Elliott	Department of Human Services
* Ellen Holroyd	Department of Cultural Affairs
Gretchen Tegler	Department of Management
* Hank Zaletel	Department of Transportation

This plan has been prepared by the individuals indicated (*) in response to that charge.

SUMMARY

The plan for the improvement of library service for state government addresses the following areas of concern: absence of structure of interdepartmental cooperation, lack of inventory control and variations in the availability of library services to state employees.

The plan responds to these concerns by making four recommendations:

1. Enacting legislation to authorize the creation of a centralized state government library services network with the State Library designated as coordinating agency.
2. Direct the network to plan and deliver coordinated library service to state government. Coordinated network activities shall include collection development and maintenance, circulation, and reference and information service.
3. Develop and implement an automation plan that will provide inventory control and subject access to information resources and services in state government.
4. Improve communications between state government decision makers and information service providers.

BACKGROUND

In preparing this plan an examination was made of four earlier reports which dealt with improving state government. Three of these dealt briefly with libraries in the context of broader reviews of state government operations.

- . Governor's Economy Committee '79. Findings and Recommendations. December, 1979. 5864634
- . Governor's Task Force on Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness. Organization Project. Organization Committee. [Report] October, 1983.
- . Governor's Task Force on Efficiencies and Cost-Effectiveness in Iowa State Government. Final Report. December, 1983. 10340479
- . Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co. A Report on the Restructuring and Downsizing of Iowa State Government. December, 1985. OCLC # 13196452
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These reports made specific recommendations for improving the operation of state government including the centralization of support functions to increase the efficiency of service delivery and to make effective use of available resources. None of these reports made specific recommendations for improving library service to state government. The Governor's Task Force on Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness did recommend that a comprehensive management review of state agency libraries be conducted. The review was never undertaken.

A Report on the Restructuring and Downsizing of Iowa State Government called for a reorganization of the Executive Branch of state government along functional lines in order to eliminate duplication of effort, coordinate provision of service and centralize management and support services. Even though library services to state government employees were not directly addressed in this report, the bill implementing the report Senate File 2175, contains the language which requires the Department of Cultural Affairs to submit this plan.

CURRENT METHODS OF PROVIDING LIBRARY SERVICES TO STATE GOVERNMENT

State government officials and employees use a variety of organizations and methods to meet their information needs. The extent and type of library services available vary from agency to agency. The State Library is available to serve all state government. Some agencies also maintain their own specialized research libraries.

The State Library is created by the Code of Iowa as a Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs. The Division is designated to fulfill the Departmental responsibility to: "meet the informational needs of the three branches of state government." (Iowa Code, chapter 3031[2f])

The Bureau of Information is organized to accomplish this portion of the State Library's mission. Included within the Bureau are three separate collections: general, medical and law, and the Technical Services Section and the Documents Depository Center.

The State Library furnishes reference and information services to state government and to the legal and medical communities of the state. Services are provided to both individual employees and state agency libraries. In addition, state agency libraries receive technical and support services.

State agency libraries are those which have been established administratively to meet the agency's specialized information needs. Their collections consist of specialized reference materials. There is great diversity in the size and scope of state agency library collections, the services which they offer and the staff assigned to the management of these libraries. Use of state agency libraries by persons outside the agency is limited.

IDENTIFIED AREAS OF CONCERN

Three general areas of concern have been identified in the delivery and organization of library services in Iowa state government.

- (1) the absence of formal mechanisms for cooperation and resource sharing among various libraries and resource collections across departmental lines,
 - (2) lack of inventory control of library materials in state government and
 - (3) variations in the availability and type of library services in different agencies.
- (1) Absence of a formal structure for cooperation among the state agency libraries and resource collections.

The need for communication and cooperation among state agency libraries was recognized almost ten years ago. Representatives of 19 state agencies and the State Library established the State Agency Library Association (SALA) in 1978.

Its stated purpose was:

To improve communications, both formal and informal, between the libraries of the several state agencies so that the resources of these libraries can be most effectively utilized and their policies and procedures coordinated toward betterment of library service within state government, and

To work toward professional advancement of its members and the development of professionalism in state agency library service.

Since the inception of SALA it has published a directory of its members, produced a union list of serials, and publicized library service to state government. These efforts are the result of contributed staff time and resources. Consequently, the Association's success is dependent upon the personal commitment of its members.

Cooperative activities among the libraries of state government are restricted because no agency has the authority or resources to provide for these activities. Nor is there a mandate requiring participation in cooperative efforts across departmental lines.

(2) Lack of inventory control of publications owned by state government.

Access to books, periodicals and newspapers in state government is fragmented and duplication of these materials is common. There is no comprehensive inventory of all publications owned by Iowa state government and no procedure for tracking these purchases through the state central accounting process. A comprehensive inventory would allow for identifying and maintaining collections, locating these materials and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

Potential benefits of library materials are lost when state employees are unaware of the availability of needed materials. Knowledge of the location of these materials would reduce individual time and effort expended to search for them. Agency expenditures of staff time and funds would be reduced when unnecessary duplication of information resources is minimized.

Inventory control of collections can be accomplished by creating a catalog. For books this is an author, title and subject index to materials owned. Control of serial publications requires title, issues held and location. The task of creating these indexes is time consuming and requires specialized skills. Not all agencies devote adequate staff and resources to perform this professional task. Within state agency libraries inventory control extends only to their own holdings. There is no centralized catalog of all library materials. There is also no known listing of materials held outside libraries.

(3) Variations in library services available to state government employees.

Obtaining needed information is often a haphazard process in state government.

The services and collections of the State Library are available to all state employees to assist in this process. Some agencies have established their own libraries to meet their specialized needs. The use of these libraries is often limited to agency personnel. Use by persons outside the agency is restricted. Circulation and reference services may be limited. Access to private files and now library resources may be unavailable.

The reorganization of state government and the downsizing that accompanied it had a major impact on library service. State agency libraries experienced changes in personnel and responsibilities. The amount of staff time available to provide service was reduced. In some cases, positions were eliminated or staff were reassigned to other duties in the agency. New responsibilities were delegated to some state agency libraries that were unrelated to library service.

A plan for the improvement of library service to state government should address each of these areas of concern: absence of cooperative structure, lack of inventory control and variation in the level of service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The plan presented here seeks to address the concerns that have been identified. A centralized state government library services network and a centralized automated inventory control and access system is proposed.

A centralized library services network for state government would provide a structure for coordination, cooperation and resource sharing. Planning would be a network activity and require agreement on a single set of goals.

A centralized automated inventory control and access system allows the construction of single file of library and information resources accessible to all state government. The benefits to be derived from this system include increased use of publications already in state possession, reduction of time spent by employees in locating necessary information and decreased purchases of duplicate titles.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Legislation should be enacted to authorize the creation of a network to provide improved information services to state employees.

Implementation Strategy 1.1

The State Library would be designated as the coordinating agency with fiscal responsibility and rulemaking authority for the network.

The success of the network requires that a single agency be given the responsibility, authority and resources to develop and operate it.

The agency best suited to this task is the State Library.

It would have authority to receive and expend funds for the operation of the network and to enter into agreements for the purchase and use of library materials on behalf of the network.

Implementation Strategy 1.2

The network would be composed of the State Library, state agency libraries and other agency units of state government. It would provide access to library resources maintained by state government.

Maximum benefits would be derived from the network with the active participation of all state agencies from the executive, legislative, judicial branches. Participants in the network other than the State Library would be expected to maintain or improve funding their library activities and to provide access to their materials.

Implementation Strategy 1.3

A coordinator would be appointed within the State Library to administer the proposed network.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The network through its members and coordinator should plan and deliver coordinated library service to state government.

Implementation Strategy 2.1

An assessment of state government library service needs would be conducted.

The study would survey collection strengths and weaknesses, expectations of library service users and the reasons for non-use. The information obtained from the assessment would be used to develop strategies for the effective delivery of library services to state agencies. The study would be periodically updated in order to enable the network and its members to respond to changes in state government information needs.

Implementation Strategy 2.2

The network coordinator would work with the participants to develop goals, objectives and procedures to administer the ongoing activities of the network. These activities would be modified as necessary to meet changes in state government programs and policies.

Network activities could include the sharing of library resources within state government, networkwide circulation of materials, interlibrary loan among state agency libraries, the coordination of collection development, processing of library materials and collection maintenance.

Implementation Strategy 2.3

The network would work toward improvements in the availability and accessibility of information resources to state agencies.

State employees engaged in agency business should have access to all state government information resources. Access is defined as the use of the collection on-site, the loaning of materials as appropriate and reference assistance as requested.

Participants would provide access to their resources through the network. Procedures for circulation and/or interlibrary loan would be developed by the network coordinator. These procedures would increase the use of information resources owned by state government.

Implementation Strategy 2.4

The network would encourage coordination of collection development among state agencies.

The most efficient use of state resources would be achieved if each state agency had a collection development policy. This policy is a guide to be used by the agency in selecting and maintaining materials that support the agency mission and meet the needs of its staff.

Coordination of collection development policies would facilitate agreement on purchasing policies, minimize duplication of effort, and allow for identification of unfilled needs. The network coordinator would review, and coordinate these policies so that collection weaknesses and other unmet needs would be identified. Appropriate, corrective measures would be recommended by the coordinator to the State Library or other agency.

Implementation Strategy 2.5

The network coordinator would facilitate the improvement of information services through the use of consultative services.

State government agencies would benefit from the availability of assistance in initiating, operating, and improving their information services activities. This could be accomplished by providing access to consultative services. One of the responsibilities of the network coordinator would be to locate the appropriate consultant after a specific need has been identified. The consultative services could be from existing state employees or outside the state government. Any funding needed for these activities would be supplied by the agency requesting the service.

Agencies without libraries could benefit from guidance and direction in building and maintaining resource collections.

Existing agency libraries would benefit from assistance in meeting identified needs and in developing new information and technological resources. The availability of specialized continuing education opportunities would increase the effectiveness of library staff and allow them to remain current.

State government information activities would also be enhanced by reviews of the information resources within each agency. These reviews would identify strengths and weaknesses, make long and short-term recommendations for improvement, and indicate areas that could be coordinated with other state agencies via the network.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The network should develop and implement an automation plan which would include provisions for inventory control and centralized cataloging of information resources and services in state government.

Implementation Strategy 3.1

The automation plan would provide for a computer system which would index information resources in Iowa state government by location, author, title and subject.

The automation plan would be developed and implemented in incremental stages to allow for use of existing resources. The system's inventory control capacity would provide improved information for acquisition decisions. Its ability to function as an online catalog would enhance access by all state employees to these resources.

Implementation Strategy 3.2

The network would coordinate the acquisition of information resources and services by all state agencies.

The network would develop procedures for purchasing print and nonprint information materials and services for the most reasonable cost. The procedures would include discount contracts with library suppliers, multiple copy discounts from publishers and group contracts for on-line bibliographic searching.

Implementation Strategy 3.3

The network would provide for centralization of technical services.

Technical services include cataloging and processing of information materials. These are specialized and time consuming but important activities. For example, centralized cataloging is the mechanism by which subject access is provided for records placed in the system.

Centralization of technical services would also reduce staff time required to perform these tasks and provide records of uniform quality.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The network should be utilized to improve communications between state government decision makers and information service providers.

Implementation Strategy 4.1

The network coordinator would serve as a conduit for relaying the information needs of state government to the providers of information services.

To prevent excessive time delays in providing needed information it is necessary that materials be readily available on all subjects of current concern to state government. Information providers must be aware of topics under investigation in order to anticipate information needs as they evolve.

The network coordinator would be expected to develop a variety of formal and informal mechanisms for keeping abreast of policy and program changes as they occur in state government and for anticipating new issue concerns as they arise.

Implementation Strategy 4.2

The network would promote increased awareness of information resources that are available to state government.

State government employees need to be made aware of the information resources that are available to them. Greater knowledge of these resource would increase their use and avoid duplication. Publication relations programs would be developed by the network and individual agencies so that state employees would be informed about the available resources.



RECOMMENDATION 4

The network should be utilized to improve communications between state government decision makers and information service providers.

Implementation Strategy 4.1

The network coordinator would serve as a conduit for relaying the information needs of state officials and employees to the providers of information services.

To prevent excessive time delays in providing needed information, materials should be readily available on all subjects of current concern to state government. Information providers must be aware of potential legislative, judicial, and administration issues in order to anticipate future information needs.

The network coordinator would be expected to develop a variety of formal and informal mechanisms for keeping abreast of policy and program changes as they occur in state government and for anticipating new issue concerns.

Implementation Strategy 4.2

The network would promote increased awareness of information resources that are available to state government.

State government employees need to be made aware of information resources available to them. Greater knowledge of these resources would increase their use and reduce duplicate purchases. Public relations programs would be developed by the network and individual agencies so that state employees would be informed about the available resources.