

Law on the Frontlines

Legal Reference for Public Libraries



Foundations of Law for Public Library Reference

TMSLL/CMCLLD/MdA2JC 2024 11 20

Introductions

The Frontlines Workgroup includes representatives from the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library, Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors, the Maryland Access to Justice Commission, and the Access to Justice Department of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Instructors for each course will vary but the information provided is based on the core curriculum of the ongoing Frontlines Project.

Today's instructors are...

Vickie Yiannoulou

Prince George's
County Circuit
Court Law Library

Catherine McGuire

Thurgood Marshall
State Law Library

Joy Hollerbach

Thurgood Marshall
State Law Library

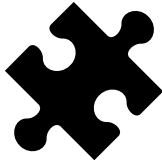
Audrey Dingler

Thurgood Marshall
State Law Library

Learning Outcomes



Describe the structure of government



Explain the connection between the structure of government and finding law



Utilize primary sources of law



Describe where to find help when needed

Access to Justice

A quick review...



What is Law?

Language passed by government bodies that holds force over all parties in a particular jurisdiction

Three branches and the law they make




LEGISLATURE

*Congress
General Assembly
County Council*

Statutory Law

Statutes
(aka Acts, Session
Laws, Ordinances)




Source: Maryland Code

EXECUTIVE

*President
Governor
Executive Agencies*

Regulatory Law
Administrative Law

Regulations
Executive Orders




Source: COMAR

JUDICIARY

*Courts
(appellate, trial)*

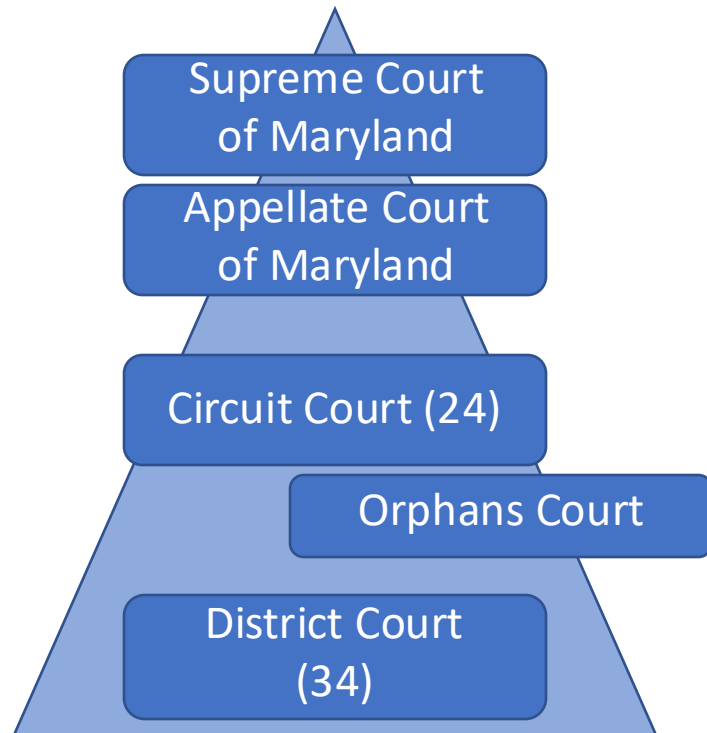
Case Law

Cases, aka Opinions
Rules of Procedure

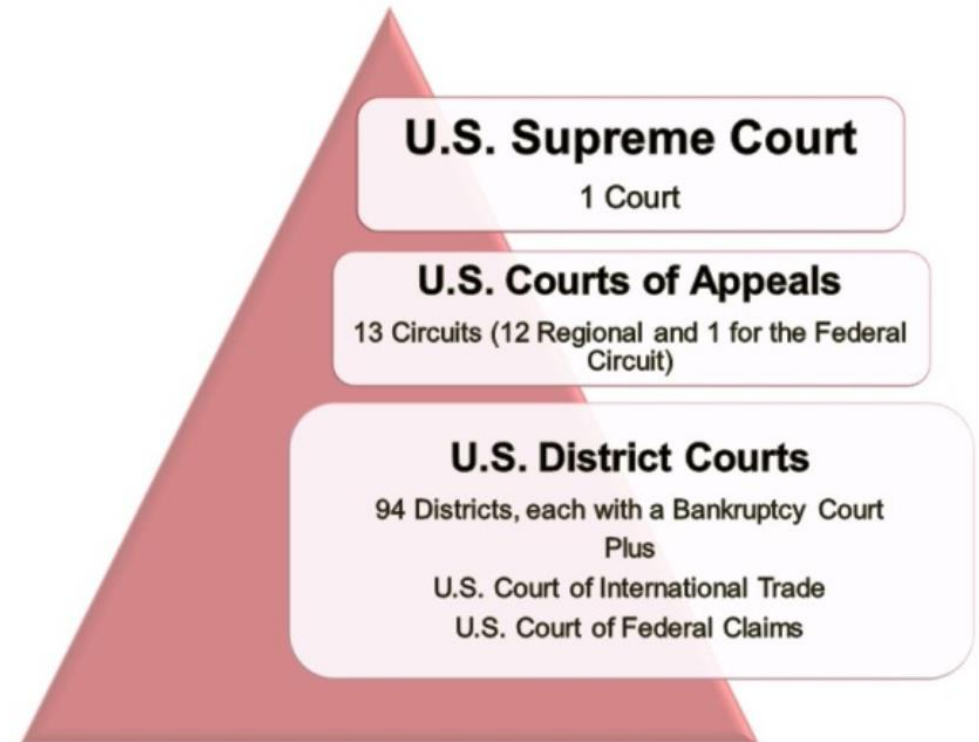


Source: Case Reporters

Court Structure



Maryland Courts



Federal Courts

Recognizing Citation Formats

Code of Maryland format:

Md Code, Family Law §5-104

State Code

Article Name

Section Number

Code of Maryland Regulations format:

07.01.02.05

Title . Subtitle . Chapter . Regulation

Case law format:

Doe vs. Johnson

Party 1 Name Party 2 Name

413 Md. 817

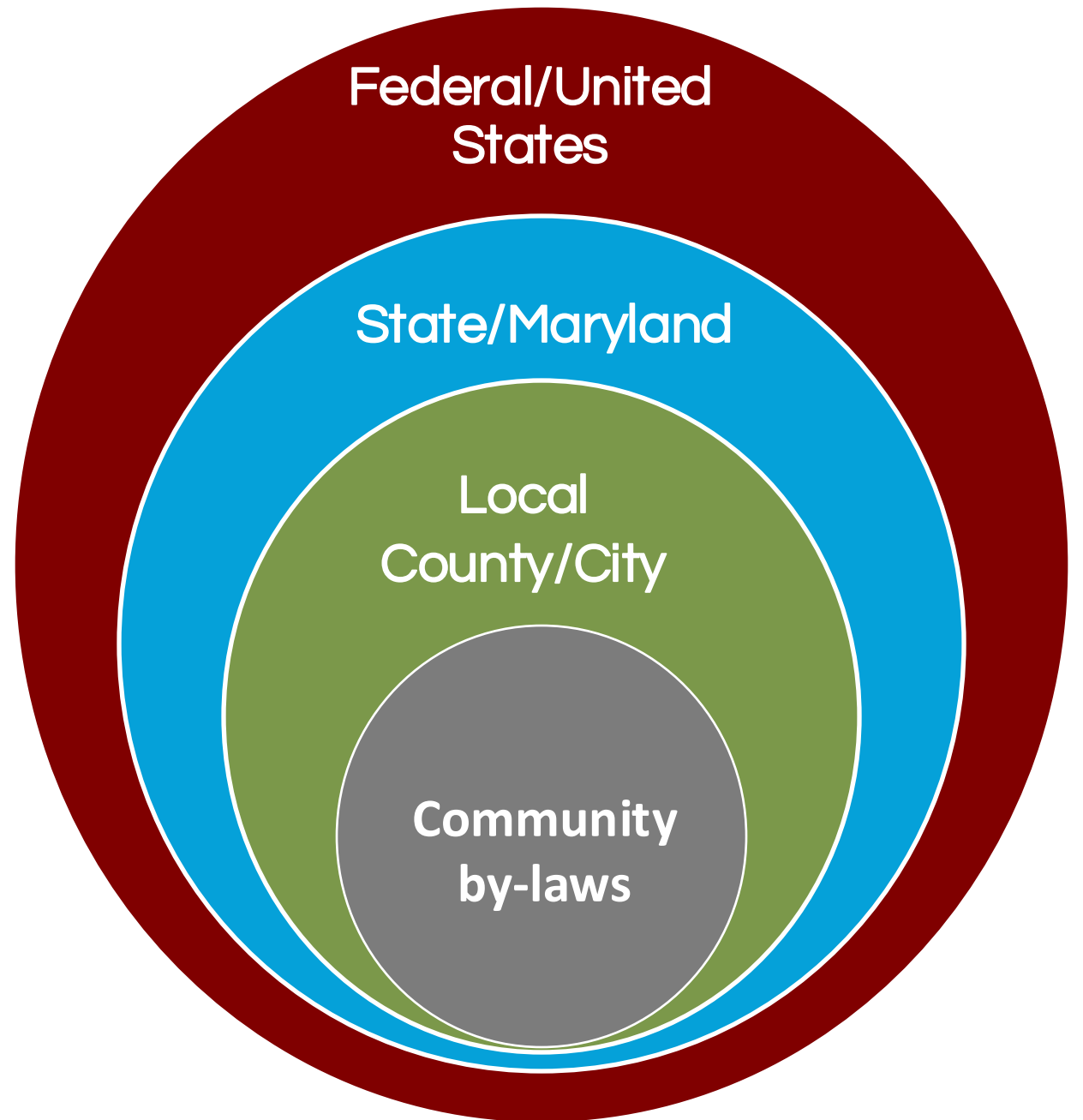
Volume
Number

Title

Page
Number

Location, Location!

Where something takes place matters



Importance of Dates and Language



Language of Law
What does it mean?

Dates
Why does it matter?



Finding the Law

The screenshot shows the top portion of the Maryland Courts website. At the top, there is a banner with the text "MARYLAND COURTS" and the tagline "Fair, Efficient, & Effective Justice For All". To the right of the banner are search boxes for "Site Search" and "Opinions Search", along with a "Search" button and "Search Tips". Below the banner is a dark navigation bar with white text for "HOME", "USING THE LIBRARY", "RESEARCH", "ABOUT US", "PEOPLE'S LAW LIBRARY", and "ASK A LAW LIBRARIAN". Underneath the navigation bar is a light gray section for the "Thurgood Marshall State Law Library". On the left is the library's logo, a circular seal with a scale of justice. To the right of the logo is the library's name and hours: "M,W,F 8AM - 4:30PM | TU,TH 8AM - 9PM | SAT 9AM - 4PM". Further right is contact information: "361 ROWE BOULEVARD", "ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401", "410-260-1430 | 888-216-8156", and "LAWLIBRARY@MDCOURTS.GOV". At the bottom of this section are two search boxes: "Search Catalog" and "Search Library Website", each with a "Search" button.

YOU ARE IN:

- Research
- Catalog
- Gateway to Maryland Law
- Databases
- Research Guides
- Collections
- Special Collections Room

Gateway to Maryland Law

The Thurgood Marshall State Law Library has an extensive collection of primary and secondary sources focusing on Maryland law. Many of these resources are available online, but some require physical presence at the Library to access.

[Maryland Code](#) | [County and Municipal Codes](#) | [Court Rules](#) | [Case Law](#) | [Regulations](#) | [Attorney General Opinions](#) | [State Publications](#) | [Task Force Reports](#) | [Incorporated by Reference](#) | [Law Reviews and Journals](#)

Maryland Code and Laws of Maryland

Maryland statutes are passed by the General Assembly, Maryland's legislative body. The Laws of the State of Maryland is a chronological collection of laws passed by the General Assembly.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Maryland Code and Rules](#)
- [Maryland County Codes](#)
- [Maryland Law Collections](#)
- [Maryland Law Reviews and Journals](#)
- [Maryland Municipal Codes](#)
- [Maryland Publications](#)
- [Scanned Collections](#)
- [Task Force Reports](#)

<https://mdcourts.gov/lawlib/research/gateway-to-md-law>

Practice Time

Using the Gateway to Maryland Law, find the following:

1. Md Code, Nat. Res. §4-803 – what is this section about?
2. Find the Md Code section that addresses actions for evictions for nonpayment of rent in a mobile home park.
3. Find the COMAR regulations addressing the topic from question #1
4. Does your local county code include any language about the keeping of chickens?

Case Law

Secondary Sources

- Can provide citations to primary law
- People's Library of Maryland: <https://peoples-law.org/>

Case law databases

- Westlaw / Lexis (fee-based)
- [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/) (free)

Practice Time

Using the Maryland PLL website, find the article on Defamation Law; locate and write down the citations to the two Maryland cases cited for this topic.

Then, go to Google Scholar. Look up one of the two citations you identified. Check the "how cited" tab. Does the other case appear in the list?

When you
hit a wall...


Maryland Law Libraries


Thurgood Marshall State Law Library 

Circuit Court Law Libraries

Allegany County


Charles County 

Prince George's County 

Anne Arundel County 

Dorchester County

Queen Anne's County

Baltimore City 

Frederick County

St. Mary's County

Baltimore County 

Garrett County

Somerset County


Calvert County

Harford County

Talbot County

Caroline County

Howard County 

Washington County 

Carroll County 


Kent County

Wicomico County

Cecil County

Montgomery County 

Worcester County

 indicates the library is staffed.

<https://mdcourts.gov/ccll>

Self-Education: Legal Reference

- Maryland Judiciary video – What is the Law?
<https://mdcourts.gov/video/selfhelp/what-law>
- Frontlines – recordings and slides from past sessions
<https://mdcourts.gov/lawlib/using-library/for-librarians/legal-reference-training/PLR-schedule-training>
- Frontlines – Legal Reference
<https://mdcourts.gov/lawlib/using-library/for-librarians/legal-reference-training>

Maryland Public Library Toolkit

- Designed for public library reference staff as a reference guide to Maryland primary and secondary legal resources
- Web-based:
<https://mdcourts.gov/lawlib/using-library/for-librarians/public-library-toolkit>



Next session-

Wednesday, December 11, 2024,
9:00am – 10:30am

[Frontlines: Navigating the Law – Finding
Maryland Legal Forms](#)



Questions?



Law on the Frontlines

A cooperative project advancing access to justice

mdcourts.gov/lawlib/using-library/for-librarians/legal-reference-training

Thurgood Marshall State Law Library

www.mdcourts.gov/lawlib

410-260-1430

lawlibrary@mdcourts.gov

Maryland Court & County Law Libraries

www.mdcourts.gov/ccll

Maryland Access to Justice Commission

www.mdaccesstojustice.org

Access to Justice Department,
Administrative Office of the Courts

www.mdcourts.gov/accesstojustice

Thank you for joining us today!