

# Wisconsin Document Depository Program Overview

## *Purpose of Document Depository Program*

Wisconsin statutes, as amended by 1991 Wisconsin Act 285, require Wisconsin state agencies to send copies of their publications to the [Wisconsin Reference and Loan Library](#) for distribution to libraries through the [Wisconsin Document Depository Program](#). This program preserves and makes available a record of major state government programs and assures the availability of state publications for use by the public throughout Wisconsin now and in the future.

The purpose of the Wisconsin Document Depository Program is to:

1. Obtain Wisconsin documents for distribution to depository libraries.
2. Assure that organized collections of Wisconsin documents are available to the public through depository libraries.
3. Facilitate interlibrary loan methods that provide efficient retrieval of Wisconsin documents and sharing of materials.
4. Promote the examination and use of Wisconsin documents by the general public.

Many state government publications are now born-digital, that is, published only on the Web. As more documents are provided exclusively in digital formats, particularly on the Internet, the requirement to comply with this law has become more challenging. The [Wisconsin Digital Archives](#) is a collaborative effort involving the [Wisconsin Reference and Loan Library](#), the [Wisconsin Historical Society](#), the [Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau](#), the [Wisconsin Department of Transportation](#), the [University of Wisconsin-Madison](#), and the [Wisconsin State Law Library](#). The Wisconsin Digital Archives provides permanent electronic access to web content located on Wisconsin state agency websites and allows state agencies to continue to fulfill their statutory obligation to participate in the Wisconsin Document Depository Program with electronic formats.

## *State Government Documents and the Public Interest*

Each year state government agencies, boards, commissions and task forces publish a vast number of documents in print and provide access to ever increasing amounts of information on state agency websites in electronic formats. State government provides information on programs, government studies, plans, statistical analysis, budgets and other topics of interest. The majority of this information receives limited dissemination to the public.

State government documents are intended for public use and distribution and cover a wide spectrum of social, judicial, legislative and political issues. They often provide essential consumer information, statistical information, economic and demographic data, and research findings. Some documents are the subject of public hearings. Most provide information about the operation of government programs, policies and issues on which agencies are making or have made decisions.

Government documents are in the public interest and should be available to the public both at the time they are published and for future reference. It is important that people have access to government documents regardless of where in Wisconsin they live. State government documents are used by government employees, other employees, students, and individuals at the state and local level, public and private nonprofit institutions, and businesses.

## ***The Depository Library Role in Disseminating State Government Documents***

The Wisconsin Document Depository Program is the main state program which currently attempts to assure that a wide range of documents are available for use by the public throughout Wisconsin now and in the future. This program preserves and makes available major state government publications regardless of format.

Public, state agency, and academic libraries serve as depositories for documents that can be used by the public. Depository libraries are the only places where collections of state government documents are likely to be available and preserved. Materials are organized so that they can be retrieved upon request and either used on-site, borrowed from the library or accessed online. State documents can also be borrowed through interlibrary loan from other libraries.

### ***Definition of a State Document***

According to the definition in s. 35.81(3), Wis. Stats., “ ‘State documents’ includes every publication produced by a state agency in multiple copies or prepared for a state agency in multiple copies by a private individual or organization that is supported wholly or partly by any funds appropriated by this state, *regardless of format or process by which produced* and regardless of the source of funds provided to the publisher, which is intended by the publisher to be disseminated or made accessible to the public or is required by law to be published, but does not include any publication of a state agency intended by the state agency to be used solely for internal purposes within the state agency or between that state agency and other state agencies.”

Everything a state agency prints or produces is not a state document as defined by the statutes. A state document is:

- Reproduced in multiple copies, regardless of format or process
- or issued by any of the following
  - the legislature (or its committees and research offices),
  - any state agency, including agencies, departments, boards, committees, commissions, and task forces,
  - the governor’s office, committees, commissions, or task forces
  - or at the state’s expense by a private individual or organization acting for one of these bodies
- or published with the intent to disseminate or make accessible to the public,
- or required by law to be published.

### ***State Document vs. Public Records***

The definition of a state document in this context is much more limited than that of a public record, although the terms are sometimes confused. It is the intent of the document depository program to collect and preserve publications intended for public use and which provide public information on state government programs. It is not the intent to collect all items that might be considered public records.

### ***Official State Documents***

Designated depository libraries receive many official state documents in print format free of charge for maintaining depository status. These documents include the Annotations, Laws of Wisconsin, and the Administrative Code and Register just to name a few. The Table for Distribution of Official Documents, Section 35.84, Wis. Stats. provides a complete list of official state documents distributed to depository libraries.

### ***University of Wisconsin Documents***

A copy of each University of Wisconsin publication meeting the definition of a state document should be deposited in its University of Wisconsin campus library. The University of Wisconsin-Madison is responsible for collecting University of Wisconsin System publications. Selected University of Wisconsin System publications will continue to be distributed through the depository library program.

### ***Exemptions and Restrictions***

The definition of a “state document” **excludes** materials not intended for public use, such as forms, inter/intra-office memos, internal procedure manuals and drafts prepared for in-house review.

The statutes make a partial exemption for state documents published exclusively for public sale by presses established by the University of Wisconsin System or the Wisconsin Historical Society, and state documents sold primarily on a subscription basis. Copies of these publications need to be shipped to the Reference and Loan Library for the state level depository libraries: the Wisconsin Historical Society; the Legislative Reference Bureau; and the Reference and Loan Library.

State agencies may restrict the number of copies provided to the number necessary for distribution to the document depository libraries specified under s. 35.83(3)(a) to (d), Wis. Stats. if the state document is published in limited quantities because of cost or content.

The overall availability of a state agency publication determines the quantity that should be sent for distribution through the depository program. We encourage state agencies to participate in the depository program at the greatest level possible. Review the guidelines for the various levels of distribution:

### ***Full Distribution : 52 Copies***

All libraries statewide participating in the depository program receive publication. This level of distribution reaches the most Wisconsin citizens and is considered the recommended number to submit since state and academic libraries and public libraries of all sizes receive copies.

### ***Limited Distribution : 15 Copies***

Only State level and Regional libraries receive publication. Regional libraries tend to be academic libraries and large public libraries. This limits the number of people who have access to the publication.

### ***State Level Distribution : 5 Copies***

If the publication is available on a very limited basis or is for sale, copies go to the Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, and the Wisconsin Reference and Loan Library, which are all located in Madison, WI. This level of distribution is very minimal and restrictive.