Report of the Anne Arundel County Public Law Library

FISCAL YEAR 2017-2019
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Anne Arundel County Public Law Library
Anne Arundel County Circuit Court
July 2016 – June 2019

Vision  access to justice through access to legal information

Mission  The Anne Arundel County Public Law Library serves the needs of Anne Arundel County’s court, attorneys, government and citizens by providing access to legal information resources; promoting access to these resources; creating educational opportunities that enhance the understanding of legal information; and providing access to programs providing legal advice to the public.
Introduction

The law library successfully kept to its mission providing access to justice through access to legal information while facing the challenges of a funding crisis and multiple staff changes. During this time the law library implemented its strategic plan.

The plan looks to the future to determine how the law library can transform to fulfill its mission in the 21st century. By meeting these goals, the library seeks to be more responsive and efficient in meeting the needs of all library users.

Legal information providing access to justice can transform lives. The right legal information accessed in a timely manner can affect the work of the court and the bar as well as the lives of those who are affected by the legal system.

The law library supports the administration of justice by providing access to resources the court needs to ensure the expedient disposition of justice.

The law library supports attorneys by providing the resources needed for the practice of law and assistance in using the resources. Attorney access results in access to justice for the citizens and small businesses of Anne Arundel County whom they serve.

The law library provides the public with the knowledge to better navigate the legal system by providing the means to find the help and information they need through research assistance; the acquisition and creation of specialized resources; referrals; and by offering special legal advice programs.

This report, covering three fiscal years, provides a picture of library use, programs, resources, services, staff and finances. The strategic plan with goals and actions taken is included.
## AACPLL Statistics

### Average per year FY17 - FY19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>FY17-FY19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>33,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors per day</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>5,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions per day</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web hits</td>
<td>31,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web hits per day</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Served by law library self-help legal advice programs</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FY2019 - Who

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorneys</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FY 2019 - How

- 86% In Person
- 13% Phone
- 1% Email

FY 2019 - Transaction Type

- Reference 35%
- Referral 30%
- Directional 2%
- Tech Assistance 19%
- Other 14%

65% of transactions involve reference & referrals.
FY2019 – Subject Matter

SUBJECT MATTER

- Civil Domestic: 32%
- Civil Non-Domestic: 34%
- Criminal: 6%
- Non-Topic/Other: 28%

FY2019 - Transaction Length

- Short (0-5 minutes): 78%
- Medium (5-30 minutes): 22%
- Long (30+ minutes): 0%

Reports for each FY can be found here: [https://aacpll.org/annual-reports/](https://aacpll.org/annual-reports/)
Library Services

The legal information needs of the law library’s diverse user groups are varied.

The law library serves the court with:
- Research assistance
- Management of chambers resources
- Westlaw password and Lexis E-book access
- Maintenance of the chambers reserve collection

The law library serves the bar with:
- Research assistance
- Online query formulation
- Technology and MDEC assistance
- Pro bono coordination
- Circulation of legal texts and treatises

The law library serves the public with:
- Research assistance
- Legal research training and instruction
- Legal services referrals
- Technology and MDEC assistance
- Access to self-help resources
- Curated online information
- Legal advice programs
- Access to the MCSHC (Maryland Courts Self-Help Center)

I could search around for this, but you know right where to look. - attorney

Firms cannot afford the books or online titles and need the law library for that - attorney

I looked and looked on the Internet but couldn’t find anything. This is just what I needed. It was good to talk to someone who understood my situation. – public patron
The Law Library meets these varied needs with a mix of formats - both print and online. The library public computers provide access to Westlaw, Lexis, the National Consumer Law Center Digital Law Library and SasiCalc on all library computers. There are two JIS network computers that allow access to the Odyssey kiosk and to Thurgood Marshall State Law Library databases including HeinOnline and the NOLO Legal Reference Center.

To create a balance of print and online, the library must consider the cost and the abilities of users to use computers. The library must also balance the dwindling funds and the increasing costs of all material in making collection development decisions. The law library looks to the Standards for Maryland Court Law Libraries and the Gimlet Reference database to evaluate which resource in which format can best meet the needs of users. Every reference transaction is recorded in Gimlet providing use statistics as well as a database of questions and answers for staff.

The law library has an online catalog. With Internet access, anyone, anywhere, can see what is available in the law library. The court and registered attorneys can borrow books from the law library.

Technology available in the law library includes computers and printers, copier/scanners, and a fax machine for public use. Access to technology provides attorneys with the means to draft documents as needed and the public who often have no access to computers or printers the ability to use online resources and forms.

I was able to take care of something in a few minutes that I have been working on for months. Everyone should know about this service. – attorney

The library saved our case. - attorney (after using library online resources during a break in trial)

You have been so nice to take the time to listen to me and help. I appreciate your patience and professionalism. – public patron looking for information on wills
Most significantly, the law library provides the service of a professional law librarian who has the expertise to find the right resource to match the needs of all who use the library. Librarians instruct in the use of legal materials, print and digital, as well as assist in the use of technology from scanning a document and attaching the document to an email to registering with MDEC.

Access to Justice Initiatives

**Brief Legal Advice Services**

*Lawyer in the Library* is held weekly in the Law Library with expanded locations and hours monthly in Anne Arundel County Public Library libraries, the Burnie Regional Library and the Eastport-Annapolis Neck Community Library.

*Homeless Resource Day* is an annual event coordinated by the Department of Social Services. Legal services are coordinated by the law librarian.

MVLS, the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service sponsors both the Lawyer in the Library and the Homeless Resource Day programs.
The law library continued to partner with the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service to host monthly remote foreclosure clinics held on the third Wednesday of the month in the law library during the weekly Lawyer in the Library program. Expungement clinics were held at the Glen Burnie Regional Library in September of 2016 and at the Eastport Annapolis-Neck Community Library in April of 2017. Maryland Legal Aid brought their Community Lawyering team for an expungement clinic to two regularly scheduled Lawyer in the Library events in January and in May of 2019 at the Glen Burnie and the Easport Public Libraries.

Celebrate Pro Bono Events, also sponsored by MVLS, coordinated by the law library included:

- Local Pro Bono Committee Expungement Clinic with the North Arundel County Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. on October 6, 2018 at the Severn Community Public Library.
- Local Pro Bono Committee Free Legal Fair and Expungement Clinic with Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Rho Eta Zeta Chapter and the Anne Arundel County NAACP at the Boys and Girls Club at Freetown Village in October of 2017 and 2018.

Pro Bono Recognition Lunch
The law librarian coordinates Anne Arundel County’s annual Pro Bono Recognition Lunch. Attorneys, who volunteer for law library pro bono programs, act as facilitators for the court, or take cases pro bono are
recognized for their service. The event was held on February 28, 2017, March 8, 2018 and June 20, 2019.

**AABA President’s Pro Bono Award**
The Anne Arundel Bar Association reinstituted the President’s pro Bono Award at the request of the Local Pro Bono Committee in 2016. The law librarian created an online nomination form for the award for use in 2017 and 2018. Award recipients are listed [here](#). The award is presented at a joint dinner meeting of the Anne Arundel County Bar Association and the James C. Cawood, Jr. Inns of Court.

**Staff**
Law library staff consisted of the Law Library Director and one full time contractual position filled in various ways, part-time and full-time, by seven different people over the last three years. During this time there were three periods when the position was vacant for two months. The law library hosted a Master of Library and Information Science student from the University of Maryland College of Library and Information Science for a summer internship in 2018 who worked on updating the library’s catalog. (With the retirement of Nancy Wallace in 2011, the law library lost its permanent assistant law librarian position. The law library was then allotted one contractual FTE position.)

Ever-changing staff requires extensive and ongoing training requirements. These training periods adversely affect law library productivity and service as do periods without any support staff. The law library worked most efficiently with two full-time positions and the one part-time position that was funded by the now discontinued Maryland State Law Library Grant program. There were no backlogs and most always at least two staff members were available in the law library. Reinstatement of the Assistant Librarian position would improve library productivity and service.
The library participates in the Bucknell University externship program. Students are given the opportunity to explore a career area of interest by visiting a workplace. Externs are given an overview of the law library but also visit with law clerks to learn about law school and to observe what happens in a courtroom.

The Court’s Spanish Staff Interpreter, Eduardo Pedraza, had a desk in the law library staff area. While in the law library, Eduardo assisted Spanish speakers who came to the information desk or to the Family Law Self Help Center.

Professional Participation, Presentations, Publications and Awards

Memberships

- Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors, member 2007 – present (Chair, 2007-2009)
- Anne Arundel County Local Pro Bono Committee, member, (Chair, 7/2011 – 6/2015)
- Maryland Judicial Council Court Access and Community Relations Committee, member, 2015 - present
  - Self-Represented Litigant Subcommittee (2015 - present)
- Maryland Court of Appeals Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service, Public Member, 05/12/2010 - present
  - Liaison to Anne Arundel County Local Pro Bono Committee
- Pro Bono Coordinating Council, member, 2013 - present
- LLAM (Law Library Association of Maryland) Member, 1982- present -
  - GRC\Vendor Relations, Chair, 2006 - present
- Maryland Library Association, Member
  - LLAM Representative on the Legislative Panel, 2005 - present
- GLL (Government Law Libraries, American Association of Law Libraries Special Interest Section) Member, 1980- present
  - Chair, 2018-2019
  - Vice-Chair, 2017-2018
- LISP (Legal Information Services to the Public, American Association of Law Libraries Special Interest Section) Member, 1996-present
  - Nominating Committee, Chair, 2017
- Self-Represented Litigation Network, Member, December 2008 -present
  - Law Librarians Working Group, Member, 2008- present (Chair, 2012-2013)
Presentations

“Utilizing Libraries and Pro Bono to Open Access to Legal Services,” Speaker, NAPBPRO (National Association of Pro Bono Professionals webinar, August 2018.


Publications


Awards/Honors
Joan Bellistri received the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, William L. Marbury Outstanding Advocate Award, December 5, 2016.
Funding

Law Library Financial Report FY17-FY19

The law library has always been concerned with the challenges of unpredictable funding sources and the ever-rising cost of legal materials. In fact, the FY2016 Annual Report predicted that without drastic cuts and/or an increase in income the library would not be able to meet expenses. Over the last three years, despite the many cost saving measures instituted, the law library did not have the funds to continue current subscriptions. The law library was able to devise a plan working with Court Administration and publishers to continue library services.

Income dropped considerably starting in FY15 causing library funding reserves to be in danger of being depleted. Library expenses have decreased but not without drastic cuts to the collection and resources.
As a result, the law library is working to continue meeting court law library standards in new ways.

**Funding Sources**
The law library is funded by a budget appropriation, appearance fees, criminal fines, bond forfeitures held beyond ten years and miscellaneous payments that include copies, print, faxes, used book sales, and court reporter charges for CDs. It is the appearance fees and criminal fines that have decreased over the years.

**Cost Saving Measures in the Past**
With the unpredictable funding and predictable rising costs, the law library has always taken measures to reduce costs.

**Chambers Library Reductions**
- With the availability of either Westlaw or Lexis provided by the Maryland State Law Library, chambers libraries have
been reduced considerably. Over the years, cancelled titles include the Maryland Law Encyclopedia, the Maryland Digest and several Maryland titles on such subjects as evidence, family law, and torts. (Some titles were kept in the library on reserve for use by judges and magistrates only.)

- Full sets of the code are no longer provided to Magistrates. Instead, each Magistrate will only have certain Maryland Code volumes. There is one full set of the code in the hall on the second floor for all magistrates to share.

“Write-for-Order”

With the “write-for-order” system titles were updated on a rotating basis rather than keeping all subscriptions continuous and current. Matthew Bender loose-leaf titles were ordered every three years and updated for one year after which the subscription was canceled. Groups of titles were updated on a rotating basis. Certain Aspen/Wolters Kluwer titles were supplemented once a year rather than three or four times that supplements are published. West’s encyclopedias were updated through purchase of new sets on alternate three to five-year periods.

Print Reduction

Certain print titles available online through Lexis and Westlaw were cancelled. Titles include the West’s digest system, Shepard’s, other state codes and certain reporters.

Beginning in FY17, the law library took the most drastic measures to date.
Cost Saving Measures FY17-FY19

1. All print subscriptions were cancelled.
2. Online subscriptions available via the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library were canceled.
3. Online subscriptions were evaluated for access to currently held print titles.
4. Reserve collection titles were reduced with reliance on digital resources for access where possible.
5. New print contracts were initiated with attention to Maryland titles and titles not available online.

At the end of FY2019, the law library had a new spending plan with new contracts in place. This will keep the library financial status stable and able to afford the opportunity to build up reserves for the future.
Strategic Plan: Status Report

The law library developed a strategic plan for 2017-2020 in order to make the best use of resources and to provide the highest quality of service to all who use the law library. The plan with goals and actions taken over the last three years follows. Actions may address more than one goal as indicated by the numbers following each action.

GOALS

1. Provide access to justice

“The Maryland Judiciary ensures equal access to justice. The courts develop services and programs that facilitate access to and understanding of court processes.” To meet this GOAL, the Anne Arundel Public Law Library will:

- Provide cost-effective and equal access to legal information resources in multiple formats.
- Identify and respond to information needs of the judiciary and attorneys.
- Identify and respond to areas where self-represented litigants request assistance to legal information.
- Remove barriers that may prevent access to legal information and services.
- Ensure that people who come to our courts without a lawyer know that legal resources are available to them through the law library.
- Strengthen public awareness and understanding of the Judiciary through library resources and programs.
- Expand self-help programs and resources.
- Continue outreach through partnerships for such programs as Anne Arundel County Homeless Resource Day.

2. Be responsive and adaptable to changing community needs

“The Maryland Judiciary provides responsive leadership, ensures a respectful forum for justice, and proactively addresses the changing needs of its constituents
and employees. With the aim of helping families and our communities and, in particular, our most vulnerable citizens, children and seniors.” The AACPLL will:

- Retain a sufficient amount of print-based legal information to meet the needs of those with limited computer skills who access the courts.
- Wisely experiment with newer technologies, such as e-books, “discovery” tools (online catalog) and expanded databases.
- Provide access to resources to assist the non-attorney and self-represented litigant.
- Promote and use language access resources.

3. Communicate effectively with stakeholders
“The Maryland Judiciary communicates effectively to inform and educate the public, the bar, justice partners and staff.” The law library will:

- Provide legal research training to Judiciary staff, as needed.
- Provide programs for courthouse staff on legal resources available to the public.
- Provide training to the Anne Arundel County Public Law Library staff on legal research, reference, and referrals.
- Create and develop talks, open to the public and courthouse staff, on topics relating to “Everyday Law.”
- Provide information about library resources and referrals to local government departments and elected officials.
- Continue to partner with the local bar association, legal service providers and public libraries to provide “Lawyer in the Library” programs.
- Keep current and distribute law library information brochures.
- Create, update and distribute local legal referral information.
- Continue to work with the Anne Arundel County Local Pro Bono Committee to promote pro bono service by Anne Arundel attorneys.
- Promote library resources of interest to the court and bar through the use of varied communication methods.
- Create and maintain online information sources for the general public.
4. Improve systems and processes
“The Maryland Judiciary is forward-thinking and focused on continuous improvements to systems and processes, helping the courts to better serve the people and provide for prompt, efficient and just resolution of cases.” To achieve this GOAL, the law library will:

- Maintain Mutual Aid Agreements with other Maryland Law Libraries as part of the Court’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
- Provide access to computers and programs needed for document creation and e-filing.
- Review and revise law library procedures as needed to meet the information needs of users.
- Coordinate with court IT so that technology needed to provide the services needed by all is available.

5. Be accountable
“The Maryland Judiciary holds itself to the highest standards of excellence and administers justice with diligence and integrity.” The action plan to reach this GOAL includes:

- Adhering to CMCLLD standards for library operation and resources.
- Providing reports to court administration on library operations.

6. Assure the highest level of service
Because a dedicated and professional workforce is essential to providing quality service to all, the Maryland Judiciary trains, develops and supports a professional and skilled workforce. Our action plans include:

- Providing the training needed for professional development of court library staff.
- Participating in continuing education.
- Participating in professional library and legal services organizations.
- Providing access to the information to meet the needs of all user communities.
7. Build partnerships
The Maryland Judiciary works collaboratively with its justice partners and the public to fulfill its mission. This action plan includes:

- Collaborating with the Anne Arundel Bar Association to promote pro bono in Anne Arundel County.
- Supporting the work of other court departments to ensure they have the information needed for the work of the department and those they serve.
- Collaborating with the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors in matters relating to the operation, management and leadership of the court libraries.
- Coordinating with the Judiciary’s Access to Justice Department to enhance library programs and resources.
- Participating in the work of the Judicial Council Community Access and Community Relations Committee to provide the perspective of court law libraries.
- Communicating with the Maryland Access to Justice Commission to ensure awareness of law library programs and resources.
- Working with the Anne Arundel County Public Library to expand law library services and programs.
- Developing and continuing partnerships with Maryland legal service providers to provide services to those of low and middle income.
- Collaborating with Legal Aid in Anne Arundel County to coordinate legal information resources needed to support the Family Law Self-Help Center.
- Participating in the work of the Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section of the American Association of Law Libraries; the Self Represented Litigation Network Law Librarians Working; the Law Library Association of Maryland; and the Maryland Library Association.

8. Use resources wisely
The Maryland Judiciary uses public funds wisely to assure sufficient resources for personnel, facilities, programs, equipment and technology, all with the aim of
efficiently administering justice and providing exceptional public service. This action plan includes:

- Providing transparent budgeting processes.
- Leveraging additional assistance through the use of library interns and volunteers.
- Sharing resources through inter-library loan and document delivery.
- Assessing resources for relevancy to the needs of all user groups.
- Working with vendors to maximize library material/resource dollars.

**ACTIONS**

- The law library created online family law forms packets to support the work of the Family Law Self-Help Center. The packets include links to online forms as listed in results of the mdcourts.gov forms finder as well as links to online articles and listings of books in the law library. (1, 2, 6, 7)

- The law library continued to offer self-help programs and events, all of which are sponsored by MVLS. Attorneys provided 204 pro bono hours and assisted 355 clients. The Lawyer in the Library program is held weekly in the law library and monthly in two different Anne Arundel County Public Library branches. Working with Legal Aid, two of the regularly scheduled Lawyer in the Library programs at the Glen Burnie Regional Library added an expungement component. The library also offered a monthly MVLS Remote Foreclosure Clinic using videoconferencing via Google Hangouts. (1, 6, 7)

- During Maryland’s Pro Bono Celebration, the law librarian coordinated three special events as a member of the Local Pro Bono Committee. A Legal Fair and Expungement Clinic was held on October 6 and 20 partnering with two sororities, Delta Sigma Theta and Zeta Phi Beta. The legal services at the Anne Arundel County Annual Homeless Resource Day were coordinated by the law library. Legal Aid brought their expungement clinic to the event. (1, 6, 7)
The law library created the online nomination form and compiled results for the AABA President’s Pro Bono Award, a project of the Anne Arundel County Local Pro Bono Committee. The award was presented at the joint dinner meeting of the AABA and Inns of Court. (1, 7)

Joan Bellistri joined Catherine McGuire for an Anne Arundel County Public Library Legal Reference Training. In addition, she participates in weekly calls to discuss developments in the statewide program in conjunction with the Maryland Access to Justice Commission. (1, 2, 3, 7)

Tip sheets that summarize Maryland Access to Justice Department videos are printed and made available for pick-up in the Family Law Self Help Center. (1, 6)

Improved language access with the Language Line by creating guides that show how to use Language Line on new phones. (2)

Language Line dual handset phone was installed at law library counter. (2)

The Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Library received an ASL laptop from the Access to Justice Department: https://aacpll.org/2017/09/15/language-access-services/. The library promotes use of this service to the court. (2)

The law library continued its digital transformation, transitioning most of the general U.S. and federal collection to online only. (2, 6, 8)

A JIS networked computer was added to the library’s self-help computer room and to the law library reading room. The new computers provide access to Thurgood Marshall State Law Library resources. (2, 4, 8)

Law library participated in the court’s new law clerk orientation by providing information on resources available. (3)

Continued to maintain and distribute the Pro Bono Services Directory and the law library brochure to the court information desk and Anne Arundel County Public Libraries and online. (3, 6)
- Law library began development, with Judiciary JIS, of a SharePoint site to replace the circuit court resource page on its Google Site which is no longer available due to switch from County Google products to Judiciary Microsoft products. (3, 6)

- Law library maintained legal information FAQ pages on the AACPLL Self Help and Pro Bono Wiki and published Law Library News via the blog. (3, 6)

- Law library requested Maryland Judiciary A2J Court TV installation in the FLSHC. Training was provided to the law librarian. (3, 6)

- Law Library staff joined other court librarians for training in the public facing MDEC interface. The law library can now provide MDEC assistance beyond access to library computers. The MDEC kiosk has been added to library computers. (4)

- Cybrarian PC monitoring software interface was removed from public PCs once it was realized that it hindered access to online resources. (4)

- Child support calculator, SasiCalc, access was expanded to all library computers. (4)

- Judiciary Public WIFI was made available to library users. Guides for registration were created by the law library. (4)

- Began updating catalog records of cancelled print titles to indicate last update and how to access online. (5, 6)

- Reviewed standards and updated collection as needed. (5, 6)

- Financial reports provided quarterly to court administration. (5)

- Audit of the Law library by the State of Maryland Judiciary did not disclose any findings in May 2019. (5, 8)
• Library provided ongoing training for new and established library staff. (6)

• Joan Bellistri as a member of the Partners for Justice program planning committee coordinated and moderated programs. (6, 7)

• Joan Bellistri maintained membership, attended conferences and presented at varied professional organizations as detailed above. Organizations include American Association of Law Libraries, the Law Library Association of Maryland, the Maryland Library Association, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Court Management and the Self Represented Litigation Network. (6)

• Joan Bellistri was elected to the American Association of Law Libraries Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section as vice-chair/chair elect. (6)

• The law library hosts and organizes the Anne Arundel County Annual Pro Bono Recognition Lunch. In 2019 the event was moved to June, rather than February, so that it continued to correspond to the pro bono reporting year that now follows the judiciary’s fiscal year. The law library keeps track of the pro bono hours of all law library program volunteers. The hours total is sent to the lawyers with their lunch invitation and all who attend receive a certificate of the hours provided. (7)

• The law library continued its annual tradition of hosting the Maryland Library Association Legislative Day breakfast provided by the Law Library association of Maryland. (7)

• Joan Bellistri is a member of the Judicial Council Court Access and Community Relations Committee and its SRL Sub-committee. She is also the public member of the Court of Appeals Standing Committee on Pro Bono. (7)

• As members of the Law Librarians Working Group of the Self Represented Litigation Network, Joan Bellistri and Sara Galligan of the Ramsey County Law Library in St. Paul, MN updated the 2013 Survey of Law Library Services to Self-Represented Litigants. They received an AALL LexisNexis research
grant so that with the aid of the SRLN GIS specialist the survey results could be mapped. (7

- The law library participates in the University of Maryland College of Information Studies (iSchool) Internship & Networking Fair. (8

- The law library hosted a Master of Library and Information Science student from the University of Maryland College of Library and Information Science for a summer internship in 2018 who worked on updating the library’s catalog. (8

Goals / Conclusion
The law library will update and revise the strategic plan to guide the law library in the coming years to make the best use of resources and to provide the highest quality of service to all who use the law library.