

# Government Documents Collection Development Policy

James Shaw, 2017

Criss Library joined the [Federal Depository Library Program \(FDLP\)](#) of the [U.S. Government Publishing Office](#) in 1939, and it joined the [Nebraska Library Commission's depository program](#) in 1976. The Library receives documents distributed via these programs, and it agrees to provide free public access, research assistance, and appropriate processing, cataloging, and preservation.

Depository documents are now often distributed over the Internet, and the Library adds catalog records which link to them. The **catalog** thus describes a physical and virtual collection which ranges across time from the 1790s to the current year.

The Library has also purchased archival collections of government documents. Most were distributed on microfilm or microfiche, but recent purchases have been for online databases.

A detailed description the Library's government documents collections may be examined at [http://libguides.unomaha.edu/government\\_documents](http://libguides.unomaha.edu/government_documents).

## ACCESS TO THE GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

The Library welcomes any and all to the Government Documents Collection. Documents are kept on public shelves or in self-service cabinets, and they are available whenever the library is open. The documents librarian and staff are happy to provide assistance, but visitors may browse and work on their own. This access policy is governed by [legal requirements of the Federal Depository Library Program](#).

Borrowing privileges for government documents largely parallel those for other library materials. Most paper U.S. and Nebraska documents may be checked out for 28 days. CD-ROMs and DVDs may be checked out for 14 days. Exceptions include several series which are treated as archival or reference works; for example, the *Congressional Record*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, and decennial census reports must be used within the Library. Photocopiers are readily available, as are scanners for microfilm and microfiche.

Both current and historical government documents are recorded in the library catalog, so they may be searched in the same manner as other library collections. Documents holdings are also noted in the OCLC WorldCat database, and the Library's Interlibrary Loan office may loan them to other libraries nationally and internationally.

The Library's public access computers may be used to search U.S. and State of Nebraska government Internet sites. The computers include disk drives which can be used for depository CD-ROMs and DVDs. All visitors may search commercial databases such as [ProQuest Congressional](#) and the [U.S. Congressional Serial Set](#) on computers inside the Library, but off-campus access is restricted by license to UNO faculty, staff, and currently-enrolled students.

## COLLECTION GUIDELINES

### *Relationship to depository programs*

Criss Library is a **selective depository** in the Federal Depository Library Program, and we typically receives about 1,400 documents each year. The Regional Depository for Nebraska ([Love Library, UNL](#)) serves as a coordinating agency for the state, and the Library cooperates with the **Nebraska State Plan**.

The Library's selections align with the specific teaching and research concerns of UNO, but some items, chiefly associated with legal, consumer, and health-related information, also address interests in the wider community. The Library's official service area in the FDLP is the 2nd Congressional District of Nebraska, and in practice this incorporates the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area.

In 2005, the Nebraska Library Commission converted its depository program to Internet distribution, and the Library annually catalogs and links to about 450 documents which reside on the NLC's archive server.

### ***Chronology***

The Government Documents collection spans the history of the United States and the State of Nebraska. Current receipts naturally tend to focus on recent concerns, but documents are not excluded because of their chronological emphasis.

### ***Geography***

Scientific treatments of agriculture, ecology, geology, and geography are typically limited to Nebraska and the surrounding states (Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota), but exceptions may be made to support curricular and research emphases. For example, studies of the ecological effect of wildfire in any state may address the teaching and research interests of certain faculty in Biology.

The Library selects U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps for Nebraska, and map selections also include national and international maps issued by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Central Intelligence Agency.

### ***Departments and Agencies***

The Government Documents collection emphasizes depository documents issued by these U.S. government departments and agencies:

- Congress (including the Congressional Budget Office)
- Agriculture
- Commerce (especially the Census Bureau)
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- Defense
- Energy
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Trade Commission
- Government Accountability Office
- Health and Human Services
- Interior
- Justice

- Labor
- President (including the Central Intelligence Agency)
- Social Security Administration
- State
- Supreme Court
- Transportation
- Treasury

The Library catalogs Internet-accessible documents added by the Nebraska Library Commission to its archive server, and it receives paper copies of several Nebraska government periodicals still distributed by mailing list.

UNO does not have a law school, but interest in legal reference sources remains notable. The Library subscribes to the [NexisUNI](#) and [WestlawNext](#) databases, which provide access to decisions of the U.S. District Courts, Courts of Appeal, and Supreme Court. They also include the decisions of the appellate courts of all fifty states.

### ***Type of Material and Format***

U.S. depository documents include both monographs and serials. The specific format (paper, microfiche, CD-ROM, or DVD) is determined by an agency or by the FDLP, and the Library's selections are guided by content. Documents are not excluded entirely on the basis of format, but additional scrutiny is given to items such as Braille editions, kits, and visual media which may present shelving, filing, or storage challenges.

Content concerns guide the selection and cataloging of Internet-accessible documents. Whenever possible, the Library prefers to link to an electronic facsimile, typically a PDF file. In the case of U.S. documents, the library prefers to link to those which have been certified as authentic with the digital signature of the U.S. Superintendent of Documents.

### ***Collection Maintenance***

Government documents are subject to the same standard of care as other library materials. When necessary, they are mended, bound, or otherwise treated so that they remain in good repair. Ranges of shelving are inspected at least weekly to identify areas where shelf-reading is needed to restore call number order. A government document may be moved to the Library's Special Collections area when fragility and particular rarity indicate that extra care should be taken to insure its long-term survival.

The Library follows the FDLP's guidelines [governing the discard of depository materials](#) and the guidelines [addressing the substitution of electronic access for tangible copies](#).