

Government Documents

Publications of the federal, state, and local governments are housed in the library's Government Documents Collection. Government publications might include committee hearings, departmental reports, special studies commissioned by government departments or agencies, public laws, statutes, and other legal documents, statistics, and a whole host of other types of materials. Government publications should not be overlooked as potential research sources; they often may provide access to materials that can be found nowhere else and are often rich with statistical data. Congressional hearings, for example, often include testimony from expert witnesses that will help a researcher to identify names of leading researchers or experts in a particular field.



U. S. Government Printing Office

United States Documents

The United States Government is one of the most prolific publishers in the world. Its various agencies and departments publish a variety of materials, including citizen and consumer guides, compilations of statistics on nearly any aspect of American life, guides to foreign countries and foreign data, records of all public hearings of the Congress, and legal documents that record legislative histories and the legislative process in the United States. Much of the publishing has traditionally been handled through the United States Government Printing Office and has focused on traditional print publishing. As the volume of information has increased and citizen access to the Internet has also expanded, the government has moved heavily into also providing information via its various websites. For example, the Census Department provides a searchable database of information that it has gathered on the population of the United States and on U.S. industry and commercial activity. The Library of Congress maintains a massive website that not only provides access to historical materials that help to define the American experience but to a fully searchable system of legislative materials produced as a part of the Congress's routine business. The Library's Thomas website (thomas.loc.gov) provides access to Congressional hearings and reports going back many years.

As a part of its responsibility to keep the public informed of its activities, the federal government makes its publications available to libraries across the country through its Depository Library program. Some libraries serve as full depositories and receive all publications of the federal government while some libraries serve as selective depositories. The Thomas G. Carpenter Library is a selective depository and receives those publications of the federal government which fit its profile.

Superintendent of Documents Classification

U.S. documents housed in the Thomas G. Carpenter Library are cataloged according to the Superintendent of Documents Classification System or SuDocs. This system organizes materials by the issuing agency or department rather than by subject matter.

The Superintendent of Documents classification system was developed in the Library of the Government Printing Office between 1895 and 1903. It was first described in October 1903 by William Leander Post, then in charge of the Library, in the preface to

List of Publications of the Agriculture Department 1862-1902, Department List No. 1, issued by the Superintendent of Documents in 1904. Mr. Post gives credit for the foundation of the system (classification by governmental author) to Miss Adelaide R. Hasse, who used government organization authorship to assign classification numbers to a List of Publications of the U.S. Department of Agriculture from 1841 to June 30, 1895. Miss Hasse prepared the list while assistant librarian in the Los Angeles Public Library. It was published by the Department of Agriculture in 1896 as its Library Bulletin No. 9. This system has expanded as the Federal Government has grown. Though still retaining the principles upon which it is based, it has changed in some details and methods of use. Because the classification system is based on the current organizational status of the government author, it changes as the organizational structure of the federal government changes. Thus, publications of some issuing agencies may be located in as many as three different places in the system.

(Source: Government Printing Office Website, http://www.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/explain.html)

The following table provides an overview of general classification categories currently in use.

Classification Letter	Department/Agency
A	Agricultural Department
AE	National Archives and Records Administration
B	Broadcasting Board of Governors
C	Commerce Department
C3	Census Bureau
CC	Federal Communications Commission
CR	Civil Rights Commission
D	Defense Department
E	Energy Department
ED	Education Department
EP	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Energy Research and Development Administration
FA	Fine Arts Commission
FE	Federal Energy Administration
FEM	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHF	Federal Housing Financing Board
FM	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
FMC	Federal Maritime Commission
FR	Federal Reserve System Board of Governors
FS	Federal Security Agency
FT	Federal Trade Commission
FTZ	Foreign Trade Zones Board
GA	Government Accountability Office (formerly General Accounting Office)
GP	Government Printing Office
GS	General Services Administration
HE	Health and Human Services Department
HH	Housing and Urban Development Department
HS	Homeland Security
I	Interior Department
IC	Interstate Commerce Commission
ID	U.S. Agency for International Development
ITC	Interstate Trade Commission

J	Justice Department
JU	Judiciary
L	Labor Department
LC	Library of Congress
LR	National Labor Relations Board
MS	Merit Systems Protection Board
NA	National Academy of Sciences
NAS	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCU	National Credit Union Administration
NF	National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities
NMB	National Mediation Board
NS	National Science Foundation
OP	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
P	United States Postal Service
PE	Peace Corps
PM	Personnel Management Office
PR	President of the United States
S	State Department
SBA	Small Business Administration
SE	Securities and Exchange Commission
SI	Smithsonian Institution
SSA	Social Security Administration
T	Treasury Department
TD	Transportation Department
VA	Veterans Affairs Department
X	Congress - House and Senate Journals and Congressional Record
Y	Congress

Florida Documents

The state government of Florida is responsible for providing Floridians with a record of what government business is transacted by the various state departments and agencies and by the Florida Legislature. Much information is made available directly from the state's website, but the state also publishes reports, statistical information, and legislative hearings in print. The Thomas G. Carpenter Library receives many of the state's print publications, which are located in the documents collection in the library. Just as the federal government has a depository arrangement with libraries, the State of Florida has its own system, begun in 1968, known as the Florida State Depository System. The Thomas G. Carpenter Library is a full depository for State of Florida documents, receiving all printed publications of the state government. The State of Florida also publishes many materials directly on its websites. A good starting place for locating available information is MyFlorida.com.

Florida Documents Classification System

Florida documents are classified using a system based on the SuDocs system that identifies materials by agency or department of the state government.

The following table provides the basic call letter designations for Florida documents.

Classification Letter	Department/Agency
AD - ADM	State Board of Administration
AES	Agricultural Experiment Station
AG	Attorney General
AG5:S8	Florida Statutes -- Online Sunshine
AGR	Agricultural & Consumer Services
AUD	Auditor General
AWI	Agency for Workforce Innovation
BPR	Business & Professional Regulation
CAF	Community Affairs
CFS	Children & Families
CIT	Citrus
COD	Commerce
COM	Financial Service
COR (& OR)	Corrections
DEP (& PC)	Environmental Protection
DMS	Management Services
EDU	Education
ELD	Elder Affairs
FAM	Florida A & M University
FAU	Florida Atlantic University
FCD	Water Management Districts Northwest - St. Johns - South Florida - Southwest - Suwanee
FGC	Florida Gulf Coast University
FIU	Florida International University
FSL	State Library of Florida
FSU	Florida State University
FTU (& UCF)	University of Central Florida
GFW	Game & Freshwater Fish Commission
GOV	Governor's Office
HCA	Agency for Health Care Administration
HFS	Department of Children and Families - Refugee Services
HLT	Health
HRS	Health & Rehabilitative Services
HSM	Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles
JAX	City of Jacksonville
JUV	Juvenile Justice
LE	Law Enforcement
LEG	Florida Legislature --- Online Sunshine
LOT	Lottery
MA	Military Affairs
NR	Natural Resources (now under DEP)
OR (& COR)	Corrections
PSC	Public Service Commission
REG	Board of Regents (no longer active)
REV	Revenue
RMA	Ringling Museum of Art
SS	State
SUP	Supreme Court
TR	Transportation
TRE	Insurance Commissioner

UF	University of Florida
UNF	University of North Florida
USF	University of South Florida
UWF	University of West Florida
VAF	Department of Veterans' Affairs

City of Jacksonville Documents

The Thomas G. Carpenter Library also collects publications of the City of Jacksonville. These are housed as part of the Florida documents collection in the library and are designated with call letters beginning JAX.

Finding Documents in the Library

As with most other materials in the library, government publications can be searched using the library's catalog. There are a couple of different ways to limit a search to government publications.

Basic Search

The screenshot shows the library catalog search results for the keyword "homelessness". The search results are displayed in a list format. The first result is "Homelessness" by Sara Dixon Criswell, published in San Diego, CA by Lucent Books in 1998. The second result is "Coping with homelessness [electronic resource]" by Eugene Hurwitz and Sue Hurwitz, published in New York by Rosen in 1997. The search results are filtered by "Library/Collection" to "Government Documents-2nd floor" and "Format" to "Govt Publication".

Annotations on the screenshot include:

- A red arrow pointing to the search input field with the text "Enter keywords describing the topic".
- A red arrow pointing to the "Government Documents-2nd floor" link in the "Library/Collection" facet with the text "Click the Government Documents collection option".
- A red arrow pointing to the "Govt Publication" link in the "Format" facet with the text "Click the Govt Publication format".

The basic search screen of the catalog allows a researcher to input keywords describing a topic and to review a listing of materials that are available in the library matching the keywords. To limit the results to only government publications, a researcher can use the facets that appear in the left panel of the search result screen. At the top of the facets is a listing of available results by "Library/Collection." Look in this facet for the Government Documents link and click it to limit the search results only to the documents collection. Selecting the Government Documents facet will also further categorize the search results into U.S. Documents, Florida Documents, and other documents locations, including CD and microformat collections. Another possible way to limit to documents is to select the format facet and choose to limit the search to just "government publications." Limiting to government publications does

not necessarily mean that all the matching results will be in the 2nd floor documents collections. Some government publications might also end up being shelved in the library's main book collection on the 3rd or 4th floors or in Special Collections on the 1st floor. Further limits can be placed on the search by selecting other search result facets.

Advanced Search

The screenshot shows the 'Catalog - books, ebooks, journals, movies and music, government documents, and more' search page. At the top right, there are links for 'renewals/library account' and 'end session'. The main search area is titled 'Option 1: Search for words' and includes a 'Search' button. A red arrow points to the first search input field containing the word 'homelessness', with the annotation 'Enter keywords that describe the topic'. Below this are two more 'and' search fields, each with a dropdown menu set to 'Anywhere'. A red arrow points to the first dropdown menu with the annotation 'Choose Government Documents from the Location menu'. Below the search fields is a 'Search' button. Underneath, there is a section 'Limit your search further by:' with three dropdown menus: 'Location' (set to 'Government Documents'), 'Format' (set to 'Govt Publication'), and 'Language' (set to 'ALL'). A red arrow points to the 'Format' dropdown menu with the annotation 'Choose Govt Publication from the Format menu'. To the right of these dropdowns is the word 'OR'. Below this is 'Option 2: Boolean Searching:' with instructions on using OR, NOT, and AND, and a 'Search Boolean' button. At the bottom, there is 'Option 3: Search lists of titles, call numbers, etc.' and a link to the previous catalog.

The advanced search screen also offers a couple of different ways to limit the search results to government publications. In addition to being able to input several different keywords or phrases to describe a search topic, a researcher is also able to choose to limit to "Location" and/or to "Format." The location limit includes an option for Government Documents, which, when selected, limits the search just to the library's documents collections (this includes U.S., Florida, and Jacksonville documents). Note: Limiting to a physical location in the library will exclude online government publications that are only available online.

The format option allows the researcher to limit the search result to "government publications." This will limit primarily to publications in the library's documents collection, but it might also retrieve books in the library's main book collection if they are published by a government entity or online documents that are not physically in any library collection.

Publications of the federal, state, and local governments can address all types of current and historical topics and provide researchers with a wealth of information. Researchers should not overlook the library's documents collections as a rich source of information for a variety of topics.