

# 2021 Annual Report



This year our libraries welcomed walk-in users for copies, forms, and research requests.

Masks and hand sanitizer were made available for visitors to our libraries throughout the year.



Book displays on indigenous law and landlord/tenant issues capped off the end of the year.



New labels on shelf endcaps provide an easier-to-read experience.

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](http://wilawlibrary.gov)**



# Welcome to the Library



On April 20, 1836, then President Andrew Jackson signed an act creating the Territory of Wisconsin. The same federal act appropriated \$5000 towards the purchase of books and the creation of a library to support the new government. Throughout the years, the Wisconsin State Law Library has served the legal information needs of the people of this state. In 2021, the library marked its 185th year of service.

One of the library's most notable service accomplishments in 2021, was hosting the current Wisconsin Jury Instructions on the State Law Library website. The jury instructions transitioned from print to a free online, digital database which provided easy access to judges, attorneys, and self-represented litigants.

The library expanded access for library cardholders throughout the state by adding two new sources to our digital collection. Lexis Digital contains eBook versions of popular legal practice books. CCH AnswerConnect provides Wisconsin and federal tax-related content including the Wisconsin Tax Reporter and Inheritance, Estate and Gift Tax Reporter. The State Law Library's eBook and legal databases continued to provide library cardholders effortless access to reputable sources from their home or office. *(Next page)*



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

## 2021 Staff

### David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library

Amy Crowder, State Law Librarian  
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

### Milwaukee County Law Library

Jamie Neuendorf, Library Associate, Branch Librarian

### LTE Staff

Beth Bland, Library Associate  
Jenna Marquardt, Library Associate

### Dane County Law Library

Bob Lopez, Branch Librarian

### LTE Staff

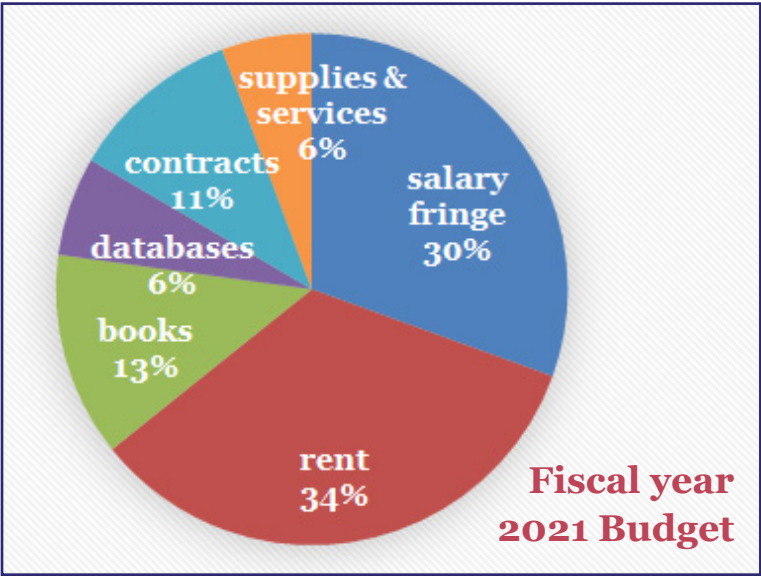
Andrew Briceno, Library Associate  
Susan Lesieutre, Library Associate



After the library’s physical doors were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, legal researchers were welcomed back to the David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library in July. Once again, library users could independently use the library’s print collection, digital subscription databases, and special collections such as briefs and legislative drafting files. The library extended our loan period to four weeks and went fine free.

The Milwaukee County Law Library (MCLL) also marked an anniversary in 2021, celebrating 25 years of service to the Milwaukee County legal community. Throughout the years, MCLL has provided essential access to court forms and a focused collection of legal practice materials. The library’s skilled staff has connected thousands of people with services that helped them navigate the court system.

In 2021, the State Law Library continued to reach out to the greater Wisconsin community. Librarians offered focused presentations to organizations and agencies, well-attended CLE webinars, and two sessions at the Wisconsin Library Association’s annual conference. We authored numerous informative articles for our monthly newsletter WSL@ Your Service and the State Bar of Wisconsin’s InsideTrack. Reference librarians researched and responded to countless reference questions via phone and email. In our 185th year of service, the Wisconsin State Law Library continued to be a reliable source of law-related information for the court system, government, attorneys, and people of this state.



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 updates**

This year brought impactful changes to our staff, first with the appointment of Jamie Neuendorf as the Milwaukee County Law Library’s Branch Librarian. Jamie began working at the library in 2017 as a library associate, and brings a strong customer and public service background to the library.

In November, long time program assistant Tammy Keller retired after 22 years of service. During that time, she provided sterling service to the Wisconsin Court System and the citizens of Wisconsin. In her retirement, Tammy looks forward to spending more time in her garden, traveling, and preparing gourmet meals.

In late November Beth Bland, Milwaukee County Law Library associate, passed away. Beth joined our libraries in 2019, but was a member of Milwaukee’s legal community for many years prior. We remember Beth’s patience, humor, and tremendous work ethic. She was an incredible asset to the library and a good friend who is greatly missed.



# Adaptive Services

## Pandemic Timeline

### March 2020

All locations close to walk-in users, while the David T. Prosser Jr. Library remains open to court users. All locations respond to voicemails and emails and remote services offered by email and mail

### April 2020

Begin hybrid work in the library

### July 2020

Sidewalk service for book checkout and document pick-up begins at the David T. Prosser Jr. Library

### August 2020

Milwaukee County Law Library offers forms and copies pickup in the hallway for social distancing and answers phone calls. The adjacent Milwaukee Justice Center begins offering virtual appointments. The Dane County Law Library partners with the Clerk of Court to provide access to court forms at a free form packet table

### May 2021

The Dane County Law Library offers afternoon walk-in hours for forms and copy services

### June 2021

The David T. Prosser Jr. Library implements a new hybrid schedule for full day live reference assistance over the phone and through existing sidewalk services. The Dane County Law Library provides full day walk-in services

### July 2021

The Risser Justice Center building re-opens to the public, which contains the David T. Prosser Jr. Library. The David T. Prosser Jr. Library opens for full day walk-in services

### August 2021

After Hours access resumes for attorney subscribers at the David T. Prosser Jr. Library. The Milwaukee County Law Library transitions to full day walk-in services

### Sept 2021

Drop-in legal assistance clinics return to the Dane County courthouse and law library

## Fine and Loan Period Changes

During the pandemic, the library recognized the difficulty patrons may have returning materials on time while the building is closed. Because of this, we stopped charging overdue fines at all three locations. Since then, circulation staff have heard many positive comments and appreciation about going fine-free from borrowers. To better accommodate book return by mail and sidewalk circulation services, the library also extended the loan period of books and other materials from 7 days to four weeks, with one renewal.

## Courthouse Services

For our two branch libraries located in the Dane and Milwaukee courthouses, the events of the past two years have required adaptation, creativity, and communication with a broad range of users and collaborators. Here are their stories.

## Milwaukee County Law Library

When the Milwaukee County Law Library (MCLL) closed in late March 2020, staff transitioned many in-person services to remote in order to continue to meet the needs of their users. Self-represented users may be in crisis, facing issues like divorce, custody or child support changes, and rental issues. They need fast answers and access to vital court forms. Early in the pandemic, librarians shifted to providing forms and information by email, and directing users where to find more help. For individuals without access to email or a printer, MCLL coordinated with staff at the David T. Prosser Jr. Library to mail forms directly, and collaborated with legal clinics to refer individuals to virtual services.

MCLL's top priority was to establish a way to safely serve people remotely and in the courthouse. Library staff took a community-oriented approach to planning, monitoring local conditions, and connecting to health authorities, county, and courthouse leadership. Early in the pandemic clear information and established best-practices were scarce, but over the past two years MCLL adapted their pandemic plan

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# Courthouse Libraries

as new best practices came to light. Modeling their reopening plan on other libraries and public health guidelines for businesses, MCLL drafted an early guide for a return to in-person services which became the first approved plan for Milwaukee court departments.

MCLL's library is a relatively small space, and the reopening plan took this into account. Until mid-2021, the library provided a modified hallway service similar to a curbside pickup service. Forms and form packets, along with new information sheets on library resources and Milwaukee Justice Center services, were free to pick up just outside the library doors. Staff could also fill copy requests or other form or book requests placed over the phone, and distribute them to users just outside the library doors.



*Library spaces were modified to help social distancing.*

While MCLL helped users remotely and through their hallway service, staff prepared to re-open to walk-in users. In August 2021, MCLL transitioned to welcome more walk-in traffic, providing space to fill out forms, make copies, and do self-guided research. Evolving services meant excellent communication with users and court staff was paramount. MCLL coordinated with the Milwaukee Justice Center to direct users to needed services throughout the pandemic, and worked with other court departments to address questions about how the library can help courthouse visitors and litigants.

## Dane County Law Library

Similar to Milwaukee, the Dane County Law Library (DCLL) underwent a massive transition in services in the spring of 2020. Staff shifted to serving users remotely, responding to email and voicemails and communicating with judges and court staff electronically. Much of the typical work behind the counter at DCLL involves one-on-one help and the pandemic caused the library to alter the way it provided services.

DCLL research services continued throughout the pandemic, a vital resource to jail residents. The library coordinated with county staff and the David T. Prosser Jr. Library to continue to respond to jail resident requests in a timely manner. The library's collections, as well as a dedicated bank of information, continued to support these requests. As staff returned to working within the courthouse, careful coordination allowed for necessary updates of print books in the library's and judicial collections.

The library participated in reopening planning, preparing its space for new foot traffic flow and safety measures. Similar to MCLL, the DCLL used this time to source plexiglass, set up new procedures for foot traffic, and improve signage and furniture set-up to maximize social distancing.

While DCLL prepared to open to walk-in users, staff coordinated with the Clerk of Court to stock forms and information packets for users looking to file or respond to a court case. Popular legal clinics shifted to remote services or temporary locations during this time and DCLL coordinated with other library and community partners to refer users to these virtual and appointment services. When the library was once again able to open its doors, clinics and users adapted very quickly to in-person clinics once again.

## Successful transitions

Transitioning courthouse library services from remote to in-person took coordination and care, as well as considerable communication. These locations remain ready to respond to changing needs, including a user base that continues to be split into remote and in-person – as we enter the third year of the pandemic. Beginning in 2021, both branch libraries began accepting credit card payments to pay for forms, copies, and other costs offering new convenience to library users.





# Serving Our Users

In 2021 reference librarians continued to facilitate and promote access to legal information, research databases, and the library's print collection. In 2020 we saw users quickly adapt to the library's remote access services, using newly available eBook collections and the long standing Ask a Librarian email service. With vaccines widely available, library doors reopened in July 2021 to walk-in users. However, many law offices have continued remote work or hybrid work as the "new normal." Through full time staffing of the library reference desk, email service, phone service, and our 24/7 website, we are able to meet users at their point of need, wherever they may be.

## Supporting research needs of attorneys, judges, and government employees

Complex legal research often requires a consultation with a reference librarian. Librarians assist attorneys with matters such as legislative history work, judicial council research, locating briefs, finding jury verdicts, and more. Phone tag was common during the 2020 health emergency, but was less of an issue in 2021. Returning to full time phone hours in 2021 allowed for real-time conversation between legal researchers and librarians. Offsite access to Lexis Digital and CCH tax products afforded new opportunities for librarians to guide attorneys in digital research over the phone.

## Practical help to pro se users

Reference librarians strive to meet the needs of all users, particularly those who may be navigating the court system for the first time. Family law and landlord tenant issues dominate questions asked by pro se users. Court procedures, forms, probate, and small claims round out the top five reasons self-represented users contacted us in 2021.

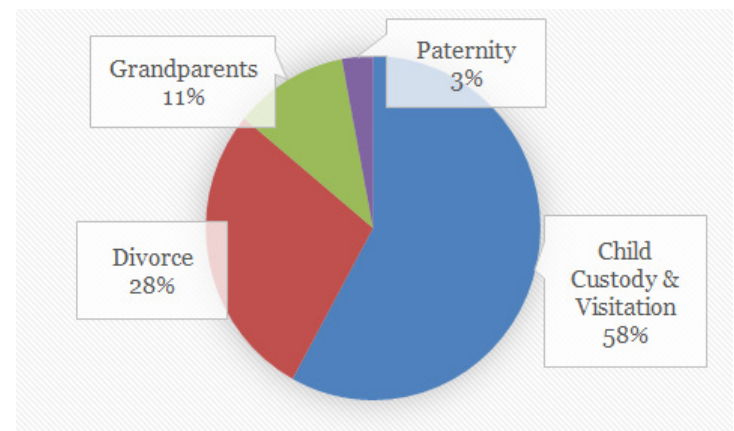
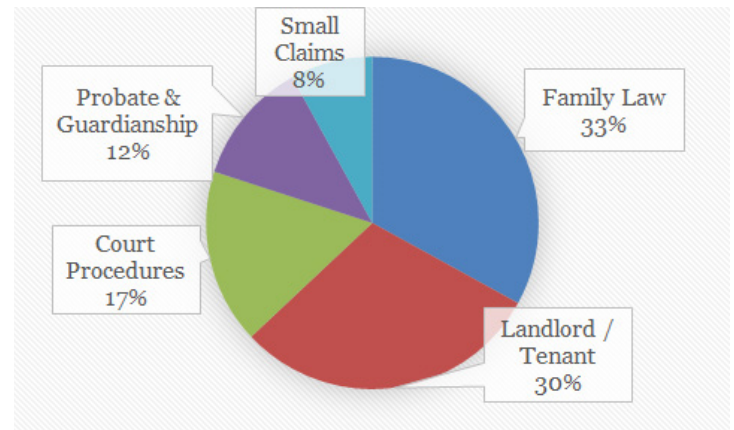
Family law questions make up 1/3 of pro se inquiries. A closer look indicates post-judgment matters often drive users to the library. These include modifying court orders, questions about visitation, and research into grandparents' rights.

## Classes

- 7 CLE or LPM webinars were offered, including Introduction to Legislative History, Advanced Wisconsin Legislative History, Wisconsin Public Records, Google Scholar, HeinOnline, and Advanced Google Searching

## Presentations

- State Law Library resources for Lawyering Skills, UW-Madison Law School – Amy Crowder, March
- New Judge Orientation – Heidi Yelk, July
- UW Forward Fest – Michael Keane, August
- Municipal Attorneys Institute, Elkart Lake – Heidi Yelk, August
- Tax Research Resources for WI Dept. of Revenue – Carol Hassler, September
- Legal Research Tips and Tricks Wisconsin Association for Legal Professionals - Heidi Yelk, October
- Understanding WCCA for WLA Annual Conference – Carol Hassler, November
- Legal Reference Examples and Sources for WLA Annual Conference – Carol Hassler, November
- Legal Research and Reference Tips Wisconsin Association of Legal Professionals – Carol Hassler, November



# Growing Collections

## New Databases & Catalog Updates

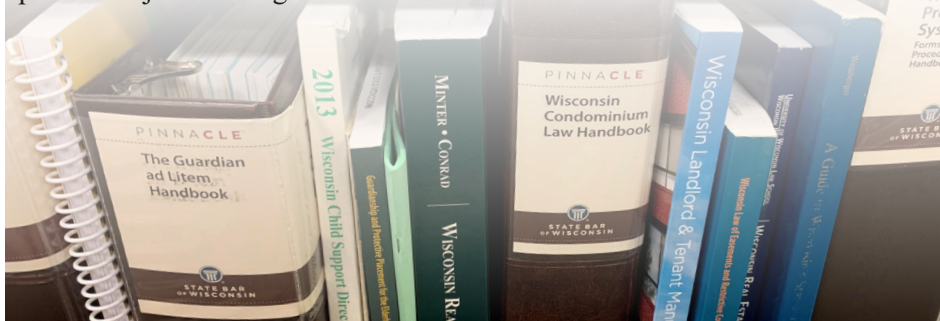
This year the library introduced two new databases for State Law Library card holders. Lexis Digital provides access to eBook versions of popular Lexis titles. CCH AnswerConnect is a one-stop resource for tax articles by topic, with information for Wisconsin and Federal laws.

The Lexis Digital Library debuted at the beginning of 2021 and expanded access to many books beyond the library walls. Librarians added access to 75 eBooks to our library catalog to grant access to these Lexis resources by simply logging in with your library barcode. Titles include *Employment in Wisconsin: Guide to Employment Law*, *Collier on Bankruptcy*, *Corbin on Contracts*, *Moore's Federal Practice*, and more.

Popular CCH tax research sources in CCH AnswerConnect include information found in the Wisconsin Tax Reporter and the full text of the *Inheritance, Estate and Gift Tax Reporter*. Researchers can also find case law, administrative rulings, news, and other resources.

Library patrons enjoyed being able to do research in these eBooks without leaving their offices. Patrons could peruse the collection, read a chosen book, bookmark, highlight and annotate sections with ease from their computer. Virtual checkouts more than doubled compared to prior annual print checkouts.

Over 5,000 of our library catalog book records were enhanced to include online reading links to resources through Google Books, HathiTrust, digital collections, and the Internet Archive. Catalog metadata was updated to reflect current and updated subject headings.



### Top 10 eBooks

1. Nichols on Eminent Domain
2. Collier on Bankruptcy
3. Corbin on Contracts
4. Powell on Real Property
5. Moore's Federal Practice
6. Warren's Forms of Agreements
7. Employment in Wisconsin
8. New Appleman on Insurance
9. Thompson on Real Property
10. Zoning Law and Practice



4,218 cardholders  
216 new users



326 new catalog  
records

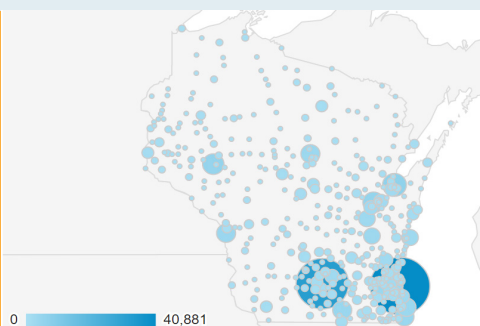


1,587 new items  
and more updated  
looseleaf books



1,472 checkouts  
37 interlibrary  
loan requests

Website  
Visits



The library's website received nearly 1 million views, with many new visitors exploring the newly available Wisconsin Jury Instructions. Popular destinations included:

1. Child custody and placement
2. Firearms
3. Landlord / Tenant
4. Public records
5. Court records
6. Ordinances & codes
7. Divorce & legal separation
8. Legal assistance
9. Children home alone
10. Wills & estate planning



# Partnerships

## Dane County Jail

The Dane County Sheriff's Department contracts with the library, who responded to requests for legal materials from jail residents. During 2021, 10,610 pages were sent and 86 books were loaned to jail residents.

## County Legal Clinics

The branch libraries collaborate with clinics in both courthouses to provide excellent assistance to litigants. The Dane County Law Library helps to coordinate clinics and provides space for clinics to meet in the library. The Milwaukee County Law Library partners with the Milwaukee Justice Center to provide information to self-represented litigants and assist library users with retrieving proof of public benefits.

The State Law Library maintains a directory of legal assistance clinics and resources for all 72 counties on the website.

## Office of Judicial Education

The Office of Judicial Education provides education for judges and Clerks of Court throughout Wisconsin. State Law Library staff regularly collaborate with the Office of Judicial Education to coordinate and share information on Wisconsin Jury Instructions.

## 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.

## State Bar of Wisconsin & Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin

State law library staff authored five articles for a monthly column in the State Bar of Wisconsin's InsideTrack for a regular column coordinated by the Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin.

## 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.

## Wisconsin Judicial Council

The library hosts and maintains the website for the Wisconsin Judicial Council, and stores records for the Council alongside its historical collection of Wisconsin Judicial Council minutes and archives.

## Wisconsin Jury Instructions

In January 2021, the Wisconsin State Law Library began hosting the Wisconsin Jury Instructions on its website, [wilaw-library.gov](http://wilaw-library.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. 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.

This collection debuted in January 2021, and has become a very popular portion of the website. Library staff worked closely with the jury instruction reporter to release two full releases for the Civil and Criminal sets, as well as several interim updates. In late 2021, editable versions of the Civil instructions without commentary were made available on the site. Instructions were viewed over 280,000 times, with nearly 170,000 of those to the Criminal instructions and nearly 60,000 visits to Civil instruction pages.