



**NCLIS**

U.S. National Commission on  
Libraries and Information Science

Phone: (202) 606-9200 • Fax: (202) 606-9203  
E-Mail: [info@nclis.gov](mailto:info@nclis.gov) • Web: [www.nclis.gov](http://www.nclis.gov)

1800 M Street, NW • Suite 350 North Tower  
Washington, DC 20036-5841

**Position Paper**

**THE U.S. NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (NCLIS)**

**DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR THE 2005 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING**

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ALA RUSA/RSS  
LIBRARY SERVICE TO AN AGING POPULATION COMMITTEE**

The first White House Conference on Aging of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be held in Washington, DC October 23-26, 2005. The purpose of the conference, according to Policy Committee Chair Dorcas R. Hardy, is to look at aging in terms of today and tomorrow, to identify emerging trends and make appropriate recommendations to help the nation prepare for changes anticipated in the next decade.

The White House Conferences on Aging have convened every 10 years in order to make policy recommendations to the President and Congress to assist the public and private sectors in promoting the dignity, health, independence, and economic security of current and future generations of older Americans. These conferences have served as catalysts for aging policy for more than 40 years, and have prompted the establishment of key initiatives such as the Supplemental Security Income program, and influential societal changes in the private and public sectors on retirement, health care, transportation, housing, and economic security.

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) has traditionally played a significant role in the White House Conferences on Aging, and particularly in 1995 when NCLIS partnered with ALA and the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in planning and implementation.

For the 2005 Conference, the ALA RUSA/RSS Library Service to an Aging Population Committee, chaired by Allan M. Kleiman, is working with conference organizers to arrange a preliminary meeting, to take place just prior to the Annual Conference of the American Library Association. The purpose of the meeting is to identify issues relating to

productive aging and the role of libraries in meeting the library and information services needs of the aging population. Recognizing that the Commission has statutory authority to address library services for the aging and that the Commission has a member whose specific responsibility is to focus on library services and productive aging, the committee has invited the Commission to submit recommendations about topics to be discussed at its meeting and to be offered to the conference organizers as appropriate subjects for study prior to the White House Conference and for discussion at the conference.

At a meeting of the ALA RUSA/RSS Committee on January 14, 2005, it was generally agreed that the best process for identifying issues to be recommended to the conference organizers, with respect to library and information services for the productive aging, would be to submit position papers from each of the participating LIS groups, with the papers to be discussed at the ALA pre-conference meeting.

As for the content of the papers, it was generally agreed that issues relating to library services should be issues already identified as priority issues for the conference. These are spelled out in the agenda for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging, which has been published by the conference organizers and the conference Policy Committee (a copy is attached at the end of this document).

Using the published agenda topics as guidelines, the Commission has identified four issues that require attention, and recommends to the committee that these issues be considered for adoption by the committee as subjects to be recommended for discussion at the White House Conference on Aging:

1. The growing competition between rural and urban populations for ever-diminishing resources, particularly for library services for the aging. This is a subject that requires study, analysis, and policy recommendation. The subject relates to several topics listed in the conference agenda:
  - Our community: coordinated social and health services that give the elderly the maximum opportunity to age in place
  - Our community: planning and developing the built environment
  - Health and long term living: access to affordable, high quality services
  - Health and long term living: delivery of quality care by caregivers
  - Social engagement: integration of the elderly with the non-elderly community
  - The workplace of the future: opportunities for older workers
  
2. Productive aging and the role of libraries as community resource centers for delivering information about productive aging to citizens (just as the library serves as a community resource center for many other subjects). The subject relates to several topics listed in the conference agenda:
  - Planning along the lifespan: protection of financial assets
  - The workplace of the future: opportunities for older workers

- The workplace of the future: work incentives/disincentives
  - The workplace of the future: employer incentives: training, retraining, retaining
  - The workplace of the future: use of technology
  - Our community: planning and developing the built environment
  - Health and long term living: healthy lifestyles, prevention, and disease management
  - Health and long term living: use of information to improve the delivery, administration, and quality of health care services
  - Social engagement: integration of the elderly with the non-elderly community
3. The role of retirees as library employees [The “graying” of the LIS workforce requires skilled workers, and many retirees want to work in an intellectually stimulation environment. Is it a match? Can retired workers be employed in library work? What policy recommendations are required to make the connection?] The subject relates to several topics listed in the conference agenda:
- The workplace of the future: opportunities for older workers
  - The workplace of the future: ageism/age discrimination
  - Social engagement: integration of the elderly with the non-elderly community
  - Social engagement: effective individual adaptation to the conditions of aging
  - Marketplace: creative products [and activities] to support independence
4. Communicating research about productive aging and the special needs of the elderly (particularly the underserved elderly, such as rural populations, low-income, etc.) to decision makers in the several governing authorities that have responsibility for funding or otherwise providing services to this population. The subject relates to several topics listed in the conference agenda:
- The workplace of the future: opportunities for older workers
  - The workplace of the future: work incentives/disincentives
  - The workplace of the future: ageism/age discrimination
  - Marketplace: promoting new products, technology, and new ways of marketing that will be helpful/useful to the older customer

The Commission recommends to the ALA RUSA/RSS Committee that the four topics described above be presented to organizers of the White House Conference on Aging as recommended topics for discussion at the conference. The Commission also recommends that the committee authorize the preparation of a discussion paper (or papers) on these subjects, that the document (or documents) be distributed to all conference delegates, and that the agenda include presentations and discussion on these topics.

Representatives of the Commission for this activity are Commissioner Sandra F. Ashworth (whose appointment specifically requires her to focus on library services for the aging), Commissioner Carol L. Diehl, Commission Chairman Beth Fitzsimmons, Ph.D., and Commission Executive Director Trudi Bellardo Hahn, Ph.D.

## 2005 White House Conference on Aging Annotated Agenda\*

### Planning along the Lifespan

#### Economic Incentives to Increase Retirement Savings

- Individual savings; employer based pension program

#### Social Security Programs Now and for the Future

- Solvency, optimal policy mix

#### Protection of Financial Assets

#### Long term care expenses, insurance and options

- Financial fraud, abuse, exploitation
- Financial Literacy throughout the Life Cycle

### The Workplace of the Future

#### Opportunities for Older Workers

#### Work Incentives/Disincentives

#### Employer incentives: training, retraining, retaining

#### Use of Technology

#### Ageism/Age Discrimination

### Our Community

Coordinated social and health services that give the elderly the maximum opportunity to age in place

- “One-stop shops” including care navigators, e.g., case manager, to help inform people about the various support systems elements available to them. Also to include health, legal, financial and protective services. One example: Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- Configuration of Senior Centers to appeal to the next generation of senior citizens
- Home and community-based care following hospital stays
- Sharing client information across multiple management systems

- Alcoholism, substance abuse, depression and medication management
- Shortage of paid workers for elderly services

- Coordination between health and aging networks
- Learning about and making use of best practices (U.S., international)
- Alternative modes of transportation
- Accommodation of the differences between the Baby Boomer aging population and previous generations of the elderly

Planning and developing the built environment (e.g., homes, neighborhoods, roadways) to optimally accommodating for the elderly

- Housing affordability and availability
- Residential design, including home modification relating to safety and convenience

Promote support for both family and non-family caregivers that enables adequate quality and supply of services

- Caregiver support: training, respite, information, referral, needs assessment and financial support for family caregivers. Training and financial support for paid caregivers

### Health and Long Term Living

#### Access to Affordable, High Quality Services

- National long-term care policy
- Connection of evidence-based research and comparative-effectiveness studies with the delivery of health care services
- Strategies to align payment policies with the continuum of care necessary for the aging, with appropriate emphasis on chronic care and access to geriatric care

#### Healthy Lifestyles, Prevention, and Disease Management

- Strategies for individual healthy behaviors
- “Prevention:” a primary focus
- Disease management programs
- Public education about risk factors for chronic conditions

#### Delivery of Quality Care by Caregivers

- Education of providers about prevention, mental health issues impacting older adults, effective disease management strategies, and coordination of care strategies
- Support of caregivers

- Incentives to encourage family members to care for their aging relatives
- Appropriate end-of-life care in all settings
- Incentives to ensure a reliable workforce exists to care for an aging society
  
- Options to provide maximum independence and non-institutional care for individuals with complex, chronic, disabling disease

#### Use of Information to Improve the Delivery, Administration, and Quality of Health Care Services

- Available resources for aging consumers and their families to make informed health care decisions
- Medical research that focuses on healthy aging, medical intervention, healthy lifestyles and public health
- Use of health information technology to improve delivery and administration of care

#### Affordable, defined health benefits through Medicare, Medicaid, and other Federal and State health care programs

- Adequate access to state and federal health care programs

#### Social Engagement

##### Integration of the elderly with the non-elderly community

- Strategies for changing attitudes toward aging
- Increasing opportunities for volunteerism and other forms of civic engagement
- Promoting expanded opportunities for companionship to reduce isolation and loneliness
- Exploring the roles of religious institutions
- Intergenerational: (a) educating younger people regarding social security policy and, (b) seniors who tutor young people regarding the workplace

##### Effective individual adaptation to the conditions of aging

- Increasing physical activity among the elderly
- Continuing higher education for the older learner
- Computer training for entertainment, sociability
- Keeping older drivers on the road safely
- Planning for long-term living, e.g., retirement, housing, long-term care insurance and end-of-life

## Marketplace

Promoting new products, technology and new ways of marketing that will be helpful /useful to the older consumer. Examples: pharmaceuticals, medical devices and rehabilitation; financial, insurance and legal; safety; consumer electronics and telecommunications: creative products to support independence  
Determine how best to develop and disseminate assistive devices  
Determining how to address the shortage of paid workers for elderly services (service industry)

\* Issue development should include consideration of differences among the following variables: socio-economic, rural/urban, minority, cultural, linguistic competencies/literacy, and age cohort (e.g., 55-65, 65-75, 75-85, 85+). It should also include consideration of strategies for changing attitudes toward aging. Research intending to increase the ability to cope with the conditions of aging should be identified.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration on Aging

[http://www.whcoa.gov/about/policy/meetings/annotated\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.whcoa.gov/about/policy/meetings/annotated_agenda.pdf)