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The Designation Procedure For Federal Depository Libraries



The Designation Procedure For Federal Depository Libraries

**A Handbook for Senators, Representatives, and Other
Officials who are empowered to designate Federal
Depository Libraries**

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I. Introduction

The Depository Library Program originated in the early 1800's when a joint resolution of Congress directed that additional copies of the House and Senate *Journals* and other documents be printed and distributed to institutions outside the Federal establishment.

From that small beginning, the Depository Library Program has grown into a system of close to 1400 Federal Depository Libraries. These libraries include many of the most prestigious libraries in the country. With few exceptions, all Congressional districts and territories of the United States have at least one Federal Depository Library.

These libraries serve as the primary source for Government information to the people of these areas. Scientists, businessmen, students, and many other Americans depend on the Federal Depository Library System for important Government information. An effective Federal Depository Library can noticeably enhance the economy and the quality of life in its local area. Therefore, the decision as to which library is granted Depository Library status is very important.

This Handbook is designed to assist those Government officials, who are empowered to designate Federal Depository Libraries, in choosing the most promising candidate for depository status.

II. Types of Designations

There are two basic ways in which libraries can be designated Federal Depositories. Most libraries receive depository status by being designated a Federal Depository by an elected or appointed Federal official. But a number of libraries receive status through special provisions of Title 44 *United States Code*. These libraries are designated by the Public Printer after they have supplied proof of their eligibility. Libraries that are automatically eligible for Federal Depository Library status include: highest State Appellate Court libraries, State libraries,

libraries of Land-grant colleges, libraries of executive departments and independent agencies, and the major bureaus and divisions of these department and agencies, libraries of the service academies, and accredited law school libraries. The above mentioned libraries are collectively referred to as "By-Law depositories."

III. Designators

Certain public officials can designate Federal Depository Libraries. These designations are subject to the libraries meeting the requirements for depository library status as listed in Chapter 19, Title 44 *United States Code* and the availability of vacancies in the area the official represents.

Senators—Each U.S. Senator can designate up to two libraries, if there are vacancies available in the Senator's State and listed under his class. The Senator can designate a depository in any section of the State. In designating depositories, Senators usually consider the location of previously designated libraries in an effort to strike a geographic balance between the State's Federal Depository Libraries.

Representatives—Each U.S. Representative can designate up to two libraries, if there are vacancies in the Representative's Congressional district.

Territorial Governors—If vacancies exist, the Governors of both American Samoa and Guam can designate one Federal Depository Library for their respective territories. The Territorial Governor of the Virgin Islands can designate two depositories if vacancies exist in the Virgin Islands. One designation is reserved for the island of St. Thomas; the second designation is reserved for the island of St. Croix.

Mayor of the District of Columbia—The Mayor of the District of Columbia can designate two libraries if there are vacancies within the District of Columbia.

IV. Permanence of Depository Status

Federal Depository Library status is a great honor. It is seen by most libraries as a unique and very valuable asset. Once status is awarded to a library, that library tends to hold the status indefinitely. Public officials who are empowered to designate Federal Depository Libraries cannot remove or replace existing depository libraries. Libraries can only lose status if they voluntarily relinquish their status, or if the Superintendent of Documents removes them from the list of Federal Depositories because they have failed to fulfill their legal obligation under Title 44 *United States Code*. (Libraries rarely lose status.)

It is therefore important for the designating official to consider the long-term impact of designating a particular library. The development of the library and the future growth of the State and/or Congressional district needs to be considered when making a decision on whether or not to designate a particular library.

V. Characteristics of Successful Depositories

Successful depositories share certain characteristics:

These are libraries whose goals are similar to the public service goals of the Depository Library Program. Public libraries, State-supported academic institutions, and private academic libraries which have demonstrated a strong commitment to public service make excellent depositories.

Libraries who request status as opposed to libraries that are offered status usually excel. Libraries that are offered status sometimes accept designation and then leave the Depository Library System within a few years. Libraries that have volunteered for status usually make a long-term commitment to the system.

Libraries that collect materials in a number of subject areas that are of interest to the general public usually provide superior public service. Libraries that are extremely specialized in collection development and clientele can find that it is difficult to coordinate a depository operation with a highly specialized library.

Libraries located in areas of the State and/or Congressional district which have a large or growing populations, and are easily accessible from many surrounding communities, make good candidates for designation.

VI. Questions the Designator May Want to Ask:

Location

Is the library located in the area of the State and/or Congressional district that most needs a Federal Depository Library?

Does the location of the library help or hinder public access?

Can it be easily reached by automobile and mass transit?

Is parking available?

Is the Library close to population centers?

Facilities

Is the library large enough to successfully operate a Federal Depository?

Is the library easily accessible to the physically handicapped?

Does the library have the proper equipment needed to house and access Government documents?

Public Service Commitment

Does the library administration fully appreciate the responsibilities and costs of Federal Depository Status?

Is the focus of the library wide enough to encompass the variety of needs and interests generated by the people of your State and/or Congressional district?

Has the library demonstrated a commitment to public service in the past?

Should the depository vacancy be maintained and kept for the future needs of the State and/or Congressional district?

VII. Procedures for Designating a Federal Depository Library

Although the designating official can solicit requests for designation, most designations are initiated by a library or libraries requesting status. The library or libraries applying for status must submit a formal justification for designation as a depository library. This letter of justification should address the library's eligibility for depository status, the library's unique qualifications for status, and the library's commitment to the goals of the Depository Library System (see example).

Libraries requesting Depository status must apply to the State library agency of their State for evaluation and recommendation. The State library agency evaluation will relate to the candidate library's commitment to serving community interests and indicate staff, space, and budget to be allocated to the collection and the number, scope, and character of the items to be selected.

Libraries in the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands do not have to apply to a State Library agency.

The State Library agency after consulting with other libraries, the local Regional depository, if any, and representatives from the professional associations, will make a recommendation to the Senator or Representative based on the location of the candidate in relation to other depositories, the need for an additional depository, and the ability of the library to provide custody and service.

The State Library agency will send its recommendation letter to the Senator or Representative. Other libraries (including the Regional) and individuals may also submit letters in support of the candidate. The Senator or Representative should appoint one staff person as the contact person. This individual, usually at the Congressman's local office, coordinates the various letters and informs the Senator or Representative when all the letters have been received. After all the letters have been received, the Senator or Representative decides whether or not to award designation to a candidate library.

Once the designating official has decided on a library to be designated, a letter is sent by the official to the Superintendent of Documents (see example) notifying him of the selection. This letter should also be accompanied by any letters, especially the State Library agency's, which support the designation. These materials should be sent to the following address:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20401

If the library is eligible for status, the candidate will be sent "Acceptance of Designation" forms. When these are completed, signed, and returned to the Government Printing Office, the library will be notified of its acceptance. Notification letters will also be sent to the designating official, the State Library agency, and the Regional library (if applicable). The library is then immediately placed on the list of Federal Depository libraries. Any procedural questions should be directed to:

Chief, Inspection Team
U.S. Government Printing Office
Library Programs Service (SLL)
Washington, DC 20401
(202) 275-1119

VIII. Sample Letters

The following "sample" letters are copies of letters that have been used to support past designations. The name of the library and other specific information on that library have been removed. The name of the library has been replaced by the letters NLRD (which stands for "name of library requesting designation.")

These "sample" letters are enclosed merely to give some guidance on the type of arguments usually given in designation requests. They should not be used as form letters. The library requesting designation need not have letters of support from other depositories, or the Regional, but a letter from the Regional is often sent.

Letter From Library to Congressman Applying for Designation

The Honorable _____

Dear Congressman _____:

The (name of library requesting designation (NLRD)) hereby applies for the vacant depository library designation in the (00) U.S. Congressional District of (state). We believe we can provide a service not now available to the residents of (town) in the (00) U.S. Congressional District. No (type) library is currently a depository in the area. The one library that has depository status in the district is some distance from (local area) and residents of our service area lack convenient access to this library.

The (NLRD) is uniquely suited to serve the (00) U.S. Congressional District as a Federal Depository Library. The library has just undergone a major building program. Substantial amounts of quality space would be available for a depository operation. The library is situated in an easily accessible site along major transportation routes.

The library's service area includes a significant amount of the (00) U.S. Congressional district's population. As a (type) library, the library is freely accessible to all members of the general public.

The (NLRD) is a member of the (group), a 70 member consortium. Residents of all communities within (region) may both use and borrow materials from our library. By placing the depository operation in the (NLRD), the entire consortium would benefit. We have consulted with a number of depositories in similar consortia in an effort to determine how best to use depository status to benefit all users of the consortium's libraries.

The (NLRD), with a collection of 200,000 volumes and a \$70,000 book budget, presently serves students, the general public, and our business community with numerous documents, including 13 items on the Appendix A list in the *Guidelines for the Depository Library System*. We are committed to expanding our Government documents service, particularly in areas that would serve our business community. Becoming a depository would allow us to substantially increase our service without substantially increasing our costs. Funds currently spent to purchase Government documents could be spent on commercial publications that would enhance the documents collection.

Our library is housed in a modern, easily accessible building, part of the Civic Center complex. Ample parking, convenient handicapped access ramps and one floor design make the library attractive for public use. The library is open seven days a week for a total of 80 hours. The library provides proper housing for its materials and comfortable surroundings for persons doing research. It has a community meeting room for doing research and in the past year has hosted programs on tax assistance, community development, and many other areas of interest in dealing with Government-related materials. Our quest for designation has the full support of the local Chamber of Commerce, the City Government, and numerous civic groups.

The library maintains a good public relations program, informing the public of its services through regular news releases to the local newspapers, as well as on its own cable television channel within the city. We have an excellent reputation for the quality of our staff and its service, and we will be supported by our City Government in this endeavor.

We realize the Federal depository library status is an honor that is granted to relatively few libraries, and that this status confers recognition from the Congressman or Senator of the special qualities of a library so honored. We fully appreciate the unique and very valuable asset that this status represents and we intend to use it productively.

Our head Reference Librarian, (name of librarian), will be in charge of the depository collection. This librarian has a Master's degree in Library Science, and has been active in the local Government documents interest group. We intend to maintain memberships in a number of professional groups relating to Government documents in order to remain current on the ever changing Government documents field.

We have read the *Guidelines for the Depository Library System* and the *Instructions to Depository Libraries*. We can comply with all the rules and regulations governing Federal Depository Libraries. We have consulted with our regional depository, (name of regional library), the (name) State Library, and the other depository in the (00) U.S. Congressional district of (state), (name of other library). You can expect letters of endorsement from them, following their receipt of copies of this letter. We will be happy to supply you with any additional information you may need, and hope you will recommend us to serve as the second depository of the (00) U.S. Congressional district of (state).

Sincerely yours,

(name)

(title)

(address & phone number)

**Letter From Other Depository
In District of Congressman Supporting Designation**

The Honorable _____

Dear Congressman _____:

The (name of previously designated library) wishes to concur with the request of the (NLRD) for designation as a United States Federal Depository.

The (NLRD) seems well equipped to handle the responsibilities and the challenges that come with depository status. The library would serve an area of the Congressional district that is growing rapidly. It has a good reputation for public service and outreach. The library has anticipated the future needs of the depository operation.

It is clearly evident that the designation of (NLRD) as a Federal Depository Library would insure that service is provided to many deserving residents in the (00) U.S. Congressional district of (state) who do not currently have easy access to a documents collection.

If I can be of further assistance please contact me.

Sincerely,

(name of library director)
(title)

Letter From State Librarian Approving Designation

The Honorable _____

Dear Congressman _____:

I understand that the (NLRD) is interested in being designated as a Federal Documents Depository. It is also my understanding that you have one available designation which could be used for this purpose. As you know, the State Library is required to make recommendations to members of Congress within the State. Since the choice of a depository will effect depository services for years to come, the State Library has taken this responsibility very seriously. I have carefully reviewed the arguments presented to me by the (NLRD,) by the depository already located in your district, and by the Regional librarian.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend to you that you designate the (NLRD) as a Federal Depository Library.

In recent years the (NLRD) has greatly expanded their services and staff. In fact, they have recently opened a magnificent new building which would be an appropriate site for housing Federal documents. As you know, the (local) community is rapidly expanding and location of a Federal depository at the (NLRD) would not only serve people within the local area, but a number of surrounding communities on the Eastern plains.

I believe the (NLRD) understands the responsibilities of a Federal Depository Library. The library's administration and staff seem fully committed to providing superior public service to all members of the general public.

Should you have any questions or need further documentation regarding justification for designating the (NLRD) as a depository, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

(name of State Librarian)
(title)
(address and phone number)

Letter From Regional Depository To Congressman Supporting Designation

The Honorable _____

Dear Congressman _____:

The (name of regional library) wishes to concur with the request of the (NLRD) for designation as a United States Federal Depository.

As you know, your district covers a large area of the State and there is currently no depository easily accessible to residents in the eastern half of the district. As the State's Regional Federal Depository Library, we have gotten a number of referral and interlibrary loan requests from the (NLRD.) This activity indicates a great deal of interest in Government documents from that area of the State.

I have talked to the (NLRD) about the responsibilities and costs of a Federal Depository operation. The library's administration seems to be fully committed to the goals of the Federal Depository Library Program.

The location of the (NLRD) would give good geographic balance for the depositories in your district. The designation of (NLRD) would provide a high level of public service to the citizens in the eastern half of your district.

Its facilities, its location, and its commitment to public service combine to make the (NLRD) a superior candidate for a Federal Depository Library designation.

Sincerely,

(name of regional librarian)

(title)

(address and phone number)

Designation Letter From Congressman To The Superintendent of Documents

(name)
Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20401

Dear _____:

I have received the enclosed letter from the librarian at (NLRD) requesting the vacant Federal Depository library designation in the (00) U.S. Congressional District of (state.)

The librarian's letter contains a number of good arguments for the (NLRD) being designated a Federal Depository Library. The candidacy of the (NLRD) was endorsed by the State Library and recommended by the State's Regional Federal Depository Library. In addition, I have received a number of letters supporting the designation of the (NLRD) as a depository from various interested parties.

After careful review of the arguments presented on behalf of the (NLRD), I feel confident that the (NLRD) is the best qualified candidate to fill the vacancy in my district. Its commitment to meeting the Government information needs of the people of (local area) has been demonstrated in the past and I feel that the library will be able to meet the public service goals of the Depository Library Program for some time to come.

I am therefore pleased to designate the (NLRD) as a Federal Depository Library. Please keep me informed on the progress of this designation by contacting my (local) office.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

(name)
Member of Congress

(Date)



United States Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20401

ASSISTANT PUBLIC PRINTER
(Superintendent of Documents)

Name of Library Head
Address

Dear _____:

I am in receipt of letters from State Librarian, (name of state Librarian) and (title and name of designator), naming the (name of library) as a depository for United States Government Publications.

The Depository Library Act provides that Federal Depository Libraries can select one copy of any publication distributed through the Federal Depository Library Program. Only those publications that meet the Government information needs of the local population and for which the library can provide adequate facilities to receive and house, should be selected. Depositories must contain 10,000 titles, other than those issued under the Federal Depository Library Program. Depositories must also provide for free public access to the depository collection, as well as reference service to assist the public in using depository materials. Since these publications remain the property of the Federal Government, the Superintendent of Documents is required by law to periodically ascertain conditions in depository libraries and to make firsthand investigations of conditions for which need is indicated.

The enclosed forms will enable this Office to include in its records certain pertinent information about your library. Please complete them, sign both copies of the Acceptance of Designation, and return all three forms to this Office. Your library will then be placed on the list of Federal depositories and you will be supplied with descriptive lists of publications.

Sincerely,

(name)
Superintendent of Documents

Enclosures



United States Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20401

Acceptance of Designation as a Depository For United States Government Publications

To: Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20401

Acting as the duly appointed head of the _____
_____ Library, under the powers conferred upon me
by that Office, I hereby accept for the above mentioned Library the
designation of that institution by the Hon. _____,
_____ from the State of _____
to be a depository for United States Government publications.

In consideration of the privilege of selecting and receiving those
series of the United States Government publications best suited to the
needs of the patrons of this library and of the local population, from
the various series which are made available to depository libraries by
the Superintendent of Documents, it is hereby agreed that this library
and its staff will abide by the law governing depository libraries, and
such regulations and instructions as have been or may be issued by the
Superintendent of Documents in administering the law.

It is further agreed that reasonable care will be exercised in select-
ing and maintaining publications to be furnished to this library so as
to prevent waste of Government funds appropriated for distribution of
depository publications.

I also certify that the statements given on the attached sheets are
true to the best of my knowledge.

Date	Signature of Head of Library	Title
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COUNTERSIGNED:

Date	Superintendent of Documents
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