

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

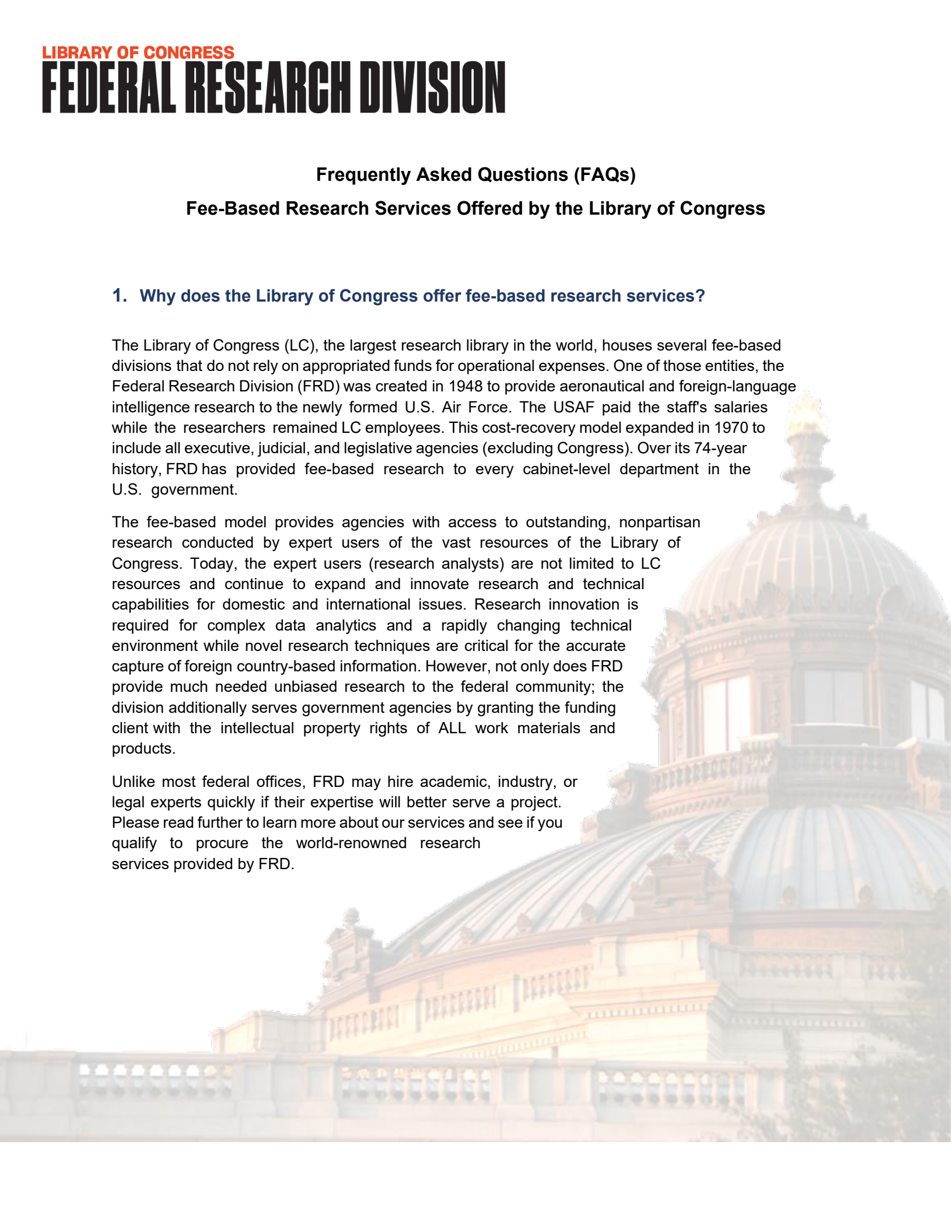
Fee-Based Research Services Offered by the Library of Congress

1. Why does the Library of Congress offer fee-based research services?

The Library of Congress (LC), the largest research library in the world, houses several fee-based divisions that do not rely on appropriated funds for operational expenses. One of those entities, the Federal Research Division (FRD) was created in 1948 to provide aeronautical and foreign-language intelligence research to the newly formed U.S. Air Force. The USAF paid the staff's salaries while the researchers remained LC employees. This cost-recovery model expanded in 1970 to include all executive, judicial, and legislative agencies (excluding Congress). Over its 74-year history, FRD has provided fee-based research to every cabinet-level department in the U.S. government.

The fee-based model provides agencies with access to outstanding, nonpartisan research conducted by expert users of the vast resources of the Library of Congress. Today, the expert users (research analysts) are not limited to LC resources and continue to expand and innovate research and technical capabilities for domestic and international issues. Research innovation is required for complex data analytics and a rapidly changing technical environment while novel research techniques are critical for the accurate capture of foreign country-based information. However, not only does FRD provide much needed unbiased research to the federal community; the division additionally serves government agencies by granting the funding client with the intellectual property rights of ALL work materials and products.

Unlike most federal offices, FRD may hire academic, industry, or legal experts quickly if their expertise will better serve a project. Please read further to learn more about our services and see if you qualify to procure the world-renowned research services provided by FRD.



2. Is FRD part of the Congressional Research Service (CRS)?

No. CRS receives appropriated funds and works directly with Congress to provide research services to its members. However, FRD does communicate with CRS staff, share its reports, and stay apprised of current CRS research to more fully support federal clients.

3. Who qualifies for FRD research services?

Three types of organizations qualify:

- Any federal office in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches, excluding Congress.
- The District of Columbia government.
- Authorized contractors who can trace the origins of the federal funds they would like to use.

FRD cannot provide research services to state or local governments or private industry (unless they are an authorized contractor using federal funding).

4. What type of research does FRD provide?

FRD specializes in domestic and international general and legal research, foreign area studies, foreign-language translations, and research evaluation. Researchers can conduct work in over 150 foreign languages. Typical research projects include:

- Benchmarking.
- Codification of legal text.
- Data analysis.
- Data collection.
- Data visualization.
- Domestic legal analysis.
- Executive order alignment.
- Financial analysis.
- Foreign company analysis.
- Foreign country data collection.
- Foreign law analysis.
- Foreign influence detection.
- Grantee assessment.
- International legal analysis.
- Key performance indicators.
- Literature reviews.
- Methodology determination.
- Organizational histories.
- Policy impact analysis.
- Program analysis.
- Science overviews.
- State-by-state legal analysis.
- State-by-state policy analysis.
- Surveys (electronic).
- Surveys (in-person interviews).
- Systematic reviews.
- Technology overviews (domestic and foreign).
- Technology readiness levels.
- Terrorism assessments.
- Threat assessments.

5. Under What Circumstances Would I Use FRD Research Services?

Federal offices seek research support for a variety of reasons. The questions on the next page provide typical situations in which federal staff may require such support. It is important to remember, however, that FRD may only accept federal funding, which may be in the form of grants, cooperative agreements, interagency agreements (IAAs), or military interdepartmental purchase requests (MIPR).

- **Do you outsource research and analysis?**
FRD is a great alternative to traditional academic or private-sector vendors and provides some unique financial benefits that make procurement simple and quick. The division also partners with outside experts, such as academics, as needed for its work.
- **Do you have intermittent research needs?**
Many federal clients have research requirements but not the specialized skills or time needed to complete the project. These requirements may include research involving operational issues, performance measures, program assessments, or human resources.
- **Do you need an outside, unbiased perspective?**
Frequently, FRD clients need research that is recognized as objective and unbiased. The Library brand is unparalleled in this respect and FRD takes additional steps to ensure nonpartisan research results.
- **Do you want to retain the IP rights of a critical project?**
Federal clients often need to own the work materials and products they have funded. FRD grants IP rights to all funding clients and freely shares work materials and final products, including software code, spreadsheets, raw data, research notes, and final reports. For some projects, the details of algorithms or statistical analysis methodologies are documented so the funding client can accurately and intelligently report to Congress, the public, or auditors.
- **Do you need specialized academic, industry, or legal expertise?**
As noted, FRD hires sought after academic, industry, or legal experts who will generally not work for the federal government full-time. These experts are hired as part-time Library staff, which means they are recognized as federal employees and undergo the same process for a public trust clearance.

6. How do I purchase research services from FRD?

Procurement is both simple and quick. The entire procurement process can take from five days to several months. FRD works quickly with the understanding that federal clients have processes and procedures that require time for document review and approval. In addition, choosing FRD obviates the need for a formal solicitation. In some cases, clients have withdrawn existing solicitations and hired FRD.

- **FRD writes a statement of work (SOW).**
FRD gathers requirements from the client, which may only require a short discussion, and writes the initial SOW rough draft in two weeks. The SOW is submitted to the client with the anticipation of feedback. The whole process may take 1-8 weeks depending on the complexity of the project and the time required by the client to review the SOW and provide feedback.
- **FRD generates funding paperwork.**
The funding paperwork (generally 7600 forms) requires 1-2 days for FRD to generate and sign. Once both parties have signed the form, funds are generally legally obligated and work can begin.
- **FRD schedules a kick-off meeting.**
A kick-off meeting is scheduled within 10 days of IAA/MIPR final signatures by both parties. At the meeting, an initial project plan is provided.

7. How do I determine whether FRD can help me?

Request a 30-minute briefing! FRD provides client briefings on a regular basis and sometimes multiple briefings to one client with many offices and staff. The briefing includes an outline of LC resources, FRD's simple procurement process and services, and prior and current research projects within the federal government. The presenter(s) also provides feedback on potential research projects, if appropriate. Regardless of outcome, almost everyone states that the information is helpful and interesting, and that the briefing is time well spent!

8. What is the average cost for a research project?

There are no average costs as each project differs in requirements and scope. FRD offers competitive hourly rates but can only know the costs of a project once requirements are discussed and outlined. However, cost estimates may be derived quickly after a project discussion. By law, FRD cannot make a profit or take a loss so all funding goes to paying the salaries of the federal employees working on the project.

9. What are some of the benefits of procuring research services from FRD?

As a federal agency, FRD will provide just some of the benefits below:

- **Data acquisition.**
The division, as a government agency, can often more easily collect hard-to-acquire data sets.
- **Five-year revolving fund.**
FRD may accept federal funds and allow those funds to cross fiscal lines for up to five years if the work is ongoing and if allowed by the funding agency.
- **Funding.**
Funding merely requires an SOW and either a signed IAA or MIPR.
- **IP ownership.**
Any and all work material(s) is owned by the funding agency, with FRD holding no rights to the information. FRD does not publish or reuse the material in any manner.
- **Privacy/confidentiality.**
FRD only shares research projects and client names with permission from the funding client. The client may choose to keep the research, and their partnership with FRD, confidential.
- **Partnerships.**
FRD is a collaborative partner with a variety of stakeholders, including federal agencies, small businesses, and universities.
- **Refunds.**
If a client is not satisfied with the progress of a project, they may request a refund of any unused funds.