BACKGROUND: Since 1981, only the heading Washington (D.C.) has been valid for use as a subject heading, not District of Columbia. With some exceptions and accommodation to previous practice, this principle applies to classification as well.

1. General rule. In the absence of any conflicting provisions printed in the classification schedules, treat Washington, D.C. as a city, not as a state.

   a. States and cities explicitly established. If individual states and cities are explicitly established in the schedule, establish Washington, D.C. alphabetically in the list of cities using the caption Washington (D.C.).

   If local breakdown goes only to the state level and individual states are established in the schedule, establish Washington, D.C. in the list of states, using the caption Washington (D.C.) and making a see reference from District of Columbia.

   b. States and cities not explicitly established. If individual states and cities are not explicitly established in the schedule, class Washington in the cities (or "local") number, if the breakdown goes to that level. If local breakdown goes only to the state level, class Washington in the number for states. Use the Cutter .Wxxx even if works cataloged under AACR 1 or earlier rules were Cuttered .Dxxx. Examples:

   By region or country
   United States
   General works
   By region or state, A-Z
   By city, A-Z

   By region or country
   United States
   General works
   By region or state, A-Z
   Local, A-Z

   By region or country
   United States
   General works
   By region or state, A-Z
   [no further breakdown provided]

   Use this number for Washington, D.C. with .Wxxx Cutter
2. *Conflicting provisions in the classification schedules.* If the schedule contains provisions that conflict with those given in sec. 1, follow the printed provisions rather than the guidelines in sec. 1. Where District of Columbia has been used as the caption, make a double caption by adding Washington (D.C.). Also make a see reference from that term in its alphabetical position.