Defines public service and identifies public service functions, introduces the Principle of Comparable Treatment in Public Services and explains the general concept of access and its requirements, discusses reference and research services for users, referrals, circulation of materials, and the marketing of Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) services, including the Federal Depository Library of the Year award

---

4.1 What's New or Important

4.1.A Principle of Free Public Access

As a designated Federal depository, your library SHALL make Federal Government information products available for the free use of the general public. This is a legal requirement.

4.1.B Principle of Comparable Treatment in Public Services

Access to and services in the use of depository information resources at your library should equal or exceed those applicable to other collections and services in your library. Reference service offered to members of the general public using the depository MUST be comparable to the reference service provided to the primary users of your library.

4.1.C General Concept of Access

The concept of access includes more than physical access to your facility and depository collection. It is also the provision of Federal Government information products to your library's primary users and the general public, the provision of sufficient computer workstations to access electronic Federal Government information products, and a commitment to ensuring that your staff is trained and capable of providing services in the use of government information in all formats.

4.1.D Referrals

You should refer depository users to other libraries for access to unique depository collections and expertise, and also offer your own unique expertise, collections and resources to users referred by other depositories or organizations. You should use the tools provided to your library to assist users in locating information at a particular depository and to ensure the information needed is available at that depository before you refer them to there.

4.1.E Electronic Access and Filters

Your depository library should have written policies regarding public services for government information in electronic formats that includes provisions for no-fee access to electronic government information, in tangible format and on the Internet, for all users.

Filtering software used by your library might inhibit access to official Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) information, for example in the health or biological sciences fields. Therefore your library MUST allow users the option to use workstations without filtering software or provide the capability of turning off the filter while users are searching FDLP information resources. Your library MUST ensure that your computer security or access policies, or those of your parent bodies, do not hinder public access to depository materials. At a minimum, if your library is unable to deactivate filtering in a rapid manner, you MUST provide mediated searching for depository users.

4.1.F Public Access Computer Workstations

Public access computer workstations may require user authentication for security reasons; however, signage (on computers, posted at tables, on desks) MUST indicate that users may inquire at the public service desk for assistance.

Libraries may provide guests the ability to log in at a workstation or staff may log them in at authenticated stations. At a minimum, if all workstations providing Internet access require authentication, users should be directed to public service desks for assistance through mediated searching.

Time limits and the use of sign-up sheets are acceptable but should be no more severe than such measures used for non-depository workstation access.

The language on public workstations, web pages, and signage should promote access to government information rather than dissuading or limiting access.

4.1.G Definition of Public Services

Public services are those activities and operations of your depository library that bring you or

your staff into regular direct contact with users of government information resources.

The two major public service goals of the FDLP are to provide the public with access to government information resources and to provide assistance in the use of those resources so the public will benefit from that access.

Acceptable public access occurs when any member of the general public can use, at no cost, the Federal Government information products available in your depository collections and receive services in the use of those products regardless of format or housing arrangements.

Acceptable public access recognizes the public's right to have timely and efficient access to the information of, by, and about its government while balancing your local concerns for the security of your staff, facilities, and collections.

4.2 Identification of Public Services Functions

Public service functions include access, reference and research services for users, referrals of users to other libraries that have specific resources or expertise, circulation of government information resources, and marketing of your depository to your primary users and the general public.

4.2.A Access

Access includes your depository library’s access to government information products, the Principle of Free Public Access, the Principle of Comparable Treatment in Public Services, your public access policies, physical access to your library as well as online access to your electronic depository resources.

4.2.B Your Depository Library’s Access to Federal Government Information Products

The goal of the FDLP is to provide the public with free access to Federal Government information of public interest or educational value, regardless of format or medium, and to insure its continued availability in the future. The only government information excluded from this objective are those products produced strictly for administrative or operational purposes, classified for reasons of national security, constrained by privacy considerations, or which are

required to be self-sustaining through sale as a cooperative publication. As a designated Federal depository, your library is legally REQUIRED to provide free public access to depository information resources under the provisions of
44 USC 1911
.
For more information on Title 44, see the
Legal Requirements in chapter 2
of this Handbook.

4.2.C Principle of Free Public Access

Free public access, as defined by the Government Printing Office (GPO), means that any member of the general public can use government information resources in all formats, without impediments. Your depository library has a fundamental obligation to provide free public access to depository information resources and to minimize barriers to your facilities, collections, and services. The development of library-wide access policies should address hours of operation, standards of service, access to facilities, collections and services; signage should encourage access. Staff properly trained and available to provide services, collection development and management policies, and informational or promotional materials should be developed in keeping with the goals of the depository program, and legal requirements as outlined in chapter 2 of this Handbook.

Factors that may affect free public access to the government information resources and services available in your depository include:

- Housing (see chapter 9 of this Handbook) includes management of the physical facilities for tangible collections both current and historical, proper handling of the collection, storage, and selective housing agreements;
- Practices that include economic barriers to collections and user categorization (different treatment for different types of users such as denying access based on a student identification) will not inhibit access;
- Staff MUST be sufficiently trained to provide services in the use of government information products in all formats, and staffing levels must be sufficient to provide access and assistance;

- Collection development (see chapter 5 in this Handbook) MUST consider the needs of the entire community (primary users and the general public);
- Preservation (see chapter 8 of this Handbook) includes maintaining the collection so it is usable;
- Security efforts should allow for user access to computer workstations even if user authentication is required;
- Contingency plans will allow for continued service to users even if construction and

remodeling or natural disasters inhibit access to or damage the collection; and

- Tangible signage and language on an electronic online presence MUST not limit access to a depository collection or to electronic depository resources. You are strongly encouraged to have a written policy regarding public access to and services in the use of government information resources regardless of format. This policy should contain provisions for no-fee access to computer workstations with CD-ROMs, DVDs, and the Internet. See more information on signage in chapter 9 of this Handbook.

- The selection of items in electronic format assumes that the library will take reasonable steps to assist the public in their use. When appropriate, this includes providing the user with instruction in running the application and developing search strategies. If the library does not own the appropriate hardware or software, it should be willing to help the user locate a site at which the product can be used.

Such factors, and any public access policies of a depository library's parent body, MUST not hinder free public access to depository information resources. Users may be charged the "usual and customary" fees and subjected to "usual and customary" limits for printing, downloading, and storage media such as diskettes.
Any fees or limits SHALL be consistent with other public service provisions of the library.

4.2.D Communication of the Principle of Free Public Access and Public Access Requirements

All appropriate library employees MUST be aware of the Principle of Free Public Access and public access requirements of Federal depository libraries, as well as of local, state, and Federal laws affecting user privacy. Any signage or communication, whether verbal, electronic, or tangible, that limits access to a depository library MUST be amended to exempt members of the general public wishing to use the library's depository information resources.

Public access computer workstations may require user authentication for security reasons; however, signage (on computers, posted at tables, on desks) MUST indicate that users may inquire at the public service desk for assistance.

Libraries may provide guests the ability to log in at a workstation, or staff may log them in at authenticated stations. At a minimum, if all workstations providing internet access require authentication, users should be directed to public service desks for assistance through mediated searching. Requests for recommendations on appropriate signage may be directed to askGPO . Additionally, the
Knowledge Base

, a part of askGPO, is a great first stop when seeking an answer to your question about the FDLP.

4.2.E Principle of Comparable Treatment in Public Services

Beyond honoring the requirement of providing free public access to depository information resources, local policies and practices that apply to other collections and services of the library may be applied to depository information resources and services. In general, access to, and services in the use of, depository information resources should equal or exceed those applicable to other library collections and services. For example, if your depository library offers night and weekend service hours to its primary clientele, your library MUST provide comparable service hours to users of depository materials.
The Principle of Comparable Treatment in Public Services, however, would not require a separate documents unit to be staffed the same hours as your general reference unit if there was open access to and basic assistance in the use of the depository collection provided by your general reference unit during those extended hours.

4.2.F The Impact of Your Public Access Policies

Your depository library policies for public services can impact public access and you should consider the following:

- Your library is not required to serve users who do not have a depository-related need to be in the library. Under a strict interpretation of the statute, a user from outside of your library's principal user group may be limited to using only depository information resources.
- The public may not exploit the use of depository information resources as a pretext to circumvent your library policies on the use of materials purchased or licensed for the use of your library’s primary clientele.
- Your public service policies cannot deny access to depository resources to users because of their age. Your library should develop user behavior policies to address conduct problems rather than restrict access based on age. Remember, however, depository users MUST adhere to the same standards of behavior expected of your other library users.

- Your library has the right to bar or remove any individual who poses a threat to library staff, other users, or the security of the collections or facility.
- Access to, and services in the use of, depository information resources should equal or exceed those applicable to your other library collections and services. Reference service offered to members of the general public using the depository MUST be comparable to the reference service provided to your library's primary users.

- Signage and other physical facilities of your library and parent institution cannot inhibit public access. Signage should be employed to facilitate access to depository materials. Requests for assistance, such as samples of appropriate signage and standard language, may

be directed to askGPO .

- Your depository library MUST allow users the option to use computer workstations without filtering software, or to turn off the filter while searching FDLP information.
- The number of available computer workstations in your depository is dependent upon the size of the depository operation and MUST be sufficient to serve depository users efficiently and effectively. Time limits and the use of sign-up sheets are acceptable.
- Security concerns of your library may lead local library administrators to implement policies to safeguard facilities and personnel including those of the depository. Permissible actions include:
  - Asking users for identification.
  - Asking users to sign a guest register.
  - Asking questions that screen users to verify that the library houses the documents relevant to their information needs, and even escorting users to the depository collection.

These actions in no way violate the responsibility of your depository library to provide free access to the depository collection by the general public under 44 USC 1911.

4.2.G Access at All Times

Public access to depository information resources and services MUST be maintained by your library during renovation projects, collection relocation projects, or other temporary disruptions in library operations.(See Administrative Notes AN-v29-#1-02/15/08 for more detailed information.) If your depository library is contemplating asbestos removal, renovation, or some other construction project or temporary situation that will involve curtailing public service to the Federal depository collection, you should develop a strategy to ensure that both your primary clientele and the general public continue to have access to government information in all formats through the Federal Depository Library Program. The strategy should be documented as a plan that includes the estimated dates of the project, the extent of service curtailment, the alternative strategies to be employed to fulfill requests for government information, and the techniques for notifying primary clienteles, other depository and non-depository libraries, and the general public. The plan does not have to be formal, lengthy, or elaborate.

If your depository anticipates such projects and prepares a contingency plan for its depository operations, you should submit a copy of the plan to Planning and Development, Library Services at GPO (via email to Planning and Development, Library Services lpplanning@gpo.gov or fax 202-512-2300) and to the library's regional depository library .

For cases where your library cannot receive and process materials, such as during a renovation or after a disaster, the shipment of depository materials can be suspended. Notify Planning and Development, Library Services (lpplanning@gpo.gov or fax 202-512-2300) regarding the situation so arrangements can be made. For information on how to handle an unanticipated disaster affecting the library's depository operations or collections, see chapter 14 of this Handbook.

4.2.H Physical Access within Your Library

Your library should provide well-planned facilities for housing and using depository information resources within the library. Both collection and public service spaces should comply with standards for accessibility (United States Access Board and Americans With Disabilities Act) and be of the same quality as other collection and public service areas of the library, providing acceptable levels of lighting, temperature, ventilation, and noise control. Depository collections in all tangible formats should be allocated adequate, readily accessible space, located where materials may be retrieved in a reasonable period of time. Ideally, your users should be able to browse the collection.

If your depository information resources are in a separate area within the library, they should be conveniently located for user access to encourage use. Depository public services spaces in the library should be functional, flexible, and expandable. Public areas should be comfortable and provide seating at tables or carrels in sufficient numbers for in-library use of depository materials. Appropriate equipment for the use of depository information resources should be provided and maintained in sufficient numbers to meet demand, including photocopiers, equipment for reading and reproducing microforms, and appropriate hardware and software for using and downloading electronic depository information resources such as CD-ROMs, DVDs, or online publications. Attempts should be made to obtain hardware that meets the latest Workstation Specifications.

If a tangible electronic information resource acquired though the FDLP is not loaded and/or supported on your depository library computer workstation, your library should attempt to provide access to it within a designated timeframe (determined by your library). As an alternative, your library should provide for the circulation of depository materials in accordance with the library's circulation policies.

Depository libraries MUST post signage or the depository emblem in a prominent location, preferably visible from the exterior of the library, indicating the library is a Federal depository and government information resources are available for use by the general public without charge. Free decals and other promotional materials are available from the Government Printing

Office (GPO) and can be ordered online .

4.2.I Online Access

Your depository MUST provide users access to depository materials regardless of format. Your depository library should have a written policy regarding public services for government information in electronic formats. This policy should contain provisions for no-fee access to computer workstations with CD-ROMs, DVDs, diskettes, and the Internet.

Any local computer security measures applied to the computer workstations in the depository MUST be consistent with the principles and access requirements of the FDLP. The following is permissible by your library:

- Log-in or sign-up sheets may be used; however, confidentiality of these records MUST be assured and consistent with applicable privacy statutes.
- Special passwords may be used.
- Use or access may be mediated or unmediated based upon filtering functionality (see Electronic Access and Filtering above).
- E-mail capability of Web browser(s) on public workstations may be blocked; however, there should be capabilities provided for printing and downloading and/or transmission of electronic data, for example ftp, and for your depository library public service area to deliver government information to distance users (for example, by fax and e-mail), in accordance with existing policies in the library.
- Whenever possible, your depository library is encouraged to provide disk space on publicly available computers for temporary storage of electronic government information for public use.
- Use of depository workstations is subject to the library's overall acceptable use policy.
- Users may be charged the "usual and customary" fees and subjected to "usual and customary" limits for printing, downloading, and storage media such as diskettes. Any fees or limits imposed by the depository SHALL be consistent with other public service fees or limits within the library.

For additional information concerning access to online resources in your depository, see the following:

- FDLP Internet Use Policy Guidelines
- Depository Library Public Service Guidelines for Government Information in Electronic Formats

- Public Access to Electronic Government Information Provided through Federal Depository Libraries
- Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection Policy Document

If there is any question that the access procedures or policies of your depository library could be seen as inhibiting free public access, the library should askGPO .

4.3 Reference and Research Services for Your Depository Users

This section defines reference and research services, explains the principle of comparable treatment in public services for reference and research services, and discusses training for staff providing reference and research assistance to depository users. Research assistance includes identifying information, as opposed to specific publications, by subject or agency and help with complex electronic products, software, Web sites, and databases.

4.3.A Principle of Comparable Treatment for Reference and Research Services

Reference service offered to members of the general public using your depository collection MUST be comparable to the reference service provided to your library's primary users. Ideally, the reference services for users of the depository collection should be blended into the reference services for the library collection as a whole.

Comparable reference and research service, in terms of the hours of service, the degree of assistance, and the professional expertise of staff, should be extended to members of the general public using depository resources just as those services are made available to the library's primary users. The number of staff providing research and reference service will depend on the size and scope of the library and the depository collection, as well as the method of organization of the depository collection. Your depository staff may be in a separate Government Documents unit or they may be part of other library units such as Technical Services or Reference Services for the overall library. To learn more about staffing requirements, see chapter 10 in this Handbook.

When applying the principle of comparability, your library has flexibility in determining specific policies or methods for providing reference and research services for government information. The 24/7 reference environment, reference services for electronic government information and the needs of remote offsite users of government information pose particular challenges to be taken into account when developing policies for providing reference services.

Reference service in the use of government information at your library should be easy to locate, access, and use. Likewise reference service for remote users should be easy to locate, access, and use on the web. Additionally, users should be able to easily locate, access, and use specific government information resources in all formats.

The library should provide all users with reference assistance with regard to depository information. In each depository library, there should be recognized focal points for inquiries about government information. At this point it should be possible to find:

- resources in the collection, including specific titles;
- location of wanted information in the library;
- answers to reference questions or a referral to a source or place where answers can be found;
- guidance on the use of the collection, including the principal available reference sources, catalogs, abstracts, indexes and other aids including electronic products;
- availability of additional resources in the region;
- assistance in borrowing documents from regional or other libraries through interlibrary loan.

A librarian should be available to handle government information reference queries and research questions from users, with competent ready reference service available to all users. Such service includes the ability to assist users with locating specific documents or information in the depository; ability to locate documents and information online by title and/or class number or other specific access points, as well as providing answers to quick or basic reference questions. Access to indexes and other reference tools should be available to all users of your library.

If your library provides reference services using methods other than in-person contact for your primary user groups (such as by phone, mail, fax, email or chat), these same or comparable methods of obtaining reference service should also be available to members of the public using the depository collection or government information. Policies governing specific aspects of reference service (such as limits on time expended on queries, types of queries accepted through various methods of contact, extent of materials copied or supplied to offsite users and identification requirements for service) are the prerogative of your library, as long as such policies apply to all users of your collections. Reference and research policies should provide for service levels to depository users that meet or exceed those for your primary users.

4.3.B Training for Staff Providing Reference and Research Assistance to Depository Users

The ability to provide more extensive research assistance to users of the depository is strongly encouraged. Research assistance includes identifying information, as opposed to specific publications, by subject or agency and help with complex electronic products, software, Web sites, and databases. On-going training for staff providing reference and research assistance to depository users is important to keep skills current, to be aware of new government information products and to be able to use transitioning collections and provide transitioning services. See chapter 13 in this Handbook for more information on transitioning depository libraries.

For training opportunities, you should consult FDLP Deskop Tutorials area and the community calendar
on FDLP Community site, where librarians can post training opportunities. The Desktop also includes information on the
Interagency Depository Seminar
and
Federal Depository Library Conference and Depository Library Council meetings
which also offer opportunities for training.

You should also check the training and educational resources available through ALA GODORT . More training may be available from library associations or consortia or government agencies such as the
Census Bureau
.

Research assistance from other depository coordinators is available from statewide e-mail discussion groups or through national e-mail discussion groups such as GOVDOC-L or MAPS -L .
Resources such as the
GODORT Handout Exchange
and topical directories of government information such as the University of Colorado at Boulder Government Publications department's
Subject Guides
, the
University of Michigan Documents Center
web site,
GODORT's Frequently Used Sites
Related to U.S. Federal Government Information,
Browse Topics
at OSU, and

USA.Gov
offer reference tools and guides for more extensive research questions.

Extended assistance and training for all users in the location and use of government information in all formats, including major reference tools and resources such as catalogs and indexes, and key government information Web sites or electronic resources such as GPO Access or American FactFinder
, is strongly encouraged. These could be provided either in person, through printed handouts or help documentation, interactive online tutorials or Web pages. Examples of handouts and instructional materials for specific tools or subjects can be found at the
GODORT Handout Exchange
. For a tiered outline of skills useful when providing services to electronic government information and links to resources to acquire proficiency in each area, see
GODORT's E-competencies
.

4.3.C Reference and Research Referrals

The FDLP is a cooperative program that enables libraries and librarians to share access to, and services in the use of, depository collections. Referrals occur when, after you have exhausted the skills and resources of your depository library, you provide the user with information about other depository or non-depository libraries, or with government information resources available locally or nationally, that could further assist the user in his/her research.

Your library can easily facilitate access to tangible government publications it does not own by locating depository libraries that own the publication and providing full bibliographic information to the user. Within the parameters of your local reference and research policies, your library has the flexibility to determine appropriate follow-through, such as requesting a photocopy on the user's behalf, directing users to a nearby depository library with the item, initiating an interlibrary loan, or directing your users to a local library for interlibrary loan.

It may not always be possible for your depository library to fully answer every reference query or each in depth research question; your library many not be able to provide assistance in the use of every electronic product or to support every format of government information available, such as 5.25-inch floppy discs. Therefore, information about additional local and national depository and government information resources available to the user should be offered to users in such circumstances.

To do so, you should be aware of the resources available at neighboring depositories and at the regional depository. You should not only refer your users to other depository libraries for access to unique collections or unique expertise, but you should also offer your own expertise, collections, and resources to users referred by other depositories or organizations. This is reciprocity.

Depository libraries are encouraged to develop home pages or bookmarks for government information and to work cooperatively with other depository libraries in their area to provide links to prominent or useful sites for the general public.

Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) offers tools to help you become familiar with the collections of your regional library and neighboring depositories. The Catalog of Government Publications (CGP), Federal Depository Library Directory and Documents Data Miner 2 can assist in locating appropriate libraries and collections. Awareness of equipment or technical expertise available at local depositories can facilitate access to less common tangible electronic formats or assistance with more specialized software and information resources.

Before referring users, you should be familiar with the resources and expertise within your own institution that can supplement service to users. For instance, the systems or information technology (IT) staff within your library or larger parent organization may be able to assist the depository staff in the use of specialized equipment required to use some government resources.

You should also have knowledge of the available reference expertise in specific topical areas for referral of complex reference and research questions. Resources to help identify such expertise include e-mail discussion groups such as GOVDOC-L , MAPS-L , and regional depositories.

4.4 Circulation of Depository Materials including Interlibrary Loan

This section defines circulation and explains the principle of comparable treatment in public services as it applies to circulation policies and interlibrary loan.

4.4.A Definition of Circulation

Circulation refers to the distribution or transmission of government information products from place to place or person to person. Tangible items circulate in the physical environment either within the library or outside of the library. Electronic items may be disseminated online through online public access catalogs, web sites, e-mails, or some other technology. They may be pulled (meaning the user searches the online catalog or web site to locate the information and uses it), or the information may be pushed (meaning the information is automatically pushed out to the user through electronic means such as selective dissemination of information).

4.4.B Principle of Comparable Treatment in Public Services, Circulation Policies, and Interlibrary Loans

Your library has the option of establishing its own circulation policies for the use of depository materials outside the library. However, the principle of comparable treatment in public services of depository and non-depository collections should be used in determining circulation policy for depository materials. For example, if a library's non-depository reference or microformat collections are non-circulating, select depository materials designated as reference tools or depository materials in microformat could also be non-circulating. Circulation of materials that cannot be easily used in the library is recommended. Examples include tangible electronic products for which a library cannot provide adequate hardware, software or user support.

Circulation periods, fines for lost or overdue depository materials, circulation to non-primary clientele and other circulation policies of your depository library are a local decision, however, the policies should follow the general principle of comparable treatment in public services.

Although interlibrary loan policies are a local decision, depository libraries should provide depository materials on interlibrary loan except for heavily used information products. All depository libraries should have a policy of providing photocopies of depository materials in traditional formats to other libraries consistent with that for non-depository materials.

4.5 Marketing to Your Users

The FDLP was established to provide the citizens of the United States with access to Federal Government information. Public access remains the highest priority of depository libraries. Public access begins with public awareness; it also includes internal and external promotion, and outreach efforts.

Your library should make every effort to ensure the public is aware of the depository collection and the services available in the use of government information. Publications MUST be stored in accessible locations.
Depository promotion should extend to all potential user groups of your library including your own library staff, the library's primary users, and the general public. Depository outreach in the surrounding communities should be ongoing and increase visibility of the depository, depository resources, and depository services.

While the utility of government information is well documented, the informational resources of many Federal depositories remain underutilized. Usage of depository materials varies widely from library to library, depending on the visibility and the accessibility of the documents collection in the libraries. Because underutilized depository collections are not cost-effective, it is in the best interest of your library to engage in public awareness, depository promotion and outreach. Increasing public awareness, and therefore usage of the depository, will provide additional justification for your library administrator to increase funding, staffing, and materials in the depository

4.5.A Public Awareness

Public access to government information begins with public awareness. In order to benefit from the resources of Federal depository libraries, the American public needs to be alerted to these valuable informational resources provided at taxpayers' expense. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways including signage, bibliographic control, web sites or pages, flyers, brochures, and other handouts.

4.5.B Signage

Depository libraries MUST post signage or the depository emblem in a prominent location, preferably visible from the exterior of the library, indicating the library is a Federal depository and government information resources are available for use by the general public without charge. Free decals and other promotional materials are available from GPO and can be ordered online (http://www.fdlp.gov/order/index-23.html).

4.5.C Bibliographic Control

The single most important action your depository can take to increase public awareness and usage of depository resources is to provide access to those resources through the library's online public access catalog. For more information, see chapter 6 of this Handbook.

4.5.D Web Sites or Pages

Library Web sites or pages are a popular 21st century vehicle for publicizing depository collections and services. Your depository library is encouraged to develop web sites, homepages or bookmarks for government information and to work cooperatively with other depository libraries in your area to provide links to prominent or useful sites for the general public. Links to current news topics can incorporate both documents and non-documents. Examples might include controversial Supreme Court decisions, elections, pending legislation, and natural disasters. Academic librarians often use subject-oriented Web pages for classroom instruction. For assistance in developing a Web page, refer to the GODORT template (http://www.ala.org/ala/godort/godortcommittees/gitco/govinfotemplate.cfm) and download FDLP graphics to place in a prominent location on depository library web pages (http://www.fdlp.gov/promotion/promographics.html).

Library web sites and pages are an excellent way to publicize access to depository collections and services in the use of Federal Government information. Information posted on a web site or page MUST not conflict with the provisions of
Title 44, United States Code
, chapter 19 or other written policies of the depository library program that ensure public access to FDLP resources.

4.5.E GPO Marketing Program

GPO provides depositories with free promotional materials including folders, bookmarks, pamphlets, posters, decals, and classification charts. You can order these materials through the Desktop — Promotional Materials section. You can create packets to distribute at library programs, or simply put them out for users to take as needed.

Many agencies will also provide the library with free publications to distribute to the general public. One of the best sites for receiving bulk orders of consumer information pamphlets is the Federal Trade Commission
. An excellent comprehensive resource for consumer publications is the Consumer Information Catalog which can be obtained through the
Federal Citizen's Information Center
or
viewed online
via pdf

4.5.F Internal Promotion of Your Depository

Your depository can be thought of as a library within a library; depository operations, therefore, mirror all the functions of the larger library of which it is a part. Your depository library should not be thought of in isolation, but as an integral part of the larger library. Internal promotion consists of cross-training, circulating e-mails, routing interesting government documents, conducting tours, and other activities which promote your depository to internal staff, faculty, and administrators.

4.5.G Cross-Training

As a part of the larger library, all levels of library staff, from director to clerical worker, should be aware of the unique resources of your depository collection. Public service staff throughout the larger library should be familiar with the documents collection, the formats available, and how to access online publications. Cross-training library staff also develops library-wide expertise and awareness of government resources in your depository. If your depository reference service is integrated with the reference services for the larger library, all reference staff play a role in providing access to, and service in the use of, government information resources.

Technical service librarians and others can benefit from instruction on the many unique aspects of depository operations. While specific times for cross-training such staff should be developed, many activities can be conducted on an on-going basis. For instance, you should always be on the alert for government publications that other staff would find useful for reference, teaching or personal interest.

Other effective ways you can promote the depository internally include circulating e-mails pertaining to current news events that are document related, routing interesting document titles and shipping lists, conducting individual tours of the documents department for new staff members, creating mini-training sessions before the library opens, and sponsoring formal training sessions to teach staff how to answer difficult user questions about government information resources.

In a successful depository, services to depository users are often fully integrated into the overall services to all users, and library personnel know and can enthusiastically recommend depository resources to all users.

4.5.H External Promotion of Your Depository

Your depository library should also develop strategies for promoting the depository operation to the library's primary users and the general public. External promotion may target all of the users

of your depository or specific user groups that may be under-served.

4.5.I Targeting All Users

Displays, bibliographies, brochures, flyers, Web pages, current awareness announcements, and other traditional library promotional tools are typically employed to target all users. These tools often highlight resources and services in the use of resources that are of general interest or resources that have public demand or media attention.

You can create a display of colorful, controversial, unusual or provocative documents. Such a display can dispel the myth that documents are "dry, boring and legalistic." For examples of displays created by other depositories, see the Government Documents Display Clearinghouse . Generally, the more creative and library-specific a promotion is, the more effective you will be in attracting people to the depository.

4.5.J Targeting Specific User Groups

If you are a depository in an academic or special library, you can contact department or division chairs, student organizations or clients to inform them of the unique services and benefits the depository offers the user group. A review of future class offerings is one way to get started. The depository coordinator might assist a faculty member in structuring a library assignment, creating or contributing to a class Web page, participating in class conferencing, or teaming up with a subject specialist to present an instructional session using government information resources.

If you are a depository in a public library, you will probably have a community resource file which could be used as a starting point to identify potential user groups. A letter explaining the depository program and some of the subject areas in your collection, relevant to the group being contacted, is a good first step. Then follow up with an offer to speak to the group or to help with research or special projects. Because the memberships of such community organizations change, this project could be repeated every 2 to 3 years. An example is to speak to nonprofit groups about the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, Grants.gov , and using American FactFinder
to retrieve statistics for grant proposals.

Of course, external promotion includes contact with individuals either in casual conversation or through formal notification of recent acquisitions or other holdings in their areas of interest.

4.5.K Outreach

Promotional activities can no longer be confined to the four library walls. Depository coordinators are finding it necessary to reach out to users and non-users by leaving the depository and going to where they are. Getting outside the depository is the best way to attract non-users.

Find opportunities to exhibit or present subject-specific workshops at local conventions or conferences; this is a good way to reach out to non-users. Many school districts offer educational opportunities for teachers. Some have days dedicated to training. Contact your local school districts to become a part of these activities. Promote the free resources of the Federal Government available for teachers and students. Some of these resources include lesson plans and teacher kits. Some useful sites to use might be Federal Resources for Educational Excellence , American Memory Learning Page , Ben's Guide .

Another form of outreach is through local media outlets. Your library's depository status, resources, and services could be highlighted on the local cable television's scrolled community announcements. Contact the local radio and television stations. They all run public service announcements and are often interested in generating programming that would be educational or service oriented. FDLP Public Service Announcement and Articles are provided by the Superintendent of Documents. Contact local newspapers to invite a reporter to visit your depository.

4.6 Practical Suggestions You Can Use to Promote Your Depository

- Provide top-notch public service that goes beyond users' expectations, and word-of-mouth will ensure a certain amount of public awareness.
- Make sure the unique resources and services of your depository are mentioned in any literature about the larger library, appear on library Web pages, and are mentioned during library-wide tours or orientations.
- Celebrate significant depository milestones (the 500,000th document, a special anniversary, a new service) and invite members of Congress, library administrators from the region, and the local media. GPO offers free materials for Federal depository library anniversary promotions .
- Never miss an opportunity to visit another depository library. A neighboring depository

operation may have some good promotional ideas you can use. Adapt a promotional activity that has been used successfully in promoting other types of information or services in your own library.

- Share information on successful public awareness activities at your depository by submitting articles to DttP: Documents to the People or other publications related to literature and government resources. Share such information at workshops and documents related meetings.
- Develop special alcoves in the documents area for heavily requested depository material. A "statistics center" with census materials or a depository CD-ROM center might be worth establishing in your depository.
- Invite groups from the community, such as school groups, social or fraternal organizations, or other interested parties, to tour the depository.
- Contact all public and academic libraries in your area and make sure they know to refer users to your depository.
- Consider selective housing arrangements and other strategies of networking with neighboring libraries or other departments within your larger institution.
- Develop a subject-oriented Web page that includes government documents, and register it with Yahoo, Google, or related search engines. Publicize locally any Web awards you receive.

- Expand information and training for other librarians, faculty, students, local government, etc., by reaching them where they are. Attend their meetings and conferences, offer to present a specialized program for them, or prepare a poster session for display at meetings.
- Collaborate with your users to integrate government information into their own work and research:
- In academic libraries, work with other librarians and faculty to integrate government information into the curricula.
- In public libraries, meet with government officials, schools, and local organizations to help them with specific information sources such as census data.
- In specialized libraries, work with primary users to deliver information efficiently for their special needs.

- Working through public relations, contribute newspaper or professional articles concerning special resources or services.
- Contribute articles to the new FDLP Desktop concerning special events, training activities, awards and recognition such as the Federal Depository Library of the Year .
- For more ideas, see Promoting Depository Collections and Services .

4.7 About the Federal Depository Library of the Year Award

The Federal Depository Library of the Year Award was established in 2003 as a special way to promote and market depository libraries. The award provides national recognition for a library that furthers the goal of the Federal Depository Library Program by ensuring that the American

public has free access to its Government's information through all of the following areas:

- Outstanding service in meeting the Federal Government information needs of the users in your library's service area;
- Creativity and innovation in developing specific community programs for use of Federal Government information or a dramatic increase in your community's use of Federal Government information; and
- Leadership in creating public service programs that can be emulated by other Federal Depository Libraries.

The Federal Depository Library of the Year demonstrates the following attributes:

- A documented knowledge of the Federal Government information needs in the library's service area;
- Knowledgeable depository staff to assist users in the identification and use of the Federal Government information that best meets their needs;
- Excellent bibliographic control practices that enhance public access;
- Outstanding public services including significant marketing and promotion of the collection and the services available in the library and in the community;
- Substantial cooperative efforts with other depository and non-depository libraries to share knowledge and resources with a larger community;
- Access to a well-defined collection of Federal depository tangible and electronic resources adequate to meet the needs of the library's service area; and
- Exceptional care and preservation of the depository collection.

Requests for nominations are announced on FDLP Desktop, usually in the spring. A selection committee that includes the Superintendent of Documents evaluates, rates, and ranks the nominations. The winning library is notified in a timely manner to allow travel plans to be made for the depository coordinator and library director to attend the fall Depository Library Conference and Council Meeting. Past winners, libraries of current Depository Library Council members, and libraries on probation are ineligible for consideration.

The library director and the depository coordinator from the winning library are funded to travel to Washington, D. C. to accept the award honoring their library as the Federal Depository Library of the Year. The presentation is made at the fall Depository Library Conference, the largest gathering of government documents librarians in the country. This is a good opportunity for the depository coordinator and director from the winning library to showcase their library's best practices and outstanding public service. The award is a great marketing tool for the

winning library.

4.8 Tips, Practical Advice, and Lessons Learned

- Your depository library should write a public services policy that includes the public service functions listed in this chapter.
- Examples of handouts, instructional and promotional materials, and tutorials for specific tools or subjects for your users and the library staff, as well as policies on access, Internet use, and public services for government information in electronic formats can be found at the GODORT Handout Exchange
.

- GODORT's E-competencies document provides a tiered outline of skills useful for providing services in the use of electronic government information and links to resources to acquire proficiency in each area.
- Develop Web guides, training aids, and instructional programs for library staff as well as library users. As libraries consolidate service points and departments, more library staff members who are not government information specialists are providing reference services for users seeking government information; this creates opportunities for you to promote greater knowledge of government information resources, to educate staff about the legal requirements of the FDLP and to make staff aware of the principles of the program. Continuous cross-training of all reference staff is critical. While a strong culture of referral and consultation with government information specialists is strongly encouraged, users are more efficiently and effectively served when all reference personnel can provide some level of government information reference.
- Since users looking for government information may approach any service point or person initially, all library staff that provides services directly to the public should be aware of the access and service requirements and the policies for Federal Government information. Maintain clear, updated, and easily accessible summaries of policies and procedures relating to access and service for depository resources and provide them to all staff members of your library.

- Maintain awareness of your cataloging and technical service processes, including your library's policies in this area since they frequently have a large impact on public services. For example, the way the library catalog displays information can have a strong influence on your users' ability to easily locate government information. Shared library catalogs facilitate increased awareness of government information resources at other depositories, promote resource sharing, and facilitate referrals.
- Visit nearby depository libraries and your regional depository library to get a better understanding of their collections and areas of expertise including the specific reference tools and resources available. These visits help establish people and resource networks that can assist you in providing better services to your users.
- Monitor and participate in local, regional or national government information groups either in person or electronically through their e-mail discussion groups. Lists such as GOVDOC -L and M

APS-L
provide invaluable access to other government information specialists' expertise. Most states also have an active
GODORT organization
. Subscribe to the
Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed
on GPO Access or from the
FDLP Desktop
to keep current on news and issues in the FDLP program.

- Cultivate good relationships with your library's technical and systems staff, and provide input into technology-related policies affecting user access to government information. The policies, procedures, and personnel of the larger library and library information technology environment often have a significant impact on public services for electronic government information.
- Create or participate in library or regional public service standards, and establish regular and quantifiable measurements of service to help assess and improve public services in your library. Examples of service standards and public service measures include the Metrodocs Libraries Service Standards
and the Association of Research Libraries' LIBQUAL+ program.

- Get ideas for displays to promote depository collections at the Government Documents Display Clearinghouse and by networking with your colleagues online or at meetings.

- Ensure your library Web pages are handicapped-accessible. The W3C Markup Validation Service can check the coding of a Web page formatted with HTML or XHTML for errors.

- If your library policy is to have filters on all public computers, talk to your administrator about the need to be able to override the filter for free public access to government information resources. Library staff should be able to override or turn off the filter for depository users. Use or access to depository resources may be unmediated or mediated.
- Public access computer workstations may require user authentication for security reasons; however, signage (on computers, posted at tables, on desks) MUST indicate that users may inquire at the public service desk for assistance. Your library may provide guests the ability to log in at a workstation or staff may log them in at authenticated stations. At a minimum, if all workstations providing Internet access require authentication, your users should be directed to public service desks for assistance through mediated searching.

- Libraries should address the provision of depository information to minors that might otherwise be subject to restricted access. Any Internet security policies MUST insure depository resources are not denied to your users because of their age.

4.9 Did you realize that you don't have to...?

- Provide free printing or photocopying. Your depository library may charge the same fees for printing and photocopying depository information resources that it charges for non-depository materials to be copied or printed. Downloading, however, MUST be available without fees. Your depository library is not required to provide storage media, such as floppies or USB drives, unless they are provided for users of non-depository materials. In that case, the same charges may be applied.

- Circulate depository materials. Your depository library has the option of establishing its own circulation policies for the use of depository materials outside the library.
- Maintain identical public service hours at the general reference and documents service desks.

4.10 Important for Library Administrators

- The Federal Depository Library Program was established to provide the residents of the United States with access to government information. Public access to this information remains the highest priority of all Federal depository libraries.
- Your depository library has a fundamental obligation to provide free public access to depository information resources and to minimize other barriers to public access to the library's depository facilities, collections, and services.
- In general, access to, and services in the use of, depository information resources should equal or exceed those applicable to your other library collections and services.
- Your depository library MUST offer the general public free access to online Federal Government information provided through the FDLP. Such access SHALL be provided to any library user free of fees or other restrictions such as age or residency status.
- Filtering software may restrict access to official FDLP information, for example in the health or biological sciences fields. Therefore, the depository library MUST allow users the option to use workstations without filtering software or have the capability of turning off the filter while searching FDLP information resources.
- If your library provides reference services using methods other than in-person contact for your primary user groups (such as through phone, mail, fax, email or chat), these same or comparable methods of obtaining reference service should also be available to members of the public using the depository collection and government information.
- Your depository library should have a written policy regarding public services for government information in electronic formats that includes provisions for no-fee access to electronic government information in tangible format and on the Internet for all users. Sign age throughout the library and other library policies MUST be in accordance with these policies.

- Your depository library has the option of establishing its own circulation policies for use of depository materials outside the library. However, the principle of comparable treatment in public services of depository and non-depository collections should be used in determining

circulation policy for depository materials.

- The general public MUST be able to access your depository's collections and services outside standard business hours if the library's primary clientele is able to do so. Comparable service to both depository and non-depository materials can be provided through the integration of depository services into an overall reference policy to ensure assistance is available at all times.

- Your depository library SHALL post signage or the depository emblem in a prominent location, preferably visible from the exterior of the library, indicating that your library is a Federal depository and that government information resources and services in the use of those resources are available from your library for your primary users and the general public without charge.
- Remember the FDLP logo should also be placed in a prominent location on your library web site or web pages. This informs online users that your library is a Federal depository and that government information resources and services in the use of those resources are available at your library or through the Web.
- Your depository should develop user behavior policies to address conduct problems of all users regardless of age. See Persistent Problem Patrons: What to Do When a Patron is Violating Library Conduct Policy.
- Depository libraries cannot deny access to depository resources to users because of their age.