

## **2022 Annual Meeting – Maryland Court Law Libraries**

December 7, 2022

Maryland Judicial Center

*Notes approved April 21, 2023*

Attending: Julia Viets (Montgomery Co.; Chair, CMCLLD); Catherine McGuire (State Law Library; Vice-Chair, CMCLLD); James Durham (State Law Library); Sandy Brewer (Howard Co.); Joan Bellistri (Anne Arundel Co.); Rebecca Littleton (Washington Co.); Kristin Grossnickle (Washington Co.); Brittany West (A2J); Amy Lubinski (Baltimore Co.); Veronica --- (Baltimore Co.); Florence Barnes (Carroll Co.); Leland Sampson (State Law Library); Tommy Fisher (Help Ctrs); Julee Snyder (Charles Co.); Scott Stevens (Baltimore Co.); Kim Klein (Anne Arundel Co.)

Nancy Faulkner, Deputy State Court Administrator, welcomed the attendees. Ms. Faulkner said libraries and librarians were the fastest to pivot in the pandemic, transitioning quickly to provide information and assistance to the court and court users. Libraries, she said, have grown as a community resource.

Julia Viets thanked Ms. Faulkner for her complimentary words and followed up by saying we do not operate in a vacuum; we work with our partners, Judicial and other.

Ms. Viets then addressed several general housekeeping details, including a review of the agenda and an explanation of the hybrid nature of the meeting with reference to the video participants.

Each attendee introduced themselves with name and affiliation.

### **People’s Law Library of Maryland**

Lee Sampson, Head of Web Content and Services at the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library, provided an update on the PLL.

- The library hired Clifford Hoffman for the position of Web Services Librarian. He has extensive experience with legal research and reference as well as tech management.
- PLL is now viewable both in desktop and mobile format. About 70% of the site’s traffic is via mobile devices.
- Text is re-sizable on the site using icons in the upper right of each page.
- The User Interface (UI) navigation can now be used with non-English text. The site only displays articles that exist in the target language.
- The Legal Services Directory has been revised and simplified. On mobile devices, it is no longer a table; rather, small boxes - “card UI” - are displayed.
- The Legal Clinic Calendar has been likewise streamlined, with the mobile interface displaying card UI. The Calendar includes both one-offs and regular-occurring events and includes all MLSC grantee programs.
- Content updates include:
  - A revision of the How Do I sections. Historically, the sections read like a book; now, the format reads as articles. There were approximately 120 articles; these have been consolidated and organized into about 90.
  - The Judgment articles have been co-located.
  - The Appeals material has been revised.

- A Life & Health Planning section has been added in response to the Maryland Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force work.
- The Adult Guardianship series has been revised and re-edited.
- The Estate Management articles now provide a start-to-finish for small estates.
- A Cannabis article has been added.
- The Glossary can be toggled on or off on the right side of the page.
- Lee also noted that name change procedures will be changing significantly as of January 1, and they are continuing to work on the expungement changes from the General Assembly, which are complex.

The group asked if updates to PLL content and format could be posted regularly in some way so that everyone could keep up on the changes. Suggestions were made as to how to convey the updates. Lee will contemplate and set up an update cycle.

### Language Tools

Ksenia Boitsova and Xiomara Iglesias, Judiciary Court Interpreter Program, provided a review of translation services available at the Judiciary. Their presentation included scenarios to demonstrate how language and translation can tie into everyday court operations.

- They mentioned that there are many languages that require specialized translation services as they are not commonly spoken. As an example, they mentioned the indigenous languages in Central and South America that are not based in Spanish or Portuguese but rather date further back than the influx of those languages.
- The A2J Department provides tools to aid with patrons needing other languages, including:
  - Language Line access (four accounts: Circuit Court, District Court, Help Center, and Commissioners); Language Line phones are available by request ([interpretermd@mdcourts.gov](mailto:interpretermd@mdcourts.gov)).
  - Public directory of interpreters on the Courts' site; American Translation Association directory – more reliable, translators are all certified; can be offered to patrons needed translation services
- They noted court services does not translate case-specific documents – the directory can be used if those services are needed
- They noted a request for an oral interpreter is different from a request for the translation of forms, etc.
- Discussion of ASL needs
  - Anne Arundel Circuit Court's library (JB) has ASL software; using a laptop or dual monitor, the software can be pulled up as needed; this is an on-demand service available through a call center
  - Laptops for ASL can be requested via ServiceNow for on-demand ASL services; they can join any online service – Zoom, Skype, etc. - via the link
- The Judiciary offers resources in several non-English language – Korean, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese. Resources include Help Center assistance; videos; and bilingual court forms
- There are currently 24 staff interpreters who may be able to pinch-hit if Language Line does not have an interpreter available at the time of need; reach out to interpreter department; work with the on-site interpreter coordinator to get assistance. A list of local coordinators is in the Language Access Toolkit
- Tips for working with an interpreter: speak slowly in phrases; avoid idiomatic phrases and legalese

- Training video demonstrated best practices for working with an interpreter; they need a “unit of talk”

### **Law on the Frontlines**

Catherine provided an overview of the history and development of the Frontlines project as well as goals and project updates.

- History & Development
  - MD court librarians have long-standing presence in legal research training
  - State Law Library relationship with the public libraries has developed through partnerships and participation in Maryland AskUsNow; through interaction with liaisons and view of incoming chat questions, able to see a need for training on a more basic level than provided the usual legal research content. There was an evident need for best practices for legal reference and how to identify a legal question.
  - Formerly, training was requested as one-offs by local system. There was a need for a broader and more consistent curriculum and schedule. The ability to do live trainings was limited by time and staff to teach.
  - As the focus of the trainings moved to reference skills, content was put on the State Law Library website.
  - At the 2016 Maryland Court Libraries meeting, Reena Shah, at that time the new Executive Director of the Maryland A2J Commission, mentioned she was looking for a project to sink her teeth into. Joanie and Catherine proposed the training as an option.
  - Throughout 2017, meetings were held with multiple stakeholders; a standard curriculum was developed; presentation slides and interactive activities were designed. Reena reached out to training coordinators at all MD public library systems and worked with them for publicity and to ensure participants would earn credits.
  - By 2019, in-person sessions had been run for 22 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions (group sessions were held for the regional systems on the Eastern Shore, in Southern Maryland, and in Western Maryland).
  - In 2020, when the pandemic hit, the trainings were moved to online format, where they have continued to run. The online format is more time-efficient (no need to travel around the state for trainers or trainees) and thus more staff-efficient. As a result of the work of the Md AG / Md A2JC Joint Task Force, topical areas of concern were identified; corresponding topic-specific sessions were developed to provide information on needed areas.
- Content Goals
  - Increase comfort level of public library staff in handling questions about legal situations (info vs advice)
  - Increase understanding of best practices for managing a legal reference session
  - Grow knowledge of good basic resources for providing information (PLL, MD Courts website, some Nolo, agency websites like AG’s)
  - Overall goal – ensure the public is getting quality legal information and is supported in understanding the processes in which they need to address their situations: Develop a statewide training curriculum that bolsters the capacity of Maryland public libraries to alleviate access to justice issues experienced by citizens of Maryland.
- Stakeholders who have had input, both brief and continuing, include Maryland court libraries; the Access to Justice Commission; the Judiciary and particularly the Access to Justice Department; Court Help Centers; the Enoch Pratt Free Library; the Maryland State Library

Resource Center (SLRC); the Maryland State Library Agency; county public library systems; and legal service organizations, including specifically input from Maryland Legal Aid and MVLS.

- Future plans
  - In summer 2022, the Frontlines Workgroup was established to bring together a wider group of people to help with the many aspects of the project. Librarians who had previously co-taught sessions of Frontlines were brought into meetings to plan a schedule for Fall trainings and to discuss planning for further ways to reach the need.
  - Fall 2022 included the first “Lab” sessions, hour-long interactive online open-houses to demonstrate how to respond to real-world legal reference questions.
  - 2023 will (hopefully) include added sessions of standard, topical, and lab sessions; brief recordings for uploading to the Frontlines web content; and tip sheets that can be easily reproduced for reference staff to use on the ground.
  - The Workgroup will further expand – anyone wishing to participate or have staff who would be interested should contact Catherine.

### **Court Help Videos**

Brittany offered information about resources from the A2J Department, particularly the videos in the Court Help Video Library.

- Both the A2JD and Family Services produce videos. Some are joint projects. If anyone has ideas or questions about video projects, reach out to Brittany to discuss. Their audience is mostly Maryland SRLs and some Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons.
- Always looking to identify new topics and fill in need gaps
- Production process:
  - Choose topic
  - Draft script
  - Review of script by subject experts (SMEs), Government Relations (GRPA), the Self-Representation Committee
  - Video production company reviews it next, then builds the video
  - Video is posted to Video Library; the video is on YouTube and plays on CourtTV (internal to courthouses)
- When the videos are updated the YouTube address changes but the MdCourts page embedded video address does not
- Amendments or edits to videos are done if the law changes; amendments can be tricky and costly; the narration, graphic elements, and live action can be impacted; whether to re-do or edit depends on those factors
- Court Help Toolkit page is a portal to a LOT of resources
- Currently in development:
  - Remote proceedings: what to expect; tech support/Zoom; for attorneys
  - E-filing for SRLs
- The A2JD has an Impact Dashboard where data on videos is available
- Judiciary has a master contract for video production, with a budget of about \$1300 per minute

### **Understanding Reference Statistics**

Joanie reviewed reference statistics keeping procedures followed by CMCLLD libraries. She discussed why and how we track statistical usage. The Conference uses uniform categories so our collective work can be demonstrated. Conference statistics are provided to, and included in, Judiciary annual reports

and can be included in individual jurisdiction reports. They provide a framework for analysis of our services and show trends over time.

- Joanie asked that all Conference libraries update the monthly spreadsheet. Several jurisdictions are missing information for multiple months.

### **Member Updates**

Attendees provided local updates.

James Durham (Thurgood Marshall State Law Library):

- How this meeting is structured and what is discussed dovetails with a bigger pattern in law libraries around the country. Our roles as law librarians are changing rapidly. Our efforts reflect TTC: Teaching-Technology-Collaboration.
- The Library had several staffing changes, including Steve Anderson's retirement as Director.
- Library managers/supervisors are recalibrating their skills through the Judiciary's CORE instruction.
- The building project for a new appellate court building is progressing; the Library is moving forward with collection management in preparation for the move
- James' hope for the future is more collaboration

Lee Sampson (SLL-PLL)

- PLL presentation covered much of his updates
- Provided top page hits for PLL traffic
- Noted there is an offline version of PLL that can be downloaded to a non-internet-connected computer

Tommy Fisher (Help Centers)

- Had a complete leadership restructuring
- Wants the SHC to be much more interactive with the group at the meeting; enhance cross-awareness

Scott Stevens (Baltimore County) (attending online)

- Introduced two staff members, Amy and Veronica, both attending in person
- The library has had two renovations
- The family help center has been co-located with the library

Julia Viets (Montgomery County)

- Has had entire staff turnover in the past year
- They are feeling the after-effects of the pandemic
- There are many tech-changes, especially due to MDEC:
  - Scanners
  - Public kiosks
  - Lots of tech assistance to patrons
  - All library staff are now public notaries; they can help the public apply for MDEC access
  - Zoom room service to attend remote hearings

Catherine McGuire (Thurgood Marshall State Law Library)

- Moved from Head of Reference to Deputy Director; while the search for a new Head of Reference continues, Catherine is balancing tasks in both positions
- The Library's move in October 2021 to RefTracker for reference management has been hugely helpful; the volume of incoming reference continues to rise, and having the RefTracker system helps keep reference staff on top of complex queries.

- Outreach and education efforts are also growing, not just with Frontlines but within Judiciary training as well, with planned courses through Judicial Education's Tech Ed and Professional Development divisions.

Rebecca Littleton and Kristin Grossnickle (Washington County)

- The library has been revamped; Rebecca was hired to run the library and the new help center location
- Any guidance the Conference can provide is welcome
- Next year Kristin will be Chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Administrators; she expressed hope that the CMCLLD might want to speak at a meeting or otherwise connect the two Conferences
- Rebecca is taking inventory of the library and making a spreadsheet of the collection

Brittany West (Access to Justice)

- Has been in the position for three months
- Working on new videos, a referral page, creating new print resources, and bench cards

Sandy Brewer (Howard County)

- Moved into new courthouse 17 months ago
- Library is more centrally-located; visitor count skyrocketed
- Acting as unofficial courthouse tour coordinator
- Manages volunteer attorneys for help programs, reduced from three to two nights per month

Florence Barnes (Carroll County)

- At the last local law library committee meeting, a local bar member suggested the library hold an open house prior to local bar association meetings
- There is a new Carroll County Detention Center librarian (Beatrice)

Joan Bellistri (Anne Arundel County)

- Discussion continues of a possible library move from upper floor bar space back into first floor of the main courthouse
- Hoping for again co-locating with the family help center, to be back to collaborating to help patrons

Julee Snyder (Charles County) (attending online)

- The grand opening of the help center/law library was held November 14<sup>th</sup>; there was a large local turnout
- Last month accomplished first budget preparation
- Library is busy; no specific updates

**The meeting adjourned at 3pm.**