



**FEDERAL DEPOSITORY
LIBRARY CONFERENCE**

**SEPTEMBER 25 – 26, 2025
#FDLCONFERENCE**

Value of FDLP Libraries

Heather Getsay, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

Brent Abercrombie, Indiana State Library

Rick Mikulski, William & Mary



Value of the FDLP Handouts

- [The Value of the FDLP \(library administration\)](#): Use this handout to articulate the value of your library's participation in the FDLP to your library administration.
- [The Value of the FDLP \(library staff\)](#): This handout articulates the value of your library's participation in the FDLP and is geared toward new or potential FDLP coordinators. It also includes talking points for coordinators to use when speaking to other librarians about the FDLP.

THE VALUE OF THE FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) provides "free, ready, and permanent access to Federal Government information, now and for future generations." Government information includes official publications from all three branches of Government in any format. The U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) has overseen the FDLP since 1895. Currently, over 1,000 libraries across the Nation are members of the FDLP.

The FDLP values the importance of making Government information freely available to the public to inform and empower them. This is a nationwide network of dedicated experts providing professional skills in locating and accessing publications from America's National Collection.

It is a common misconception that all Government information is available online. It is not. The important historical record is on library shelves around the country. We need libraries like yours to ensure GPO's vision of an *America informed*.

Top Five Ways Your Library Benefits from Being Involved in the FDLP

1. Easily access a national shared print collection. As a depository, you have the option of being part of the ongoing preservation of the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information.
2. Save space using new digital distribution models and increased online access to publications. Starting in 2024, the FDLP pivoted to a digital-first program. While select titles will continue in print, you will save storage space moving forward while providing access to authenticated digital information in accessible formats. You will be able to flexibly build collections around your patrons' needs and your staff expertise.
3. Access free professional development opportunities for library staff. The FDLP Academy offers recorded instructional videos, live interaction with specialists across the Federal Government, and reusable educational resources for library staff to develop expertise in navigating Government websites and databases to meet your community's information needs.
4. Engage in networking opportunities. Share your library's perspective in discussions about Government information with GPO staff and other Government information librarians through conferences and FDLP Academy webinars. Provide opportunities to your library staff for national service and collaboration.
5. Receive excellent GPO customer service and support. GPO librarians come from a wide array of professional backgrounds to assist you in collection management, cataloging workflows, preservation assessments, and community outreach. GPO can also help connect your library to others in the FDLP.

FDLP.gov



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August 2025

THE VALUE OF THE FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM

As a coordinator at a Federal depository library (FDL), you are part of an extensive network of libraries across the Nation, where you and your library staff:

Learn and Teach Government Information Literacy Skills

- Find publications that browser searches fail to include.
- Determine whether a publication is official and authenticated by the Federal Government.
- Communicate with other libraries to better serve your patrons' needs.
- Learn about the breadth of publications issued by agencies in all three branches of the Government.
- Discover relevant Government information in any format.
- Demonstrate the importance of official Government information to inform, enrich, and empower your library patrons.

Access and Contribute to the FDL Community of Practice

- Participate in free professional development and continuing education to become an expert in Government information librarianship.
- Share expertise and participate to help build the next generation of Government information librarians.
- Partner with GPO by identifying unreported publications and by preserving local materials to enhance the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information.

Help Patrons Navigate the National Collection

- Access vital parts of the National Collection that are only available in print and are geographically dispersed across the Nation.
- Curate locally significant collections of Government information that meet patron needs.

FDLP.gov



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<https://www.fdlp.gov/file-repository/639/download-only-handouts>



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Value of the FDLP

Heather Getsay

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

heather.getsay@sru.edu



FDLP at Slippery Rock University

- Public institution in Western Pennsylvania
- Member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
- FTE students approximately 8,400
 - Undergraduate 6,853
 - Graduate 1,541
- FDLP selective participant (Bailey Library) since 1965
- Mostly digital but physical collection is still maintained
 - 7,000 paper items
 - 22,000 microfiche



Depository Coordinator

Added to my responsibilities in 2014 after retirement of previous coordinator

The many jobs of a depository coordinator:

- Subject liaison with instruction and collection development responsibilities for Social Sciences and related departments
- Resource Acquisitions Librarian
- Copyright Librarian
- Government Information Librarian



How many roles do you juggle?



Communicating Value

- Library instruction
- Government Information LibGuide
- Answer questions from students, faculty, staff, and community
- Displays, signage, and posters
- Pocket Constitutions / Ask Me button
- Biennial report
- FDLP anniversary event

*Persistent thought:
I wish I had more
time! I am not doing
enough for the FDLP.*



Challenges

- Juggling multiple responsibilities
- Finding time for outreach and promotion
- Shrinking budgets and fewer library employees
- Communicating value to administrators, library colleagues, community members, and others
- Do university administrators and others outside the library know about the FDLP?



Dissertation Research

Providing Public Access to Government Information in University
Depository Libraries: An Evaluation of Public Service Values within
Small to Medium-Sized Public Institutions

- *Doctor of Public Administration (DPA), Department of Public Policy & Administration, West Chester University of Pennsylvania (May 2025)*
- Public Administration and Library Science share similar democratic, ethical, and public service values.
- Qualitative study
- Conducted individual interviews with 10 depository coordinators and 9 library administrators from different small and medium-sized public institutions across the country



Research Purpose



Explore perspectives of
depository librarians and
library administrators



Examine FDLP experiences
using public service values
lens



Understand how library
professionals perceive their
public service roles in
providing public access to
government information



Consider FDLP transition to
mainly digital amid common
library challenges with
shrinking budgets and fewer
employees



Individual Interviews

Topics of Coordinator Questions	Work responsibilities, citizen access to government information, FDLP, public service values, librarianship values, small and medium-sized academic libraries, public institutions
Topics of Administrator Questions	Work responsibilities, FDLP, allocation of resources and staff time, motivations for maintaining or dropping depository status, public service values, librarianship values, small and medium-sized academic libraries, public institutions
Public Service Values and Librarianship Values	All participants were asked to choose public service values and librarianship values representative of their work for the FDLP. Values and their definitions were provided using visual aids during the interviews.



Data Themes and Selected Findings

Interview Data Themes and Subthemes

Managing Government Information Work Roles

- tangible to digital format changes
- staffing concerns
- library size and administration

Ensuring Public Access

- community and citizen access
- service
- public institutions

Commitment to Stewardship

- responsibility
- geographic significance
- value of government information

Participant Challenges with Government Information Roles

Depository Coordinators

- hybrid job roles
- minimal time
- overburdened

Library Administrators

- staffing limitations
- budget cuts
- prioritization of resources

Despite Challenges Participants Embraced Their Government Information Roles

- Influenced by public service values for citizen access
 - democratic, professional, ethical
- Strong commitment to the FDLP and stewardship of materials
- Sense of responsibility for serving citizens in their communities and geographic regions
- Perceived as a vital public service
- Sense of pride for participation in the FDLP
- Of the 19 total interviewees, 18 indicated their intentions to continue FDLP participation.



Benefits of FDLP Participation

- No cost to participate
- Digital FDLP requires less shelf space and physical processing
- Free access to government materials for the university and community
- Supports student learning and faculty research
- Collection development opportunities
- Serves the community, geographic region, congressional district
- Professional development opportunities



Communicating Value - Final Thoughts

- Explain FDLP work and participation to administrators
- Discuss with library colleagues to avoid FDLP work silo
- Use FDLP handouts to promote the value of the program
- Collaborate with classroom faculty
- Share experiences and knowledge with other coordinators
- Partner with community groups
- No time for planning events? Talk about the FDLP!



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The Value of the FDLP

Brent Abercrombie – Indiana Regional Depository Coordinator





About the Indiana State Library

- Regional Depository for state of Indiana
 - 27 Selective Libraries in state
 - 2022 Depository of the Year recipient
- Established in 1825
 - Regional Depository since 1963
- State Library serves 92 counties
 - Public research library
- FDLP Partner
 - Preservation Steward
 - Digital Content Contributor





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How do you communicate the
value of the FDLP?



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Trusted. Accountability. Integrity.

- That's government information!
 - GovInfo. USA.gov. Government websites.
- That's libraries and librarians!
 - Trust members of the community.
- That's the FDLP Mission
 - The mission of Federal depository libraries is to provide local, free access to information from the Federal government in an **impartial environment**.



Instruction & Outreach (Audience)

- Serving the Public
 - Government information is a type of information, not a subject
 - Public may be unaware the information they seek is from a government publication/resource, or know how to locate government information
- Serving Librarians
 - Aware of government information, but have limited experience
 - Often asking on behalf of a patron
- Depository Coordinators
 - Rules and policies of the FDLP (particularly as the Regional)
 - Crowd source those difficult federal documents questions



Instruction & Outreach (Activities)

- Government Information Day Conference
 - Free 1-day conference promoting government information
- Present Government Information Webinars
 - For FDLP Academy; at Library Conferences; with you Library
 - Talk about a government resource, topic, or for a specific audience
- Themed Events & Exhibits
 - Events of the public (example - Constitution Day Trivia)
 - Social media
 - Displays and exhibits in the library
- Printed Resources
 - Libguides/subject guides
 - Blogs or newsletter



Tips for Promoting FDLP's Value

- Just Do It!
 - Take ideas and run with them
- Don't be afraid to ask!
 - FDLP coordinators are very supportive and helpful
- Engage with different groups!
 - Government information is for everyone



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Promoting the FDLP at a mid-sized, Selective depository

Rick Mikulski
William & Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia
rick@wm.edu



William & Mary

- Established by royal charter in 1693
- Current enrollment: ~7,000 undergrad / ~3,000 grad students
- Includes a Law School, Business School, School of Education
- Offers PhDs in American Studies, Anthropology, Applied Science, Computer Science, History, Marine Science, Physics
- The FDLP collection at W&M is about 3,200 linear feet (excluding maps and microforms)
 - Preservation Steward & ASERL Center of Excellence for Congressional Budget Office material (about 20 shelves)
 - Otherwise, extremely few print items coming into the collection



Talking Points

- FDLP membership provides opportunities to “have a seat” in regional & national organizations, projects, and discussions.
 - As an FDLP member, W&M librarians have been on DLC, GODORT Steering, ASERL committees, NCSA steering, the HathiTrust Federal Documents Advisory Committee, *DttP* editorial board. W&M is frequently the smallest university represented on these committees.
- FDLP membership provides opportunities for greater visibility within the broader LIS community.
 - (Speaking in front of everyone right now at the 2025 Fall conference is an example!)



Talking Points

- FDLP membership show faculty the Library is engaged in Federal data preservation
 - Faculty regularly contact our library asking if we are part of efforts to retain, secure, and protect at-risk federal information/data. FDLP membership is a tangible example of the library's commitment to preservation of federal information
 - This was an especially useful and persuasive argument when asking our dean to sign off on our CBO preservation steward agreement.
 - Anecdotally: A faculty member successfully proposed that WM host a multi-institutional digital project of research-collected government data because of our expertise as an FDLP
 - Ironically, all the institutions involved are FDLPs; we were just the most vocal!



Talking Points

- FDLP membership overtly mirrors campus priorities and values.
 - “Civil Engagement” and “Democracy” are stated values of the University’s strategic plan. Partnership with GPO and the Congressional Budget Office are tangible examples of the library supporting these values, which the Dean of Libraries can highlight.
 - We provide the FDLP Pocket Constitutions to campus partners (Literacy for Life; Center for Civic Engagement; Public Library) for use at their events.
 - We promote our status as an FDLP while co-hosting Civic related events, such as Constitution Day and voter registration drives.



Talking Points

- FDLP Membership denotes expertise and support to the campus community
 - Majors in Government, Public Policy, and International Relations reach out regularly for research support.
 - Members of the public contact our reference desk with government related questions because we are listed as depository
 - Members of the university administration occasionally ask for research assistance (usually finding quotes or information from state legislation)



Suspiciously Absent: The Materials Themselves

- It is probably odd that I do not have FDLP materials listed as a talking point.
 - Librarians and Administration mostly appreciate the value of the FDLP material themselves, however I have anecdotally found that library directors immediately picture filled shelves when the FDLP collection is discussed.
 - Stressing the limited print nature of the new FDLP, the online context, and the modern ease of managing print collections certainly is helpful.



Lessons from a small Selective:

- Link FDLP membership to university-wide initiatives
- Emphasize how FDLP membership allows even smaller universities to be visible, active, and impactful in the larger community
- Stress the digital nature of the modern FDLP, deemphasis the physical space footprint
- Consider low-effort, high-visibility FDLP projects (ex. Preservation Steward for a small agency)
- Be shameless in promoting the program!



Q&A

- Heather Getsay, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania,
heather.getsay@sru.edu
- Brent Abercrombie, Indiana State Library,
babercrombie@library.in.gov
- Rick Mikulski, William & Mary, rick@wm.edu