

## **Exhibition Statement**

The University of Kansas is proud of its 150-year history as a federal depository library. The depository program allows free, local access to this rich source of information, and our government information librarians provide expert assistance to scholars, students, and citizens of Kansas who need to navigate the vast amounts of material. As part of the Federal Depository Library Program, our librarians provide leadership to the selective repositories in the state, as well as on national policy related to how the government shares information.

There are two truly remarkable things about government information and the FDLP.

The first is that, as the title of the exhibit says, all this information is publicly accessible. Through the federal depository program, and now through online publication, government information represents the cornerstone of American democracy. All U.S. citizens have an equal right to use government information to learn the laws of our land, how to comply with federal regulations, and where to go to claim the whole panoply of government benefits. This rich trove of openly available federal information supports a tremendous variety of research and publications by KU scholars and scholars throughout Kansas. Government documents keep America informed and educated!

The second remarkable thing about government information is its richness and variety. The government produces information about so much more than its own internal workings. Using materials produced by the federal government, individuals can discover objects that exist deep in outer space or learn about cattle breeding in Pottawatomie County. They can find the names of soldiers killed during the Vietnam War, trace who owns the rights to "Citizen Kane," or learn the best ways to grow a healthy crop of wheat. From children's literature to census data to information about health and disease, government publications offer a truly astonishing array of topics, and the potential for all sorts and varieties of knowledge.

By participating in this program, we help ensure that Kansans can find and use the government information that they need, and thus enrich lives and support an immense variety of businesses, pastimes, and interests. The depository has also been a vital resource for KU's own champion debate teams!

Access to government information grows our economy and improves conditions for people across the state. As "For the People" demonstrates, the federal depository at KU has been making a difference for Kansas and the nation for a century and a half, and we look forward to continuing that tradition for many years to come.

*Kevin L. Smith  
Dean of Libraries  
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