

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Staffing

Defines the responsible officials and their roles in the depository library program, staffing level recommendations, staff responsibilities, and training opportunities made available to staff in Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) participant libraries

What's New or Important

There is no longer a set formula for determining the number of staff necessary to support your depository collections and services. **Instead, your depository staff numbers and skills MUST be sufficient to meet the functional requirements of the FDLP and the unique requirements in each depository library.**

In some depositories, the larger library's current staff members are more involved in reference services and processing government documents while in other depositories, the larger library staff is developing new skills to leverage electronic government information resources. As a result, some depository libraries find that their staff is augmented and complimented by the staff of the larger library.

Responsible Officials and their Roles in the Federal Depository Library Program

The director of the larger library in which your Federal depository is located is the official responsible for ensuring that the depository operation conforms to the legal requirements of the FDLP.

Most library directors will designate a staff member as the Federal Depository Library Program Coordinator (depository coordinator), although the director can serve in that role in small libraries. A depository coordinator is responsible for the coordination of all depository activities within the library and for acting as liaison to the Superintendent of Documents in all matters relating to depository libraries. Depository activities include public and technical services, collection development and management, maintenance, preservation (if applicable), and administrative responsibilities.

While several staff members may be responsible for different areas of depository operations such as technical services or public services, it is still important to have one staff member designated as the depository coordinator. The depository coordinator should be a librarian. **If the library position that includes responsibility for depository coordination is vacant, your library MUST designate another point of contact to serve until the position is filled.**

A depository coordinator should be responsible to the library administration, either directly or through an intermediate supervisor. **Any depository collection and/or operation outside the jurisdiction of the director of the designated library MUST be covered by a selective housing memorandum of agreement (MOA) (see appendix D in this Handbook for more information) and should also have a depository coordinator.** These selective housing locations are responsible for adhering to the same guidelines as depository libraries, in consultation with your designated depository.

The library director and the depository coordinator should ensure that all appropriate employees are aware of the free public access requirements of Federal depository libraries.

Staffing Level Recommendations

- You should have both professional and paraprofessional staff working with your depository operations (exceptions may occur in small libraries with minimal personnel).
- **Staffing MUST be at levels sufficient to meet depository responsibilities detailed in this handbook. This requirement means that your library MUST assign staff with appropriate professional and technical skills to maintain depository collections and provide programs in a timely manner, consistent with staffing of other library operations.**
- **Public service staffing MUST be adequate to serve your library's primary user community as well as users from the general public.**
- Comparable public service, in terms of hours of service, degree of assistance, and 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 will depend on the size and scope of your library and depository collections, as well as the methods of organization of the depository collection.
- Your depository staff may be in a separate Government Documents unit or part of other library units such as Technical Services or Reference Services.

Access to staff with technical skills is of particular importance as depository collections include a growing number and variety of electronic government

information resources and as more government information is digitized and made available electronically. With the reduction of tangible materials and the increase in available electronic resources, a different level of staffing and expertise is desirable.

The special skills needed for a variety of new tasks might include:

- Identifying electronic resources and integrating electronic records into the catalog;
- Integrating electronic government resources into Web pages and user education tools;
- Providing training for staff and users; and
- Providing public service in an increasingly complex electronic environment.

Staff Responsibilities

As more tangible and online government publications become integrated into library collections, catalogs, and services, shared staffing responsibilities and knowledge of government information become more important. All of your library staff should be informed of and trained in depository functions and resources, thus ensuring and improving access to government information. Cross-training should be provided for staff involved in all areas of depository library work, including public services, technical services, and technical support.

Though many library staff may participate in depository operations, your depository coordinator in most depositories has the ultimate responsibility for:

- Acting as liaison to the Superintendent of Documents, including replying to correspondence and surveys such as the [Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries](http://www.fdlp.gov/bsurvey/about.html) (<http://www.fdlp.gov/bsurvey/about.html>) and participating in the item selection update cycle;
- Interpreting the FDLP to the administrative levels of the library and assuring that changes in library procedures and policies take into account the requirements of the FDLP;
- Fulfilling administrative duties such as preparing budgets and submitting reports; and
- Performing or training staff to perform the depository functions outlined in this handbook, such as:
 - ♦ Public services, including providing reference and instruction services for in-person and remote users;
 - ♦ Promotion, including promoting the depository collection to library staff, the library's primary users, and the general public through outreach programs and ongoing communication, and integrating FDLP resources into library Web and training activities;

- Collections, including collection development, identifying user needs, and carrying out selection and disposal procedures;
- Bibliographic control, including processing, managing catalog records for both tangible and electronic publications, and maintaining statistics;
- Preservation and housing, including collection maintenance for tangible materials, computer software and hardware to support access to electronic products and, for some libraries, preservation of electronic products;
- Formal partnerships, including communicating and collaborating with other depository libraries, the regional depository, and the U.S. Government Printing Office; and
- Regional services, including providing consultative and other services to selectives in their region (applies only to regional depositories).

Training Opportunities

Your library is responsible for providing training related to the depository responsibilities of all of the staff involved in depository operations. Opportunities and resources should be provided for the initial and continuing education of both professional and paraprofessional staff. Staff within the depository and throughout the larger library should be sufficiently trained and knowledgeable to provide depository services to the general public. Additionally, training and mentoring could be offered to staff at neighboring or related non-depository libraries to promote the depository as a resource and improve access to government information to the public.

In order to ensure an efficient and effective depository operation, staff who have depository responsibilities should also keep up-to-date on new developments through participation in professional organizations, e-mail discussion groups, attendance at workshops, and professional reading. Depository staff should also attend local and national meetings devoted to depository-related issues.

Tips, Practical Advice, and Lessons Learned

Resources to Consult

- You can keep up-to-date with policies, procedures, and guidelines with the following GPO and FDLP resources and communications:
 - [The FDLP Desktop](http://www.fdlp.gov/) (<http://www.fdlp.gov/>)

- *Federal Depository Library Handbook*
- [askGPO](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/help/index.html) (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/help/index.html>)
- You can share ideas and questions with colleagues through e-mail discussion lists such as:
 - [GOVDOC-L](http://govdoc-l.org/) (<http://govdoc-l.org/>)
 - [DOCTECH-L](http://list.lib.usu.edu/mailman/listinfo/doctech-l) (<http://list.lib.usu.edu/mailman/listinfo/doctech-l>)
 - [MAPS-L](http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/maps-l.html) (<http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/maps-l.html>)
 - Your state or regional e-mail discussion group. Check with your regional librarian for information.

Organizations and Learning Opportunities

- Enhance your knowledge and share your experience by participating in professional organizations and interest groups. Look for local groups and e-mail discussion groups through your regional library and state associations. If there are no local interest groups, consider initiating one. Some national professional groups related to government information include:
 - [American Library Association's \(ALA\) Government Documents Round Table \(GODORT\)](http://www.ala.org/ala/godort/godort.htm) (<http://www.ala.org/ala/godort/godort.htm>)
 - [ALA's Map and Geography Round Table \(MAGERT\)](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/magert/index.cfm) (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/magert/index.cfm>)
 - [Special Libraries Association's Government Information Division](http://units.sla.org/division/dgi/) (<http://units.sla.org/division/dgi/>)
- GPO sponsors three free continuing education events annually:
 - The [Interagency Depository Seminar](http://www.fdlp.gov/events.html), held each summer in Washington, D.C. is designed for depository staff who are new or returning to government documents. Check this web page for more information. (<http://www.fdlp.gov/events.html>)
 - [The Fall Depository Library Conference](http://www.fdlp.gov/events.html), with many programs related to depository issues, is held in conjunction with the fall Depository Library Council meeting in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Information about past conference and proceedings is available at this web page. (<http://www.fdlp.gov/events.html>)
 - A small number of depository-related programs are held in conjunction with the [spring Depository Library Council meeting](http://www.fdlp.gov/events.html), held at a site outside Washington, DC. For more information, check the archive available on this web page. (<http://www.fdlp.gov/events.html>)
- State library associations, regional libraries and state documents groups may sponsor local meetings.

Suggestions for New Staff

- If you are a new depository coordinator, you should contact their regional depository coordinator for assistance and information, including information about the state plan. You can consult examples of [Virginia's State plan](http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/govtinfo/depos/stateplan/VA_StatePlan.doc) (http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/govtinfo/depos/stateplan/VA_StatePlan.doc), a compilation of state plans from the [Library of Michigan's Regional Federal depository library Web site](http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17449_39356---,00.html) (http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17449_39356---,00.html), or see [Chapter 11](#) in this Handbook. New staff working with depository operations may want to attend an orientation at their regional or another depository library.
- Find your regional library, and other depositories of your type or in your state, city, zip code, or area code, on the GPO's [Federal Depository Library Directory](http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/login.jsp) page (<http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/login.jsp>), and update information about your depository library. Be sure your library's information is up-to-date in the FDLP directory.
- Review your library's files, especially past inspection reports, self-studies, and biennial surveys. Learn your depository number and your GPO passwords in your library's files or from other staff members. If you need help with these items, contact the [askGPO](http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/login.jsp) (<http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/login.jsp>) staff from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) at:
 - Toll-Free: 866-512-1800
 - DC Area: 202-512-1800
 - Fax: 202-512-2104
- Contact your neighboring depository libraries to identify potential experts and/or mentors to assist with basic information and to become familiar with local resources.
- Look at the guides created by other libraries on the [GODORT Government Information Clearinghouse and Handout Exchange](http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/godort.html) (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/godort.html>) and [Browse Topics](http://www.browsetopics.gov/) (<http://www.browsetopics.gov/>).
- Find the list of [E-Competencies compiled by GODORT](http://www.ala.org/ala/godort/godortcommittees/gitco/ecomps.cfm) and determine the skills you and other library staff might need to improve (<http://www.ala.org/ala/godort/godortcommittees/gitco/ecomps.cfm>).
- Additional tools for new staff can be found in GPO's "[Top 10 List for New Documents Librarians](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/mgt/top10.html)" (http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/mgt/top10.html).

Did you realize that you don't have to

- Determine staffing needs for a depository collection by using an arbitrary standard or measure. **Current guidelines simply require that professional and paraprofessional staffing levels MUST be sufficient to meet your depository responsibilities.** The number of staff will depend on the size and scope of your larger library and depository collections, as well as the methods of organization of the depository collection.
- Do it all by yourself, or reinvent the wheel. Collaborate with other depositories on cataloging, collection development, or outreach; consult and seek help from your regional; recruit other staff in the larger library to help with reference services or technical processing; and network with staff in other depositories in every way you can.

Important for Library Administrators

- **Your depository library MUST have one staff member designated as the depository coordinator.** This staff member's responsibilities are detailed above in the section on Staff Responsibilities.
- Keep your regional librarian and GPO informed of any changes in depository responsibilities and operations within your library.
- **Despite the fact that depository libraries are receiving fewer tangible publications, the need for staff is not decreasing. Staff are NEEDED for many important tasks:**
 - ♦ **To integrate electronic records into library catalogs;**
 - ♦ **To integrate government information into library Web resources and user education;**
 - ♦ **To train all library staff to use government information resources effectively; and**
 - ♦ **To provide public service in person and remotely, as finding government information becomes more complex in the electronic environment.**
- Staff with depository responsibilities should receive library support for attendance at appropriate local and national meetings. Equally, you, as a library administrator, are encouraged to attend the annual Federal Depository Library Conference to learn about the FDLP.