

# A Town-Gown Government Collection: The Challenges and Benefits of a University-Public Library Selective Housing Agreement

Katie Yelinek, Andrus Library, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania

## What

GPO defines a selective housing agreement (SHA) as an arrangement where a federal depository library houses some depository material at another institution.

## Who

Andrus Library (#0514A) at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania is a selective (~20%), with an emphasis on education, geological, and historical publications. The Bloomsburg Public Library (BPL) serves residents from the rural, northeastern PA town of Bloomsburg and surrounding areas.

## Why

The items selected for the SHA had never been checked out, and it was hoped they would receive more use in a public library. As the current BPL director Lydia Kegler explains, a certain portion of the public identifies libraries as public libraries. They don't think of or don't feel comfortable visiting a university library. Having depository material at a local public library provides information to patrons in a place they feel comfortable. Having print materials is important since a portion of public library patrons don't have email.

## How

1. In academic year 2014/2015, the FDLP Coordinator Katie Yelinek and BPL director Hal Pratt selected 135 documents to send to the public library.
2. Andrus Library created a new location in its ILS (Alma) for "Bloomsburg Public Library." All SHA documents were given this temporary location and suppressed from discovery.
3. Andrus Library ran a report with titles, authors, call numbers, and OCLC (035) numbers of the SHA material to assist the BPL in copy cataloging. Cataloging the material took some time, complicated by a change in the BPL directorship.
4. Once the documents were in their catalog, BPL put them on the shelves. This took place in 2018.
5. For as long as the SHA remains, the FDLP Coordinator will check in with the BPL once a year.

## Pictures



The Andrus Library Documents Collection, tucked up on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.



At BPL, the SHA material is accessible in the nonfiction section on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

## Lessons Learned

### Challenges:

1. Andrus Library has a dedicated cataloging librarian. The BPL does not, which made cataloging the SHA material difficult.
2. Out of concern for theft, BPL initially housed the documents in a rarely used room. This was revised to place the documents in a more accessible but less secure location.
3. As the number of print documents declines, there are fewer chances to update the SHA materials.

### Benefits:

1. The SHA built new relationships between the two libraries.
2. Some patrons will visit a public library but not an academic library. After not circulating at all, two SHA documents circulated since 2018, despite lengthy COVID closures.
3. Choosing the SHA materials meant reconsidering the selection profile for both scholarly and popular materials.

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