



MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

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COVID-19

As with most workplaces, COVID-19 changed our operations. Below is a timeline of how the library responded in 2021.

Nov. 30, 2020	The Minnesota Judicial Center was locked and generally closed to the public The State Law Library was open to the public with very limited appointments Technical Services staff were working a hybrid schedule of 3 days onsite/2 at home Librarians were working 2 days onsite/3 at home
February 17	The library stopped quarantining books
March 1	Technical Services staff started working 4 days onsite/1 day at home
March 15	The Minnesota Judicial Center reopened to the public Librarians returned to working 3 days onsite/2 at home 30 minute "express visits" were allowed for patrons who showed up without an appointment The stacks reopened
April 18	Technical Services staff returned to work every day onsite
June 7	The library stopped requiring appointments
June 14	The mask requirement was lifted for the Minnesota Judicial Center
August 2	Masks were again required in the Minnesota Judicial Center

The law librarians found they were able to assist most patrons remotely using our online subscriptions to Westlaw, Lexis, and HeinOnline. We could respond to questions requiring our print collection by either scanning and emailing a portion of the book, or checking the book out to the patron and mailing it to them. The library was able to continue answering the reference desk phone during business hours.

2021 Highlights

19th Amendment Traveling Exhibit

The American Bar Association and the Law Library of Congress created a special traveling exhibit to commemorate the 100th anniversary of women's constitutional right to vote. The State Law Library hosted this traveling seven-banner exhibit October 4-15, 2021. Originally scheduled for May 2020, it was postponed twice due to COVID-19.

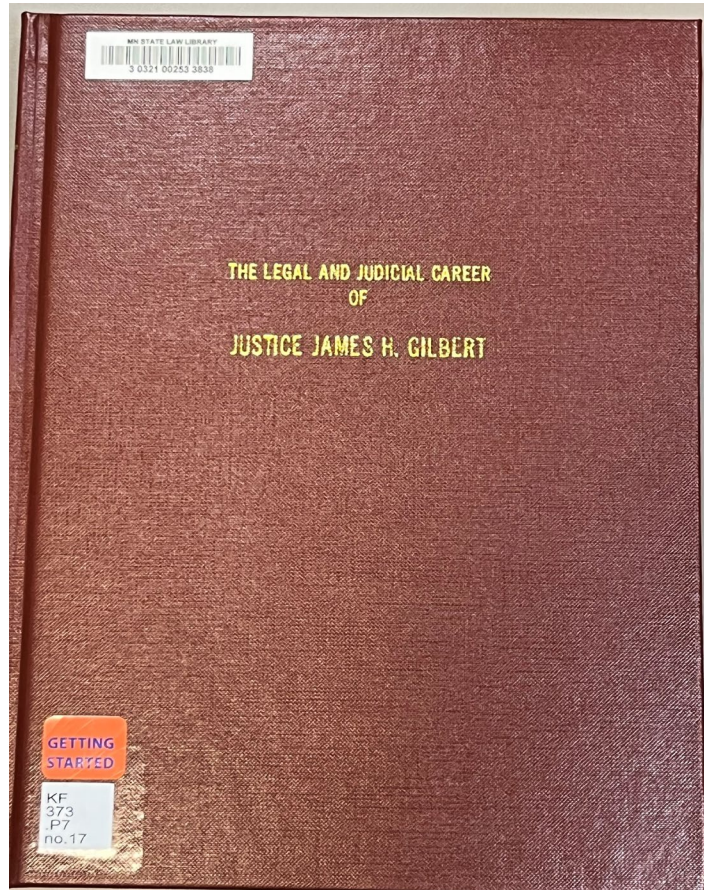


The law library created an online exhibit on women's suffrage to go along with the traveling exhibit. It can be viewed here - <https://mncourts.libguides.com/suffrage>.

Career Book of Justice James H. Gilbert

The volume entitled "The Legal and Judicial Career of James H. Gilbert" is the 17th compiled by the Minnesota State Law Library after the retirement of a member of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Leslie Greenwood, Erica Nutzman, and Liz Reppe worked on assembling this important piece of Minnesota history. It is the first one printed in color. Copies of the books are available to

researchers at the State Law Library. Two additional copies were printed and donated to the libraries at the Minnesota State Historical Society and the University of Minnesota Law School.



Video Tutorials

In 2021, the State Law Library created several video tutorials about topics related to filing an appeal. Much of the content was based on the written information the Minnesota Court of Appeals has posted on its website. This project reflects the frustration and confusion appellants can feel when facing pages of written instructions. These videos give people another format in which to get direction on how to navigate an appeal without an attorney.

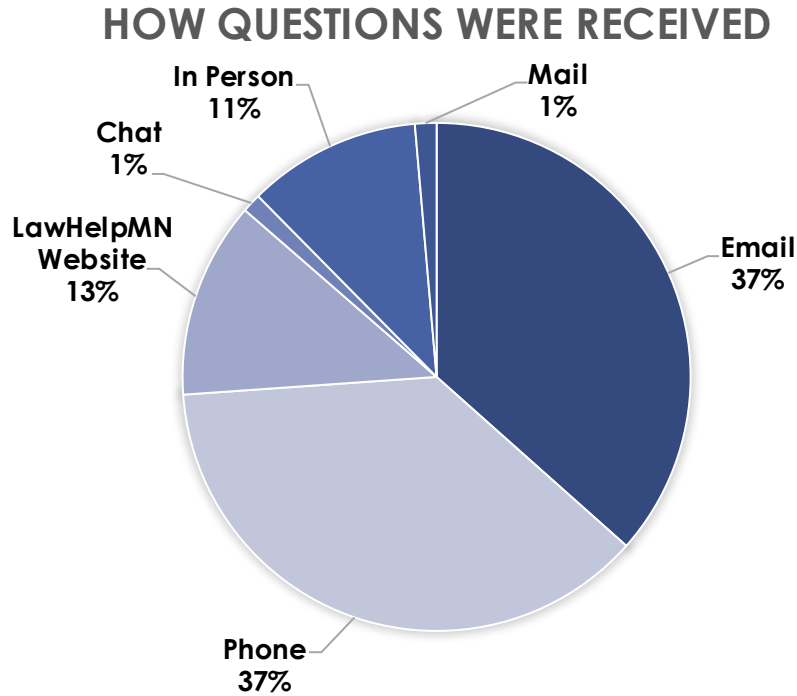
Topic	Date Posted	2021 Views
Informal Appellate Briefs	January 11, 2021	467
Filing an Unemployment Appeal at the Minnesota Court of Appeals	January 28, 2021	246

Filing a Civil Appeal at the Minnesota Court of Appeals	July 12, 2021	114
Steps in an Appeal to the Minnesota Court of Appeals	July 15, 2021	98

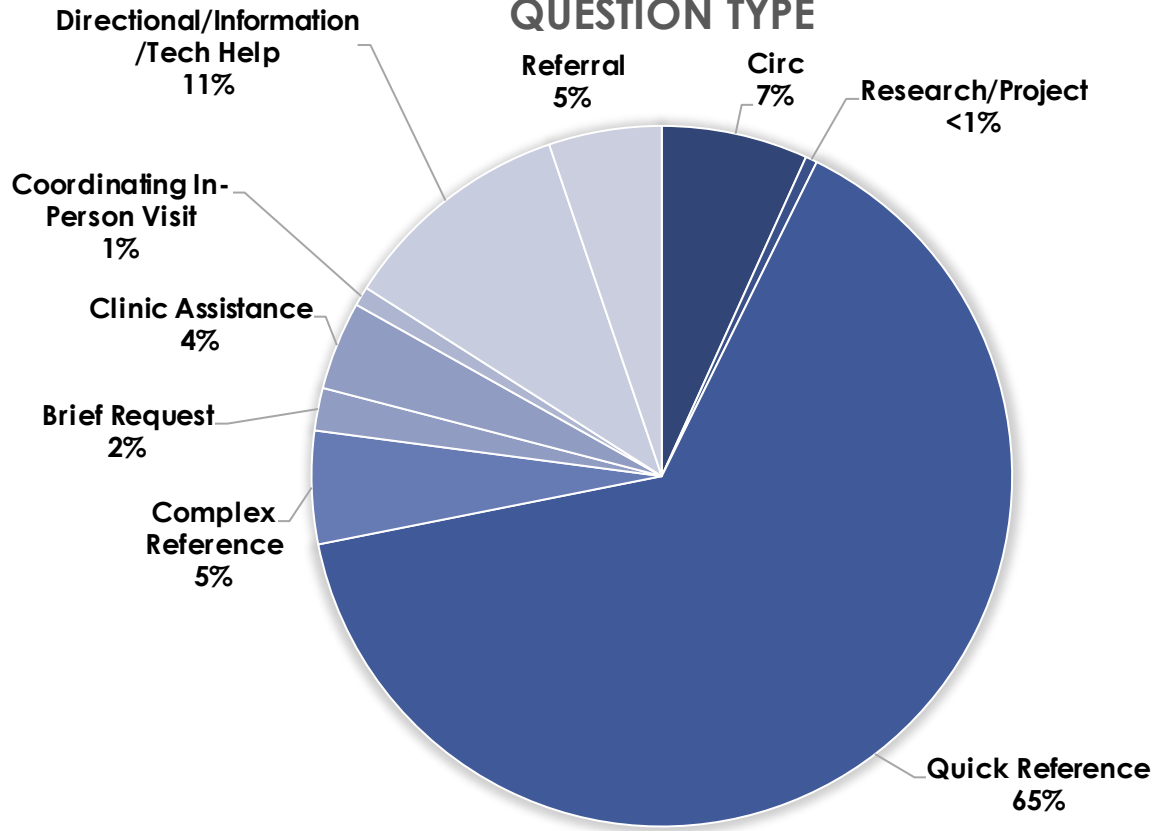
Assisting our Patrons

Answering Questions

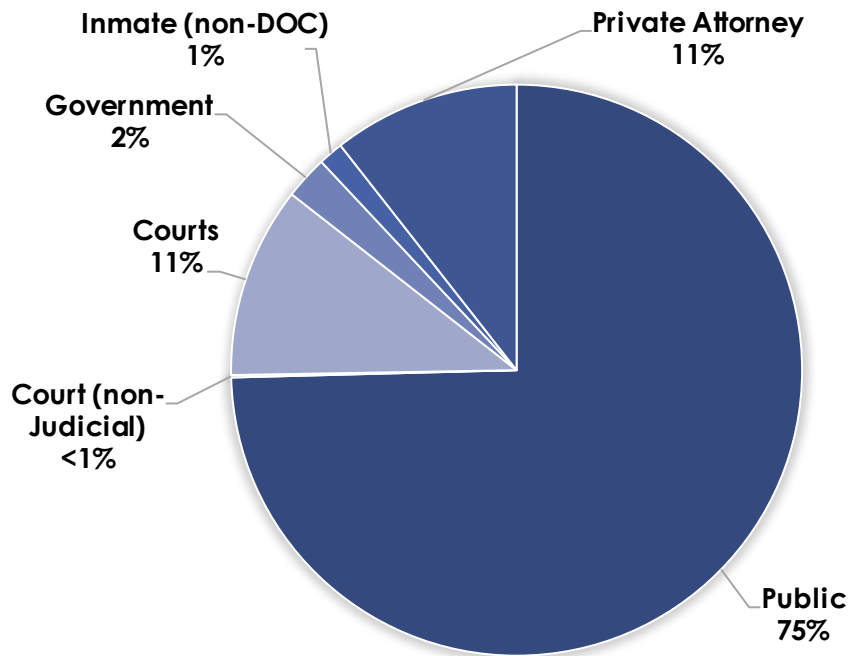
Our patrons can contact us in person, via phone, chat, email, and mail. We make an effort to serve people in the manner that they prefer. In 2021, the reference librarians answered over 9,100 questions. Between 2020 and 2021 the percentage of requests from the public increased from 68% to 75%. The library continued a program started in 2020 and mailed 592 court forms packets to patrons who did not have access to a computer.



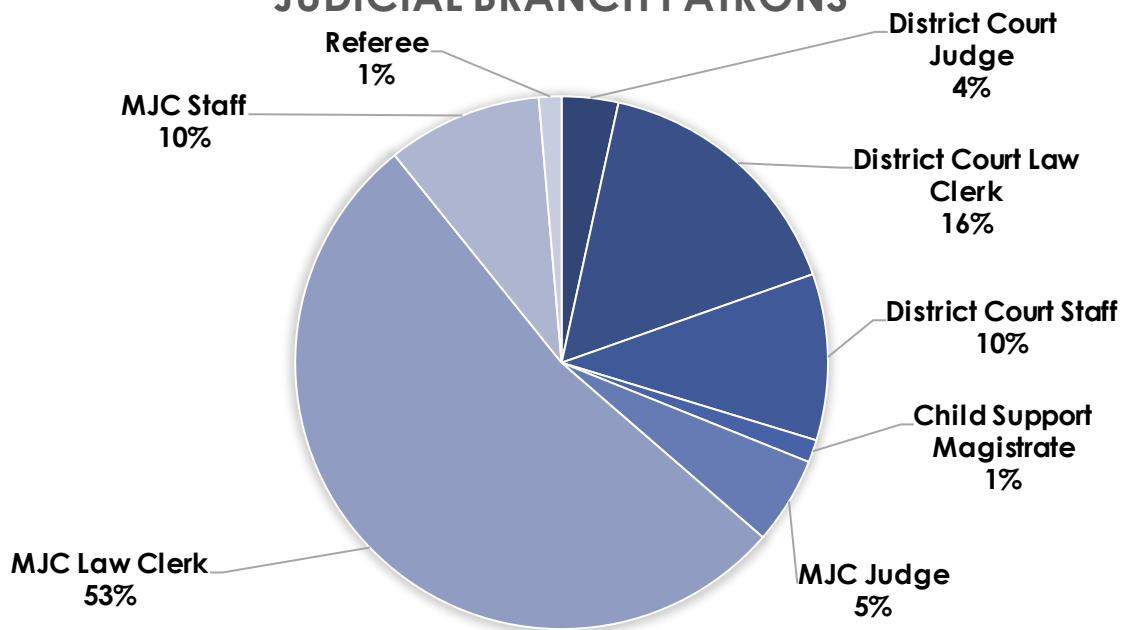
QUESTION TYPE



PATRON TYPE



JUDICIAL BRANCH PATRONS



Topics of Questions Asked	Percentage
Legal Research	14.7%
Family Law	11.5%
Appeals	10.1%
Landlord/Tenant	6.8%
Criminal/Traffic	6.1%
District Court Process/Records	5.5%
Probate/Estate Planning	4.0%
General Civil	3.5%
Employment	2.6%
OFP/HRO	2.1%
Brief Request	1.8%
Real Estate/Zoning	1.8%
Conciliation Court	1.6%
Article Request	1.4%
Name Change	1.3%
Consumer Issue	1.1%
Other	1.1%
Bankruptcy/Debtor/Creditor, Business, IFP/Fee Waiver, Immigration, Juveniles, Healthcare/Disability, Government Benefits, Tax	Each topic accounted for 1% or less

A Sampling of Interesting Questions

- My friends and I have been debating on Facebook about a woman who laminated her floor with pennies. We want to know if it's illegal. I tried to look it up on Google, but I couldn't find a clear answer and I didn't trust Google to give me the right answer.
- I'm trying to look into my mother's history and wants to find out if she changed her name legally in the 1920's.
- I've had flooding on my land due to county road construction over several years. I want to know if I can sue the county.
- I am trying to get information on how or if I can get an outdated restraining order expunged off of my record.
- When a person died penniless who has the authority or responsibility for his burial? Whose wishes for the deceased would be granted? Blood relatives or a girlfriend that was never married to the deceased?
- I'm a research assistant for the head editor of [a national magazine], and I am looking for information on criminal abortion cases from 1870 - 1930. I've been trying to nail down the documents from a supreme court case that took place in 1872 titled "The State of Minnesota vs. Thomas McIntyre." Please let me know if you have any information or court records available from this case. Thank you!
- I deliver appliances. The company pickup has expired tabs. If I get pulled over, am I in trouble or my boss?

- I am a student and I live in Belgium. I allow myself to contact you because doing an independent study work on the George Floyd affair, and I must do in-depth legal research. Not knowing the American system, I ask for your help. I would like to know the law of the police and civilians during an arrest and arrest. Thanks for your understanding. [Question submitted in French.]
- What is the lawful distance a licensed hunter must be from occupied homes and buildings on posted private property before discharging a hunting weapon or firearm?
- I am researching a case involving immigrant name change during the time period of 1890 - 1900 within Minnesota. I suspect that the name change was simply done without any legal action; however, for my research I must address the law at that particular time within Minnesota. I have searched through Minnesota statutes and cannot locate any statute that might deal with this. I would appreciate any assistance you might be able to provide me in this matter.
- Is there a state law requiring local police departments and/or county sheriffs to collect and share data on race and ethnicity of civilians in police encounters, like traffic stops?
- I am interested to know if there would be any records of the LeQuire trial in Cook County. This murder trial took place in the fall of 1913. A future Hall of Fame pitcher, Rube Waddell, testified in it. Homer LeQuire was the suspect. He was found guilty. Louis Fernie was the victim. The murder happened near Lake Vermillion.
- I have a client who was convicted of violating Minn.Stat.§152.023, subd. 1(1) in 1990. According to the Register of Actions, the violation is classified as a misdemeanor. Was a violation of this statute ever a misdemeanor way back in 1990?
- I am in the process of investigating the legislative history of Minn. Stat. § 144.565, specifically HF 1078/SF967 which amended the aforementioned statute in May of 2007. I know that the amending language to Minn. Stat. § 144.565 was added between May 2 and May 21 of 2007 to the omnibus bill, but I cannot find from which other bill or committee it originated and was added. I believe it was added by the Senate committee of Health, Housing and Family Security (name of the committee at the time), but I cannot find who added it or any committee notes/minutes of members discussing the reason or origin of that portion of the bill. Would you have any input or guidance as to find the origin of that amendment?
- I have a subject attempting to purchase a firearm here in [other state]. He pled an assault charge that was domestic violence down to 609.72.1 (disorderly conduct). I need to know if this statute has the force element. The conviction was in 2007. Would the statute have changed between then and now?

Appellate Self-Help Clinics

Cases with at least one pro se party constituted 29% of all filings to the Court of Appeals in 2021. To assist, the State Law Library offers two appellate self-help clinics. The general [Appeals Self-Help Clinic](#) is offered once per month. In 2021, the clinic assisted 135 people. The top types of cases seen at the clinic were family law, civil, probate, agency, criminal, and harassment restraining orders. The State Law Library also continues to offer an [Unemployment Appeals Self-Help Clinic](#) twice per month to assist people appealing a denial of unemployment benefits Court of Appeals. In 2021, the clinic assisted 74 people, which amounted to a 95% increase from 2020. The vast majority of these types of appeals (85%) involve an unrepresented party.

Online Presence

Website

The law library's website saw 479,720 unique page views and 195,751 new visitors in 2021. Our [legal research guides](#) had 128,819 views total, a 104% increase in views from 2020. The most popular guides in 2021 were Appeals; Child Custody and Parenting Time; Employment Law; Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning; and Neighbor Law.

Opinion and Briefs Archives

Since 1996 the State Law Library has provided an online, [searchable database](#) of appellate court decisions. In 2021, the library added 1,194 opinions to the database.

The library also maintains a [searchable database](#) of appellate briefs from published/precedential Minnesota Court of Appeals and Supreme Court cases. Comprehensive coverage goes back to 2002, and staff adds additional older briefs or briefs from non-precedential cases as requested. Last year library staff added 4,496 briefs to the online archive. The database is now complete back to 651 N.W.2d.

Social Media

The library now has 507 [Facebook](#) followers. The library's [Twitter feed](#) now has 1,442 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 2021, the library obtained 87 items for the court and loaned 63 items to other libraries.

Continuing Legal Education

The State Law Library offers [free CLEs](#) for the judicial branch and other interested attorneys. In 2021, the library hosted fourteen public CLE programs (11 standard credits, 1 elimination of bias credit, and 2 ethics credits). The library also offers several CLEs for on-demand credit via its website. This has been a popular feature. We had 17 CLEs available for on-demand credit during 2021. 1532 lawyers reported attendance for these courses (for a total 7066 total CLE credits).

Judicial 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. (36 counties in 2021!)

The State Law Librarian and Outreach Librarian taught several training sessions for the new appellate law clerks on how to conduct Minnesota legislative history research. In addition, the Outreach Librarian provided training for the new appellate clerks on the Minnesota legal resources available at the State Law Library.

The Outreach Librarian presented a CLE webinar on "Minnesota Legal Research" to district court clerks in August. In October the library arranged for a CLE entitled "The Nuts and Bolts of Criminal Law and Procedure" to be presented for district court and appellate clerks. In November the Outreach Librarian presented a CLE on Minnesota legislative history research for district court clerks.

Kudos

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

- Thank you! You just saved me so much time today. I really appreciate it. *~appellate law clerk*
- Thank you for the information provided regarding the court cases that I inquired about. The information was very helpful. As residents of Minnesota, it's nice to know that the Minnesota State Law Library works so well for citizen inquiries. *~member of the public*
- Wow! That is awesome! Thanks! My attorney is going to be so pleased! *~law firm librarian*
- This is absolutely perfect, thank you so much! I never cease to be amazed by how fast and how helpful you always are with my questions, I appreciate it more than you know. *~district court law clerk*
- Thank you - this is exactly what I was looking for. *~court staff*
- Thank you so much for all of the research and getting the interlibrary library loan documents through. The interconnectedness (and responsiveness!) of the libraries is a model for all other government bodies. Please accept my thanks to you and the others, invisible to me, who got this done. *~district court law clerk*
- You're a rockstar. Thank you so much. This is great stuff! *~appellate law clerk*
- Thank you so much. You have been so helpful. *~member of the public*
- Thanks and please extend my thanks to your staff. This information is very helpful. *~appellate court judge*
- I just wanted to take a minute to thank you and your team for your help. The information you share is vital to helping me grasp difficult issues and serves to verify my research and expand on it. Life has been moving at a brisk pace since the last project I sent your way, but I wanted to take a minute to thank you all for your help. For a law clerk like me that tends to work in isolation given the geographic nature of our district the service you supply is priceless. Thanks again for all your time and attention. *~district court law clerk*

- Thank you for your quick response and your thorough analysis. Much appreciated! ~attorney
- It's like a little bit of Christmas once a month [referring to our monthly current awareness email] ~district court judge
- Thank you! Got it all printed out for the attorney so it's on his desk when he comes in. You make me look like a hero. You're awesome! ~law firm paralegal
- Thank you so very much. This is absolutely what I was looking for. ~member of the public
- Your team is awesome and incredibly helpful. ~county law librarian
- Just a note to let you know how appreciative and thankful I am for all your help. You have gone above and beyond for me, and I see your good deeds. Thank you so much for sending me the information I needed. It put me on the right track for learning. Having the right information is empowering. ~inmate

Outreach

The State Law Library makes an effort to reach people outside of our walls. In a typical year we travel to public libraries, bar association meetings, 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. In 2021 we continued our outreach primarily online.

Legal Community

- January – Sarah Larsen presented the CLE “State Law Library Resources” as part of the law library’s CLE program
- February – Sarah Larsen spoke to the Mitchell Hamline School of Law Judicial Writing Course about the library’s services
- April – Sarah Larsen presented “Online Legal Research: Tips for Finding What You Need” to the 3rd District Bar Association
- April – Liz Reppe presented the CLE “Minnesota Legislative History Research” as part of the law library’s CLE program
- October – Sarah Larsen staffed a State Law Library information table at the new attorneys’ swearing in ceremony at the Capitol

Library Community

- January – Sarah Larsen presented on the “Unique Resources of the State Law Library” to the Capitol Area Library Consortium (CALCO).
- February – Sarah Larsen presentation on the library’s outreach initiatives to the Law Librarians of Puget Sound
- February – Liz Reppe presented two sessions on legal reference to the Great River Regional Library System
- March – Sarah Larsen presented the webinar “Law Librarians & Legal Information Professionals as Partners in the Access to Justice Movement” for the American Association of Law Libraries
- April – Liz Reppe presented “Legal Reference 101” for the Lake Agassiz Regional Library System

- May – Sarah Larsen spoke about court forms and court records at the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries spring training for public librarians

Other Groups

- September – Erica Nutzman spoke to the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum. She provided an overview of the library with an emphasis on historic materials.

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 2021, 46 county law libraries (out of 82) participated. 17 of those counties opted for a level of service that includes a visit from either the State Law Librarian or the County Law Library Program Coordinator.

- March – Visited the St. Louis County Law Library
- April – Visited the county law libraries in Crow Wing, Clearwater, Becker, and Clay Counties
- May – Visited the Traverse, Otter Tail, Wilkin, Grant, Nobles, Cottonwood, Big Stone, and Stevens County Law Libraries
- June – Visited the Murray County Law Library
- August – Attended the Crow Wing and Le Sueur County Law Libraries' Board of Trustee meetings via Zoom
- August – Visited the Le Sueur County Law Library
- October – Visited the Sibley and McLeod County Law Libraries
- October - Attended the Le Sueur County Law Library's Board of Trustee meeting
- December – Attended the Goodhue County Law Libraries' Board of Trustee meeting and visited the library
- December - Visited the St. Louis County Law Libraries

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. Often the displays connect with events or exhibits. In 2021, the library continued the display Before They Were Justices, which featured Justices who held non-legal jobs both before and after they were on the court. In September, we installed the display Votes for Women, 100 Years of Women's Suffrage. This display was in conjunction with a travelling exhibit from the ABA, "100 Years After the 19th Amendment: Their Legacy, and Our Future," which was on display in October.



Preserving Court History

The State Law Library has begun the work to establish our own digital archives management tool. This will allow us to post digitized copies of many of our archival materials, such as videos and documents. We expect the site to launch in 2022. Digitization work has been ongoing for the past several years and will continue as we focus on fragile materials that are in high demand.

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 2021, the library added ten oral history interviews along with their transcripts. They were interviews with Justice Alan Page, Justice James Gilbert, Justice Sam Hanson, Justice Helen Meyer, Justice George Scott, Justice Esther Tomljanovich, Justice Lawrence Yetka, and Justice John Simonett. The most popular Law Library item from the Minnesota Reflections in 2021 was the Roll of Attorneys (1858-1970).

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. 24 volumes were scanned by the end of 2021.

Over the past year Opinion Summaries were completed for the following justices:

- Paul H. Anderson (1994- 2013) – 438 opinions
- Alan Page (retired 1993- 2015) – 554 opinions
- Christopher J. Dietzen (2008-2016) – 154 opinions
- Wilhelmina M. Wright (2012-2016) – 49 opinions
- David R. Stras (2010-2018) – 132 opinions
- David L. Lillehaug (2013-2020) – 143 opinions

These numbers include the total number of majority, dissenting, and concurring opinions written by the justice. Opinions are further categorized by subject. All retired justices have been completed back to Chief Justice Henry Gallagher who left the court in 1944. These summaries can be found on each [justices' biographical page](#).

Managing the Collection

Our Technical Services department is responsible for making all types of library materials available to the public and the judiciary. We ensure that the materials are relevant, current and easy to find, on and off-line. We also make briefs available to the public in a variety of formats: print, microfiche, and through the online archive. In addition, we preserve historic court materials, send out a new books list, and we work with six county law libraries to make their materials searchable online.

2021 Statistics

- 452 items circulated

- 2785 updates added in the three libraries (new replacement volumes, hardbound supplements, loose-leafs, pocket parts)
- 343 new titles added
- 18,993 electronic resources added*
- 145 original cataloging records created
- 1252 Federal Depository Library items added
- 465 titles cataloged for County Law Libraries, 277 deleted
- 11,202 visits to the online catalog

*The library has access to thousands of historical law books through our subscription to HeinOnline. To increase patron's access to these ebooks, the library purchased a set of records that include full information about the books and added them to our catalog. Now patrons can search our catalog and find out which ebooks are available in HeinOnline.

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 2021, the Cataloger indexed 1,369 articles for the MLPI. A number of the added articles are from the earlier paper versions of the MLPI from before it went online. This gives us a deeper set of resources to draw from when searching. The library also added three new periodical titles (Challenger Magazine, Session/Law, VI Magazine).

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 attorneys. This year the library continued a project to digitize older briefs from our microfiche collection using the scanner we acquired at the end of 2018.

- 73 volumes of bound briefs were added to the collection.
- 4496 briefs were redacted and added to the library's [online database](#). The database is complete back to 651 N.W.2d with additional older and newer cases being added regularly.
 - 623 of the added briefs were digitized from microfiche and added to the library's archive.
 - In 2021, there were 2,281 visits to the online Briefs Archive

Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

About the Program

Under an Inter-Agency Agreement between the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MNDOC) and the Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL), the Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP) program provides law library service to people incarcerated in a MNDOC facility or otherwise under MNDOC jurisdiction.

Legal information requests are accepted by "kite," a request form available to Incarcerated Persons (IPs) at their facility. In addition, they may call or write to us. While there is no cost to the patron, we limit our responses to eighty pages, or eight items, per two-week period. IPs with pending court actions are given priority and their requests are answered weekly until their pending action is resolved.

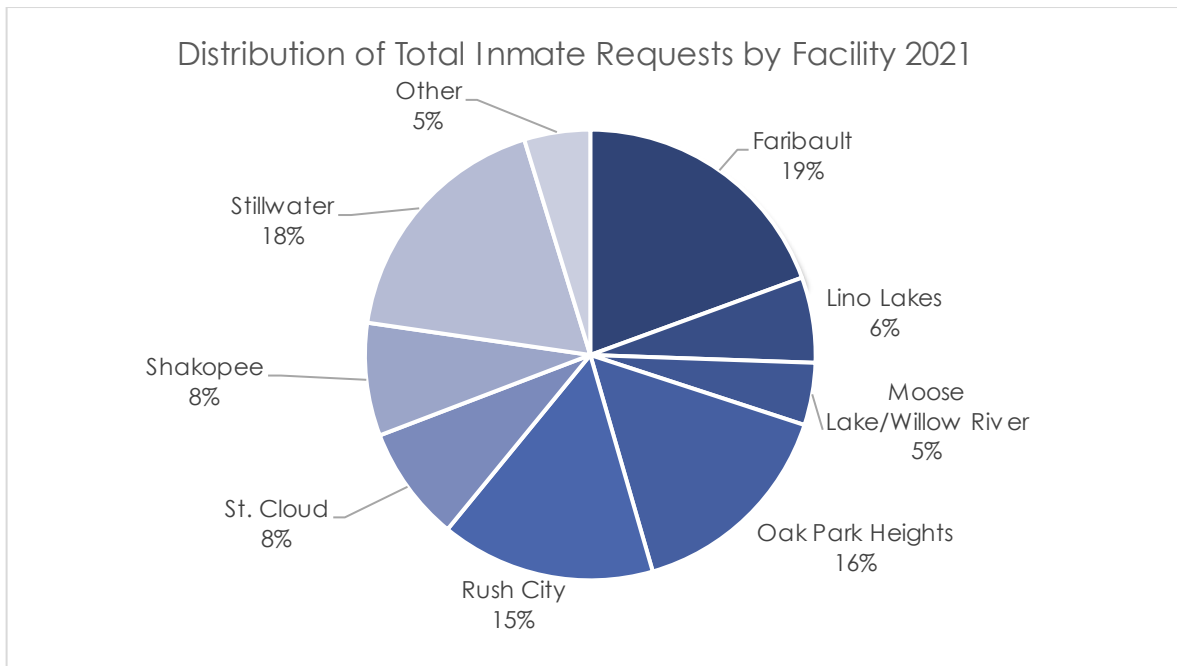
LLSP librarians also work with library staff at each facility to ensure that a core collection of legal research materials is available at the facility.

2021 was a year of change for the Law Library Service to Prisoners Program (LLSP). Through this second year of the pandemic, LLSP has continued to mail responses to prisons every two weeks but has not visited a single facility. After much planning and a few failed attempts, we are now using Zoom to conduct virtual visits with our IPs at a few facilities and plan to expand this service to additional facilities 2022.

There has also been a significant change in LLSP staff with long-term LLSP Librarian Susan Trombley leaving in August and Allyson Ososki joining the staff in September.

2021 Statistics

7,583	DOC inmates (as of 01/01/2021)
7,369	DOC inmates (as of 07/01/2021)
20,047	Questions answered
850	Phone calls (20% increase from 2020)
31,193	Items sent
2,071	Individual inmates assisted



Professional Activities in the Legal/Library Community

Legal

Elvira Embser-Hebert

- Mentor, University of Thomas Law School

Sarah Larsen

- Minnesota Judicial Branch Self-Represented Litigant Working Group
- MSBA Access to Justice Committee & Resource Development Subcommittee
- MSBA State of the State Workgroup

Erica Nutzman

- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society's Preservation Committee

Library

Elvira Embser-Hebert

- Co-Chair, Diversity Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries
- Member, Continuing Professional Education Committee, American Association of Law Libraries

Leslie Greenwood

- Chair, Bylaws Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Regional Coordinator, 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.
- Secretary/Treasurer, Government Documents Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries

Sarah Larsen

- Chair Elect/Chair, Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Chair, Education Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Co-Chair, MALL Meet Ups, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries
- Chair, Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries

Erica Nutzman

- Member, MNPALS Governing Board
- Member, CALCO Archives Committee
- Member, Archives Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

Liz Reppe

- Board member, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Member, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Awareness Special Committee, American Association of Law Libraries

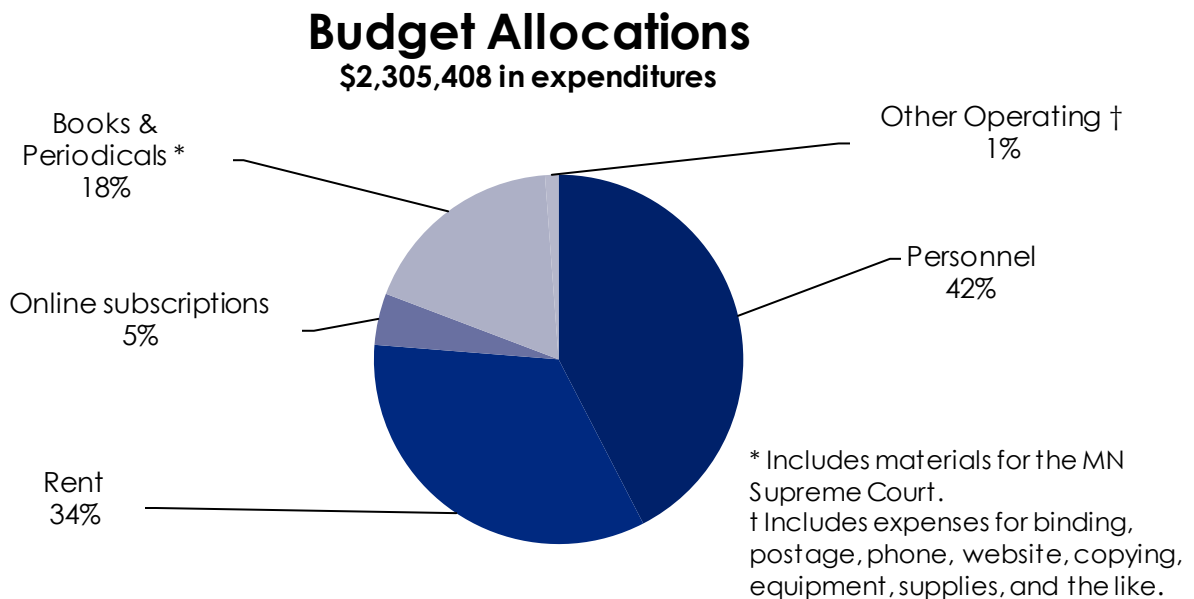
Librarian-Authored Materials

- Sarah Larsen, Outreach and Access to Justice in a Pandemic, LISP/SR Blog (Jan. 26, 2021)

Awards

- Sarah Larsen - Mitchell Hamline Law Review Wallace-Lerner Award for Excellence in Leadership
- Susan Trombley – Unsung Legal Hero, Minnesota Lawyer

Financial Summary (FY21)



Library Staff

Jean Anderson, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
Cate Boruff, Reference Librarian (started September 2021)
Katy Boyle, Temporary Librarian (January – July 2021)
Allison Brennhofer, Technical Services Clerk (started June 2021)
Elvira Embser-Herbert, Head of Public Services
Jacob Frank, Technical Services Clerk

Leslie Greenwood, Reference Librarian
Sheri Huppert, Government Documents Librarian
Elizabeth Karges, Technical Services Technician
Debbie Kitzmann, Technical & Outreach Services Clerk
Sarah Larsen, Outreach Librarian
Alyssa Matlon, Technical Services Clerk (until March 2021)
Erica Nutzman, Head of Technical Services
Allyson Ososki, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian (started September 2021)
Liz Reppe, State Law Librarian
Stephanie Thorson, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian
Susan Trombley, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian (until August 2021)
Elizabeth Tuckwood, Technical Services Librarian

In 2021 the Librarian position was increased from pay band 7 to pay band 8.

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.