

## INDIANA STATE DOCUMENTS: AWARENESS AND ACCESSIBILITY

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Indiana's libraries have a significant role to play in helping the public to benefit from the wealth of useful information published by state agencies. As in other area of library services, awareness of existing materials and access to them are key factors in tapping this important resource.

### AWARENESS OF STATE PUBLICATIONS

State documents are generally not advertised, promoted or reviewed in the usual sense; therefore, even very useful or important state publications may remain unknown to many who could benefit from them. Some "awareness aids" are described below.

Press Releases. Occasionally a state agency issues a press release

upon publication of a major new report, study, plan, regulatory guide or other document, if the agency thinks it should be brought to public attention. Librarians concerned with keeping abreast of government activities and information resources are well-advised to scan daily newspapers for these notices. What the press does with such announcements is, of course, another matter. They may be given considerable play as "news" or buried in a brief, backpage story. Often lacking is sufficient information to contact the appropriate office in order to request copies.

Business and economic newsletters and those of environmental and other interest groups should also be monitored for mention of significant publications.

Librarians encountering

difficulty in locating state agencies or obtaining their publications directly may enlist the aid of the Indiana State Library's State Documents Coordinator.

Checklist of Indiana State Documents. It was to help solve the problems of awareness of and access to state publications that the Indiana State document depository systems was established in 1973 (Indiana Code, Sections 4-23-7.1-25 et seq.). In addition to collecting documents and distributing them to depository libraries, the State Library's state documents coordinator is responsible for listing them in a quarterly Checklist of Indiana State Documents. This list is available to anyone on request, free of charge. The quarterly issues are cumulated and indexed annually.

Unfortunately, even though the document depository law has been in force for nineteen years, many state agencies seem unaware of their ongoing obligation to deposit their publications with the State Library. The State Documents Coordinator regularly strives to correct this situation; but many documents are not received and the Checklist must be regarded as an incomplete listing. It is, however, a very useful guide with which to

begin a search for desired publications.

Monthly Checklist of State Publications. The State Library sends copies of all state documents it receives to the Library of Congress. Many or most of these items appear in the federal Monthly Checklist of State Publications.

State of Indiana Telephone Directory. In ascertaining the existence and availability of some kinds of information—for instance, very recent statistics—direct personal contact with an agency is often preferable to reliance on published bibliographies. On page vii of the state government telephone directory is a list of “communications coordinators”—persons in every major agency whose job it is to provide information to the public. The main part of the directory constitutes by far the most useful setting forth of state agencies and subagencies to be found anywhere, complete with names, phone numbers and addresses of hundreds of officials. Among these are the persons—if you can only identify them—who are responsible for producing the very documents you are seeking.

One reason for resorting to calling state offices for information

is that much of the information formerly available in print form is now kept only in agency databases. The Department of Environmental Management, for example, does not issue a printed landfill directory, but will provide an up-to-date printout of one upon request. Similarly, the department of Insurance will provide specific information on agents and companies directly from its database.

There are, of course, disadvantages to seeking information directly from state agencies or depending on the telephone directory to provide the right contact. Reorganization may have abolished and office or even an entire agency listed in the directory. A person listed as a communications coordinator may no longer have that responsibility. Some coordinators may not be sufficiently informed in a specific area to be of much help to the caller. An understandable circumstance given the great size and complexity of some divisions of state government. Indeed, the caller may be subjected to a confusing and time-consuming sequence of call transfers to ever less helpful offices. As stated above, if such difficulties are encountered, the State Library's State Documents Coordinator may be of assistance.

### Agency Publications Lists.

Not only is publishing activity uncoordinated in state government as a whole, even within a single department, offices issue publications independently of each other. No government unit of the magnitude of a department seems to maintain bibliographic control of its publications or issue a listing of them. Some smaller units—unfortunately, very few of them—do compile such lists. The following are some examples of these:

Education, Department of. Learning Resources Unit. Materials Directory. Employment and Training Services, Department of. Labor Market Information. Publications Directory (statistics on Indiana employment, wages and job openings by category and geographic area.)

Health, State Board of. Bureau of Policy Development. Annotated Bibliography of Publications.

Higher Education, Commission for. Publications, Background Papers, and Reports.

Historical Bureau. Publications and Commemorative Items for Sale by the Indiana Historical Bureau. Library, Indiana State. Audiovisual

Services. Indiana State Library Audiovisual Materials.

Natural Resources, Department of. Fish and Wildlife Division. Fishing and Wildlife Publications. (includes hunting, fishing and boating regulations.)

Natural Resources, Department of. Geological Survey. Geologic Publications of Indiana. (includes maps and pamphlets on both popular and highly technical subjects; also includes federal publications.)

Transportation, Department of. Summary of IDOT Research and Implementation.

University publication Lists. A number of departments and other divisions of state universities provide useful lists of their currently available publications. Among these are the following:

Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne. Research and Scholarly Publications and Creative Works of the Faculty. (not limited to publications of the university.)

Purdue University. Media Distribu-

tion Center. Educational Materials List. (an extensive listing, mainly of Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service publications. These are generally available from the county offices of the Cooperative Extension Service.)

Purdue University. Water Resources Research Center. Annual Program Report. (an annotated list of the center's technical reports.)

## ACCESSIBILITY

Acquisition by Depository Libraries Multiple copies of publications sent to the State Library by state agencies are distributed by the State Documents Coordinator to other state document depository libraries. These are the main campus libraries of the four state universities and Valparaiso University and the public libraries at Columbus, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Kokomo, New Albany, Richmond and South Bend.

In addition to materials sent by the State Library, the other depository libraries obtain a number of state publications directly from the issuing agencies. There are several reasons for acquiring items directly. One of which is that the State Library does not distribute state-

published periodicals of a frequency of more than three issues annually. It is far more expedient for the branch depositories themselves to subscribe to them and receive issues without delay. Branch depositories also search for other kinds of state publications which are of particular interest and which may have been overlooked by the State Library's State Documents Coordinator.

Distribution by State Agencies. State agencies routinely distribute a large number of their publications to the public, including libraries. Copies of the Indiana Code, Indiana Administrative Code, Indiana Register, and Acts of the General Assembly are sent to libraries in all counties of the state in accordance with state law. Many periodicals published by state agencies are offered on a subscription basis. Outdoor Indiana, published by the Department of Natural Resources is an outstanding example of a particularly popular magazine.

Some state agencies maintain information and sales desks on their premises for the convenience of the public. Notable examples of these distribution centers are the Historical Bureau in the State Library and Historical Building, and the Depart-

ment of Natural Resources, which recently relocated in the new Indiana Government Center South. The reception areas of many other state agencies are made to serve as "walk-in" distribution points, especially for free brochures and short pamphlets. They are mentioned here only because they may, on occasion, prove to be convenient places for librarians to become aware of and to obtain these types of information.

Library Cataloging of State Documents. The Indiana State Library fully catalogs most of the state publications it receives, and places the items themselves in the Indiana Division's collection. Bibliographic records are thus assured for OCLC access as well as the library's own on-line catalog. This cataloging is especially helpful, in that it provides subject access.

The other depository libraries also selectively catalog the materials they receive from the State Library and those which they obtain on their own initiative. Cataloged items may become part of the library's general collections, as is the case at Purdue University; or they may be specially classified and placed in a separate government documents collection, as at Ball State University. In any case,

they are generally readily accessible through the libraries' cataloging systems.

Certain state publications—many flyers and brochures, for example—are more suitable for placement in uncataloged collections such as pamphlet files. This is a satisfactory practice for depository items, as long as accessibility is assured.

## CONCLUSION

The Indiana state document depository system provides a partial answer to the problem of accessibility of state publications. Responsibility for assuring public awareness of and access to this valuable resource must be shared by the issuing agency, by those administering the depository system and by the libraries of the state.

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