

**The ASERL Collaborative Federal Depository Project
A Proposal to the IMLS National Leadership Grant Program
January 28, 2009**

The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) proposes a 36-month demonstration project to create a collaborative model of “centers of excellence” among federally-designated regional depository libraries, to increase completeness of holdings, improve access to these holdings for the general public and other depository libraries, and improve services that support use of federal government publications. Working within the current legal mandate and policies of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), ASERL will partner with the University of Kentucky and the University of South Carolina to test a plan to create a comprehensive-as-possible collection of tangible, legacy federal documents in two subject areas, with cataloging and provision of expert subject-based reference support services. The Collaborative Federal Depository Project (CFDP) will document and test the feasibility of a model that could lead to the creation of subject-based centers of excellence among all depository libraries, relieving pressure among regional and selective depository libraries and improving preservation, intellectual control, and access for legacy collections nationwide. It also can provide a model for future development of shared collections and services for current and digital federal depository collections.

I. Assessment of Need

The FDLP was established in 1813 when legislation was authorized to deposit copies of selected Congressional publications in certain libraries and universities, with the condition that “no-fee access” be provided to the general public. The FDLP operates under a framework defined by Title 44 of the U.S. Code §§ 1901-1916. The existing structure of regional and selective depository libraries was established by the Depository Library Act of 1962. There are currently 51 regional depository libraries and 1,206 selective depository libraries. All depository libraries must make their holdings available free to the general public. All publications distributed through the FDLP are sent to regional depositories and must be permanently retained unless superseded; selective depositories must retain FDLP material for five years but may then dispose of it with approval from their regional depository. Regional depositories also are required to provide interlibrary loan, reference services, and assistance to the selective depositories that they serve. The Government Printing Office (GPO) Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-40) clarified regional depository library preservation responsibilities in regard to electronic information, delegating to the GPO the primary responsibility for permanent public access to online content. Nonetheless, regional depository libraries are responsible for permanent preservation and public access for tangible publications, including print, microfiche, and disks. Regional depositories are designated by U.S. Senators in the states where they are located.

While the FDLP is an enormously successful program, it is currently operating under a legal and operational framework that places increasingly difficult fiscal and logistical burdens on regional depository libraries. These burdens limit the ability of all depository libraries to take full advantage of digital technologies to improve access to government documents. A number of organizations have been engaged in studying the situation, issuing public reports and statements, including ASERL, the Association of Research Libraries, the American Library Association and its Government Documents Round Table, and the American Association of Law Librarians. ASERL established a program in

2006 to explore options for cooperative services and collection management of federal government publications to improve public access. The primary driver for ASERL was concern that public access would be diminished due to the increasing cost of managing, cataloging, storing, and preserving large collections of historic documents; increasing pressure on regional depositories to provide services and support to selective depositories; and decreasing availability of staff expertise in government information.

During 2007-2008, the GPO conducted a study of regional depository libraries that further defined the issues impacting public access to federal government publications on a national level. A December 2008 report, *Regional Depository Libraries in the 21st Century: A Preliminary Assessment*, documents the same issues nation-wide that prompted ASERL to establish its program, including decreasing or static staffing levels for depository collections, with diminishing in-depth expertise; lack of or poor cataloging and holdings information, especially for pre-1976 materials; fiscal and space constraints; and preservation issues related to obsolete technology and legacy print collections.¹ The report indicates that ten of the regional depositories (20%) are considering relinquishing their regional depository designation (p. 6). “The return on investment for regional libraries to store, maintain, and preserve their tangible collections has diminished as some libraries report institutional costs of more than \$1,000,000 a year to support their regional depository operation” (p. 8). A 2003-2004 ARL study of regional depositories estimated average annual operating costs of \$330,000 for staff, cataloging and processing, equipment, collection reference resources and maintenance supplies; a 2007-2008 study of two regional depositories estimated \$700,000 in yearly amortized costs for facilities to house FDLP collections.² At a time when library budgets are static or declining and the expense of acquiring and maintaining access to all information resources is increasing, such depository costs are difficult to sustain.

The December 2008 GPO report recommends changes to allow for increased flexibility and collaboration, increased funding to support cataloging, and additional study to develop recommendations for policy and statutory changes. Collaboration is frequently recommended as a strategy for addressing financial, technological, preservation, and access issues. In particular, the report notes that “Collaboration is needed to meet the challenges of cataloging, storing, preserving, and digitizing the tangible collection of depository materials” (p. 8). The ASERL CFDP is one innovative model to address these challenges for legacy federal government depository collections.

The ASERL CFDP seeks to address the need for improved public access to federal depository collections by providing complete holdings in discrete subject areas at specific regional depositories (“centers of excellence”), with appropriate cataloging for all materials and improved access to related reference expertise. Legacy collections are incomplete at all depositories, and the CFDP proposes innovative solutions for identifying the contents of federal depository collections and creating as-complete-as-possible collections at “centers of excellence.”

¹ *Regional Depository Libraries in the 21st Century: A Preliminary Assessment*. Final Report to the Joint Committee on Printing. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2008, pp. 4-5, 8. Retrieved on January 15, 2009, from <http://www.fdlp.gov/home/about/209-studyofregionals>.

² *Regional Depository Libraries in the 21st Century: A Time for Change?* A Draft Report to the Joint Committee on Printing. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 2008, p. C-62. Retrieved on December 29, 2008, from <http://www.fdlp.gov/regionals/study.html>.

The CFDP also provides an innovative model for sharing resources. As the FDLP evolves, the CFDP could provide new models for coordinating collections among regional and selective depositories and improving management of the disposition process. The December 2008 GPO report describes “an overwhelming number of comments [from selective depositories] complaining about the disposition of materials process” (p. 5). Regional depositories often find it difficult to process the increasing number of disposition requests in a timely manner, the result of selectives seeking to address their own space and public access issues by replacing tangible publications with digital surrogates. The ASERL CFDP provides the structure for a potential model to improve disposition processes by coordinating requests through “centers of excellence.” The proposed demonstration project will explore this and other collaborative options, and provide valuable input to the GPO as it continues to define policies for effective operation of the FDLP in the future.

The model created through the CFDP will benefit all regional and selective depository libraries by providing a trusted resource for access to the “center of excellence” collections and an expandable model that can be adopted by other consortia and depository libraries. The CFDP also will improve cataloging and holdings records for selected collections. Although the GPO has contracted to catalog pre-1976 publications, the process is costly, time-consuming, and incomplete (for example, few items from one of the collections included in this project, the Works Progress Administration publications, will be cataloged by the GPO contract). ASERL’s CFDP will provide additional resources in selected subject areas to support the GPO’s efforts and will validate GPO records against actual “center of excellence” holdings. At the same time, ASERL seeks to create and document master lists within subject areas, so that all regional depository libraries can ascertain the completeness of their holdings and identify gaps. No other projects seek to create a collaborative model of complete collections of federal government publications in specific subject areas, with appropriate intellectual control and expert reference assistance to facilitate access.

II. National Impact and Intended Results

The ASERL CFDP addresses documented issues related to current and future public access to federal government publications. The model it creates will have a lasting impact on ASERL libraries and, if widely adopted, on all depository libraries, by providing collaborative solutions to ensure public access to complete historic and current federal publications with correlated subject expertise to facilitate use. While the December 2008 GPO report implies potential future changes to Title 44, the ASERL CFDP is designed to provide a valuable model whether or not statutory or policy changes occur. Should no changes occur in the legal or operational framework of the FDLP, the ASERL CFDP will serve as a model for collaboration in cataloging, collection analysis, and provision of expert, subject-based reference assistance for federal government publications within the current depository library system. Should policy or statutory changes occur in the FDLP, the ASERL CFDP will serve as a model for creating complete subject-based depository collections with adequate redundancy to ensure preservation and easy access within shared depository libraries and collections. As noted by the Regional Depository Librarians themselves in a joint statement to the GPO issued with its draft June 2008 study: “[E]asy, convenient access can be guaranteed by fewer ‘complete’ collections and smarter collaborations and delivery systems. ... New trends of information access, remote delivery, and library use argue for allowing GPO and regional depositories some flexibility in the placement of collections in order to respond to space constraints for all library materials.”³ The

³ *Regional Depository Libraries in the 21st Century: A Time for Change?*, p. C-58.

joint statement goes on to highlight the lack of complete cataloging and online catalog access to pre-1976 federal publications and the preservation needs of older collections, calling for consortial action as “essential” to addressing these issues.

ASERL has been developing the CFDP since 2006. Participation by the regional depository libraries within the ten states included in ASERL is completely voluntary (a list of these libraries is attached in Supporting Document 1); however, all have provided input and feedback on the collaborative model and many are engaged in the program’s steering committee (listed below in section III). The ASERL CFDP model is designed regionally, but will be developed for easy adoption in other regions and for inclusion of partners nationally. The program will not alter any of the requirements or responsibilities of federal regional depository libraries; rather, it seeks to improve public services for and access to federal government publications, whether a regional depository elects to become a “center of excellence” or not. ASERL hopes for a future FDLP that provides flexibility for greater collaboration in service to the public, and it envisions the CFDP as one step in that direction.

Although support from depositories for the concepts of the ASERL CFDP has been positive, the project has elicited controversial reactions from two directions. One group expresses concerns that the CFDP seeks to create one regional depository library for the entire Southeast. This is not the goal and will not be the result of the CFDP, which seeks redundant “centers of excellence” in each subject or agency area (see ASERL’s program description in Supporting Document 2). In addition, participants in the CFDP do not relinquish their responsibilities as a regional depository library with the FDLP, so will continue to collect and preserve all materials as mandated by that program, whether included in the subject area of the “center of excellence” or not. “Centers of excellence” will, in fact, increase holdings of historic publications, filling gaps and replacing lost materials, so that more regional depository libraries will have more complete collections than they do now.

The second area of concern, expressed largely by the law library community, is that the CFDP will reduce access to original, printed publications that may be needed for cases in federal courts, which do not yet recognize digital surrogates as authentic. The CFDP has no intent to reduce access to originals, but rather intends to improve and increase access to them. As noted above, regional depository libraries will continue to fulfill the collection mandates of the GPO. While some of the documents added to “centers of excellence” will come from selective depositories, as the system currently stands, those libraries can dispose of their holdings after five years with approval of their regional (currently many send them directly to their regional depository in lieu of disposition). The “centers of excellence” will provide a focused outlet for disposition of these assets to other libraries, ensuring that they are used to help fill gaps and complete collections, and are not just discarded. Also, all regional depository libraries are mandated to provide original copies by interlibrary loan, and that service will continue. Lawyers should actually have increased access to needed federal government publications through the “centers of excellence,” which will provide improved cataloging, access to a full range of complementary resources from cited agencies, and expert reference support.

The CFDP has been developed with as full awareness as possible of the needs of the various constituencies that use and depend upon federal government documents. Much discussion has already occurred about the concerns noted above and other issues, all of which has informed the development of the current CFDP plan. While there is the risk that an issue has been overlooked, implementation of the model described in the plan of work below will be key to illuminating the need and developing

a workable solution. The effectiveness with which “centers of excellence” can document complete holdings and fill gaps in their collections will be a major means for assessing the significance of the project and its potential for broad adoption. In the short term, improved catalog and holdings records, stronger collections at “centers of excellence,” and better access to collection experts will provide immediate benefit to the library community and the general public.

III. Project Design & Evaluation Plan

The ASERL CFDP has been developed under the guidance of a steering committee chaired by Sandra McAninch, Regional Depository Librarian at the University of Kentucky; current members are Valerie Glenn (Government Documents Librarian at the University of Alabama), Laura Harper (Head of Government Information/Media/Microforms Services at the University of Mississippi), Marian Parker (Associate Dean for Information Services at the Wake Forest University Law Library), Judith Russell (Dean of University Libraries at the University of Florida), William Sudduth (Head of Government Information, Microforms, Newspapers and Maps at the University of South Carolina), David Vidor (Leader, User Services at Emory University), and John Burger (Executive Director, ASERL). Input in planning has been sought from all depository libraries in the Southeast, regardless of affiliation with ASERL. An active un-moderated listserv facilitates discussion among interested persons (subscription instructions are at www.aserl.org). The full scope of ASERL’s collaborative federal depository model is described in the attached Concept Paper (Supporting Document 2). The ASERL model is committed to developing collaborative solutions and processes within the existing mandate of the GPO, the FDLP, and Title 44 U.S. Code §§ 1901-1916. In summary, it seeks to:

- Create “centers of excellence” that will ensure multiple, complete retrospective collections of federal publications by agency, supported by subject matter experts who are able to provide sophisticated, in-depth reference services. This portion of the full model is the primary focus of this IMLS project proposal.
- Improve identification and preservation of these collections.
- Provide rapid delivery of materials via interlibrary loan from the “centers of excellence” to users throughout the region and nation.
- Develop outreach activities to improve public knowledge of how to access federal government information.

The goal of the ASERL CFDP is to demonstrate the feasibility of a collaborative model of “centers of excellence” among regional depository libraries in the FDLP, to increase completeness of holdings, improve access to these holdings for the general public and other depository libraries, and improve services that support use of federal government information. ASERL will implement the test in partnership with the University of Kentucky and the University of South Carolina using two specific subject collections. The University of Kentucky will establish a “center of excellence” focused on Works Progress Administration documents (Superintendent of Documents [SuDocs] classes FW and Y 3.W 89/2). The University of South Carolina will establish a “center of excellence” focused on Department of Education documents (SuDocs ED classes). These two collections were selected as most comprehensive among southeastern regional depository libraries based on assessment of linear feet of holdings – the University of Kentucky has 99 linear feet in the Works Progress Administration classes compared to 1 to 27 linear feet held by other southeastern regional depository libraries; the

University of South Carolina has 180 linear feet of ED holdings compared to 47 to 167 linear feet reported by other regional depositories in the Southeast.

III.A. Plan of Work

The project start date will be October 1, 2009. The attached Schedule of Completion provides a timeline for project activities. Each partner will have a project manager to direct work locally (John Burger for ASERL, Sandra McAninch for the University of Kentucky, and William Sudduth for the University of South Carolina). These three will direct all project activity as the Project Oversight Team, with support from a part-time Project Coordinator reporting to John Burger, the Project Director. Mr. Burger also will be responsible for coordinating input and feedback from the ASERL Collaborative Federal Depository Program Steering Committee (listed above). Additional information on staffing is provided in section IV below. Key project activities are:

1. Inventory holdings and ensure accurate cataloging and holdings records for the extant collections at each site. Lack of cataloging and holdings records for older material has been a major hindrance to access, sharing, and ensuring completeness of holdings. Each partner will inventory and catalog its holdings in the relevant SuDocs classes, adding records and holdings to OCLC's WorldCat. Existing GPO or OCLC records will be used when available, but both partners expect to create new records for a significant percentage of their collections. Grant funds will support part-time staff at the University of South Carolina; the University of Kentucky has elected to complete the inventory and cataloging process with existing staff.
2. Create master lists of all titles in the ED, FW and Y 3.W 89/2 classes. This requires staff at both university libraries to compile and compare their records with records reported by other organizations through the GPO, OCLC, and catalogs of other ASERL libraries. In addition, Paratext (an independent information company in Texas that provides bibliographic and full-text databases for libraries) has created cataloging records for some of the Works Progress Administration material and has agreed to share those records freely with ASERL; in return, ASERL will provide Paratext with records for new Works Progress Administration items discovered through this project.

The master lists will be compiled through a searchable database (preferably developed on an open source program) accessible via the ASERL website. The database will provide brief cataloging records, serials records, and holdings information for the two participating libraries as well as records reported in other sources as noted above. A database consultant hired at the beginning of the project will assess database options and select a database that will provide the functionality needed; design the database for record input, searching, and reporting; and import data from existing data sources (such as local catalog records, the GPO, or Paratext). The database is meant to be as comprehensive as possible for the relevant SuDocs classes. Staff at both partner libraries will assist in creation of the master lists.

3. Check "center of excellence" holdings against the compiled master lists to identify gaps. No historical federal government publications collection is 100% complete. Regional depositories were established at different times, and prior to their designation, collected and retained federal publications with varying degrees of completeness based on community needs. Even holdings

obtained after designation as a regional depository are incomplete due to loss from disaster, wear-and-tear, theft, etc. Staff at both partner libraries will analyze their collections to identify gaps.

4. Fill gaps in “center of excellence” collections as they are identified. With feedback from the CFDP Steering Committee and other depository libraries, the project partners will develop, implement, and document a process to fill gaps and create as-comprehensive-as-possible collections. The process will include: identification of potential sources of federal government publications (including holdings from selective depositories); communication protocols for inquiring into availability; transfer procedures if items are to be contributed by another depository library; and surrogate procedures if the holding institution wishes to retain the original and provide a copy (paper or digital). While surrogates at “centers of excellence” may not be useful for court cases, they will nonetheless enable the center to provide access to the information for most users. Any costs related to filling gaps (purchase, shipping, processing, etc.) will be contributed by the partner library and are not included in this project’s budget. The partner library will catalog new acquisitions and update information in the subject master list to reflect accurate holdings. Documentation regarding the process for filling gaps will be publicly available on ASERL’s website.
5. Identify subject expertise to facilitate use of the “centers of excellence” collections. As noted above, expert reference assistance in federal government information is diminishing. Through the CFDP, shared expertise in federal government information subject areas would benefit not only users of the “centers of excellence” but also other depository libraries. ASERL and partner libraries plan to work with other libraries in the region, the GPO and the Depository Library Council to identify expertise and design a program to provide this expertise as reference and user support through the “centers of excellence.” Expertise may be located anywhere. ASERL will establish protocols, procedures, and agreements for sharing this expertise among institutions in support of user reference services. Activity in this area will be coordinated with the Government Information Online GPO virtual reference service, launched in 2008 among 20 regional depository libraries.

To support implementation of the CFDP, the Project Oversight Team will meet annually to agree on standards, database design, metrics, and processes. These meetings will be opportunities for problem resolution, model documentation, and feedback. In addition, the Project Coordinator or Director will visit each partner site annually to assess progress and address unique issues. The CFDP Steering Committee meets monthly by conference call to provide oversight, advice, and feedback.

Throughout the project, ASERL and its partners will document processes and decisions, and continue to share them with the library community through the ASERL website. Feedback will be sought through the CFDP listserv mentioned above and through public comment sessions at Depository Library Conferences (the latter have been held for the past two years). ASERL also will share project reports and findings with the GPO on a regular basis. One major output of the project will be documentation of the model and processes, with assessment of their effectiveness and applicability on a wider scale (through the project’s final report). Other results of the project include: cataloging and holdings records for partners for the SuDocs classes included in the project; creation of master lists of federal government publications in the Works Progress Administration and Department of Education subject areas; addition of publications to both the University of Kentucky and University

of South Carolina collections to create as-comprehensive-as-possible holdings in the Works Progress Administration and Department of Education depository collections respectively; and provision of subject expertise in reference services for collections at the two “centers of excellence.”

III.B. Evaluation Plan

The goal of this project is to demonstrate the feasibility of ASERL’s CFDP collaborative model of “centers of excellence” among regional depository libraries. Success of the model will be determined by the model’s ability to meet its goals of: increased completeness of holdings, improved access to holdings for the general public and other depository libraries, and improved services to support use of federal government publications. Several strategies will be used in evaluation:

- Improvement in completeness of holdings in the relevant subject areas at partner libraries based on measures of holdings as a percent of all publications on the master lists, at completion of cataloging and at the end of the project.
- Increased public use of target collections based on pre-project and post-project measures of use at each library. These measures will be defined at the beginning of the project based on usage metrics each library already collects; they may not reflect complete usage of the collections, since some uses (such as that resulting from collection browsing) are difficult to measure.
- Quantitative and qualitative assessment of the use and benefits of access to subject matter expertise during the course of the project. Use of subject experts will be measured in terms of number and complexity of queries. Qualitative assessment will be based on feedback from the subject experts themselves and staff at both “centers of excellence.”
- ASERL will conduct a survey of depository libraries in the Southeast (regional and selective) in the final year of the project to obtain feedback and assessment of the test model. The survey will provide information for the CFDP Steering Committee to assess the scalability and broad adoptability of the model.
- Throughout the entire project, ASERL will collect feedback on the project and the model through the CFDP listserv. In addition, all project partners will provide feedback as project activities are implemented and participate in assessment and process improvements to ensure effectiveness.

IV. Project Resources: Budget, Personnel, and Management

IV.A. Budget

Grant funds are requested specifically to support temporary staffing, consultants, and travel. As noted in the budget and above, ASERL, the University of Kentucky, and the University of South Carolina will contribute significant resources to the project, only a portion of which is reflected in the project budget. Overall, 80% of requested direct grant funds are devoted to staff and consulting resources necessary to accomplish project goals. All project participants are committed to the long-term goal of creating and maintaining collaborative “centers of excellence” among regional depository libraries, for which completion of this demonstration project will provide valuable information on costs and resource requirements.

IV.B. Personnel and Management

The project director will be John Burger, Executive Director of ASERL. He will devote 20% of his time to the project to hire and supervise the Project Coordinator, lead the Project Oversight Team, coordinate work with the CFDP Steering Committee and ASERL Board of Directors, and manage project promotion, evaluation, and reporting. Mr. Burger has been Executive Director of ASERL since 2000 and has managed several grant projects in the past. His expertise in project management will be supplemented by the federal government information expertise of the two other members of the Project Oversight Team, Sandra McAninch from the University of Kentucky and William Sudduth from the University of South Carolina. Ms. McAninch has 32 years of professional experience in management of federal government publication collections. She will contribute 15% of her time to the project to serve on the Project Oversight Team and coordinate project participation at the University of Kentucky. Mr. Sudduth has 19 years of professional experience in federal government depository collections and will contribute 20% of his time to the project to serve on the Project Oversight Team, coordinate project participation and supervise project staff at the University of South Carolina. The Project Oversight Team will be responsible for all decisions in regard to project implementation. Résumés for these three individuals are attached (Resumes.pdf).

A part-time Project Coordinator will be hired to manage day-to-day operations of the CFDP and IMLS grant, including working with the database consultant on master lists; documenting standards, procedures, and processes for the “centers of excellence;” identifying and arranging agreements with subject experts; providing and updating CFDP documentation on the ASERL website; performing assessment and evaluation activities; coordinating the work of the Project Oversight Team and the CFDP Steering Committee; handling project communications and promotions; and assisting in the preparation of reports. A job description for this position is attached (Resumes.pdf).

Grant funds will support part-time staff at the University of South Carolina to inventory and catalog ED collections, create master lists, and analyze collections under the supervision of Mr. Sudduth. This work will be done over 36 months by a temporary librarian at 10 hours/week and a student assistant, also at 10 hours/week. The University of Kentucky has already begun the cataloging and inventory process for the Works Progress Administration documents, and has elected to complete this work with existing staff. The University of Kentucky expects to complete the inventory, cataloging, and master list within 12 months.

A database consultant will develop and provide ongoing support for the master list database for each of the “centers of excellence” subject collections, as described above in section III.A.2. ASERL will secure a consultant with database design experience and knowledge of library cataloging and the MARC record format.

The ASERL CFDP Steering Committee will provide guidance and support for the project, review processes and reports, participate in project promotion and evaluation, and assist in resolution of issues. The Project Director reports to both the CFDP Steering Committee and the ASERL Board of Directors in regard to this project. The CFDP holds monthly conference calls in addition to regular email communications; it also meets annually in conjunction with the Depository Library Council meeting. The directors of the two partner libraries (Carol Pitts Diedrichs, Dean of Libraries at the University of Kentucky, and Thomas F. McNally, Interim Dean of Libraries at the University of

South Carolina) have committed to providing the resources at their organizations needed to accomplish the project goals (see their letters in Supporting Document 3). Some of these resources are reflected in the project budget (such as grant funding for part-time catalogers and cost-sharing of project oversight staff members); others are not, including the costs of filling gaps and long-term performance as a “center of excellence.”

V. Dissemination

All project reports and documentation will continue to be publicly available on the ASERL website. Announcements of the availability of new reports and project tools (such as the collection master lists) will be made through the CFDP listserv and through other communication tools that reach the federal depository community (such as Regional-L managed by the Association of Research Libraries and the Center for Networked Information, and FDLP-L managed by the GPO). For major reports, ASERL will issue press releases to the entire library community. In addition, project staff members plan to provide overview sessions, reports, and discussions at national, regional, and state conferences whenever possible (such as American Library Association and Depository Library Council meetings). The CFDP Steering Committee made such a report at the October 2007 GPO Depository Library Conference, which will be a venue for future reports and ongoing feedback sessions. In addition, reports are provided at ASERL semi-annual membership meetings. The CFDP listserv will continue to serve as the primary tool for soliciting feedback and input from interested observers. Anyone may join the listserv, which provides an un-moderated forum for discussion (instructions are at www.aserl.org).

VI. Sustainability

ASERL plans to provide long-term access to the reports, documentation, and products of this project, for as long as they are useful to the library community. No matter what the outcome of the test, these documents will provide useful information for future FDLP collaborative initiatives.

The partners in the ASERL CFDP are confident that they can create a workable model for regional depository “centers of excellence.” The test to be conducted through this grant provides the basic design for building a larger program, one that establishes multiple “centers of excellence” for each area/agency represented in the FDLP, both regionally and nationally. The test also provides a platform for building other collaborative services. Shared, subject-based reference expertise is one such service, to be explored through this grant. Other areas could include collaborative digitization for improved access to older collections, shared systems for long-term preservation of all formats of government publications, cooperative training initiatives to share expertise within the depository community, and collaborative public awareness and outreach campaigns to promote federal government publications to specific communities, such as school media centers and public libraries.

ASERL plans to continue its program to develop and implement collaborative services for depository libraries within its membership and within the region. This IMLS project will facilitate its efforts and enable a faster and more focused and coordinated test than could be accomplished without grant funds. Support for this project at this time will also provide useful input to the GPO and Depository Library Council as it considers changes in the regional depository system.