Government Documents

A Brief Overview

The United States Government is the nation’s largest publisher. A large number of these publications, often referred to as “government documents,” are available in libraries that have been designated as government document depositories under Title 44 of the U.S. Code. The University of Missouri-St. Louis was designated as a depository site in 1966. The Libraries receive documents in paper, microfiche, tangible electronic formats (CD-ROM/DVD), and as online-only resources. We currently receive about 92% of the materials available for distribution through the Federal Depository Library Program.

Records for many documents published since 1991, including many recent online-only resources, may be located by using the Library Catalog. Records for items published from 1976 to the present may also be identified by using electronic databases available on campus or at home through remote access (LexisNexis®, ProQuest Congressional, etc.).

The following may be searched by author, title, subject or issuing agency:

- Government Printing Office’s Federal Digital System (Freely Available Online)
- Library Catalog (via the Libraries’ Home Page)

The Superintendent of Documents Classification System

In the Thomas Jefferson Library, Superintendent of Documents classification (SuDoc) numbers are used to locate most government documents. The system is used to shelve the documents by the issuing agency. The organizational structure of the United States Government is followed - that is, subordinate divisions and bureaus are grouped with the parent agency or department. Each parent department is assigned a letter symbol, such as:

A  Agriculture Department  |  J  Justice Department
C  Commerce Department   |  SBA  Small Business Administration
ED  Education Department  |  TD  Transportation Department
HE  Health and Human Services  |  Y  Congress

A strict number sequence is used in the SUDOC scheme; they are arranged by whole numbers, not decimals. Example: “J 1.8” will be shelved before “J 1.14”

The list of locations on the following page indicates where the various numbers may be found.
Where to Locate Government Documents:

Level 2:

Generally, government documents in the Thomas Jefferson Library are housed separately from the regular book and journal collections. The vast majority are housed on Level 2 in the large room in the southeast corner.

Level 3:

Some documents are shelved in special locations because of subject matter. Census materials are shelved at the beginning of the government documents collection on Level 3. Various documents and guides relating to federal laws are shelved in the Ref Law section on Level 3.

Documents shelved in Ref Law:

- Federal Register AE 2.106:
- List of CFR Sections Affected AE 2.106/2:
- Code of Federal Regulations AE 2.106/3:
- Public (slip) Laws AE 2.110:
- United States Statues at Large AE 2.111:

Other documents on Level 3:

- Statistical Abstract : C 3.134:
- Public Papers of the Presidents: AE 2.114
- All Census material

Other Locations:

- All documents issued by the U.S. Department of Education (SuDoc class “ED”) are housed in the Ward E. Barnes Library on South Campus.

- A few government-published periodicals are located with the regular journal collection materials on Level 5.

Frequently Used Government Documents

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