

# Depository Library Council

*Advisory body to the Director of the U.S. Government Publishing Office*

November 18, 2020

Hugh Nathaniel Halpern, Director  
U.S. Government Publishing Office  
732 North Capitol Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20401

Dear Director Halpern,

As Chair of the Depository Library Council, I am pleased to transmit to you the final report, *Depository Libraries in a COVID-19 Pandemic Environment: Lessons Learned from Depository Library Council's Open Forums, April 22 and July 27, 2020*.

This report builds upon the lessons learned in the open forums earlier this year, transmitted in the previous report, *Depository Libraries in a Time of Stay-at-Home Orders – Report of Depository Library Council's Open Forum, April 22, 2020*. Following this report, Council also recommended that the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) convene a meeting during summer 2020 that would include a panel to discuss library reopening planning, and an open forum to allow attendees an opportunity to share what is happening in their libraries. This resulted in the open forum and panel, *Planning for Reopening: FDLP Libraries Recovering from the COVID-19 Pandemic*, which occurred on July 27, 2020. The focus of this newest report is to build on the knowledge gleaned from the April open forum to identify the overarching themes, issues, and concerns that continue to plague the depository community as the pandemic continues. This will better inform Council and GPO about what depository libraries and staff need for support in this trying time and.

The July open forum hosted approximately 250 attendees who provided comments as prompted by overarching questions related to the COVID-19 situation. Between the July and April open forums, the working group organized the comments into five categories: Public Services, Technical Services, Communication, Wellbeing and Equilibrium, and the Government Publishing Office. Across these themes, some consistent messages emerged. One is the clear desire for depository libraries to meet the needs of the public where they are and in ways that are most meaningful and relevant, especially as times continue to change. A second is that depository library staff themselves are resilient in finding new ways to adapt while also maintaining a high level of service. Staff are finding new ways to particularly utilize technology and digital platforms to fill these service and access gaps. Finally, we are seeing depository libraries look to GPO more than ever for guidance and support as they navigate through new and uncertain waters. You will see these themes embodied in the three recommendations put forth by the working group, which were approved by Council and included in our overall recommendations.

Moving forward, Council hopes to collaborate with GPO in planning additional open forums as the pandemic and this uncertain environment continues. These open forums are invaluable for keeping the Council aware of the various situations and concerns facing depository libraries during this time of fluidity and to keep GPO apprised of the needs of these libraries so that they can continue to support and guide them.

I want to acknowledge the amazing effort and work of the Council's Digital Only Depository Libraries Working Group in pulling together this report. Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding this report, please don't hesitate to contact me or Yvonne D. Williams, Chair of the Digital Only Depository Libraries Working Group.

Sincerely,

*Alicia Kubas*

ALICIA KUBAS  
Chair, Depository Library Council

Cc: Laurie B. Hall, Superintendent of Documents  
Cc: Will Stringfellow, incoming Chair of the Depository Library Council