



MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

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Special Programs

The Intersection of Tribal Courts and State Courts

On January 14, the law library hosted a program on the intersection of state court and tribal court. Panelists Justice Anne K. McKeig, Judge John Stanoch (ret.), Senior Judge Robert A. Blaeser, Lenor Scheffler Blaeser, and Judge Denise Reilly discussed the Tribal Court State Court Forum and the [recent changes to Gen. R. Prac. 10](#) relating to the enforcement of tribal court orders and judgments. In addition, the program included a discussion of some of the issues presented in the film [Tribal Justice](#).



Law Day Celebration - Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society

The law library celebrated Law Day on May 1 with trivia, giveaways, and a CLE. The 2019 theme was "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society". Professor Raleigh Hannah Levine, from Mitchell Hamline School of Law spoke about historical and current prior restraint cases.

Constitution Day

The library celebrated Constitution Day on September 18 with constitutional trivia, cookies, and free pocket constitutions.

New in 2019

Expansion of LawHelpMN Partnership

In July, the law library expanded its service to users of the LawHelpMN website. The law librarians have assisted with live chat on the website since 2013. In July, the website was changed to allow people looking for information at times that live chat was not active to send us a message. Between July and the end of December, the law librarians answered over 400 questions received from users of the site. This is in addition to the 260 questions answered via live chat.

Increased Appellate Brief Access

The law library has the most complete collection of Minnesota appellate briefs. Many are available in print and/or on microfiche. In 2019, the library purchased a microfiche scanner that allows the library to provide greater access to the briefs. If a patron seeks a brief that the library has on microfiche, now it can be scanned, redacted, and added to the online brief archive. Prior to that time, patrons would need to come to the library to access the brief. 193 of the briefs added to the archive in 2019 were briefs requested by patrons.

Credit Card Payments

The law library put into place a system that enables patrons to pay for copies, court documents, and print-outs with a credit card. Formerly, only cash and checks were accepted.

New Meeting Room

To address a shortage of meeting spaces for the library's appeals clinic, and in the building overall, the law library created a meeting room out of a hallway and smaller workroom. The room seats 4-6 people.

Hours Change

On May 1, 2019, the library changed its hours from 8:30am – 5:00pm to 8:00am – 4:30pm. This was recommended by the court's new Emergency Management Analyst. It was done to match the hours of the rest of the building and to prevent the public from being in the building after it was closed for the night.

New Reference Statistics Gathering Tool

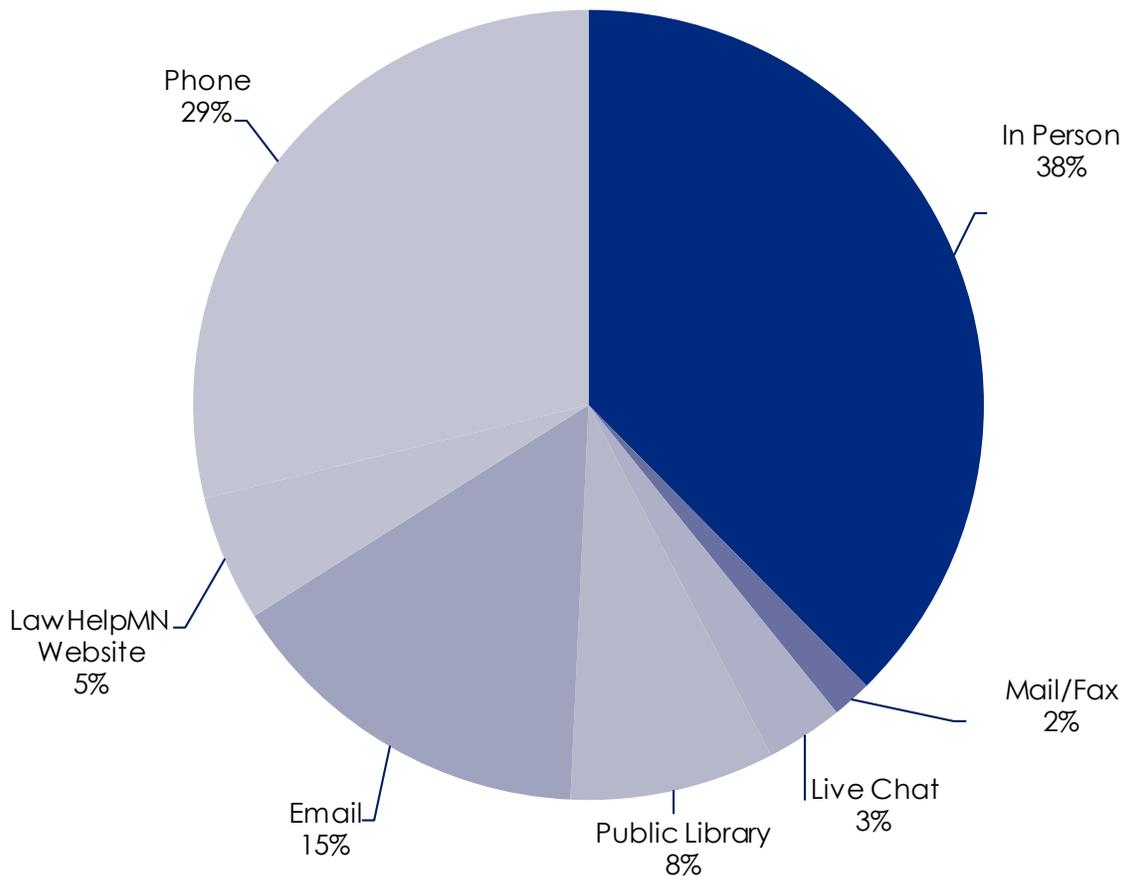
In 2019, the library implemented a new statistics gathering tool, LibAnswers, to better collect and report the work of our reference staff.

Assisting our Patrons

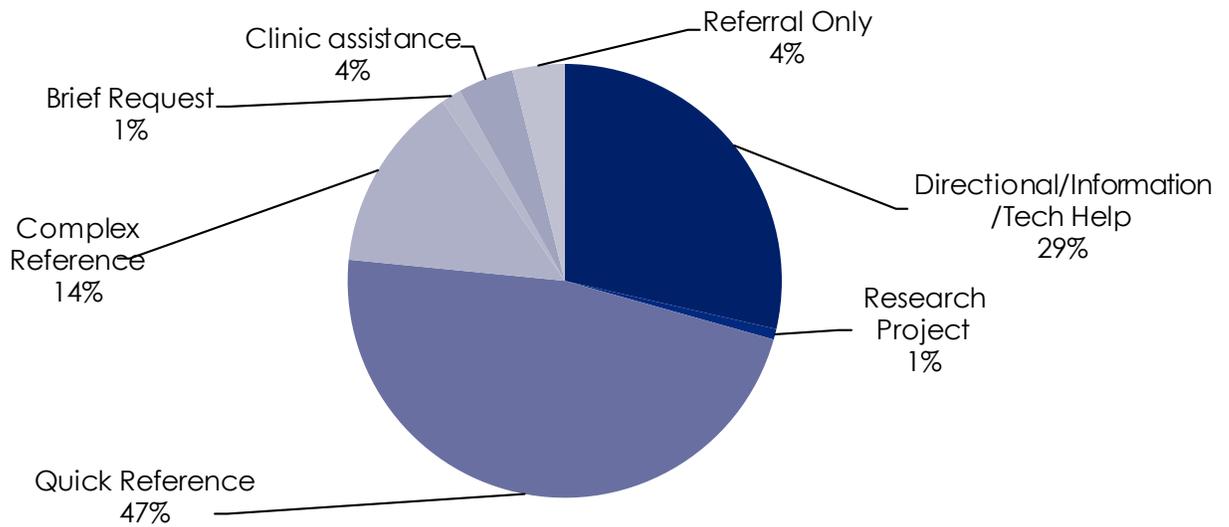
Answering Questions

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 2019, the reference librarians answered over 8000 questions. In addition, just over 2400 people who did not need assistance from staff visited the library to use our resources, and more than 700 people toured the library over the course of the year.

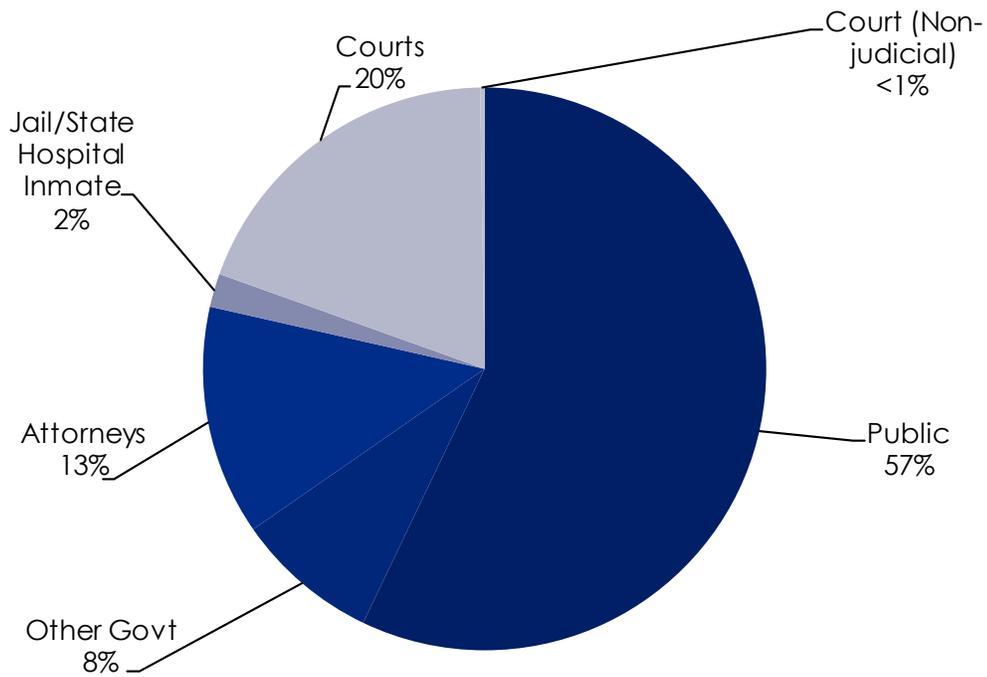
How Questions were Received

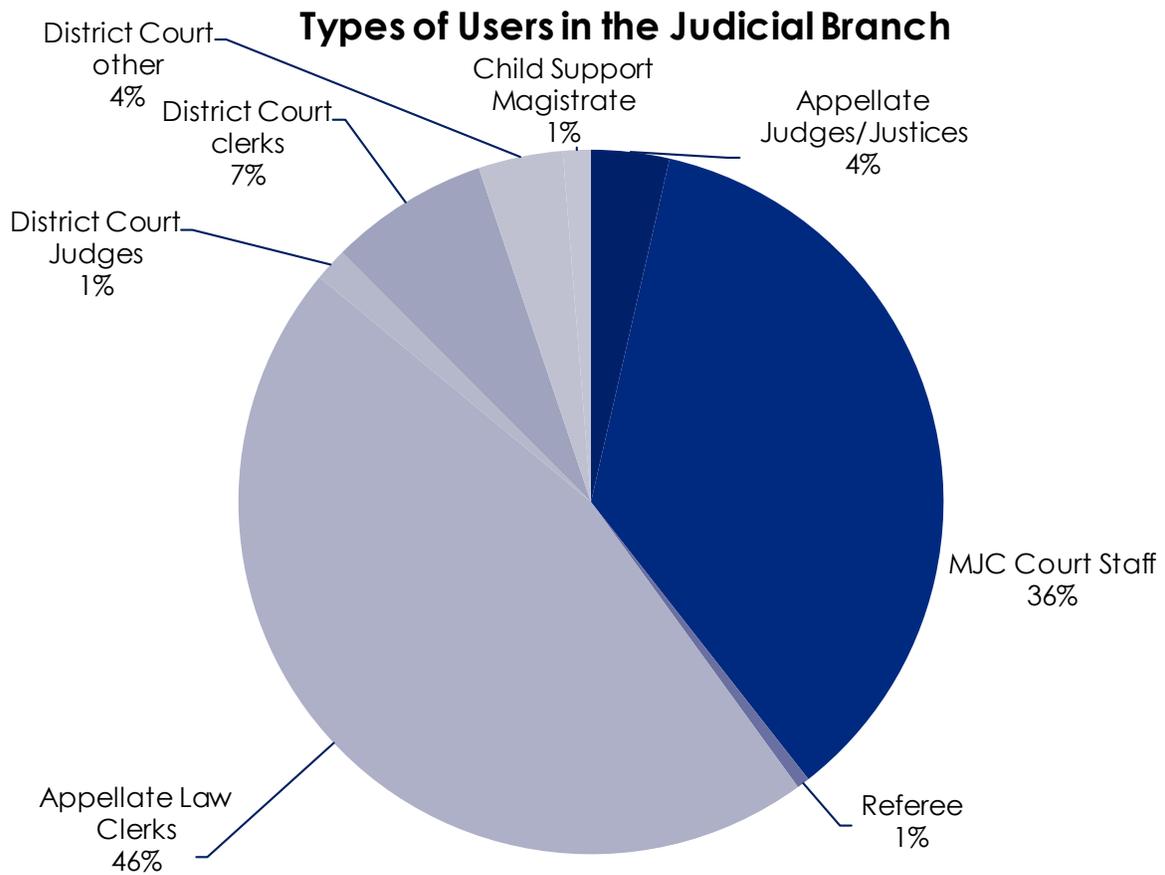


Types of Questions



Types of Library Patrons





Topics of Questions Asked	Percentage
Legal Research	20%
Appeals	16%
Family	13%
Criminal	8%
Landlord Tenant	7%
District Court Procedure	7%
Probate/Estate Planning	5%
Other	3%
General Civil	3%
Consumer Issue	3%
Employment	3%
OFF/Harassment	2%
Real Estate	2%
Article request, Business, Conciliation Court, Bankruptcy/Debtor/Creditor, IFP, Immigration, Juvenile, Name Change	Each topic accounted for 1% or less

A Sampling of Interesting Questions

- Who was the author legislator of the bill that amended MS 273.12 by adding these words at the end of the first paragraph: "and, for agricultural lands, to consider and give recognition to its earning potential as measured by its free market rental rate"? The answer has statewide significance!
- I am hoping to find out when Minnesota state rule 5200.0910 (Prohibited Employments of Minors under 18 Years Old) became enacted, and specifically determine when it started to include Line F ("In or about construction project").
- I am a law professor at [an out of state law school] and I am doing research on state-court procedures for consolidating cases across courts. Under Minnesota General Rule of Practice 113.03, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court may consolidate cases across courts. I am trying to gather information about how this procedure is used in Minnesota. I would be interested in any "data" about the use of the procedure, as well as information about how I might find any orders issued under this rule. Any help would be most appreciated.
- My wife and I own a home in Ramsey County together with my son and his wife. My wife and I want to "quit claim" so that only our son and his wife hold the property. As we understand, all four of us sign the form as "grantor". However, my wife and I live overseas. We have notary services at US Embassy. Is it possible to have our two signatures notarized where we are, and send the document to our son to complete?
- How do I put a feeder's lien on a horse?
- I'm wondering if the new cell phone [hands' free] law will apply to boat operation as well as cars and I would like to see where I can read the entire bill.
- Will contains language that property is inherited "share and share alike" to two people. Does this mean tenants in common or joint tenants?
- I received a citation in the mail - I can't read the offense. Is there a Minnesota Statute or Rule that indicates the type size on legal documents? If such a statute or rule exists could you inform me of which statute or rule?
- Where is it okay to drive a lawn tractor on a road?
- I just purchased a half acre of land and was told there were no covenants or neighborhood association. After speaking with a neighbor I was told there are indeed. My question is, do they have to be recorded with the county to be enforced and legal or can one neighbor have a copy and enforced then? The county said I could put a camper on my vacant land while I'm waiting to build, the neighbor said I cannot.
- I have a client who doesn't want the county taking a picture of his house unless they are on public property. Can he do this?
- I am an appellate lawyer with the [out of state] AG's office. I am trying to find the general instructions that the Minnesota trial courts give to grand juries. They are referenced in 408 F.3d 1184, 1198 (9th Cir. 2005), but the links are old and don't lead to anything.
- Are there any statutes that say who can have keys to a township clerk and treasurer's offices? These positions are bonded while supervisors are not. One supervisor on her own had all the keys redone and now the supervisors all have keys to the clerks and my (treasurer) office which I do not like as I have confidential info in my files.

Appellate 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 2019, the clinic assisted 158 people. The top five types of cases seen at the clinic were family law, civil, juvenile, criminal/traffic, and orders for protection. The State Law Library also continues to offer an [Unemployment Appeals Self-Help Clinic](#) twice per month. In 2019, the clinic assisted 48 people who were considering appealing their denial of benefits to the Court of Appeals. The vast majority of these types of appeals (95%) involve an unrepresented party.

Online Presence

Website

The law library's website saw 163,998 unique visitors in 2019, a 5.7% increase from 2018. Our [legal research guides](#) had 35,304 views total, a 19% increase in views from 2018. The most popular guides in 2019 were Appeals; Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning; Child Custody and Parenting Time; Divorce/Dissolution of Marriage; and Landlord and Tenant.

One of the highlights of the website is the collection of [Supreme Court justice biographies](#). The law librarians continue to research and add content to the biographies. Some of the sources used for research include [newspapers.com](#), Ancestry, historical directories, and the resources of the Minnesota Historical Society. The territorial justices are considered complete, while work on the remaining justices is ongoing.

Opinion and Briefs Archives

Since 1996 the State Law Library has provided an online, [searchable database](#) of appellate court decisions. In 2019, the library added almost 1,300 opinions to the database.

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. Last year library staff added 1,062 briefs, a 54% increase over 2018.

Social Media

The library now has 324 [Facebook](#) followers. The weekly "throw back Thursday" posts that highlight materials in the Special Collections Room tend to be the most popular. The library's [Twitter feed](#) now has 1,437 followers.

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. The library also sends out a list of new books each month.

Interlibrary Loan

The State Law Library provides an interlibrary loan service for the Judicial Branch. This includes both books and journal articles. In 2019, the library obtained 88 items for the court and loaned 84 items to other libraries.

Continuing Legal Education

The State Law Library offers [free CLEs](#) for the judicial branch and other interested attorneys. In 2019, the library hosted twelve public CLE programs (8.75 standard credits, 2.5 elimination of bias credits, and 1 ethics credit). The library also offers several CLEs for on-demand credit via its website. This has been a popular feature. In 2019, 2,501 attorneys registered for these courses.

Law Clerk Assistance

The library communicates to the court's law clerks via a quarterly law clerk newsletter, and has a dedicated law clerk assistance email account. It is a popular resource and the library regularly gets emails from law clerks all over the state. (31 counties in 2019!) From 2018 to 2019, the number of requests from law clerks increased by 14%.

In the fall, the library's Outreach Librarian, Sarah Larsen, and Public Services Librarian Ellen Jaquette, presented three sessions of a "Prepare to Practice" course for outgoing appellate law clerks.

The State Law Librarian and Outreach Librarian taught several training sessions for the new appellate law clerks on how to do Minnesota legislative history research. In addition, the Outreach Librarian and Head of Public Services, Elvira Embser-Herbert provided training for the new clerks on the Minnesota legal resources available at the State Law Library.

The Outreach Librarian conducted a survey of law clerks to determine what training they would like to receive. In response, the library taught CLEs via webinar on the topics of Minnesota Legal Research and Minnesota Legislative History Research. In addition, the law library partnered with the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility to host two CLE webinars on Law Clerk Ethics and Law Clerk Wellness.

Kudos

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

- This helps greatly, thank you so much for looking into this! This is a fantastic offering for law clerks. – *district court law clerk*
- Thank you so much for the information!! I really appreciate you taking the time to follow up with me, it was extremely helpful and helped me out more than I could tell you!! - *member of the public*

- This is exactly what I was looking for. I appreciate all your hard work. – *appellate court law clerk*
- I love the law library! Not only are the printed materials great, but everyone there is friendly, helpful and they always find answers for me when I'm stumped! - attorney
- Thank you, as always, for keeping us abreast of new materials. I see several books of interest. - *appellate court judge*
- Thank you so much! The librarians at the state law library are really the best! – *attorney*
- I am greatly grateful for your efforts. Librarians are the best. I had already tried the attorney for the respondent, the AG, the appellate clerk's office, and the court reporter. You are the best. – *attorney*
- As always... thank you SO much for your help! I really appreciate it. – *magistrate*
- There's nothing like old-fashioned personal service by people who care about (and are superb at) what they do to shine a light in the wilderness of legal research. – *district court law clerk*
- This is perfect, exactly what the [court customer] is looking for. Thank you so much for the comprehensive information and for the speediness. I really appreciate it and I know the [customer] does too. – *court staff*
- Thank you for helping me with Westlaw yesterday. The case citation you found for me was directly on point for my appeal. – *attorney*
- Just a quick note to express appreciation for the CLE opportunities you (the law library) is providing. Both my wife and I are retired lawyers who have managed to keep our law licenses up. Keeping our licenses is important to us. It is a big part of who we are. This is getting quite expensive for us as we are on fixed incomes and every dollar counts. We were delighted when we found the on demand as well as live webcasts. Thank you again for what you do. - *attorney*
- This provided all the answers I needed. Thank you for being such an amazing assistance. – *district court law clerk*
- I want to say a big thanks to this program - for it is much needed - and to you and your staff for helping us inmates. - *inmate*

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. Since 2017 we have had a librarian dedicated to these activities.

Legal Community

- January – Liz Reppe was part of a CLE panel for the MSBA Labor and Employment Law section. She spoke about volunteering for the law library's Unemployment Appeals Self-Help Clinic.
- April - Liz Reppe presented a topic on Minnesota Legislative History to the Steele County Bar Association.

- June – the library had an informational table at the MSBA Convention.
- September – Liz Reppe presented at the event “Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Report on Gender Fairness in the Courts”, sponsored by Minnesota Women Lawyers.
- October – Liz Reppe was a panelist at “Legal Research Day at the MSBA”.
- December – Sarah Larsen presented the CLE “Skip Tracing for Finding Relatives” to the Ramsey County Bar Association.
- December – the library had an informational table at the State Judges’ Conference and provided material on services for judges in the packets given to all attendees.

Library Community

- January – Sarah Larsen presented to the Capitol Area Library Consortium on the State Law Library’s outreach initiatives.
- February – Sarah Larsen presented “Legal Reference for Public Librarians” at the First Friday in February Conference, which is put on by the Prairielands Library Exchange.
- February – Liz Reppe presented “Legal Reference 101” to staff of the Pioneerland Library System in Willmar.
- April – Liz Reppe presented a course on “Minnesota Legislative History Research” to the Legal Research Institute, hosted by the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries.
- October – Erica Nutzman was a panelist on the program “Secrets of the Government Libraries”, which was offered at the Minnesota Library Association Conference.

Public

- Five law librarians from the State Law Library regularly visit St. Paul public library branches to help people locate legal information. The branches include: Rice Street, Central, Rondo, Arlington, and Sun Ray. Librarians visit each branch twice per month.
- August – Sarah Larsen and Elvira Embser-Herbert helped to staff the court’s State Fair booth.

County Law Libraries

By statute, the State Law Librarian is tasked with assisting and advising county law libraries. The library has two programs for county law libraries. Members receive materials and assistance from the State Law Library. In 2019, 57 county law libraries (out of 82) participated.

- March – Visited the Le Sueur County Law Library.
- May - Visited Cottonwood and Murray County Law Libraries and attended Le Sueur County Law Library’s board meeting. In addition, assisted in planning educational program for public librarians (co-sponsored with the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries).
- June – Visited Hubbard, Pipestone, and Rock County Law Libraries.
- July - Visited McLeod and Sibley County Law Libraries.

- August – Visited Dodge, Traverse, Cook and St. Louis County Law Libraries. In addition, set up the Le Sueur County Law Library in the new courthouse.
- September – Visited Sibley County Law Library to set up library.
- November - Helped plan educational program for county law library staff (co-sponsored with the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries) and visited Goodhue County Law Library.

Newsletters

The State Law Library uses three newsletters to connect to patrons. There is a newsletter for law clerks that goes out four times per year, a county law library version that goes out twice per year, and a general newsletter, [Inter Alia](#), that is sent four times per year.

Display Cases

Library staff create new displays several times a year to engage visitors to the library and promote the library collections. In 2019, the library presented the displays Women in the Law, Tribal Justice, and Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society (for Law Day 2019).



Managing the Collection

Our Technical Services Department is responsible for making all types of library materials available to the public and the judiciary. This department ensures that the materials are relevant, current and easy to find, on and off-line. The library also makes briefs available to the public in a variety of formats: print, microfiche and through the online archive

2019 Statistics

- 943* items circulated (*Does not include January 2019 due to software transition)
- 3,865* updates added in the three libraries (new replacement volumes, hardbound supplements, loose-leaves, pocket parts) (*This includes the end of year 2018 updates due to the system migration)
- 993 new titles added
- 257 original cataloging records created
- 1474 briefs processed
- 263 Federal Depository Library items added
- 430 titles cataloged for County Law Libraries, 164 deleted

Special Projects

Software Migration

The Technical Services Department, after two years of preparation, successfully migrated our catalog data to a new software platform. This project was complete in early February 2019. Training on the new system continued through the year.

Preserving Court History

The State Law Library has contributed to the Minnesota Digital Library (MDL) in past years and we plan to continue offering our unique materials for digitization and public access. In 2019, the library contributed eight oral history interviews along with their transcripts. They are interviews with Chief Justice Douglas Amdahl, Justice Rosalie Wahl, Justice Edward Stringer, Justice Maynard Pirsig, Justice George Scott, Justice John Todd, and Chief Justice Russell Anderson. The Law Library item from the Minnesota Reflections collection that was most heavily used in 2019 was the Roll of Attorneys (1858-1970).

In addition, the library is working with [LLMC](#) to digitize the collection of historic handwritten briefs. This project is expected to take a number of years due to the fragile nature of the materials. Five volumes had been scanned by the end of 2019.

Special Collections Room

In 2019, the library received as a donation *Of the law of nature and nations: eight books* by Baron Samuel von Pufendorf, published in 1717. The cover was in poor condition, so the book was rebound and added to the Special Collections Room.

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. In 2019, the Cataloger indexed 955 articles for the MLPI.

Appellate Briefs

The library provides access to appellate briefs in multiple 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. This year the library began a project to digitize older briefs from our microfiche collection using the scanner we acquired last year.

- 81 volumes of bound briefs were added to the collection.
- 211 sheets of microfiche were produced. The library discontinued this practice with volume 915.
- 1062 briefs were redacted and added to the library's [online database](#). The database is complete back to 705 N.W. 2d. with additional older and newer cases being added regularly.

Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

About the Program

The mission of LLSP is to provide law library service to state 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 are not paid for by Minnesota taxpayers.

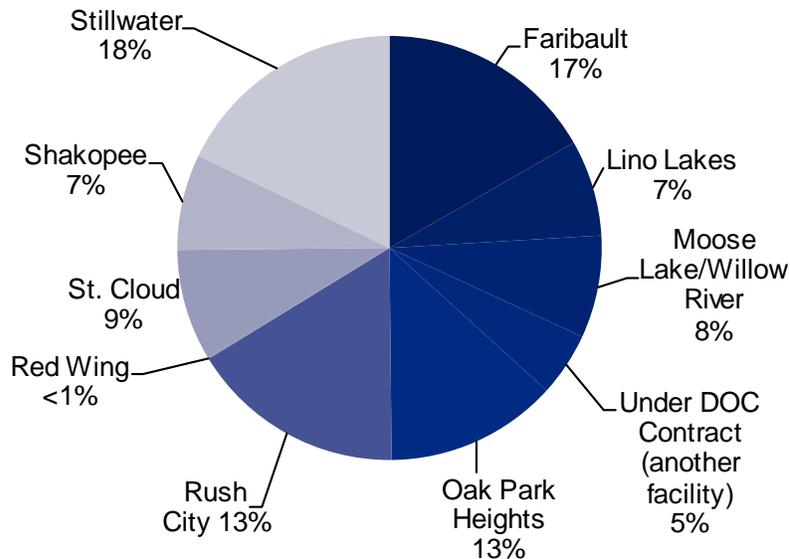
Law librarians provide access to legal materials, both at the correctional facilities and the Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL). Circuit-riding prison law librarians, based at MSLL, conduct monthly visits at eight adult correctional facilities to meet with inmates. Questions that cannot be answered 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.

2019 Statistics

9,479 DOC inmates
92 Prison visits
8,868 Estimated miles travelled
1,233 Inmate interviews

2,595 Individual inmates assisted
40,509 Inmate requests processed

Distribution of Total Inmate Requests by Facility 2019



Professional Activities in the Legal/Library Community

Legal

Sarah Larsen

- Minnesota Judicial Branch State Fair Booth Steering Committee
- Self-Represented Litigant Working Group
- MSBA Access to Justice Committee & Resource Development Subcommittee

Erica Nutzman

- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society's Preservation Committee

Liz Reppe

- Triage Portal Advisory Committee
- Public Access Rules Committee
- Implementation of Legal Practitioners Committee

Susan Trombley

- MSBA Criminal Law section (student, nonvoting member)

Library

Leslie Greenwood

- Membership Chair, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries
- Member, Bylaws Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Volunteer, 50 State Toolkit Committee, Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries

Sheri Huppert

- Member, Regional Advisory Group that represents depository libraries in Minnesota, Michigan, and the Dakotas.

Elizabeth Karges

- Member, PALS Circulation Steering Committee

Sarah Larsen

- Member at Large, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries
- Member, Education Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Member, Education Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries
- Volunteer, 50 State Toolkit Committee, Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries

Erica Nutzman

- Chair, Technical Services Section, Minnesota Library Association
- Member, MNPALS Systems User Group
- Member, MNPALS Governance Structure Task Force
- Member, MNPALS Reports Work Group
- State Government Libraries representative to Minitex Policy Advisory Committee
- Member, CALCO Archives Committee
- Chair, Archives Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

Liz Reppe

- At-Large Board Member, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries

Susan Trombley

- Chair, Exchange Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

Elizabeth Tuckwood

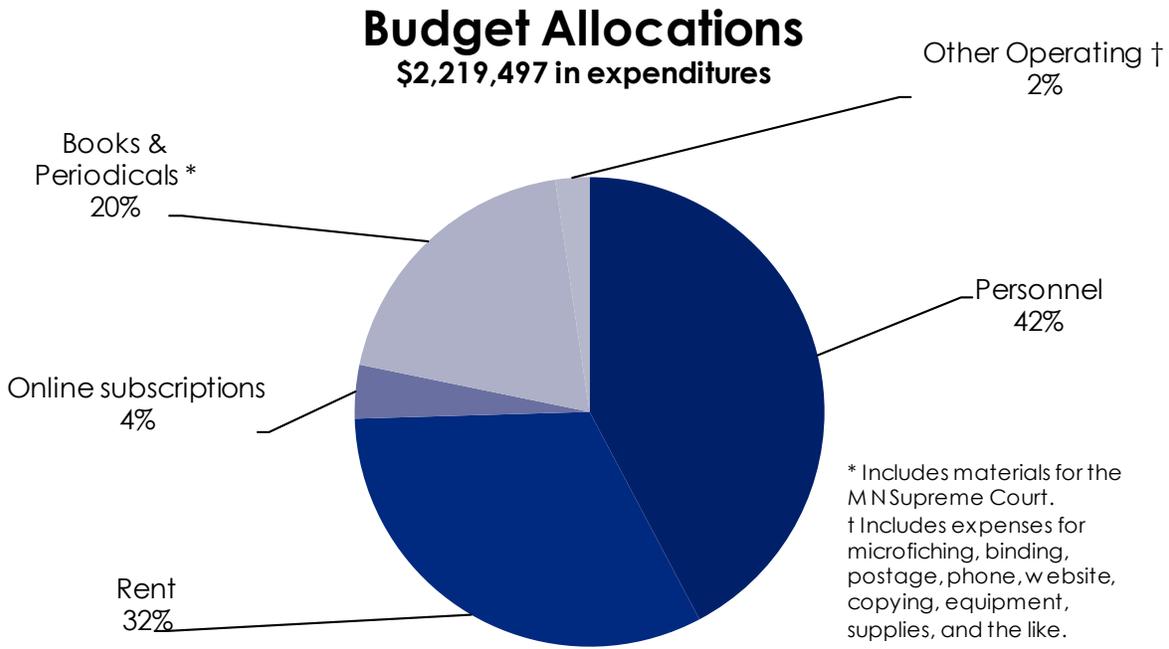
- Member, Cataloging Steering Committee, Minnesota Program for Automated Library Systems (MNPALS)

Librarian-Authored Materials

- Ellen Jaquette, [Martha Dorsett](#), MNopedia article

Financial Summary

This is the summary for fiscal year 2019.



Library Staff

- Jean Anderson, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
- Elvira Embser-Herbert, Head of Public Services
- Jacob Frank, Technical Services Clerk
- Leslie Greenwood, Reference Librarian
- Sheri Huppert, Government Documents Librarian
- Ellen Jaquette – Reference Librarian (hired May 2019)
- Elizabeth Karges, Technical Services Technician
- Debbie Kitzmann, Technical & Outreach Services Clerk
- Sarah Larsen, Outreach Librarian
- Susan Larson, Reference Librarian (Retired May 2019)
- Alyssa Matlon, Technical Services Clerk
- Erica Nutzman, Head of Technical Services
- Liz Reppe, State Law Librarian
- Alec Shaw, intern (started May 2019)
- Stephanie Thorson, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
- Susan Trombley, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
- Elizabeth Tuckwood, Technical Services Librarian

Leadership

Many thanks go to Associate Justice Paul Thissen who is the library's Supreme Court liaison. The law library is appreciative of his interest and guidance.