

Congressional Presentation

Estimate of Appropriations for FY 2002

Federal Citizen Information Center



U.S. General Services Administration

Federal Citizen Information Center

<http://www.FirstGov.gov>

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov>

PROGRAM SUMMARY

During fiscal year 2000, with the merger of the Consumer Information Center and the Federal Information Center programs, the newly formed Federal Consumer Information Center has developed new tools to inform and serve the American public. FCIC has successfully brought together a vast array of useful Federal information and made it easily accessible. Whether citizens want information in print, electronically, or over the telephone, FCIC is their help desk for everyday life – giving answers and assistance they trust about the things that matter.

For millions of consumers, FCIC embodies the best of government – practical, down-to-earth, and dedicated to meeting their needs. For 30 years, citizens have written to Pueblo, Colorado to get helpful, timely Federal publications that answer their questions or explain federal programs. They are increasingly logging on to www.pueblo.gsa.gov, and now a new web domain www.info.gov, for instant, free access to an even greater variety of federal information. They are also calling the toll-free National Contact Center with questions ranging from how to check social security benefits, find specialized tax forms, get the latest product recalls, or apply for a student loan. In fiscal year 2000, with the addition of the FIC toll-free calls and web site accesses, public contacts with the FCIC rose to 23.2 million, an increase of 51% over fiscal year 1999.

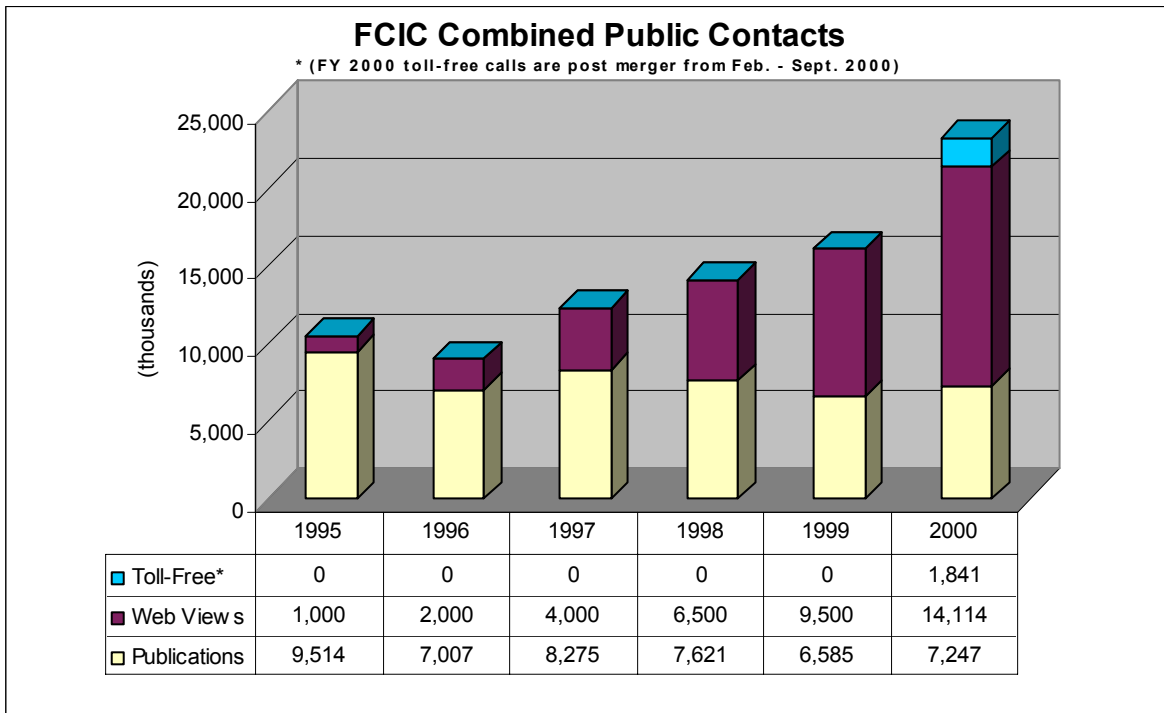
In response to the public's need for proactive, self-directed consumer education and protection in FY 2000, the **Consumer's Resource Handbook** was refocused and renamed the **Consumer Action Handbook (CAH)**. The National Consumers League, the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators, and various focus groups reviewed the contents and made suggestions to make the **CAH** even more helpful and easier to use. More than 500,000 copies of the new edition were printed in fiscal year 2000, and the public response was overwhelming. For example, during the week following a September 10, 2000 mention of **CAH** in

Parade Magazine, FCIC received requests for nearly 120,000 copies. To help meet demand for **CAH**, FCIC raised funds from 30 corporate partners, and enlisted printing support from 10 Federal agencies.

The new web version of **CAH** was released simultaneously with the printed edition, providing consumers with a single site where they can learn how to contact federal, state, and corporate offices all across the country. **CAH** links consumers directly to government agencies and corporate consumer offices, enabling citizens to resolve their problems and get answers directly as needed. FCIC updates and adds new information to the **e-CAH** daily, making it one of the most powerful and useful consumer protection tools.

During fiscal year 2000, FCIC also continued to publish the **Consumer Information Catalog**, which lists hundreds of popular titles from across the Federal Government on subjects such as saving for college or retirement, avoiding fraud, exercising and eating for good health, and learning about the Federal laws and regulations that affect their daily lives. In fiscal year 2000, FCIC distributed more than 11 million **Catalogs** to individuals and through educators, nonprofit associations, large and small businesses, banks, credit unions, libraries, government offices, and Members of Congress who distribute it as a service to their constituents.

Reversing the trend seen in recent years, the number of printed publications ordered through the Pueblo, Colorado distribution facility actually increased during fiscal year 2000. FCIC's fiscal year 2000 distribution totaled 7.2 million publications as compared to 6.6 million in fiscal year 1999. While publication distribution increased as a result of a special Dear Abby promotion and a targeted distribution project of Federal publications in Spanish, orders placed through the **Consumer Information Catalog** continued to decline. This resulted in a drop of



almost 29 percent in user fee revenue from the \$332,819 received in fiscal year 1999 to \$236,763 in fiscal year 2000. Revenue from the sale of Superintendent of Documents publications distributed through the **Catalog**, which is retained by the Government Printing Office, fell by 17.9 percent to \$685,123.

Variables such as promotions, agency publishing budgets and initiatives, and media pickup affect publication distribution amounts each year. Looking ahead, FCIC anticipates that publication distribution and the revenue generated by it will trend downwards as the public increasingly uses the easily accessible free information available on the web.

Listening to consumers and meeting their information needs with excellent service have long been hallmarks of the FCIC program. During fiscal year 2000, the Federal Consumer Information Center was one of the 32 high-visibility Federal agencies chosen to participate in the second government-wide American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey. This survey, conducted by the University of Michigan Business School in partnership with the American Society for Quality and

Arthur Andersen, has been conducted in the private sector since 1994. It provides an index to measure how customers rate the products and services provided by business and now government. FCIC customers who had placed multiple publication orders were asked via telephone for their evaluation of the **Catalog**, the ordering process, and the web site. FCIC received an index score of 79, tied for 4th place out of the 32 agencies evaluated. The FCIC index was 10.4 points higher than the average of 68.6 for the Federal sector and 7.8 points higher than the average of 71.2 for businesses.

FCIC continues to win accolades from the media and from government colleagues for the excellence of its products. The National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators honored FCIC's fiscal year 2000 television public service announcement with their award for Excellence in Consumer Education, as well as bestowing its annual Web Site Excellence Award on www.pueblo.gsa.gov. In fiscal year 2001, the National Association of Government Communicators recognized FCIC with a first place Gold Screen award for its television public service announcement, as well as a coveted Blue Pencil award for news writing. And **Forbes** magazine selected FCIC's web site as one of the top 200 Internet sites in its Spring 2001 "Best of the Web" issue. FCIC's winning site was complimented on its superior content, design, navigation, speed and customization.

FCIC is uniquely positioned to continue meeting the public's information needs. It brings together an innovative media and marketing program, an efficient and centralized distribution system for publications, a nationwide toll-free telephone system, and a dynamic web site. Combining these forces will help America's citizens grow in knowledge, productivity, and self-reliance.

COMPARISON OF FY 2002 REQUEST TO PRIOR YEARS' REQUESTS
\$(Millions)

2000 Appropriation.....	\$2.622
FIC Appropriation	+3.700
FIC Personnel and Contract Increases	+ .325
Rent and Administrative Support/Services	+ .146
Pay Raise, Reclassification of Positions, FTE Increase	+ .282
Net Contract Increases	+ .031
2001 Appropriation.....	\$7.106
Personnel Increases.....	+ .076
Net Contract Increases	+ .094
2002 Appropriation.....	\$7.276

SUMMARY EXPLANATION OF CHANGES FROM 2001 TO 2002

Administrative Expenses

The administrative expenses of FCIC are funded by a combination of annual appropriations from the general fund of the Treasury, fees collected from the public, gifts from the private sector, and unobligated balances in the FCIC Fund. FCIC requests a direct appropriation of \$7,276,000 for fiscal year 2002, an increase of \$170,000 as compared to fiscal year 2001. In addition, user fees and other fund balances are projected to cover \$344,000 of FCIC administrative expenses for a grand total of \$7,620,000. This request will enable FCIC to carry forward programs at the same level carried out in fiscal year 2001.

Publication Distribution Costs

FCIC works with numerous private sector entities and serves more than 40 Federal agencies in their mission to provide information to the public. In the process, FCIC provides order fulfillment services on a reimbursable basis primarily through the Government Printing Office facility in Pueblo, Colorado. The participating agencies and organizations fully fund the costs associated with distributing the publications that they have determined to offer without charge to the public. These agency reimbursements from Federal agencies and the private sector will total an estimated \$2,949,499 in fiscal year 2002 to cover costs projected to be incurred in handling citizen requests for free publications. In addition, an FCIC-appropriated portion of \$290,741 will cover **Consumer Action Handbook** distribution costs. The grand total of \$3,240,240 will help fund the distribution of an estimated total 5.9 million publications in fiscal year 2002.

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

For necessary expenses of the Federal Consumer Information Center, including services authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3109, [\$7,122,000] \$7,276,000, to be deposited into the Federal Consumer Information Center Fund: Provided, That the appropriations, revenues and collections deposited into the fund shall be available for necessary expenses of Federal Consumer Information Center activities in the aggregate amount of \$12,000,000. Appropriations, revenues, and collections accruing to this fund during fiscal year [2001] 2002 in excess of \$12,000,000 shall remain in the fund and shall not be available for expenditure except as authorized in appropriations Acts. (*Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001.*)

THE FEDERAL CONSUMER INFORMATION CENTER FUND

In 1983, Public Law 98-63 established the Consumer Information Center (CIC) Fund to provide for a business-like operation of Consumer Information Center activities. Effective during the second quarter of fiscal year 2000, the Federal Information Center (FIC) was transferred to the CIC and the resulting organization was named the Federal Consumer Information Center (FCIC). As of fiscal year 2001, the revolving fund was renamed the Federal Consumer Information Center Fund to reflect the new organization, and covers all the liabilities and commitments of both the CIC and the FIC. FIC activities, primarily its National Contact Center, are consistent with CIC program activities, in that both disseminate Federal Government consumer information to the public. The Fund is authorized to retain unobligated amounts at the end of the fiscal year. The activities of the FCIC are financed from the following:

1. Annual appropriations to pay salaries and expenses.
2. Reimbursements from Federal agencies to pay costs associated with the provision of information services to the public. This includes costs such as the telephone ordering system, and of publications distributed through the Government Printing Office (GPO) facility in Pueblo, Colorado. It also includes funds received for providing agencies with call center services.
3. User fees from the public for publications ordered through the **Consumer Information Catalog**. These are used to offset administrative expenses.
4. Other income incidental to FCIC activities, primarily payments from private sector groups to cover the cost of distributing cooperative government-industry publications.

5. Gifts to defray costs associated with the **Consumer Action Handbook** and other information and educational materials, and of undertaking other consumer information activities.

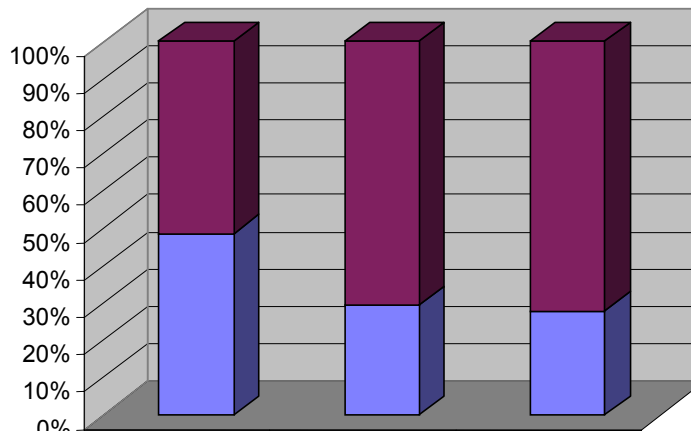
All income is available without regard to fiscal year limitations, but subject to an annual aggregate limit as set forth in appropriation acts. For fiscal year 2000, public user fees totaled \$236,763, gifts from the private sector totaled \$74,000, and reimbursements from the Federal and private sector totaled \$3,513,741. These reimbursements are projected at \$3,389,000 in fiscal year 2001 and \$3,274,000 in fiscal year 2002, and will pay for nearly one-third of FCIC program costs in fiscal years 2001 and 2002. These funds will cover more than \$3 million of FCIC's estimated total costs of approximately \$10.6 million in fiscal year 2002. The following pages provide additional details on the operation of the FCIC Fund, including the source and application of income for the Fund, from fiscal year 2000 through fiscal year 2002.

STATUS OF THE FEDERAL CONSUMER INFORMATION CENTER FUND

\$(Millions)

	<u>Actual</u> <u>2000</u>	<u>Program</u> <u>2001</u>	<u>Request</u> <u>2002</u>	<u>Change</u> <u>FY 02/01</u>
Source of Funding:				
Unobligated Balance				
Brought Forward on Oct. 1.....	\$1.000	\$.581	\$.350	-\$.231
Appropriation.....	2.622	7.106	7.276	+.170
Reimbursements for Distribution:				
-From Federal Agencies.....	3.179	2.722	2.505	-.217
-From the Private Sector.....	.334	.432	.444	+.012
User Fees.....	.237	.225	.225	---
Gifts from the Private Sector.....	.074	.010	.100	+.090
Prior Years' Adjustments.....	<u>-.024</u>	---	---	---
 Total Resources Available.....	 <u>\$7.422</u>	 <u>\$11.076</u>	 <u>\$10.900</u>	 <u>-\$.176</u>
Application of Resources:				
Administrative Expenses				
-Salaries and Benefits.....	\$1.591	\$2.033	\$2.109	+\$.076
-Travel.....	.024	.045	.045	---
-Catalog Printing/Transportation.....	.399	.350	.350	---
-CAH Production and Distribution....	.458	.310	.400	+ .090
-Public Service Advertising.....	.320	.406	.415	+ .009
-Administrative Support/Services.....	.221	.336	.343	+ .007
-Rent Payments.....	.132	.163	.164	+ .001
-Direct Marketing.....	.113	.113	.113	--
-FIC Service Costs.....	--	3.615	3.477	- .138
-All Other.....	<u>.224</u>	<u>.201</u>	<u>.204</u>	<u>+ .003</u>
 Total Administrative Expenses.....	 \$3.482	 \$7.572	 \$7.620	 +\$.048
Publication Distribution.....	3.316	3.154	2.949	- .205
Prior Years' Obligations.....	.043	---	---	---
Unobligated Balance				
Carried Forward.....	<u>.581</u>	<u>.350</u>	<u>.331</u>	<u>- .019</u>
 Total Resources Applied.....	 <u>\$7.422</u>	 <u>\$11.076</u>	 <u>\$10.900</u>	 <u>-\$.176</u>

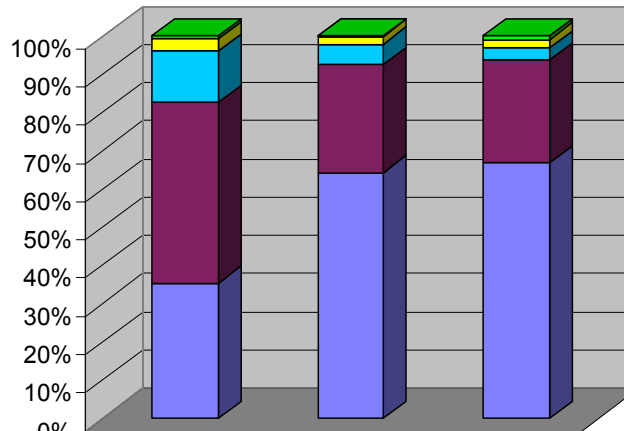
**FCIC Fund - Income Application
FY 2000 - FY 2002**



	FY 2000 \$6.841 mill.	FY 2001* \$10.726 mill.	FY 2002 \$10.569 mill.
■ Administrative/ Other Expenses	51.5%	70.6%	72.1%
■ Publication Distribution	48.5%	29.4%	27.9%

* In FY 2001, FIC functions were added.

**FCIC Fund - Source of Income
FY 2000 - FY 2002**



	FY 2000 \$7.422 mill.	FY 2001* \$11.076 mill.	FY 2002 \$10.900 mill.
■ Other	0.7%	0.1%	0.9%
■ User Fees	3.2%	2.0%	2.1%
■ Unobligated Balance	13.5%	5.3%	3.2%
■ Agency/Private Reimbursements	47.3%	28.4%	27.0%
■ Appropriations	35.3%	64.2%	66.8%

* In FY 2001, FIC functions were added.

• **DETAIL OF POSITIONS**

		Actual, 2000			Program, 2001			Request, 2002		
		C.O.	Field	Total	C.O.	Field	Total	C.O.	Field	Total
SES - GS -	02	1	---	1	1	---	1	1	---	1
	15	2	---	2	3	---	3	3	---	3
	14	1	---	1	3	---	3	3	---	3
	13	5	---	5	9	---	9	9	---	9
	12	6	---	6	4	---	4	3	---	3
	11	3	---	3	---	---	---	2	---	2
	9	---	---	---	1	---	1	---	---	---
	7	4	---	4	3	---	3	3	---	3
	6	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Permanent Positions		22	---	22	24	---	24	24	---	24
Other		---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
TOTAL		22	---	22	24	---	24	24	---	24

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

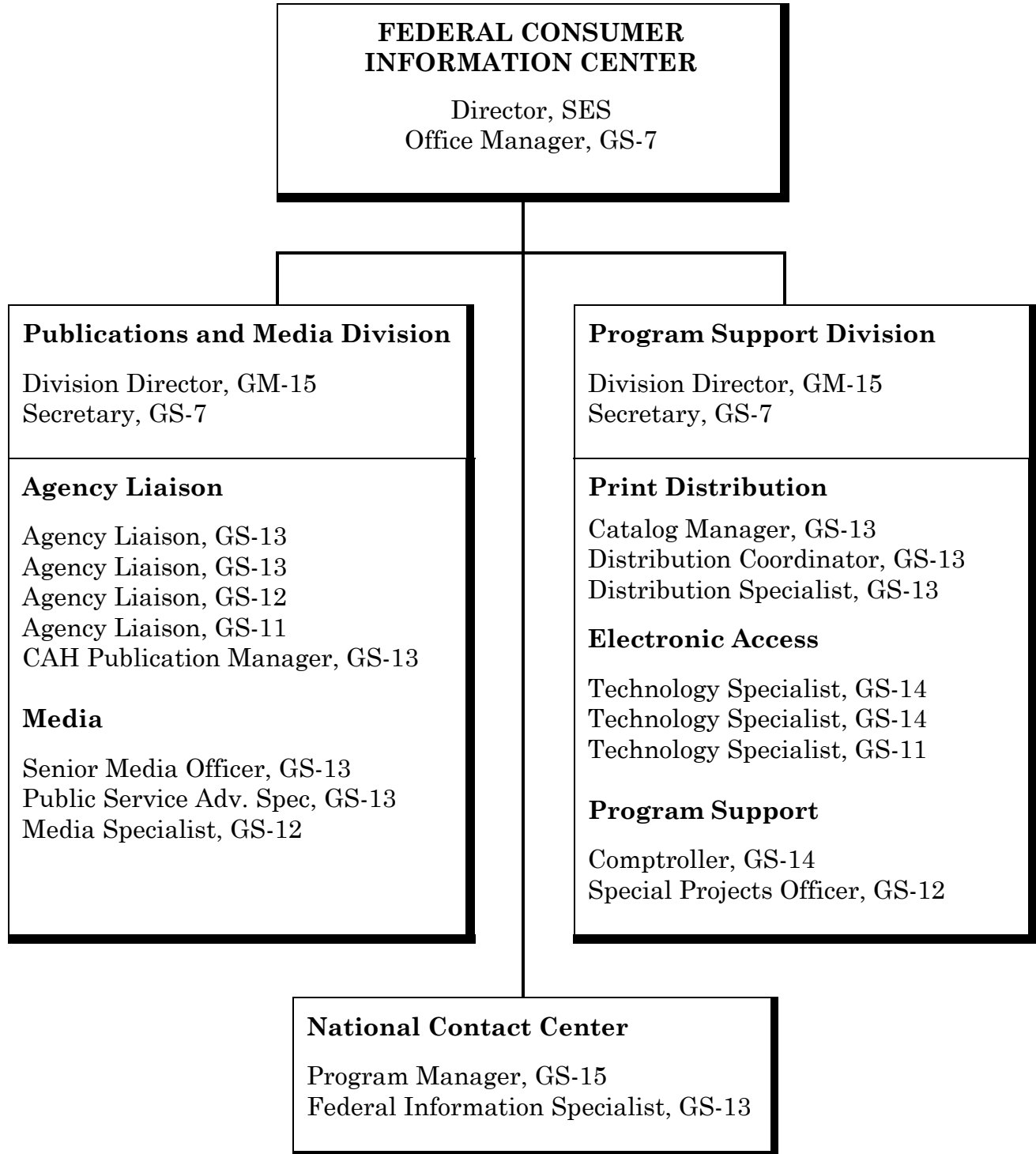
		Actual, 2000	Program, 2001	Request, 2002
Personnel Compensation:	Central Office	\$ 1.304	\$ 1.684	\$ 1.751
	Field	---	---	---
11	Total personnel compensation	\$ 1.304	\$ 1.684	\$ 1.751
12	Personnel benefits	.287	.348	.358
21	Travel	.024	.045	.045
22	Transportation of things	.036	.040	.040
23	Rental payments to GSA	.132	.163	.164
	Communications and misc. charges	.073	.478	.480
24	Printing and reproduction	.793	.437	.515
25	Other services	4.131	7.461	7.145
26	Supplies and materials	.017	.051	.052
31	Equipment	.001	.019	.019
99	Total obligations	*\$ 6.841	\$10.726	\$10.569

*Total obligations include a net \$.043 in prior years' adjustments not reflected in amounts for individual object classes.

**EXPLANATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2002 REQUEST BY OBJECT CLASS
\$(Millions)**

- 11 Personnel Compensation - \$1.751: To support 24 FTE, all in the Central Office.
- 12 Personnel Benefits - \$.358: \$.208 for retirement contributions; \$.064 for health benefits; \$.084 for FICA; and \$.002 for group life insurance.
- 21 Travel and Transportation of Persons - \$.045: For travel by FCIC staff members for contract monitoring and to produce and promote Federal information.
- 22 Transportation of Things - \$.040: For transporting **Catalogs** from the printing company to the Colorado distribution center and to Washington, DC.
- 23 Rental Payments to GSA - \$.164: For payments to the Federal Buildings Fund for rental of space.
- 23 Communications, Utilities and Misc. Charges - \$.480: \$.460 for toll-free lines, the remaining for office telephone and other communications charges.
- 24 Printing and Reproduction - \$.515: \$.310 for printing **Catalogs**; \$.109 for printing the **Consumer Action Handbook**; \$.068 for printing consumer information material for direct marketing; and \$.028 for miscellaneous printing.
- 25 Other Services - \$7.145: \$2.594 for payments primarily to the Government Printing Office for the cost of distributing consumer publications (the amount is fully covered by participating organizations); \$3.372 for costs associated with contractor performance of toll-free telephone and other services; \$.343 for payment to GSA for administrative support and services; \$.415 for preparation and distribution of public service materials for television; \$.291 for producing and distributing the **Consumer Action Handbook** and related activities; \$.045 for direct marketing; and \$.85 for miscellaneous expenses.
- 26 Supplies and Materials - \$.052: For administrative supplies and materials.
- 31 Equipment - \$.019: For the purchase of general office equipment.

**FEDERAL CONSUMER INFORMATION CENTER
FISCAL YEAR 2002 PROJECTED STAFFING**



SELECTED WORKLOAD PROJECTIONS

	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Estimate	FY 2002 Request	FY 02/01 Change
1. Electronic Accesses (Millions)	14.1	16.0	18.0	+12.5%
2. Publication Titles Available (Print and Electronic)	540	570	600	+ 5.3%
3. Private Sector Publication Income (\$000)	408	442	544	+23.1%
4. Publications Distributed (Millions)	7.25	6.0	5.9	- 1.7%
5. Toll-Free Telephone Inquiries/Orders (Millions)	2.7	2.7	2.7	---

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To answer citizens' questions about the Federal Government and about everyday consumer issues, the FCIC works with Federal agencies to identify useful information, to build public awareness of the information through media and marketing programs, to provide direct answers through a toll-free National Contact Center, to make information available instantly 24/7 over its award-winning Internet web sites, and to send out printed information from the Government Printing Office (GPO) facility in Pueblo, Colorado.

The following sections describe program highlights in the major FCIC program areas: identifying and developing information, media and marketing, the National Contact Center, the web sites, and the Pueblo Distribution Center.

Information Development

During fiscal year 2000, FCIC continued its mission mandate to serve the public as a central source of Federal information. FCIC broadened both the scope and the format of the information that it provides to cover information that is available at the moment it is needed and in the way that consumers can most easily use.

More than 40 Federal agencies work with FCIC on an ongoing basis to develop, promote and distribute timely and helpful information. FCIC provides insights into the information needs of consumers, and reviews new and revised publications for readability and clarity. FCIC coordinates marketing and promotional efforts so that citizens can fully utilize the information gathered on their behalf. FCIC collects the most practical and useful consumer news from agency and private sector web sites, and organizes it for easy public access. FCIC provides feedback from distribution reports and electronic accesses to help agencies prioritize funding and staff

resources, and to ensure continued Federal information efforts in areas where the need is critical.

FCIC also works with the private sector to develop needed consumer information by encouraging participation in cooperative publishing. This program matches businesses and trade associations with Federal agencies who share an interest in providing information to the public. In fiscal year 2000, corporate and nonprofit co-sponsors included the MetLife Consumer Education Center, the American Council of Life Insurers, the American Financial Services Association Education Foundation, the National Consumers League, American Express, the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, MasterCard International, Kidde Safety, the Consumer Federation of America, and many others. To date, FCIC has coordinated, promoted, and distributed more than 180 cooperative government-industry publications.

The following examples illustrate FCIC's activities to identify and develop helpful consumer information during fiscal year 2000:

- Since more than 500,000 Americans are victims of identity fraud each year, FCIC has redoubled its efforts to warn consumers about how to protect themselves from this growing epidemic of information theft and the credit nightmares that ensue. By promoting **ID Theft: When Bad Things Happen to Your Good Name** from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) through its **Catalog** and web site, FCIC is giving consumers all the information and resources available to reduce their risks or to take corrective action. The FCIC web site highlighted **ID Theft** on the home page both as a “Pub of the Week” and in a more in-depth “Consumer Focus” article. Finally, FCIC updated the privacy section of the **Consumer Action Handbook** to further stress deterring ID theft through the careful control of Social Security numbers and frequent credit report reviews. To help consumers distinguish between health frauds and

bona fide medical claims, as well as find reliable health information on the web, FCIC has promoted and distributed **How to Spot Health Fraud** from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and **Fraudulent Health Claims: Don't Be Fooled**, which offers tips on how to spot false claims and report problems to the FTC.

- The majority of the almost 40 million Medicare beneficiaries live on low or moderate incomes, and one third of them live alone. Their reliance on this government program makes it important that they are fully and clearly informed about any changes or new benefit information. FCIC has worked closely with the Health Care Financing Administration to make new Medicare publications on several specific coverage concerns more widely available. For example, FCIC promoted a package of three free publications about hospice benefits, home health care, and general Medicare Q&A's to **Parade Magazine's** 82 million readers. FCIC also arranged for **Dear Abby's** syndicated column to offer three Medicare publications as part of a "Women's Consumer Survival Kit." The publications explained managed care plans, the preventive services available under Medicare, and how to compare various supplemental insurance plans. To round out Federal benefit programs, FCIC continued to provide the latest information on Social Security during fiscal year 2000, with a special emphasis on what women should know about their rights.
- With the stock market and the investment economy going through periods of volatility, getting the latest and best information on investments and finances, as well as consumer tips on how to identify investment scams, is more important than ever. During fiscal year 2000, FCIC worked with the Securities and Exchange Commission to provide consumers with a series of helpful new publications. **Get the Facts on Saving and Investing** is a guide to help consumers determine their net worth and plan their financial security. **International Investing – Get the Facts** provides Q&A's on this investment

option, which is more popular in the global economy. **Cold Calling** provides tips on investment fraud and how to evaluate investments pitched by phone, and **Microcap Stocks** covers how to evaluate low-priced stocks issued by small companies, information that is difficult to locate. FCIC continued to help consumers understand the vital differences between bank deposit accounts and investment products with **Your Insured Deposit** from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

- To meet the safety needs of American families in and around their homes, FCIC worked on the development of several new publications in cooperation with private sector partners. **Help Yourself to a Healthy Home: Protect Your Children's Health** is a collaborative effort of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Home-A-Syst program of the University of Wisconsin. It covers how to improve water and indoor air quality, reduce the potential for harm through lead poisoning, pesticides, and use of potentially harmful household chemicals. For the first time, FCIC encouraged the development of a publication based on a previously published book. **Making Your Home Safe from Fire and Carbon Monoxide**. Kidde Safety underwrote the new, free publication, which was endorsed by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- A wide variety of health concerns increasingly worry America's aging baby boomers, and cost them as well. Nearly 40 million have some form of arthritis, and this number is climbing . **Osteoarthritis** and **Rheumatoid Arthritis**, publications developed by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMSD), and **Coping with Arthritis in Its Many Forms** from the FDA, discuss the various types of arthritis, symptoms, long-term effects, and the treatment options. In addition, **How to**

Find Medical Information by NIAMSD helps consumers find the most accurate medical sources on the Internet, at libraries, and through Federal government clearinghouses. To improve their vision, many consumers consult the FDA publication, **Laser Eye Surgery: Is It Worth Looking Into?** to learn the risks, advantages and differences between photorefractive keratectomy (PRK) and laser in situ keratomileusis (LASIK) surgery. Breast cancer remains the second most diagnosed cancer in women in the United States today, with the risks increasing as women age. **FDA Sets Higher Standards for Mammography** gives the facts on the most recent diagnostic equipment regulations and tells how to locate a certified facility. **Fruits & Vegetables: Eating Your Way to 5 A Day** and **Bulking Up Fiber's Healthful Reputation** offer practical advice on healthy eating and tips on lowering the risks of cancer and heart disease. And FCIC offers a variety of publications on controlling sugars and fats in your diet and exercising to help maintain a healthy weight.

In summary, FCIC helped to develop and/or promote and distribute 71 new publications during fiscal year 2000. FCIC also researched and posted monthly Consumer Focus columns on its web site, covering subjects such as buying drugs online, doing your taxes, buying and using cellular phones, tire safety/recalls and self-employment. These columns provide an interagency perspective on hot consumer topics by pulling together information from a variety of publications and other sources, with links to useful Federal and private sector web sites. By posting information on scams and frauds, recalls, a calendar of public meetings and consumer workshops, news items, notices of proposed Federal regulations, and requests for public comment on Federal activities, FCIC serves as a cross-agency resource and promotes easy public access to the most valuable Federal information.

During fiscal year 2002, FCIC will continue to focus on the most efficient and effective methods of educating citizens about vital health, financial and marketplace

issues, whether by printed publication, through the media, via the Internet, or through the toll-free National Contact Center.

Media and Marketing

During the past year, FCIC's media activities have concentrated on meeting the emerging and still changing electronic needs of the media, while continuing to provide information in the print format that many writers and broadcasters still rely on. Taken all together, during fiscal year 2000, FCIC media programs received free air time and publication space worth \$14.1 million.

Combining the ease of electronic access with the credibility and familiarity of "Pueblo, Colorado" gives the media the best of both information worlds. And the strong partnerships that FCIC has forged with writers and editors who report on subjects of consumer interest, now include those who provide the content for freestanding web sites and for the electronic editions of newspapers and magazines. In the "Press Room" at www.pueblo.gsa.gov, FCIC offers the media news from Federal agencies, the latest recalls and consumer frauds to watch out for, articles focused on the most popular consumer topics, and notices of new or proposed government regulations that will have a significant impact on consumers..

Reporters and broadcasters have responded enthusiastically to FCIC's electronic media services. During fiscal year 2000, the FCIC's media e-mail list jumped from 500 to 3,300 subscribers. FCIC can notify these subscribers about new Federal information almost immediately - weeks before printed copies of "New for Consumers" press releases are received by the mailing list of 3,000 reporters and editors. Whether in print or electronic format, the releases highlight the most important information from FCIC publications and explain how consumers can get copies by mail, toll-free telephone, fax, or on the web. Journalists often use FCIC copy directly as written, and frequently turn to the FCIC media staff for further

information or Federal contacts. As an example of how the e-mail list encourages timely news stories for consumers, in response to three warnings from the FDA about health aids and food products in early November 2000, FCIC sent out an urgent electronic press release. The release was sent out on November 16, 2000 and articles began appearing as early as November 20th in the Miami Herald.

FCIC press releases, scripts, personal visits and calls to the media, and web site provide a constant stream of stories and articles that reach millions of Americans. Magazines such as **Fortune**, **The Kiplinger Letter**, **Woman's Day**, **Country Home**, **Popular Science**, **Today's Homeowner**, and **Consumers Digest** use "New for Consumers" releases in feature articles and to provide background information. The releases have also appeared frequently in large and smaller newspapers throughout the country from the **Columbus Dispatch**, **The Washington Post**, **The Baltimore Sun**, and the **Miami Herald** to the **Boynton Beach Community News**, the **Clifton (NJ) Dateline Journal**, and the **Irondequoit (NY) Post**. In addition, wire and news services such as Associated Press, Copley and Knight Ridder regularly promote FCIC publications in articles that appear in hundreds of newspapers across the country. The Sunday insert magazine **Parade** ran 11 FCIC-placed articles during fiscal year 2000, delivering information to more than 82 million readers on subjects ranging from saving and managing money to avoiding skin cancer and solving consumer problems.

The single most effective media promotion achieved by FCIC was the **Dear Abby** column that appeared in 1,250 newspapers nationwide offering readers the "Women's Consumer Survival Kit." The kit contained up to 20 publications on solving consumer problems, staying healthy, preparing food safely, taking medicines wisely, and planning for retirement. As a result of this article, readers requested more than one million publications.

Radio and television reach the widest range of consumers and are cost-effective public service channels. FCIC uses both live-announcer radio copy and pre-recorded radio and television public service announcements (PSAs) to broadcast information directly to listeners and viewers. During fiscal year 2000, radio stations continued to air “Baby Changes Everything,” based on an earlier television campaign. According to survey research, radio stations aired these PSAs more than 90,000 times, with airtime valued at approximately \$1.8 million over the course of the two-year campaign.

This year's television public service announcement is “Best Friend” — a humorous campaign that features a basset hound and shows viewers how to use the **Consumer Action Handbook** to help resolve their consumer problems. “Best Friend” was especially well received by stations and networks. ABC Network placed the spots on its “emergency reel,” which is used when there are technical problems or during special television coverage. The FCIC spots were broadcast during the Emmy Awards, the Olympics, national sporting events, and during primetime election night coverage. During Nielsen's August-September monitoring period, “Best Friend” was rated the number one television PSA in the country in a field of 351 television public service campaigns. FCIC used the Nielsen Company's Sigma monitoring service to track airplay in all 211 television markets. These results, combined with reported broadcast network, cable and local airplay, indicate FCIC received airtime valued at approximately \$12.5 million over the 12-month life of the FY 2000 FCIC campaign.

Newspapers and magazines also donate space to FCIC's public service print ads at no cost to the government. FCIC's newest print ad, “People Know Pueblo” highlights Pueblo's name recognition, and lets citizens know that they can get their Federal information fast by using FCIC's toll-free telephone number, web site, or **Consumer Information Catalog**. During fiscal year 2000, periodicals ranging from **Family Circle** to **Golf Magazine**, **Woman's Day** to **Popular Mechanics**,

and **House Beautiful to Inc.** provided space worth more than one million dollars for “People Know Pueblo” and other previously produced FCIC print ads. In response to FCIC promotions of our address, web site, and toll-free telephone number, more than 170,000 consumers requested a copy of the **Catalog** during fiscal year 2000.

When the U.S. General Services Administration undertook development of FirstGov.gov, the central Federal Web portal, they turned to FCIC for marketing expertise to insure the widest possible public use of the new site. FCIC developed a comprehensive plan covering consumer print, broadcast and electronic media. FCIC developed and placed information in newspapers and magazines nationwide, including **U.S. News & World Report**, **Money Magazine**, the **Chicago Tribune**, the **Miami Herald**, **The New York Times**, and the **Atlanta Journal-Constitution**. A special release was targeted to librarians describing how they, and their patrons, can use FirstGov to search the full text of every government web page on the Internet. FCIC produced PSAs for magazines, newspapers, and radio stations. Print ads were developed in five different sizes for easy placement, with film/digital ads when required. FCIC sent sets of 15 live announcer copy scripts to more than 1,100 selected radio stations representing a variety of formats and known to use live copy scripts. An additional 1,000 radio stations across the country received CDs featuring a set of nine pre-recorded public service announcements. Recorded in a friendly style with upbeat music, the CDs were targeted to country, adult contemporary and news/talk stations known to use pre-recorded PSAs.

In addition to FCIC's activities to inform the public through print and broadcast media outlets, it continues to utilize a variety of direct mail offers to reach other segments of the public. During fiscal year 2000, FCIC repeated annual projects in cooperation with the IRS and the Treasury Department to distribute more than 10 million promotional inserts to citizens who either requested supplemental tax

information forms and instructions or who received tax refund checks. As a direct result of these efforts, citizens requested and received nearly 1.15 million consumer publications. In fiscal year 2001, FCIC will work with the IRS to send out one million copies of the **Consumer Information Catalog** and to repeat the tax refund check project.

National Contact Center

The National Contact Center (NCC), operated under contract by Aspen Systems Corporation (Aspen) in Indianapolis, Indiana, has two main functions for the FCIC: responding to telephone inquiries about Federal programs, benefits, and services, and processing telephone requests for consumer publications. Specially selected and trained staff field the calls from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Aspen was selected in a competitive procurement completed in fiscal year 2000 and replaced Biospherics Incorporated, which maintained its call center in Cumberland, Maryland. The FCIC is working with Aspen to implement the various new features of the contract and to assure that the quality of existing services is retained.

For a third of a century, Americans have been contacting the Federal Information Center, now known as the FCIC's National Contact Center, to get answers to their questions about their government. Initially, the telephone service was available only via local telephone numbers in key metropolitan areas. But for the past 10 years, the NCC has responded to public inquiries via a nationwide toll-free telephone number, **1(800)688-9889**. The number is listed in 400 telephone directories around the country, serving the majority of the American public. The NCC responds to nearly 8,500 general information requests every day, either providing the information or locating the source of assistance for the caller. Recorded information on frequently requested subjects is available around the

clock. In fiscal year 2000, the average length of a call was 4.2 minutes and the average cost to the government was \$1.07.

The fundamental goal of the NCC is to simplify access to Federal Government and Government-related information by serving as a single, initial point of contact for telephone callers. While fulfilling that goal, the NCC also serves the American public by working with other agencies and programs to respond to public inquiries. These additional toll-free hotlines are described below:

- The President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion and the Federal Trade Commission used the NCC to provide current and accurate information to the public on the "Y2K Bug" and related topics through January 2000.
- NCC operated the "Home Heating Oil Hotline" from February through April 2000 in partnership with the Department of Energy to disseminate information from the Secretary of Energy, to distribute printed materials via the Pueblo facility, and to refer callers to sources of financial assistance.
- NCC operated a "My History" hotline from November 1999 to September 2000 in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities to take orders for the "My History" guidebook, which provides ways for families to preserve memories, stories, photographs, heirlooms, and more.
- In October 2000, NCC began staffing a separate toll-free telephone number, 1-866-firstgov (866-347-7846), to respond to follow-up inquiries to FirstGov.gov.

The NCC continued its agreements with various Federal agencies to facilitate the public's access to Government information. The NCC fulfills requests from the public for copyright forms, distributes US Marshals Service information on how to obtain surplus property, and assists the Department of State with requests for the

authentication of documents, and the Office of Personnel Management with the reporting of deaths of annuitants.

The NCC provides one of the principal methods for the public to obtain printed information from the FCIC, a method used for over 40% of the requests during the year. They simply call the toll-free number, **1 (888) 8 PUEBLO**, and provide any needed credit card information; their order is then transmitted electronically to the Pueblo, CO distribution facility for fulfillment. All FCIC Catalogs and promotions now include the toll-free telephone number for consumers to order publications. In fiscal year 2000, the average length of a publication order call was 1.9 minutes and the average cost to the government was 57¢.

The NCC responded to more than 2.7 million calls during fiscal year 2000, 2.1 million of which related to questions about Federal programs, and 607,000 of which were publication orders.

Web Sites

In fiscal year 2000, FCIC redesigned its primary web site www.pueblo.gsa.gov. The revised design debuted in January 2000, and includes a wider range of information resources with weekly special features on consumer issues and publications, a completely revised online version of the **Consumer Action Handbook**, and an improved navigational interface. FCIC included detailed privacy and security statements, and is well along toward meeting the Section 508 accessibility requirements. The web site still offers the convenience of online order processing and FCIC now has two e-mail subscription lists to provide the public and the media with up-to-the-minute information about FCIC and newly available publications.

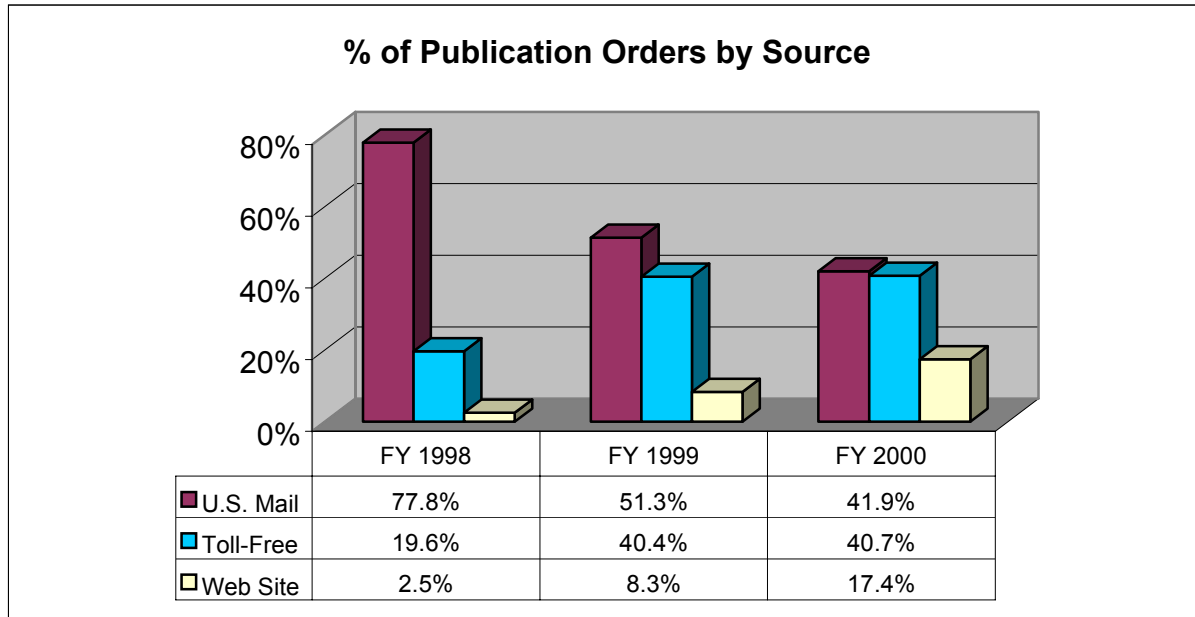
As a result of the January 2000 consolidation of the FIC and CIC programs, FCIC assumed overall content responsibility for the former FIC web site and for the

info.gov domain. This web domain contains a variety of resources to help the public, businesses, and international users find answers and additional resources within the Federal government.

FCIC has redesigned www.info.gov by expanding its portal web page to U.S. Government web sites for kids. FCIC also retained and updated the existing links to a comprehensive list of Federal web sites, all Federal telephone directories, and Federal toll-free telephone directory listings. Additional resources are being added, such as the new listing of Federal agency press release web sites. The new www.info.gov site appeared in November 2000, and usage has been strong.

The web site www.info.gov also features answers to the most frequently asked questions of the NCC staff. During fiscal year 2001, FCIC will work with Aspen to make available online the NCC's entire database. The NCC database contains 20,000 subject areas and 120,000 points of contact in the Federal Government and in other levels of government nationwide, and is used by the telephone specialists to research and retrieve information for the public. Soon, the public will be able to query the database to get immediate round-the-clock answers to their questions relating to the Federal government.

During fiscal year 2000, total FCIC page views reached 14.1 million. Web page views at the www.pueblo.gsa.gov site increased by 42% from 9.5 million in 1999 to 13.5 million. The web site also accounted for 17.4% of FCIC publication orders in fiscal year 2000. This is up significantly from the 8.3% experienced in fiscal year 1999.



Pueblo Distribution Facility

Approximately 43 full-time GPO employees in Pueblo, Colorado, serve FCIC and the public by responding in a timely and efficient fashion to requests for millions of publications annually. FCIC's challenge remains to continue providing cost-effective distribution services while requests for printed publications are declining and postal rates and GPO costs are increasing. These factors will inevitably lead to rising unit costs for customer agencies. Since more than 95% of the current workload in Pueblo is generated by FCIC, close cooperation is required between FCIC and GPO to manage overhead costs and to identify and implement creative management practices and innovative technological advances. In March 2000, the Government Printing Office released the results of a study outlining its plans for future utilization of the Pueblo Distribution facility conducted at the request of the House Legislative Appropriations Subcommittee. In the report, GPO says, "Changes in technology, government publishing, and customer habits have had a negative impact on the amount of work processed through the PuDDC (Pueblo Documents Distribution Center). It is likely that the workload for present programs

will continue to decline over time." GPO plans to seek more business from other Federal agencies to help cover some of the costs of maintaining the facility. Pueblo is currently doing some bulk forms distribution work for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. FCIC continues to support GPO efforts to find additional non-FCIC work for the facility with the goal of reducing FCIC's portion of the overall cost.

CONCLUSION

The Federal Consumer Information Center's requested appropriation for fiscal year 2002 totals \$7,276,000, an increase of \$170,000 as compared to fiscal year 2001. The request will enable FCIC to continue to perform at existing program levels, which include operating a nationwide toll-free telephone system for responding to inquiries concerning information about the Federal Government, as well as producing and distributing the **Consumer Information Catalog** and the **Consumer Action Handbook**. These Federal publications have proven to be two of the most popular Federal consumer documents ever published. During fiscal year 2002, FCIC will also expand its online information program and continue to encourage the printing of adequate numbers of publications for consumers who rely on information in print format.

In recent years, FCIC programs have evolved to meet the public's changing information needs. In a complex and fast-paced economy, consumers want and expect information that is immediately available and targeted to their individual concerns. FCIC has met that need and successfully brought together a vast amount of information that can be easily searched and accessed in a variety of ways. By the end of fiscal year 2000, FCIC had distributed 7.2 million publications, responded to 2.7 million telephone inquiries, and provided online information through 14.1 million page accesses.

During fiscal year 2002, FCIC will continue to focus on serving the information needs of the American public. In this new century, FCIC's success will be measured by the quality and usefulness of the Federal information it makes available to citizens, by how easily citizens use its services and, ultimately, by how these services improve their daily lives. As it has for 30 years, FCIC will deliver services that play an important role in maintaining a healthy consumer economy and provide a vital communications bridge between citizens and their government.