

2017



MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

New Initiatives and Services	1
Strategic Plan	1
Legal Reference at the Public Library	1
Asian Pacific Legal Experience in America Exhibit	1
Assisting our Patrons	2
Answering Questions	2
A Sampling of Interesting Questions	4
Self-Help Clinics	5
Online Presence	5
Current Awareness	5
Interlibrary Loan	6
Continuing Legal Education	6
Law Clerk Assistance	6
Kudos	6
Outreach	7
Library Community	7
Legal Community	8
Public	8
County Law Libraries	8
Managing the Collection	8
2017 Statistics	9
Special Projects	9
Minnesota Legal Periodical Index	9
Appellate Briefs	9
Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)	10
About the Program	10
2017 Statistics	10
Professional Activities in the Legal/Library Community	11
Legal	11
Library	11
Librarian-Authored Materials	12
Financial Summary	12
Library Staff	12

New Initiatives and Services

Strategic Plan

During 2017, the Law Library created a three year [strategic plan](#). This was the library's first comprehensive plan, and the process took several months.

Legal Reference at the Public Library

The Law Library partnered with the St. Paul Public Library to provide legal reference at five library branches. Between March and December the law librarians answered almost 350 questions. The topics of landlord/tenant, family law, and immigration were the most common.

Asian Pacific Legal Experience in America Exhibit

In April, the law library hosted the exhibit Asian Pacific Legal Experience in America. This traveling exhibit detailed the legal history of Asian Pacific peoples in the United States through three pivotal events: the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Japanese American Incarceration during WWII, and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

During the exhibition, the Minnesota State Law Library hosted a special screening of the PBS film, *Of Civil Wrongs And Rights: The Fred Korematsu Story*. The 2001 documentary details the 40-year legal fight to vindicate Fred Korematsu, a civil rights activist who resisted the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The screening was introduced by United States Magistrate Judge Tony N. Leung. Judge Leung became the first Asian-American judge in Minnesota when he was appointed to the Hennepin County District Court bench in 1994, and subsequently became the first Asian-Pacific American to serve on the federal bench in the state in 2011.

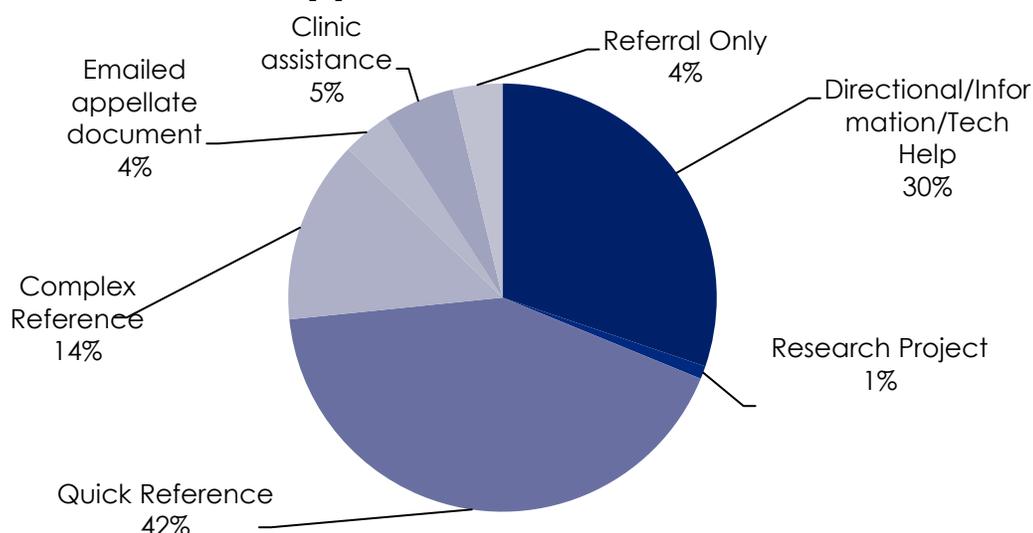


Assisting our Patrons

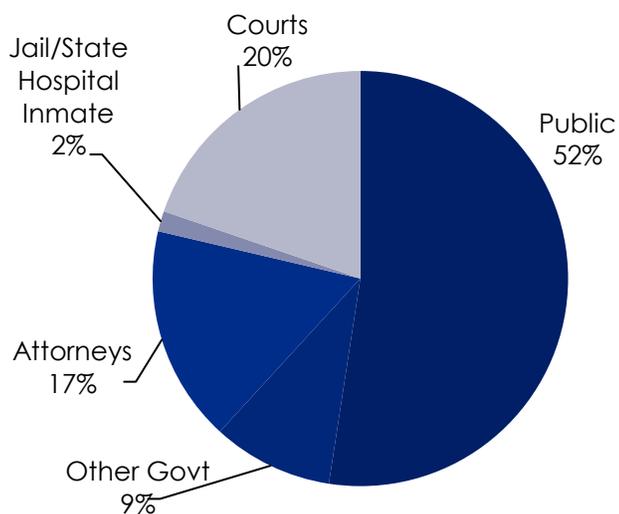
Answering Questions

Our patrons contact us in-person, via phone, chat, email, and mail. We make an effort to serve people in the manner that they prefer. In 2017, the reference librarians answered 7500 questions. In addition, just over 3000 people who did not need assistance from staff visited the library to use our resources, and more than 500 people toured the library over the course of the year.

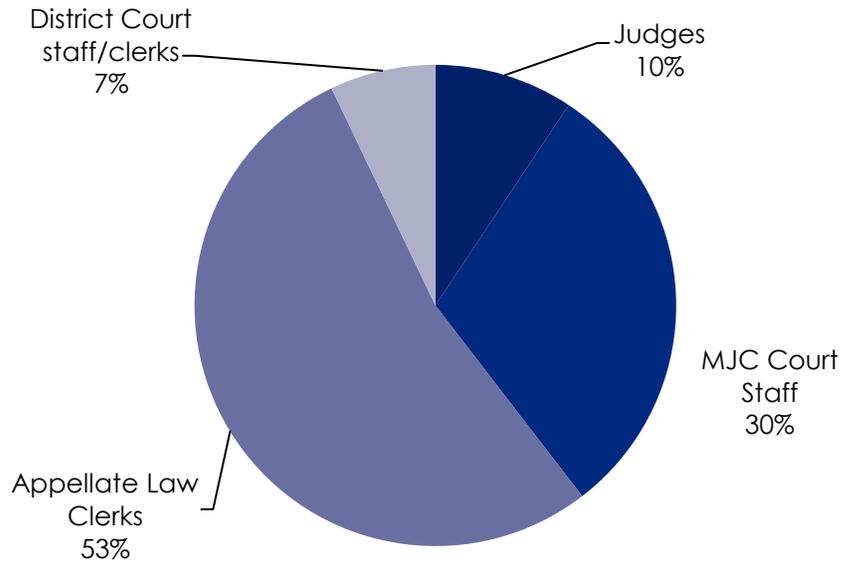
Types of Questions



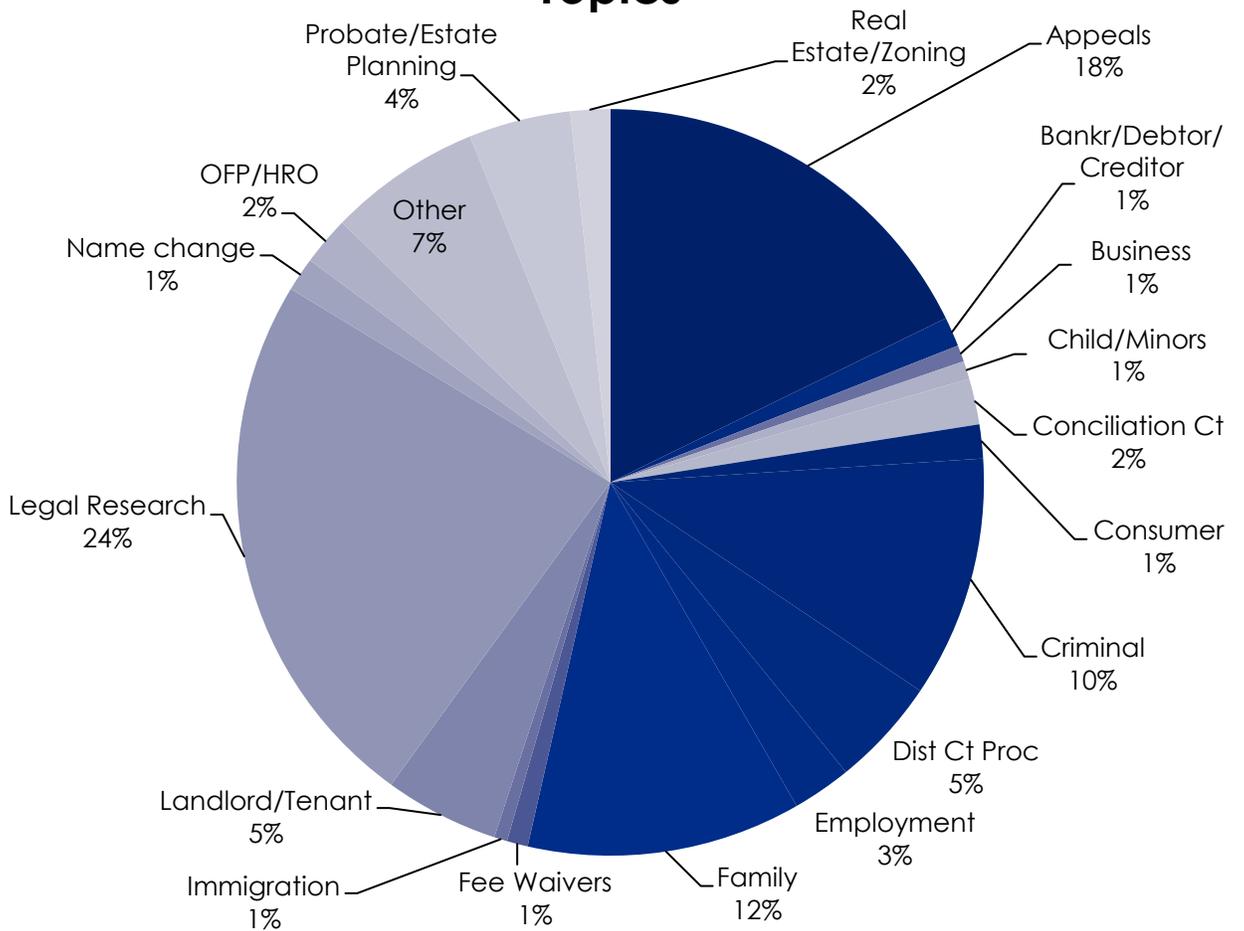
Types of Library Patrons



Types of Users in the Judicial Branch



Topics



A Sampling of Interesting Questions

- I am doing some genealogical research and am looking for information on Edward T Young, who was state attorney general starting in 1905.
- I have a client who had a motor vehicle theft at 17. Now he's being denied for a gun permit. Can you help find the grounds for rejecting the application?
- I've just learned my great grandmother challenged an election in St. Paul in May of 1914, requesting the right for women to vote. It is my understanding that the case was argued in the Minnesota Supreme Court the week of Thanksgiving 1914 and that a written decision was issued in January or February 1915. I'm trying to locate a copy of the opinion. Thank you in advance for any assistance you can provide.
- The police say my house has been designated a meth lab. How do I get that removed?
- I'm looking for the language of the building code that indicates pre-existing buildings are not required to be brought up to code (aka a grandfather clause).
- We have accepted a purchase order for the sale of a condo we own in Hennepin County. The buyer paid \$5000 earnest money with the purchase agreement. Now the buyer and his real estate agent are not responding to any of our calls and will not set a closing date. Can we file a claim in small claims court to keep the earnest money? In what county should we file the claim?
- I work at the law library at the College of William & Mary, in Virginia. I'm putting together a survey of the surviving volumes of the reports of our founding professor, George Wythe, and I'm hoping Minnesota might be willing to help me: I see a copy of Wythe's 1795 decisions in your Special Collections. I wonder if someone there might be persuaded to take a look at your copy, and see if there are any signatures, inscriptions, or other signs of former ownership inside the covers, or on the first and last few pages? There are only about 30 or so copies of Wythe's Reports remaining, and while he didn't sell very many in his lifetime, he did give quite a few away to peers and his former students (like Thomas Jefferson).
- Can a co-owner of undivided property put a judgment against one owners share if he refuses to pay the property taxes, and therefore another owner had to pay it to keep it from being sold as tax forfeit? Is there any legal recourse for co-owners if one owner will not pay his property taxes?
- What does HIB stand for? My friend and I had been hearing about it on the news. I called the reporter, who didn't know, and called my U.S. Representative's office. They also could not tell her.
- Were people required to be legally married, i.e. fill out a marriage license and all that, to be married in Minnesota in the 1940s? I cannot find a marriage license for my grandfather's first wife and since his father was a minister, they may have just done the church ceremony and called it good. And if someone only did a church ceremony and not the legal paperwork, would they need to file divorce paperwork? This is all in the context of the 1940s.
- What are the rules for wet blasting lead paint?

Self-Help Clinics

The State Law Library offers two appellate self-help clinics. The general [Appeals Self-Help Clinic](#) is offered once per month. In 2017 the clinic assisted 140 people. The top three types of cases seen at the clinic were family law, civil, and appeals from administrative agencies. The State Law Library also continues to offer an [Unemployment Appeals Self-Help Clinic](#) twice per month. In 2017, the clinic assisted 37 people who were considering appealing their denial of benefits to the Court of Appeals. The vast majority of these types of appeals (92%) involve an unrepresented party.

Online Presence

Opinion and Briefs Archive

Since 1996 the State Law Library has provided an online, [searchable database](#) of appellate court decisions. In 2017, an option to browse opinions by date was added.

The library also maintains a searchable database of appellate briefs from published Minnesota Court of Appeals and Supreme Court cases. Coverage goes back to 2005. In 2017, the project to add criminal briefs was completed.

Social Media

The library now has 218 [Facebook](#) followers. This is an increase of 20% from 2016. The library's [Twitter feed](#) now has 1,340 followers, up 8% from last year.

Current Awareness

Each month, the State Law Library compiles a list of articles of interest to the courts and distributes the articles to all members of the Judicial Branch via email. Beginning in July of 2017, we began limiting the list to 10-15 articles with a strong emphasis on articles directly relevant to the work of the judicial branch. Brief annotations of the articles were also added to aid readers in selecting articles of interest. Response to the first edition of the list was very positive and we continue to get good feedback.

A separate list of diversity articles was also compiled over the course of 2017 and the growing list was made available as part of the monthly email beginning in July. Previously, the list was not distributed until the end of the year.

In addition to articles, tables of contents of Minnesota legal periodicals were compiled quarterly and distributed with the monthly email and MJC employees who indicated an interest in a particular journal were sent the tables of contents for those journals via email when the journal was received.

Interlibrary Loan

The State Law Library provides an interlibrary loan service for the Judicial Branch. This includes both books and journal articles. In 2017, the library obtained 56 items for the court and loaned 91 items to other libraries.

Continuing Legal Education

The State Law Library offers [free CLEs](#) for the judicial branch and other interested attorneys. In 2017, the library hosted eleven CLE programs (8 standard credits, 2 ethics credits, and 1 elimination of bias credit).

Law Clerk Assistance

The library communicates to the law clerks via a quarterly law clerk newsletter, and has a dedicated lawclerkhelp@courts.state.mn.us email account. It is a popular resource and the library regularly gets emails from law clerks all over the state.

In 2017, the State Law Librarian arranged several training sessions for the appellate law clerks on how to do Minnesota legislative history research. In addition, she presented a legal research CLE to the 10th District law clerks.

The library's Outreach Librarian and Electronic Resources Librarian created and presented a new "Prepare to Practice" course for outgoing appellate law clerks.

Kudos

The State Law Library aims to provide excellent service to all of our patrons. We appreciate knowing if we are succeeding.

- You are a miracle worker! Thanks so much for your assistance. – *law firm librarian*
- Angels like you have been brought my way at just the right time in just the right way and for that I am eternally grateful. ~ *member of the public*
- This is terrific! Thanks so much, for all of the excellent information! I really appreciate your special effort. – *district court staff*
- YOU ARE THE BEST! LIBRARIANS ARE THE MOST AWESOME! That is exactly what I need! Thank you, thank you, thank you! ~*district court law clerk*
- Thanks so much. This is exactly what I was looking for. ~ *legislative staff*
- Thanks very much for putting time into this. I really appreciate that we have the State Law Library. ~*attorney*
- Thank you! This is exactly what I needed. I really appreciate you getting it so quickly! – *appellate court law clerk*
- Thank you so much. That was EXACTLY what I wanted. I know you are not allowed to give out legal advice or opinions but I sure appreciate what you found. All last weekend I searched EVERYWHERE in the statutes, rules, constitution, etc. just for this statute!!!! You have made me very happy. ~ *member of the public*

- That is very helpful. I really appreciate your help!! I have been stuck on this issue for a while and I really appreciate your help!! This is great information. *~district court law clerk*
- I wanted to say to you thank you so very much for the information in regards to the statutes information. It was very helpful and leading me to the right agency and a reason to fight for my civil rights. *– member of the public*
- Thank you so much! All of us clerks have really enjoyed working with you and everyone else at the library. You have all been so incredibly kind and helpful—we wouldn't be able to figure things out without you! *~Supreme Court law clerk*
- What an incredible service you and the state of Minnesota offer! I haven't seen a resource like this in other states. I really appreciate the help. *~WA attorney*
- Thank you so much. This is MARVELOUS. I so appreciate it! *~member of the press*

Outreach

The State Law Library makes an effort to reach people outside of our walls. We travel to public libraries, bar associations, and county law libraries in order to raise awareness of the State Law Library and its services. In 2017 we created the position of Outreach Librarian to focus on these efforts. Sarah Larsen was hired to fill this role.

Library Community

- March – Librarians Sheri Huppert and Elvira Embser-Herbert presented at the Minnesota Library Technology Conference about the law library's use of live chat to help people access legal information.
- April - Public Library Division Day. Outreach Librarian, Sarah Larsen, was a presenter.
- April – The library helped plan an educational program for public librarians (co-sponsored with the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries). Liz Reppe was a presenter.
- May – Sarah Larsen presented at the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries Spring Conference on the topic of the State Law Library's outreach initiatives.
- August – Liz Reppe spoke to the librarians from the Arrowhead Regional Library System about law library services and how to find legal information.
- September – Sarah Larsen spoke to the Traverse de Sioux Regional Library System about law library services and how to find legal information.
- October – Erica Nutzman, Head of Technical Services, presented at the Minnesota Library Association Annual Conference on the topic of Digitized Legal Archives. This session was presented with Sheree Spear, from the Minnesota Revisor's Office.
- November - Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian, Jean Anderson, spoke to a Masters in Library Science class at the University of St. Catherine about prison law librarianship.
- December - Sarah Larsen spoke to the East Central Regional Library System about law library services and how to find legal information.

Legal Community

- March – Liz Reppe spoke to the Legal Scholarship for Equal Justice class at Mitchell Hamline. She spoke to the class about the library's services to self-represented litigants.
- June - Liz Reppe spoke to the 5th District Bar Association meeting about library services for attorneys.
- October – Sarah Larsen staffed a table at the new attorney swearing in ceremony and provided information about how the State Law Library can assist new lawyers.

Public

- March – Liz Reppe visited Lincoln Elementary School in White Bear Lake on two occasions. She read the book *Marshall the Courthouse Mouse: A Tail of the U.S. Supreme Court* to a 3rd grade class. Later in the month she returned to speak to another class about the importance of the right to jury. Both of these events were done as part of Ramsey County Bar Association outreach.
- August – Sarah Larsen and Library Clerk Alyssa Matlon served as Read and Ride Day Library Ambassadors at the Minnesota State Fair.

County Law Libraries

- January – Freeborn County Law Library visit
- March – Visits to Wilkin County Law Library and Grant County Law Library
- April – Visits to Cottonwood and Murray County Law Libraries
- June – Rice County Law Library visit
- July - Sibley County Law Library visit
- August – Visits to Cook and Roseau County Law Libraries
- November – Visits to St. Louis and Lake County Law Libraries
- November - Helped plan educational program for county law library staff (co-sponsored with the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries)

Managing the Collection

Our Technical Services Department is responsible for ordering, receiving, processing, and cataloging books and other media - including e-books and online documents - for the library's collection. In addition, the department catalogs materials for seven county law libraries. The department also serves as a publisher of the Minnesota appellate courts' briefs on microfiche for county and academic law libraries.

When new items arrive, library staff catalogs, processes, and then shelves them in the State Law Library, the Court of Appeals Research Library, or the Supreme Court Research Library. The staff also culls outdated materials from all three libraries and relocates materials to make space for new volumes.

2017 Statistics

- 1,206 items circulated
- 3,584 continuation items added in the three libraries (new replacement volumes and hardbound supplements)
- 857 new titles added
- 274 original cataloging records created
- 1,484 briefs processed
- 1,431 Federal Depository Library items added

Special Projects

Inventory

In the summer of 2013, the library began the first inventory of the library's collection in over 20 years. Due to the size of the library and the length of time since the last inventory, this project continued through the following years and was finally completed at the end of 2017. In conjunction with the inventory, the department has also been working to clean up the library catalog in preparation for a migration to a new catalog management system in January 2019.

Digitization

The State Law Library has made a number of contributions to the Minnesota Digital Library (MDL) in past years and we plan to continue offering our unique materials for digitization. In 2017, the library contributed one book, *A History of the City of Saint Paul, and of the county of Ramsey, Minnesota*. The library also proposed to contribute three oral history interview videos. These were accepted and will appear in Minnesota Reflections sometime in 2018. The Law Library item from the Minnesota Reflections collection that was most heavily used in 2017 was the *Roll of Attorneys (1858-1970)*.

Minnesota Legal Periodical Index

The [Minnesota Legal Periodical Index](#) (MLPI) is a database of Minnesota legal periodicals that the State Law Library has developed and maintained since 1984. It includes periodicals published by Minnesota law schools, bar associations, and commercial publishers. The web version of MLPI is powered by LawMoose and is a collaboration between the Minnesota State Law Library and Pritchard Law Webs. In 2017, the Cataloger indexed 1148 articles for the MLPI. The indexing process involves designating the journal, volume and issue, author, and title. In addition, up to three subject headings are assigned to each record to aid researchers in searching for articles by topic.

Appellate Briefs

The library provides access to appellate briefs in various formats. For Minnesota appellate decisions that are published in the Northwestern Reporter, the library binds the briefs and

their addenda to ensure long-term access. These materials are heavily used by, and circulated to, attorneys.

- 9 volumes of bound briefs were added to the collection.
- 484 microfiche sheets were produced. (Library staff prepares the briefs for microfiche processing. Area law libraries that do not have print copies of briefs purchase the microfiche.)
- 1,667 briefs were redacted and added to the library's [online database](#). The database is now complete back to 705 N.W.2d, after retroactively adding all criminal briefs that had not been added initially.

Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

About the Program

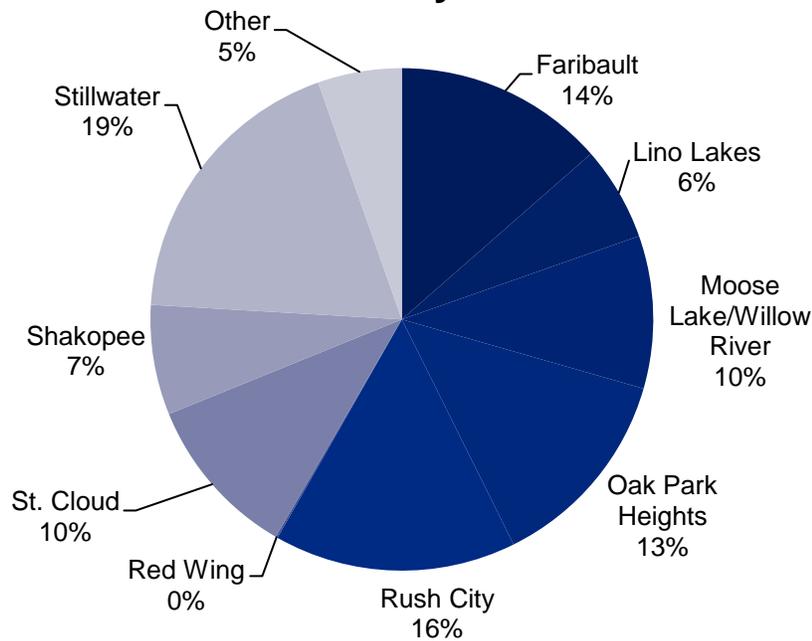
The mission of LLSP is to provide law library service to inmates incarcerated in Minnesota. LLSP is funded by an inter-agency agreement between the State Law Library and the DOC. The program expenses are provided by inmate canteen and phone services, and not paid for by Minnesota taxpayers.

Law librarians provide access to legal materials, both at the correctional facilities and the Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL). Circuit-riding prison law librarians, based at MSLL, conduct monthly visits at eight adult correctional facilities to meet with inmates. Questions that cannot be answered on-site using the prison collections of core legal materials are researched at MSLL. Inmates also write or call LLSP for assistance with their legal research. In addition, the program provides law library services to Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) staff and DOC inmates housed in other facilities, such as county jails, state hospitals, and other states.

2017 Statistics

9,869	DOC inmates
95	Prison visits
9,459	Estimated miles travelled
1,282	Inmate interviews
2,404	Individual inmates assisted
36,801	Inmate requests processed

Distribution of Total Inmate Requests by Facility 2017



Professional Activities in the Legal/Library Community

Legal

- Liz Reppe served on the following committees: MSBA Alternative Legal Models Taskforce, MSBA Legal Assistance to the Disadvantaged Committee, Justice for All Steering Committee, and the Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society's Preservation Committee

Library

- Erica Nutzman served on the Capitol Area Library Consortium (CALCO) Archives Committee.
- Sheri Huppert is a member of the Regional Advisory Group that represents depository libraries in Minnesota, Michigan, and the Dakotas. She is also a part of the Minitex Interlibrary Loan Committee.
- Elizabeth Tuckwood served on the Cataloging Steering Committee of the Minnesota Program for Automated Library Systems (PALS)
- Sarah Larsen served on the American Association of Law Libraries Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section Education Committee.

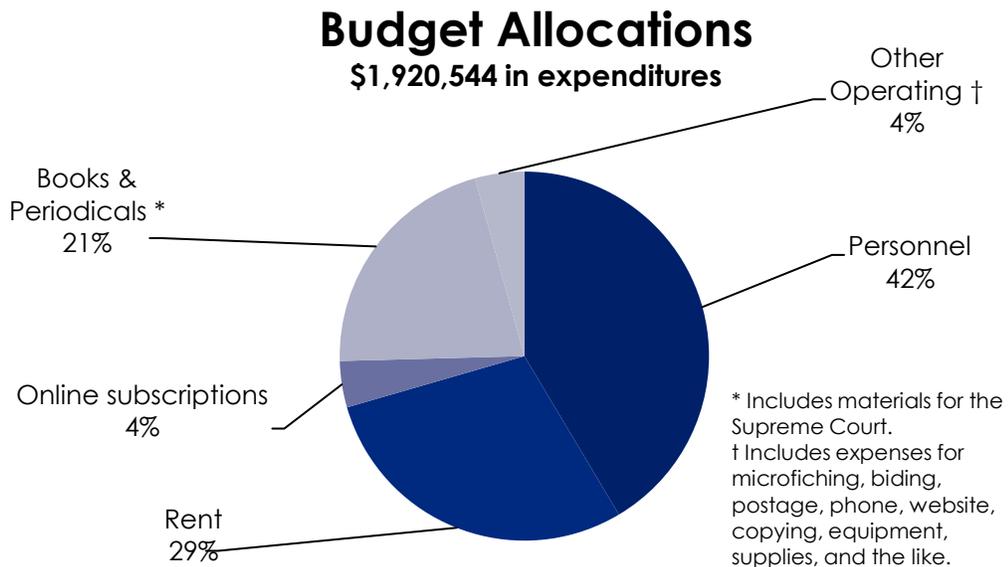
- Susan Trombley was the Chair of the Exchange Committee for the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries.
- Liz Reppe served on the Minitex Policy Advisory Council and the American Association of Law Libraries Digital Access to Legal Information Committee.

Librarian-Authored Materials:

- Sarah Larsen - *Diversity in Public Libraries: Strategies for Achieving a More Representative Workforce*, Public Libraries Magazine (May/June 2017).

Financial Summary

This is the summary for fiscal year 2017.



Library Staff

Jean Anderson, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
 Elvira Embser-Herbert, Electronic Services Librarian
 Jacob Frank, Technical Services Clerk
 Leslie Greenwood, Reference Librarian (September 2017 – present)
 Debby Hackerson, Reference Librarian (until April 2017)
 Sheri Huppert, Government Documents Librarian
 Elizabeth Karges, Technical Services Technician
 Debbie Kitmann, Technical & Outreach Services Clerk
 Sarah Larsen, Outreach Librarian
 Susan Larson, Head of Public Services

Alyssa Matlon, Technical Services Clerk
Erica Nutzman, Head of Technical Services
Joan O., volunteer
Liz Reppe, State Law Librarian
Stephanie Thorson, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
Susan Trombley, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
Elizabeth Tuckwood, Librarian

Many thanks go to Associate Justice David Stras, our Law Library Supreme Court Liaison.