

Depository Library Council

Advisory body to the Director of the U.S. Government Publishing Office

December 26, 2024

Hugh Nathaniel Halpern
Director U.S. Government Publishing Office
732 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC 20401

Dear Director Halpern,

On behalf of the Depository Library Council (DLC), I am presenting three recommendations and one commendation approved by Council at our Fall Business Meeting held October 23, 2024.

In addition to those recommendations, Council would like to express our thanks to GPO for responses to previous recommendations, including continuing the COVID-19 questions in the 2025 Biennial Survey, and providing guiding documents for the digital-first Federal Depository Library Program. Council also expresses our thanks for the draft talking points stating the value of the FDL program.

Discussions at the Fall DLC conference and the Business Meeting included how to support new coordinators as well as those who are facing the challenges of a primarily digital FDL. A primary focus was on the loss of the Catalog Records Distribution Program (CRDP) and the ceasing operation of MARCIVE, a private sector company and long-time supporter of depository cataloging and document processing. Many FDL libraries relied on MARCIVE for catalog records.

The formal recommendations from our Business Meeting follow.

Recommendation 1: Develop resources to promote mentorship

- Develop tools needed to connect individuals with subject specialists, such as adding a category in the FDL directory for specialties or mentoring interests.
- Create virtual spaces for discussion such as additional mini-conferences and less formal discussion groups.

Justification:

There is significant interest within the FDL community for resources to facilitate communication among FDL members. The Snacks with Council session on mentors revealed strong interest among attendees for ways to connect with peers. Implementing these recommendations would provide opportunities that are especially helpful for those who are new to the FDL community.

Recommendation 2: Act upon the recommendations related to the work of the Long-Term Impacts of COVID-19 Working Group:

- Monitor the trend of decreasing physical access to depository libraries and update the guidance and requirements regarding public access accordingly, with appropriate flexibilities for the digital FDLP.
- Increase outreach efforts to depository library staff, whose roles and responsibilities are still shifting and evolving, to gain a better understanding of the needs and challenges they are facing. Provide guidance and assurances as appropriate.
- Revisit and update the COVID questions for the upcoming 2025 Biennial Survey to better reflect the current needs and nature of the FDLP in a digital and post-COVID world. Include a question in the 2025 Biennial Survey to determine the causes of decreased physical access to library collections. The Working Group welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with GPO on devising the questions.

Justification:

Upon analyzing the responses to the 2023 Biennial Survey as well as comparing those to the initial 2021 survey results, it is clear that the impact of COVID-19 mitigation policies continues to have a lasting impact on FDLP operations and libraries. The findings from the second iteration of this survey has shown that long-term trends have developed and are continuing to shape the FDLP landscape. Results of the recommendation will inform GPO of potential actions to take or guidance to provide. [Second Report of the Depository Library Council's Working Group on the Long-Term Impacts of COVID-19 on Federal Depository Library Access, Collections, and Services](#) (October 18, 2024)

Recommendation 3: Develop resources to aid FDLs in adjusting to changes in the Program.

1. Create an online space for those who work with government information to engage in ongoing discussions regarding the collection development, ILS, consortia, discovery layers, access, and other issues related to the digital-first FDLP. For example, an authorized platform such as Discord.
2. Develop and solicit from the greater FDL community additional resources and training materials on selected topics such as PURL tracking, GitHub, and uploading records in consortial/shared catalog settings.
 - Explore different types of guidance and training opportunities and expand outreach to highlight existing training materials.
 - Create and broadly disseminate a chart highlighting choices and methods for obtaining digital records.
 - Encourage coordinators to share learning opportunities with general cataloging staff in their libraries, given that a high number of cataloging staff are not dedicated to FDLP materials.
 - Create a resource, such as a LibGuide or wiki, where known issues and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are posted.

3. Review, revise, and share documentation to provide an overview of retention rules for print and online sources.

- Explain that digital publications are not subject to the five-year retention rule and may be withdrawn at any time.
- Acknowledge that depository libraries are not required to add catalog records for digital government publications.
- Update the Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program to include changes resulting from the digital-first FDLP.

Justification:

The Collection and Discovery Services Subcommittee found that managing catalog records and discovery of digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) publications are topics that regularly raise questions and concerns among depository coordinators. The transition to a digital-first FDLP has made these issues more pressing. Approximately three-quarters of the respondents expressed the need to know more about withdrawing of, retention guidelines for, and gauging usage of FDLP digital publications. A large percentage also indicated an interest in learning how to identify FDLP digital publications that can be added to their library's collection. As the survey was conducted prior to the announcement that both MARCIVE, Inc and CRDP will cease at the end of December 2024, it is likely that responses would now be higher with the understanding that hundreds of FDLs will need to find replacements for MARCIVE, Inc and CRDP services.

[Managing FDLP Digital Publications in Library Catalogs: Survey Findings](#) (October 2024)

Commendation: Council commends former Managing Director Laurie Beyer Hall

The Depository Library Council commends Managing Director of Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) Laurie Beyer Hall for 38 years of exceptional service to the FDLP, the depository community, and the country, which has benefited from increased access to government publications through her leadership.

This commendation was approved by unanimous vote on October 23, 2024 and sent to Hall on December 6, 2024.

A copy of the commendation is attached.

In conclusion, as Chair, I wish to express my thanks to you, GPO staff, and to members of the Federal Depository Library community for the opportunity to explore and discuss the ongoing benefits and challenges of a Digital FDLP. I look forward to continuing our open communication and dialogue with GPO.

Sincerely,

Susanne Caro

Susanne Caro
Government Information Librarian
New Mexico State Library

Copy:

Scott Matheson, Superintendent of Documents

Cindy Etkin, DLC Designated Federal Officer

Amy Laub, DLC Secretary

Angela Bonnell, 2025-2026 Depository Library Council Chair

Attachment

Commendation – Commending Managing Director of Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) Laurie Beyer Hall for her service to the FDLP

The Depository Library Council commends Managing Director of Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) Laurie Beyer Hall for 38 years of exceptional service to the FDLP, the depository community, and the country, which has benefited from increased access to government publications through her leadership.

During Hall's extensive career at the FDLP she played an important role in modernizing multiple areas of the depository program. Highlights of her work include updating the GPO Classification Manual (1987), coordinating the classification and cataloging activities required for the Acquisitions, Classification & Shipment Information System ACSIS (1992), and her efforts on the discontinuation of microformats. Her leadership has led the Program through numerous changes.

Hall was a leader in building the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) Electronic Collection beginning in 1998, a project that has evolved over time and resulted in increased access to a vast collection while maintaining high preservation standards. As Chief of Library Technical Information Services, Library Services and Content Management she led the digitization of the historic shelflist collection, creating a comprehensive record of publications with enhanced cataloging, and made these records accessible to the public. In 2006 she saw the launch of the new Catalog of Government Publications, which held 426,865 records. This collection grew to 1,087,009 by October of 2024. In 2008 her department began web harvesting of government websites. This was in addition to digitizing the historical collection of government publications through in-house efforts and partnerships.

During Hall's concurrent term as Superintendent of Documents and Director of Library Services and Content Management (2016-2022), GPO made history by becoming the first organization in the United States and second organization in the world to achieve the status of a Trustworthy Digital Repository under the ISO 16363:2012 standard. This certification was a key GPO strategic initiative and made the agency a leader in digital repositories and access.

After many years of guiding the Program through significant changes, Laurie Beyer Hall leaves the FDLP community with a more flexible and dynamic Program meeting the needs of the modern public. For this and all she has done for the Program and our community, Council extends a sincere and heartfelt thanks to Laurie Beyer Hall, and wishes her the best on her well-deserved retirement.