

Unique Challenges and Underserved Populations – Transcript of audio

Hi, everyone. Welcome back. This is our Depository Library Council session.

Reporter: unique challenges and underserved populations. Put your questions in the chat box, lower right-hand corner of the screen. The presenters will be monitoring the chat and address your questions at the end. Now, it is my pleasure to handed over to Mr. Alan Moore.

Thank you, Kelly. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Alan Moye, I'm the associate Dean and Director of law library at the fall College of Law, here in Chicago. This is my second year on the Depository Library Council, which serves as an advisory group for the GPO, its director, and Superintendent of documents. We have a broad cross-section of members focused on providing government information to our primary users. Along with my co-chair, Aimee Quinn, at Northern Arizona University, I shared this working group that came into being a little earlier this year. Before I tell you about when we are working on, I want to tell you how this group came to be. Those of you that may have attended last fall's conference may have it attended a session focused on HBCUs and tribal libraries at that are part of the FDL program, and their importance to the program. That conference generated some discussion among the Council about ways that we can look at some of the problems that we are addressing during the presentation. Maybe, offer some possessions for GPO to assist the library. We petitioned the director to create a working group, which he did. Here we are, this year, giving a progress report. So, our members, we currently have 12 members of the working group. Again, representing a broad cross-section of different types of libraries. We have four members from the GPO library services and content management division. Appointed by the superintendent of documents. So, as far as our charge is concerned, basically, we have been asked to take a look at the depository libraries that phone to certain categories. We are looking at affinity focused institutions, and other FDL's with unique challenges and needs that might impact their ability to provide access to tangible and digital depository resources. The working group is also going to look at possible solutions and provide recommendations that include ways in which the government publishing office can better support these libraries. The goal is to deliver a report to director Halpern by the end of March. Of course, we are giving the proper supports at each one of the fall and spring meetings. In terms of the format, I'm going to give you an overview of our methodology, and give you a snapshot in terms of what we are saying so far from the data. Then, we're going to turn it over to three people from the community that we made contact with as we were trying to research these issues. They're going to give you their perspective on some of these issues. One of the first challenges we had was to try to identify the libraries we are going to work with. When a candidate HBCUs and the tribals, since they were mentioned in the presentation from last year, we started there. We realized there was another library that we also want to make sure we included. He was fairly straightforward to identify the historically black colleges and universities. Hispanic serving community colleges, as well as the tribal, because they are all defined, statutorily. Basically, title 20, title 25, and title VII provide definitions for which libraries phone to those categories. We were then able to match the institution to meet that requirement. When it came to trying to define the public libraries in the rural, that presented a challenge. We had to look at some various definitions to help us narrow that scope. With small public libraries, we use the Institute of Museum and Library services definition, which defines a public library as an entity that is established under state enabling laws and regulations to serve a particular community. So, we use that as the basis for looking at the Federal Depository Libraries that met the criteria. For rural, that presented a challenge because we found a couple of different definitions for how a rule library would be defined. We used something called the Federal information processing series, or Phipps code. For each library in salesforce, we have five digit F.I.P.S. codes. Included basic

information about the library, and the F.I.P.S. code, and match it up with the data from the census. This gave us 75 libraries that we were working with that met the criteria that we needed. Again, we are still working within these groups. I should add, we divided into subgroups. Each one of us, maybe about 3 to 4 of us, are working on specific areas. I should note, the tribal college and Alaska native are mixed with urban. Not because there is anything in common. Although there is some intersection alley between these various groups. That's primarily because the people that were signed were also working with urban. It was a logistic --, she was going on here. I got a message about -- okay, camera disconnected. Sorry about that. That doesn't happen every now and then. As far as our methodology, we looked at various literature to get a sense of what the issues are affecting the libraries. Academic journals, newspaper articles, magazines -- the idea is to see if there are certain issues that would rise to the top. Then, we look for data collection. One of the first things he went to where the Biennial Survey's. I'll talk about that in a second. Focus groups are on the horizon. Hopefully some of you that are listening might be interested in participating in a focus group. We have our contact information available at the end of the presentation. We attended webinars, conferences and workshops, we connected with a lot of affinity focus groups. The HBC library alliance, the Association for rural and small libraries. There was Arizona Summit for Hispanic serving institutions that was in early October. We had some members attended there. The idea is to get as much information as we can and make some connections with people who are dealing with these issues. They can provide suggestions for how we might be able to help. So, as far as the Biennial Survey is concerned, we looked at 2017, 2019, and 2021 to see if there were any common themes or issues that rose to the forefront. Also, because there are two questions that we zeroed in on that were asked to each one of the surveys. This is to give us a snapshot, or an idea if there are any trends. Or, if there are some issues that could get started back in 2017 or 2015. They are still in existence, or if they have exacerbated, or anything like that. Questions we focused on were, what significant projects or events that affected your FDLP operations in the last two years? And, for 2021, we asked that they exclude any COVID related concerns because there is a separate survey that asked about COVID. What are your libraries major plans for the depository operation the next two years? In terms of observations, trends and themes, some of the major concerns that rose to the top were budgetary constraints, staffing cuts, and space constraints. We assume these might be issues for every library in the past few years. But, because the libraries were looking at dealing with underserved populations, or may have unique challenges, those issues may be exacerbated among them. So, that is what we were looking for. Also, as far as featured plans, inventorying and reading tangible collections. Training library staff and using government docs, and transition to government docs collections were some things that came up. The training library staff, there seems to be a correlation between staffing cuts. A lot of libraries lost staff through retirement and were unable to fill the positions. Quite often, they would write that they had someone who was in the position, but they weren't properly trained and they didn't have the training that they needed to work with government documents. In terms of some numbers, from 2021, we are going to look -- and again, we are sitting to the data -- but, about 25% of those that responded said that budget cuts was a major concern. Staff cuts, 60% said it was a major concern. I should also add, as far as the HBCUs are concerned, they are about 100, 103 HBC's in the country. They are only 30 that participate in the depository library program. Some have been in the program, some have left. We are trying to follow up with them to try and find out what prompted them to leave, and if there was anything that GPO could do to get them back. As far as rural libraries are concerned, 20% said budget cuts were a major concern. 40% listed staff cuts. 20% of the rural libraries said that space was a concern. Space constraints was a concern. As far as future plans, HBCUs libraries, 71% of the respondents indicated that they were weeding the casual collection. 32% said that training their staff was something that was in the works for the next couple of years. The rural libraries, 54% were weeding. 25% said that they needed to train their staff. Interestingly, among rural libraries, 28% said that they didn't have any plans within the next couple of years. That is a snapshot of where we are, now. It is

an ongoing project. It is interesting. Hopefully that is most of the heavy lifting that is out of the way. At this point, I want to turn it over to some of the community voices. Folks that we made connection with through our outreach to find out what was going on in different communities. We have Julieta Calderon, representing the public, Hispanic serving, and rural. We have Heather Hutto, from Bristol Library in Oklahoma, representing public, rural, and tribal. Underwood, from testy Kiki, Alabama. Representing HBCUs. Now, I'm going to turn it over to Julieta. Okay.

Hi, everyone. I am Julieta Calderon. Thank you, Alan. I'm from the Yuma County Library District in you why, Arizona. We are library with eight branches. We are part of the border community serving a rural area. We were a part of the F DLP, back in 1953 until 2001. We transferred our collection over to the local community college, Arizona Western College. They had that up until 2020, when they lost the staff member who managed the FDLP collection. Because he didn't have anybody to take on the role, they asked if the public library would be willing to take the collection back. We have had the collection, now, from 2020, until now. I'm the federal coordinator for the FDLP collection here at Yuma. The demographics that we usually deal with, and are library, is the general public. It is largely Latino and Hispanic because we are close to the border. We do have a large Spanish-speaking population. We also have large seasonal populations. We have winter visitors and seasonal farmworkers that double our population in the wintertime. We also have a large military presence. When you have two military bases, here, in Yuma. That gives a variety of demographics that we have to serve. It was a very different demographic that Arizona had to focus on. Even though the Arizona Western College library is open to the public, a lot of people in the community don't know that. Especially because the campus is outside of the town. It is not as accessible to a lot of people. Having the collection with us allows us to be a lot more accessible to other members of the community who might not have had access, previously.

Some of the issues that I run into while having the collection here at the main library has been staffing issues, in the sense that, all the duties that along with the FDLP collection have been tagged onto other responsibilities that we already had. While I am the FDLP coordinator, I'm also the information service library them. A large part of my responsibilities fall on creating programming, referenced services, any kind of customer service in the library. We are managing the collection and promoting the collection. That is one part of all the other possibility that you have. However, we do have specific points of contact for different phases of the process of getting your materials into the building. We do have a specific tech services staff member who handles cataloging of our government documents collection. We do have a specific circulation staff members who handles reshelving. I handle most of the reference questions in regards to the collection. We do have others for the librarians in the buildings to answer questions and provide services on how to use the government documents collection. A part of the staffing issue is time management. In a sense, I have to figure out how to juggle all the different responsibilities, plus maintaining and managing and handling the FDLP collection. That has been part of the challenge that I face, taking on the role. As well as issues with promoting the collection. What I have noticed when working with the collection, some of the barriers is that patrons aren't aware of the program. As well as information they are able to access. There is, sometimes, distrust with the government, within the community. That makes it difficult to trust information they are receiving. There is also a lack of knowledge and understanding. We see an education gap, and the sense of people not knowing that they have access to this kind of information. We have to educate patrons on the collection. What is considered government information, what they can access, as well as I mentioned earlier, we have a large Spanish-speaking population. We have to build up material that is available in Spanish and educate that population, as to what they are able to access with government information. That is needed for them to become a more educated, community, as well as a participatory member of in the credit process. Other things I had issues with is finding ways to engage with patrons. It is a unique collection.

Sometimes, the common public isn't always going to find it relevant. Find something that is going to be of use to them. We first got the collection, were mostly close to the public because of COVID. We created virtual programs for people to educate people about the program. I've been encouraging my coworkers to use government documents and their library program, whether that is with the library grant that we have, using NASA documents, as well as other materials that we had in the tangible collection. Or, I created a government document page on the website to inform people about the program. It includes a list of sites that are commonly used. A lot of times, the questions we get about government information, or current information about Social Security, immigration policy, federal assistance program -- those kind of things, that is most of what I see when interacting with the public. Also, we don't have much of an issue with budget. We don't have a specific budget for federal documents. Everything is within the general library budget. So, it is working with my administration, if I want to select anything new. If I need to purchase anything -- that is what I'm lucky that I have a director who is very, who has a very positive attitude towards government documents and the collection of FDLP's. I have a lot of support, in that sense. Other challenges I have faced is that I have no previous experience. In government information or documents. I was in the library and, in general, when I got the collection. But, also, I had no previous experience. I had a steep learning curve. I'm constantly learning new things. I had to learn, basically, everything about the role of FDLP coordinator. Those are the biggest challenges when getting the collection. Trying to learn everything about the operations of FDLP, as well as the classification system. Those are the things I have worked with. Because of that, I thought it would be a good idea if there was a mentoring program that could be accessible to new FDLP coordinators. I feel like that would have been of great use because it can be very overwhelming, when taking on a collection like this. Especially if you have no experience, before. And then, I've made great use of the FDLP training academy because there is so much information. I think it would have been good to have suggested training for new coordinators, cites a menu coordinator training series. Because, sometimes there are specific questions that I did know how to access, or find places to find the solution. Other than that, it has been a great experience. Learning about FDLP and working with the public, and teaching them about government information. That is been my experience working with FDLP. I will hand the ball over to Heather so that she can share her information.

[Silence]

Heather, your Mike, are you having trouble in meeting?

Is unneeded, now?

Yes, you are good.

Perfect. Thank you, so much. Apologies, in advance. I have the flu that I'm getting over. I hope you guys can hear me okay. My name is Heather Hutto, I serve as the executive director of at the Bristol public library. We are a tribal, rule library. Essentially, that means that we are located within Creek County Oklahoma. But, we are also located within the contingent boundaries of the Muscogee Creek nation. I want to express gratitude for this working group for recognizing my research and including me in on the event. Also, all the people working behind the scenes to make this event happen. So, after an internship in San Francisco, I came back to my home state of Oklahoma and I felt fast discrepancies in technology literacy. It stuck with me throughout the years. It bothered me. For 10 years after that, I worked in rural tribal schools, public schools and public libraries. I went back and got my MLS at the University of North Texas. In early 2021, when I was getting ready to graduate, one of my professors recognize my passion about tribal rural digital literacy. His background had focused on digital inclusivity. More, underserved

areas and persons of color. My research stuck out. He said, you know, let's take a swing at some research. I said, all right, let's do it. We went ahead and selected content analysis of our methodology. We set the tone and aperture, a sociology, we set the tone of the approach to knowledge management. The scope, comparing all rural and tribal communities across the United States. It was too big of a scope. That would be a huge endeavor. We had a limited amount of time. We chose to compare Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Those states are similar, as far as physical geography. They had some hills and mountains and streams, then they give away two flat prairie in the West. They also have similar historic settlement patterns. They each have a couple of larger urban areas. Then, a handful of small to medium-sized cities. The rest of the states is predominantly rural. The key difference between the two states is that, while Kansas only has four or five recognize tribal nations, Oklahoma has 39. The majority of the state is contingent with the sovereign tribal nation boundaries. So, in our research we determined that the state leadership was to blame with a disconnect. Not just broadband access, all-inclusive digital divide issues. Of course, in case you haven't gathered, access begets digital skills. Practice at these digital skills begets digital literacy. So, poor state leadership in states with contingent tribal boundaries tend to not have as high of access. Subsequently, not quite digital skills or digital literacy. State agencies and communities of practice in Kansas were going after digital literacy, as early as 2013 and 2014. Those didn't occur in Oklahoma until the year 2020, well into the pandemic. We also found a lack of qualified LAS professionals. Both in rural public schools, but also in rural school libraries. There is some phenomenal research out there. They have set out to go over the entire United States, in their scope, and in their approach, and determine what that discrepancy is, how many rural schools are lacking, or rather any schools, are lacking qualified LAS professionals within the school district. Go check out the research if you feel so obliged. We were able to determine -- I'm sorry, can you see my slides? I'm not sure sure everyone can see my slides.

My goodness gracious. Please, give me one second. My sincere apologies, you guys.

I can take it back and display your slides.

That would be helpful. I'm on a different computer and I thought they were pulled up but they are not. 22 headed back to you in order for that to happen? Can you --

Yes. If you hover your mouse over the ball and drag and drop it to my name, it will do it.

This is Kelly speaking, right?

Yes.

I am so sorry. I really thought I had this.

No problem.

Kelly, I'm not seeing you, either.

I have it.

Thank you.

All right, thank you so much. My sincere apologies. The final thing we found was the local and state media coverage. Essentially, the people who needed to get this information about digital inclusivity measures, and the economic factors that are tied into digital literacy, the people need to get his information the most, essentially, where getting it, due to the poor local and state media coverage. I'm so sorry, I skipped over a key part. Hopefully most of you know that the FCC has some data for about a decade. That flood data, we found out, was more likely to exist in states with historically more sparse settlement patterns. Such as Oklahoma and Kansas. What is key here is the difference between remote rural and friend rural. In areas that are considered fringe rural, the rural community is on the outside of the suburban or urban area. Whereas, a fringe rural community exists an hour or more away from a major urban area. So, the way that plays out with the FCC data is that, if one person in a census block had Internet access, that whole census block was marked as having Internet access. Well, a census block, in a historically sparse area, it might be 40 square miles or more. Versus an urban area where it might be a little block, like a block or two. This factor plays out in states with more sparse settlement patterns. But, especially those with contingent tribal boundaries. If you wouldn't mind advancing to the next slide. As you can see, here is a comparison between broadband access and Oklahoma counties. To compare, there is a map of contingent tribal boundaries within the state of Oklahoma. Now, there is a lot of intersecting factors, here. A lot of the available funds for broadband access have been sought out by a Western County not contingent with tribal boundaries. We were able to find in our research, a lot of the times, the tribal nations that exist on the eastern and other parts of the state, they were given a seat at the table. They weren't notified. Or, if they were going to get broadband, they weren't given a seat at the table to determine how the road rollout would occur. Historically, there has been a huge discrepancy in counties with contingent and sovereign nations. What axes they had compared to other places in the United States. Of course, access begets skills, which begets literacy. So, how can the FDL and the GPO help? How is it all relevant? First and foremost, when I met a member of this working group at the national our cell conference, last month, I vaguely heard of the STL and GPO. I was vaguely aware of what they did, or what they produced. I hadn't heard much of them. I didn't know how to access certain federal documents. That, in and of itself, speaks volumes. Additionally, out of all of the Federal Depository Libraries in the state of Oklahoma, all but two are an academic library. Therefore, a lot of people in Oklahoma don't even know that they exist. The two that exist in public libraries, one is in an urban area. One is in a rural area. I went ahead and reached out to both of those Federal Depository Libraries locations. The one in the urban area, the person I spoke to on the phone did not know that they were a Federal Depository Libraries. She did not know how to help me access those documents. The other one, which was a rural public library, they did. They were pretty spot on on answering all my questions. They knew how to access all of the resources, physically and digitally. Excuse me. The person I spoke to was able to help me navigate the website to find this documents online. Interestingly, when I asked her, she said people don't access these very much. I said, why not? She said, things have been digitized for so long, either people know exactly where to go online to find them, and they don't call us for help -- or, alternatively, people don't have the access or the digital skills. So, they know -- don't know how to go online and find them. I come to the table to offer this perspective. Hopefully, sharing my insights can help the GPO and FDL come up with solutions that might make things better for tribal and Oklahoma libraries. Now, I believe, at this time, I'm going to pass it to Jonathan. One moment while I find his name in here.

He is all set, Heather. Thank you.

Thank you.

Jonathan, are you muted? We can't hear you if you are talking.

Can you hear me now?

Yes. Thank you.

Okay. Good afternoon, my name is Jonathan Underwood. I am a government documents reference librarian at Tuskegee University. I misguidedly to be with you this afternoon. Although I'm starting my ninth year at Tuskegee University, I have only been in my current position since June of 2022. My objective is to help you get to know a few of the land-grant historically black colleges and universities settled depositories. Understand some of the challenges there library space, and how they are working to overcome these challenges. We get information, I interviewed librarians and directors at their respective institutions. I enjoy getting to know them and better understanding the situations with their government documents and federal depositories. Today, we're going to look at five land-grant institution depository libraries under the Morrill act of 1890. These universities are beneficiaries of the Morrill act, a land-grant institution, except the Atlanta University incorporated. Alabama and M University, Alcorn State University, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, and Tuskegee University. So, what exactly are the more acts and land-grant institutions? The Morrill act of 1862 and 1890, as well as the equity in educational land-grant status act of 1994, they established three different divisions of the land-grant system known as 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions. However, we will focus on the 1890 land-grant institutions. There are 1918 90 institutions which are historically black colleges and universities. Today, I will focus on five HBCUs designated as the 1890 land-grant institutions, and are also federal depositories. Our first institution will be Tuskegee University. Founded in 1881. It was designated a federal depository in 1907. It enrolls 3000 students. It was the first black college to be designated as a registered national historic landmark, and the only black college to be designated a national historic site. It is located in Macon County, Alabama. Alabama A&M University. It was founded in 1875. He was designated a federal depository in 1963. Their enrollment is 6100 students. They are the state of Alabama's largest HBC you. They are located in Madison County Alabama. Alcorn State University, they have around 3100 students. They were founded in 1871. It is the oldest public historically black land-grant institution in the U.S. The second oldest state supported institution of higher learning in Mississippi. It was designated a federal depository in 1970. If you notice, the University was founded in 1871. But, it did not become a federal depository until 1970. Which is fascinating. It would be interesting to understand why there was a large gap of time between their founding and when they became a federal depository. Now, there is one other HBC you federal depository in Mississippi. That is Jackson State University. However, I did not get to speak with anyone there. They are located, Alcorn State is located in Claiborne County, Mississippi. They had two counties located in Vicksburg and Natchez. Florida A&M University enrolls nearly 10,000 students. In 1996, it was added to the register of historic places. It was founded in 1887. It was designated a federal depository in 1936. It is the only HBCUs in the entire state designated as a federal depository. The federal depository library directory shows Florida as one regional and 29 selective's. When looking at those selective's, there is only one HBC you designated as a federal depository in the entire state. There located in Tallahassee, Florida. And, Florida A&M University has several campuses across Florida. Fort Valley State University was founded in 1895. The student enrollment is 2776. They are not a federal depository. So, you may be asking yourself, why does University listed in the presentation discussing federal depositories? That would be a great question to which I have a great answer. The federal depository library directory shows that Georgia has one regional and 22 selective's. Within those selected, there is only one HBC you designated as a federal depository in the United States. The same is Florida. This federal depository in Georgia is located at Atlanta University Consortium incorporated. 106 miles away. The closest federal depository to Fort Valley State University is Marcel University. 26 miles away. This is

significant. The inability to access these important documents could adversely affect their political literacy, and understanding, if they are deprived of access to government documents, which, by law, they are entitled to have. Now, the Federal Depository Libraries were created to serve those within the community and regional areas. If there is no access, this puts them as they did it at a disadvantage. When I asked the director, if their library had considered becoming a federal depository, he said no. It would take them away in a different direction, instead of focusing their time, effort, and energy on the students and faculty. This University is located in peach County, Georgia. Atlanta University Center Consortium Inc. was founded in 1929. According to the website, the Atlanta University Center of Consortium Inc. is comprised of Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College. Now, the Robert W Woodruff library works with around 8600 students. However, it is not easy to access it. Atlanta University center Consortium's total number of students is more than 10,000. They were designated a federal depository in 1962. Again, they are the only HBCUs in the entire state designated as a federal depository. What is more interesting is, even though there is a federal depository, most of the government documents are located at the public library. This is the only institution we will look at that is not a land-grant institution. The Atlanta University center Consortium Inc. is located in downtown Atlanta, at Park Atlanta University. I would like to take a few moments to discuss the significance of the statistical information from these land-grant institutions. Looking at the slide, we can ask, what is the statistical information telling us? First, Tallahassee and Huntsville's populations have increased. Comparatively, Fort Valley, Tuskegee, and Claiborne County Mississippi populations have decreased. As a result of having a low population, they would not have access to many of the resources, or other benefits that larger cities have, which puts them at a disadvantage. Second, the smaller cities of Fort Valley, Tuskegee, and Claiborne County Mississippi have a much higher black or African-American population than Tallahassee and Huntsville. Which, are significantly lower. So, we will look at this information a little closer. Notice the smaller silly cities of Fort Valley, Tuskegee, and Claiborne County Mississippi populations. Their lower percentage of high school graduation or higher. Lower bachelor degrees or higher. Median household income, and a higher poverty percentage than the larger cities of Tallahassee and Huntsville. So, how does this relate to federal depositories? Well, these low income and education levels of the smaller cities can limit their ability, or understanding of how to access government information. Whether in person or online, some! nations can be the lack of knowledge. Inability to access the Internet because of restrictions of broadband. The city's geographic location to larger cities, and lack of access. For example, the library is not a federal depository. Or, they do not have adequate transportation. One reason that might explain why the larger cities we have discussed have more opportunities and better salaries, is at the size of the city provides more resources and better assistance to their residence. A question to consider, is how can federal depositories bridge these differences with their communities and land-grant institutions?

Final observations -- when talking with the different locations, every library had a relatively positive experience with GPO. Now, they had library issues. Every library I spoke with said staffing was an issue in some form or fashion. Some of the staffing issues they struggled with our being short staffed. Several of the libraries I spoke with said that many other staff and faculty retired, which caused personnel shortages. One library stated that they had not had a government document library and in 12 years. Some of the libraries currently do not have a government document librarian. They have different departments running the government documents and using work-study students to help ease the load. They also talked about hiring freezes. The inability to hire people because of the hiring freezes. Even though there is no longer a hiring freeze in place, they talked about, it was difficult to hire people. Some of the infrastructure issues, issues with being housed in older buildings, and the challenges associated with it. Supply chain issues that made it more challenging and more complicated to complete seemingly simple things. Surprisingly, one University stated they do not have any infrastructure concerns. So, how

are they overcoming these challenges? Well, doing more through crosstraining and shadowing. Retired staff and factory volunteers volunteer their time to teach others new areas of the library. Purchased items to make their library more modern and appealing, such as changing and updating furniture. Writing more compelling position descriptions. One librarian stated that they were taking the job description and rewriting it to make it more appealing. How can GPO help? Provide training. Those I talk with stated that they would like GPO to conduct more local conferences. More workshops, and additional hands-on training. Either locally, or through GPO, directly. They also wanted to learn how they could promote the government documents and bring awareness of the resources to faculty and students. Resources for new government documents. What to do in their institution does not have a government document librarian. Hopefully, this snapshot of the five historically black colleges and universities, federal depositories, shows you that they are working to overcome significant challenges and have identified ways GPO can help. I have learned many things to my research. I was also able to network with different librarians around the Southeast. Thank you.

I will turn the ball back over to Helen.

Can you hear me?

Yes, we can.

Yeah, now we are going to open the floor up for any comments or questions that anybody has. I think we have folks monitoring the chat. I think we have Cindy Etkin, is Cindy here? And Aimee Quinn. The to Amy's? Amy Laub-Carroll and Aimee Quinn?

Go ahead.

The access to the Robert W Woodruff library -- that was based on a colleague who attended there. She is the one that made your comment. That is how this one came about.

Was at about the easy to access common?

Easy to access. To get to it. Maybe I didn't clarify that. She said it was difficult to get to. Not that it was hard to access the building. My apologies.

I see a couple of questions, has anything been done about a formal mentorship program?

Allen, there are a couple of comments about LAS programs that need more government information. I think it is something that is widely known. We are aware of the decreasing number of classes being taught. That fits right into something that we have learned. Charlie says, I teach one in a heartbeat. We challenge you to try and get a class to teach, Charlie, that would be great.

I see that some folks are interested in mentor ships. Maybe that is something that we can include in the recommendations.

As he pointed out, that has been coming up in the research. More training being needed, yeah.

That is right. These things that we've been reading about, arguably, are on point.

There's a question, specifically for Heather.

Cindy, D.C. that one?

There is a question from Arlene. The question to Heather. It says, can you talk about what type of information these people have in your community? I think we can talk less about government information and more about the specifics of what is needed. Legal documents, historical research, access to government forms --

Can you guys hear me?

Yeah.

Yes.

Okay. Gosh, I could talk your ear off. I think we are familiar with the term, food deserts. There are places in Oklahoma and perhaps other parts of rural America that are information deserts. Even being aware of the fact that GPO occupant documents are available, we are legally entitled to access those documents. It is something I didn't even know and I am a public library director. I hope that paints a picture, or sets the tone of the information discrepancies that we are looking at. Now, LAS professionals in my state, I feel like, there is a resurgence in the profession. At least as it pertains to school librarians and public librarians. We notice information, and there are many intersecting reasons. A lot of those have to do with the decline of rural places. Economically, as was population wise. The decline of rural schools, the decline of LAS professionals at schools. More and more people are graduating and entering the workforce without actually having information literacy. I think there is a movement with LAS professionals, within my state, to bridge those gaps the best that we can. My library is setting out to address information gaps regarding tribal and local history. There are huge gaps in this information. We have a history room we are going to be opening in a month or six weeks. If I can kick this illness. That will address the information gaps. We are working with the tribal libraries committee. The Oklahoma Library Association, as well as the college of the Muskogee nation, to make sure and its misrepresentation is what should be. In the past, that representation has not been equitable. In regards to other forms of information -- it is not something that translates well to a digital presentation, but, I had a volunteer in the audience have a looking glass about this big. I have another one hold up an empty pen, if you will. With all the inside components taken out. Then, I asked them to assess a graphic that I put up. Of course, the one with the little viewfinder that was this big was able to ascertain most of the information. But, the one looking through the pen wasn't able to ascertain any information. The catch of the graphic that they were supposed to look at is that it was, if you look at the fine print at the very top of the image, it was an ad by Google. Neither one of them could see that. It was especially impossible for the one looking through this viewfinder to see that information. When you have a majority of a states, all the people living in rural areas, they don't have access to broadband and don't have access to digital skills and subsequent digital literacy. They are having to drive to the next town to get on their phone. Their phone might be a budget phone. It might be pre-populated with Facebook. If they're having to drive out of their way, that week or that day to access the Internet, they are going to do it in the most economically possible way. They're probably going to check her email, text messages, and Facebook. That is it. They don't get on Google, or have desktop skills like we all here have, presumably. Using a WebEx conference platform. They lack the skills, entirely. If you can put yourself in that role, you can see that there is a huge disconnect in the information era that we all live in. And the people that have been drastically left behind. I hope that answers the question.

Yes, it does, Heather. Thank you. There are a couple of more comments in the chat. Basically, people agreeing that there needs to be mentorship programs it looks like Sarah has posted her email for people who are new or would like more information. Alan has also posted his email, if anyone is interested in participating in a focus group on this project.

If I could, I would like to address one of the comments stating that they's serve -- I realize, when I went to the Atlanta University Center Consortium Inc., they did not have the interdenominational theological Center located. They had the Morehouse School of Medicine located. That is the reason why that was left off. Because, I didn't want to have inaccurate information. As I stated, the website said one thing and the people that I spoke with at the Robert W Woodruff Library tell me something else. I couldn't get a consensus of what was accurate. We felt it was best to leave that off. My apologies. It was not my intent to have any inaccurate information. Because we couldn't get a consensus on what information was accurate. So, I hope that clarifies that.

I were to all participants. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate his perspective. Kudos for Heather for being right on target for our audience, today.

Sorry, I know we have other comments coming in, but we have reached the end of our session. We will be back with you in 15 minutes for our next Depository Library Council session. Community collections and national contributions. We will be back at 2:15 Eastern. Thank you.

Thank you, everyone. Appreciate it.