

Did You Know? The Top 20 Largest Libraries in the United States are GPO Federal Depository Libraries

The U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) is one of the largest publishers in the world, and every day congressional bills, hearings, laws, regulations, presidential documents, and other collections from the three branches of the Federal Government are disseminated to the public on GPO's GovInfo and through the nation's libraries. To ensure the American public has access to its Government's information, Congress established the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) in 1813 under the administration of Department of the Interior. The Printing Act of 1895 transferred the administration of the FDLP to the GPO where it has remains today. Since 1895, the number of Federal Depository Libraries (FDLs) has grown significantly from 420 to almost 1,100 depository libraries located in 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Federated States of Micronesia, and U.S. territories.

The FDLs help GPO fulfill our mission to provide free, ready, and permanent public access to Federal Government information, now and for future generations. The GPO distributes Government information free of cost to these libraries, and they guarantee free access to this information for all users. FDLs contribute significantly to the diversity of information sources available to the public. Some FDLs receive everything distributed by GPO while others select to receive materials that meet the needs of the community they serve. In addition, information specialists are available at these libraries to assist researchers with locating Federal information.

The size of FDLs, and the libraries in which they reside, can be determined by many metrics, which include the number of volumes held by the library, the circulation of library materials, and the number of people visiting the library. According to the World Atlas, the following are the twenty largest public and academic libraries in the United States, which are all members of the FDLP.



Ranked #1: Main Reading Room, Library of Congress - Washington, DC.



Ranked #4: The main reading room of the New York Public Library in Manhattan, New York City.

The 20 Largest Libraries in The United States

Rank	Name of Library (Year Joined FDLP)	Volumes Held
1	Library of Congress (1977)	34,528,818
2	Boston Public Library (1859)	19,090,261
3	Harvard University Library (1860)	16,832,952
4	New York Public Library (1884)	16,342,365
5	University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign Library (1907)	13,158,748
6	Yale University Library (1859)	12,787,962
7	University of California - Berkeley Library (1884)	11,545,418
8	Columbia University Library (1882)	11,189,036
9	University of Michigan Library (1884)	10,778,736
10	University of Texas - Austin Library (1884)	9,990,941
11	University of Chicago (1897)	9,837,021
12	University of California - Los Angeles (1932)	9,151,964
13	Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County (1884)	8,819,759
14	Indiana University (1881)	8,677,974
15	Stanford University (1895)	8,500,000
16	University of Wisconsin - Madison (1939)	8,421,198
17	Cornell University (1907)	8,173,778
18	Princeton University (1884)	7,226,744
19	University of Washington (1890)	7,203,156
20	University of Minnesota (1907)	7,111,311



Ranked #9: University of Michigan Law School Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



Ranked #13: The Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County.

