



# AGENDA FOR ACCESS

Public Access to Federal Information for  
Sustainability through the Information Superhighway

A REPORT PREPARED BY  
THE BAUMAN FOUNDATION

JANUARY 1995



# THE BAUMAN FOUNDATION

Jewell House • 2045 Street • Washington, D.C. 20009-1110  
202-328-2040 • FAX 202-328-2008

Dear Colleagues,

It is with pleasure that we publish and distribute *Agenda for Access: Federal Information on Sustainability Through the Information Superhighway*. Months of research, writing, consultations and a ninety-person national advisory meeting, this document is based on the suggestions, ideas and hard work of nearly 200 people throughout the country.

The collaboration ranged from senior Clinton Administration officials to grassroots community organizers; from heads of philanthropic foundations to union officials; from academics and librarians to policy analysts and Congressional staff. Representing a broad diversity of perspectives, agendas, interests and backgrounds, the participants in this project have shared in common a commitment to empower citizens with easy access to the wealth of federal information that is vital to our lives, the vitality of our communities and the democratic process itself.

## Public Access to Federal Information for

## Sustainability through the Information Superhighway

We believe that the time is ripe to build on the dramatic shift in the culture of information policy toward public access that is taking place within the federal government. Information through the "information superhighway" will help institutionalize this new direction.

As a starting point, we have chosen to focus on federal information concerned with a constellation of issues that includes the environment, economy, health and education. The reader will note that this report, as expressed in its title, frames these issues under the banner of "sustainability," rather than the more familiar "sustainable development." This change was at the urging of many of the participants who felt that the term "sustainability" avoids confusion about what development should mean and provides a broader, more flexible and inclusive context for their concerns.

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The *Agenda for Access* is one step on a long journey, and only a beginning step at that. The document itself is a living document, one which we hope will evolve as new voices are added to the debate and add their recommendations and reactions. We hope, as well, that this report will inspire thoughtful discussion and ongoing action within and outside of government that will result in improved access to and public access to federal information on sustainability.

With Co-Sponsorship by  
The Benton Foundation  
The HKH Foundation  
The Rockefeller Family Fund  
The Summit Foundation

In addition to the participants in this process who have given so generously of their time, experience and insights, I wish to thank Sally Katzon and her staff at the Office of Management and Budget for their encouragement throughout this process. I also wish to thank Molly Olson and the President's Council on Sustainable Development for their continuing support and cooperation. I am most grateful to Gary D. Bass, Executive Director of OMB Watch, who helped to conceive as well as carry out this effort since the outset, Jennifer Henderson and Barbara Western for their assistance on this project, and to Ted Howard, project coordinator, who made it happen.

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Finally, I wish to thank the foundations that joined with the Bauman Foundation in underwriting the cost of this effort: the Benton Foundation; the HKH Foundation; the Rockefeller Family Fund; and the Summit Foundation.

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Sustainability through the Information Superhighway  
Public Access to Federal Information for

A Report Prepared by  
The Strategic Planning  
With a Foreword by  
The Center for  
The High Foundation  
The National Family Fund  
The National Foundation

JANUARY 1995

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Dear Colleague,

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Our collaborators ranged from senior Clinton Administration officials to grassroots community organizers; from heads of philanthropic foundations to union officials; from academics and librarians to policy analysts and Congressional staff. Representing a broad diversity of perspectives, agendas, interests and backgrounds, the participants in this project have shared in common a commitment to empower citizens with easy access to the wealth of federal information that is vital to our lives, the vitality of our communities and the democratic process itself.

We believe that the time is ripe to build on the dramatic shift in the culture of information policy toward public access that is taking place within the federal government. The active dissemination of useful and usable federal information through the "information superhighway" will help institutionalize this new direction.

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Patricia Bauman  
Co-Director

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