

Linscheid Library User Instruction



Government Documents

Government Documents is a catchall term for any and all information produced by any government agency. Government documents come from various sources:

- The federal government
- State agencies
- Local organizations
- International organizations

The term "document" is often misleading, since government documents come in a variety of forms:

- Books
- Pamphlets
- Posters
- Periodicals
- Maps
- CDs
- Online databases

The most important thing to remember when working with government documents is to know about the government or the organization you are researching. The more you know about the federal government, state governments, or local governments, the better you will be able to figure out what kind of information they produce and how to find it.

Where Can You Find Government Documents?

- In the library's general collection. Simply look them up using the library's electronic catalog called CatPac.
- Microfiche are located in the file cabinets on the second floor.
- Maps and posters published by state and federal agencies are located in the map section on the second floor.

What are Government Documents good for?

The US Government publishes information on a wide variety of topics: everything from pet care to technical research. In general, government documents will be of most use to those doing research in the social sciences and sciences. You might want to look for government documents if you need any of the following:

- ✓ **Statistics:** the government publishes a huge amount of statistics on every conceivable subject. The US Federal Census and the Consumer Price Index are two examples.
- ✓ **Social Issues:** Examples include world hunger, education, adoption, or unemployment.
- ✓ **Legal Research:** If you need to track legislation or look up laws or court cases, then you'll be using government documents.
- ✓ **History:** There is a great deal of government information of interest to students of both local, American and international history.
- ✓ **Scientific Research:** Government agencies spend billions of dollars each year on scientific research, and most of the reports on this research are available for free. NASA publications are one example.

For Internet links to government publications, please go to the government documents section of the library web page at http://www.ecok.edu/academics/acad_resources/library/default.asp. Consult a reference librarian (580-310-5371) if you need specific information.