

# 2022 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](http://wilawlibrary.gov)**



# Welcome to the Library



Photo courtesy State Bar of Wisconsin

Callers to the State Law Library often tell us, “I’m not sure I’m calling the right place” or “I’m not sure who can help.” We quickly assure them contacting a library is often a good first step. The staff of the Wisconsin State Law Library welcomes those looking for information about law and government. It can sometimes be a challenge to know how to start your legal research or where to turn for help. Our reference librarians are ready to offer our expert assistance. We can help you research case law, statutes, regulations, articles, and locate forms. Our libraries can connect you to an appropriate agency or legal assistance organization in your area.

You can rely on libraries to provide access to authoritative sources. The State Law Library can help you access legal practice books and research databases at one of our locations in Madison and Milwaukee. If you are not able to visit in person, librarians can direct you to information over the phone or via email; we can also email you sections or pages from our print and database collections. The library’s website [wilawlibrary.gov](http://wilawlibrary.gov) provides easy access to trustworthy sources of legal information, even when our physical locations are closed.

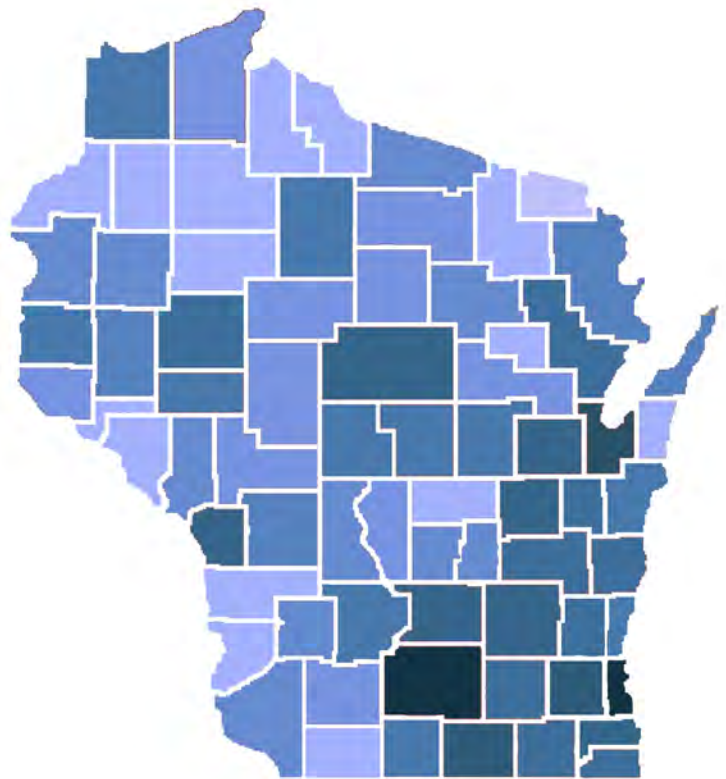
Whether you are a judge, self-represented litigant, a government official, or a member of the public the State Law Library is here to help. We are your State Law Library.

## Updates from Courthouse Libraries

The Milwaukee County Law Library (MCLL) and Dane County Law Library (DCLL) are both bustling libraries located in two of the most populous counties in Wisconsin.

A typical day involves everything from providing access to court forms to complex research questions. These libraries continue to be robust partners in the courthouse, working with court staff and legal clinic volunteers to provide the best service to litigants, attorneys, and judges.

This year, our branch libraries saw a technology upgrade with new patron computers and printers and improved internet access. Both libraries hired and trained new staff, while providing excellent service to new and returning users.



Composite map of cardholders and reference questions received at our libraries in 2022

## Court System Awarded Legal Innovator Award

Carol Hassler, Access Services Librarian, along with Bryce Pierson with the Office of Judicial Education, are proud to receive a 2022 Legal Innovator Award from the State Bar of Wisconsin. This was awarded in recognition of the work done to host the Wisconsin Jury Instructions online at the library's website, [wilawlibrary.gov/jury](http://wilawlibrary.gov/jury). Wisconsin Jury Instructions serve as models, checklists or minimum standards to assist judges and lawyers in providing instructions to jurors who must reach verdicts during trials.

The jury instructions project was completed in 2021 and replaced what had been a paid, subscription-based service of the UW Law School. The move to a free, online format was conducted in cooperation with the law school and the Director of State Courts Office through the State Law Library and Office of Judicial Education.



Photo courtesy State Bar of Wisconsin

Hosting the jury instructions for free online broadens the reach of these works. During 2022, jury instruction pages were visited or documents downloaded over 400,000 times. Over the past few years, visitors to the State Law Library website have used the subject indices and tables, Civil, Criminal, and Children content summaries, and individual pages to download Word and PDF versions of current instructions. Visitors arrive through search engines, as well as direct links from state and local agency websites, Wisconsin law schools and libraries, and a variety of law firm websites or blogs. In the past year, the Wisconsin Jury Instructions have been linked from various social media sources (Facebook, Twitter, and forum sites) as well as news websites, including Wispolitics.com, Wisconsin Law Journal, ABA Journal, MSNBC, and the Guardian.

## New Artwork at the Milwaukee County Law Library

The Milwaukee County Law Library strives to cultivate an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere. New art prints, generously donated by Attorney Joel Rosenthal, help to achieve that goal. The vibrant portraits of influential African Americans in law and politics include civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr., Vice President Kamala Harris, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, and congressman and civil rights activist, John Lewis. All four portraits are by local artist Ari David Rosenthal. Rosenthal also donated three other beautiful prints to the library featuring architectural and landscape themes.



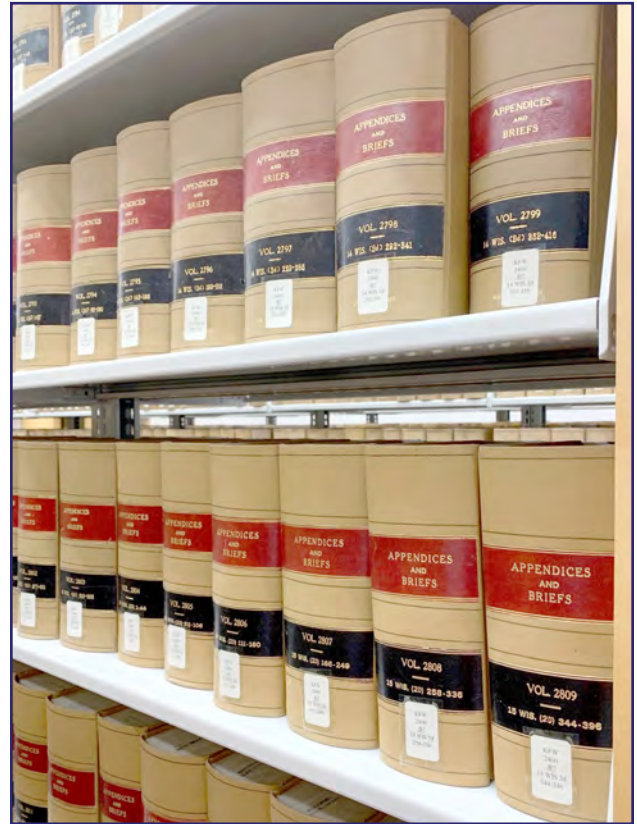


# Special Collections

## Briefs Collection Preserves Wisconsin History

The Wisconsin State Law Library has long recognized the legal research value of appellate briefs and appendices. While near instant access to digital appellate briefs in Wisconsin has taken a step forward since partial electronic filing first began on July 1, 2009, the library has been physically archiving appellate briefs since 1839. In fact, the oldest books in this collection made it through the 1904 capitol fire unscathed! Through the years, the briefs collection has been bound under three different titles. It currently consists of 8073 bound volumes. This physical archive of bound volumes grows at average of 15 linear feet per year. However, growth can vary widely depending on the expansiveness of the filings!

Our collection of appellate briefs and appendices exists in 3 different formats: bound volumes, microfiche, and digital images. The court began microficheing appellate briefs and appendices in 1956 and continued to do so into the 1990s when the state microficheing lab closed. The library maintains a microfiche cabinet containing thousands of flat sheets of fiche, with each sheet holding up to 325 individual pages. Wisconsin State Law Library staff undertook the task of bulk scanning briefs and appendices when microficheing ended. Just imagine what early scanners looked like in the 1990s! We used to feed the pages of the briefs through the scanner individually. While we've written newsletter articles, created tutorials, and maintain a web page detailing the contents of our electronic Wisconsin Briefs collection, we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the depth of the library's physical archive. This collection can only be used in-house at the David T. Prosser Jr. State Law Library. Our librarians are here to assist you in locating briefs from historical and modern cases alike!



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## Compact Storage Fulfills Archival Mission

For a reference librarian or legal researcher, one of the most important spaces in the library is the compact storage area on the third floor. Think of compact storage as the retirement home for legal treatise superstars. *(next page)*

1,436 checkouts

4,283 cardholders

178 new catalog records

1,438 new items and more updated looseleaf books

Over 940,000 website visits

Half of checkouts were updated or new books

135 new users  
25% are new attorneys

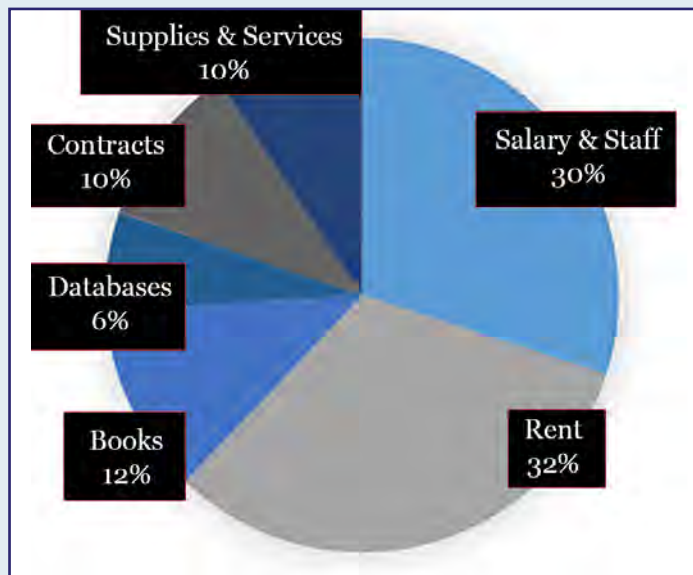
31 interlibrary loan requests

**2022 by the Numbers**

# Robust Research

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.



2022 Budget

## Compact Storage Fulfills Archival Mission

*(from page 4)*

When a secondary source is superseded by a new edition, the older books are not necessarily discarded. Librarians consider whether the superseded version is appropriate for archiving in compact storage. Prior editions of treatises considered significant to the legal research collection are moved to compact storage for preservation. Long-standing titles with multiple editions include Jones on Evidence, Corbin on Contracts, Appleman Insurance Law & Practice, The Law of Municipal Corporations, American Law of Zoning, and LaFave Search & Seizure. More than 800 archived titles are specific to Wisconsin, including prior editions of many State Bar books.



## Book Displays Promote Topical Research

The David T. Prosser Jr. Library began curating book displays to tie in with topics in the newsletter. Displays included: Eviction and landlord tenant law, tax research, business and practice of law, summer activities and the law, Nolo books, and constitutional law.

## Online Form Ordering

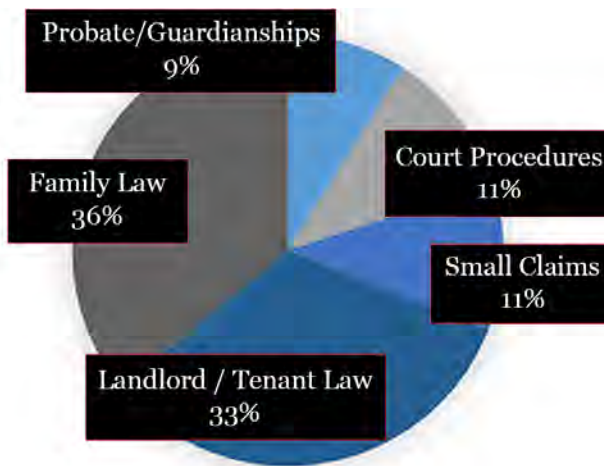
In 2022, the library debuted a new online ordering system, allowing customers to place orders for legal forms and other items at any time. After credit card payment is completed, forms are sent via US Mail. In high demand is the Wisconsin Basic Will, a form based in Wis. Stat. 853.55. Commonly requested landlord / tenant forms are also available. This service is popular with individuals who need forms for small rentals and personal use.



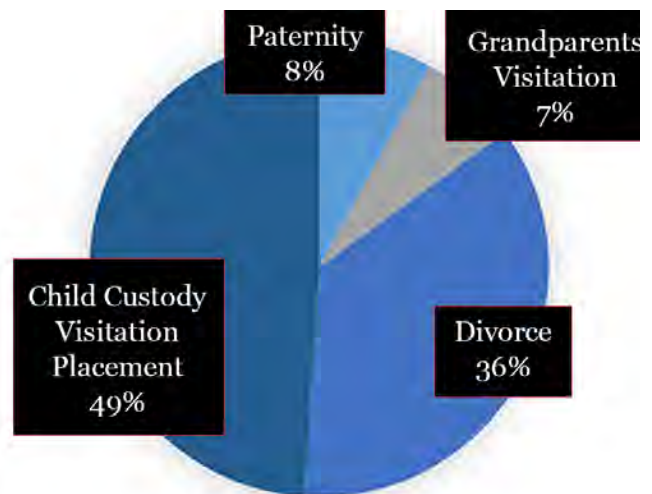
# Serving Our Users

For reference librarians, 2022 marks the first full year of in-person library operations since 2019. This is an important milestone in the return to “normal.” People are at the heart of what we do and real time conversations can be crucial when determining legal research needs. While our email inbox is always open, 2022 saw a new trend of slightly more people preferring to reach us via telephone, 48% vs. 45%.

From appellate procedure to zoning ordinances, reference librarians field questions from A to Z. While librarians are prepared to tackle any question, queries on family law and landlord tenant law continue to dominate. Small claims, court procedures, and probate/guardianship questions round out the top five.



Top five categories of pro se requests



Family law research requests

Within the topic of family law, users frequently come to the library with questions on child custody, visitation and placement.

## Classes

Two new CLE classes were added to the library’s legislative education track in 2022. In the spirit of “prequels” a basic knowledge class of Wisconsin laws and legislative documents was added to provide the foundation needed when tackling a legislative history. A second class, “Special Problems in Researching Wisconsin Legislation,” explores unusual laws and non-statutory provisions. This year we offered the following classes.

- Tax Research Sources and Strategies - March webinar
- Wisconsin legislature website - June webinar
- Basic Knowledge for Legislative Research in Wisconsin - June in-person class, September webinar
- Introduction to Wisconsin Legislative history - April, October webinars
- Missing or Repealed Statutes and other special problems in Wisconsin Legislative Research - July in-person class
- Advanced Wisconsin Legislative History - February, May, November webinars

# Partnerships

## **Dane County Jail**

The Dane County Sheriff's Office contracts with the library, who responded to requests for legal materials from jail residents. During 2022, 14,040 pages were sent and 149 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 also 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.

## **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, [wilawlibrary.gov](http://wilawlibrary.gov). 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. Library staff work closely with the jury instruction reporter to load new releases and other updates to the website.



# Presentations and Articles

- Using the State Law Library  
Advanced Legal Research class, UW-Madison Law School, April
- State Law Library resources for Lawyering Skills  
UW-Madison Law School –April
- New Judge Orientation
- Legal Research Tools and Techniques  
State Bar of Wisconsin seminar - May
- Wisconsin Judicial Conference - November
- Discovering legal resources: legal research tips (YouTube) with Wisconsin Valley Library System
- Navigating the legal reference interview (YouTube) with Wisconsin Valley Library System
- Navigating the access to justice gap & finding legal assistance (YouTube) with Wisconsin Valley Library System
- WLA Annual Conference: Access to Justice and the Public Library
- WLA Annual Conference: Navigating Legal Reference Questions

State law library staff authored five articles for the State Bar of Wisconsin's publications, as part of an initiative spearheaded by the Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin

## InsideTrack

- Legal Research 101: Crafting Commercial Lease Agreements, by Amy Crowder
- Legal Research 101: Finding Tax Law Resources, by Carol Hassler
- Legal Research: New Lawyers: Grow Your Practice by Reusing Knowledge, by Carol Hassler
- Researching Private and Public Businesses, Specialized Industries, by Carol Hassler (featured article)

## Wisconsin Lawyer

- Legal Resources: Researching Stormwater and Flood Management, by Carol Hassler

## 2022 Staff

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

Amy Crowder, State Law Librarian  
Nate Anderson, Reference and Electronic Services Librarian  
Abigail Case, Program Associate  
Elspeth Gordon, Library Associate  
Carol Hassler, Access Services Librarian  
Jaime Healy-Plotkin, Cataloger  
Abby Hoffman, Library Assistant  
Angela Humiston, Wisconsin Collections Librarian  
Michael Keane, Reference and Instruction Librarian  
Keely Wrolstad, Cataloging and Metadata Librarian  
Heidi Yelk, Director of Reference, Deputy Law Librarian  
Kari Zelinka, Acquisitions Librarian

#### LTE Staff

Patti Bishop, Library Assistant  
Katie Mamrosh, Library Assistant  
Chris Schroeder, Library Assistant

### Milwaukee County Law Library

Jamie Neuendorf, Branch Librarian  
Faymarie Pluskota, Library Associate  
LTE Staff  
Victor Hoel, Library Associate  
Jenna Marquardt, Library Associate

### Dane County Law Library

Bob Lopez, Branch Librarian  
LTE Staff  
Sara Andrews, Library Associate