Guidelines for Federal Government Documents

Table of Contents

1. Purpose
2. General collection guidelines
   A. Language
   B. Chronology
   C. Geographical Areas
   D. Publication Date
   E. Treatment of Subject
   F. Types of Materials, Formats Collected
   G. Classification and Organization of the Collection
   H. Access to the Collection, Subscription Services.
3. Area resources
4. Agencies and collecting levels
5. Methodology
6. Collection Maintenance
7. ASERL Center of Excellence for the Department of Homeland Security

1. Purpose.

VCU Libraries was designated a selective Federal Depository Library in 1971. The Libraries is committed to providing access to depository materials that support the research and teaching needs of the University as well as the information needs of Virginia's 3rd Congressional District.

The depository collection is selected, maintained, and serviced in accordance with the requirements of Title 44, Chapter 19, of the United States Code (44 USC 19). This law provides for the establishment and maintenance of depository libraries and for the distribution of Government documents to those libraries for use by the public. Acquisition, maintenance, and use of the collection is governed by The Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library.
Program. The administration and development of the documents collection require cooperation from the following departments in the VCU Libraries: Acquisitions, Cataloging, Collection Management, and Research and Instructional Services. The collection includes depository and non-depository materials issued by government agencies, private organizations, and commercial businesses. The majority of the federal documents collection is housed at the James Branch Cabell Library. Materials relevant to health sciences are housed at the Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences.

2. General Collection Guidelines.

A. Language.

   English is preferred, though the collection does include Spanish language titles. In general, foreign language titles are added only when issued under the same item numbers as English language materials.

B. Chronology.

   Primary emphasis is given to the acquisition of current and historical federal documents that are relevant to the needs and interests of the University community and the citizens of the 3rd Congressional District.

C. Geographical Areas.

   Geographic coverage reflects the publication interests of the federal government, which is worldwide. Primary focus is on the United States, however, the collection is international in scope.

D. Publication Date.

   Both current and retrospective federal documents are acquired for the collection, however, the emphasis is on current materials.

E. Treatment of Subject.

   Government publications can be identified according to six types of documents, based on their functions. Materials providing the following functions are selected: legislative documents published on the legislative process of a government; administrative documents which are compilations of rules and regulations needed to carry out the intent of the law; reportorial documents that are reports issued by government agencies or commissions or court decisions; service publications which provide beneficial information to individuals or groups; research documents that cover the results of research projects by government agencies or technical reports; and informational documents that are issued to inform the public about government activities or services.

F. Types of Materials, Formats Collected.

   Government information comes in a extensive variety of materials and formats. The range of government information materials includes: annual reports; bills and resolutions; juridical decisions and opinions; multimedia materials; hearings; laws and statutes; newsletters; scholarly journals; research/investigation reports; statistical reports/compilations; books/monographs; bibliographies and lists; committee and commission reports;
directories; general information pamphlets; journals and proceedings; maps; magazines; press releases; rules and regulations; and executive communications.

The format for each of these materials must be considered during the item selection process. Depository formats include: paper (P), online (EL), miscellaneous electronic products (E), microfiche (MF), CD-ROMs and DVDs (CD), and floppy diskettes (FL). Born digital and online formats are highly preferred, and substitution of authentic digital copies for tangible materials should be made whenever possible.

Acquisition of maps is selective. The collection includes general or base maps, topographical maps, state map series, and geological maps.

In general, posters, pamphlets, and brochures are not selected because of difficulty in storage and limited research value.

G. Classification and Organization of the Collection.
The collection is cataloged and arranged by the Superintendent of Documents classification system.

H. Accessibility to Collection, Subscription Services.
The documents collection is arranged by Superintendent of Documents classification number and is located separately from the library's general circulating collection. An open stack policy provides access to all patrons when the libraries are open. All non-reference federal documents circulate to any patron with library privileges. Microfiche reader/printers and photocopiers are available for all patrons.


3. Area Resources.
VCU Libraries participates in the interlibrary loan networks with other libraries in the region, state, and nation. There is unrestricted interlibrary loan of circulating documents to any requesting academic or public library. This service is free.

Federal publications not selected by the VCU Libraries can be obtained from other selective depository libraries in the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area which include the: United States Court of Appeals, University of Richmond-Boatwright Memorial Library, University of Richmond Law School Library, Virginia State Law Library, Virginia State Library & Archives, Virginia State University-Johnston Memorial Library or the University of Virginia Alderman Library, which is the regional depository for the state of Virginia.
4. Agencies and Collecting Levels.

The collection levels referred to in this policy are a part of the VCU Libraries' general collection management policy.

A. Comprehensive Level

- Fine Arts Commission (FA)
- Federal Reserve System Board of Governors (FR)
- Department of Health and Human Services (HE)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HH)
- Interstate Commerce Commission (IC)
- United States Agency for International Development (ID)
- Department of Justice (J)
- Judiciary (Ju)
- National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (NF)
- National Science Foundation (NS)
- President of the United States (PR)
- Executive Office of the President (PrEx)
- Department of State (S)
- Smithsonian Institution (SI)

B. Research Level

- Department of Commerce (C)
- Civil Rights Commission (CR)
- Department of Education (ED)
- General Accounting Office (GA)
- Department of Homeland Security (HS)
- International Trade Commission (ITC)
- Department of Labor (L)
- The Library of Congress (LC)
- National Capital Planning Commission (NC)
- Securities & Exchange Commission (SE)
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA)
Vice President of the United States (VP)
United States Congress (X and Y)

C. Study Level

Broadcasting Board of Governors (B)
Federal Communications Commission (CC)
Department of Defense (D)
Federal Maritime Commission (FMC)
Federal Trade Commission (FT)
Government Printing Office (GP)
General Services Administration (GS)
National Archives & Records Administration (AE)
National Credit Union Administration (NCU)
Peace Corps (PE)
Personnel Management Office (PM)
Small Business Administration (SBA)
Department of Transportation (TD)
Department of the Treasury (T)
Postal Service (P)

D. Basic Level

Department of Agriculture (A)
Department of Energy (E)
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHF)
Department of Interior (I)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NAS)

5. Collection Maintenance.
The collection is maintained in accordance with the guidelines stated in the The Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program. An accurate shelflist for all depository publications is
maintained and all documents are clearly marked with the depository property stamp and the Superintendent of Documents number.

Titles in the **Superseded List**, or titles that meet the **Supersession Criteria**, may be withdrawn from the collection. All other documents in the collection are reviewed for retention or withdrawal. Those titles no longer needed in the collection are offered to other libraries with the permission of the regional depository in accordance with Federal Depository Library Program guidelines. Damaged or worn documents are evaluated for replacement or withdrawal.

**6. Methodology.**

The *List of Classes of the United States Government Publications Available for Selection by Depository Libraries* is used to update item files for inactive or discontinued selections. Changes to the Libraries’ item selection profile are made throughout the year using the Depository Selection Information Management System (DSIMS).

Other tools for developing the collection include:

2. **U.S. Government Periodicals Index**
4. **VCU Libraries Collection Management Policy**
5. VCU Libraries also acquires materials published by commercial and quasi-commercial sources which specialize in government information. Examples include, the National Technical Information Center (NTIS), a quasi-commercial source of important government information, and Congressional Information Services (CIS), a private-sector vendor which supplies U.S. government titles in a variety of formats.

**7. ASERL Center of Excellence for The Department of Homeland Security.**

The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) designed the VCU Libraries a Center of Excellence (COE) for The Department of Homeland Security in 2011. As a COE, the Libraries has agreed to:

- Operate within the boundaries of the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) guidelines and instructions as well as Title 44, Chapter 19 of the United States Code, in particular Sections 1911 and 1912.
- Inventory holdings and ensure accurate cataloging and holdings records for the extant collections.
- Create a master list of all titles in the relevant Superintendent of Documents (SuDocs) stem(s) and upload brief catalog records to the ASERL/COE database.
- Fill identified gaps in the COE collection.
• Develop expertise to facilitate use of the COE collections.
• Facilitate access to Federal Depository Library Program and COE titles through interlibrary loan.
• Develop a contingency plan for maintaining the regional collection and the COE collection, should the COE elect to terminate or significantly modify their agreement.

The VCU Libraries is an active participant in the ASERL Collaborative Federal Depository Program, and the COE advances the research enterprise of the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs’ degree programs in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness as well as VCU’s Department of Epidemiology and Community Health degree programs in Public Health. Virginia Commonwealth University is also home to the National Homeland Security Project. The University is located in the state capital, and is only 100 miles south of the nation’s capital, which provides excellent access to homeland security institutions and practitioners.