

Federal Government Information Available in Michigan Libraries



Federal Depository Library Program

The Federal Depository Library System

For over 150 years the United States Government has distributed informative publications to the American people through a system of depository libraries operated by the Government Printing Office (GPO). There are 45 of these libraries in Michigan. For a depository near you check the back of this brochure or for a complete list of Michigan libraries use the map at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/libraries.html> and click on the state of Michigan. While most depository libraries do not receive all the information published by the federal government, you will find important and useful material in each of their collections.

Examples of Material Found in a Depository Library

The federal government produces a wide range of publications from cook books and child care information to scientific and economic reports. Some examples of material found in a depository collection include:

Census Information

The population counts that result from the decennial census are just one example of numerous statistical resources produced by the government.

Laws and Regulations

Laws are the end result of the legislative process and are fundamental to the running of the country. Depository collections not only contain the official text of these laws but frequently the reasoning of the legislators who passed them. Regulations are promulgated by the executive branch of government in order to enforce the laws passed by the legislative branch.

Tax Forms

Staff at depository libraries can help patrons locate tax forms, although they cannot give advice on completing them.

Availability of Material

Some of the libraries in the depository program select to receive a lot of the material available and some select a small portion. Individual libraries determine what they will receive based on the needs of patrons in their communities, but two libraries in the state receive everything available: The Library of Michigan (http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17445_19270---,00.html – you may have to “copy and paste” this URL if clicking won’t work!) and The Detroit Public Library (<http://www.detroit.lib.mi.us/>).

All depository libraries make the majority of their collections available through interlibrary loan, and the collections are open to patrons who come to a depository library in person. Some depository libraries keep their government documents forever and some choose to keep only current materials. It is good to check with the library before visiting for material availability.

GPO Access

The Government Printing Office (GPO) is distributing more official government information via the Internet each year through [GPO Access \(http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html\)](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html). A list of the databases in GPO Access is at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/databases.html>.



Web Resources

There are a number of ways to locate government documents. The two primary methods are indexes/catalogs of the material and specialized internet search engines.

Indexes

The Government Printing Office provides an online catalog of government publications from 1994 to the present at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cgp/index.html>. Many of the records appearing in this catalog have links to full text material available on the web.

Residents of Michigan can access the GPO database on FirstSearch at <https://www.mel.org/accessmich/> (login will ask for a Michigan driver's license number). The GPO database is a catalog of government documents published from 1976 to the present.

If you are looking for government documents published before 1976 please contact one of the depository libraries in the state. If you choose to visit a depository library to find a copy of any documents you identified in one of the indexes, it is best to print out the entire entry for the document you are interested in before you go. Remember, because of the selection and retention patterns of the various libraries, finding a publication in an index does not mean that an individual library will have that document. Always check with the library to make sure what you are interested in is available. And many libraries include records for government documents in their catalogs.

Search Engines

[Google Uncle Sam \(http://www.google.com/unclesam\)](http://www.google.com/unclesam) searches only government and military sites on the web.

[FirstGov \(http://www.firstgov.gov/\)](http://www.firstgov.gov/) is a gateway to government information sources. Information is arranged by topic, and popular sites are listed on the home page.

Other Online Resources

If you hear a government agency has issued a report you can begin your search by going directly to the agency's page by linking from <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/agencies.html>.

The Michigan Electronic Library (www.mel.org) has excellent government information resources.

For Elementary and Secondary Students

The GPO Access site includes “Ben’s Guide to United States Government for Kids” (<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/index.html>) which is a wonderful resource for students, teachers and parents.

An online version of this brochure (with clickable links) is located at:

<http://www.calvin.edu/library/govdocs/FDLP-MI.pdf>

A Depository Library Near You Is:

Hekman Library
Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary
1855 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

616-526-7072

<http://www.calvin.edu/library/researchhelp/azindex/govdocs.stm>

Depository Librarian: Diane VanderPol – dvpo@calvin.edu



For additional copies of this brochure, contact the library listed above.

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