

Preservation Steward Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Preservation Steward?

Preservation Stewards are partners that commit to retain and preserve specified tangible publications of the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information for the length of the partnership agreement. This includes both preventive maintenance and conservation treatments. Preservation Stewards may be for legacy publications, or for new publications that a library is currently selecting and upon receipt will continue to hold for the duration of the agreement.

2. Who can serve as a Preservation Steward?

Both regional selective Federal depository libraries are able to serve as Preservation Stewards. GPO also welcomes the opportunity for discussions and partnerships with interested parties from beyond the FDLP.

3. What are the obligations of a Preservation Steward?

As a Preservation Steward, a library agrees to:

- Provide GPO with an item level inventory of the title(s) they are preserving, including the condition of the item, which should be good or better for historic titles. Or confirm receipt of material via a list sent by LSCM staff on a periodic basis for day forward titles.
- Ensure the item(s) are cataloged. This can be a minimal level record.
- Identify the item(s) as preservation copies by adding a note to the catalog record and by stamping the items with a Preservation Copy stamp provided by GPO (optional).
- Include the item(s) within the scope of library's collection care programs if the library has preservation or collection care programs.
- Notify GPO immediately if the condition of any of the titles changes due to user damage or a disaster, and if there are location changes for any of the titles.
- Complete a collection questionnaire at least every 3 years.

4. A Preservation Steward in each [National Collection Service Area \(NCSA\)](#) is one requirement that must be met in order for the Superintendent of Documents to authorize either the [Regional Discard Policy](#) or the [Regional Online Selections Policy](#) for a specific title in an NCSA. Will the GPO allow more than four Preservation Stewards per title?

Yes, GPO will allow more than four Preservation Stewards per title. Redundancy is good! As stated in the question above, there must be a Preservation Steward in that NCSA for the Superintendent of Documents to authorize regionals to discard publications or select online as a format in lieu of print, but that is not the primary purpose of the Preservation Steward program, and we welcome all libraries to serve as Preservation Stewards for any titles or SuDoc classes that fit their collection management goals.

5. Do preservation copies of record have to be volumes distributed through the FLDP?

Publications within [scope](#) of the Superintendent of Documents Public Information Programs are eligible to be preservation copies of record. Therefore, unreported documents though not distributed through the FDLP, can be preservation copies of record. However, if the publication is a reproduction, there are additional considerations. If it is a GPO-printed copy purchased through GPO's U.S. Government Bookstore or a print-on-demand copy made from a digital copy that was created from a GPO printed original, it would be acceptable, as would publications produced under contract with a Federal agency and paid for with Federal funds. Commercial reproductions cannot be preservation copies of record.

6. My library has publications that will be retained and for which we would like to serve as a Preservation Steward, but there are no digital versions on GPO's govinfo. Can my library still be a Preservation Steward?

Yes, your library can still be a Preservation Steward! Content being on **govinfo** is not a requirement or condition for becoming a Preservation Steward. If a regional or selective depository library, Federal agency library, has tangible publications for which they would like to be a Preservation Steward, the library should contact the partnership through [askGPO](#), select the Partnership (including digitization initiatives) category. By taking on the role of storing and preserving physical copies of Government publications, Preservation Stewards become GPO partners.

7. As time passes and there is staff turnover in depository libraries, how can we be assured that succession planning in these libraries includes awareness of obligations such as those that will come with being a Preservation Steward?

Cataloging records will have a retention note and the piece will have a stamp that indicates not to withdraw. Additionally, GPO always reaches out to new depository coordinators. Obligations that come from formal agreements and partnerships, such

as Preservation Steward agreements, will be included in GPO briefings or trainings for the coordinators, and institutional administrators can be included in those briefings.

8. Are depository libraries required to become Preservation Stewards or must we become one to be a depository library?

Depository libraries, whether they are regionals or selectives, are not required to be Preservation Stewards. Participation is voluntary and totally the library's choice to make.

9. Is there a binding agreement for Preservation Stewards?

Yes. GPO developed a template for a [Memorandum of Agreement \(MOA\)](#) that the library will enter into with GPO that, among other things, delineates obligations of Preservation Stewards.

10. What if my library wants to be a Preservation Steward, but doesn't like, or cannot do, something in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) template?

If a library wants to be a Preservation Steward but has objections to something contained in the MOA, GPO will work with the library to try to reach an agreement that is acceptable to both parties.

11. If a library enters into a Memorandum of Agreement, is it forever? What if the library's circumstances change?

The MOA will be reviewed every three years for continuation. Additionally, there is a provision that allows for the termination of the agreement by either party with prior notice.

12. Is the library required to make any material in the Preservation Steward collection non-circulating and house it in closed stacks?

No, the appropriate housing and circulation status of the material is determined by the library. Some Preservation Steward collections are housed in off-site storage or closed and are a limited to in-library use only, while others are housed in open stacks and circulate.

13. If a regional is a Preservation Steward and they choose to make the materials non-circulating, will they need to make sure there is another tangible circulating copy in the region they serve?

No, the regional does not have to make that assurance. The stipulation of the Joint Committee on Printing is to have four tangible copies throughout the FDLP, or one copy in each National Collection Service Area (NCSA). The tangible copy that is non-circulating can be used within the library or the regional can send a copy of the digital file through ILL.

14. In the draft MOA it states, “Have guarantees in place for replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged materials.” Can you please explain what this means, specifically in regards to ILL services?

If copies circulate and are used for ILL, the risk of wear, tear, damage, and potential loss increases. For this reason the stipulation, “Have guarantees in place for replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged materials” was included in the Memorandum of Agreement.

There are several options that will provide that guarantee, for example:

- Have a second copy for access and circulation.
- Use the digital copy for access and ILL a copy of the digital file version.
- Make a tangible facsimile from the digital version.
- Have an agreement with a selective to provide a replacement copy from that library’s collection if needed.

15. What incentives are there for becoming a Preservation Steward?

The Joint Committee on Printing has stated that GPO has the responsibility to ensure at least four copies of tangible materials are preserved across the four National Collection Services Areas of the FDLP. These print publications are a key component of the [National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information](#), and the FDLP collections held by Federal depository libraries constitute the tangible portion of that National Collection. GPO committed to providing services to support those collections. For example, GPO covers postage for shipping materials to Preservation Stewards from other depository libraries. Other support services GPO is considering are: assisting with cataloging, inventories, condition assessments, and contracting for conservation services.