

Glenn Rawdon, Senior
Program Counsel
Legal Services Corp.

LIBRARIES AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE: Libraries as Crucial Partners

A Role for Libraries in Access to Justice

- There are 16,536 public libraries in the United States, nearly all of which offer free public access to computers, the Internet, and to trained staff equipped to help library patrons access information.
- Librarians in law schools, bar association libraries, and court libraries have expertise that would be valuable to low-income people seeking legal information, but these entities are typically not as familiar, or have the same accessibility, to low-income individuals, as public libraries.
- With proper training and support, public librarians could help a significant number of Americans who qualify for LSC-funded legal aid, but are turned away due to lack of resources.

Legal Services Website Templates

LawHelp.org powered by [probono.net](#) Text size: A A A [Hide Visits](#)

FloridaLawHelp.org

Helping low-income individuals solve legal problems
[Site Help](#) | [About Us](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Find a Local Office](#) | [Forms](#)

Understand Your Legal Issue Find Legal Help Search GO

Understand your legal issue, solve your problem

Choose a topic below to find resources including general information, your legal rights, the law and the courts, legal forms and more.

- Family Law**
 - Divorce - Contested
 - Abuse, Neglect and Foster Care
 - Adoption
 - [More issues >](#)
- Housing**
 - Eviction
 - Foreclosure and Predatory Lending
 - Housing Discrimination
 - [More issues >](#)
- Consumer**
 - Bankruptcy
 - Contract and Warranty Problems
 - Credit Reports and Credit Access
 - [More issues >](#)
- Domestic Violence**
 - Injunctions for Protection
 - Shelter Resources
- Public Benefits**
 - Children's Health
 - Food Stamps
 - Medicaid
 - [More issues >](#)
- Community Education**
 - Juvenile Expungements
 - Consumer Directory
 - [More issues >](#)
- Immigration**
- Seniors**
- Education**

+ Set your location

More Languages
Spanish / Español
Haitian Creole / Kreyòl ayisyen
Portuguese / português
Creole / Kreyòl

[Click here](#) for free do-it-yourself legal forms.

2016 Changes in SNAP

Changes to Expunction of Juvenile Records

Open Advocate Template

HELP4TN

HELP4TN

Find legal and social service resources in Tennessee

[Home](#)

[About](#)

[Find Legal Information](#)

[Find Help](#)

[For Librarians](#)

[For Volunteer Attorneys](#)



Help With Affordable Care Act & Health Insurance



Veterans Benefits

Free Legal Resources

[Find Legal Help by Email](#)

[Find Legal Help by Phone](#)

[Find a Free Legal Clinic](#)

[Free Divorce Forms](#)

Community Services in Tennessee



To talk to a person for help with community

[Editor Login](#)

How Do I

- [Evaluate My Situation](#)
- [Find Alternatives to Court](#)
- [Find Court and Legal Forms](#)
- [Research the Law](#)
- [File a Case/Respond to a Case](#)
- [Prepare for My Day in Court](#)
- [Appeal or Enforce a Decision](#)

Get Help

- [Legal Clinic Calendar](#)
- [Legal Services Directory](#)
- [Español](#)
- [Français](#)
- [简体中文](#)
- [한국어](#)
- [Non-English Help](#)



Legal self-help information for Marylanders. Hosted by the Maryland State Law Library

Consumer

Automobiles, Affidavit Judgments, Bankruptcy, Contracts, Credit: Debts & Loans, more

Criminal

Defendant's Rights, Expungement, Filing Charges, Victim's Rights

Domestic Violence

Definitions of Abuse, Legal Options, Non-Legal Support, Safety Issues

Education

Discipline, Enrollment & Registration, Home School

Employment

Discrimination, Pension Issues, Unemployment Benefits, Workers Compensation, Working Conditions, more

Family Law

Adoption, Annulment, Birth Certificates, Child Abuse/Neglect, Child Support, more

Government Benefits & Services

Disability Services, Food Programs, Income Assistance, Medical Benefits, Social Security, more

Health

Advance Directives, Alcoholism/Substance Abuse, Disability Law, Insurance, Medicaid/Medicare, more

Housing

Homeownership, Long-term Care, Landlord/Tenant, Homelessness

Motor Vehicles

Licenses, DWI, Traffic Court

Senior Citizens

Discrimination Issues, Nursing Homes/Assisted Living, Pensions, Social Security Benefits, Wills/Estates/Probate, more

Wills/Estates/Probate

Advance Directives, Estate Administration & Probate, Powers of Attorney, Trusts, Wills, more

Youth Law

Child Abuse, Criminal Law, Custody, Emancipation, Employment, more

Other Legal Issues

Civil Rights, Immigration, Land Records, Maryland Small Business, Personal Injury, more

Ask Us Now!

Law Librarians are available to chat live on Tuesdays from 9-11 am & on Tuesdays & Thursdays, from 2-4pm. At all other times, please send an email for a response from a reference librarian at the State Law Library.

Maryland Law Libraries

Maryland Courts Self-Help Center

8:30 am - 8:00 pm, Mon - Fri
Call or Click: Attorneys available by phone and live chat:

410-260-1392

Live Help
Start Chat

Landlord/Tenant * Small and Large Claims * Debt Collection * Return of Property * Peace and Protective Orders * Foreclosure * Family Law * Divorce * Custody * Child Support * Expungement

Court Self-help Sites

- Self-Help Home
- Find a Lawyer
- Find a Mediator
- Find a Court
- Find a Case
- Find a Form
- Filing Fees
- Update Your Address
- FAQs
- Law Libraries
- Topics
- Virginia Judicial System Home



Custody, Visitation & Support



Protective Orders



Divorce

The aim of the Virginia Judicial System is to assure that disputes are resolved justly, promptly, and economically through a court system unified in its structures and administration.

How We Can Help You - Legal Information vs Legal Advice

Judges, court employees, and librarians must be neutral and impartial, and can give legal information. [Learn what this means.](#) Only a lawyer representing you can give you legal advice.

Latest News

Statewide Senior Legal Helpline

April 13, 2017

Free and Low Cost Legal Resources Pamphlet

March 6, 2017

"What to Do When You Can't Afford an Attorney"

December 2, 2016

Virginia Free Legal Answers



Virginia.freelegalanswers.org is a free, fast, and easy service for Virginians who cannot afford a lawyer. The site can be accessed from

Login

© 2017 Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of Virginia. All rights reserved.

Powered by OpenAdvocate

VAI legalAid.org

Law Library Resources

State Library of Arizona Virtual Reference Desk

Find what you need when you need it.



[Home](#) [About](#) [Collections](#) [State Library of Arizona Events](#) [Viewing Room](#) [A-C](#) [D-F](#) [G-I](#) [J-L](#) [M-O](#) [P-R](#) [S-U](#) [V-Z](#)

Law4AZ



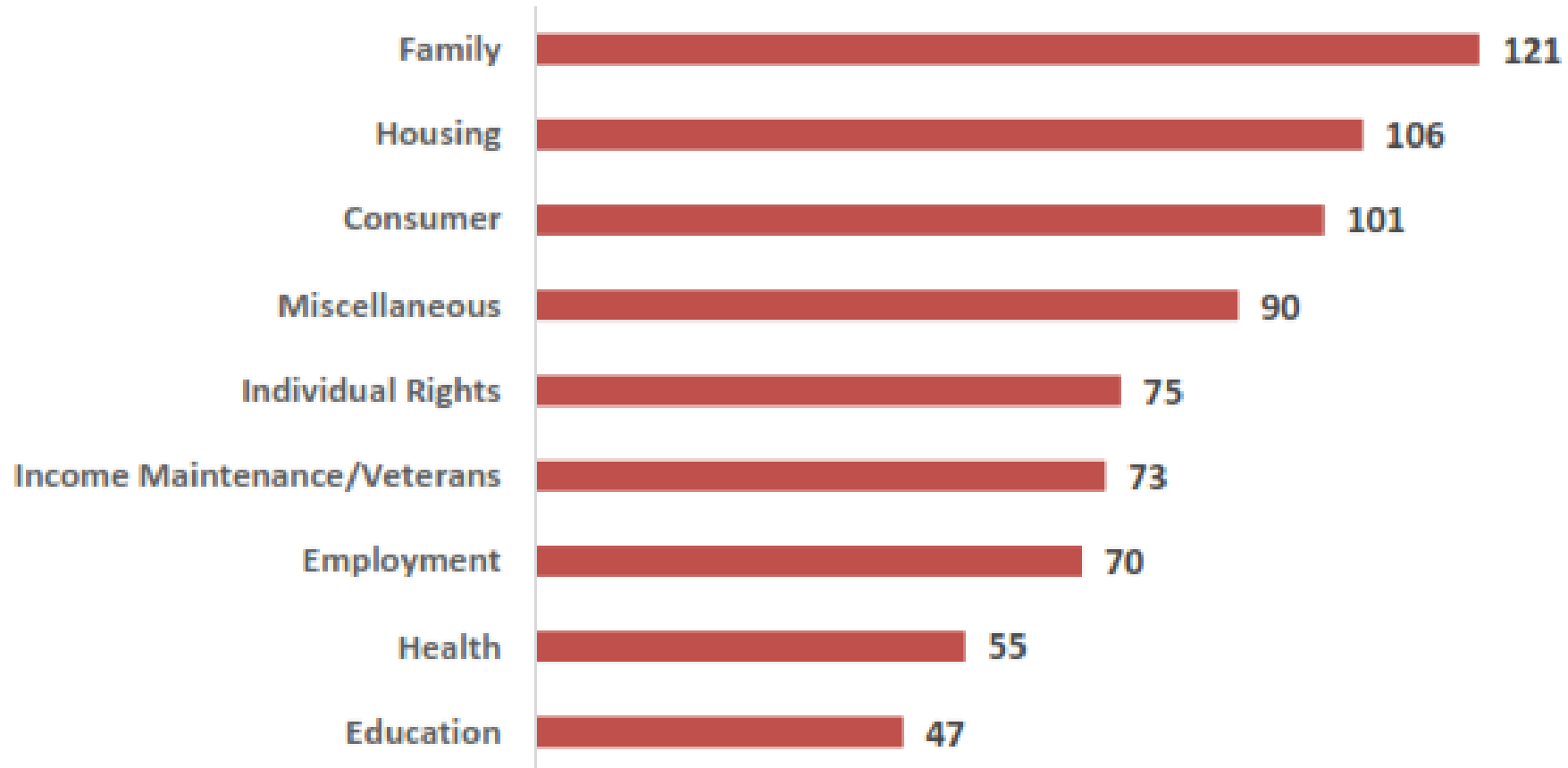
The goal of Law4AZ is to increase access to justice statewide by connecting people to legal information through their public libraries. Law4AZ is conducted in two phases. First, the State Library of Arizona offers training sessions for public library staff. These training sessions cover basics of legal information and legal reference services. Second, the State Library works with participating libraries to plan seminars on legal information for the



[Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Homepage](#)



Most Common Topics Covered by Self-Help Websites - 2016*

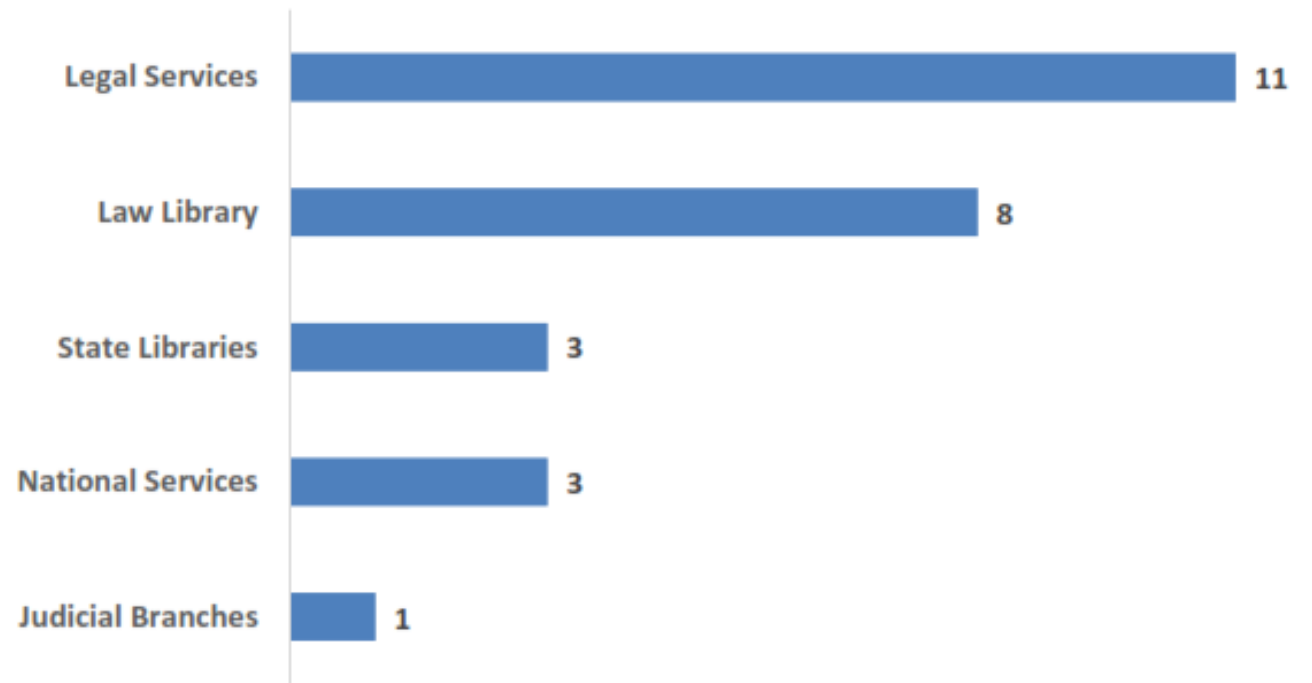


Public Librarian Training Resources

- The research identified 26 online civil legal self-help sources or trainings designed specifically for librarians.
- The majority of these trainings were produced within the legal field, either by law librarians or other organizations in the legal services field.
- LSC grants funded most of the trainings, followed by bar association and government funding.

Organizations doing Training for Public Librarians

Types of Organizations that Produced Online Public Librarian Training Programs - 2016



	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Format	Webinars (7)	Webpages including links (7)	Documents (PDF) (6)	Presentations without audio (3)	Seminars/Video (3)
Example	Arizona State Library	South Carolina – Circuit Riders	Michigan Legal Help	HelpMELaw	Kentucky Access to Justice
Organizations	Legal Services Private State Library	Bar Association County Law Library Private State Courts State Law Library	Law Library Legal Services	Legal Services State Library	Justice Foundation Law School State Courts
Presenter / Author	Legal services staff State Librarians	Bar Association Court Access to Justice Program Court Librarians Law Librarians Private company	Law Librarians Legal services staff	Legal services staff	Attorneys Law Librarian Legal services staff
Funders / Partners	LSC State Library United Way Bar Associations Legal Services AmeriCorps Gates Foundation	LSC Court System State Justice Institute Legal Services Bar Association	LSC Court System Bar Foundation Legal Corporations National Association of Social Workers Legal Services	LSC Justice Action Group Stateside Legal Department of Commerce Law Reform Institute Legal Assistance Corporation	LSC Bar Association

Locating the Law: A Handbook for Non-Law Librarians in Michigan

Chapter 6: The Michigan Legal Help Website and Additional Resources

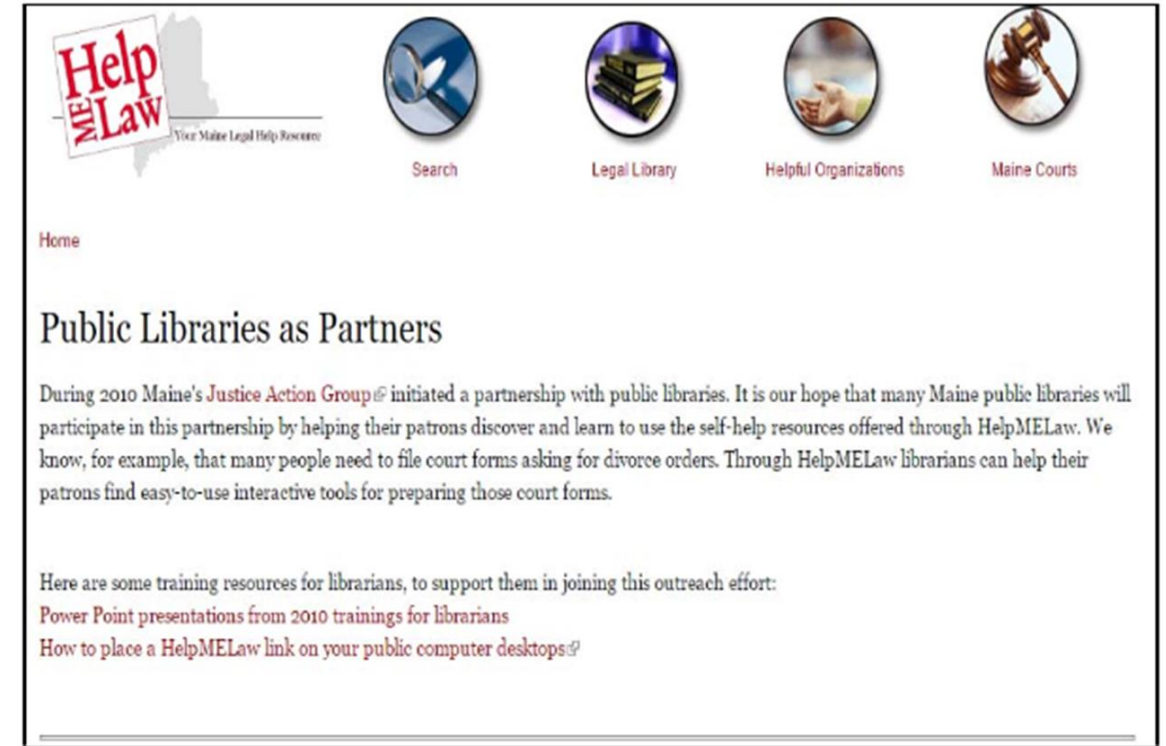
By Angela Tripp, Project Manager, Michigan Legal Help Program

Introduction

MichiganLegalHelp.org is an interactive website built to enable self-represented persons to handle relatively simple civil legal matters on their own. This project of the Michigan Poverty Law Program (MPLP) is funded by a grant from the Michigan State Bar Foundation (MSBF) and was originally a project of the Solutions on Self-Help Taskforce (SOSTF). The SOSTF was created in April 2010 by (then) Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelley to promote greater centralization, coordination, and quality of support for self-represented litigants in Michigan.

This website includes legal information and forms covering a variety of legal subject areas, currently including consumer, family, protection from abuse, housing, expungement, public benefits, and income taxes. Users can complete several of the forms by answering questions in a simple interview format; the interviews and forms are programmed so the answers complete the forms selected by the user.

The site also provides self-represented people with jurisdiction-specific procedural instructions. These instructions guide users through the steps they need to take after completing their forms, and give them an idea of what to expect once they get to court. In addition, the website is a clearinghouse for referrals



HelpMELaw
Your State Legal Help Resource

Search Legal Library Helpful Organizations Maine Courts

Home

Public Libraries as Partners

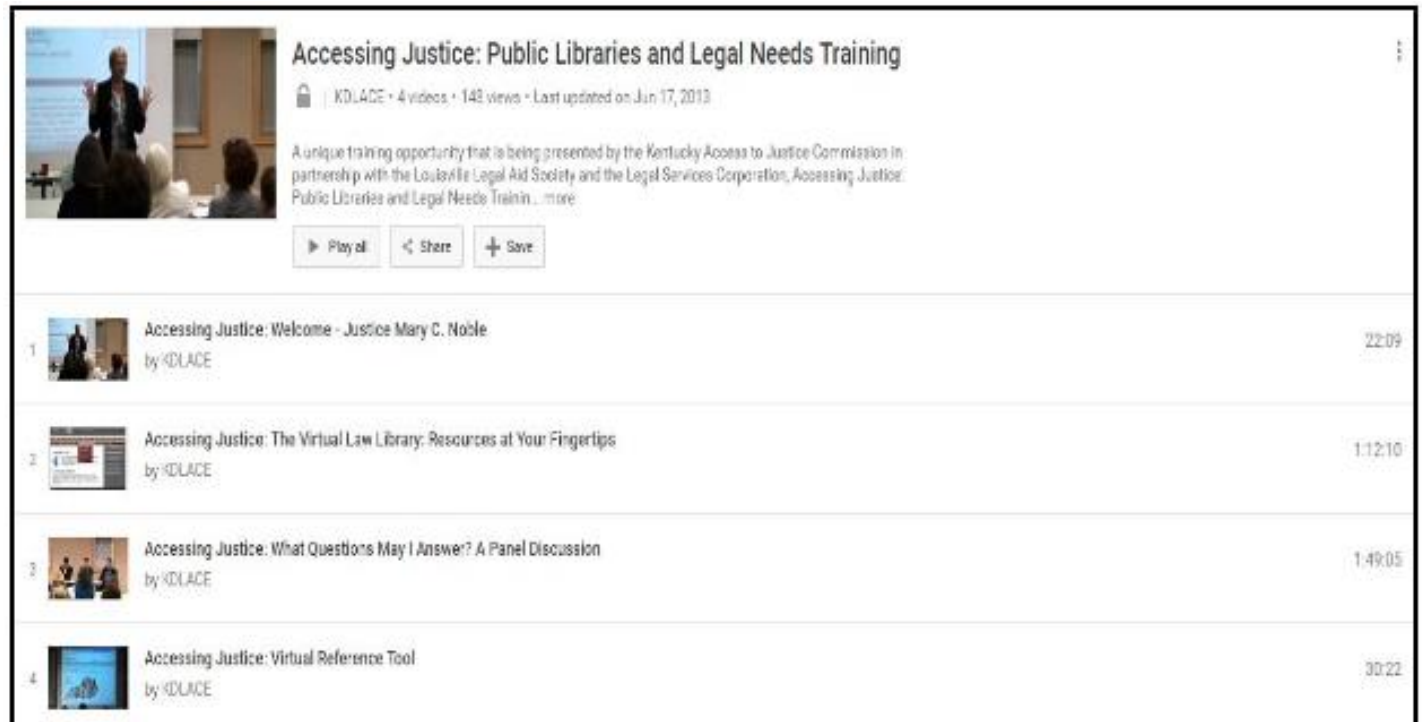
During 2010 Maine's **Justice Action Group** initiated a partnership with public libraries. It is our hope that many Maine public libraries will participate in this partnership by helping their patrons discover and learn to use the self-help resources offered through HelpMELaw. We know, for example, that many people need to file court forms asking for divorce orders. Through HelpMELaw librarians can help their patrons find easy-to-use interactive tools for preparing those court forms.

Here are some training resources for librarians, to support them in joining this outreach effort:

- [Power Point presentations from 2010 trainings for librarians](#)
- [How to place a HelpMELaw link on your public computer desktops](#)

Websites

Videos







Accessing Justice: Public Libraries and Legal Needs Training

🔒 | KDLACE • 4 videos • 148 views • Last updated on Jun 17, 2013

A unique training opportunity that is being presented by the Kentucky Access to Justice Commission in partnership with the Louisville Legal Aid Society and the Legal Services Corporation, Accessing Justice: Public Libraries and Legal Needs Train... more

▶ Play all ◀ Share + Save

1	 Accessing Justice: Welcome - Justice Mary C. Noble by KDLACE	22:09
2	 Accessing Justice: The Virtual Law Library: Resources at Your Fingertips by KDLACE	1:12:10
3	 Accessing Justice: What Questions May I Answer? A Panel Discussion by KDLACE	1:49:05
4	 Accessing Justice: Virtual Reference Tool by KDLACE	30:22

Potential Curriculum

- The importance of the relationship between public libraries and the legal services community to help bridge the justice gap (e.g. Message from LSC president Jim Sandman and statistics regarding the justice gap in the United States)
- Identifying a legal issue
 - Legal reference interview questions
 - Difference between a civil and criminal issue
 - Who has the right to an attorney?
- Legal advice vs legal information
- The most commonly addressed civil legal topics listed by civil legal self-help websites:
 - Family
 - Housing
 - Consumer

Potential Curriculum – contd.

- Online self-help resources
- Completing online legal forms
- How libraries can build reciprocal partnerships with local legal and social agencies
 - Finding a local legal aid office (for referring patrons to a legal specialist)
- Soft skills/people skills – comfort with legal topics and sources, developing relationships with the legal community
- Helping patrons with technology
 - Keyboarding skills
 - Use of laptop or another device
- Advanced legal topics for libraries and librarians that have already gone through the basic training

Next Steps

- LSC plans to:
 - Seek funding to develop the training
 - Partner with OCLC/WebJunction, an organization that provides cost-effective training and staff development programs for librarians, to design and build the curriculum.
 - Seek input from the American Library Association (ALA); Cleveland Public Library; the Public Library Association (PLA), a subset of ALA; and the American Association of Law Librarians (AALL).
 - Engage with legal partners such as for their input and endorsement of the project.

Contact information

- Glenn Rawdon, LSC
- gawdon@lsc.gov