

**Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the
Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors
December 16, 2025**

**Maryland Judicial Center
Room 129
187 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21404**

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDING: Florence Barnes (Carroll County; Chair, CMCLLD); Joan Bellistri (Anne Arundel County; Vice-Chair, CMCLLD); Justice Jonathan Biran (Supreme Court of Maryland); Greg Hilton (Clerk of the Supreme Court of Maryland); Judy Rupp, (State Court Administrator); Nancy Faulkner (Deputy State Court Administrator); James Durham (State Law Library); Catherine McGuire (State Law Library); Leland Sampson (State Law Library); Audrey Dingler (State Law Library); Jessica Mundy (State Law Library); Julia Topper (State Law Library); Tonya Baroudi (Prince George’s County); Sandy Brewer (Howard County); Kimberly Viera (Charles County); Julia Viets (Montgomery County); Jill Schorr (Montgomery County); Heather Wetzel (Washington County); Kristin Grossnickle (Washington County); Melissa Buskirk (Allegany County); Pamela Ortiz (A2J); Christian Noble (A2J); Brittany West (A2J); Kristin Cravath (A2J); Kimberly Alvarez (A2J); Tommy Fisher (MCLA); Phillip-Mathew Golden (Curriculum Developer/Training Specialist); and Allison Gingell (Manager of Professional Development)

Introductions of Attendees

Welcome Address

Nancy Faulkner, Deputy State Court Administrator, Administrative Office of the Courts

Nancy Faulkner commented on the topic of AI in relation to law librarians. She noted that librarians possess “natural intelligence” used in conjunction with new tools like AI to provide library services. Ms. Faulkner remarked that as things change law librarians are

more self-evolved than many professions and are ahead of the game in utilizing new tools like AI.

Conference Business

Member Updates

Washington County: Kristin Grossnickle, Court Administrator, introduced Heather Wetzel who will replace Zachary Gunther in the law library.

Howard County: Sandy Brewer reported that the law library along with the civil and family law clinics are busier than ever.

Thurgood Marshall State Law Library: James Durham, Director, reported that there is an RFP for a vendor to host the Maryland People's Law Library. Catherine McGuire and Audrey Dingler continue to provide courses on digital resources for the Judiciary and Frontlines training for public libraries. Catherine McGuire added that the library's transition to new hours since January has been successful, with patrons pleased about additional evening hours during the week. Audrey Dingler added that there will be six courses on digital resources for the Judiciary in 2026.

Montgomery County: Julia Viets reported that the law library's new hours have been in effect for a year and working well. Staff has been constant and is increasing professional involvement in the library community.

Anne Arundel County: Joan Bellistri shared that library staffing is stable. The law library and Family Court Help Center continue to work well together.

Carroll County: Flossie Barnes reported that there have been 245 LexisNexis Digital e-book sessions from Aug-Nov 2025 on the Library's new subscription. The law library brochure has been revised to include the new e-book information. The year-end shelf-read inventory has been completed.

Charles County: Kim Viera reported that the Family Law Access Day pilot went well. The program will continue quarterly. Future program in partnership with the bar association and the Elder Services Department is being considered.

Strategic Plan

Members approved the revised [Strategic Initiatives](#). Members were reminded to add tasks to the CMCLLD Operational Plan.

CMCLLD Committee Reports and Projects

Revisions to the Recommended Titles for the Core Collection – Catherine McGuire, Audrey Dingler, Joanie Bellistri, and Julia Viets

All sections of the Recommended Titles for the Core Collection have been reviewed. Each section will have a second review. Hope to have ready for full CMCLLD review in February. The [Core Collection List](#) is a guide for Maryland circuit court law libraries in the assessment and acquisition of materials to meet the [Maryland County Public Law Library Standards](#) (CMCLLD, adopted June 2009).

Chambers Collections & Other Court Department Collections – Flossie Barnes and Joanie Bellistri

A list of recommended titles will be compiled using the survey results.

Promotion of Court Law Libraries: Marketing/Outreach Inside/Outside the Law Library – Committee of the whole – Audrey Dingler

It is time for the online Court Law Library directory to be refreshed and reviewed.

Audrey Dingler and Joy Hollerbach of the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library presented a program, “Keeping It Current: Updating Your Library’s Legal Reference Guide,” at the Maryland Library Association/Delaware Library Association (MLA/DLA) Conference in May 2025. The program promoted resources and CMCLLD libraries and described what public library staff may wish to have

Joy Hollerbach of the TMSLL has redesigned the CMCLLD card. The card was distributed at the MLA/DLA conference.

Other promotion efforts included “in-reach” to court staff, tours for the public and Judiciary staff, and participation in meetings.

Frontlines

Law on the Frontlines is an online continuing education program for public library staff. It is offered through a partnership between the TMSLL, CMCLLD and the Access to Justice Commission. The standardized curriculum covers best practices, essential information about law, and specific legal topics. In 2025, there were six webinars attended by 155 participants. Frontlines will continue in 2026. Audrey published an article in the MLA newsletter, The Crab, promoting Frontlines. Catherine reported that the Frontlines web content is undergoing a review and refresh. The Law on the Frontlines program has been recognized as a national template.

Annual Report

Edits to the Annual Report should be made in color by the deadline of January 7. The final report should be ready by the end of January.

Artificial Intelligence

Justice Jonathan Biran, Supreme Court of Maryland

Justice Biran addressed changes in the Maryland Judiciary's Work Group, notable instances of AI hallucinations and deepfakes found by the courts, the current rules landscape regarding AI, and the Maryland Judiciary's AIDA.

The Judiciary Work Group has become the AI Governance Sub-Committee. Membership has been broadened with a mandate to create strategic directions, set policy on use, monitor compliance, weigh in on procurements, address risks and make recommendations.

The Maryland case *Mezu v. Mezu* is an example of AI misuse. A brief containing hallucinations was submitted to the court.

Maryland Judiciary guidelines for use of AI allow for use of AI with approval of a supervisor. Use of Lexis and Westlaw is still encouraged for legal research. Justice Biran provided an example of how the proper use of AI can save time. Using Claude to search the Maryland Archives uncovered an 1808 article and case that most likely would not have been found otherwise.

A deepfake is the malicious use of AI. An AI created video that was presented as evidence in a California trial court resulted in the dismissal of the case.

There are no Maryland rules addressing the use of deepfakes as yet but will be coming. There will be a pilot program on how to deal with deepfakes.

Greg Hilton added that there may be opportunities for AI usage in the area of Access to Justice.

Guidelines for Judiciary use can be found on CourtNet. Judiciary staff can create accounts with their mdcourts email for approved platforms including Co-pilot, Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini. Other tools are being reviewed.

Access to Justice – Updates

Pamela Ortiz, Esq., Director, Access to Justice, Administrative Office of the Courts

Pam Ortiz described the work of the Access to Justice Department as supporting the self-represented, providing language access, promoting inclusion practices and supporting the civil legal services delivery system.

News

A2J logos have been rebranded with new colors to comply with new accessibility requirements. There is a new 5-part video series on appeals to the Appellate Court of Maryland and the probate series for personal representatives is in progress. The Baltimore City District Court Help Center has moved to the Hubbard Court House.

Technology

Maryland Court Help App has been updated with a formatted home page, added a service location list. All online content is available through the App.

Guide and File has added a protective order interview.

Pam Ortiz described the work to address transcript fees as cost barriers to appeals with the judiciary's Transcript Task Force. The Task Force will work on a short-term solution with the Transcript Waiver Pilot Program and explore long term solutions to reduce or eliminate transcript costs through the use of audio or video recordings or automated transcripts using AI.

Language Access

Language access projects include the Bilingual Staff Program involving staff with verified language qualifications through the interpreter's exam. This allows court staff to serve the public directly in another language. Will expand beyond Spanish.

Video remote interpreting (VRI) is another language access program used for appropriate, usually, brief courtroom proceedings. It is a cost-effective solution to the high costs of interpreting involving additional travel costs.

Implementation of new Maryland ASL licensing requirements. There is now a pause in the implementation. Court will look into amendments as this will be difficult for the courts as well as schools and hospitals.

Accessibility

Accommodations in job application process video has been created and is posted on the court's careers webpage.

The A2J Department is responsible for providing assisted listening devices. Christian Noble is responsible.

A new app, AIRA, visual explorer app, way finding tool for people with blindness, is being explored. Can also be used to explore a website.

Revised Accommodation Rule 1-332, effective as of October 2025, per the 224th Rules Order recognizes that an accommodation is an interactive conversation to solve the request. Requires that data be collected.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines requires compliance by April 2026. The Judiciary's Accessibility Toolkit includes Tips for Making Your Website Accessible. PDFs have specific requirements.

Education

Webinars for court staff include Resources for Self-Represented Litigants, offered 7 times. The webinars provide information on CHCs and information resources.

The MD Court Help Center Providers Conference, attended by law librarians, shows that there is a lot of commonality in the way we all serve the public.

Language Access Trainings series was created for judges and magistrates. The series teaches how to work with interpreters and is available in the CourtNet Language Services Toolkit

A refresh of the "Can We Help You?" document has been published.

There are accessibility trainings through the Judicial College, Professional Development webinars and the NCSC.

The A2J Department provides Access to Justice grants for DEI and Judicare civil legal aid providers. Grants cover programs such as day-of-court and full representation. A grantee, the Civil Justice Passport, received an award this year.

There are two annual reports to come: Language Services for the Public and Resources for SRL Services (they need to be made accessible for posting).

Remarks

Judy Rupp, State Court Administrator

Ms. Rupp shared her appreciation for the privilege of working for the Judiciary. Visitors from the Kansas Judiciary were impressed with the talent, services and programs provided in Maryland courts. She acknowledged that court law libraries provide that same level of service on the frontlines helping people at often the hardest times in their lives. Libraries are a safe space in the courthouse. Ms. Rupp appreciated the intentionality in services including outreach efforts that law libraries provide. She thanked the group for another amazing year and the work that law libraries do.

She concluded with appreciation of the just-approved CMCLLD Strategic Initiatives and stated that she was impressed at the Conferences' ability to come together and decide what is important for conference goals.

People's Law Library – Updates

C. Leland (Lee) Sampson, Head of Web Content and Services, Thurgood Marshall State Law Library

Lee Sampson reported the People's Law Library of Maryland has had a visual refresh with:

- Masthead adjusted for mobile use. (65% of users come via mobile devices.)
- Streamlining of the Legal Services Directory makes room for research topics
- New Help Center visual
- Text size is easier to adjust

Backend changes are being made considering Generative AI and Google Analytics. Total impressions data have increased due to Gen AI overview results. Changes and the structure of the site will reflect a leaning into the use GenAI. The difference between users at the website and machine interaction with the website are considered. Most who use People's do so through a platform rather than coming to the site directly. Changes in the code and editing can make the site more accessible with more metadata at the paragraph level. More citations to primary and secondary sources are a powerful tool for GenAI to identify the information as authoritative. Citations will be indicated with a footnote in a list at the bottom.

Maryland Center for Legal Assistance

Thomas J. Fisher, Jr., Esq., Managing Director, Maryland Center for Legal Assistance, LLC

Tommy Fisher provided updates on the Maryland Court Help Centers. Starting with an update on the Maryland Justice Passport, he shared the news that they received another award, their third. Passport has added new partners: one is for therapy referrals - Kenah One Health; and the other is an estate planning partner - Senior Legal Services for Baltimore City. Other partners have expanded service areas. The MVLS Consumer Protection Project has expanded hardship letter assistance statewide. Community Legal Services in Prince George's expanded by adding representation for foreclosure and standby guardianship assistance. MVLS is adding representation for end of life/estate planning in Baltimore City and County. 3879 passports have been created since 2021 resulting in 1712 assisted. The CHCs assist litigants with MDEC first by encouraging them not to e-file. MDEC tech issues are referred to the e-filing support, but they can assist with filing codes and will refer to resources on mdcourts.gov. The CHC offers videoconferencing assistance in Howard, Allegany, and Washington counties. This provides service impact in counties where there are not a lot of resources. Through remote services, the CHC can print to the litigant in the remote location. There are two new tech innovations: the related tab and the RAG Bot developed with Maryland Legal Aid. The related tab identifies who is calling with a phone number, without connecting a name. The enables CHC attorneys to see how the litigant was helped previously. The related tab improves efficiency and combats abuse and overuse of services. Considerations are increased risks of conflicts of interest; and how to protect DV litigants in cases of landline use. Conflicts are not identified. Tagging an interaction as "Confidential" ensures that it will not appear in the related tab. The RAG Bot was built with Maryland Legal Aid's own "ChatGPT." It takes information from the CHC knowledge base to answer staff questions.

Questions included:

Will videoconferencing be expanded, for example to the lower Eastern Shore?

Staff would be needed but a staff attorney in Salisbury through partnership with the court initiated a pilot program for expungements using a bus traveling on the Eastern Shore.

How do CHCs manage challenging clients?

Such clients are identified and addressed by a supervisor. Services will be cut-off via a phone call. A list is kept with details such as suspensions or time limits on sessions. Organization keeps current with Teams chats.

Mindfulness Strategies

Phillip-Mathew Golden, Curriculum Developer/Training Specialist, Judicial College/Professional Development, Administrative Office of the Courts

Phillip-Mathew Golden described the benefits of mindfulness and led the group through a mindfulness exercise. There is a mindfulness strategies webinar available on CourtNet that can be shared with staff.

Closing Remarks

Florence Barnes, Chair, CMCLLD

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the speakers for their valuable contributions today and, once again, to thank you all for your presence and participation. Please have a safe journey home.