

THE LIBRARY SERVICES ACT AND NORTH CAROLINA

By ELAINE VON OESEN*

The Library Services Act was signed on June 19, 1956. At the end of the session, in July, Congress appropriated part of the funds authorized by the Act. As a result only \$40,000 will be available to each state until an additional appropriation is made. The initial allocation of \$40,000 will be received after rules and regulations have been released by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and applications in line with these rules and regulations have been approved by the Department.

In September and October personnel of the federal office met with representatives of state library agencies to discuss tentative rules and regulations formulated by the legal counsel of the federal agency. Mrs. Elizabeth H. Hughey, State Librarian, and Elaine von Oesen, Extension Services Librarian, represented North Carolina at the Southeastern district meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, September 27, 28 and 29. The discussion at this meeting was concerned with the practical application of tentative regulations to achieve the primary objectives of the Act: the improvement and extension of public library service in rural areas of the Southeastern states. Many changes were suggested to federal officials. There seem to have been similar comments at the other three district meetings and the revised and final regulations had not been received when this magazine went to press the last week in November.

Background of the North Carolina Plan

In order to include the opinion of every public librarian and trustee of libraries serving the 75.8% of North Carolina's population which lives in rural areas, a questionnaire was sent to the board chairman and librarian of 87 public libraries. The results of this questionnaire, returned by 72 (or 83%) of the libraries, were presented to a committee of librarians and trustees of the Public Libraries Section of NCLA by the state library staff. This committee formulated specific goals which were incorporated in the North Carolina Plan for the use of federal funds.

Elements of the North Carolina Plan

The purpose of the North Carolina Plan is to improve the quality of library service to people who live in the country or in small towns and to extend library service to the six counties which do not have it. The funds are to be used for services which can reasonably be expected to be continued by local and state funds at the end of the five-year period when federal funds are no longer available.

A small amount of the total appropriation will be used by the State Library to strengthen its services to the libraries serving rural areas and to individuals in rural areas without libraries and to cover administrative costs. Approximately twice this amount will be available to present library units serving a rural population, meeting State Aid requirements, and presenting an acceptable plan for improving service in line with the new public library standards. In making such allocations caution will be exercised to avoid perpetuating existing inadequate units as such or establishing addi-

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tional substandard units. A large amount, approximately half of the total appropriation, will be used for incentive grants to stimulate the combination of units, partially or completely, to help overcome the present inadequacies of small libraries and to encourage cooperative service between libraries.

The following general factors governing the use of federal funds by *regions* (formally organized library systems serving more than one county); *districts* (areas served by several county-wide libraries cooperating to improve service); and *counties* have been adopted by the State Library Board:

1. Each area must first meet qualifications for State Aid funds.
2. A written detailed plan emphasizing improvement of service to rural areas must be submitted.
3. A detailed budget showing costs of services from local, state and federal funds must be submitted.
4. A minimum of 34% of the budget must come from local and state funds.
5. An annual audit will be required showing use of local, state and federal funds. Audits must meet federal specifications.
6. A statement must be included indicating the reasonable expectations that the program of service supported with federal funds can be gradually absorbed by local and state funds.
7. Plans must be approved by the State Library Board. Annual adjustments may be made in plans to conform to progress, experience and changing needs.

The State Library has "Suggestions Regarding Use of Federal Funds by Regions, Districts, or Counties" which will be sent out to libraries of the state. The Extension Services staff is available to discuss with board members and librarians possibilities for cooperation with other libraries. All plans will originate with the libraries involved. The Library Services Act provides that the State Library Board approve all plans.

Plans for the Initial Allocation

A major portion of the initial \$40,000 available to North Carolina will be used to supplement and expand the services of the State Library. Approximately \$10,000 will be available in grants to a few of the first libraries in the state to propose an acceptable cooperative plan. Improvement and expansion of State Library services will be sought through the following additions:

Advisory services to public libraries and to people interested in obtaining library service will be increased by adding personnel to the field staff.

The informational program will be expanded. More information needs to be channelled to trustees and their requirements given more attention. Special emphasis will be placed on an informational program in the six counties without countywide library service.

More Books are needed by the State Library to fill requests from individuals in the unserved areas and from the smaller libraries to supplement collections.

Another *reference librarian* is needed to handle the expanded reference and inter-library loan requests.

Additional films are needed in the Adult Film Project.

The *union catalog* of special subject collections throughout the state will be expanded to include entries for significant collections owned by local libraries and not now identified outside of those libraries.

Workshops and institutes for library personnel and trustees will be scheduled. The current shortage of professional librarians makes it imperative that personnel with other qualifications be given an opportunity for in-service training. Institutes on standards and library development in the state will be scheduled for professional library personnel and trustees.

Technical and clerical personnel, equipment and operational funds will be required to initiate the expanded service to rural areas by the State Library.

It is hoped that the final rules and regulations will be received in time for an application for the initial amount of federal funds to be made for the period from January 1, 1957 through June 30, 1957. This will allow six months for planning with individual libraries throughout the state for the best use of the full \$303,534 authorized by the Library Services Act. The new Congress will be asked for the full appropriation to begin July 1, 1957.

Southern Library History

Two papers on Southern library history which were presented to the American Library History Round Table of the ALA at the Miami meeting last summer have been published in the November, 1956, *Wilson Library Bulletin*. Many librarians who could not attend the meeting will want to read these papers. One is "Southern University Libraries," by Benjamin Edward Powell, librarian of Duke University. The other paper is "The Carnegie Corporation and the Library Renaissance in the South," by Robert M. Lester.

November was "Know Your Library Month"

Luther H. Hodges, Governor of North Carolina, designated the month of November as "Know your Library Month in North Carolina." Libraries throughout the state had special exhibits, arranged for group visits and sponsored talks about books and libraries. Climax of the observance was children's book week from November 25 through December 1.