

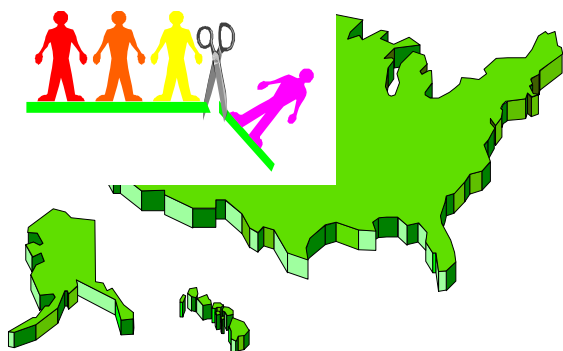
FAST **FACTS**

*Recent Statistics from the
Library Research Service*

Improved Reporting Identifies 7.4 Million "Unserved" by Public Libraries

According to 1997 data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 7.4 million Americans in 30 states live beyond the legal service area of any public library—a population roughly equivalent to that of the Chicago metropolitan area. (By comparison, in 1996, 24 states reported a total of less than seven million "unserved" residents.) These individuals are considered "unserved," as there is no public library responsible for meeting their needs for reading matter, information, and Internet access. The possible reasons for this situation were first described in **FAST FACTS**

no. 145 (September 1, 1998), *Almost 7 Million Americans "Unserved" by Public Libraries*.



The 1996-1997 increase of 490,063 can be attributed largely to improved reporting. This 7.1 percent increase is roughly the equivalent of the entire population of the Charleston, South Carolina; Worcester, Massachusetts; or Napa, California, metropolitan area.

Last year's issue of **FAST FACTS** was the first publicized analysis of these figures. An examination of specific state reports for 1996 and 1997 suggests that some states revised their reports for 1997 to be more accurate. First, the number of states reporting "unserved" populations increased from 24 in 1996 to 30 in 1997. In addition, states reporting no "unserved" population in 1996 did report this measurement the following year. Also, some state's figures rose or dropped by 10 percent or more.

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7.4 Million Americans "Unserved" by Public Libraries

One noteworthy group of states is comprised of those that reported "unserved" populations in 1997 after reporting none in 1996. These five states account for over 370,000 of the newly-recognized "unserved"--84 percent of the increase from 1996 to 1997. See Table 1.

Table 1. States Reporting "Unserved" Populations in 1997 After Reporting None in 1996

State	Official state population	Total unduplicated population of legal service areas	"Unserved"
Nebraska	1,580,976	1,397,018	183,958
Arizona	4,595,379	4,433,463	161,916
Louisiana	4,351,769	4,303,926	47,843
New Hampshire	1,173,000	1,161,323	11,677
Arkansas	2,274,511	2,264,510	10,001
Tennessee	5,256,231	5,253,231	3,000
Total	14,880,097	14,509,545	418,395

Another group of states whose reports of "unserved" population affected the national figure dramatically is comprised of those states whose "unserved" figures increased or decreased more than ten percent from 1996 to 1997. See Table 2.

Table 2. Largest and Smallest Changes in "Unserved" Population by State Ranked by Percent Change From 1996-99

State	"Unserved" 1997	"Unserved" 1996	1996-1997 Change	Percent Change
Virginia	68,657	12,127	56,530	466.1%
Missouri	638,267	395,652	242,615	61.3%
Vermont	51,000	45,000	6,000	13.3%
Texas	1,461,267	1,338,474	122,793	9.2%
Oklahoma	570,002	639,767	-69,765	-10.9%
New Mexico	291,628	347,303	-55,675	-16.0%
California	27,000	223,485	-196,485	-87.9%
TOTAL	3,109,818	3,003,804	106,014	3.53%

7.4 Million Americans "Unserved" by Public Libraries

States appearing in Table 3 are those reporting 1997 percentages of "unserved" residents in excess of 10 percent of the population. They include: South Dakota (32.9%), Oklahoma (20.9%), New Mexico (20.5%), Maine (20.3%), Idaho (19.2%), North Dakota (17.1%), Missouri (13.5%), and Nebraska (13.2%). It is, perhaps, significant that all but one of these states are West of the Mississippi River.

Table 3. States Reporting Largest Percentages of "Unserved" Residents in 1997

State	Official state population	Total unduplicated population of legal service areas	"Unserved"	"Unserved" Percent
South Dakota	690,004	519,068	170,936	32.9%
Oklahoma	3,295,315	2,725,313	570,002	20.9%
New Mexico	1,713,407	1,421,779	291,628	20.5%
Maine	1,243,316	1,033,572	209,744	20.3%
Idaho	1,210,232	1,015,461	194,771	19.2%
North Dakota	638,800	545,425	93,375	17.1%
Missouri	5,358,692	4,720,425	638,267	13.5%
Nebraska	1,580,976	1,397,018	183,958	13.2%

Table 4 reports 1997 data related to "unserved" populations for all states. Those aggregated into the "Other states" category -those reporting no "unserved" population for 1997 -are: Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

7.4 Million Americans "Unserved" by Public Libraries**Table 3. States Reporting "Unserved" Populations, 1997**

State	Total duplicated population of legal service areas, 1997	Official state population estimate, 1997	Total unduplicated population of legal service areas, 1997	"Unserved" 1997*	Percent "unserved" 1997
AL	4,055,921	4,137,511	3,898,913	238,598	6.1%
AR	2,274,511	2,274,511	2,264,510	10,001	0.4%
AZ	4,535,018	4,595,379	4,433,463	161,916	3.7%
CA	32,487,935	32,617,665	32,590,665	27,000	0.1%
CO	3,904,158	3,892,644	3,834,182	58,462	1.5%
FL	14,539,085	14,712,922	14,300,236	412,686	2.9%
ID	1,015,461	1,210,232	1,015,461	194,771	19.2%
IN	5,206,205	5,544,159	5,079,933	464,226	9.1%
KS	2,108,833	2,559,343	2,558,743	600	0.0%
KY	3,652,952	3,685,296	3,651,328	33,968	0.9%
LA	4,351,769	4,351,769	4,303,926	47,843	1.1%
MA	6,091,219	6,092,352	6,091,219	1,133	0.0%
ME	1,153,871	1,243,316	1,033,572	209,744	20.3%
MI	9,303,190	9,295,297	9,281,920	13,377	0.1%
MO	4,723,125	5,358,692	4,720,425	638,267	13.5%
ND	561,926	638,800	545,425	93,375	17.1%
NE	1,889,437	1,580,976	1,397,018	183,958	13.2%
NH	1,281,713	1,173,000	1,161,323	11,677	1.0%
NJ	8,602,097	7,993,220	7,919,222	73,998	0.9%
NM	1,421,779	1,713,407	1,421,779	291,628	20.5%
NY	17,909,462	17,990,764	16,677,815	1,312,949	7.9%
OK	2,734,850	3,295,315	2,725,313	570,002	20.9%
OR	3,013,931	3,181,000	3,013,931	167,069	5.5%
PA	11,753,955	11,888,946	11,635,227	253,719	2.2%
SD	526,697	690,004	519,068	170,936	32.9%
TN	8,418,313	5,256,231	5,253,231	3,000	0.1%
TX	17,666,994	19,128,261	17,666,994	1,461,267	8.3%
VA	6,665,339	6,733,996	6,665,339	68,657	1.0%
VT	603,037	576,000	525,000	51,000	9.7%
WA	5,405,783	5,606,800	5,406,198	200,602	3.7%
Others	76,492,283	74,810,071	74,810,071	-	0.0%
Total	264,350,849	263,827,879	256,401,450	7,426,429	2.9%