Government Documents at the Mary and Jeff Bell Library
What is a Government Document?

• Government Documents are materials produced by Government Agencies or groups allied with Government Agencies.

• Gov Docs can be produced by Federal, State, Local/City and even Global Government Bodies.
Why Use Government Documents?

1) They provide informative sources across multiple subjects and disciplines.

2) They are usually available in multiple material formats.

3) They provide accurate information backed by governmental agencies.
What Types of Information do Government Documents Provide?

- Statistics
- Bills, Regulations, Statutes and Laws
- Agency and Commission Reports
- Maps
- Congressional Hearings
- Patents
- Trademarks
- Consumer Information
- Historical Documents
- Scientific and Social Advancements
- Supreme and other Court Decisions
- Economic Indications and Values
- And Much More
Government Documents Depository

The Mary and Jeff Bell Library is a Selective Depository. This means that we don’t carry all Federal Documents that are being produced, just a large portion of them.

The Regional Depository is located at the Texas State Library in Austin. Regional Depositories collect and retain all Federal Documents.
Depository Status

Depository Status for libraries is granted by the Government Printing Office and managed by an area’s Regional Depository.

Any time you see the image below at a library, that means you are in a Depository Library.
Depository Library Program

The Federal Depository Library Program was created in 1813 to keep the public informed of what their government was doing.

The FDLP collects and organizes information and provides no-fee access to the public.

There are nearly 1,250 Depository Libraries throughout the country.
Location of Collection

The Government Documents in the Mary and Jeff Bell Library are located on the first floor in the Northwest corner.
Call Numbers

Government Documents don’t use the Library of Congress call numbering system used in the rest of the Library, instead they use the Superintendent of Documents call numbering system, usually called the SuDoc system.

An explanation of the SuDoc system can be found here.
Gov Doc Collections

The Library has a number of collections of Government Documents including:

Federal Documents
Texas State Documents
Microforms
USGS (I 19’s) located on second floor
and Government Reference Materials (mixed in with the General Reference materials)
Finding Gov Docs

Government Documents can be found via Portal, the Mary and Jeff Bell Library’s online catalog.
Enhanced Search for Gov Docs

You can search within a few of the Government Documents collections on the Library’s Enhanced Search page.
Finding the Item

Once you’ve found a Government Document in Portal that you want to use there are a few things that you need.

1. First, the item may be available online via a link on the item’s record page. This link is called a **PURL** (Persistent Uniform Resource Locator). If the electronic copy will suit your needs, clicking on this link will take you to the electronic version of the document.

2. Second, if there is no electronic version or you prefer a hard copy, you’ll need the **SuDoc** number, without this you will not be able to find the document.

3. Third, you need to identify which **collection** it is in, because microfiche is not in the same area as the paper copies.
Need Assistance?

If you need help finding Government Documents you can contact:

The Reference Desk, located near the library atrium or phone at (361) 825-2609
or
The Government Documents Librarian: Zachary Allred at (361) 825-5702