

2022



MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

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COVID-19

While COVID-19 was still a factor during 2022 our operations were fairly normal. The library was fully accessible and masks were optional for visitors and law library staff. Vaccinations or testing/masking was required by Minnesota Judicial Branch policy for court staff and judges.

2022 Highlights

New Probate Self-Help Clinic

Seeing a need for brief legal advice for simple probate process questions, the State Law Library partnered with the Probate, Trusts and Estates Section of the Minnesota State Bar Association to create a free clinic. The clinic started in October 2022 and is coordinated by the State Law Library and staffed by attorney volunteers from the Probate, Trusts and Estates Section. It is a phone clinic, so it is available to people statewide. Issues not covered are tax, medical assistance, guardianship/conservatorship, questions about the law in other states.

Court of Appeals Oral Histories

In 2022, the library added seven oral history interviews and their transcripts to the Minnesota Digital Library. They were interviews with retired Court of Appeals Judges Doris Ohlsen Huspeni, Edward Toussaint Jr., Gary Crippen, Harriet Lansing, Marianne Short, Randolph Peterson, and Thomas J. Kalitowski. These interviews were part of a 2017 project by the Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society to document the founding and early days of the Court of Appeals. The State Law Library has now submitted [31 oral history interview videos](#) to the Minnesota Digital Library.

Excellence in Community Engagement Award

In 2022, the State Law Library received the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Excellence in Community Engagement Award. The award honors outstanding achievement in public relations activities by an AALL member library. The State Law Library was selected as the 2022 winner for our first four Appeals Self-Help Videos. These videos were published during 2021 and were produced to make it easier for self-represented appellants to complete initial paperwork to file their appeals. The State Law Library has since added a fifth appeals video on eviction appeals and two videos demonstrating legal research strategies.

Justice James H. Gilbert Career Book Presentment

In 2021, the State Law Library completed the volume entitled "The Legal and Judicial Career of James H. Gilbert". On March 1, 2022 the book was presented to Justice Gilbert

and the Supreme Court at a court ceremony in the Capitol courtroom. Retired Associate Justice Paul Anderson and former Attorney General Lori Swanson spoke at the event. Because COVID-19 was still a concern, attendance was limited, but the event was live streamed and recorded. The recording can be found here - <https://mncourts.libguides.com/gilbert/bookceremony>. This was the first book presentment ceremony with a live streaming option. The last book presentment ceremony was done for Associate Justice Sam Hanson in 2009.



Associate Justice (ret.) James Gilbert and State Law Librarian Liz Reppe

Security Screening

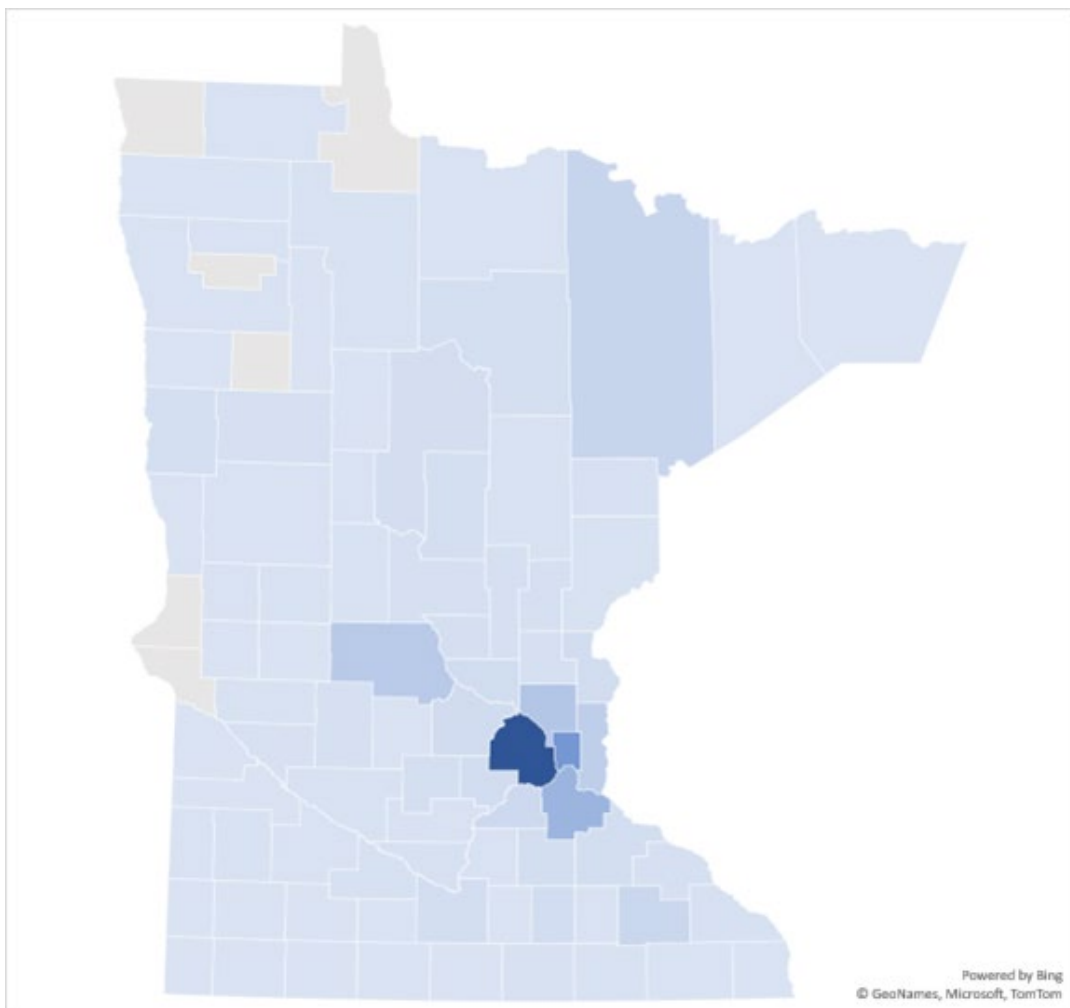
On January 3, 2022, the Minnesota Judicial Center adopted new security screening protocols. Visitors entering through the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard entrance must pass through screening before they can enter the upper levels of the building. Since the law library is located next to the tunnel, and people in the tunnel can pass through the Minnesota Judicial Center without having to go through security, additional measures were put in place for the library. The library doors are kept locked, and visitors are buzzed into the library from the receptionist/guard station, after they have passed through security screening. Interestingly, the new screening has not lessened our foot traffic. The library's percentage of in person patrons increased from 11% in 2021 to 19% in 2022.

Assisting our Patrons

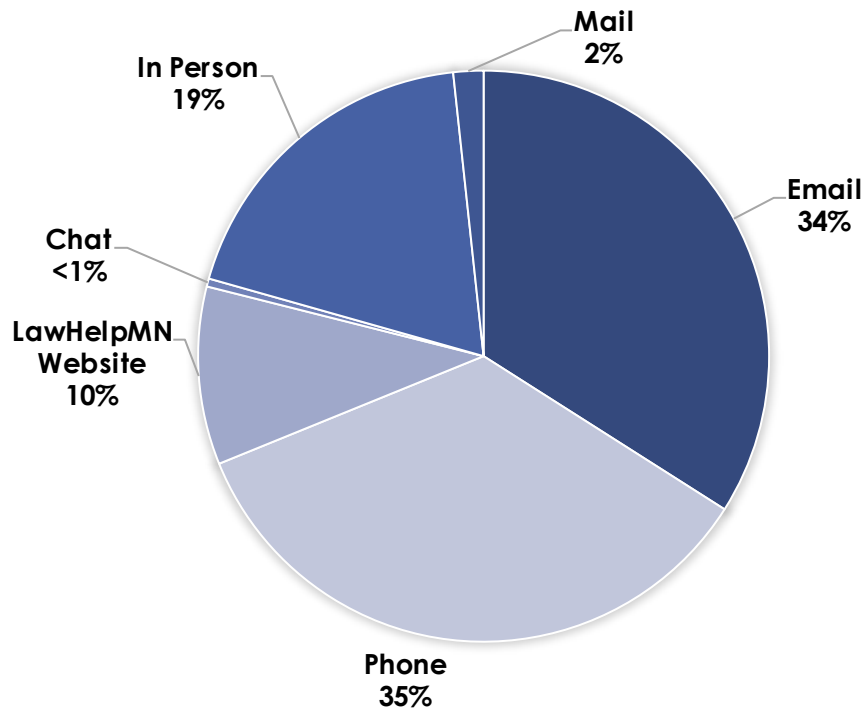
Answering Questions

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 2022, the reference librarians answered over 8,500 questions.

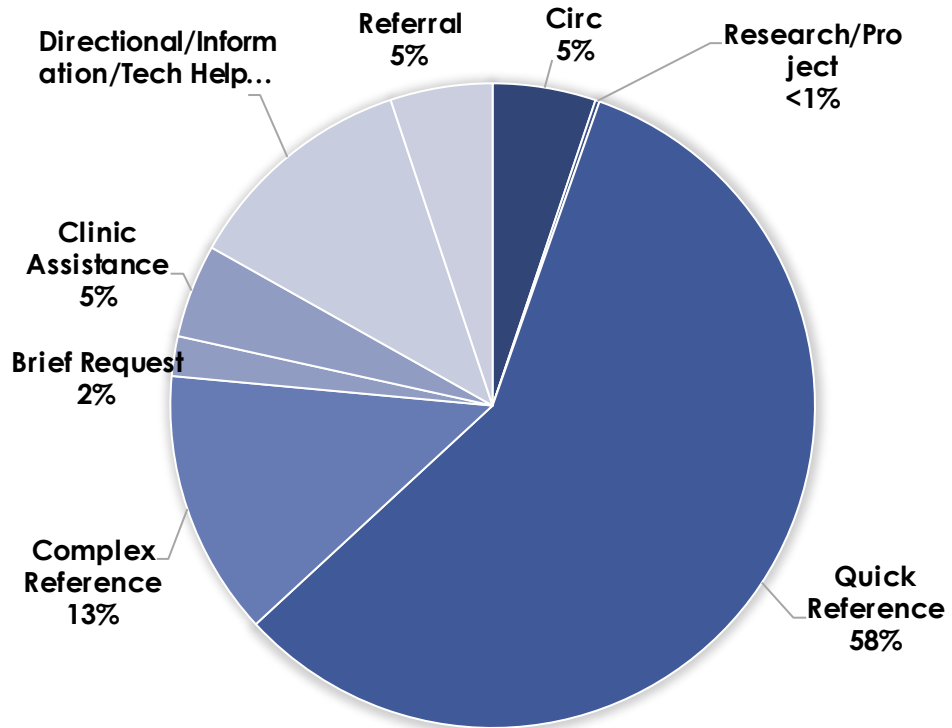
The State Law Library strives to provide statewide service. The library can track the county for many questions that are received via email. (We can track counties in emails that are initiated by clicking on "Ask a Librarian" on our website and emails coming from LawHelpMN.org.) The image below demonstrates that in 2022 the library received email questions from almost every county in the state. While six counties are shown in grey, it is possible that residents of those counties did receive assistance from the law library by calling the library or sending an email directly to our specific email address (askalibrarian@courts.state.mn.us).

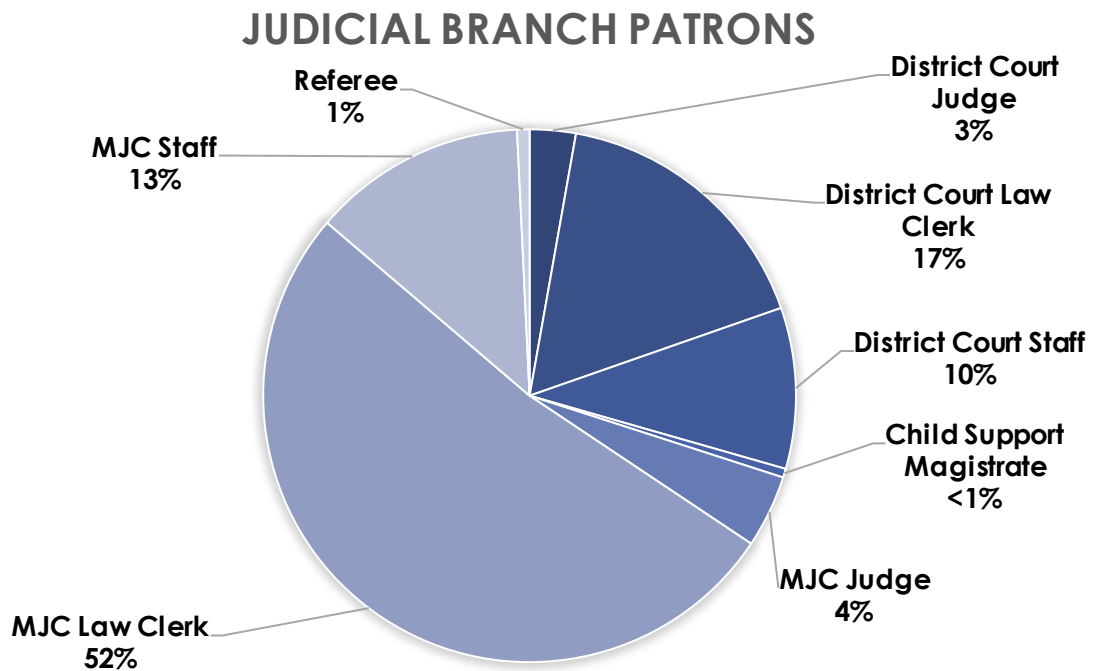
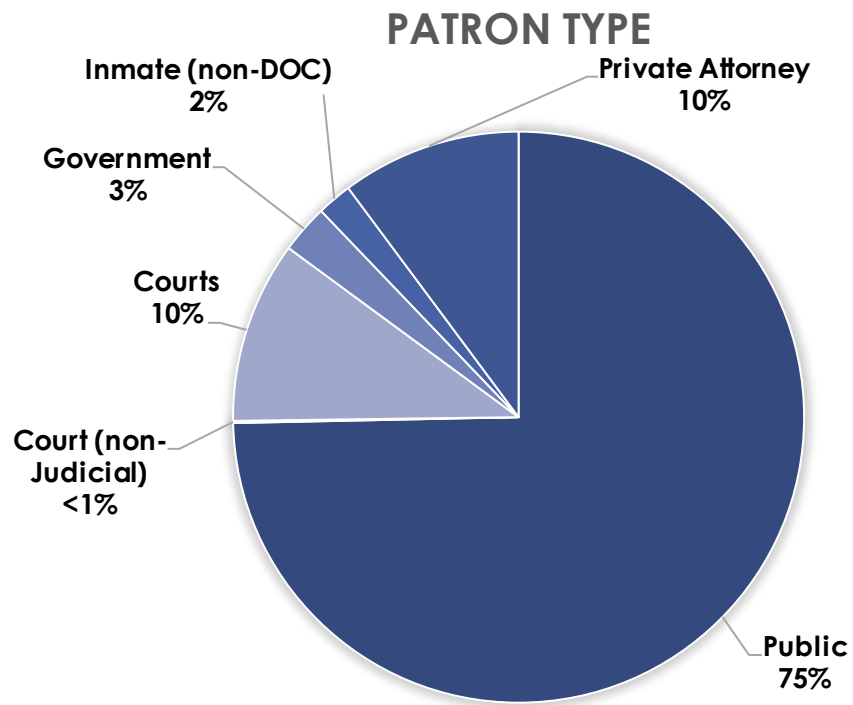


HOW QUESTIONS WERE RECEIVED



QUESTION TYPE





Topics of Questions Asked	Percentage
Legal Research	16.1
Appeals	15.8
Family Law	11.3
Landlord/Tenant	7.9
Criminal Law/Traffic	7.7
Probate and Estate Planning	6.1
Court Records	4.9
General Civil	4.1
Court Process	3.8
Employment	2.6
Brief Request	2.5
Homeowners/Real Estate	2.3
Conciliation Court	2.2
OFP/Harassment Orders	1.9
Name Change	1.3
Juvenile Court	1.3
Consumer Issue	1.3
Other	1.3
Health/Disability, Business, Bankruptcy/Creditor/Debtor, Tax, Attorney/Judge Complaints, Government Benefits, Immigration	Each topic accounted for 1% or less

A Sampling of Interesting Questions

- We are interested in starting a family cemetery in St. Paul. This is a new journey for us. Can you direct or provide any guidance on zoning requirements, who to contact regarding looking for land, land surveyors, etc.? Any assistance would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your assistance.
- I have a question about whether there are any specific laws about loons in the State of Minnesota. If a person were to intentionally kill a loon what would be the charge and potential punishment? Or would this be a federal matter?
- I'm looking for a law from around 1900 against blowing whistle of steam engine and scaring horses.
- I am looking for records/investigations for an unsolved murder involving a family member from 1952.
- If after showing proof of age, the establishment (the same employees) refuse to sell to me on a daily basis without an i.d. are they violating my civil rights? I'm a senior citizen.
- Part of a big healthy white pine tree fell into our neighbor's yard and caused damage. This occurred during the terrific wind storm. We understood that this tree limb fell due to "An Act of God" and we, as the tree's owners are not responsible for the cleanup or damages. His insurance company should compensate him. He is insisting that we pay him for damages. Where in the Minnesota Statutes does it say we are not responsible?

- Is there such a thing as a motion to amend the charges from the defense side?
- Is there a difference between legal and religious annulment? Would it have been possible to obtain a legal annulment in 1949/1950 in the state of Minnesota? Would there be records of a legal annulment?
- How long may a County Attorney delay a decision to charge, and does it matter if the crime is stalking and the victim is in fear? May the County Attorney classify data as confidential indefinitely (more than nine months) to prevent a victim of crime from access to data she is the subject of? Is there a law that disallows data classification and denial of access to data when it is being used to cover up wrongdoing by the entity that controls access to data? Especially if reports about the subject of the data (victim) are incomplete and inaccurate?
- I am trying to find the date my grandfather [name removed] died in Minneapolis around 1984. He was born 12/24/1904 in Nielsville, Wisconsin.
- If a township and a county have ordinances on the same topic, which body's ordinance controls?
- I am trying to find out what minimum age an individual needs to appear to be in order to not be carded when purchasing THC products from our store.
- What confirmation does a party receive when a "hip pocket" [service] has expired due to statute of limitations? Is the status of an expired "hip pocket" public record and or searchable on a MN records website? If the hip pocket has expired due to statute of limitations is it "dismissed with prejudice"? When does parties involved with a "hip pocket" that has expired get confirmation of the dismissal?

Appellate Self-Help Clinics

Cases with at least one pro se party constituted 27% of all filings to the Court of Appeals in 2022. To assist, the State Law Library offers two appellate self-help clinics. The general [Appeals Self-Help Clinic](#) is offered once per month. In 2022, the clinic assisted 132 people. The top two types of cases seen at the clinic were family law (37%) and general civil (32%). 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 2022 the clinic assisted 41 people. The vast majority of these types of appeals (95%) involve an unrepresented party.

Online Presence

Website

The law library's website saw 506,939 unique page views and 183,640 new visitors in 2022. Our [legal research guides](#) had 199,163 views total, a 54% increase in views from 2021. The most popular guides in 2022 were Appeals; Neighbor Law; Child Custody and Parenting Time; Children, Minors, and Teens, Homeowners/Real Estate; Divorce/Dissolution of Marriage; and Landlord Tenant.

Opinion and Briefs Archives

Since 1996, the State Law Library has provided an online, [searchable database](#) of appellate court decisions. In 2022, the library added 1,053 opinions to the database.

The library also maintains a [searchable database](#) of appellate briefs from 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 4,662 briefs to the online archive. The database is complete back to 651 N.W.2d.

Social Media

The library now has 525 [Facebook](#) followers. The library's [Twitter feed](#) has 1,416 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 2022, the library obtained 44 items for the court and loaned 53 items to other libraries.

Continuing Legal Education

The State Law Library offers [free CLEs](#) for the judicial branch and other interested attorneys. In 2022, the library hosted thirteen public CLE programs (11.25 standard credits and 2.5 ethics credits). The library also offers several CLEs for on-demand credit via its website. This has been a popular feature. The library had 35 CLEs available for on-demand credit during 2022. 1587 lawyers reported attendance for these courses (for a total 7804.5 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 service, and the library regularly gets emails from law clerks all over the state. (38 counties in 2022!)

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 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.

- I love you people and your abundance of knowledge...thank you so very much.
~*member of the public*
- Thank you so much! And a massive thank you to you and your colleagues for all your assistance throughout the term. I am extremely grateful to and for you all! ~*appellate court law clerk*
- Thanks again. You all are amazing and I appreciate all the help and your staff provide! ~ *government attorney*
- I very much appreciate the information you provided and your great suggestions, which I intend to utilize. Thank you for your time and effort. ~*district court law clerk*
- I find your staff very helpful in providing useful information. ~*MJC staff*
- Thank you for your help. The research was on point and useful. ~*district court judge*
- Thank you. Awesome as always. ~*private attorney*
- You guys are the BEST!!!! ~*member of the public*
- Thank you both so much! This is very helpful and I appreciate all the work you have put into it. ~*district court law clerk*
- Oh my goodness! It's not every day you see something so on point! Thank you!
~*appellate court law clerk*
- You provide a wonderful and timely service and I have a true and abiding appreciation for what you do. ~*private attorney*
- Amazing fast work. Thanks! ~*appellate court judicial officer*

Outreach

The State Law Library works to reach people outside of our walls. In a typical year staff 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, the law library has had a librarian dedicated to these activities.

Legal Community

- February – Sarah Larsen presented the CLE "How to Find (Almost) Anything: Tips and Tricks for Researching the Law" for the Washington County Bar Association
- March – Sarah Larsen provided a virtual tour of the State Law Library to the HCBA New Lawyers Section

- April – Sarah Larsen presented the CLE “Free Online Legal Resources” to the 11th District Bar Association
- April – Liz Reppe presented a class on Minnesota Legislative History Research to students at the University of St Thomas School of Law
- April – Sarah Larsen was part of the Government Summer Associates Panel at the University of St. Thomas School of Law
- April – Liz Reppe presented a CLE on Skip Tracing for the 6th District Bar Association
- May – Liz Reppe presented the CLE “Finding Free Legal Resources Online” for the 1st District Bar Association
- May – Liz Reppe presented a CLE on Skip Tracing for the Rice County Bar Association
- May – State Law Library information table at the new lawyers' swearing in ceremony
- June – Liz Reppe presented a CLE on Minnesota Legislative History Research for the 12th District Bar Association
- September – State Law Library table at the 5th District Bar Association meeting
- October – Sarah Larsen presented the CLE “Free Resources for Legal Research” for the Minnesota Association for Justice
- October - State Law Library information table at the new lawyers' swearing in ceremony
- December – Sarah Larsen presented the CLE “Finding Free Legal Resources Online” as part of the State Law Library's CLE program

Library Community

- May – Sarah Larsen presented “Press Play: Helping State Law Library Patrons with Instructional Videos” at the Minitex Connect Conference
- May – Sarah Larsen presented “Library Reference 101” to the staff of the Plum Creek Regional Library System
- June – Liz Reppe presented a program on legal reference for the staff of the Arrowhead Regional Library System
- July – Sarah Larsen was a co-presenter for the AALL program “Coping with Vicarious Trauma: Tips for Law Librarians on the Front Lines” (w/ Dominique Quevedo of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles)
- July – Sarah Larsen moderated two programs at the American Association of Law Libraries annual meeting
- October – Sarah Larsen presented “Court and Court-Related Records: Where to Find Them... and How to Get Rid of Them” at the Minnesota Library Association Annual Conference
- October – Erica Nutzman presented “Accessibility: Lessons from Government Libraries” with Elaine Settergren, Minnesota Legislative Research Library
- November – Sarah Larsen was the facilitator at the MALL Meet-Up discussion “Hiring and Recruiting in Law Libraries”

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 2022, 48 county law libraries (out of 82) opted in. 18 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.

- January – Attended the Grant County Law Library board meeting
- March – Attended the Wilkin County Law Library board meeting
- May – Attended board meetings for the Mille Lacs County Law Library and the Big Stone County Law Library
- May – Visited the Pope, Stevens, Big Stone, and Traverse County Law Libraries
- June – Visited the Goodhue and Mille Lacs County Law Libraries
- July – Visited the Goodhue, Grant, Wilkin, Becker, and Crow Wing County Law Libraries
- September – Visited the Sibley, McLeod, Kandiyohi, Murray, Cottonwood, and Nobles County Law Libraries
- October – Visited the St. Louis County Law Library (all 3 locations)
- November – Attended the Kandiyohi County Law Library board meeting
- December - Visited the Le Sueur County Law Library



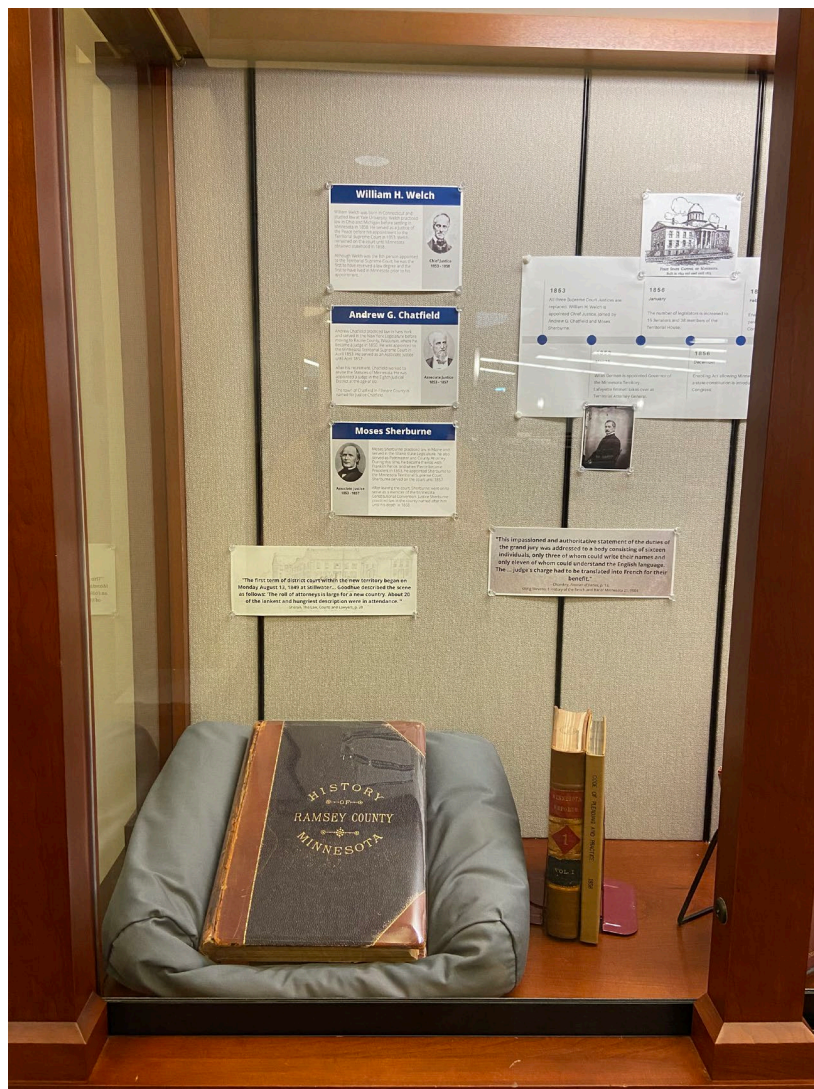
Crow Wing County Law Library

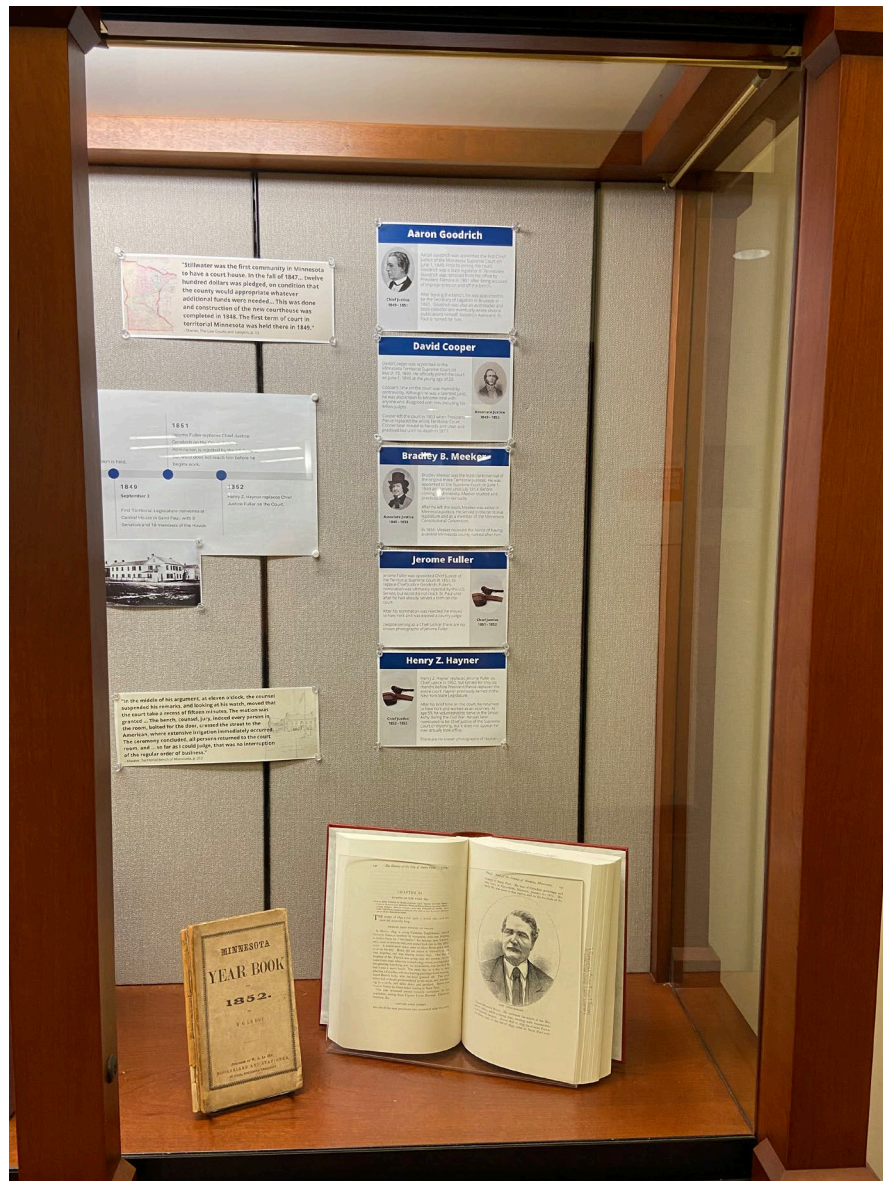
Newsletters

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. Often the displays connect with events or exhibits. In 2022, the library celebrated pride month with a display of books in the collection. That was followed by an exhibit about the Minnesota Territory with a timeline, short biographies of the territorial justices, quotes of descriptions of Minnesota at the time, and books in our collection from and about the era.





Preserving Court History

The State Law Library has been working 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. The site will launch in early 2023. Digitization work has been ongoing for the past several years and will continue as the library focuses on fragile materials that are in high demand.

The library continues work on the project to digitize historic appellate briefs from the microfiche collection. Staff have scanned, redacted, and uploaded 2,784 briefs from the early 1980s since 2019.

The library is working with [LLMC](#) to digitize the collection of historic handwritten briefs. This project is scheduled to take several years due to the fragile nature of the materials. 29 volumes were scanned by the end of 2022.

Managing the Collection

The Technical Services department is responsible for making all types of library materials available to the public and the judiciary. This department ensures that the library materials are relevant, current, and easy to find, both on and off-line. It is also responsible for making briefs available to the public in a variety of formats: print, microfiche, and through the online archive. In addition, the department preserves historic court materials and distributes a new books list. The Cataloger works with six county law libraries to make their materials searchable online.

2022 Statistics

- 514 items circulated
- 2540 updates added in the three libraries (new replacement volumes, hardbound supplements, loose-leafs, pocket parts)
- 399 new titles added
- 974 electronic resources added
- 93 original cataloging records created
- 1,031 Federal Depository Library items added
- 343 titles cataloged for County Law Libraries, 431 deleted
- 11,032 visits to the online catalog

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 2022, the Cataloger indexed 1,227 articles for the MLPI. Many of the added articles are from the earlier paper versions of the MLPI from before it went online which gives us a deeper set of resources to draw from when searching.

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 added the feature to search by reporter number to its search interface. The library also continued a project to digitize older briefs from our microfiche collection using the scanner the library acquired at the end of 2018.

- 47 volumes of bound briefs were added to the collection.

- 2,580 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.
 - 1,778 of the added briefs were digitized from microfiche and added to the library's archive.
 - 304 briefs were added upon request
 - In 2022, there were 1,965 visits to the online Briefs Archive

Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

About the Program

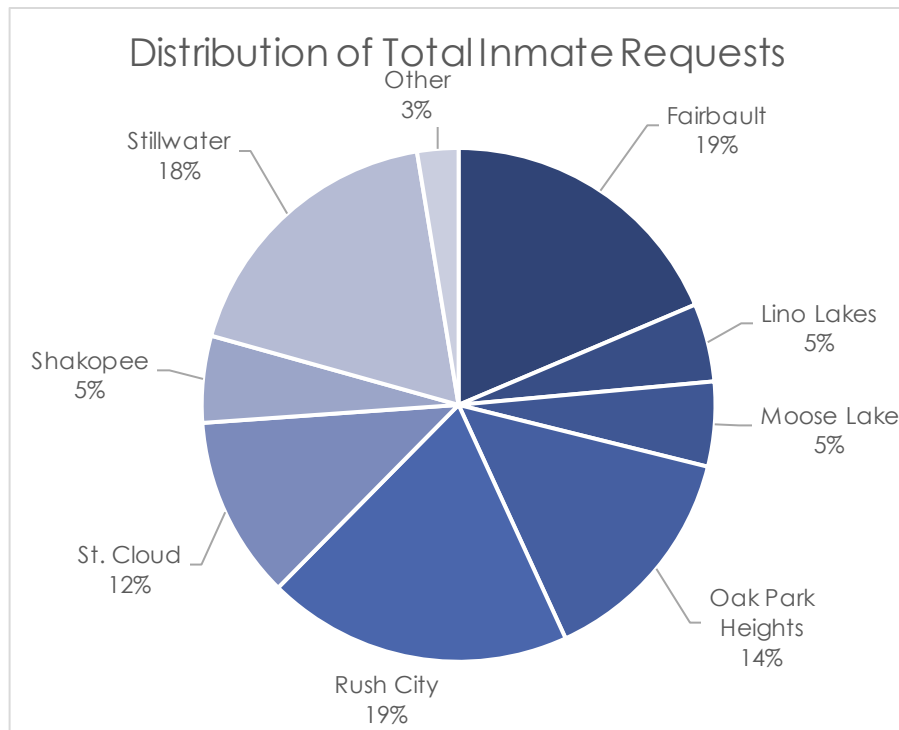
Under an Inter-Agency Agreement between the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MNDOC) and the Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL), the Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP) program provides law library service to people incarcerated in a MNDOC facility or otherwise under MNDOC jurisdiction.

Legal information requests are accepted by "kite," a request form available to Incarcerated Persons (IPs) at their facility. In addition, IPs may submit requests via phone or letter. LLSP librarians also conduct video visits in which IPs meet via Zoom with an LLSP librarian to discuss their legal information request. Facility librarians and the IPs have provided positive feedback about these visits. LLSP is continuing efforts to get all eight facilities on a schedule for monthly video visits. As of this writing, the law librarians have regular monthly video visits with five of the eight facilities: Faribault, Lino Lakes, Shakopee, St. Cloud, Stillwater. The goal is to get Moose Lake, Oak Park Heights, and Rush City set up within the next year.

The Law Library Service to Prisoners Program experienced staffing changes in 2022 with Jean Anderson moving to part-time in May and then retiring in August. Ally Ososki increased her hours in May and then moved from part-time to full-time in August. Valerie Salazar joined the staff as the new part-time librarian in July.

2022 Statistics

7,511	DOC inmates (as of 01/01/2022)
7,833	DOC inmates (as of 07/01/2022)
17,792	Questions answered
731	Phone calls (20% increase from 2020)
155	Video visits
23,577	Items sent
2,129	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
- Minnesota Judicial Branch State Fair Steering Committee

Erica Nutzman

- Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society's Preservation Committee

Library

Leslie Greenwood

- Chair, Bylaws Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Chair, Blog 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, Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Chair, LISP Toolkit Committee, Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Chair (outgoing), 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 Consortium Governing Board
- Member, CALCO Archives Committee
- Member, Archives Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

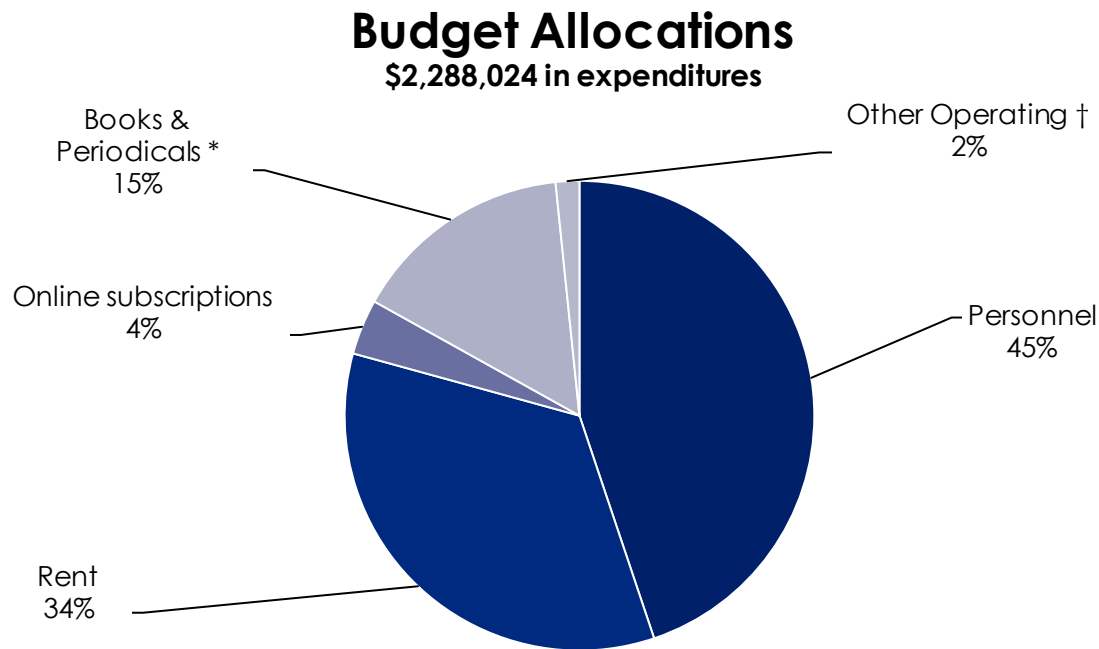
Liz Reppe

- Board member, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Chair (incoming), Education Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Member, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Awareness Special Committee, American Association of Law Libraries
- Member at Large, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

Elizabeth Tuckwood

- Member, MNPALS Cataloging Community of Interest
- Member, MNPALS Cataloging Policy Group

Financial Summary (FY22)



* Includes materials for the MN Supreme Court.

† Includes expenses for binding, postage, phone, website, copying, equipment, supplies, etc.

Library Staff

Jean Anderson, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian (retired August 2022)

Cate Boruff, Reference Librarian (until December 2022)

Allison Brennhofer, Technical Services Clerk (until March 2022)

Kaitlin Crawford (started October 2022)

Elvira Embser-Herbert, Head of Public Services

Jacob Frank, Technical Services Clerk (until September 2022)

Leslie Greenwood, Reference Librarian

Sheri Huppert, Government Documents Librarian

Elizabeth Karges, Technical Services Technician

Karen Kenison, Technical Services Clerk (started May 2022)

Debbie Kitzmann, Technical & Outreach Services Clerk

Sarah Larsen, Outreach Librarian

Erica Nutzman, Head of Technical Services

Allyson Ososki, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian

Liz Reppe, State Law Librarian

Valerie Salazar, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian (started July 2022)
Stephanie Thorson, 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 appreciates his interest and guidance.