

Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

Annual Report for 2023

General Information

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 IP, we limit our responses to 80 pages, or 8 items, per 2-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.

Our Staff

In January 2023, Stephanie retired after working at LLSP for twenty-two years. With a great retirement party, we said our farewells and wished her the best for what is to come.

In January 2023, Valerie became a full-time librarian taking over Stephanie's position. She completed her Master's of Library and Information Science degree in May 2023.

Ally, our other full-time librarian, is still our longest-term employee since she joined us in August of 2021. She also attended the AALL conference this past July in which she got the chance to learn more about the profession and network with other law librarians.

On April 12, 2023, we welcomed Gabby as a new part-time librarian. Gabby completed her Master's of Library and Information Science degree in May 2023. Being a quick learner, Gabby soon was able to complete kites, virtual visits, and phone calls.

Lists Pilot Project

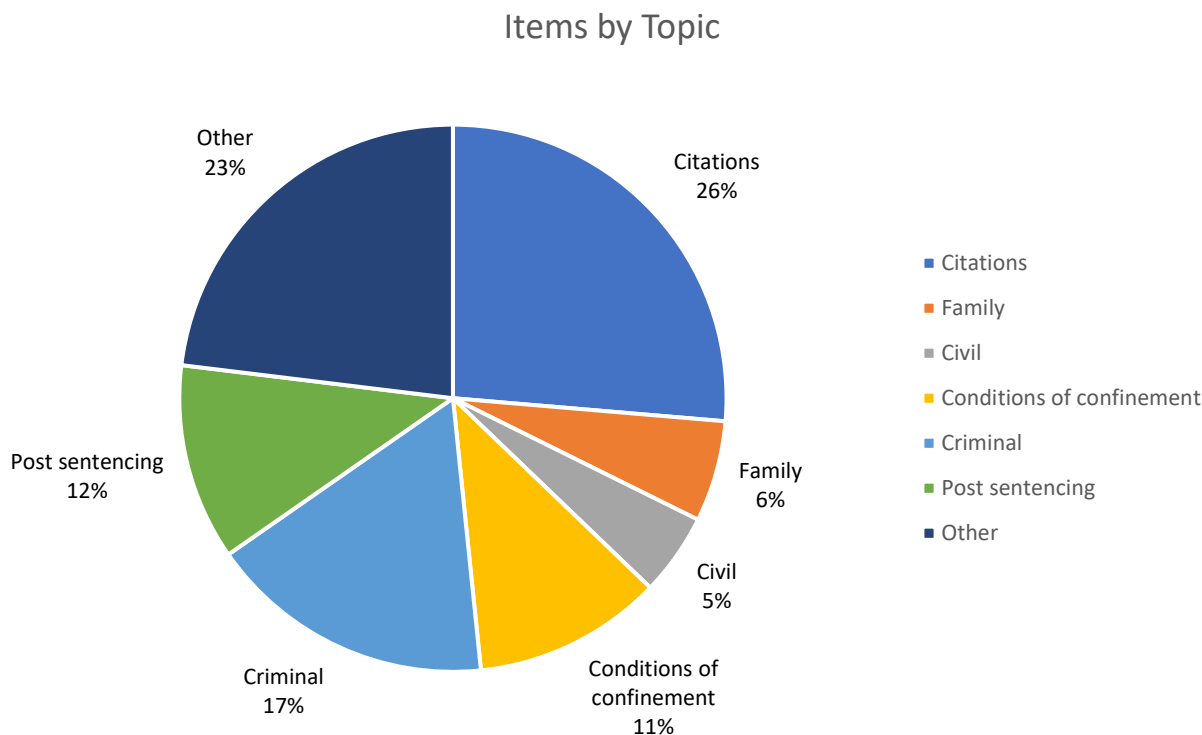
To reduce the consumption of paper and digitize the requests that come in as "kites," Ally and Valerie piloted using Microsoft Lists as their main software to upload requests and access them there. Instead of printing out each requests, Debbie, uploads them into Lists so that the LLSP librarians can access them and then work on each request. The way that Lists was set up by Ally makes it easier for statistics to be collected. We deemed this piloted project to be successful for the year 2023, thus LLSP is making this a permanent practice. Overall, LLSP saved over 8,000 sheets of paper by just uploading each request to the software instead of printing it.

Requests by the Numbers

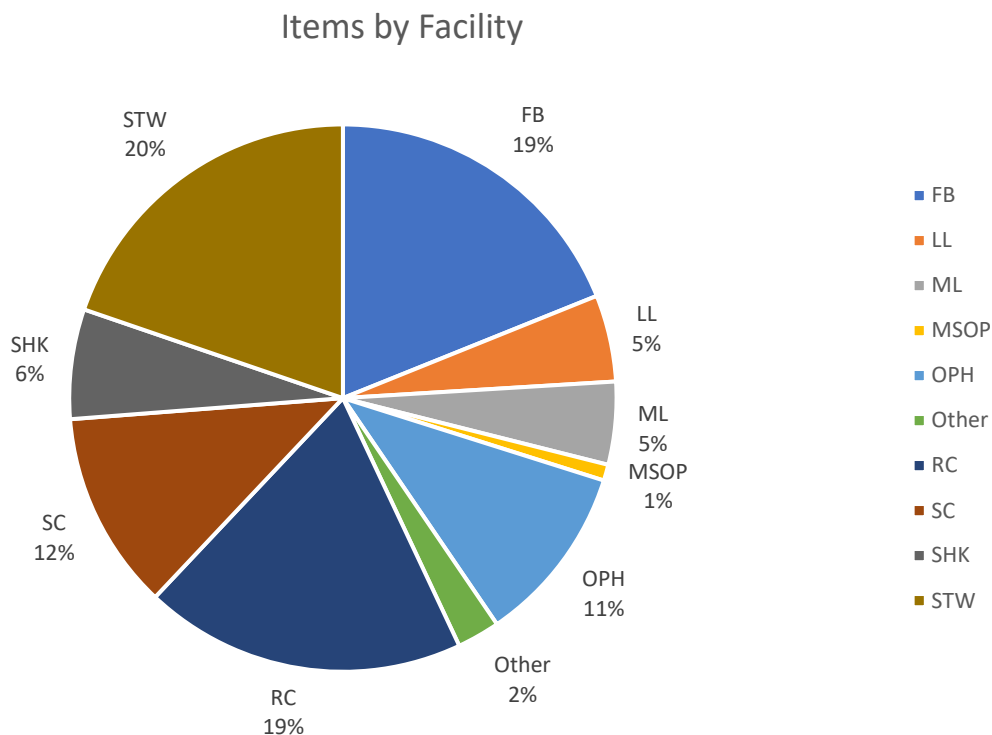
- As of July 2023, total prison population: 8,274
- Incarcerated people assisted: 2,350 (28.4% of the total prison population and a 10% increase from 2022)
- Number of questions: 17,502
- Phone calls: 773 (5.7% increase from 2022)
- Virtual Visits: 366 (136% increase from 2022)
- Items sent: 25,711 (9% increase from 2022)

This year, there was a spike in virtual visits. As of the end of 2023, LLSP has been doing virtual visits in Faribault, Lino Lakes, Rush City, Saint Cloud, Shakopee, and the Stillwater prison facilities. LLSP is hoping to add Oak Park Heights and Moose Lake into this list soon.

Below is a chart that splits the requests into topic areas. The most types of items that were requested were cited. Whether it being case law or law, incarcerated people knew exactly what they were looking for. The second biggest topic that was requested fell under “other.” The majority of the items that were placed under this category were bankruptcy packets, fee waivers, and name change forms. Because of the similarities of the items placed under the “other” category, LLSP will be updating the way they categorize topics. Please see the “Looking Ahead” section for more details. The next two biggest topics requested fell under “criminal” and “post sentencing.” This is unsurprising since incarcerated people use our services to work on their cases.



Below is a chart that splits requests by facilities. The facilities that received the majority of the items were Stillwater, Rush City, and Faribault. This closely correlates with last year's statistics. As for the rest of the facilities, the percentage of items sent to each facility stayed relatively the same as last year.



Looking Ahead

For the year 2024, LLSP is updating how requests get categorized by topic. They will still have citation, conditions of confinement, criminal, post sentencing, and other. They are adding, financial law and contacts and combining family and civil into the same category. The reason for this change is to better evaluate what types of requests incarcerated people are making and how to improve the collection.