



# FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM COVID-19 SUPPORT SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

*March 2021*

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## **Background**

At the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) and the Depository Library Council (DLC) began planning and developing various support services for Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) libraries. The timeline that follows lists activities developed in direct response to the pandemic.

## **Timeline**

### March 2020

- GPO temporarily suspended and held FDLP shipments in the wake of library closures and committed to do so until libraries began to reopen.
- GPO began offering educational webinars and webcasts [focused on the pandemic](#) through its FDLP Academy. These webinars have continued throughout the year.
- GPO began featuring COVID-19 information resources on the FDLP.gov homepage.
- GPO developed a new [govinfo page](#) for legislative, Presidential, and regulatory documents related to COVID-19.

### April 2020

- GPO and the DLC hosted the Open Forum, “Depository Libraries in a Time of Stay-at-Home Orders.” This was an opportunity for the FDLP community to discuss:
  - New and creative ways of offering patron services in a remote environment.

- The impact of workplace access restrictions on non-public service workflows.
- The effects of COVID-19 on communication with patrons, coworkers, and supervisors.
- Maintaining calm and coping with social isolation.
- The ways in which GPO can support FDLP libraries and their work.
- GPO developed the [FDLP COVID-19 Toolkit](#) with access to information on FDLP operations, reliable Government information resources for patrons, infographics, and downloadable images for library websites. The Toolkit has been updated and maintained since the start of the pandemic.
- GPO featured FDLP libraries via social media for National Library Week, focusing on how library staff continued services during closures and the creative ways library staff developed outreach to patrons.
- GPO began compiling and featuring FDLP LibGuides [related to the pandemic](#).

#### May 2020

- The Superintendent of Documents sent correspondence to all FDLP libraries addressing questions concerning access to Government resources as libraries reopened.
- The DLC transmitted, “Depository Libraries in a Time of Stay-at-Home Orders — Report of Depository Library Council’s Open Forum, April 22, 2020 (May 29, 2020)” to Director Halpern, which was also posted to the DLC web page on FDLP.gov.

#### June 2020

- GPO distributed the publication, “[Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#),” and also offered it to FDLP libraries as a Special Selection Offer.
- GPO developed a guidance document for Federal depository library staff on the safe handling of library materials, including disinfection and quarantine. This document has been updated numerous times as new research becomes available.
- GPO developed a notification form for FDLP libraries to alert GPO when shipments may resume. Throughout the following months, GPO staff monitored the form and conducted outreach to non-responsive libraries.

#### July 2020

- GPO resumed shipments of U.S. Government publications for the libraries that indicated they were open and ready to receive them.
- GPO made available FDLP face masks and a variety of library signage, free to FDLP libraries. This signage focused on coronavirus prevention measures such as social distancing, recommended room capacity, rules for mask wearing, and caution when using library materials.

- GPO featured FDLP librarians and staff via social media as they returned to work to serve patrons nationwide.
- GPO and the DLC hosted the Open Forum, “Planning for Reopening: FDLP Libraries Recovering from the COVID-19 Pandemic.” This was an opportunity for the FDLP community to discuss:
  - Reopening challenges.
  - Staffing challenges.
  - New health and safety measures.
  - New services or resources libraries would like to see from GPO to assist with the new challenges.

#### October 2020

- GPO hosted the fall 2020 Federal Depository Library Conference virtually and presented numerous pandemic-related programs.
- The DLC presented the conference session, “Uncharted Waters: Lessons Learned by Depository Libraries during the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

#### November 2020

- The DLC presented a report to GPO and the FDLP community, “Depository Libraries in a COVID-19 Pandemic Environment: Lessons Learned from the Depository Library Council’s Open Forums, April 22 and July 27, 2020.” The report was also published on the DLC web page on [FDLP.gov](https://www.fdlp.gov).

#### February 2021

- GPO’s Distribution Facility reorganized the backlog of FDLP shipments that were held at the facility, some since March 2020. This was undertaken to expedite the shipping of materials to libraries that indicated they were open and could receive them. Within a week of the start, approximately 1,000 shipments were processed.
- GPO launched a survey on COVID-19 disruptions in libraries to identify challenges and training needs.

#### March 2021

- GPO undertook a massive outreach effort to individually contact each FDLP library coordinator who hadn’t yet indicated their ability to resume shipments and determine how GPO could assist with the process.
- GPO announced a new initiative to host a “COVID-19 Repository” to help FDLP libraries share best practices and lessons learned during the pandemic. GPO’s FDLP Academy is also recruiting speakers for webinars focused on lessons learned.

- GPO announced a webinar to take place in April entitled, “FDLP COVID Support Services,” which will outline the various services and resources available to FDLP libraries from GPO.
- The DLC announced a follow-up Open Forum related to the COVID-19 pandemic, “COVID-19 a Year Later: Returning to Normal? or an Emerging New Normal?” to be held during the spring 2021 Depository Library Council Virtual Meeting.
- The Superintendent of Documents sent a letter to all Library Directors commending the work on FDLP coordinators and staff throughout the pandemic.