

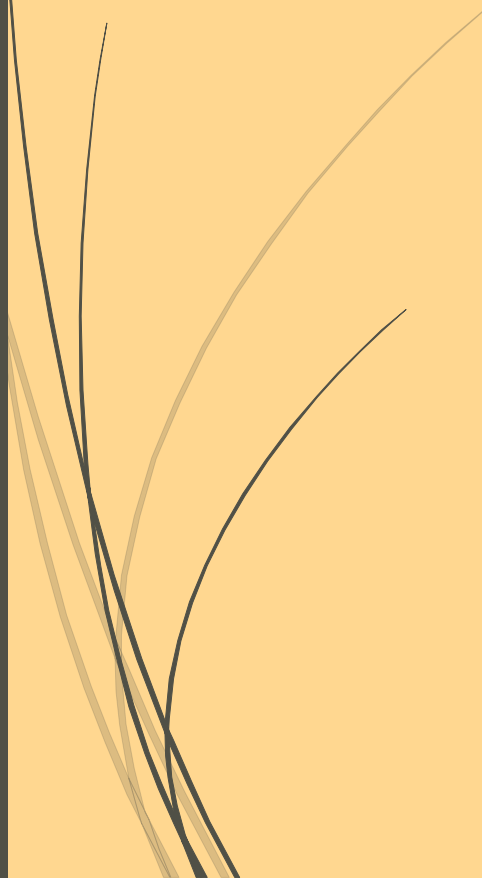


Maryland Law Libraries  
Access, Connect, Learn.

FY 2018




# Annual Report

Conference of Maryland Court Law  
Library Directors



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# LIBRARY USAGE STATISTICS FY 2018

	100,229 TOTAL LIBRARY VISITORS
	409 VISITORS PER DAY
	52,290 QUESTIONS ASKED AND ANSWERED  213 AVERAGE QUESTIONS PER DAY
	1,652 SERVED BY “LAWYER IN THE LIBRARY” SELF-HELP LEGAL ADVICE PROGRAMS



# HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

## MARYLAND COURT LAW LIBRARIES – ACCESS, CONNECT, LEARN.

**The Anne Arundel County Public Law Library** continued to offer its self-help programs which include Lawyer in the Library programs, weekly in the court and monthly in two public library branches, and the monthly remote MVLS Foreclosure clinic. In addition to the library programs, the library coordinated legal services for the Anne Arundel County Homeless Resource Day. The law library also coordinated with the Anne Arundel County Local Pro Bono Committee to partner with Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Rho Eta Zeta Chapter and the Anne Arundel County NAACP for a Free Legal Fair and Expungement Clinic at the Boys and Girls Club at Freetown Village. Fifty-two attorneys provided brief legal advice to 392 clients.

The Access to Justice Department installed a Court TV for the viewing of self-help videos in the law library's Family Self-Help Center waiting room in the library's self-help area.

**Baltimore County Circuit Court Law Library** added Maryland Legislative History Bill Files on DVD to its collection. In 2017, the Law Library added another full-time librarian to its staff bring the total to three full time librarians. Librarian Scott Stevens earned his MBA from University of Baltimore/Towson University. He also became a notary. This service is now being offered to patrons in the Law Library.

**Carroll County Circuit Court Law Library** prepared for the launch of MDEC in the Spring of 2018 by sending its librarian to attend a comprehensive 4-day program entitled: MDEC & Law Librarian Training. The "train-the trainer" program, held at the JCECC, was geared toward teaching law librarians how to assist attorneys and self-represented litigants with e-filing in MDEC. The Law Librarian also assisted JIS staff at the MDEC North Central Registration Fair for attorneys prior to the MDEC launch in Carroll County. Because of the excellent librarian training program, many MDEC users were assisted post-launch and continue to be assisted upon request.

To better assist the public, the District Court and Circuit Court Clerk's offices in Carroll County refers those in need of legal assistance to the Carroll County Circuit Court's Law Library which allows people to utilize the library's research area. To further promote access to justice

by providing access to information, the Law Library updated its portal on its self-help computer with a new interface in the Spring of 2018. The updated portal on the Library's self-help computer station allows self-represented Marylanders easy navigation to the Maryland Courts Self-Help Center, the People's Law Library, and to many other links to obtain legal information assistance.

**Charles County Public Law Library** has partnered with the Maryland Volunteer Lawyer Service (MVLS) to provide monthly foreclosure clinics via video chat. Participants are encouraged to bring paperwork. The librarian scans and emails the material to the MVLS attorney who can provide personalized advice. Similarly, the MVLS attorney emails documents to the law librarian to give to the participant.

**Howard County Law Library & Legal Resource Center** worked with the Court as it implemented mandatory electronic filing in April 2018. To achieve a higher level of service, the Law Library advocated for new state computers and scanners to meet the needs of electronic filers.

To make the justice system more accessible, user-friendly and fair for Marylanders, the Law Library also advocated for its new computers to provide access to all electronically filed documents through a Maryland public kiosk application.

To improve communications with stakeholders and to increase accessibility, the Law Librarian revised the Law Library webpage and the fliers for the Court's free legal advice programs – the Civil Law Center and the Family Law Assistance Program-by using effective and simple language to create meaning for readers.

Each month, the Law Librarian shared statistics with the public library where the evening sessions of the free legal programs are held. This cooperation supports the goal of the Law Library & Legal Resource Center to be accountable and communicative with its partners.

**The Maryland State Law Library** expanded and improved access to digital and web-based information resources. The Library's Scanned Collections were upgraded to Knowviation, to include enhanced search features; a project was launched to digitize Maryland county and municipal codes in the public domain; and the People's Law Library underwent a technology upgrade and full site redesign. In addition, the MSLL offers programs to assist public library staff in responding to legal information requests.

The People's Law Library content grew to include new articles, including information on the topics of expungement, sealing or shielding court records, immigration, and limited scope representation. In addition,

almost 200 articles were translated into Spanish, providing better access for non-English speakers.

**Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library (MCCCLL)** continued to provide full library services to the court, the bar, and the public during the height of major library renovations. To provide access to justice, MCCCLL crafted new guides for pro se litigants, including a popular Montgomery County legal help resources trifold and a comprehensive Mutual Consent Divorce guide. MCCCLL also strived to ensure that its collections were responsive to changing community needs by adding new titles to its immigration law collection. Furthermore, MCCCLL worked with Montgomery College's paralegal program to get ABA accreditation for its courses and continues to act as a research destination for its local students.

**The Prince George's County Circuit Court Law Library** continued several initiatives for FY18. The Law Library sponsored an "Everyday Law Series" for courthouse personnel. The program consists of regularly scheduled events that bring in an expert from a different legal field for discussions and to answer questions from court employees. The FY18 topics included grant writing, estate planning, cybersecurity, and financial literacy. The program has featured judges, attorneys, elected officials, and government officials who have volunteered to share their expertise with employees. Attendees have been enlightened by the information garnered at these events.

Law Library staff continue to serve on courthouse committees and events such as the Special Projects Committee, the Continuity of Operations Plan Committee, and the Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony. Additional memberships in the American Library Association, the Law Library Association of Maryland, the American Association of Law Libraries, and the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors have provided educational, leadership, and networking opportunities that staff members have used to better provide services to the patrons of the Law Library. By maintaining past relationships and forging new ones, the Law Library continues to provide services that ensure fairness and access to justice for all.

Prince George's Circuit Court Law Library also continued to offer free, open forums for the public and courthouse staff on topics relating to everyday law, facilitated by judges, magistrates, and attorneys.

# STRATEGIC PLAN: GOALS, OBJECTIVES

## MARYLAND COURT LAW LIBRARIES – ACCESS, CONNECT, LEARN.

In FY2018, the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) focused on eight strategic initiatives to serve the needs of Maryland's citizens by building and preserving legal information resources, promoting access to these collections and creating educational opportunities that enhance the understanding of legal information.

### I. PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- The Maryland Judiciary strives to ensure equal access to justice. The courts develop services and programs that facilitate access to and understanding of court processes.
- Promote court law libraries as the resource for legal information for all court users.
- Coordinate with the Court Operations Committee's Courthouse Equity Subcommittee to ensure public access to all libraries maintained by Circuit Courts.
- Coordinate with the Court Access and Community Relations Committee Self-Represented Litigant Subcommittee to provide input on court library resources and services.
- Continue collaboration, assistance and sharing of information through quarterly meetings with the Access to Justice Department and the leadership of the Maryland Courts Self-Help Center.
- Support the partnership between the People's Law Library and the Department of Family Administration in presenting "Family Law for the People" sessions.
- Support translation of People's Law Library of Maryland pages into languages other than English.
- Expand self-help programs and resources.
- Work with public librarians to develop legal resources across the state.
- Target community college librarians to inform them about our legal resources.



## 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.
- Provide access to resources for non-attorneys and self-represented litigants.
- Retain a sufficient collection of print-based legal information to meet the needs of those with limited computer skills who access the courts.
- Explore emerging technologies, such as e-books, online communication methods, discovery tools and expanded databases.
- Develop a model program on legal information resources for correctional facilities.
- Expand legal resources for people with disabilities.

## 3. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Maryland Judiciary communicates effectively to inform and educate the public, the bar, justice partners and court staff.

- Providing Judiciary staff and local public librarians with training on legal research, legal reference and law library services.
- Developing programs for the public and courthouse staff on self-help and legal topics.
- Encouraging Circuit Court libraries to partner with local bar associations, legal service providers and public libraries to provide “lawyer in the library” and similar programs.
- Introducing new attorneys to law library services and developing training programs on cost-effective legal research.
- Supporting the hiring of People’s Law Library Fellows that create and update information resources.
- Supporting the State Law Library's digitization efforts for easier access to legal information (see <http://mdlaw.ptfs.com/portal/index.html>).
- Distributing the CMCLLD *Finding Maryland Law* brochure to all Maryland courts.

## 4. IMPROVE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

The Maryland Judiciary is forward-thinking and continuously focused on improving systems and processes, helping the courts to better serve the people and provide prompt, efficient and just case resolution.

- Reviewing CMCLLD Standards for Court Law Libraries, including Recommended Core Collections Lists.
- Maintain Mutual Aid Agreements as part of the Judiciary's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
- Share bibliographic data and records seamlessly among CMCLLD libraries.
- Provide access to computers and programs needed for e-filing.
- Develop a publicly-accessible online database of Maryland legislative bill files.
- Investigate the possibility of a state-wide catalog of all Circuit Court library resources.

## **5. BE ACCOUNTABLE**

The Maryland Judiciary holds itself to the highest standards of excellence and administers justice with diligence and integrity.

- Ratifying and disseminating the annual reports and minutes of Conference meetings.
- Exchanging ideas and views on the operation, management and leadership of Circuit Court libraries.
- Providing transparency by compiling and reporting statistics to the Judiciary, Access to Justice Department and Judicial Council committees.

## **6. ASSURE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SERVICE**

A dedicated and professional workforce is essential to providing quality service to all, CMCLLD members train, develop and support a professional and skilled workforce.

- Providing excellent legal research and reference services to the bench, the bar and the public.
- Ensuring that all Maryland court libraries provide access to information to all user communities.
- Providing a forum for professional development and mentoring for court library staff.
- Providing referrals for services that meet the needs of users.
- Attend professional library educational opportunities like CMCLLD meetings and the American Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting and Conference.

## **7. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS**

The Maryland Judiciary works collaboratively with its justice partners and the public to fulfill its mission.

- Collaborating with the Maryland Judiciary courts and departments, locally and statewide, to meet state court strategic objectives.
- Supporting the People’s Law Library’s partnerships with stakeholders in the legal community to author new articles and to update older articles.
- Providing informational programs at Maryland Library Association and other regional and local professional library association meetings and conferences.
- Initiating and developing partnerships with Maryland legal service providers, government agencies, community organizations and other non-legal service organizations to provide comprehensive information assistance to all patrons.
- Continuing work with the MSBA Delivery of Legal Services Section to present information on access to legal services and information.
- Participating in the work of the American Association of Law Libraries’ Government Law Libraries and Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Sections and the Self Represented Litigation Network Law Librarians Working Group.

## 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.

- Providing transparent budgeting processes.
- Sharing resources through interlibrary loan and document delivery.
- Compiling statistics to evaluate processes and resources.
- Inventorying collections for usage and availability.
- Evaluating online resources and working to negotiate the most cost-worthy contracts.

# MEMBERS AND LEADERSHIP

Kate Martin (Chair, 2017-2018), Director, Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library

Mary Jo Lazun, (Vice Chair, 2017-2019), Law Librarian, Charles County Public Law Library

Florence J. Barnes, (Vice Chair, 2017-2019), Librarian, Carroll County Circuit Court Law Library

Steve Anderson, Director, Maryland State Law Library

Tonya Baroudi, Director, Prince George's County Law Library

Joan Bellistri, Director, Anne Arundel County Public Law Library

Joseph W. Bennett, Head Librarian, Library Company of the Baltimore Bar

Sandy S. Brewer, Law Librarian, Circuit Court for Howard County Law Library & Legal Resource Center

Stephanie Levasseur, Director, Baltimore County Circuit Court Law Library

Catherine I. McGuire, Head of Reference and Outreach, Maryland State Law Library

Pamela Ortiz (ex officio), Director, Department of Access to Justice, Maryland Judiciary