

# PovNet Update

By Nancy Hannum (semi-retired librarian).

Many librarians know PovNet as an active searchable web site which includes current information about welfare, housing, homelessness, human rights and related legal issues such as landlord-tenant, employment insurance, pensions and disabilities in British Columbia. <http://www.povnet.org>.

## More than a web site

In addition PovNet maintains email lists for community based advocates in BC; these lists form the heart of a communications network for advocates. PovNet's online school (PovNet U) runs courses such as introduction to advocacy, residential tenancy law, disability law and is planning several future courses for training and updating community advocates.

This year PovNet's Executive Coordinator Penny Goldsmith has been awarded the first Carold Institute fellowship to document the history of PovNet and create a casebook of resources for other

communities who want to integrate online tools for information sharing and social justice networking.

## PovNet and BCLA

PovNet was conceived in 1997 and was a cooperative initiative of several community organizations as well as representatives of SPARC BC, Legal Services Society, MOSAIC, BCTF and BCLA. BCLA was invited to join the PovNet board to ensure that the resources are available and useful to BC libraries and library users. I have been the BCLA representative on the PovNet Board for 10 years. During that time, PovNet has participated in several BCLA conference workshops and for several years had a booth at the conference and distributed many a bookmark to public libraries.

*Nancy Hannum is the former head of the Legal Resource Centre and currently represents BCLA on the PovNet Board of Directors.*