Designed to help those who are interested in women's concerns make use of computerized information sources, this guide defines the nature of online information systems, explains how those systems are accessed, illustrates a typical computer search strategy, discusses the costs of online searching, and describes the Women's Educational Equity Communications Network (WEECN) computerized database. Appendices provide a list of some online social science databases that contain information on women's issues as well as a sample printout. (FM)
Computer Searching: A Resource For Women's Educational Equity

Jean Marzone
and
Sharon Strover

1980

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Jean Marzone

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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Operated by FAR WEST LABORATORY FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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About the Women's Educational Equity Communications Network.—WEECN is an information service and communication system established in 1977 and operated by Far West Laboratory for the Department of Education under the auspices of the Women's Educational Equity Act. As an information service, WEECN collects, screens, classifies, stores, and provides information on projects and materials related to women's educational equity. As a communication system, WEECN facilitates contact among persons, groups and agencies who are working on behalf of women's educational equity. Users of WEECN include teachers, administrators, counselors, curriculum specialists, preservice and inservice trainers, researchers, students, parents, and citizens.

—Matilda Butler, Director
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank Judy Wanger, Vice President of Cuadra Associates, Mimi Spencer, Associate Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, and Carolyn Joyner, Women's Educational Equity Act Program, U.S. Department of Education, for reviewing this publication.
Computer searching is rapidly becoming a significant resource for proposal writers, scholars, researchers, project and material developers, students, and others who need information but do not have time to cope with the escalating number of printed resources. This guide is designed to help these people—especially those who are interested in women's concerns—make use of computerized sources of information. It will look at:

- What computerized sources are,
- How these sources are accessed,
- When they are useful, and
- How much it costs to access these sources.

Let us first consider the basic question:

**What are Computerized Sources of Information?**

Computer technology is used to store and manipulate many kinds of information: census data, consumer credit histories, library circulation records, and bibliographic references, to name a few. This guide will focus on computerized storage and utilization of bibliographic references.

This type of computerized information source is commonly called a bibliographic database. A bibliographic database may consist of a set of references that all deal with one discipline or subject (such as psychology or linguistics) or one type of entry (such as newspaper articles). Appendix A contains a listing of some of the commonly available social science databases that those interested in women's concerns may find useful.

How is a bibliographic database built? A database producer compiles information that is to become part of the database from appropriate sources.
For example, the producer of Psychological Abstracts selects journal articles from appropriate psychology journals. The information is then turned into bibliographic citations with author, title, institutional source, number of pages, and so forth. Often an annotation or abstract and index terms are added to the citation. Each bibliographic citation along with its annotation or abstract and index terms becomes a record for the database. Each record is then put into machine-readable form (that is, a form that a computer can "read"). This is usually accomplished by key punching or optical character scanning. The end result is a magnetic tape (similar to an audio tape) that can be manipulated by a computer when the computer is given a specific set of instructions called a program.

What is stored on the tape might be compared to what is in the card catalog of a library. Just as the library cataloger records the title, author, institutional source, date, number of pages, publisher, call number, and subject terms on catalog cards for a particular document and stores these in a systematic way to enable future access to the document, so the database compiler records and stores the same type of information on magnetic tape for future access.

**How are Computerized Sources Accessed?**

Once a database exists on magnetic tape and the program (that is, the instructions to the computer) is prepared, the database is ready to be searched. The programs that allow the searching of the database often provide for many different ways to sort through the records and provide you with the information you want. You can search for specific titles, authors, and institutional sources, as well as for particular subjects or content areas. You indicate what materials you are interested in: what subject or subjects; how recent the references should be; how many references you want to look at; and so forth. You instruct the computer to look at the entire database (which contains a large number of records) and pull out only those records that satisfy your particular list of demands.
Many useful databases, such as those listed in Appendix A, are made available through online vendors. Online vendors are businesses that purchase the magnetic tapes of databases, develop the programs to utilize the databases and sell access to the databases through online searching. Being online means having direct access to the magnetic tapes of the database through the use of a computer and an appropriate computer program.

However, you will probably not do the searching yourself. There are many search services that act as intermediaries between the online vendor and you, the final consumer of the information. Check with your local libraries, either municipal or college/university, for the availability of search services in your area. Some county agencies, school districts, teacher centers, private organizations, and public agencies (such as ERIC Clearinghouses) offer computer search services to staff, teachers, administrators, and the public. One resource which may help you in obtaining a computer search is the Directory of ERIC Search Services (November 1978). This directory lists places that search ERIC, but the same places often search other databases as well. A copy is available from the ERIC Document and Reference Facility, ORI, Inc., 4833 Rugby Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

Search services employ information analysts. The information analyst learns the various online vendors' systems for utilizing the databases. You talk with the information analyst to describe your information needs. The information analyst designs a search strategy and then goes to a computer terminal and conducts the online search. The result is usually a printout or listing of relevant citations, including annotations and abstracts when available. Printouts are sometimes done online (that is, at the same time the search is conducted). Most search results, however, are printed offline, by having the searcher instruct the computer to print the results at a later time. The results are then sent to the searcher. Not only are offline prints much cheaper (about one-fifth the cost for the ERIC database, for example; see the section on cost of searching), but the print quality
of offline copy is usually superior to that of online copy obtained from the computer terminal.

If you have a search service close at hand, you may be present when your search is done. Often it is helpful to the information analyst to have you there in order to clarify or alter the search as it proceeds, especially if the search is complicated. If you cannot talk in person to the information analyst, you will want to talk on the telephone. Do not rely on a letter to express your information needs to the searcher. Always negotiate your search as directly as possible and give the person who will do your search as much information as you can. State your information needs in several different ways. Keep talking until you are sure that the information analyst understands what you want.

**When is Computer Searching Useful?**

You can use computer searching to replace the hours you would spend tracking down information. You can use computer searching to uncover the few references available on your very particular topic. You can use computer searching to sort through the many references available on your broad topic to find the ones most immediate to your needs.

Let's consider an example. You are interested in starting a job bank for women. You need information on how to set up a job bank, examples of existing job banks, success and failure factors of job banks. The information analyst at a local search service suggests searching the ERIC database. You talk with the information analyst and decide that you want:

1. ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), one of the major social science databases, has been in existence since 1966. It is a nationwide information network for educational materials, consisting of 16 subject-oriented clearinghouses. For further information, contact Central ERIC, National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C. 20208.
1) Information directly related to job banks, no matter what population they serve, and

2) Information related to job development, employment opportunities, job search methods, job markets, and job placement specifically for women.

The information analyst designs the search strategy by translating the key concepts into the proper terms for searching the ERIC database.

The search actually becomes a two-part operation. First, the term "job bank" is searched to find all possible citations that deal with this concept. The searcher instructs the computer to create a set of all records that contain the phrase "job bank." This set can be graphically represented by a circle, which contains all of the 17 records found by the computer.

Figure 1

"job bank" set of records
(17)

The second part of this search is more complicated. You want citations that deal with job development and women. The concept of job development is represented by several terms in the ERIC database: "job development," "employment opportunities," "job market," "job search methods," "job placement." The population group, women, is represented in ERIC by the terms "female" and "working women." The searcher first in-
structs the computer to construct a set of all the records that have at least one of the "job" terms. This set consists of 5750 records. The computer is then instructed to make a set of all the records that have at least one of the "women" terms. The "women" set consists of 9912 records. The final step of the search is to instruct the computer to combine the "job" set and the "women" set to create a single new set that contains only records that have both a "job" term and a "women" term. This search strategy is represented by the following figure.

The 180 records that make up this new set you are interested in are those contained in the shaded, overlapping area.

The searcher finds 17 records that deal specifically with job banks and 180 records that deal with the broader area of job development for women. The computer is instructed to print these records offline and send them to the searcher. Appendix B contains a sample of these printouts. The total amount of online searching time was approximately 5 minutes. Adding 30 minutes for negotiating and designing the search, you have managed to search a database that contains over 400,000 records in only 35 minutes.
It is important to remember, however, that what you receive is a bibliography that will refer you to relevant materials. You will not receive the materials themselves from the search. Once the printout is obtained, you must decide which items seem most relevant and pursue the materials through your library or search service.

Now that you have found information on job banks and job development for women, it is time to consider who might fund a job bank for women. Computer searching again can be helpful. The information analyst informs you that the Foundation Directory is an online database with information on foundations and what they fund. You decide that you want to search as broadly as possible and the information analyst instructs the computer to look for all foundations that have the words "job," "jobs," or "employment" in the descriptions that are stored on the database computer tape. A total of 9 foundations are found and the printout is ordered. As can be seen from the sample in Appendix B, once the printout arrives, you can decide on the basis of the descriptions which foundations to contact as possible funding sources.

This is only one example of the many uses of computer searching of bibliographic databases. You could use computer searching for gathering information when --

- Filing a Title IX grievance.
- Examining textbooks for sexism.
- Developing nonsexist curricula.
- Learning about nonsexist childrearing practices.
- Starting a day care center.
- Obtaining ideas on combining family responsibilities and job responsibilities.
- Developing inservice programs for creating awareness of sex stereotyping in education.
- Obtaining references to nonsexist nonprint resources.
- Collecting background information for a film about women.

One of the best people to advise you on the usefulness of a search for a particular information problem is the information analyst who does computer searching. Discuss your information needs with this intermediary. Be as specific as possible as to what it is you must have, especially explaining how you will use the information. For example, do you need references to evaluations of textbooks or references to textbooks themselves? Do you plan to write an academic paper or make a speech before the school board? The information analyst should be able to guide you to the most appropriate information sources: specific computerized databases; reference books; another organization or agency; or some combination of sources. Remember, computerized sources of bibliographic information cannot answer all information needs, but they can be an efficient and effective tool for those information needs that they are designed to fill.

**How Much Does Computer Searching Cost?**

The cost of searching bibliographic databases that are available through online vendors depends on four factors:

1. **The database and the online vendor.** Each database has its own search price based on a per hour cost. For example, for a particular online vendor, ERIC costs $25.00 per hour to search; Sociological Abstracts costs $55.00 per hour. These costs vary with other online vendors. Why is there a difference? Databases are produced and updated by different groups, some being publicly-supported, others being privately owned or proprietary. Publicly-supported databases are generally less expensive than proprietary. Maintenance, amount of indexing, and other costs associated with readying a database for
public use can vary, contributing to cost variance. Each vendor, being a privately owned business, sets its own rates, and these too may differ.

2. **Nature of the search.** Some information needs are very narrow in scope or can be expressed by a very narrow set of terms. For example, if you wanted to retrieve everything in ERIC about Title IX, you need only direct the computer to search on that one term. Your online time would be brief. On the other hand, if you wanted to find references to evaluation techniques or instruments used for inservice training programs for elementary school personnel, you would have to do a search using perhaps ten or fifteen terms. Even though searches are usually designed offline (that is, terms and how to combine them are decided on before connecting with the computer) complicated searches often require adjustments during online time. The longer one stays online, the more expensive a search will be.

3. **Prints.** The results of your search will be printed offline for you. (If you wish, they can be printed out at the terminal while online but, except in the case of a very small quantity of printing, the cost will be much greater than offline printing.) Each database has its own cost per offline printed record. For example, using one vendor, ERIC costs $0.10 per record; Sociological Abstracts costs $0.15 per record; the Foundation Grants Index costs $0.30 per record.

4. **The cost of your search service.** Whoever does your search will probably charge you for that service. The charge could be a function of staff time or it could be a flat rate. It varies from place to place. Be sure to inquire about this for the particular search service you use.

The following chart gives examples of the costs for ERIC and Comprehensive Dissertation Abstract International (CDI) searches using the costs of one particular vendor. For example, a 15-minute search (which is actually an average time for many searches) yielding 50 citations would cost $11.25 for the ERIC database and $19.75 for CDI. Although
these costs are calculated for a particular vendor, the costs do not vary greatly from vendor to vendor. These costs do not include any service charges that particular search services may add to the cost of online time and offline prints. Cost estimates for other databases may be computed using the information given in Appendix A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time spent online</th>
<th>Number of offline printed citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 citations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min. (1/12 hr.)</td>
<td>$3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min. (1/6 hr.)</td>
<td>$5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 min. (1/4 hr.)</td>
<td>$7.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1ERIIC = $25 per hour online; $0.10 per citation printed offline.
2Comprehensive Dissertation Abstracts = $55 per hour; $0.12 per citation printed offline.

The WEECN Database

The growing interest in women's concerns has been paralleled by a growing amount of literature on women. As noted earlier, a great deal of this literature is found in a variety of computerized databases. Each of these databases has its own record format and indexing vocabulary, and each is searched in its own particular way. In an effort to consolidate some of the computerized literature on women and education, the Women's Educational Equity Communications Network (WEECN) developed a new computerized database that draws on thirteen other databases.1 WEECN periodically search-

1ABI/INFORM, AGRICOLA, America: History and Life, Dissertation Abstracts, ERIC (both documents and journal articles), Magazine Index, Management Contents, MEDLARS, NICEH, NTIS, Psychological Abstracts, PAIS, and Sociological Abstracts.
ed these databases, looking for all records dealing with women or girls combined with education. The results of each search were reviewed and any irrelevant records were eliminated. The selected records were put into one standardized format (including a standardized indexing vocabulary) and placed on computer tape. A semi-annual abstract journal, Resources in Women's Educational Equity (RIWEE)\(^2\), is the printed version of what is on the computer tape. Each succeeding RIWEE volume represents additions to the WEECN database. As of September 1980, a total of 12,779 records were included. The WEECN database, although not currently available online, was designed to have this capability. For information on future use of the database, contact the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, U.S. Department of Education, Donahoe Building, Room 1105, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202.

**Conclusion**

Computer searching is an efficient tool for those who need information. Obtaining a computer search is not difficult, and its cost is usually justified by the time you save and, in some cases, by the more accurate and comprehensive information obtained. Computer searching is most effective:

- when your information need is well thought out;
- when you state your topic as precisely as possible.

Until you become familiar with this resource, the person who does your search can best advise you on whether a computer search is appropriate, what to

\(^2\)RIWEE is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Volume 1: order no. 017-080-01820-9, $5.00; Volume 2: order no. 017-080-01947-7, $7.25; Volume 3, Number 1: order no. 017-080-02014-9, $6.50; Volume 3, Number 2: order no. 017-080-02064-5, $7.50; Volume 4, Number 1: order no. 065-000-00004-1, $8.50.
expect from a search, which databases will be best to use, and how much it will cost. Computerized sources have a great deal of information dealing with the concerns of women. Those who need this information should investigate these efficient and economical resources.
Appendix A

Some Online Social Science Databases That Contain Information on Women's Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Cost/hour online</th>
<th>Cost/print citation offline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABI/Inform (business management and administration)</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGRICOLA (database of the National Agricultural Library; rural sociology, home economics, etc.)</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM/ARM (vocational and technical education)</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America: History and Life</td>
<td>$65</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Dissertation Abstracts</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center)</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional Child Education Abstracts</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Directory</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Grants Index</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Abstracts</td>
<td>$65</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Language Behavior Abstracts</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine Index (popular, non-scholarly periodicals)</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Contents (business)</td>
<td>$70</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTIS (National Technical Information Service: mainly government reports)</td>
<td>$35</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Abstracts</td>
<td>$65</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Scisearch (social science literature)</td>
<td>$70</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Abstracts</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These costs are for a particular online vendor. Costs of other vendors may vary. These are cited here only to give an example of computer searching costs.
College Venture: Helping the 'Stop Out' Ppective, David Ray
Change, 10, 3, 12-3 Mar 74

The College Venture Program, a Boston-based committee of New
England liberal arts colleges, annually helps place hundreds of student clients—"stopouts" or "interrupters"—in temporary jobs while they contemplate their future college plans. Counseling services are offered and a Job Bank is maintained. [111]

Descriptors: Dropout Prevention/ School Holding Power/ Innovation/ Field Experience Programs / Jobs/ Higher Education/ Dropout / Educational Alternatives/ Consortia/ Student Experience
Identifiers: College Venture Program/ 'Stopouts'/ New England

Job Bank in the Secondary School Seller, Terry
Occupational Outlook Quarterly, 20, 2, 28-9 Sum 76

The Job Bank in the Brookline, Wisconsin secondary schools, sponsored by the Wisconsin State Employment Service (WSES), consists of two lists of microfiche of job openings throughout the State as listed with WSES. It is used for placement at the high school level and exploratory purposes at the junior high level. [111]

Descriptors: Job Market/ Information Dissemination/ Job Placement/ Career Exploration/ Secondary Schools/ Employment Opportunities
Identifiers: Job Bank

Job File: How to Learn If There's a Job in Dallas When You're Jobless in Dex Moines
Rainer, Wayne
Occupational Outlook Quarterly, 20, 2, 2-7 Sum 76

Job File, a monthly report by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor, includes only occupations for which high demand exists in Job Banks (1,000 or more total monthly vacancies). A listing of Job Bank districts which report on frequently listed openings is included. [111]

Identifiers: Job File / Job Bank

New Resources in the Employment Service for Counselors and Administrators
Archived, Mary; Augus, Norma
Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 21, 2, 144-148 Dec 72

One of the modern sources of up-to-date information offered by the Employment Services is the computerized Job Bank, withdrawals' from which may be made by jobseekers and counselors. [111]

Descriptors: Counselors/ Employment Services/ Information Services/ Job Applicants/ Jobs/ Occupational Information/ Personal Data

GL's Draw on Job Bank
Moss, Allan L.
Manpower, 4, 10, 26-27 Oct 72

Summary of job openings in the States distributed to U.S. bases in the Far East, Europe, and the U.S. [Editor]

Descriptors: Computer Oriented Programs/ Employment Opportunities/ Employment Services/ Enlisted Men/ Job Market/ Manpower Needs/ National Programs/ Occupational Guidance/ Vocational Development
Identifiers: Job Bank
ED147518 CED3578

Sponsoring Agency: Employment and Training Administration (DOT), Washington, D.C.

Grant No.: DUN-75-01-16-02
Available from: National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22161
EDS Price: MF 0.83 MC 1.25 Plus Postage.

This report reviews the second year activities of the Alabama Occupational Information System (AOIS), whose second-year objectives were (1) to review all state file formats, particularly the occupational file, (2) to validate national data supplied by the Government Information Service (GIS), (3) to develop and implement a Job Bank Summary File, and (4) to establish good working ties with the Department of Industrial Relations and Vocational Education. A description of how each objective was met is provided. The report was devoted to appendices which include sample computer printout job information sheets, a listing of occupational categories and groups, state occupations by title and Alabama Occupational Information System (AOIS) code numbers, sample instruction sheets for obtaining information on financial aid and state occupational training programs, a sample computer printout of job bank information, the benefits and objectives of AOIS, and a general description of the contents of each of AOIS' interactive information files: national occupational, state occupational, state occupational training, national scholarship and financial aid, state scholarship and financial aid, career resource, four-year college, two-year college, and job bank summary. (BL)


Identifiers: Alabama
Getting in the Oil Guys' Club
Bents, Janet
Vocational Guidance Quarterly, v38 n2 p125-35 Dec 1979

Reprint: UAI
Language: ENGLISH

Describes a workshop for women preparing to interview in traditionally male-dominated jobs and training programs. The workshop goals are to help women recognize sex-role stereotyping, respond to this system in constructive and self-enhancing ways, and use verbal strategies to communicate their confidence and competence

Descriptors: Career Opportunities/Educational Programs/Industry/Employment/Females/Job Search Methods/Occupational Choice/Equal Rights/Team Training/Workshops

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP: A New Career Option for Women.
McKenna, Patricia P
New Directions for Education, Work and Careers, No. 8
Enhancing Women's Career Development, p71-82 1979

Reprint: UAI
Language: ENGLISH

An status and barriers faced by women business owners is examined, and ways in which education institutions can assist women to overcome these obstacles are suggested. The Women Entrepreneurs (WE) Project is described, and a survey of women-owned businesses in California is discussed.


ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Self-Employed Women Entrepreneurs Project.
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Purpose and Activities: Purposes: grants in several
areas of health and welfare, education, civic causes, and
urban programs, especially in community development, job
training, youth activities, and international and cultural
programs; support for educational gift-matching and
scholarship programs for employees' children. Grants to local
organizations concentrated in key areas of Company operations:
New York City, Promont, Danville, and Fort Lauderdale. No
grants to individuals, for building or endowment funds,
preschool, primary or secondary educational institutions.
except to secondary schools under the matching gifts program;
operating funds in organizations which are unit group
members.
Profile, CS
Financial data, ending 12/31/18:
Assets $174,219 AL Gifts Received $1,551,507
Expenditures $1,581,722
Grant Amount $1,116,098 No. of Grants: 222 High $100,000 Low $50 Matching Gifts Amount $134,292
Officers Stephen S. Halley/ President, Hanbroch B. Miller/ Vice-President, Olaf E. Jorgens/ Secretary, Robert C.
Schmidt/ Treasurer
Trustees: Richard W. Bliss/ Howard L. Clark/ C.R. Greenwood/ James D. Robinson, III/ Frederick A. Tomé
APPLICATION INFORMATION Grant application guidelines available; initial approach by letter; submit 2 copies
of proposal preferably in the late fall; board meets 3 times a year in February, October, and November

ID No. 001499 EL No. 381360149
Upjohn W. E. ) Unemployment Trustee Corporation
200 South Westedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 (616) 343-5541
Incorporated in 1932 in Michigan
Director: W. E. Upjohn
Purpose and Activities: To support research into the causes;
effects, prevention, and alleviation of unemployment; funds
used to support W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment
Research. No grants for building or endowment funds or
operating budgets.
Financial data, ending 12/31/18:
Assets $17,740,297 AN Expenditures $1,050,562
Grants Amount $58,158 No. of Grants: R High $18,750
Low $250
Officers and Trustees: P.S. Parth/ Chairman, D.G. Knapp/ Secretary-Treasurer. John T. Bernhard/ J.H. Dunbar/ C.C.
WRITE E. Earl Wright, Director
APPLICATION INFORMATION: Program policy statement and grant
application guidelines available; initial approach by letter;
submit 1 copy of proposal prior to June 1; board meets
semiaannually in May and December.