

ADDED ENTRIES

POOR PEOPLES' SERVICES

From MSSRT

This draft policy, modeled after the ALA Minority Concerns Policy adopted in 1988, is presented for your consideration. It is a collaborative effort by members of the Minnesota Library Association's Social Responsibilities Round Table. Comments about the draft are welcome. Call Elizabeth Anderson, 612-451-8563.

The [Minnesota Library Association, American Library Association, etc.] promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America. These people are affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination. Therefore, the role played by libraries to enable poor people to participate fully in a democratic society is crucial. Libraries must utilize various resources and strategies to empower poor people. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to sensitize and prepare library staff to identify poor people's needs and deliver relevant services. Within the [Minnesota Library Association, American Library Association, etc.], the coordinating mechanisms for programs and activities dealing with poor people in various divisions, offices, and units should be strengthened, and support for low-income liaison activities should be enhanced.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The [Minnesota Library Association, American Library Association, etc.] shall implement these objectives by:

Promoting the removal of all barriers to library and information services, particularly fees and overdue charges.

Promoting the publication, production, purchase and ready accessibility of print and nonprint materials that honestly address the issues of poverty and homelessness, that deal with poor people in a respectful way, and that are of practical use to low-income patrons.

Promoting full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs in support of low-income services, and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites to poor children, adults, and families.

Promoting training opportunities for librarians, in order to teach effective

techniques for generating public funding to upgrade library services to poor people.

Promoting the incorporation of low-income programs and services into regular library budgets in all types of libraries, rather than the tendency to support these projects solely with "soft money" like private or federal grants.

Promoting equity in funding adequate library services for poor people in terms of materials, facilities, and equipment.

Promoting supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations by urging local, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.

Promoting increased public awareness -- through programs, displays, bibliographies, and publicity -- of the importance of poverty-related library resources and services in all segments of society.

Promoting the determination of output measures through the encouragement of community needs assessments, giving special emphasis to assessing the needs of low-income people and involving both anti-poverty advocates and poor people themselves in such assessment.

Promoting direct representation of poor people and anti-poverty advocates through appointment to local boards and creation of local advisory committees on service to low-income people, such appointments to include library-paid transportation and stipends.

Promoting training to sensitize library staff to issues affecting poor people and to attitudinal and other barriers that hinder poor people's use of libraries.

Promoting networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups, in order to develop programs and services that effectively reach poor people.

Promoting the implementation of an expanded federal low-income housing program, national health insurance, full-employment policy, living minimum wage and welfare payments, affordable day care, and other programs likely to reduce, if not eliminate poverty itself.

Promoting among library staff the collection of food and clothing donations, volunteering personal time to anti-poverty activities, and contributing money to direct-aid-organizations.

Promoting related efforts concerning minorities and women, since these groups are disproportionately represented among poor people.