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Public Access Assessments

Focus on free public access and related best practices

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Overview

Public Access Assessments (PAA) program
focuses on public access requirements and is
outcomes-based

Depositories following legal and program
requirements to ensure free public access is
provided are in compliance with the law and
shall be successful in a Public Access
Assessment

our strategic vision in progress

Update

<http://www.fdlp.gov/paa/about.html>

- Includes Focus on Access, Collections, & Service Request for GPO Participation
- Under Outreach & Education on the FDLP Desktop

Presented about PAA at 5 statewide meetings

Second PAA librarian selected

Available soon

Federal Depository Library Handbook chapter on Public Access Assessments

“Checklist” corresponding to Focus on Access, Collections, and Service

- PAA librarians will use as a resource to facilitate consistent review of individual depositories.
- The form will be available as part of PAA documentation.

Checklist example (Access)

Access to Federal Government information products is equal to or exceeds that provided for other collections in the library.

Sources for review:

Library Web page, institution Web page, library access policy, depository access policy, phone recording, published promotional material, signage in library building

2007 Biennial Survey: 3b, 4, 4a, 4b, 5d, 6, 8, 9, 9b, 21, 21a, 22, 24, 25, 28, 28a, 28b, 29, 29a, 29b

Yes

No. Describe: _____

The first sentence above is an element in Focus on Access, Collections, and Service.

Refers to principle of comparable treatment in public services.

Checklist example (Collections)

Libraries maintain their collections by technical processing of new receipts for access in an appropriate time period and properly storing and caring for all the resources acquired through the FDLP.

Sources for review:

Library collection development and/or maintenance policy or procedures manual, GPO's official file for the library

2007 Biennial Survey questions: 3 – 14

Yes

No. Describe: _____

Uncertain about processing time. Contact the coordinator.

The first sentence above is an element in Focus on Access, Collections, and Service.

Coming attractions

Online public feedback form

Self-assessment resource

- Update of Self-Study of a Federal Depository Library for self-assessment and strategic planning on a voluntary basis

Test of PAA processes in summer

Scheduled assessments in winter, 2009

Public feedback form in development

Graphic placed on your library page will link to a fill-in form on the FDLP Desktop.

- Contributor name and contact information will be optional.
- Comments will be shared with the library.
- Library use will now be voluntary.

*What can we do better?
As a valued Federal Depository Library Program user, your feedback is truly appreciated. We would like to hear how we may better serve you. Please provide any comments or suggestions.*

Process: Initial review

GPO review of Biennial Survey submission and library and institution Web pages

- Some issues always result in follow-up, e.g., non-response to Biennial Survey or library's access policy indicates that the library is closed to the public.

Possible results:

- Review satisfactory and report provided to library.
- Follow-up is needed.
- Library requests onsite Public Access Assessment.

Process: Follow-up review

Interview depository coordinator by phone.

If the following will address a question, obtain additional documentation, e.g.,

- Biennial Survey
- Library surveys with info. about depository access, collections, and service
- Policies not posted online
- Self-assessment document (*in development*)
- Regional librarian visit report (*in development*)
- Other (e.g., library annual report, etc.)

Process: Follow-up review (cont.)

Possible results:

- Review satisfactory and report provided to library.
- Follow-up is needed and library is requested to take action and report back within a specific time frame, e.g., 3 months.
 - When satisfactory, report provided to library.
- Follow-up is needed and onsite Public Access Assessment is scheduled.
- Library requests onsite Public Access Assessment.

Final review: Onsite visit

Possible results:

- Satisfactory and report provided to the library.
- Follow-up is needed and library is requested to take action and report back within a specific time frame, e.g., 3 months.
 - When satisfactory, report provided to library.
- Report is provided to the library outlining needed action and is scheduled for another onsite visit after a minimum of 6 months.
- Probationary status a possibility.

Sample public access scenarios

Today, scenarios focus on public access best practices.

See also last fall's program entitled "Council Session - Public Access Assessments" for problematic scenarios.

<http://www.fdlp.gov/repository/fall-dlc-meeting-washington-dc/index.html>

For discussion

Question #1: For each scenario, how would you address these situations to deliver free public access?



For discussion

Question #2: What are some barriers to implementation and how would you overcome these to provide for or enhance free public access?



Scenario 1

A depository library has highly visible “real estate” for depository public services within the library building and on the library’s Web pages.

Scenario 2

Information about all depository library users, including primary patrons and the general public (if different), are included in library policies, Web pages, signage, and other library documentation and all personnel are aware of the policies.

Scenario 3

A depository library regularly promotes the use of depository resources to a wide audience within the library and institution and to the wider community as well.

Scenario 4

Federal depository resources are all described bibliographically in the library's online public access catalog.

Scenario 5

Depositories that have a mostly electronic collection, or are transitioning to become more electronic, exhibit all of the above, with an emphasis on identification and promotion of the online resources.

Follow-up

Question #3:
What other situations
may serve as
best practices
examples?



Questions?

<http://www.fdlp.gov/paa/about.html>

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Public Access Assessments



Overview

Public Access Assessments (PAA) is a revitalized library assessment program. It emphasizes how Federal depository libraries serve general public Federal Government information needs by reviewing how they provide access to and services for their Federal Government information products. Information about the program is available on the FDLP Desktop at <<http://www.fdlp.gov/paa/about.html>>. A new chapter on the program will be included in the first update to the Federal Depository Library Handbook this spring.

The Public Access Assessment program focuses on the outcomes. The processes selected by each depository library to meet public access requirements continue to be a local determination. Depository libraries following legal and program requirements per Title 44 of the U.S. Code and the Federal Depository Library Handbook to ensure that free public access is provided are in compliance with the law and shall be successful in a Public Access Assessment.

“Focus on Access, Collections, and Service” describes the focus and organizational scheme of the Public Access Assessment. The paper was disseminated for comment in November 2007, and the comments were supportive of the direction Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) is taking in the program. LSCM is currently updating this resource as we develop a corresponding “checklist,” a tool LSCM assessment librarians use to facilitate consistent review of individual depository libraries. We will disseminate an update of Focus on Access, Collections, and Service and the checklist for depository library comment in the coming weeks.

LSCM is also developing a self-assessment resource that covers public access requirements and day-to-day depository management issues. This will be an update of the Self-Study of a Federal Depository Library (Federal Depository Library Manual Supplement 3) that may be used for strategic planning and educational purposes in your library on a voluntary basis. We plan later this year to combine this resource and the PAA checklist into a resource that regional librarians may use when consulting with selective depositories.

As the Public Access Assessment focuses on public access requirements and is outcomes-based, general public feedback is emphasized. LSCM is developing a new Web-based feedback form where online researchers may comment about individual Federal depository libraries. By clicking on a particular FDLP graphic included on a library Web page, the researcher will link to a Web form on the FDLP Desktop. GPO receives feedback already through public access complaints and comments made through the 1-800 phone number included on the FDLP building emblem. A procedure for the public feedback process is under development within LSCM.

The depository community will have an opportunity to review and comment on upcoming PAA resources. We will review our process with volunteer depositories this summer. Scheduled assessments for all individual depository libraries will start thereafter in winter, 2009.

Currently, any depository library may request a Public Access Assessment through the Request for GPO Participation Form on the FDLP Desktop. LSCM regularly consults with depository library personnel about public access issues and may also schedule an onsite Public Access Assessment at this time if we have major concerns about a depository's public access. The specifics of the scheduling process for ongoing assessment are still being developed, but we may start the process with assessment of depository libraries about which we already have some concerns based on specific responses to the 2007 Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries. Some of the responses indicate that the depository's selective housing site(s) do not provide public access. A library not submitting the Survey at all will also be scheduled for early review.

Through the Public Access Assessments process, GPO remains informed of the status of individual depositories and also exchanges information with depository personnel about the FDLP, in order to increase its overall efficiency and effectiveness. Our mutual commitment to provide the American public with access to Federal Government information is reinforced.

For discussion

The following examples illustrate some best practices scenarios where free public access to Federal depository resources is provided. They demonstrate examples of desired outcomes to providing free public access.

1. A depository library has highly visible "real estate" for depository public services within the library building and on the library's Web pages.
2. Information about all depository library users, including primary patrons and the general public (if different), are included in library policies, Web pages, signage, and other library documentation and all personnel are aware of the policies.
3. A depository library regularly promotes the use of depository resources to a wide audience within the library and institution and to the wider community as well.
4. Federal depository resources are all described bibliographically in the library's online public access catalog (OPAC).
5. Depositories that have a mostly electronic collection, or are transitioning to become more electronic, exhibit all of the above, with an emphasis on identification and promotion of the online resources.

Questions

1. For each scenario, how would you address these situations to deliver free public access?
2. What are some barriers to implementation and how would you overcome these to provide for or enhance free public access?
3. What other situations may serve as best practices examples?

Additional information regarding the sample scenarios related to Federal depository library free public access best practices

The following content provided for each scenario is not meant to be comprehensive but illustrative of best practices that depositories may adopt, if not already in place, to promote and enhance free public access to Federal depository resources and services to gain access to them.

1. A depository library has highly visible “real estate” for depository public services within the library building and on the library’s Web pages.

In the library building:

- Federal government information products are housed on open shelves and are accessible by browsing.
- These are located within sight of or next to a public services desk.
- They are located on the same floor as the primary entrance to the library building.
- When public service for U.S. Government information resources or the depository collection is located on another floor from the primary entrance to the library, visible and understandable signage is located near the entrance directing library users to the appropriate floor.

On the Web pages:

- The library home page includes a FDLP graphic and indicates the library is a Federal depository library.
- The library home page includes a direct link to a page about U.S. Government information resources.
- A page including information about U.S. Government information collections and services for at the library indicates that the library is a Federal depository library.

2. Information about all depository library users, including primary patrons and the general public (if different), are included in library policies, Web pages, signage, and other library documentation and all personnel are aware of the policies.

- The library has an access policy that includes Federal Government information researchers. The library also has a policy covering access to online Federal Government information resources.
- Federal depository library patrons may also be called U.S. Government information researchers or other similar terms.
- Library and other institution personnel, including institution or building security staff, are regularly trained about Federal depository library access requirements.
- The Federal Government information needs of the library’s users are considered in development of new library policies, Web pages, signage, and other documentation.

3. A depository library regularly promotes the use of depository resources to a wide audience within the library and institution and to the wider community as well.

- The library regularly (e.g., weekly) provides current awareness notices to stakeholders (e.g., local government personnel, teachers, etc.) about useful U.S. Government information resources.
 - The library contacts local or regional organizations regularly (e.g., monthly) and shares information about useful U.S. Government information resources.
 - Public services personnel have the service attitude that a U.S. Government depository publication may be used to answer almost any reference question.
 - The library maintains a regularly changing Web site about U.S. Government information resources that identifies the library as a site where assistance and services are available to access these services.
4. Federal depository resources are described bibliographically in the library's online public access catalog (OPAC).
- All new receipts in all formats are cataloged into the OPAC and the records show piece-level holdings information.
 - All older depository publications in all formats have been retrospectively cataloged into the OPAC with piece-level holdings information.
 - Publications selected in the online only format (EL) are systematically identified, i.e., through review of New Electronic titles for all the item numbers a library selects or through a subscription to a records service from a vendor.
 - For any publication not cataloged into the OPAC, records for these are included in a Web-based publicly accessible database (e.g., MS Access database).
5. Depositories that have a mostly electronic collection, or are transitioning to become more electronic, exhibit all of the above, with an emphasis on identification and promotion of the online resources.
- The library has an up-to-date collection development policy explaining how the online format is preferred by all library user groups. It also explains how the Federal Government information needs of the community continue to be identified and met.
 - The library has a prominent physical space in the library showing that the library is a Federal depository library.
 - The library includes Federal depository library patrons as a user group in their policies, Web pages, signage, and other documentation.
 - Federal Government information resources, especially the services for their access, in all formats are heavily promoted to all depository user groups within the institution and in the community as well.
 - All depository resources, current and previous receipts, in all formats are cataloged.