



Federal Depository Library Program

STATE OF THE FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM 2022



GPO

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
About This Report.....	1
Suggested Citation	2
Methodology	2
The National Collection	2
FDLP Participation and Staffing.....	4
FDLP Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic	5
Discoverability	6
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	8
Evolving Collections.....	9
FDLP Training, GPO Outreach, and the New askGPO Website	12
What Else Happened in the FDLP?	15
FDLP Future Directions	16

Introduction

Established by Congress in 1895, the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) ensures government information is available to the American public. The Government Publishing Office (GPO) and its Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) business unit works in constant and close collaboration with a network of over 1,100 Federal depository library partners to achieve that goal.

The FDLP considers and balances both long-term and short-term considerations for public access to information. The program also includes a wide variety of library types, and strives to provide excellent customer service for the full range of our community's needs.

Every two years, GPO conducts the Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries (Biennial Survey), and examines the results to evaluate trends and current issues. By regularly examining the conditions in depository libraries, the FDLP is able to evolve and respond to the community.

In 2020 and 2021, FDLP libraries faced new and familiar challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic permeated all aspects of library work. LSCM responded by providing regular guidance, education, and conversation opportunities for our community. Libraries continued to experience staff cuts, and LSCM helped by providing high quality, free training.

Among all types of libraries, collections are evolving and trending toward a more digital focus. At the same time, 94% of Federal depository libraries (FDLs) who took the Biennial Survey still have paper in their collections. Whatever the format of the material, visibility equates to success for depositories, and depository librarians continue to adjust and enhance their services and show great creativity in promoting the wide range of historic and contemporary Government information that is available.

To further these efforts, FDLs and LSCM are partnering to make every U.S. government document available through the *National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information*. Key initiatives in LSCM focus on establishing new models for government information discovery, preservation, and access and will no doubt impact depository libraries and their collections in the future.

Working in concert with FDLs, GPO fulfills the agency's mission to publish trusted information and our vision of *America Informed*. We help our users succeed by providing free and convenient access to Government information nationwide and the expertise to help people find that information through the FDLP and the network of depository libraries.

About This Report

What is the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP)?

The FDLP ensures that the American public has access to its Government's information by making documents and information available throughout the United States and its territories to designated libraries and historical societies.

The authority for the FDLP is in **44 U.S. Code §§1901-1916**.

The FDLP has been administered by GPO since 1895.

What is this report?

The State of the FDLP report highlights selected data points and themes gathered both from the 2021 Biennial Survey and the outreach and special projects work done by the LSCM unit of the GPO. The report covers the time period of January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021.

Why does this report exist?

This report fulfills 44 U.S. Code §1909's requirements for the Superintendent of Documents to report on conditions at depository libraries.

Additionally, the State of the FDLP helps evaluate and focus the program to strategically and effectively serve the participating libraries.

Where is all the data?

The questions and full dataset of responses for the 2021 Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries and for previous Biennial Surveys are available on **FDLP.gov**.

Suggested Citation

Superintendent of Documents, Government Publishing Office. "State of the Federal Depository Library Program". Government. U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022. www.govinfo.gov.

Methodology

The questions for the 2021 Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries were developed by LSCM staff in collaboration with the **Depository Library Council** (DLC), the advisory group to the Director of GPO and the Superintendent of Documents. The survey was open from January 26, 2022 – March 23, 2022. The survey is usually administered in odd numbered years in the late fall, but the 2021 survey was delayed due to the implementation of a new survey software.

Some questions are regularly asked in each Biennial Survey, and others address the trends, issues, and concerns of the moment.

LSCM continued to gather survey responses even after the March 23 deadline, and the report dataset includes all responses received through May 12, 2022. The survey was sent to 1,113 libraries and the report dataset contains 1065 responses, for a 96% return rate. Whenever percentages of libraries are mentioned in the report, they reflect the percentage of Biennial Survey respondents, not the total number of FDLs.

This report does not include an analysis of each question on the Biennial Survey, since many of the questions and issues are being analyzed and reported on in other groups or venues. Additionally, LSCM staff are internally assessing and responding with individualized outreach. The full dataset of questions and responses to the **2021 Biennial Survey** is available on FDLP.gov.



"GPO's pledge to make every U.S. Government document publicly accessible is another way GPO is Keeping America Informed and is an important pillar supporting our democracy."

–Hugh Nathaniel Halpern
GPO Director

The National Collection

The **National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information** (National Collection) is a primary strategic initiative of the FDLP. The goal is to ensure that anyone can access Federal Government public information anywhere in the country, at no cost. The National Collection includes all public information products of the U.S. Government.

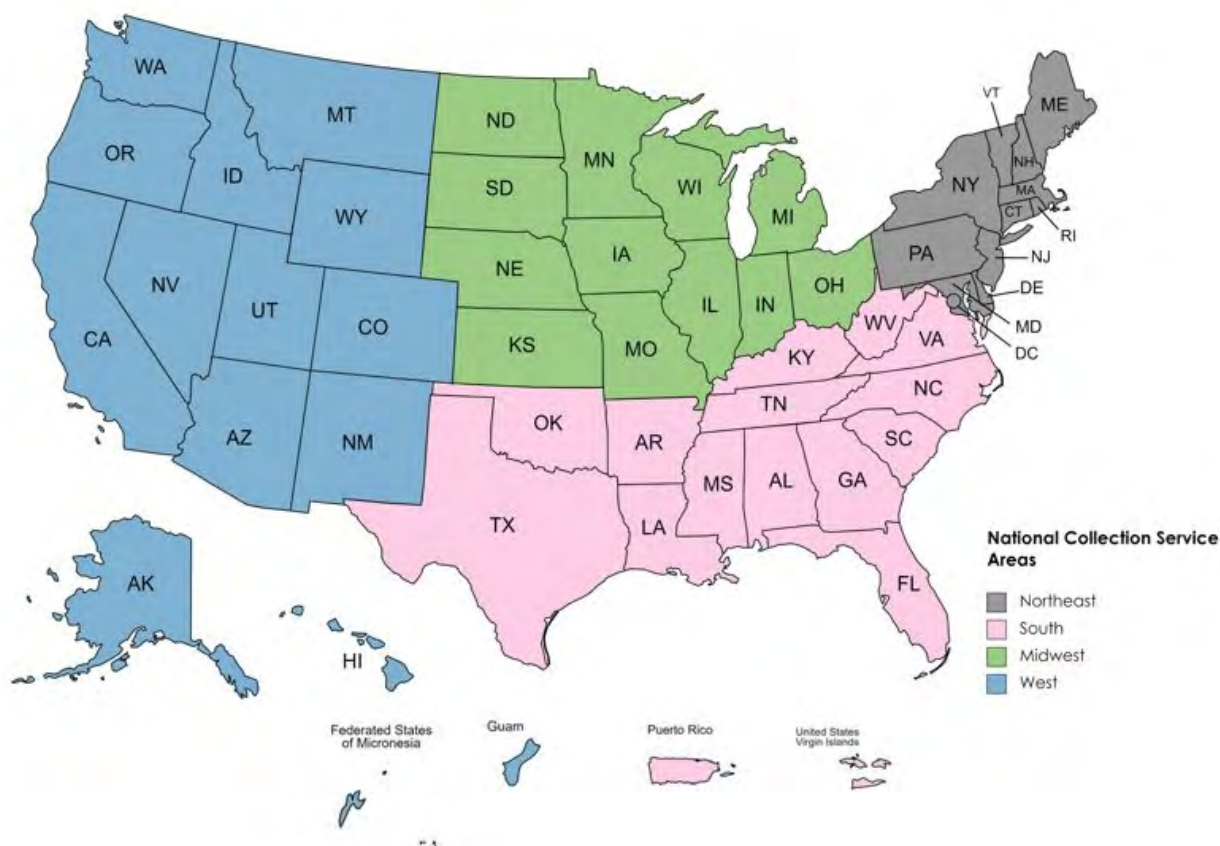
The FDLP has always worked toward the goals of cataloging Federal Government information and making it widely accessible, and in April 2021 **GPO announced** that the agency set a goal to make every U.S. Government document available. The documents will be accessible on **GovInfo** and the **Catalog of U.S. Government Publications**.

Partnerships with FDLs will be a key part of building the National Collection. When asked about partnering with GPO in support of the National Collection on *Question 25* of the Biennial Survey, 21% of respondents answered that they are already partners or are interested in becoming partners.

Some of the material that was cataloged or digitized as part of the National Collection effort from January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021 includes:

- U.S. Government Manual
- Historical Legal Reports
- Railroad Retirement Board Publications
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Publications
- U.S. Congressional Serial Set
- CRS Reports
- Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications

Figure 1: National Collection Service Areas



LSCM is also working toward achieving the goal of a comprehensive National Collection by modifying existing FDLP policies and procedures and creating new ones as needed.

- The ***Regional Depository Libraries Online Selections*** policy effective August 31, 2021, allows much needed flexibility. When specified titles are accessible through GovInfo and also have four geographically dispersed paper copies in depository libraries, regional depositories may now select the online format of those titles instead of having to select paper or microfiche.
- Libraries who leave the FDLP now follow a new process outlined in the ***Federal Depository Libraries Relinquishing Their Designation: Strategic Disposition of Depository Materials in Support of the National Collection*** guidance document. The process now includes a more comprehensive and collaborative review and

evaluation of the tangible collections at a library leaving the FDLP. This collaboration includes GPO, the regional depository library, and the depository library leaving the program. The disposition of the collection can also be expedited through this process, reducing a potential burden on depositories. Additionally, the process provides an opportunity to identify and provide permanent public access to titles included in the National Collection by redistributing them to other libraries or allowing for digitization.

- LSCM defined four new National Collection Service Areas (NCSAs) in 2021. NCSAs group Federal depository libraries into four regions as a means of ensuring geographically-dispersed permanent public access to Federal Government information products, sharing resources among depository libraries, and receiving services from LSCM.

FDLP Participation and Staffing

There were 1,113 FDLs of varying types and sizes in the FDLP at the end of the reporting period. Of these, forty-six were regional depository libraries. In 2020-2021, eleven selective depository libraries relinquished their depository designation. Meanwhile two libraries, Yuma County Public Library (AZ) and Lake Pleasant Public Library (NY) joined the FDLP. Shared regionals in Florida/Georgia and Louisiana/Mississippi were designated by their United States Senators. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) were represented in the FDLP.

According to *Question 2* of the Biennial Survey, 91% of FDLs plan on remaining in the program. When libraries indicate they may want to leave the FDLP, LSCM provides consultation and help. After this type of consultation, eleven libraries in this time period committed to remain in the FDLP.

Question 7 showed that the most significant projects and events affecting FDLP operations in the past two years, excluding the COVID-19 pandemic, included staff cuts or turnover (43%), space constraints (22%), budget cuts (18%), collection moves (15%), and cataloging projects (13%). 28 FDLs experienced a natural disaster and two FDLs reported cyberattacks.

Question 8 revealed that a majority of FDLs had major plans for their depository operations in the coming two years. Roughly half (53%) of the FDLs planned on weeding tangible collections. A quarter (25%) of FDLs planned to inventory tangible collections and train library staff in the use of U.S. Government information. Just over one fifth (21%) of FDLs indicated they do not have plans for the next two years, and just under one fifth (17%) plan on discontinuing receipt of future tangible material and transitioning to digital-only depositories.

Table 1: The 1,065 depository libraries who responded to the 2021 Biennial Survey represent the full range of library types in the FDLP.

Depositories by Library Type	Count of FDLs
Academic Community College (AC)	49
Academic General (AG)	587
Academic Law Library (AL)	136
Federal Agency Library (FA)	28
Federal Court Library (FC)	9
Highest State Court Library (SC)	33
Public Library (PU)	168
Service Academy (SA)	3
Special Library (SP)	14
State Library (SL)	38
Total	1065

Table 2: Timeline of GPO's Responses to COVID-19 from March 2020 to December 2021

Date	GPO's Response
March 17, 2020	Suspended FDLP shipments and increased FDLP eXchange review periods
April 13, 2020	Created the COVID-19 Toolkit for FDLs
May 21, 2020	Superintendent of Documents letter regarding reopening and accessing FDLP materials for the public
June 17, 2020	First release of the guidance document on managing FDLP collections safely during the pandemic
July 15, 2020	Free FDLP face masks and COVID-19 signage available to FDLs
February 25, 2021	Survey on COVID-19 Disruptions in Libraries
May 18, 2021	COVID-19 best practices and lessons learned published on FDLP.gov
April 2020 to December 2021	FDLP Academy and DLC Conference host webinars on COVID-19 pandemic topics

FDLP Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The 2021 Biennial Survey was the first time that GPO administered the survey during COVID-19, gathering firsthand responses of how the FDLs are handling the pandemic's impacts on FDLP operations.

GPO changed its FDLP operations in response to COVID-19, responding with significant actions highlighted in *Table 2*.

During this 22-month time frame, GPO periodically updated its guidance on managing FDLP collections and provided free webinars, open forum discussions, personalized outreach, and special sessions during FDLP conferences on COVID-19 topics.

While health and safety protocols have changed because of evolving COVID-19 variants during this time, GPO periodically issued general best practices to address both the safety needs of FDLs and the public's access to FDLP collections.

- Superintendent of Documents Laurie Hall sent **a letter** on May 21, 2020 authorizing FDLs to temporarily restrict access to their tangible depository collections due to the pandemic.
- The FDLP Academy presented **numerous webinars** on best practices to manage FDLP collections during the pandemic. Topics included managing tangible collections; reopening libraries to the public; and finding Federal government information on health and medical resources.
- GPO continues to provide communication opportunities for the FDLs. These one-on-one consultations include phone calls, virtual conference meetings, askGPO inquiries, and if safe, onsite visits.

The 2021 edition was the first Biennial Survey to include questions and response options that addressed COVID-19. *Question 3* included an option to indicate that public access was restricted because of the pandemic. 194 FDLs (18%) closed their FDLP collections due to COVID-19. Meanwhile, 836 FDLs (78%) continued to make their FDLP collection accessible to the public. This percentage of publicly accessible libraries is unusual when compared with the previous two Biennial Surveys. *Table 3* compares the “yes” responses to this question from the 2017–2021 Biennial Surveys.

Table 3: Comparing Three Biennial Surveys: What Percentage of Libraries have FDLP Collections Accessible to the Public

Biennial Survey	Survey Question	Percentage of Survey’s Respondents
2021	Q3	78%
2019	Q4	97%
2017	Q8	97%

While 97% of FDLs in 2017 and 97% of FDLs in 2019 were open to the public, only 78% of libraries in 2021 were publicly accessible. This year’s “yes” response is an approximate 19% decrease from the previous two Biennial Surveys, and the survey indicates this is directly a result of the pandemic.

“We received the COVID safety signage and have used it in our library. The signs are well designed and allow us to have appealing designs with an easy to understand official display of information.”

—Anonymous

“During COVID, our library never missed a step. We took what we had and kept rolling. We implemented a curbside service and enhanced our online presence, and I am very proud of how our library adapted to the pandemic.”

—Anonymous

Discoverability

Discoverability refers to the methods by which libraries make their collections findable, and how easy-to-use and successful those methods are at retrieving that information for patrons. Per 44 U.S. Code §1911 FDLs are required to make government publications available for free public use, but the methods FDLs use to make their collections available vary across the FDLP.

Through the **Cataloging Record Distribution Program (CRDP)**, GPO provides cataloging records at no cost to participating FDLs (approximately 22% of all FDLs are in the CRDP) that are tailored to their selection profile and/or chosen by Superintendent of Documents call number stems. Making materials findable through the library catalog and associated discovery layers is one of the best ways to raise the visibility of government document collections and to help people find government information.

GPO also makes cataloging records available to FDLs through OCLC and in a growing number of collections on GitHub.

GPO set a goal to make every U.S. Government document available. LSCM initiated **Pilot Projects** in conjunction with FDLs to increase exposure to tangible documents in library collections and to “enhance access to the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information.” Merrill Cazier Library at Utah State University was selected for **Pilot Project 1**, which involves conducting an inventory and collection assessment on a small collection of Executive Branch Agency documents from the World War II era.

In May 2021, GPO launched the **FDLP eXchange dashboard**, a graphic to help visualize how publications are moving through the eXchange system. FDLP eXchange is a tool FDLs use to post Federal publications they are weeding or to build their collections by acquiring publications other libraries are weeding. The dashboard is updated quarterly and includes a list of the most frequently offered and frequently claimed agencies/ Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) stems and the total number of claims and needs placed in the FDLP eXchange. Users can also see the total number of offers and needs posted by each state.

Question 4 on the Biennial Survey asked how FDLs make online Federal depository publications discoverable outside of providing computers for patron usage. The vast majority of FDLs (82%) make their collections findable through local catalog records in their integrated library system (ILS). Over half of FDLs also reported that they make their collections findable through their discovery services, finding aids/subject guides, and links on library web pages. 6% of FDLs also locally host a digital collection.

Question 13 on the Biennial Survey asked FDLs if their library has a digital repository that is freely accessible to the public. 67% answered that they currently have a publicly accessible digital repository, 28% answered no, and 5% answered no, but they planned to have one within the next one to two years.

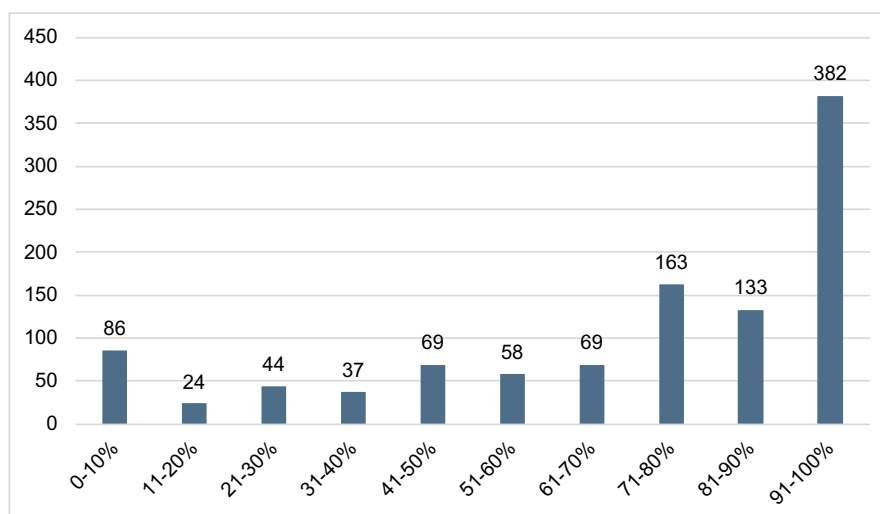
“The CRDP is very beneficial. It saves us time and effort, allowing us to disseminate the material we receive electronically in a timely fashion.”

–Jaime Valenzuela,
University of Arizona
James E. Rogers College of Law,
Cracchiolo Law Library, FDL 0023B

Question 16a on the Biennial Survey asked FDLs about the primary location of their tangible FDLP collection. 79% of FDLs have their primary collection onsite where they can immediately access the material. The remaining 21% of FDLs have their collections in locations that are off-site or in separate housing.

Question 21 on the Biennial Survey asked FDLs to estimate how much of their tangible collection is cataloged. *Figure 2* shows the breakdown of responses in increments of 10%. Over half of respondents (63%) have cataloged 71% or more of their tangible collection. Increasing the percentage of tangible materials cataloged raises the visibility and the usage of government document collections by increasing their discoverability.

Figure 2: Question 21, “How much of your tangible collection (paper, microfiche, etc.) would you estimate is cataloged?”



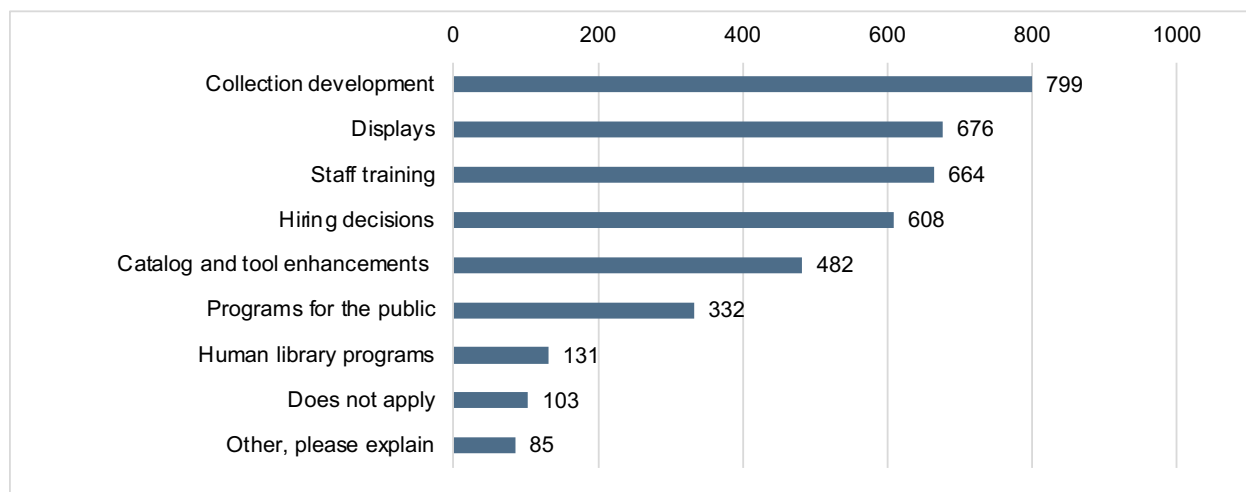
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives are an important action area for libraries, not only in terms of collection development, but also for making decisions about personnel, policies, accessibility, and outreach. The FDLP strives to serve all of its customers through all means available and to adapt its services to meet the expressed needs of its customers.

Question 9 on the Biennial Survey asked depository coordinators about their libraries' efforts to increase DEI through various methods (e.g., catalog and tool enhancements, displays, collection development, hiring decisions, human library programs, programs for the public, and staff training). *Figure 3* shows the total number of libraries that selected each option. 75% of libraries responded that they are working on increasing DEI in collection development, 63% of libraries are increasing DEI through creating displays, and 62% of libraries are increasing DEI through staff training.



Figure 3: Bar chart showing responses from most to least for Question 9, “My library is actively working to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through...”



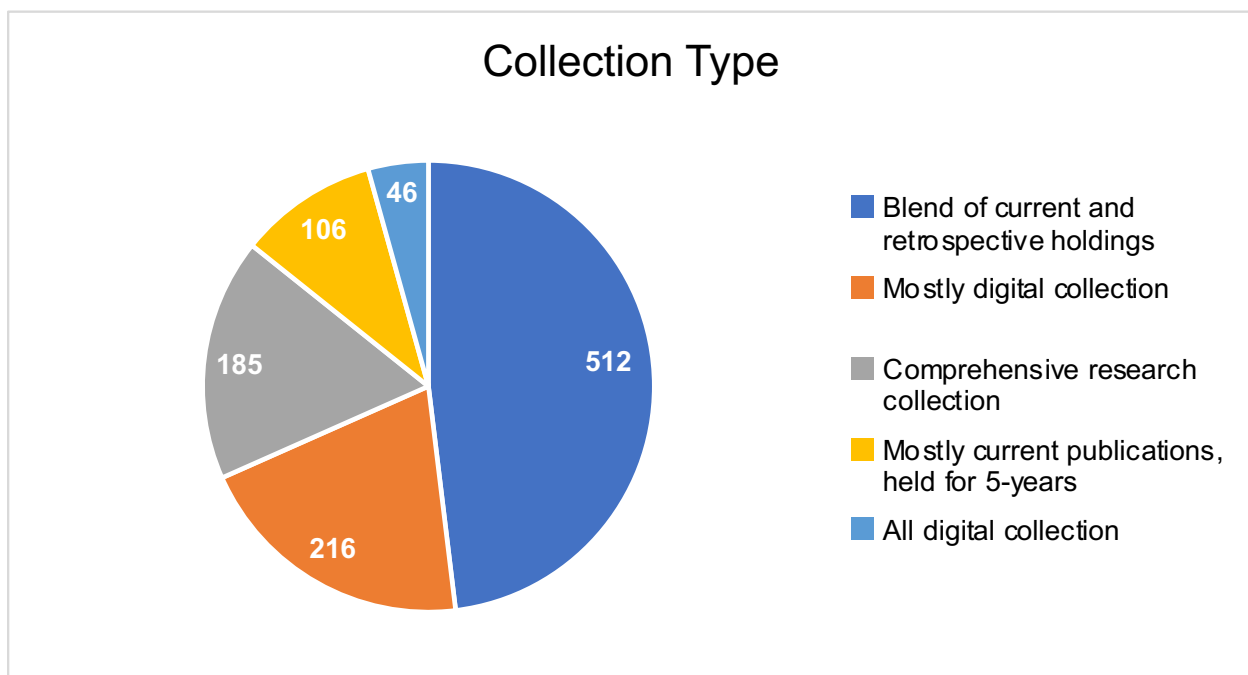
Evolving Collections

FDLP collections are in a state of change, and the shifting nature and format of these collections requires a strategic approach to managing the National Collection of U.S. Government Public Information. For the last three Biennial Surveys, libraries have consistently reported that they plan to weed their collections. At the same time, some libraries continue to build or maintain their print collections. Considering how these tangible depository resources can be redistributed and reformatted in support of permanent public access is central to the GPO's National Collection strategic planning.

Responding to *Question 10* of the 2021 Biennial Survey, 58% of FDLs report they are weeding and describe their collections as either mostly current publications or a blend of current and retrospective holdings. 17% of libraries report little to no weeding.



Figure 4: Responses to Question 10, “Describe the nature of your depository collection.”



While many libraries are weeding, *Question 18* reveals that about 11% of FDLs are working to actively build their tangible collections, across all library types. Some libraries report collecting based on geography while others are focusing on certain Superintendent of Documents classification stems. The most commonly cited stems for collection building included: A (Agriculture Department), C (Commerce Department), I (Interior Department), NAS (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), W (War Department), Y 1, Y 3, Y 4, and Y 10 (Congress).

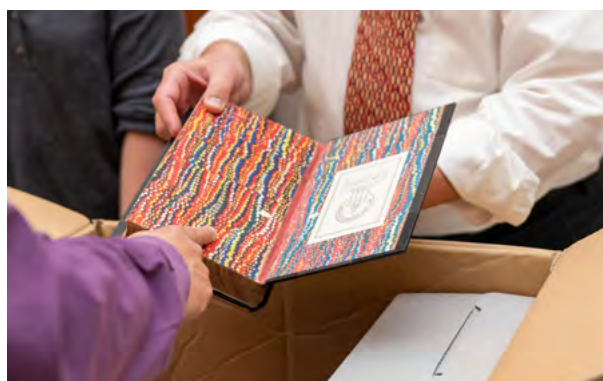


Table 4: 116 FDLs of various library types and both depository types are actively building their tangible government information collections.

Library Type	Regional	Selective	Total
Academic General (AG)	18	53	71
Academic, Community College (AC)	0	2	2
Academic, Law Library (AL)	0	7	7
Federal Agency Library (FA)	0	6	6
Highest State Court Library (SC)	0	1	1
Public Library (PU)	2	6	8
Special Library (SP)	0	3	3
State Library (SL)	11	7	18
Total	31	85	116

In *Question 14*, depository coordinators estimated the size of their tangible collections in four formats: paper, microfiche, maps, and physical media (e.g., DVDs, CD-ROMs, VHS tapes, and floppy diskettes). For the 1,000 responding libraries that have a tangible FDLP collection: 993 libraries have paper (93%); 762 libraries have microfiche (71%); 700 libraries have maps (66%); and 739 libraries have physical media (69%).



Figure 5: Percentage of 2021 Biennial Survey respondents with tangible collections by format

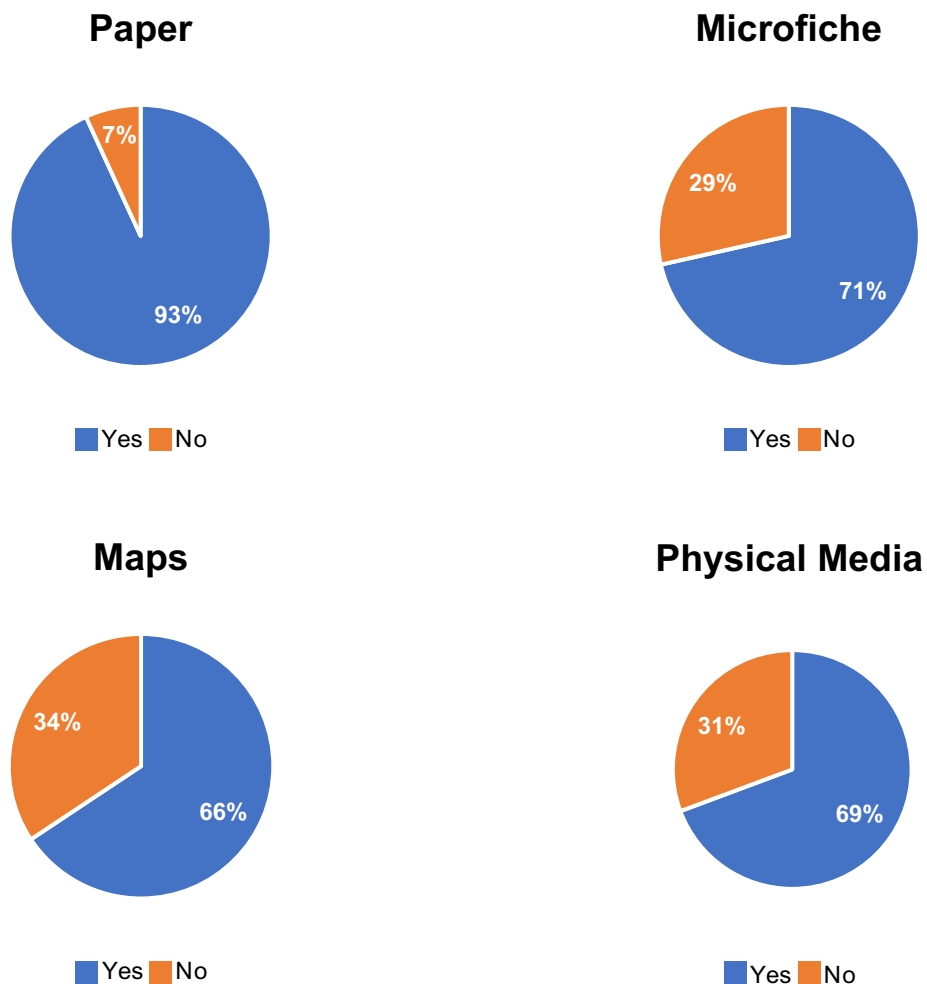


Figure 6: Bar chart showing from most to least responses for Question 23, “What type of training can GPO provide to enhance your familiarity with Government information and FDLP tools and resources?”



The bar chart uses abbreviated names as the labels for GPO training topics.

FDLP Training, GPO Outreach, and the New askGPO Website

The FDLP offers a constant variety of training and outreach through the **FDLP Academy**. On August 10, 2020, GPO launched a redesigned customer relationship management service, **askGPO**. These two initiatives in particular show how GPO accommodates the needs of FDLs and all its other users with effective and relevant customer service.

Question 23 asked respondents to indicate whether they have an interest in a particular topic and which training tool(s) they prefer to learn about it. *Figure 4* shows the list of provided topics in ranked order from most to least interested among the FDLs. The top three topics of interests are: GovInfo (85%); askGPO (84%); and FDLP eXchange (82%). 33% selected all GPO training topics and 7% did not choose any of these listed subjects.

Figure 6 shows the overall interested responses for *Question 23*, while *Table 5* on the following page shows a sample of four types of FDLs and their top three topics of interest.



Table 5: Sample of four FDL types' top three topics of interests for Question 23.

Type of Library	First	Second	Third
Academic, Community College (AC)	askGPO	FDLP eXchange (<i>tied</i>)	Item Selection Profile (<i>tied</i>)
Academic General (AG)	GovInfo	askGPO	FDLP eXchange
Law Library (AL)	FDLP eXchange	askGPO (<i>tied</i>)	GovInfo (<i>tied</i>)
Public Library (PU)	GovInfo	askGPO	FDLP eXchange

Table 6: Ranked listing of responses from most to least popular formats for Question 23

Training Format	Average Percentage of FDLs Interested in Training Format
Webcast (pre-recorded)	55%
Tutorial	41%
Webinar (live)	37%
Hands-on	8%

Though the ranking order for askGPO is different when comparing the responses of academic community college libraries, academic general libraries, law libraries, and public libraries, it is a top topic for all of them, perhaps in part because the new system launched in 2020. Meanwhile, academic community college libraries are the only library type among the sample of four that has Item Selection Profile as a popular topic of interest.

Although the three least popular topics among all FDLs are CGP on GitHub, Cataloging Record Distribution Program (CRDP), and Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government, a closer look shows that certain types of libraries expressed interests in learning about them. For example, 71% of Federal agency libraries and 66% of academic general libraries are interested in learning about the CGP on GitHub. Meanwhile, 71% of state libraries and 65% of academic law libraries wanted training on the CRDP (20% of all FDLs participate in the CRDP).

And although Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government is an interactive educational tool for K-12 students, 70% of highest state court libraries and 68% of special libraries are interested in training about this educational resource.

These results indicate that customized training is needed for different audiences.

In terms of how GPO staff trains the FDLs, it appears that there is a preference for asynchronous learning. *Table 6* is a ranked listing of the responses, from most to least popular educational formats. About 55% of the FDLP community prefer an asynchronous mode of training while less than fifty percent of libraries prefer any form of synchronous training.

Based on the responses of *Question 23*, FDLP staff will continue to refine training topics and to re-evaluate asynchronous and synchronous educational options for the FDLP community.

askGPO is the second most popular topic among the FDLs according to *Question 23*, likely in part because GPO launched a new version of the site in August, 2020. The new askGPO site is a more centralized and easy-to-use communication tool that enhances the relationship between GPO and FDLs, and between GPO and all its other customers. Benefits of the new askGPO site include:

- A redesigned Federal Depository Library Directory, including an **FDLP Network** page that illustrates the relationships between regional and selective depository libraries
- More efficient avenues for customers to submit questions and GPO staff to answer them
- Enhanced metrics and reporting available that help GPO respond to changing user needs
- Centralized record of activities with individual FDLs
- Better user support for all GPO customers

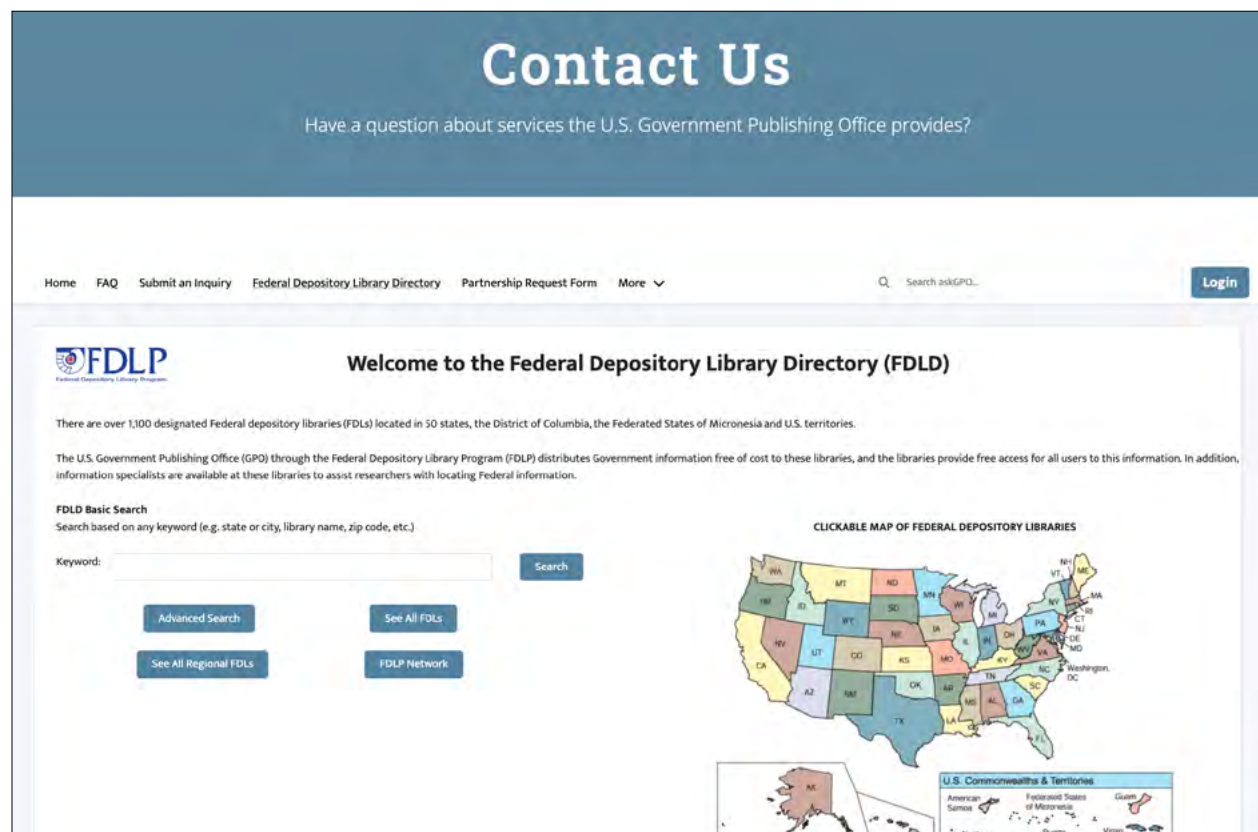
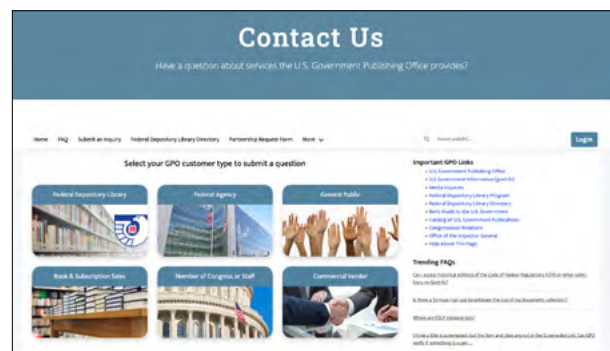
Question 23 of the Biennial Survey and the updated askGPO website reveal how much the FDLs value both relevant training topics and a streamlined customer service platform provided by GPO.

“I used the new site [askGPO] the other day and found it very intuitive and easy to use!”

—Amy Rudberg,
California State University, Northridge

“I wish I had this tool [new Federal Depository Library Directory] 20 years ago!”

—Anonymous



What Else Happened in the FDLP?

March 2020

Launched the Gov Docs 101 webinar training series

August 10, 2020

Launched the new askGPO website

2020

FDLP community participated in the End of Term Web Archive project

March 18, 2021

Discontinued use of the phrase “fugitive documents” in favor of “unreported publications”

September 23, 2021

Published a story map on the first GPO librarian, Adelaide Hasse

December 13, 2021

Discontinued use of the subject headings “Aliens” and “Illegal Aliens” in the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications and replaced them with new terms “Noncitizens” and “Noncitizens and Illegal immigration”

2021–2022

177 free webinars and webcasts on Government information resources presented through the FDLP Academy

FDLP Future Directions

The results of the 2021 Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries and the experience of LSCM staff and the entire FDLP community throughout the period of 2020-2021 combine to illustrate that not even a global pandemic can halt the flow of government information to the public through the Federal Depository Library Program.

The FDLP continues to prioritize public access to and discoverability of U.S. Government information in all formats. The FDLP and its partner libraries are continuing a long-term process of evolution toward a future of primarily digital information. Simultaneously, the FDLP is committed to safeguarding its significant and valuable historic print collections and balancing digital and print through the National Collection.

LSCM will continue to provide customized and relevant services to all of the libraries in the FDLP, to innovate, and to educate and train the staff at FDLs. New and continuing users are always welcome in the FDLP, and the program continues to closely support the Government Publishing Office's vision of *America Informed*.





Federal Depository Library Program



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

America Informed

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