GPO | **HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN**
Director

since 1861

April 17, 2025

Ms. Susanne Caro
Chair, Depository Library Council
Government Information Librarian
New Mexico State Library
Sante Fe, NM 87507

Dear Ms. Caro:

This letter is in response to the Depository Library Council's (DLC) December 26, 2024, transmittal of the DLC recommendations resulting from the Fall 2024 Depository Library Council Meeting.

I am encouraged by the interest in mentoring that was expressed at the fall meeting. Mentoring programs are beneficial to staff, their organizations, and, in this case, to the Government Publishing Office as well. Depository librarians are on the front line and have the most direct contact with Government information users. Ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge to serve their patrons, to manage their operations, and to adjust to the digital-first Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is paramount.

The desired outcomes of DLC's recommendations are consistent with the mission of Federal Depository Support Services — to provide excellent customer service and support to empower depository librarians through communication, outreach, training, and guidance. I accept the recommendations and have charged the Superintendent of Documents with implementing them as best we can.

The DLC's recommendations and GPO's responses, attached, are part of the permanent record of GPO's work. They will be published on FDLP.gov for the FDLP community and the public to access.

Please contact Superintendent Matheson if you have any questions about GPO's responses to your recommendations.

Thank you, Ms. Caro, and to all the members of the DLC, for your continued commitment to the FDLP and to furthering GPO's vision of an America Informed.

Sincerely,

HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN

Attachment
cc: Depository Library Council members
        Superintendent of Documents

GPO RESPONSES TO
DEPOSITORY LIBRARY COUNCIL
FALL 2024 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop resources to promote mentorship

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

GPO RESPONSE

GPO understands the importance of mentoring programs and will assist as resources allow. Under the continuing resolution until the end of the 2025 fiscal year, we do not have permission to begin new projects, or funding for new systems. We can explore adding mentoring fields in the FDL Directory as part of ongoing maintenance.

To help identify subject strengths where staff may offer answers, GPO encourages depository coordinators to populate the existing "Depository Highlights" field in the FDL Directory with their collection strengths. Also, 2025 is a biennial survey year and, to gauge how widespread the mentoring interest is, a question will be included in the survey.

GPO can support discussion opportunities by hosting meetings on our webinar platform by request. GPO also encourages depository library staff to participate in other discussion opportunities available to them (as GPO teammates do too), such as the ALA GODORT Friday Chats.

GPO recently hired a new Federal Depository Support Services unit training administrator. Her planning will consider your recommendations to enhance the FDLP Academy.

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

- Monitor the trend of decreasing physical access to depository libraries and update the guidance and requirements regarding public access accordingly, with appropriate flexibilities for the digital FDLP.
- Increase outreach efforts to depository library staff, whose roles and responsibilities are still shifting and evolving, to gain a better understanding of the needs and challenges they are facing. Provide guidance and assurances as appropriate.

- Revisit and update the COVID questions for the upcoming 2025 Biennial Survey to better reflect the current needs and nature of the FDLP in a digital and post-COVID world. Include a question in the 2025 Biennial Survey to determine the causes of decreased physical access to library collections. The Working Group welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with GPO on devising the questions.

GPO RESPONSE

GPO is following public access trends in depository libraries. A question will be included on the 2025 Biennial Survey about access practices, including physical access. A revision of our guidance to depository libraries has begun, with special attention to providing effective public access.

In-person and virtual outreach efforts to depository libraries have increased. In October 2024, GPO released *State of the Federal Depository Library Program, 2022-2023,* The report highlights selected 2023 Biennial Survey data, as well as information gleaned by Library Services and Content Management staff during visits and other interactions with depository library personnel and administrators. Outreach and communication with depository library staff are critical to our understanding of their needs. What we learn feeds into our process of updating our guidance and requirements.

In accordance with the Depository Library Council's previous recommendation, the 2025 biennial survey will be the last one to ask specific COVID-related questions. GPO appreciates the efforts of the Depository Library Council's COVID Working Group, which is exploring the pandemic's impacts on Federal depository libraries, and thanks them for working with GPO to develop appropriate survey questions.

Recommendation 3: Develop resources to aid FDLs in adjusting to changes in the Program.
1. Create an online space for those who work with government information to engage in ongoing discussions regarding the collection development, ILS, consortia, discovery layers, access, and other issues related to the digital-first FDLP. For example, an authorized platform such as Discord.
2. Develop and solicit from the greater FDL community additional resources and training materials on selected topics such as PURL tracking, GitHub, and uploading records in consortial/shared catalog settings.
   - Explore different types of guidance and training opportunities and expand outreach to highlight existing training materials.
   - Create and broadly disseminate a chart highlighting choices and methods for obtaining digital records.

- Encourage coordinators to share learning opportunities with general cataloging staff in their libraries, given that a high number of cataloging staff are not dedicated to FDLP materials.
3. Create a resource, such as a LibGuide or wiki, where known issues and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are posted
   - Review, revise, and share documentation to provide an overview of retention rules for print and online sources.
   - Explain that digital publications are not subject to the five-year retention rule and may be withdrawn at any time.
   - Acknowledge that depository libraries are not required to add catalog records for digital government publications.
   - Update the Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program to include changes resulting from the digital-first FDLP.

GPO RESPONSE

As mentioned in our response to Recommendation 1, GPO is currently unable to pursue new system development. Further, we must comply with strict security measures that often prevent us from using tools that are widely available and free. However, GPO can work with you to support discussion opportunities by hosting meetings on our webinar platform. And we offer a wide array of webinars and support documentation.

GPO had great success when e-resources librarians were encouraged to attend the initial meetings of the National Collection Service Areas in 2023. And similarly, there was a large turnout of catalogers at the Fall 2024 Federal Depository Library Conference. To further encourage attendance of non-government information librarians at depository libraries, GPO will include a reminder to include non-depository colleagues on registration announcements for webinars, FDL Conferences, and Depository Library Council meetings.

We encourage members of the Federal depository community to conduct webinars and give presentations during the FDL Conference, after which their programs remain accessible through the expansive [FDLP Academy Training Repository](#). Training topics are wide-ranging and include a webcast series on [GitHub](#) and [Analyzing Usage of Digital FDLP Resources](#). LSCM's Metadata and Collection Services developed an [Information Portal](#) where one can find GPO resources for cataloging along with other free resources for cataloging Government documents. FDLP.gov includes pages like [Sources of GPO Cataloging Records](#) (We are exploring

how to present that information as a chart). There is a searchable [FAQ component](#) in askGPO. The three topics up front include FDLP and Digital FDLP.

GPO does not have the expertise to provide training for uploading cataloging records into local library systems. We welcome volunteers from the depository community to share their experiences in GPO-sponsored webinars and conferences. One library shared their success at the fall Depository Library Conference, and Angela Bonnell will present, "A Consortial Cataloging Records Success Story", at the upcoming meeting in May.

GPO is revising FDLP requirements and guidance, paying close attention to the revisions needed to reflect the digital-first FDLP. The requirements for digital content, print, and other tangible publications will be clearly delineated.