

FY2022 Highlights

Maryland Thurgood Marshall State Law Library

Maryland's First Legal Resource

Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1697

Reference: 410.260.1430
Email: lawlibrary@mdcourts.gov
Website: www.mdcourts.gov/lawlib

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Profile

The State Law Library, Maryland's oldest law library, supports the research activities of the Maryland Judiciary. The Library's collection includes federal and state legal materials, Maryland state agency publications, and Maryland history and genealogy. The Library offers its services and collections to other government entities, the legal community, and the public.

Mission

The Thurgood Marshall State Law Library, a unit of the Maryland Judiciary, serves the needs of Maryland's government and citizens by building and preserving collections of legal information resources, promoting access to these collections and creating educational opportunities that enhance the understanding of legal information.

Highlights

These Library Highlights provide updates on State Law Library collections, staffing, initiatives, and accomplishments throughout the year.

Library Staff

Director

Steven P. Anderson (retired August 2021)
James G. Durham (September 2021-)

Deputy Director

James G. Durham (through August 2021)
Catherine McGuire (May 2022-)

Technical Services

Jessie Tam, Head of Technical Services
Leigh Johnson, Library Acquisitions Specialist
Scott Ashlin, Technical Services Assistant
Debra Haines, Library Aide

Collection Management

Jessica Mundy, Head of Collection Management
Julia Roberts, Digital Collections Librarian
Bruce Lord, Maryland Collections Librarian
Cindy Terry, Collection Management Specialist
Ed Wisenbaler, Federal Documents Assistant

Reference Services

Catherine McGuire, Head of Reference Services (through April 2022)
S. Hughston Vasil, Research and Instructional Librarian
Elizabeth Simmons, Research Librarian
Maureen Della Barba, Reference Assistant

Web Content and Services

C. Leland Sampson, Head of Web Content and Services
Chi Song, Web Services Librarian

Library Committee

Hon. Joseph M. Getty, Court of Appeals
Hon. Matthew J. Fader, Court of Special Appeals
Suzanne C. Johnson, Clerk of the Court of Appeals
Pamela Harris, State Court Administrator
Susan Zuhowski, Esq.
Steven P. Anderson, Library Director

Library Volunteer

J. Jeffrey Ross

Building and Preserving Collections

The Library is charged with managing permanent access to legal materials, especially those pertaining to Maryland law. Such materials include traditional collections of print and microform materials, as well as a significant collection of digital content. The Library works independently and in partnership with Legal Information Archive (LIA) to collect and digitally preserve state government publications.

Digitization Projects

In 2022, a ninth collection was added to the Library's Scanned Collections. Though not a complete representation of historic rules, this collection includes rules and procedures issued by the Court of Appeals between 1896 and 1960, a small collection of local rules from Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, the Second Judicial Circuit, as well as historic Tax Court Rules of Procedure.

The Library is pursuing a project to convert materials in an obsolete format, such as cassette, VHS, or DVDs, to updated mp3 files. As the materials are generally under copyright protections, the content will be available for use within the Library. In 2022, working with the Maryland State Archives, the Library started a digitization project to convert cassette tapes that include content from/by the Judiciary or notable authors. Titles include *Mastering the Rules of Evidence : A Practical-Hands On Approach to the New Rules*, 1995 with Honorable Joseph F. Murphy, Jr. and *Gordon on Chapter 7*, 1995, with Alexander Gordon.

Comprehensive Plans

To enhance the Maryland county and municipal collection, the Library completed a project on printing and cataloging local Comprehensive Plans. Comprehensive Plans, created by local governments, serve as the standard for how land use and development occur over a long-term period. Maryland's local Comprehensive Plans are available in print; most can be accessed online through the Library's online catalog.

Maryland Current and Superseded Codes

In addition to retaining current sets of the Maryland Code for patron access, the Library endeavors to maintain complete sets of superseded Maryland Code volumes. These volumes, unavailable for the most part in digital format, are critical elements to state legislative research. As the number of superseded volumes increases, Library staff inventories and organizes available copies of both volumes and cumulative supplements to ensure needed material is available to researchers.

COMAR and Pre-COMAR Collections

To improve the organization of and access to materials for researching the history of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), staff reorganized the Superseded COMAR and Pre-COMAR collections.

Special Collections Room

In our Special Collections Room, working with the Maryland State Archives, the Pegasus Tiles by Minton are now in a preservation box. Chief Judge Joseph M. Getty (ret.), Court of Appeals of Maryland, accepted a donation of 17th century coins on behalf of the Library. The Dutch trade coins, locally known as "lion" or "dog" dollars, represent the first silver dollars of the Province of Maryland and were a gift from a Judge of the Maryland Tax Court.

Promoting Access

The Library connects patrons to its collections. Efforts include providing information services, expanding access to digital materials, and enhancing web-based information resources and tools. These efforts increase the Library's efficiency and make Maryland legal information and history readily accessible and available to researchers.

Reference Activity

The Library provides reference and research assistance to a wide range of patrons, most from Maryland or with questions about Maryland law. Assistance is provided through email, telephone calls, in-person visits, and regular mail.

The number of reference requests increased 9% compared to the prior year. The general public makes up 83% of this volume; and 66% of all requests arrive via email or online contact forms. For a more detailed look at reference activity, the Library provides the *FY2022 Reference Highlights*.

Reference Management System

The Library completed the contract process during FY2022 with Altarama to implement RefTracker, a reference management system (RMS). After a thorough staff training process, the Library went live with RefTracker in October 2021. The new RMS streamlines incoming reference requests and facilitates allocation and management of requests to and among reference staff. *See Reference Highlights FY2022.*

People's Law Library

The People's Law Library advances the Judiciary's commitment to access to justice by providing legal information and linking Marylanders with services.

To expand access to legal information, several major content projects were completed in Fiscal Year 2022. The [Appeals section](#) was rewritten and republished to provide comprehensive information for all types of appeals. The [Prepare for Court](#) section was edited to streamline the information and walk court users through the process. Throughout the pandemic, Library users were interested in health and estate topics. To meet the need, PLL published a new [Life and Health Planning](#) section. This section was made possible by contributions from the Maryland Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force. In total, 19 new articles were published during the year.

In addition to English, PLL provides information resources in French, Chinese, Korean, and Spanish. Expanding language support was a major emphasis in Fiscal Year 2022. Previously, when a user selected a language translation, only the main body of the article would be translated. Navigation, menus, and other user interface (UI) elements remained in English. Now, when a user selects a language, they can view all UI elements in the target language along with information resources in that language. This makes legal information more accessible for users with limited English language proficiency.

Additionally, significant progress was made in translating English content to Spanish. Over 80% of articles are available in Spanish through high quality, human translations. As a result, use of Spanish language content has more than doubled since Fiscal Year 2020.

Legal information resources address general topics and often are not able to address specific situations. To meet the challenges of specific situations, PLL has several features to connect users with services where they can obtain help. Users submitted 3,933 requests for information through the PLL Ask a Law

Librarian contact form. The Library's reference staff responded to these messages. PLL also links users directly with the Court Help Center chat and telephone services.

To link users with services beyond the Judiciary, PLL revised and improved the Legal Services Directory and Legal Clinic Calendar. Over 70% of users access PLL through their mobile device. Thanks to the new design, mobile users are better able to view the information and find organizations and clinics more easily.

User traffic continued to increase for the fourth consecutive year. The total number of users increased 11% to 2,292,938, a record high. The total number of pageviews increased 9% to 4,294,507, also a record high.

Database Collection

The Library began promoting the use of Westlaw Edge's Quick Check and Quick Check Judicial for Maryland Judiciary staff. Training sessions were offered to Court of Appeals, Court of Special Appeals, and Library staff.

The Library initiated a Judiciary-wide subscription to the online version of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*. This subscription is available to any staff member with an mdcourts.gov email address. This allows quick access to the most up-to-date version of *The Bluebook*, the go-to guide for legal citation trusted by legal professionals since 1926.

Continuing Education of Library Staff

To support provision of the highest level of access and service, Library staff participate in continuing professional education opportunities in a broad spectrum of related applications and areas. The year included participation in trainings to enhance skills in many critical areas.

Staff attended regular annual meetings and conferences that included the Federal Depository Library Conference, the Maryland Court Help Provider Conference, the Maryland State Publication Depository and Distribution Program Meeting, the State Library Resource Center Conference, and the American Association of Law Libraries (Virtual) Meeting & Conference.

To stay current with developments in resources and information services, staff attendance included: Legal Deserts in America (AALL); Elder Justice Explained (NNLM); Increasing Access to Justice Forum (LSC); Libraries in Alternative Locations (COSLA); the Future of Eviction Diversion; and the LLSDC Legal Research Institute.

To stay current with developments in technology, staff attended sessions on Gears, RefTracker, Perma.cc, Westlaw, RDA, MDEC File & Serve, Sierra, BIBFRAME, Knowvation, ALA Core CCIG, Archive-It, and Innovative. In addition, staff completed courses and classes in the Fundamentals of Digital Library Projects (ALA); Digital Accessibility: Best Practices (AALL); and Digital Preservation.

To build on presentation and teaching skills, staff attended the Judicial College's Train the Trainers course as well as several sessions from AALL on developing writing skills.

Creating Educational Opportunities

Enhancing understanding of law and legal information is a powerful component of the Library's mission. To that end, the Library develops educational materials, programs, events, and exhibits (both independently and in partnership with allied organizations) for the Judiciary, the bar, the public, and specialized groups within the library community.

Frontlines: Legal Reference for Public Libraries

In partnership with the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) and the Maryland Access to Justice Commission, the Frontlines program continued to provide sessions to public library staff on best practices and resources for managing legal reference questions. Spring 2022 included the refreshed and reformatted *Best Practices for Legal Reference* and *Foundations of Law for Public Library Reference*, then continued with individual topics sessions on Landlord-Tenant; Family; Consumer; Public Benefits; and Life & Health Planning. Web sessions were recorded and posted to the Frontlines website. The program content was also provided in person at the Maryland Library Association Annual Conference in May, 2022.

Skills Training for the Judiciary

Library staff provided information sessions for the Judiciary through the Judicial College and through independently-offered sessions. FY2022 included:

- *Introduction to Legal Research for District Court Commissioners*
- *MDEC File and Serve*, for the Montgomery County Circuit Court
- *Resources for Self-Represented Litigants*, Maryland Court Manager's/Supervisor's Certificate Program
- *Ghosthunting: Digging into Legislative History Research*
- *Research Resources for the Legal Professional*

The year included inaugural sessions of *Digital Resource Minis*, shorter online sessions focused on a single digital resource available through the Library. Minis were offered on HeinOnline; West Academic; and the Maryland Task Force Reports Scanned Collection.

Skills Training Outside of the Judiciary

Library staff provided training for non-Judiciary colleagues, partners, and stakeholders:

- *Technology Tips for Solo and Small Firm Practice*, 2022 MSBA Solo Summit
- *Technology in the Practice of Law*, University of Baltimore School of Law
- *Access to Justice*, Towson University
- *Access to Justice – Language Access*, University of Maryland Carey School of Law
- *Legal Research for Maryland State Court Clerkships*, University of Maryland Carey School of Law
- *Advancing Justice: Access and Navigate MD Legal Information, Court Tools, and Resources*, Maryland Library Association Annual Conference
- *Innovations in Justice: Using Design Sprint to Generate Game-changing Ideas*, Maryland Partners for Justice Conference

Tours

Library staff regularly provide tours of the Library collections and facility for new judges, law clerks, and other judicial staff. More formal tours are arranged for students at law schools, undergraduate programs, and community college legal studies programs. In FY2022, several tours were provided of the Special Collections Room with particular focus on the Audubon copperplate engravings.

Professional Activities

Library staff are active members of multiple professional associations and organizations, which provide opportunities for skills enhancement and leadership.

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) includes special interest sections (SIS), chapters, and caucuses, in which our staff participate as leaders and members:

Government Law Libraries (GLL-SIS)

- James Durham, Executive Board, Past Chair
- Chi Song, Awards Committee
- Catherine McGuire, Education Committee
- Jessie Tam, Member

Legal Information Services to the Public (LISP-SIS)

- Catherine McGuire, Nominations Committee Chair
- Julia Roberts, Hughston Vasil, Members

Technical Services (TS-SIS)

- Jessie Tam, Executive Board

Library System & Resource Discovery (LSRD-SIS)

- Jessie Tam, Member

Legal Innovation & Technology (LIT-SIS)

- James Durham, Member

Joint LSRD/TS-SIS Funding Research Opportunities Grant (FROG) Committee

- Jessie Tam, Chair

Research Instruction and Patron Services (RIPS-SIS)

- Catherine McGuire, Hughston Vasil, Members

Asian American Law Librarians Caucus (AALLc)

- Jessie Tam, Nominations Committee
- Chi Song, Member

Advancing Access to Justice Special Committee

- Catherine McGuire, Member

Legal History & Rare Books

- Hughston Vasil, Member

Law Library Association of Maryland (LLAM)

- Chi Song, Executive Board, Past President; Nominations Committee Chair
- Jessica Mundy, Programming Committee
- Julia Roberts, Board Member
- Elizabeth Simmons, Grants Committee
- James Durham, Catherine McGuire, Leland Sampson, Jessie Tam, Hughston Vasil, Members

NIGP The Institute for Public Procurement

- Leigh Johnson, Member

Maryland Public Purchasing Association

- Leigh Johnson, Member

Maryland Pro Bono Coordinating Council (PBCC)

- Leland Sampson, Member

University of Maryland College of Information Studies MLIS Advisory Board

- Catherine McGuire, Member

Comments from Library Patrons

Staff received many expressions of gratitude from library patrons. A sampling underscores the positive impact of the Library's services.

I appreciate having this library. I have not resided in Maryland for years and yet need to work on a legal matter within that state's realm. If one is not a lawyer, having clear explanations of legal matters sure does help.

This is a very helpful reply. I had no idea that COMAR was created by the Executive Agencies. Now it makes sense. Thank you so much!

First, thank you for having a great website that allowed me to easily submit my inquiry. Thank you very much for coming through for me and responding to my inquiry. Thank you for providing the on point COMAR References -- this was great! I was not aware that DHS regulations were in the COMAR -- this was just an eye opener.

I am deeply grateful for the quick and helpful response to my inquiry and for the research information and references provided.

The answers provided were appropriate in the legal statute or opinions and directed to me, a non-legal member of the public. The findings felt complete and well organized. My experience was a pleasure.

This is very helpful, thank you! I did not know of the Scanned Collections and how easy they were to access (I found them independently via Google once you all pointed them out...) so my apologies for asking about an easy to find treasure trove!

Good morning kind person, I do not know your name but you took your time wrote all these statements down in very detailed manner this helped me a lot.

Thank you very much for providing this information and for the quick turn-around! It is incredibly helpful and exactly what I was looking for.

My reach out was wonderful. The person I spoke to was very understanding and very helpful. Thank so much for all your help and compassion.

Although you were not able to answer my question, you pointed to excellent resources to resolve my question. I am appreciative and grateful!

Thank you. This response provided more clarification. I sincerely appreciate the timely responses and patience with explanations.

I appreciated your prompt response to this inquiry, and though it took me a little while to review all the resources provided, once I did I was impressed with what was given. I found it very helpful. To follow-up, this matter has been resolved and I learned a lot in the process. Thank you for your assistance!