

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

Are you a depository coordinator at an academic library looking to work more with your community patrons? Hi, I'm Katie Yelinek, federal depository library coordinator at Andrus Library at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. While the documents in my collection have a moderate circulation rate, they are used mostly by faculty and students. The community patrons who visit our library rarely use the materials in our documents collection. At the same time, I noticed some documents in the collection are more popular than scholarly in nature, such as materials relating to citizenship, public health, and travel. I struggled with how to get our community patrons connected with these types of resources. Then it occurred to me that I could house some of my depository materials at the Bloomsburg Public Library through a selective housing agreement. A selective housing agreement, as defined by GPO, is when a federal depository library houses some of its materials at another institution.

So in academic year 2014/2015, I contacted the then-director of the Bloomsburg Public Library, Hal Pratt, to see if he'd be interested in some of the depository material here. He was, and we worked out an agreement where I sent 135 documents to the public library. After some difficulty getting records for the material into the public library's catalog, and after a change in the directorship at the Bloomsburg Public Library, those documents went on the shelf in 2018.

While circulation rates for the documents still remain low – two documents circulated before the public library had to close for extended amounts of time due to COVID– I am still pleased that the documents are getting any circulation at all, and I am pleased that they are available in a location where patrons can use them in the library even if they are not being checked out. As the current director of the Bloomsburg Public Library, Lydia Kegler, points out, there is a certain portion of the public that identifies a library as a public library. These people aren't familiar with or don't feel comfortable coming into an academic library. Having depository materials at a public library allows this information to be available in a place where these patrons feel comfortable. And having printed material is especially important since there is still a portion of public library patrons who don't have email.

So if you are at an academic library and looking to extend your reach into the surrounding community, perhaps a selective housing agreement would be right for you too. Thank you.