

Proposal to Become an ASERL Center of Excellence

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Introduction

East Tennessee State University's (ETSU) Sherrod Library has been a federal document depository for the First Congressional District of Tennessee since 1942, although many items in our collection were published prior to that date. We are currently one of 22 depository libraries in the state of Tennessee, selecting over 35% of the items distributed by the United States Government Printing Office. Our documents collection is one of the seven largest in Tennessee, and we serve as a shared regional depository, with the University of Memphis Library as the primary depository for the state. Sherrod Library has also been a depository for Tennessee state documents since 1978.

During the past seventy years, our collection has grown to well over 1,000,000 items. Collection strengths are in areas relating to the environment, the Appalachian region, education, health, justice, business, and veterans' affairs. During the past twenty years, the Government Printing Office has increasingly turned to electronic publication to provide information. While Sherrod Library has embraced these new formats, in a time in which the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) along with other agencies, experiences continued budgetary uncertainty, there is also a growing need for preservation of government document print collections. This need has led Sherrod Library to seek to participate in the Collaborative Federal Documents Program (CFDP) created by the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL).

The purpose of the CFDP is to address the increasing cost of managing, preserving, and providing access to large collections of federal government publications through the creation of agency-based Centers of Excellence (COEs) among libraries participating in the FDLP. The goal of the program is to create two complete distributed collections of all print publications made available through the FDLP. Each participating COE selects at least one agency and is required to keep at least one tangible print copy of every publication for that agency. Additionally, a COE is required to catalog all holdings of the selected agency, create a list of all publications for that agency, work with other libraries to fill in any missing gaps within the current collection, provide reference service for the collection, and make those documents available as a resource for the campus community and the region.

As an academic research library, Sherrod Library's holdings include a variety of agencies and subject areas, but the collection of primary source documents on mental health and substance abuse is especially important not only to the region but to many departments and programs within the campus community. These departments include the ETSU College of Medicine, which is closely affiliated with the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center. ETSU is also

home to psychiatry, psychology, sociology, counseling, social work, and criminal justice programs. Each of these departments works with mental health and substance abuse issues and benefits from Sherrod Library's extensive documents collection. For these reasons Sherrod Library requests to become an ASERL Center of Excellence for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Implementation

1. Creating a master list of titles to identify gaps in the collection

As a COE Sherrod Library would be tasked with creating a master list of all SAMHSA publications (SuDoc range HE 20.400 to HE 20.431) in order to begin acquiring at least one print copy of all SAMHSA material since the agency began in 1992. A search of the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications revealed 699 titles within that range. Sherrod Library would need to acquire approximately 406 titles to supplement the 293 titles currently in the collection. In order to compile the master list of all relevant titles and ensure accurate cataloging procedures for each, Sherrod Library will use Marcive Bibliographic Data Services. Sherrod Library has used Marcive as a cataloging source for a number of years to supplement the work done by the cataloging department. Because of the familiarity and working relationship between Marcive and Sherrod Library, this has been determined to be the most efficient and effective way to fulfill this requirement.

2. Cataloging

Once a master list of all relevant titles has been created, Sherrod Library will identify and acquire missing titles using both the FDLP and ASERL systems. This will primarily be done through needs and offers lists, the ASERL Documents Disposition Database, and the help of partnering academic libraries. Once these items are acquired, they will be cataloged through the Sherrod Library cataloging department, which will work in conjunction with the government documents department in order to assure all ASERL and FDLP guidelines are followed. To verify the accuracy of all existing holdings, the current collection of all relevant titles will be reviewed for cataloging errors and assigned archival status, which will be denoted in each item record. Additionally, all relevant holdings will be uploaded to both OCLC's WorldCat and the ASERL/COE database which will serve as a resource for other academic and research libraries.

3. Storage & Preservation

Due to its archival status, the COE collection will be housed in a closed stack area of the government documents department. However, it will be made available to members of the ETSU community and citizens of the region at their request. Sherrod Library's documents department currently has a closed stack area housing the rare book collection that has sufficient space for the COE material. We anticipate the additions to the collection to be less than 1,000 documents. However, there is room for growth as SAMHSA releases new material. Digitization will be a long term goal in order to fully preserve the archival material in the future. Sherrod Library is already using digitization technology for interlibrary loan and to preserve other collections.

4. Access & Reference Assistance

A major issue in creating an archival collection accessible by the public, will be creating a circulation policy, which at the same time allows for ease of access while taking into consideration the need for long term preservation of the material. While the COE collection will be located in closed stacks, it will circulate within the ETSU community. Library staff will be available to provide reference assistance and to retrieve materials as needed both in the reference department and within the Government Documents Department. In-depth research inquiries would be referred to a Government Documents staff member or to the Documents Department Librarian who will have a thorough understanding of SAMHSA and the COE collection. Additional training will be provided to library faculty and staff to enable them to field questions relating to the material. Fulfilling loan requirements to other libraries will also be an important consideration. To balance access versus preservation, every effort will be made to send material requested through ILL as a scanned digital copy. In rare circumstances exceptions to lending policies can be made at the discretion of the Government Documents Librarian; however, for preservation purposes, preference will always be given to providing scanned digital copies over the physical item.

Conclusion

By joining the CFDP in becoming a Center of Excellence for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, East Tennessee State University's Sherrod Library can not only assist in the long term preservation of primary source material, but will also become a more valuable resource for the ETSU campus community and for the regional library system. By taking part in this initiative, Sherrod Library will be able to expand its federal documents collection in a way that supports the academic endeavors of many on-campus departments. Furthermore, in promoting digitization efforts for archival material, Sherrod Library will continue to advance its technology and preservation programs.