

2020 Annual Report



The Wisconsin State Law Library exists to serve the legal information needs of the officers and employees of this state, attorneys and the public by providing the highest quality of professional expertise in the selection, maintenance and use of materials, information and technology in order to facilitate equal access to the law.



Wisconsin State Law Library
Madison, Wisconsin
wilawlibrary.gov



Welcome to the Library



The COVID-19 pandemic changed many peoples' personal and professional lives. Our library users needed to adapt and change how they worked. This prompted the State Law Library to rethink how we provided our services. While our doors were closed, our services remained open to the public.

From the first day of the Safer at Home order, our librarians continued to provide for the legal information needs of people throughout the state.

We answered reference questions on the phone and replied to legal information requests through email. We quickly scanned and emailed pages from books to users. Books were shipped directly to users through our Borrow by Mail service. We efficiently researched using online databases. Librarians searched and scanned legislative drafting records.

The State Law Library also embraced the opportunity to provide new services.

- Sidewalk check-outs and returns
- CLE webinars via Zoom
- Free, online access to Wisconsin civil, criminal, and children's jury instructions



David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library
120 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Madison WI 53703

Milwaukee County Law Library
Courthouse
Room G8
901 North 9th St
Milwaukee WI 53233-1425

Dane County Law Library
Courthouse
Room L1007
215 S Hamilton St
Madison WI 53703

2020 Staff

David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library

Amy Crowder, State Law Librarian (March 1, 2020-)
Julie Tessmer Robinson, State Law Librarian (2012-2020)
Elspeth Gordon, Library Associate
Carol Hassler, Web Services Librarian
Abby Hartenbower, Library Assistant
Jaime Healy-Plotkin, Cataloger
Angela Humiston, Wisconsin Collections Librarian
Michael Keane, Reference and Instruction Librarian
Tammy Keller, Program Assistant
Heidi Yelk, Director of Reference, Deputy Law Librarian
Kari Zelinka, Acquisitions Librarian

LTE Staff

Patti Bishop, Library Assistant
Katie Mamrosh, Library Assistant
Linda Xiao, Library Assistant

Milwaukee County Law Library

Jamie Neuendorf, Library Associate

LTE Staff

Beth Bland, Library Associate
Jenna Marquardt, Library Associate

Dane County Law Library

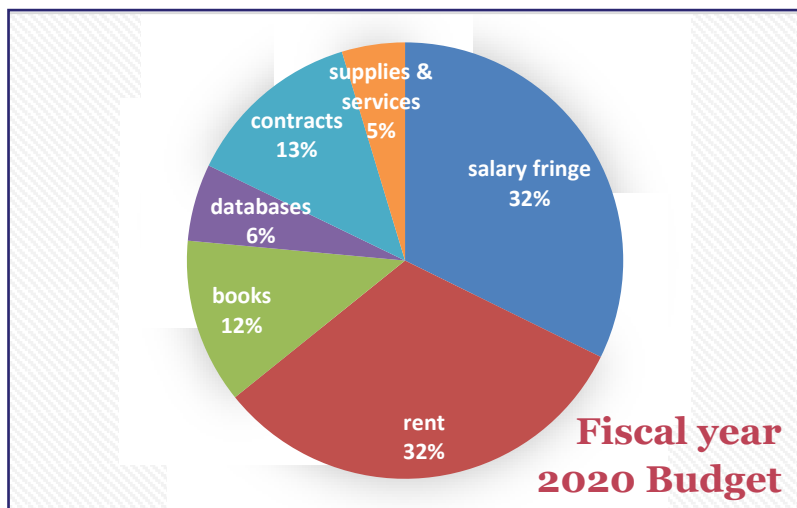
Bob Lopez, Reference Librarian

LTE Staff

Maureen McShane, Library Associate
Kira Zimmerman, Library Associate

Librarians enhanced our more popular Legal Topics pages on our website. Updates included new FAQs, an emphasis on finding legal forms, and updated books and article lists. Librarians also updated research guides. A new Wisconsin Municipal Courts web directory debuted.

Throughout 2020, library users and staff adapted to change. One thing that remained the same was the State Law Library's commitment to fast and friendly service. When library users couldn't come to the library, our staff brought the library to them. Whether library users contacted us by phone or email, our priority was to help find information quickly so they could move forward with their work.



The David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library maintains a comprehensive collection of primary and secondary materials to serve the legal research and practice needs of the Wisconsin Court System and people throughout the state. Emphasis is primarily on Wisconsin and U.S. law.

The collection consists of over 135,000 items in print, microfiche, and other formats. The collections of the Milwaukee County Law Library and the Dane County Law Library focus on Wisconsin legal practice materials to best serve the needs of those involved in a court action. The State Law Library provides access to considerable electronic holdings as part of the library's online database subscriptions.

Staff Highlights

Staff pivoted to adapt library services quickly in March 2020. All three libraries responded to phone, email, and mail requests from the first day of remote work. Early in the pandemic, staff held regular meetings to plan for the safe return of staff to the David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library, Milwaukee County Law Library, and Dane County Law Library.

Staff returned to the David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library in early April 2020, with reference librarians scheduled regularly in the library beginning June 1st. Staggered schedules allowed us to respond to phone and copy requests in the library and maintain library collections, while also adhering to social distancing guidelines. Milwaukee and Dane County Law Libraries also saw a return to in-library work in summer 2020.

While 2020 presented many challenges, staff at all three libraries were able to collaborate on special projects, plan and implement phased reopenings, participate in professional development, and tackle work backlogs.

In March 2020, the law library said farewell to Julie Tessmer Robinson, State Law Librarian from 2012. Julie was a dedicated employee of the State Law Library for thirty-eight years. We wish her the best in her retirement!



Amy Crowder, Jaime Healy-Plotkin, Justice Rebecca Frank Dallet, Chief Justice Patience D. Roggensack, Justice Rebecca Grassl Bradley, and Julie Robinson at The Wisconsin Women in Government event on January 28, 2020



Research and Collections

The library continually develops, maintains, and evaluates the library collections to keep pace with changes in the law and meet the evolving needs of our users. From selection and purchasing to processing new items and updating current titles, collection management staff ensure our users have the most up-to-date information. The library also manages collections and subscriptions for the Wisconsin Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, and Milwaukee County and Dane County judicial offices.

The flow of materials through our collections is constant. Over 5,000 catalog records for books or other materials in our catalog were added or edited during the year. Many more items on the shelf were updated, as library staff managed supplementation, new items and editions, and other changes to titles.

Maintaining the print collections during a pandemic in our main library, branch libraries, and other collections the library manages posed logistical challenges. In late spring 2020, librarians quickly assembled a plan to halt publisher shipments when library staff shifted to remote work. As a safety plan was put into place to work in the library, collection management staff restarted subscriptions and processed the resulting backlog of materials.

Wisconsin Briefs

The Wisconsin Briefs collection provides access to Court of Appeals and Supreme Court Briefs and Appendices, dating back to the two courts' inception. A long term project continues to expand online access to older Briefs and newer Briefs that have not been eFiled. 732 new briefs and appendices that were not eFiled were scanned and uploaded to WSCCA, and 2,571 older documents were also uploaded to WSCCA.

Databases & Online Collections

The Library's collection expands beyond the physical titles on the shelves, thanks to our digital collection. This collection includes:

- Electronic resources available through our website
- Links in our catalog to online texts, both free and library subscription databases
- In-house databases such as Westlaw, Lexis, Fastcase and Books Unbound
- With a library card, 24/7 access to HeinOnline and Index to Legal Periodicals

Databases available remotely to our users:

Index to Legal Periodicals
LLMC Digital
HeinOnline

Library-Access Databases:

Access Newspaper Archive
Bloomberg Law
Books Unbound
Fastcase
League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Lexis Advance
National Consumer Law Center
Oxford English Dictionary
PACER
SCCA
Westlaw

Website

The library's website is a living publication, updated constantly throughout the year to add and maintain links. Thousands of records in our Ordinances page, and County Resources and Legal Topics databases were reviewed for currency. The website was visited 978,000 times in 2020, and included new research pages on coronavirus legal topics and remote work.

Our website reaches users throughout Wisconsin and beyond.



Projects

Over 2,000 patron records were updated, and 170 new library cards were issued to users throughout the state.

The Wisconsin State Law Library became a part of the Wisconsin Name Authority Cooperative Funnel and five new name authorities were added to a worldwide shared database.

Staff archived COVID-19 circuit court orders and worked with the Wisconsin Digital Archives to preserve those resources for future researchers.

Catalog record clean-up work included our States collection, American Law Institute holdings, and adding digital resources to books kept in Compact Storage.

Reference Services



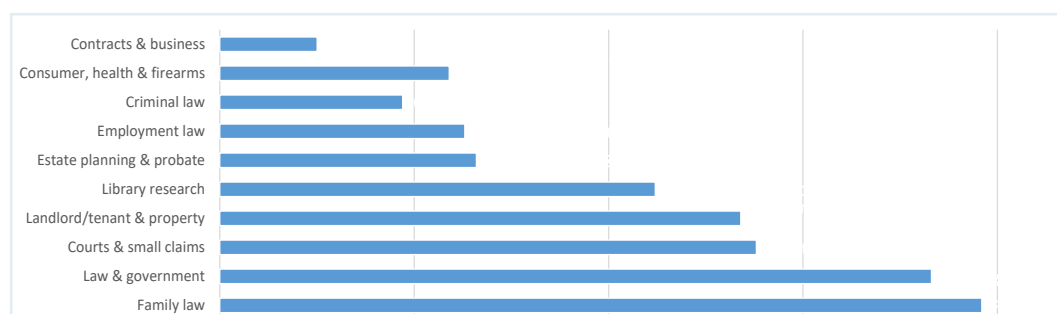
The Library has a team of experienced librarians who provide reference and research services to users. We strive to respond to users within one business day and often are able to provide information and answers within the same day. Small claims, landlord-tenant, and family law continue to be frequently requested areas of information, along with circuit and appellate court procedures. As guidelines and government programs changed quickly during the pandemic, librarians helped many people navigate new resources like executive orders, and state and federal agency websites.

Branch libraries in the Milwaukee and Dane County Courthouses are typically bustling places with users who visit the library for help accessing forms and researching court-related questions. During the pandemic, these libraries collaborated with Clerks of Court offices to provide remote or no-contact services to *pro se* litigants, judges, and attorneys.

Publications

Published in the State Bar of Wisconsin's InsideTrack

- Law Library Closed: Now What?, by Amy Crowder, April 2020
- Legal Research: Online Regulatory Resources, by Beth Bland. July 2020
- Legal Research 101: Estate Planning, by Carol Hassler. September 2020
- Legal Research 101: Where to Find Real Estate Resources, by Amy Crowder. October 2020
- Legal Research 101: What's New with HeinOnline? by Amy Crowder. December 2020



Top 10 topics answered by our reference librarians

Early Pandemic Services

Users are at the heart of any library and the State Law Library is no exception. When our buildings closed for the pandemic in March 2020, helping our users was a high priority. Our team of reference librarians immediately created a plan to operate from home. The foundations of electronic research laid years ago was crucial to our success. Our staff's expertise in computerized legal research combined with web access to services such as Westlaw.com, HeinOnline, PACER, and Lexis made for a smooth transition. With a robust email reference service already established, we were ready for email to become our users' preferred service.

Hybrid Work

With the support of the Director of State Court's Office, librarians were able to transition to hybrid remote and in-library work early in the pandemic. For the reference team, this meant one or two librarians working inside the library Monday through Thursday starting in early June 2020. This was an important step towards helping our users. Facilitating access to our print collection was a crucial service.

With hybrid work, librarians were able to access the library's unique collections including Judicial Council notes, archived Supreme Court briefs, and legislative drafting files on microfiche. The research skills of our librarians were vital as we served as proxies for researchers who could not conduct their own research onsite. Recent upgrades to our scanning capabilities allowed librarians to efficiently share and deliver materials from the collection. Circulation of library material also resumed in June 2020. Sidewalk circulation and borrowing books by mail allowed users to borrow print materials. We extended our typical loan period to accommodate the scheduling challenges that appointment services and quarantine presented to our users.

Our Firearms research page reached over 160,000 people. Firearms questions accounted for just over 1% of the research questions librarians answered



CLE Classes

In 2020, classes shifted to a webinar-only format.

- Public records (May, June)
- Alternative search engines
- Understanding Wisconsin Circuit Court Access
- Introduction to Legislative History
- Dockets throughout the United States
- Virtual tours reached agency staff, law clerks, and students

Presentations

2020 Wisconsin Court System Clerks' Institute

Library research and services

Legal Personnel of Southern Wisconsin

Wisconsin public records

Madison Area Paralegal Association

Wisconsin Legislative History

South Central Library System

Sharing Best Practices for Reopening Special Libraries

Understanding the WI Circuit Court Access website

Wisconsin public records

WLA's Government Information Day

Legal reference tips and tricks

Remote Outreach

The library offered tours and library orientations throughout the year, shifting to remote outreach in the spring.

Through Zoom, we hosted new Law Clerks and summer law firm associates. The library also shared informative handouts with attendees to the annual Judicial Conference.

This year we provided information about our services, as well as new research guides geared towards conference topics. We also worked with public library organizations to offer training and guides on how to provide legal reference services to their library users.

State Law Librarian Amy Crowder co-presented a panel session as part of the American Association of Law Library's virtual annual conference, along with UW Law Library's Assistant Director of Public Services Kris Turner and Davis & Kuelthau Director of Library Services, Beverly Butula.

The presentation, "I'm, like, totally profesh!" Finding the Right Balance Between Casual and Professional Marketing and Outreach Voices, examined ways each library reached out to their users and balanced engaging communication with the library's reputation and message.

Wisconsin Jury Instructions

In late 2020, the Wisconsin State Law Library agreed to host the Wisconsin Jury Instructions on its website, wilawlibrary.gov. This was the result of a cooperative effort between the University of Wisconsin Law School, the State Law Library, and the Wisconsin Court System's Office of Judicial Education.

The Wisconsin Jury Instructions are comprised of three titles: Civil, Criminal, and Children's. Instructions are used to assist judges and lawyers in providing instructions to jurors who must reach verdicts during trials, and the three titles include over 1,500 individual instructions. In the past, instructions were published as three titles - two of them looseleaf and updated annually.

The State Law Library opted to create an integrated approach to moving the instruction sets online. Each instruction set included a full keyword index as well as several tables correlating instructions with cited cases in the jury instruction comments. Contents of each instruction set reflected the traditional print set instructions to cases or statutes. The library created a relational database to combine instructions and finding aids into one easily browsed system. Converting three print books and their findings aids into a database required the library to create a new structure to suit the way information interconnects to enhance the user's understanding and access to jury instructions. Entirely custom-coded and designed, the underlying structure creating the Wisconsin Jury Instructions section of the website includes eleven underlying tables with over 8,600 rows of interconnected data. This work was completed in late fall and winter 2020, with the free jury instructions debuting online in January 2021.

Recognizing the History of Wisconsin's Black Lawyers

On February 25, we were pleased to host a celebration of trailblazing African-American attorneys in the David T. Prosser Jr. Library rare book room.

The event, The History of Wisconsin's Black Lawyers, featured speakers including Former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Louis Butler and Attorney Celia Jackson of the Wisconsin Association of African-American Lawyers. Celia Jackson presented Chief Justice Patience Roggensack and State Law Librarian Julie Tessmer Robinson with copies of The History of Wisconsin's Black Lawyers 2019, to add to library collections.

Additional remarks were given by Marquette University Law Dean Joseph Kearney, University of Wisconsin Law Dean Margaret Raymond, State Bar of Wisconsin President Jill Kastner, and was moderated by Judge Carl Ashley.

During the event, participants were able to pick up a copy of the new book, *The History of Wisconsin's Black Lawyers 2019*. The book includes biographies of several African-American lawyers from the late nineteenth century through the 1960s, a history of the Wisconsin Association of African-American Lawyers, and a roster of Wisconsin's black lawyers from 1888 through 2019.

Inspired by the Wisconsin Association of African-American Lawyers' publication, the David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library created a multimedia display to celebrate the achievements of Wisconsin's Black attorneys, legislators, and judges. The display featured photos, biographies, and items from the library collections, like Wisconsin briefs and historical Supreme Court attorney rolls, which the library holds in its rare book collection.

Display photos are featured on this report's cover.



Attorney Celia Jackson, with the Wisconsin Association of African-American Lawyers, presents Chief Justice Patience Roggensack and State Law Librarian Julie Tessmer Robinson with copies of The History of Wisconsin's Black Lawyers 2019, to add to library collections

County Law Libraries Adapted During the Pandemic

The pandemic meant that our once-bustling county law libraries were suddenly closed to the public. Our county law librarians worked throughout to continue serving their users remotely, and in coordination with local court offices. During this time, library staff collaborated on special projects, planned and implemented phased reopening, and tackled a backlog of work upon return to their libraries.

The Milwaukee County Law Library (MCLL) provided legal forms, copies, and cases by email and helped users over the phone. A new service to users, MCLL began offering no-contact pick-up of forms and free photocopies during regular library hours. Offering up-to-date information about court procedures under pandemic conditions and referrals to organizations offering legal help remained two of MCLL's most important services.

At the Dane County Law Library (DCLL), library staff continued to respond inmate requests for information, while also working closely with the Clerk of Court to provide forms packets and information for courthouse visitors. Both libraries continued to provide reference services over the phone and by email, maintained judicial collections, and worked with courthouse planning committees to safely offer services during the pandemic.



Partnerships

Dane County Jail

The Dane County Sheriff's Department contracts with the library, who responded to requests for legal materials from jail inmates. During the pandemic, photocopy requests were filled regularly.

County Legal Clinics

2020 may be described as a year of isolation but it was also a year of collaboration. As the pandemic forced the closure of local legal clinics, the library was pleased to collaborate with Dane County Bar Association volunteer attorneys to facilitate a unique, statewide, free legal clinic by phone.

The Small Claims Assistance Project (SCAP) and the Family Law Assistance Center (FLAC) have long partnered with the Dane County Law Library to provide in-person consultations with Dane County residents. When these clinics pivoted to service by phone, it provided an opportunity to reach more pro-se users. The library's statewide reach provided a large pool of potential clinic clients.

Through email and phone contacts, reference librarians were able to identify users in need of more in-depth legal support and connect them with clinic volunteers. These weekly, virtual clinics served library users from May through November 2020.

The library also maintains a directory of legal assistance clinics and resources for all 72 counties on the website.

Madison Paralegal Program

The Library has a long-standing partnership with the Madison College Paralegal Program. Librarians are part of the Program's Advisory Board and the Library's collection serves as a resource for faculty and staff. Libraries often host paralegal student interns fulfilling their practicum assignments.

Wisconsin Digital Archive

The library participates in the Wisconsin Digital Archives collection, a cooperative project with state agency librarians to archive and catalog state government publications. Staff catalog publications relevant to the Wisconsin Court System, Wisconsin Department of Justice, and other materials beneficial to our researchers.



2021 Goals

As we look forward to 2021, some of our goals are to:

- Welcome library users back to our main and branch libraries.
- Expand upon our digital collections.
- Update content and redesign popular legal topics pages.
- Continue to develop and offer CLE webinars.
- Enhance the online jury instructions experience for library users.
- Transition to Voice Over Internet Phone system.
- Review book circulation duration and fines policies

**2020, Wisconsin State Law Library
120 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Madison WI 53703**