

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is the history of GPO?

A. The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) was created in 1860 by an Act of Congress, GPO opened its doors for business on March 4, 1861, the same day that Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as President. Through war and peace, boom and bust, GPO has been there, producing and distributing the official publications of our government.

Printers set type by hand under candlelight. Printing presses were driven by steam and deliveries each morning to the Capitol were by horse-drawn cart. Since then, GPO has had to adapt to new technologies and new ways of meeting the information and product needs of Congress, Federal agencies, and the American people.

Today, GPO disseminates the daily *Congressional Record* and the *Federal Register* services in print and digitally while also building the digital tools of the future that will enable our government to work more effectively and efficiently. GPO produced the official edition of the 9/11 Commission's final report in both print and online formats. In 2005, for the Presidential Inauguration, GPO printed a range of materials including invitations, maps, signs, programs, tickets, and other products. Many of these included unique and unprecedented security features prepared specifically for the first inauguration since 9/11.

On February 4, 2008, GPO authenticated by digital signature the Budget of the U.S. Government for the fiscal year 2009. This authentication verifies to anyone who downloads the e-Budget that the content is official and unaltered. This is the first time in history that the President of the United States has submitted his budget to Congress electronically. This truly ushers in a new era for GPO and the Federal Government.

GPO plays a crucial role in our Nation's security by producing passports, which GPO employees have been doing since 1926. Consistent with international standards, we are now including a contactless chip capable of holding biometric information into the printed booklet. The contactless chip is just one of the many security features employed in the design of the new passport.

GPO's main plant in Washington, D.C., a 1.5 million square-foot complex that is the largest in information processing, printing, and distribution facility in the world, located just five blocks from the Capitol. In addition to the agency's production facilities, GPO procures between 600 and 1,000 print-related projects a day through private sector vendors across the country. The majority of the Government's printing needs are met through a long-standing partnership with America's printing industry. GPO competitively buys products and services from thousands of private sector companies

in all 50 States. It is one of the Government's most successful procurement programs, assuring the most cost-effective use of the taxpayers' printing dollars.

Q. How is the GPO managed?

A. GPO is managed by the Public Printer of the United States. The Public Printer serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the GPO. Under the leadership of the Public Printer, GPO oversees production and distribution of information products and services for all three branches of the Federal Government. The Public Printer is nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate.

The position of the Public Printer traces its roots back to Benjamin Franklin and the period before the American Revolution, when he served as "public printer," whose job was to produce official government documents for Pennsylvania and other colonies.

Q. What does the GPO do?

A. The men and women of the GPO have been *Keeping America Informed* on the three branches of Government since 1861. This mission has been achieved by serving as the country's printer in producing and distributing the official documents of our democracy.

GPO is the Federal Government's primary centralized resource for gathering, cataloging, producing, providing, authenticating and preserving published information in all its forms.

GPO plays four roles today that are crucial to the information product operations of the Federal Government:

- a role in the legislative process by producing work for the United States Congress;
- a crucial role in our Nation's security and intelligent documents for Federal agencies, most prominently the electronic passport of the State Department;
- a supportive role to all of the agencies and organizations of the Federal government by helping them meet their printing and communication needs; and
- a facilitating role by working with the library community to provide free, open, and permanent public access to the documents of our democracy through the Federal Depository Library Program.

For additional information, visit www.gpo.gov or call 202.512.0000.

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Q. Who pays for the GPO?

A. Unlike most Federal agencies, GPO operates much like a business — it is reimbursed by its customers for the cost of work performed. GPO also receives two appropriations each year. One pays for the cost of congressional printing, and the other to fund the cataloging, indexing, distribution and online access to Government documents, through the FDLP.

Q. What is GPO Access?

A. *GPO Access* www.gpoaccess.gov is a service of the U.S. Government Printing Office that provides free electronic access to a wealth of important information products produced by the Federal Government. The information provided on this site is the official, published version and the information retrieved from *GPO Access* can be used without restriction, unless specifically noted. This free service is funded by the Federal Depository Library Program and has grown out of Public Law 103-40, known as the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Enhancement Act of 1993.

Q. What is the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP)?



A. Established by Congress to ensure the American public has access to its Government's information, the Federal

Depository Library Program involves the acquisition, format conversion, and distribution of depository materials and the coordination of Federal depository libraries across the country.

The mission of the Federal Depository Library Program is to provide for no-fee ready and permanent public access to Federal Government information, now and for future generations. This is achieved through:

- Organizing processes that enable desired information to be identified and located;
- Expert assistance rendered by trained professionals in a network of libraries;
- Collections of publications at a network of libraries; and
- Archived online information dissemination products from GPO Access, Federal Agency Web sites, and partner Web sites.

The nation's more than 1,250 depository libraries serve as one of the vital links between "We the people" and our Government. Anyone can visit Federal depository libraries and use the Federal depository collections which are filled with information on careers, business opportunities, consumer information, health and nutrition, legal and regulatory information, demographics, and numerous other subjects. Participating libraries may be located via <http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp>

Q. How do I get documents from the GPO?

A. More than 235,000 Federal Government document titles are available to the public via the Internet at *GPO Access* www.gpoaccess.gov.

Printed copies of many of those documents ranging from Supreme Court opinions to reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics may also be purchased in person, online, via phone, fax, email, or postal mail.

To order in person, please visit the GPO Main Bookstore at 710 North Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC (Corner of North Capitol and H Streets) from 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. EST.

To order online, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

To order by phone or inquire about an order, call toll-free **866.512.1800** or, in the D.C. metro area, call **202.512.1800** from 7:00 a.m.- 6:30 p.m. EST.

By fax, dial **202.512.2104**. Send order inquiries to contactcenter@gpo.gov.

Send mail to

U.S. Government Printing Office
P.O. Box 979050
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

All orders require prepayment by VISA, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover/NOVUS credit cards, check, or SOD deposit account.