

Executive Summary: 2013 Biennial Survey of Federal Depository Libraries

The Biennial Survey is required by law under 44 USC §1909. The survey gathers information from Federal depository libraries on conditions in their libraries. The 2013 [Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries](#) was sent to the 1,195 libraries participating in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) in June 2013. The survey was posted on [FDLP.gov](#) from June 14, 2013 through August 16, 2013. In all, 1,177 libraries responded to the survey. The summary results gathered via the Biennial Survey are available on the [FDLP.gov Web site](#).

The 2013 survey consisted of 36 questions, including multiple choice and open-ended questions. Six questions from the 2011 survey were eliminated, and nine new or modified questions were added. Some questions were slightly modified or changed from open-ended to multiple choice and vice versa. That affects the ability to make absolute comparisons from year to year while still providing longitudinal information.

For the most part, responses to the 2013 Biennial Survey closely parallel the 2011 Survey responses.

- 1,072 of the libraries (91%) reported in both surveys that they planned to remain in the FDLP.
- In 2013, 88 libraries (8%) were not sure if they would remain in the FDLP compared to 92 libraries (8%) in 2011.
- In both 2011 and 2013, 17 libraries indicated they did not intend to remain in the FDLP.
- The number of regional libraries planning to change their designation from regional to selective status decreased, from 7 out of 47 in 2011 to 5 out of 47 in 2013.
- In both 2011 and 2013, the number of libraries with less than 10,000 non-government volumes remained the same, 48 libraries (4%).
- In 2013, 1,053 libraries (89%) indicated they have adequate staff to fulfill basic depository responsibilities. This number is consistent with 89% of respondents indicating they had adequate staff in the 2011 survey. The number of designated coordinators is also consistent. In 2013, 1,135 libraries (96%) reported they have designated depository coordinators. In 2011, 1,146 libraries (97%) had designated depository coordinators.
- 97% of libraries reported that members of the general public can access and use Federal Government information resources in their libraries in all formats. In addition, they provide reference services to the general public free of charge. Only 1% responded negatively. Two percent (2%) of the libraries were unsure if the general public had full access and use of Federal Government information resources. These numbers are consistent with the 2011 survey results, with 98% reporting they allow general public full access and 1% indicating they do not or did not know.

- The location of the collections also remained consistent. Most libraries house materials in a separate collection, with some titles located in the reference or main collections. There was a slight decrease in the number of free standing, separate collections: 859 libraries in 2013 and 887 libraries in 2011.

However, some changes were evident, especially related to technology and physical facilities. The questions capturing these statistics were changed, indicating a trend, while not definitive.

- The ability to access depository microfiche was reduced. Forty-seven libraries indicated they had no microfiche capability, up from 16 libraries in 2011. This number may be higher in 2013 because the question did not include the “Don’t Select” microfiche option in the 2011 survey. (That option was selected by 74 libraries in 2011.) The trend is not clear, however, because 642 libraries reported they provided access to microfiche readers with scanning capabilities. This number is up from the 612 libraries reporting that capability in 2011.
- Access to tangible electronic publications went down slightly. 45 libraries reported no capability to provide access to these resources, compared to 29 libraries in 2011. However, the “Don’t Select” option offered and reported by 69 libraries in 2011 was not available on the 2013 survey. One new option for 2013, mediated access, was reported by 147 libraries. Another significant change for tangible electronics was the decrease in access to resources through local networks or Web sites. Seventy-two libraries reported they provide access to electronic resources through local networks or Web sites. In 2011, 129 libraries indicated they provided this option.
- Staff training through webinars increased significantly. 1,043 libraries reported they took advantage of GPO-provided training and webinars for library staff, compared to 662 in 2011. 785 libraries reported use of online, self-paced training, up from 603 in 2011. The questions and options for responding changed from 2011 to 2013. However, when libraries were asked to identify training formats in general rather than GPO-provided training, responses indicate that online training resources continue to increase.

Libraries were asked to identify the biggest issues facing their library. While the concerns and the order in which they were identified remained constant, there were some overall changes. 877 libraries indicated budget as the biggest issue for the library, down from 937 libraries in 2011. 645 libraries reported use of physical space, up from 616 libraries in 2011. And 647 libraries reported staffing issues, up from 612 libraries in 2011. One issue remained at essentially the same level in both surveys: access to public computers/connections. In 2013, 51 libraries and in 2011, 50 libraries reported the lack of public computers/connections as an issue.

- 1,141 libraries, or 97%, provide public access to all titles in the FDLP Basic Collection in at least one format. The question was slightly different in 2011. This was an increase from 2011 when 1,092 libraries, or 92%, reported they had all titles in the FDLP Basic Collection in at least one format accessible for immediate use by users.

The 2013 Biennial Survey included new questions about eBooks, preservation, and levels of staff experience.

- 393 libraries (33%) provide access to eBooks but only to their primary patron base. 432 libraries (37%), provide access to eBooks to all patrons, and 352 libraries (30%) do not provide access to eBooks. Of the libraries not currently providing access to eBooks, 188 libraries (81%) do not plan on making eBooks available in the upcoming year.
- 779 libraries (66%) had not conducted a collection survey/assessment that included depository materials.
- In 2011, 874 libraries (74%) included the depository collection in the library's major preservation activities. In 2013, the question was slightly re-worded. 755 libraries (64%) reported having a preservation/conservation program. Of those libraries, 633 (87%) reported that preservation activities were applied to depository materials.
- Recently, a number of events such as floods and storms impacted libraries. Fortunately, 1,125 libraries (96%) responded they had not lost portions of the collection due to natural or man-made disasters.
- A new question for 2013 focused on experience levels for staff in depository operations. 725 libraries reported they have staff with expert experience, 631 have staff with intermediate experience, and 132 reported experience at the beginner level.