

Thurgood Marshall State Law Library Highlights, FY2020

Maryland's First Legal Resource

Thurgood Marshall State Law Library

Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building
361 Rowe Boulevard, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Reference: 410.260.1430
Email: lawlibrary@mdcourts.gov
Website: www.mdcourts.gov/lawlib

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.

Library Profile

The State Law Library, Maryland's oldest law library, supports the research activities of the Maryland 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. Staffed by 17 full-time and part-time, professional and paraprofessional employees, the Library stands ready to serve users from all walks of life.

The Library's 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.

Library Highlights

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

Library Staff

Steve Anderson, Director
Scott Ashlin, Technical Services Assistant
Maureen Della Barba, Reference Assistant
James G. Durham, Deputy Director
Debra Haines, Library Aide
Leigh Johnson, Library Acquisition Specialist
Deborah Judy, Maryland Collections Librarian
Catherine McGuire, Head of Reference and Outreach
Jessica Mundy, Head of Collection Management
Julia Roberts, Discovery Services Librarian
C. Leland Sampson, Head of Web Content and Services
Elizabeth Simmons, Research Librarian (part-time)
Chi Song, Web Services Librarian
Jessie Tam, Head of Technical Services
Cindy Terry, Collection Management Specialist

Tanya Thomas, Research Librarian (part-time)
Ed Wisenbaler, Federal Documents Assistant (part-time)

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, Director, Thurgood Marshall State Law Library

Library Volunteers

Patricia Lesley
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.

County and Municipal Code Digitization

The County and Municipal Codes collection was added as the eighth collection of the Library's Scanned Collections. This digital collection of Maryland County and Municipal Codes includes select county and local laws/codes from prior to 1978, as well as recent editions of the Baltimore City Code.

Database Subscriptions and Access

The Library added the *State Constitutions Illustrated* to its content on HeinOnline. The collection provides comprehensive coverage of state constitutions, and includes the original, consolidated, and current texts for all fifty states, as well as an extensive collection of documents from before statehood. Researchers can compare across multiple editions from multiple sources.

On December 1, 2019, the Westlaw legal research platform migrated to Westlaw Edge, which contains new technologies, including a new KeyCite symbol which indicates when a case holding has been implicitly overruled; one-click statute version compare; one-click COMAR version compare; Precedent Analytics reports; and a new Procedural Posture filter for search results in cases. The Library offered six online trainings for Judiciary staff statewide and one in-person session for Appellate Judges and staff.

Maryland Rules and Judiciary Materials Digitization

The Library began the project of adding a ninth collection to the Library's Scanned Collections. The digital collection of historic local and Maryland Court Rules is expected to be added finished and added to the Collections by early 2021.

Chief Judge Robert M. Bell Special Collections Room

A few new items were added to our special collections this year:

- A set of four Minton encaustic floor tiles depicting Pegasus, the symbol of the Inner Temple of London. These tiles originally were made for the Temple Church and formed part of a floor laid in 1841-182. The addition included a letter and descriptive card from Harold Anson, former Master of the Temple, attesting to the provenance of the set.
- A steel engraving print of Luther Martin, part of a limited edition of 100 and signed by the artist.
- A Baltimore City map from 1860.

Promoting Access

The Library continues to connect patrons of the Library 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. A more detailed look at reference activity is available in the FY2020 Reference Report on the Library's website.

The Library continues to see an increase in workload related to interactions with the public. For the second year in a row, Library staff responded to over 10,000 interactions, with 80% of activity from members of the general public. Inquiries via email constituted 70% of the year's interactions, a significant rise from the prior year's 55%. The rise is likely due to the COVID-19 quarantine: from March 24, 2020 through June 7, 2020, all reference services were provided via email while the Courts of Appeal Building was closed to all but minimal staff. Through the closure, Library staff provided prompt and efficient services, albeit entirely via email.

Library Website

The Library's new website launched on July 1, 2019, to coincide with the renaming of the Library in honor of Thurgood Marshall. The site moved to a modern content management system based on the system hosted by the Maryland Courts website. The new site shares the look and feel of the Maryland Courts website, achieving consistent branding and navigation structure. Site content was redesigned to make it easier to find information about Maryland law.

People's Law Library

PLL saw significant usage growth, despite lower than forecasted traffic during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Users continued to respond to the new design launched in the first quarter of FY 2019. The site saw 26% more visitors and page views in FY 2020, resulting in record highs.

Throughout the COVID-19 closures and phased re-openings, PLL staff published 7 new articles keeping patrons up to date on court closures, procedural changes, and available resources. These pages were updated nearly every day as new information became available. Staff also monitored developments related to 72 articles in categories such as housing, domestic violence, and government benefits.

In addition to COVID-19-related topics, PLL content was augmented by new or re-drafted articles on Real ID; Tobacco Minimum Age; Family Safety Planning, 1-Getting Started and 2-Writing the Plan; Parenting Plan; Housing Protections and Options for Domestic Violence Victims; Adult Guardianship Process (five-article series); and Life Estates.

Translation of current content continued, with new translations into Chinese (20 articles), French (22), Korean (22), and Spanish (29). At the end of FY2020, the volume of PLLs articles available in Spanish had grown to 46%.

Library Staff Training

In order to provide the highest level of access and service possible, 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 many critical arenas:

- Database search and usage (HeinOnline; Lexis Digital Library; MDEC)
- Program efficiency (Preservica; OCLC AskQC; RDA)
- Technology tools (ScanPro; VDI; Drupal 9; GoToWebinar; Blockchain)
- Instructional Skills (AALL, Using Cognitive Theory to Boost Long-Term Retention of Legal Research Skills)
- Reference services abilities:
 - Improving Services to Customers with Disabilities (LLAM)
 - Federal Legislative History (LLAM)
 - Legal Research Institute (LLSDC)
 - Providing Legal Reference Assistance to the Public (AALL)

- Corbin on Contracts: COVID-19 and Force Majeure (Lexis)

Microfilm Scanner Upgrade

One of the Library's soon to be obsolete manual microfilm machines was replaced by the ST ViewScan 4, a compact desktop microfilm scanner that streamlines the browsing, scanning and saving of images stored on microfilm.

COVID-19 Response

FY2020 presented unforeseen challenges for the Library, as it did with the Judiciary and wider world. On March 16th, the Judiciary announced the need to move personnel to remote work where possible. In the limited time available, staff determined which tools would be most useful in a remote setting, obtained access, and provided quick basic training so that staff could be as productive as possible remotely. These last-minute critical decisions provided the foundation for the Library's success in providing reference and information services from quarantine locations across the state.

Throughout the twelve weeks of quarantine, in-person, telephone, and letter contact was unfortunately inaccessible. Information inquiries continued to arrive via email, and at a slightly higher number than prior to the quarantine. Reference staff found workarounds to manage almost every request, in large part by working cooperatively with colleagues in the Maryland Circuit Court law libraries and law librarians nationwide.

After the re-opening, Library staff worked together to open all shipments, check in the massive number of new materials, and file thousands of pages into loose-leaf publications.

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 and events, and exhibits, both independently and in partnership with allied organizations, for the Judiciary, the bar, the public, and many other specialized groups within the Library's community.

Legal Reference for Public Libraries

The Library's cooperative project with the Maryland Access to Justice Commission and Conference of Maryland Circuit Court Law Libraries, active since 2016, continued in FY2020. In addition to basic training, the fiscal year included new advanced topic training, with a focus on the common legal information topics of family law, landlord-tenant law, and consumer/debt collection law. Sessions were provided to public library systems in Anne Arundel, Carroll, Cecil, Howard, and Prince George's Counties, as well as for the regional systems for Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore.

Spring scheduling had just begun when the COVID-19 quarantine shut down the established face-to-face training. Pivoting quickly, with the help of the Montgomery County Public Libraries, training shifted to virtual sessions. After a successful session for its own county, the Montgomery County library system offered to host a statewide session, which drew more than 160 registrants from multiple counties.

People's Law Library Outreach

In honor of the October 2019 National Celebration of Pro Bono, PLL collaborated with the Anne Arundel County Public Law Library and the Anne Arundel County Local Pro Bono Committee for an article review-

a-thon. Circuit court law clerks and private attorneys volunteered together to edit and update PLL articles, including family law articles and preparing for court.

A June 2020 web presentation to Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) attorneys and staff covered PLL's history, how the site helps the public, and how MLA attorneys and staff can navigate the site and its resources to assist their clients.

Skills Training for the Judiciary

Library staff provide ongoing brief on-demand informational sessions for Judiciary staff on legislative and regulatory history. More formal, longer sessions on the Library's collection, databases, and services are provided at the Judicial College and Education Center (after January 2020, at the Maryland Judicial Center) throughout the year. Special trainings in FY2020 included:

- Westlaw Skills for Appellate Judges
- Online Legal Research

Library Staff Presentations and Programs

2019 MSBA Solo Summit, *Technology Tools to Increase Office Efficiency*

Library staff discussed several technology tools attorneys can use to speed up administrative work; effectively backup and secure work product; and enhance productivity. Several common MDEC pitfalls were addressed and discussed.

2019 LLAM Legal Research Institute, *The Art of the Legal Reference Interview*

Library staff addressed the nuances of the legal reference interviews and conversations. Program participants included librarians from public law libraries, community colleges, government agencies, as well as students. The program topics included the difference between legal information and legal advice, helpful questions to ask patrons, and how to break down a patron's needs.

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 scheduled and provided for students at law schools, undergraduate programs, and community college legal studies and paralegal programs. In addition to these usual tours, FY2020 included tours for judges from Pakistan and Myanmar; staff from the Enoch Pratt Free Library; and several sessions for viewing the Audubon prints.

Professional Activities

Library staff are members of many professional associations. Participation in these associations enhances staff skills and ability to serve the State Law Library's mission.

In FY2020, staff were members of:

American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), including memberships in the following Special Interest Sections and Caucuses:

- Government Law Libraries (GLL-SIS)
- Legal Information Services to the Public (LISP-SIS)
- Technical Services (TS-SIS)
- Online Bibliographic Services (OBS-SIS)
- Research Instruction and Patron Services (RIPS-SIS)
- Legal History & Rare Books (LHRB-SIS)
- Computing Services (CS-SIS)

Digitization & Educational Technology (DET-SIS)
Asian American Law Librarians Caucus
Law Library Association of Maryland (LLAM)
NIGP Institute for Public Procurement
Maryland Public Purchasing Association

Library staff held leadership positions in several professional associations:

- Steve Anderson, member, Committee on Relations with Information Vendors, AALL
- James Durham, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, GLL-SIS, AALL; member, Continuing Professional Education Committee, AALL; member, Council of SIS Chairs, AALL
- Jessie Tam, Chair, Funding Research Opportunities Grant Committee, OB-SIS/TS-SIS, AALL; Co-Chair, Nominations Committee, Asian American Law Librarians Caucus
- Catherine McGuire: Chair, LISP-SIS, AALL; member, Council of SIS Chairs, AALL
- Jessica Mundy, Chair, Placement Committee, LLAM; member, Programming Committee, LLAM
- Leland Sampson, member, Pro Bono Coordinating Council Steering Committee
- Chi Song, Vice-President, LLAM; member, Awards Committee, GLL-SIS, AALL; member, Council of Chapter Presidents, AALL
- Julia Roberts, Board Member, LLAM

Comments from Library Patrons

Staff received many expressions of thanks from library patrons. A review of the thank-you responses underscores the positive impact of the Library's services.

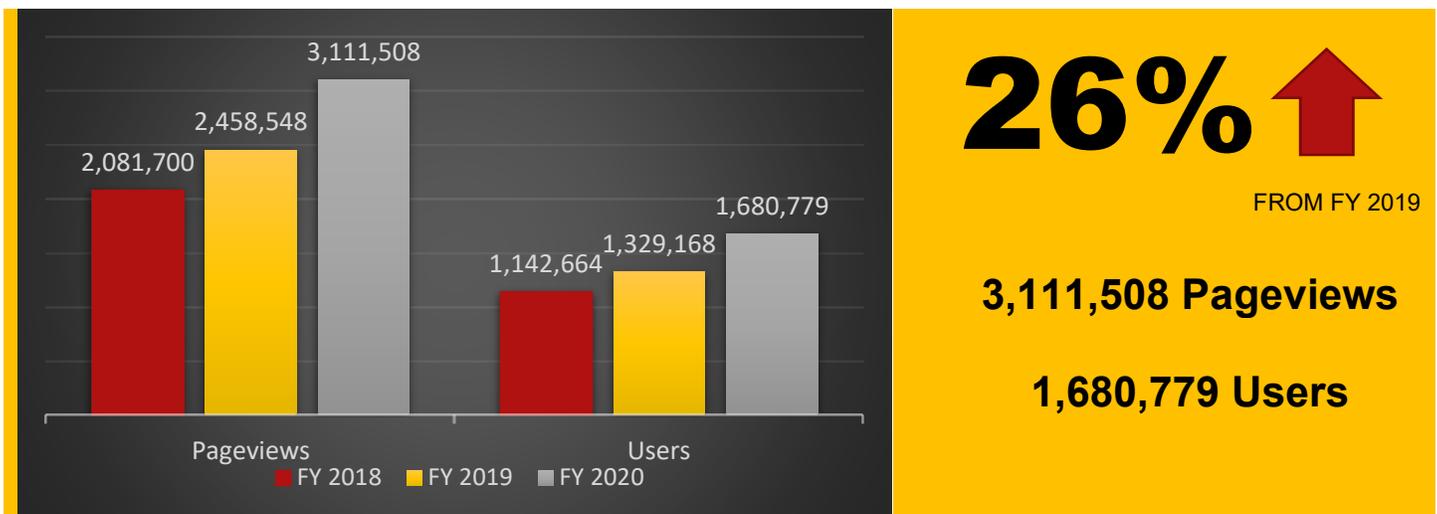
- It is really great to have a resource that is unbiased and neutral when asking questions that you need answers for right away. If there is more than one way to interpret the question posed to the MD Law Library they will provide additional answers.
- Thank you! Just what I wanted to get, guidance on good sources!
- I am an eastern shore solo practitioner and the staff was extremely helpful assisting me with research for a brief. Given the distance, it is not easy to get to Annapolis to do legislative research. I will keep your library in my thoughts for future needs. Your website was also helpful. Did not know these resources were available on-line.
- This is perfect, thank you so much for your prompt response.
- Thank you once again for being such a HUGE help!!!!
- I did not know about accessing these materials, so this is a huge help—not just for this particular case—but in the future as well. Thank you so much for your help! I don't think I need anyone to track down an actual volume now.
- Yesterday was the Westlaw training for --- judges and staff. After the training, [a judge] introduced himself and let me know that the library staff has been extremely helpful to him and his clerks, particularly with legislative history and superseded Code versions.
- Thanks so much! As usual, you are the best!
- Thank you for taking care of getting the Westlaw accounts set up so fast! You are the BEST!
- Thank you very much for setting up my Westlaw Edge Account. Very much appreciated as well as all the other access it provides. I also appreciate you getting the info to me so quickly as I was not particularly looking forward to spending more time in our somewhat cramped library.
- Thanks so much - you're the best, as usual! Take care in this crazy time!
- Again, thank you so much. You are the best resource for lawyers and lay citizens.

- This is a huge help. It has been like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Thank you for your assistance.
- I appreciate the follow-up! I believe that was enough, thank you so much for the help!
- Amazing! Thank you so much for such a thorough response. I will reach out if I have any further questions.
- Thank you for pointing me to these resources and providing the partial download--I can guarantee nothing is speedier on my end.
- Thanks so much! I had found some statistics but not the FJC, so I'll probably start by trying them.
- Heroic. Thank u. It was tremendously helpful.
- Wow! Thanks for your prompt response! Yes this is not a good time for a researcher to access print collections! I had actually checked our local law libraries before contacting you and learned that they were closed (not surprisingly). Thanks very much for getting back to me so quickly.
- Thank you very much! The COMAR attachments are very helpful.
- Wow, you guys always amaze me!! Thank you so much!!
- What a wonderful job you did for me! What a wonderful start! And you have saved me so much time. Thank you so very much.
- Thank you very much! This answers my questions about this project. I greatly appreciate all of your help and your very timely responses.
- Thank you very much, this is exactly what I was looking for.
- Thank you, so much, for this incredibly helpful and thorough answer!!!
- Thank you very much for getting back to me and for the thorough research!
- You are my hero!! Thanks so much for finding this and for forwarding it along so quickly. I was able to get it to the partner who needed it, and it really helped her out. Thanks for making me look good! I'll complete the survey, but I still owe you a beer (or lemonade).
- Thank you for taking the time to respond and share so many resources. I appreciate your time and thoughtful response.
- My heroes! Thank you so much.
- Thank-you so much!!! That was the best response I could possibly hope for. This service has been vital for me to do my job properly - on more than one occasion.
- You guys do excellent work.
- Thank you very much for all the information and support you provided. It is a daunting task to think about representing yourself in court so I wanted to say how much I appreciate the information and the sample trial pleading to help me understand the proceedings and where to find Maryland's Rules and Regulations.
- Thank you very much! If there's a chance that I can return the favor sometime, please don't hesitate to contact me.
- Thank you for all you have done to help me to move a little closer to my goal of understanding the law better. Your assistance as well as your colleagues were invaluable and greatly appreciated.
- A SPECIAL THANK YOU for ALL of you help in answering my questions regarding Maryland's tax rules on pension exclusions. Your research time and expediency on my behalf is SO DEEPLY APPRECIATED from the heart! THANK YOU!
- Thank you for your rapid - and informative - response. Although I always hoped that I'd never have need for your services, I also want to thank the People's Law Library for the services and resources that you offer (I'm a big fan of Howard Zinn, so I appreciate that you exist).
- That is precisely what I wanted. Thank you for your full and prompt reply.

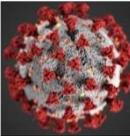
- Thank you for the detailed response. You have provided me with very useful and on-point information, which I appreciate.
- I was pleasantly surprised at the quick response I received. They answered my question and provided me with information on how to proceed next. I will definitely use this a resource in the future. Thank you!
- It works at an atm. I just tried. Thanks for your diligence
- Thank you very much for an excellent response to my question and for information on other relevant resources for gathering more information relevant to my question. I am very impressed. This is a wonderful service.
- I am very impressed. Not only did you provide excellent guidance, but your response time was incredibly quick. Thank you for outstanding customer service!
- Thank you. I especially appreciate the county information.
- This was perfect. Probably saved me several calls to wrong agencies and response was very quick. Thank you.
- Thank you for your rapid and informative response; I will undoubtedly pursue the resources you provided. Again, just in case people sometimes forget to mention it (as is wont to happen when overwhelmed by intricate legal issues), be assured that your assistance is much appreciated.
- Following inquiries on school classrooms / capacity I wish to thank you in sincerest terms for your aid. The materials are invaluable.
- I interact with the MD State Law Library once or twice a year and their response and knowledge is excellent. Thanks and keep up the good work. You are an invaluable tool for other Law Librarians seeking assistance with MD regulatory or legislative questions.
- This is a HUGE help to a local attorney. Thank you so much.
- Thank you so much for your reply! It was very helpful – I think with this information I will be able to format the citation correctly.

PLL is a legal information and self-help website managed by the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library.

3+ Million Pageviews | 1.6+ Million Users



Providing Plain Language Legal Information



COVID-19

- Near daily updates
- 7 new articles with up-to-date information on court closures, procedural changes, and resources
- Monitored developments related to 72 existing articles



Translations

- 46% of the site is translated into Spanish
- Added new translations
 - 29 Spanish
 - 22 French
 - 22 Korean
 - 20 Chinese



NEW

New Articles

- Real ID
- Tobacco Minimum Age
- Parenting Plan
- Family Safety Planning series
- Housing Protections and Options for Domestic Violence Victims
- Adult Guardianship series

Connecting Marylanders to Legal Information and Services

- Legal Services Directory
- Legal Clinic Calendar
- MCSHC Attorney Live Chat

Ask a Law Librarian
3,301 Questions