



Access. Connect. Learn.

Conference of Maryland Circuit Court Law Library Directors

2016-2017 Annual Report

Members and Leadership

Tonya Baroudi (Chair, 2015-2017), Director, Prince George's County Law Library

Kate Martin (Vice Chair, 2015-2017), Director, Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library

Steve Anderson, Director, Maryland State Law Library

Florence J. Barnes, Librarian, Carroll County Circuit Court 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, Howard County Law Library

Mary Jo Lazun, Law Librarian, Charles County Public Law Library

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

Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2017

Greetings!

I am pleased to present the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report documenting the progress and achievements made over the past year. The Conference is dedicated to making its facilities places where people feel valued and welcomed.

The Conference is developing consistent marketing and branding plans to expand the outreach of CMCLLD libraries while utilizing relationships with public and private partners to increase awareness of library programs and resources. Expanded partnerships include the Access to Justice Commission, the Access to Justice Department, Judicial Council committees, Maryland Legal Aid, self-help centers, the Peoples' Law Library, the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, Family Justice Center, law firms, community colleges and correctional facilities.

Over the next two years, the Conference will implement programs and trainings to help prepare patrons in meeting the challenges of a complex digital world. These include acquiring premium resources, training for Clerk of the Circuit Court personnel, access to self-help videos and online tip sheets, and developing a model program on legal information resources for correctional facilities.

Improvements in the last year include renovations at the Anne Arundel and Montgomery County Public Law Libraries, and improvements to the Charles County Public Law Library. The blueprint envisions libraries as community centers for knowledge, learning and collaboration. The Conference continues to exchange ideas and views on the operation, management, and leadership of court law libraries.

It is an honor to have served as Chair and to have worked with the law library directors who have worked diligently to improve the services for the residents of Maryland.

Warmest regards,

Tonya E. Baroudi, CMCLLD Chair

Establishment and Structure of the Conference

On February 21, 2008, the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) was created by order of the Honorable Robert M. Bell, former Chief Judge, Maryland Court of Appeals, and reaffirmed on September 28, 2015 by the Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and administrative head of the Judicial Branch.

Administrative Order (February 21, 2008; sup'd by 2015 order) and Administrative Order (September 28, 2015)

Strategic Plan: Goals, Objectives

Maryland Law Libraries – Access, Connect, Learn.

In FY2017, the Conference introduced 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.

1. 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 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.
- 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.

"Thank you so much for your help, cordiality, and thorough and quick response. Maryland law is way too complicated. So relieved there was someone there to help me."

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.

"Librarians are extremely helpful and patient with Pro Se individuals. Basically, your law librarians are the only source of help once one gets beyond the Circuit Court appeal. Thank you for allowing us the humble privilege of continuing our pursuit of justice!"

- 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.

“Recently, a librarian helped me with a rather tedious and complex research issue dealing with old regulations. Not only was [she] extremely efficient, attentive, and wonderful to work with, she went above and beyond in explaining to me the nuances of her search and research, and aided a great deal in helping me understand and grasp what we were dealing with.”

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 references 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.

"I am writing to simply comment on the outstanding performance of our Law Librarian. She has demonstrated a real commitment to our legal community and I have been very impressed with her willingness to help attorneys and the public."

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.

"Since 1977, I have found the law library to be a critical source of legal information and a critical aid in helping me to narrow my focus and to most expeditiously get what I need. Changes in technology has not altered the relationship."

"The Court Access and Community Relations Committee has benefitted tremendously. The librarian has been especially helpful in identifying the needs of self-represented litigants and how the Judiciary can best provide services to meet the needs considering the central role that law libraries occupy in the public's access to legal information, services and justice!" -Honorable Larnzell Martin, Jr.

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.

"It would be an injustice if 90% of my knowledge and achievement weren't attributed to the resources that I discovered at the law library."
-John Hopkins, Esq.

- 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.

Highlights and Achievements

Maryland Law Libraries – Access, Connect, Learn.

The Anne Arundel County Public Law Library expanded the Family Law Self-help Center (CLSHC) in the law library. With a grant from the Access to Justice Department of the Maryland Judiciary and Family Law Division funds, the FLSHC expanded and installed enclosed workstations to increase privacy and access for users. The law library and FLSHC work together to serve the needs of those representing themselves in family law issues. Librarians guide Center users to appropriate resources when referred by FLSHC staff. (For photos and to read more: <https://aacpll.org/2016/07/12/family-law-self-help-center-expansion-in-the-anne-arundel-county-circuit-court/>)

"It's wonderful that I can depend on law libraries to help me."

Baltimore County Circuit Court completed an overall reorganization of its website. The Circuit Court Librarian, working with all the departments, redesigned and updated the Court Website to create a better portal.

Carroll County Circuit Court Law Library's Self-Help Computer Center continued to provide Self-Represented Litigants a dedicated computer work station for access to legal information, legal service providers & programs along with the technology to be able to phone or chat with the MD Courts Self-Help Center while on-site. To further market the Law Library, Carroll County Public Library reference supervisors were given a tour and overview of services available, a supply of laminated book marks with the Law Library's contact information on it, along with a question/answer session at the Carroll County Circuit Court Law Library.

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, MVLS attorney emails documents to the law librarian to give to the participant.

To further market the law library to citizens of Charles County, the law librarian met with public librarians in the county. She provided them with an overview of services and materials available at the Public Law Library for both library staff and their patrons. The librarian also attends the monthly sessions of "Family Law for the People" which are held at a local branch library. During the class the law librarian lets participants know that the law library is staffed and can assist with locating forms and other materials they may need.

At the request of the Charles County Detention Center, the law librarian held a class for inmates on how to do basic legal research using their computer system.

Howard County Circuit Court Law Library continued to partner with local bar associations to provide lawyer in the library programs for civil matters and family law matters. In addition, the Law Library continued to offer the free legal advice programs in the evenings, by partnering with the local public library system. In 2016, over 300 self-represented litigants visited the Civil Law Center, and over 1000 self-represented litigants visited the Family Law Assistance Program.

Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library reorganized its whole website and doubled the website's amount of legal and referral information guides geared towards non-attorneys.

"I want to acknowledge the assistance I received from the librarian. She was extremely kind and generous with her time and expertise. She went above the call of duty to answer all my questions. I deal with patients daily, and I recognize that serving the public can often be a thankless endeavor." -Benjamin Carr

The library also expanded its legal information offerings to judges by negotiating a deal to provide judges with desktop LexisNexis accounts.

The library continued to partner with local legal and community organizations to provide programming about women and minorities' historical contributions to Maryland law. These programs aim to contextualize the legal system and market library services as inclusive of all types of patrons. These programs were open to the public and popular with court staff, the local bar, and non-attorneys.

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County Law Library invited faculty and students of Prince George's County Schools to participate in the Judiciary Project: A Courthouse Experience. A program and tour where students gained a firsthand experience of the judicial system by observing a trial, speaking with a Circuit Court judge and participating in questions and answer sessions. It is a great opportunity to introduce students to careers in the justice system, to understand the importance of the judicial system and to improve critical thinking skills. Moreover, this authentic opportunity allowed students to learn about one of the three branches of government. The courtroom tours were offered during the school year for students in grades 9 – 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 pm. Each tour accommodated up to 25 students. The Circuit Court has hosted 12 organizations and 175 participants.

"Thank you for providing this service. It would have been impossible for me to find the answers. I sincerely appreciate it and I'm grateful for this service. Please continue this most valuable service."

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.

Member Honors

Maryland Law Libraries – Access, Connect, Learn.

James Durham and Steve Anderson received the 2016 Professional Publications Award from the Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section of AALL. (July 17, 2016)

Dave Pantzer, web content coordinator for the People's Law Library, earned the Advancement of Public Understanding of the Law Award by the Maryland Bar Foundation (October 27, 2016)

Mary Jo Lazun, recipient of the Charles County Bar Association's Liberty Bell Award (May 1, 2017)

Sandy Brewer, recipient of the 2017 Government or Corporate Legal Document Maryland Pro Bono Service Award for your "commitment and dedication to the legal profession and for helping to ensure equal access to justice." (June 17, 2017)

Joan Bellistri was awarded the William L. Marbury Outstanding Advocate Award by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation for "demonstrating outstanding service...by expanding access to justice." (December 5, 2017)

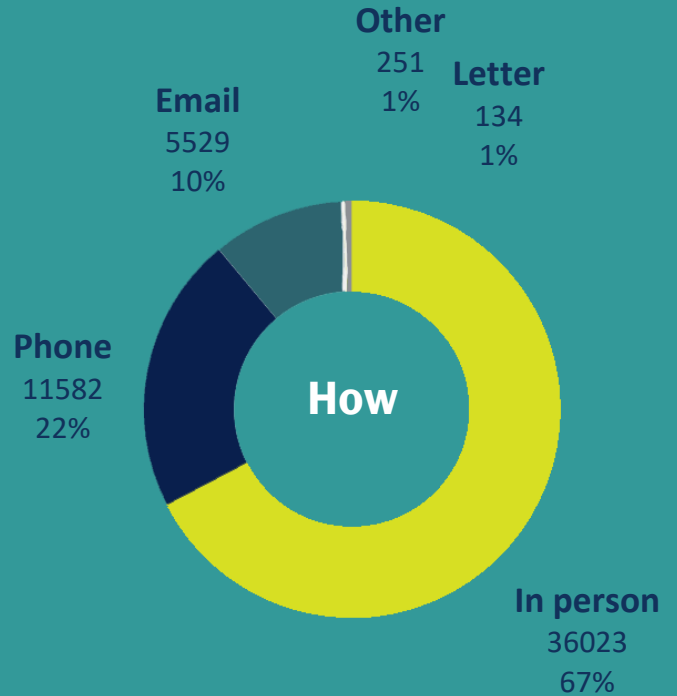
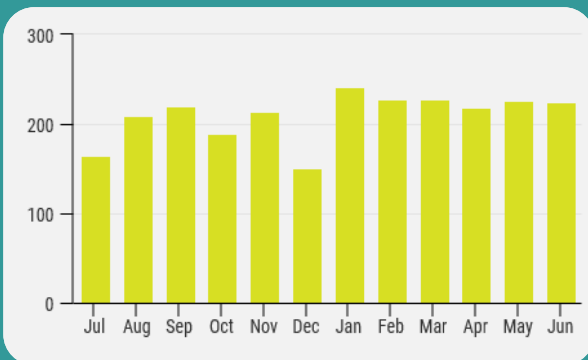
CMCLLD Usage Statistics

How many people are using us and how?

106,046 Visitors
413 per day



53,519 Questions
208 per day



1.5 million
web hits*
14,593 per day

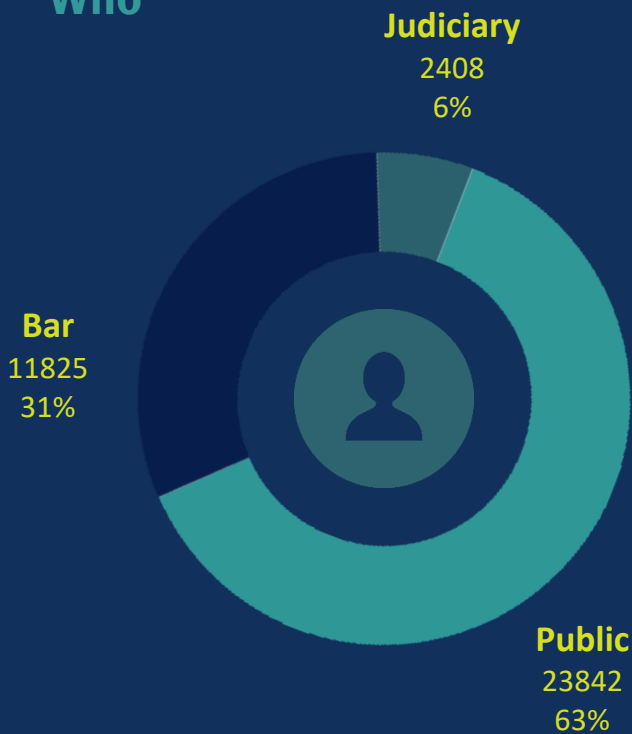
*Includes People's Law Library statistics

171,944
Catalog searches



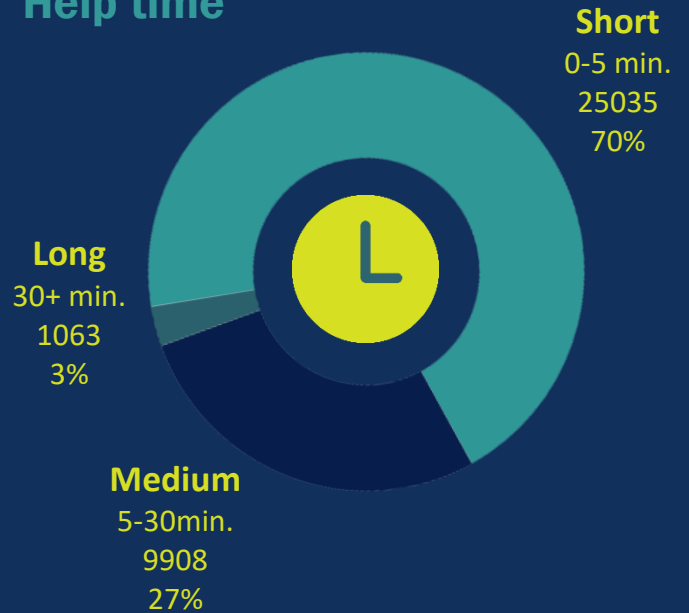
Who is using us and why?

Who

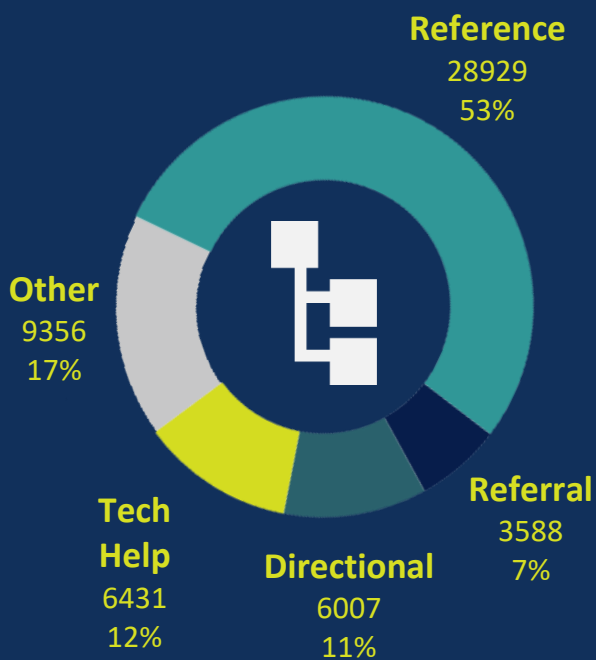


**1,622 Served
by Lawyer in
the Library**

Help time



Help types



Question topic

