



Maryland State Law Library

Highlights

FY 2012
July 2011 – June 2012

The Library's Mission

The Maryland State Law Library, a court-related agency 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.

Library Highlights

The Maryland State Law Library, established in 1826 as the Maryland State Library, supports the research activities of the Maryland State Judiciary. The Library offers its services and collections to other government entities, the legal community, and the public. In addition to a significant number of legal materials, the Library's collections include Maryland state agency publications, Maryland history, and federal government documents.

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

Maryland State Law Library
Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building
361 Rowe Blvd
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Reference: 410-260-1430
Fax: 410-260-1572
Email: lawlibrary@mdcourts.gov
Website: www.mdcourts.gov/lawlib

Building and Preserving Collections

Library Maintenance Agreement

The Library extended its “library maintenance agreement” with West Publishing, covering print subscriptions from that vendor.

Self-Help Collection

The Library’s extensive collection of self-help materials, including publications from Nolo Press and Sphinx Publishing, the Maryland State Bar Association, government agencies, and legal aid organizations, continued revision this year. The collection has been reorganized using broad subject categories and clearly-marked book spines to allow for easier location of materials by the layperson.

Task Force Reports Digitization Project

The Library completed its digitization of the Maryland Task Force Reports collection, encompassing some 1800 reports dating back to the early 20th Century and covering subjects ranging from Chesapeake Bay pollution to state employee pensions. These reports are often used when researching legislative history. The ability to access them remotely and in digital format is a boon to legal researchers. Links in the Library’s catalog to the digital format make for easy retrieval of the full text.

Database Collection

The Library’s database collection was expanded in two key areas: the HeinOnline subscription grew to include session laws, Restatements and the uniform laws collection; and an online newspaper subscription now includes both the *Baltimore Sun* from recent years and additional Maryland newspapers.

Chesapeake Project

The Library continues to preserve Maryland state publications through participation in the Legal Information Preservation Alliance’s “Chesapeake Digital Preservation Group.” Every year, the Library staff contributes its data to the Chesapeake Group’s investigation of whether or not the documents in the digital archive could still be found at the original web addresses from which they were captured. In 2012, the study found that over a 5-year period nearly 38% of the archived documents could no longer be found at their original web addresses.

Binding Materials

Through the standard RFP process, a new bindery vendor was chosen to handle the Library’s binding preservation projects. The new vendor provides software to assist staff in tracking materials as they move from the shelves to the bindery and back.

Comprehensive Collection Analysis

With the assistance of a University of Maryland Library School intern, the Library completed a full review and analysis of its collection of materials on constitutional law, comparing the Library’s holdings to the collections in the Library of Congress and other major law libraries. The results will assist Library staff in acquisitions decision-making.

COMAR

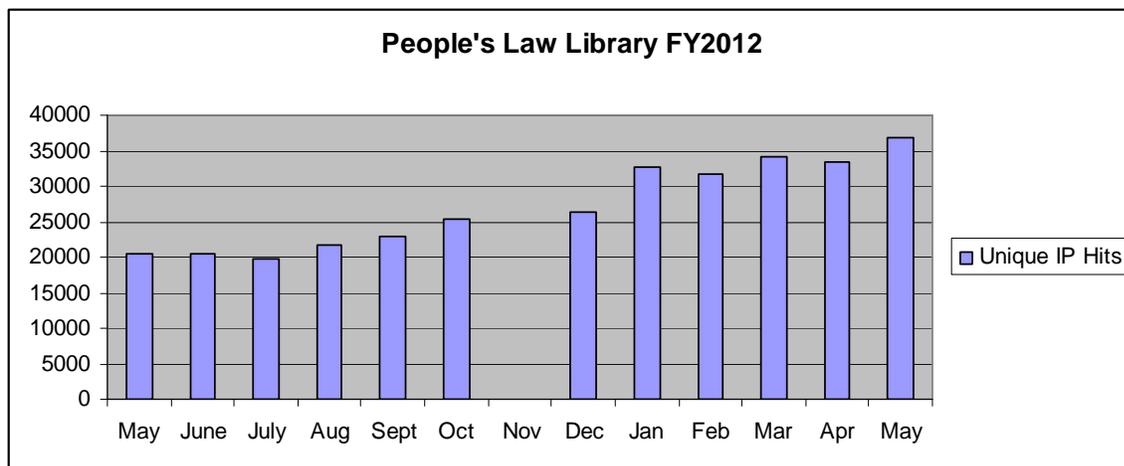
With publication of a completely new set of COMAR (Maryland regulations), the Library decided to “sunset” the superseded set, binding it completely for use in historical COMAR research. The superseded set will be retained in the permanent collection.

Promoting Access

People's Law Library

The People's Law Library website (www.peoples-law.org) underwent several changes during the year. The site migrated to Drupal, a new platform that allows for more flexible cross-subject tagging and access. New topical pages were created, including: Storm Damage FAQ (in the wake of Hurricane Irene); the Job Applicant Fairness Act; Child Neglect; and Ground Rent. Also, PLL contracted to translate 36 pages into Spanish as part of a pilot project to expand provision of legal information for self-represented litigants. Spanish translations are accessible via an "Español" link at the bottom of selected English pages and through links from a redesigned Spanish Gateway page.

Site usage continued to increase throughout the FY2012 year, rising from about 1 million total hits in May 2011 to over 1.8 million total hits in May 2012.



*Totals not available for the month of November

In recognition of its outreach services, the People's Law Library received the 2011 Herbert S. Garten Public Citizen Award from the Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC).

Public Computers

The Library's public computer access was boosted in the form of new, updated hardware.

Reference Statistics

The Library saw increased use of reference services overall, up 7% from the previous fiscal year. Percentage increases were significantly higher in the categories of e-mail (16%) and live online chat (8%) than the previous fiscal year. This year, Library reference staff members answered a total of 9,099 questions from patrons.

Circuit Court Libraries Study Committee

A new Maryland Circuit Court Libraries Study Committee was established by request of Chief Judge Bell in June 2011. Membership consisted of a cross-section of stakeholders from the Judiciary and the legal and library communities, including several Library staff. The Committee hopes to issue its report next year.

Maryland AskUsNow! 24/7 Chat Reference

The Library's role in the Maryland AskUsNow program increased in August 2011. Backup assistance on legal information requests continued as it has since the 2003 inception of the

service. Overall assistance grew by an additional 2 hours of live chat participation, rising from 4 to 6 hours per week (Tuesdays 9-11 a.m., 2-4 p.m.; and Thursdays 2-4 p.m.).

E-mail Guidelines

The reference staff at the Library developed e-mail guidelines and a response template to help standardize the level of responses to similar reference questions and make clear to patrons what the Library's role is in responding to requests. A review process was instituted to ensure a consistently high quality of responses.

Creating Educational Opportunities

Library Tours

The Library regularly holds tours upon request. The year included a wide range of tour groups, with visits from the Baltimore Scholars Program, the UMBC Shriver Center interns, the Attorney General's Office law clerks, students from the University of Maryland School of Law, youngsters in the Legal Eagles Debate Camp, multiple high school groups, and judges from Brazil, China, and Iraq.

Outreach Activities

The annual meeting of Maryland Circuit Court Libraries convened on December 7. Discussion during the meeting included information on the new Lexis Advance system; a session on legal clinics in the library; and information on the Study Committee plans and progress.

Library Presentations

The Library continued to provide and participate in a diverse array of educational and training opportunities, including:

- "Full Disclosure: Librarians Sharing Best Practices" conference, sponsored by the Law Library Association of Maryland (LLAM)
- Legal Research for the Judiciary's Court Supervisor/Manager Certificate Program
- Mini-Lexis for the Office of Fair Practices
- Guest lectures by Mary Jo Lazun and Catherine McGuire at the University of Maryland iSchool
- Participation in a panel discussion of law library careers at the University of Maryland iSchool
- State Library Resource Center (SLRC) Spring Conference, "Ready Reference Law: Top 10 Tips from Law Librarians"
- Maryland Library Association/Delaware Library Association Annual Meeting, "Beyond the Basics: Legal Reference Strategies"

Staff continues to exhibit the Library's services at conferences and fairs, including:

- Maryland Partners for Justice
- University of Maryland iSchool's career / internship fair

Staff professional participation has included membership in or meeting attendance at:

- Maryland Advisory Council on Libraries
- Law Library Association of Maryland
- American Association of Law Libraries
- Maryland Library Association
- Federal Law Librarians Conference
- Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Program

Patron Comments

This is a case of going above and beyond what is asked for. I appreciate the help since I am in a situation where I cannot access hard copy and do not have anyone else or any other resources to help me answer these questions. Thank you for your quick and thorough response. I appreciate it. Thank you so much for all the useful research materials. I am really appreciative for the time you spent invested in this endeavor.

Wow. I'm impressed. I spent days searching the web to find this information but wasn't able to find it. I believe I found your site somewhere on the Maryland web page. The information I received back was perfect. Exactly what I was looking for and even provided links to the actual laws and regulations in addition to the information provided in the email.

Perfect! I just love working with all of you in the Law Library. You are true professionals!

Library Profile

The State Law Library, Maryland's oldest law library, features one of the State's most extensive collections of legal and government information resources. Staffed by 18 full-time and part-time, professional and paraprofessional employees, the Library stands ready to serve users from all walks of life.

Hours of Operation

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.

Staff, FY2012

Steve Anderson, Director

Shirley Aronson, State Publications/Research Librarian (Part-time)

Scott Ashlin, Library Clerk

Katherine Baer, Maryland Collections/Research Librarian

Michael Craven, People's Law Library Web Content Coordinator

Maureen Della Barba, Library Clerk

James G. Durham, Deputy Director

Debra Haines, Library Aide (Part-time)

Ruth Henderson, Administrative Specialist (retired 2012)

Deborah Judy, Reference Librarian (Part-time)

Rudi Lamy, Cataloging/Research Librarian (retired 2012)

Mary Jo Lazun, Head of Electronic Services

Pam Luby, Reference Librarian (Part-time)

Catherine McGuire, Outreach Services Law Librarian

Jessica Nhem, Cataloging/Research Librarian

Jessie Tam, Head of Technical Services

Cindy Terry, Federal Documents and Systems Associate

Crystal Welsh, Administrative Specialist

Ed Wisenbaler, Federal Documents Assistant (Part-time)

Library Committee

Hon. Robert M. Bell, Chief Judge, Court of Appeals

Hon. Clayton Greene Jr., Court of Appeals

Hon. Peter B. Krauser, Court of Special Appeals

Hon. Deborah Sweet Eyler, Court of Special Appeals

Frank Broccolina, State Court Administrator

Bessie Decker, Clerk, Court of Appeals

Patricia Ann Logan, Esq., Anne Arundel County Office of Law

Steven Anderson, Esq., Director, State Law Library