



**RESOLUTION ON THE FUTURE OF THE
FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM**

- WHEREAS,** The federal government collects, compiles, and produces information on every subject which pertains to life in our society; and
- WHEREAS,** The American Library Association has long held that the federal government has an affirmative obligation and responsibility to collect and disseminate that information, regardless of format, to the public; and
- WHEREAS,** Access to government information is a public right and the principal function and goal of federal government information policy, and is essential for a democratic society; and
- WHEREAS,** GPO, with the authority for centralized government-wide printing, administratively linked and located with an agency responsible for collecting and distributing government information to depository libraries, has proven to be an effective model for dissemination of government information; and
- WHEREAS,** Most federal agencies have no centralized point of publication and control and could in no way, even if required by law, provide the same quantity of government information directly to depository libraries now provided by the Federal Depository Library Program; and
- WHEREAS,** The Federal Depository Library Program provides a centralized point of no-fee public access to government information for business, research, education, and the general public for more than 100 years in approximately 1,400 locations in virtually every Congressional district and is a proven, efficient, and cost-effective program; and
- WHEREAS,** Depository libraries play a significant role assisting users in identifying, locating, and using government information and in serving as a single point of access to a wide array of government information products and services; and
- WHEREAS,** In the information infrastructure there are multiple suppliers of government information products and services; and
- WHEREAS,** Congress is engaged in a comprehensive review of the federal government's printing and dissemination responsibilities and activities; and

WHEREAS, The American Library Association supports improvements to strengthen the nation's printing and dissemination systems; and

WHEREAS, Federal agencies have neither adequate funds to procure government information products for the sole purpose of distributing them to depository libraries, nor are they likely to ask Congress for the funds to do so; and

WHEREAS, Congress has not provided adequate funding for the Federal Depository Library Program to carry out its mission or to perform the distribution of information and services produced by the Executive Branch as required by statute; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association urge Congress to ensure the American public access to government information through a centralized agency which has responsibility for printing, procurement, and dissemination of government information, regardless of format—as currently vested in the Government Printing Office; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association urge Congress to provide adequate funds for the distribution of government information; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association urge Congress to ensure that any legislative changes:

1. Retain in the Legislative Branch the overall information dissemination authority;
2. Strengthen Congressional oversight responsibility for government information dissemination;
3. Guarantee a centralized authority to provide a system of equitable, effective and efficient distribution to depository libraries which permits full and no-fee public access to government information in all formats including print, microform, electronic, audio and visual presentations, or other means of information transfer;
4. Provide for timely comprehensive catalogs or locators using standardized description of government information products;
5. Implement compliance mechanisms to ensure depository libraries no-fee, timely, and equitable access to government information produced and disseminated by all government agencies;
6. Provide access to government information in a format that is most appropriate, most cost effective, most timely, and most useful for government agencies, libraries, and the general public;
7. Provide avenues for the regular evaluation of information programs, products, and services with input from users' councils, federal agencies, participating libraries, the public, business, industry, and appropriate others;

8. Strengthen the government's obligation to archive and preserve government information, regardless of format;
9. Advance the development and promotion of standards in the area of information technology, bibliographic control, and government-wide search software;
10. Foster communication between Federal Depository Library Program participants, such as Federal agencies, libraries, and the public, in the design of government information products and services, and in the development and promotion of standards;
11. Fund the Federal Depository Library Program at the level necessary to comply with statutory requirements and to ensure its effectiveness and participation in the emerging National Information Infrastructure;

and, be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the appropriate Congressional committees and federal officials.

Adopted by the Council of the
American Library Association
Los Angeles, California
February 9, 1994
(Council Document 21.4)