The Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) at a Glance

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Authority of the U.S. Depository Library Program

Chapter 19 of Title 44 (§§1901-1916) of the United States Code sets forth the parameters of the program. The Superintendent of Documents is charged to uphold the laws of the U.S. Depository Library Program (FDLP) (§1909).

Public Access and Location of Depository Libraries

Free, public access is essential to the FDLP. Anyone can walk into a Federal depository library (FDL), find Government information, and get reference help either in-person or online. FDLP libraries are located nationwide in areas where they can best serve the public need.

Custody and Service for Depository Information

Depository libraries need to catalog, process, properly house, and ensure that their users can find digital and tangible Government information. If you are receiving tangible publications, this is official government property and must be retained for 5 years. Regional depositories must retain tangible material permanently.

Publicize Your Federal Depository

Library users need to know they can find Government information at your library. Put the FDLP logo on your entrance and webpage, and publicize your depository collection and services through signage, regular communication, exhibits, and events.

Have Knowledgeable and Sufficient Staff

Depository libraries must have staff who can provide in-person or online reference and technical services for Government information.

Report on Conditions of Your Depository

Whenever U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) checks in with a depository library through surveys, direct correspondence, visits, or any other method, the library must work with GPO. Understanding and evaluating the conditions in depositories helps GPO and libraries refine services and develop best practices to meet current needs.

Regional and Selective Libraries

Every depository library is either a regional or a selective.

► **Regional libraries must:**

- Receive and retain what is distributed through the FDLP permanently (with some exceptions).
- Provide interlibrary loan, reference service, and assistance for selectives in their region.
- Direct and establish the discard process for the selectives in their region.

► **Selective libraries that are served by a regional depository must:**

- Work with their regionals to develop, maintain, and weed collections.

► **Selective libraries that are not served by a regional depository must:**

- Work with GPO to develop and maintain collections.

Participate and Communicate with GPO and Other Libraries in the Program

One of the great strengths and benefits of the FDLP is the network of peers and experts. Communication among FDLs and GPO is critical to the success of the program.

Special Requirements

Federal agency and highest state appellate court depository libraries follow some different procedures or are exempt from certain requirements. These exceptions are detailed in §1915 and §1917.
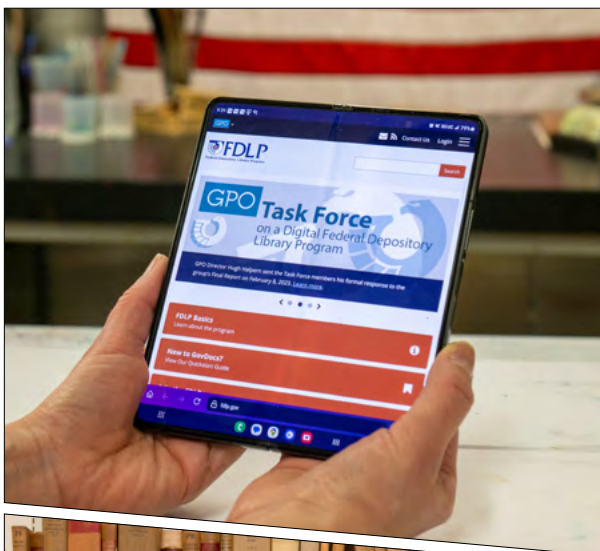
Best Practices

In addition to complying with the minimum requirements to participate in the FDLP, the following are some best practices:

► **Enhance visibility of depository materials.**
  ▪ On-site: use signs, create exhibits, or host events showcasing Government documents.
  ▪ Online: have easy-to-find and current information about the FDLP on main library web pages; create research guides on Government resources.

► **Increase findability.**
  ▪ Provide access to key government resources in your discovery tools.
  ▪ Add PURLs to research guides.

► **Meet user needs with your collection and services.**
  ▪ Tailor your resources and services to the needs of your local community and your institution.
  ▪ Review or update collection development plans.
  ▪ Inventory electronic records of FDL materials.

► **Practice good customer service, providing clear and consistent patron policies and messages.**

► **Network with depositories to collaborate with local and national peers.**
  ▪ Attend FDL conferences and FDLP Academy sessions.
  ▪ Participate in activities with your regional depository and in your National Collection Service Area.

► **Have general knowledge of the U.S. Government to assist users effectively.**
  ▪ Learn about the general structure of the U.S. Government.
  ▪ Determine what publications and data produced by different agencies and bureaus are relevant for your users.
  ▪ Be able to articulate the purpose and importance of the FDLP.
  ▪ Visit FDLP Academy for free educational webinars and webcasts on U.S. Government information resources: https://www.fdlp.gov/about/fdlp-academy

► **Know how to find contacts at GPO, agencies, or other FDLP libraries when you need help.**

Contact Us

askGPO:
https://ask.gpo.gov/s/

Federal Depository Library Directory:
https://ask.gpo.gov/s/FDLD

More Information on the FDLP

Join the FDLP:
https://www.fdlp.gov/join-the-fdlp

FDLP Testimonials:
https://www.fdlp.gov/about/the-essential-fdlp

FDLP Website:
https://fdlp.gov/

FDLP News and Alerts:
https://www.fdlp.gov/news

FDLP Promotional Materials:
https://www.fdlp.gov/promotion

National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information:
https://www.fdlp.gov/about-the-fdlp/the-national-collection

Legal Requirements and Program Regulations:
https://www.fdlp.gov/requirements-and-guidance/regulations

FDLP Guidance:
https://www.fdlp.gov/guidance