



# Appendix 4:

## Government Documents Collection Development Policy

**Norfolk Public Library** has been a depository for federal government publications since 1895. The collection has the depth that comes with such longevity.

The Federal Depository Library Program is mandated by law ([U.S. Code, Title 44, Chapter 19](#)) to serve all of the citizens in a congressional district, not just its "primary" patrons. This suits the mission of a public library well.

The Norfolk Public Library is a "selective" depository. This means that the Library receives only a selection of federal publications, not all of them. The selection has been made by a succession of Government Documents librarians and is ongoing.

Documents are selected that are likely to be of interest to a wide range of citizens. A basic subject is laws and regulations covering a spectrum of activities in American life. NPL selects the laws and regulations themselves, and some interpretation, but does not attempt to provide the depth of a law library.

Health is emphasized. Publications directed to the layman, covering health maintenance and health disorders, are selected. NPL has a Selective Housing Agreement with Eastern Virginia Medical School whereby more technical publications on health subjects - those directed to physicians - are housed there. This agreement dates back to 1973. EVMS had input into the original selections to be housed there; the selection profile has changed little over the years.

As Norfolk, and especially downtown Norfolk, is a hub of business, many publications helpful to the business community are selected. There is an emphasis on imports and exports. Many statistical publications are included.

History is another major topic. Publications on history are issued by a number of different agencies. The National Park Service documents offer an in depth historical background on many of the sites, which provide much social history of the settlement of this country, and the development of various industries.

Science is of interest to students and to the general public, and documents are chosen to serve these interests. There is some emphasis on astronomy and physics.

Selections are made with the nearby depository collection of ODU in mind, and also the availability of the regional depository at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. The regional library collects all federal publications offered through the Federal Depository Library Program.

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Selection decisions are made based on patron requests and reference questions, as well as information sources including the Subject Bibliography series. Selections are made in a full range of media including paper, microfiche, and CD-ROM. As the federal government moves increasingly toward electronic delivery of information, the Library will provide access to more documents, reports and forms through the Internet. These changes will affect the availability of many documents, formerly produced in formats listed above.

Federal documents are reviewed for retention or removal every other year as required by the Instructions to Depository Libraries, revised 2009. Documents are appraised based on relevance, timeliness, usage, and circulation, as well as physical condition. Then items are deselected by a prescribed procedure: items are first offered statewide, and then may be offered nationally. It is important to remember that all depository documents remain the property of the federal government, they do not become the property of the depository library.

Attached is an appendix showing from which federal agencies most of our selections are made. This must be viewed with the understanding that it is only the roughest of indicators. The depository "item number" system of organization means that selections are made by item number, each of which may include many titles. Within an item number, no selection is allowed. All titles are received. Thus a small number of "items" does not necessarily mean a small number of titles.

### AGENCY NO. OF ITEMS

Department of Commerce 766

Department of Health and Human Services 192

Department of Labor 140

Department of Defense 52

Congress 45

Library of Congress 41

Department of the Treasury 40

Department of Justice 37

Department of the Interior 35

Government Printing Office 28

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Department of Education 27

Department of Transportation 26

Executive Office of the President 24

Smithsonian Institution 24

National Aeronautics and Space Administration 18

Department of State 16

Small Business Administration 15

Social Security Administration 15

Department of Veterans Affairs 12

Approximately forty percent of the federal documents received are cataloged. The rest are accessed by various other means, including the [Marcive online commercial index](#), and the online and paper [Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications](#).

The Norfolk Public Library attempts to collect all significant documents and reports issued by the City of Norfolk and will retain them as far back as space constraints permit. Recognizing that Norfolk is the regional hub of the Hampton Roads area, the Library will acquire selected reports issued by other sister city governments in the area and retain them for five years. The library will also endeavor to collect a selected list of Virginia state government documents and refer patrons to the Chesapeake Public Library, which is a depository for state government documents.