

Depository Library Council

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

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Cynthia Etkin
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Dear Cynthia,

The Depository Library Council has reached consensus and endorses the policy regarding Firsthand Investigations of Federal Depository Libraries. As outlined in 44 U.S.C. § 1909, the Superintendent of Documents holds the responsibility for conducting firsthand assessments of FDLP conditions. This oversight aims to ensure that public access to government materials is preserved and appropriately maintained. Given the lack of specific procedural details in the legislation regarding the methods, timing, or means of these investigations, the decision on these matters is delegated to the Superintendent.

The policy presented appropriately recognizes the diversity among libraries within the FDLP, including various types and operational styles. Some libraries maintain collections solely in digital formats and can be effectively assessed through online teleconference interviews. Others with extensive physical collections may require in-person visits. This policy's flexibility enables assessments to be tailored to each library's circumstances.

Additionally, the two-tiered system of assessment and investigation provides further flexibility. For libraries that are in compliance, a "spot-check" style assessment appears sufficient and represents an efficient use of the Superintendent's and Coordinator's time. More comprehensive investigations are reserved for libraries not in compliance, optimizing resource allocation. The policy clearly delineates the measures used in this tiered approach and specifies the conditions under which further investigation would be necessary.

Overall, this policy appropriately balances the need for oversight with flexibility, in accordance with the requirements of 44 U.S.C.

In Service,



Stephani (Nia) Rodgers, Chair
Depository Library Council, 2026-2027