

# Statewide Access to Justice (A2J) and Self-Represented Litigant (SRL) Collaborations Between Law Libraries AND Courts, Bar Associations, and Legal Aid Organizations

**A work in progress:** Updated April 17, 2014

Corrections and additions are welcome: [lawlibrary@co.washington.or.us](mailto:lawlibrary@co.washington.or.us)  
WASHINGTON COUNTY (Oregon) LAW LIBRARY

**Background:** State, state-court, and public law librarians around the country were asked if they had any statewide *collaborative* law library AND court, legal aid, and/or local or state bar association A2J or SRL programs in their states.

We are not looking for library-only or lawyer-only initiatives. We are seeking descriptions of collaborative endeavors only, i.e. law librarians working WITH their state's lawyers and courts on Access to Justice and Self-Represented Litigant programs.

## STATE DESCRIPTIONS:

### ARIZONA

- The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education, a 501c3 organization created by the Arizona State Bar in 1978, is holding forums at several locations around the state for input on the structure and membership of an Access to Justice Commission. Ad hoc committees include library, attorney and public members.
- The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education is continuing its mission of promoting access to justice for all Arizonans. They are continuously working to bring together various interests and/or potential partners to support, advertise and promote Access to Justice projects. The activities of the foundation are documented in their quarterly reports which can be found at the website (<http://www.azflse.org/>).
- In 2013 and 2014, a selected group of public librarians in Maricopa County, the state's largest county, are participating in Access to Justice training (Law4AZ). They are learning about the legal sources available to all Arizonans and learning the local or statewide sources they can direct library users to for additional assistance.

### CALIFORNIA

- California Judicial Council Task Force on Self Represented Litigants (SRL). The Task Force, chaired by Justice Kathleen O'Leary, Presiding Judge, California 4th District Court of Appeal, includes a county law librarian. Link to the current TF roster: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/selfrep.pdf>
- California Commission on Access to Justice. The Commission has been a nationwide leader in the Access to Justice movement. Their website for more info: <http://cc.calbar.ca.gov/CommitteesCommissions/Special/AccessToJustice.aspx>.

- The Council of California County Law Librarians (CCCLL) is an appointing entity to the Commission. Marcia Bell, from the San Francisco Law Library, is the current CCCLL representative to the Commission.
- The State Bar of California has a legal services/access to justice center and staff members from that group serve the Commission, among other duties:  
<http://calbar.ca.gov/AboutUs/CenteronAccesstoJustice.aspx>
- Each year (for about the last 7 years) the California Administrative Office of the Courts has held a Statewide Conference on Self Represented Litigants where County Law Librarians have joined Court-based self help center attorneys and staff on Presentation Panels.
- California Judicial Council Task Force on Self Represented Litigants:  
<http://www.courts.ca.gov/3046.htm>
- In 2003, California Council of County Law Libraries (CCCLL) became an appointing entity to the [California Access to Justice Commission](#). A county law librarian has served on the Judicial Council's Self-Represented Litigants Task Force since 2001.  
<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/proper.pdf>
- Law librarians are involved in access to justice issues with the State Bar (contact Larry Meyer, San Bernardino County LL), and a program with the AOC and public libraries (contact: Los Angeles County Law Library).
- County law librarians may be involved in efforts to develop or improve access to justice in their communities. For example, one is a member of the local Self-Help working group which includes court, local government, legal aid organizations, and community members.
- There is also a Judicial Branch-wide Self Help Center, available at:  
<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>
- There's also Justice Corps: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/programs-justicecorps.htm>
- An "Ask Now" 24/7 real-time chat service (coordinated by the Sacramento County Public Law Library) found online at the California Courts Self-Help Center  
<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>
- Ten County Law Libraries have committed "Ask Now" volunteers to cover the 8-5 workweek every week for over 5 years: [http://www.247ref.org/portal/access\\_law3.cfm](http://www.247ref.org/portal/access_law3.cfm)
- Participating "Ask Now" Libraries include Bernard E. Witkin California State Law Library, Fresno County Law Library, LA Law Library, Orange County Public Law Library, Placer County Law Library, Riverside County Law Library, Sacramento County Public Law Library, San Bernardino County Law Library, San Diego County Public Law Library , San Francisco Law Library

## **HAWAII**

- The State Law Librarian currently participates in statewide A2J in an advisory capacity. The Judiciary will partner with Legal Aid Hawaii and the State public library system to

educate/promote/expand on a self-help interactive court forms initiative. SJI grant funds support this project.

- See also the Hawaii Justice Commission: <http://www.hawaiijustice.org/>

## **ILLINOIS**

- Article X of the Illinois Supreme Court Rules was adopted in 2012: Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice. Currently, The Kane County Law Librarian sits on the Illinois Access to Justice Commission as a member of the Expungement/Sealing Subcommittee of the Standardized Forms Committee.
- She is also Chair of the Access to Legal Services Committee of the Kane County Bar Association, and a member of the Kane County Bar Foundation Board – chair of their committee that awards grants to local legal aid programs.

## **KENTUCKY**

- The State Law Librarian currently chairs the Public Services Committee for the KY A2J Commission. (2014)
- Kentucky State Law Library partners with legal aid societies and public libraries in on future grants from LSC. Members of the KY team have given presentations on Libraries and Access to Justice initiatives at the 2013 EJC and the 2014 TIG conference (<http://tig.lsc.gov/>).
- Public Services Committee (f/k/a Library and Pro Se), chaired by Commissioner (& State Law Librarian) Jennifer Frazier reported on several matters: a proposed rule change for corporate counsel, library trainings and development of pro se handbook.
- First, the rule change will allow corporate in-house counsel admitted under the limited admission certificate to do pro bono work. The rule passed the Commission, has been endorsed by the Kentucky Bar Association, and has been submitted to the Kentucky Supreme Court rules committee.
- Second: Law library training initiatives: In partnership with the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives (KDLA) and Legal Aid Society in Louisville (LAS), the Public Service Committee organized 5 regional trainings for public librarians to assist pro se patrons. Grant monies were available to provide lunches. Supreme Court justices supported the events by encouraging state librarians to attend. The trainings focused on what constituted the unauthorized practice of law, where to find resources online, demonstrating the new triage tool designed by LAS and conducting a reference interview without crossing into legal advice. The programs were all well received and one session was recorded and will be available online through the KDLA website for future viewing by public librarians. This project was the main focus of the committee and took a great deal of time.
- The third initiative of the Public Service Committee is the development of a pro se brochure that gives information about the courts and court proceedings to individuals proceeding without an attorney. The brochures were to be distributed in the fall for comments and edits to judiciary and circuit court clerks.

## MAINE

- Judiciary and the Maine Justice Action Group <http://www.mbf.org/content/justice-action-group> are (were?) co-sponsoring an initiative called "The Collaboration," which tries to match the resources of the Judicial Branch, the Volunteer Lawyer Project, the legal aid providers, and public libraries to help self-represented litigants understand the judicial process and prepare their cases.
- Possible contact for more info: Executive Coordinator of the Justice Action Group, Carrie Wilshusen, who can be reached at (207) 332-6565 or at [cwilshusen@mbf.org](mailto:cwilshusen@mbf.org).

## MARYLAND

- Maryland law librarians serve on the Maryland Access to Justice Commission <http://www.mdcourts.gov/mdatjc/> and of various working committees, including for self-represented litigants and public education.
- They held a successful and well-attended 2014 Access to Justice Conference, with librarian and lawyer representatives from Maryland several other states: <http://llamonline.org/lri2014/2014-lri-program-handouts/>

## MASSACHUSETTS

- The website [www.masslegalhelp.org](http://www.masslegalhelp.org) links to the Massachusetts Trial Court Law Libraries chat service <http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/libraries/services/ask.html>. Librarians answer questions generated from the Massachusetts Legal Services website.
- The project came about as part of Massachusetts Legal Services participation in a Gates Foundation funded conference in Texas on how the legal community can work with the librarian community on Access to Justice Commission collaboration program.
- Law librarians are also on Access to Justice Commission (A2J) Working Group for Technology and Websites and Working Group for Probate & Family Courts, a Self-Help Materials Task Force and the Information Center Task Force.
- The Trial Court Law Libraries work with the public libraries doing training, site visits, etc. so that most public libraries know to direct legal questions to the Trial Court Law Libraries or our website [www.lawlib.state.ma.us](http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us).

## MICHIGAN

- Report from Laura Mancini, Director of Oakland County Law Library, on Michigan A2J activities.
- In 2010, Michigan Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly looked at Illinois and Texas SHC models and convened a Task Force, including 90 people from the bar, libraries, law schools, bench, i.e. a cross section of the entire legal community. From that Task Force the [Michigan Legal Help](#) program was born. It is [supported by a cross section of the Michigan legal community](#).
- Michigan now has one centralized website for all SRLs, (family, landlord-tenant, expungement, consumer law help, etc.) The website has Toolkits (decided on 6th grade reading level, plain language). It mirrors language people use when they come up to CLL reference desk.
- Information people get is targeted to their local resources, to their geographic location.

- Toolkit includes legal self-help topics, articles, videos, checklists, but not yet forms, since there are no court-approved forms (this facet of the service is under development).
- The Michigan Court Administrative Office is working on approved forms for family and family-related legal issues. They have partnered with Law Help Interactive. (Similar to Turbo-tax services.) The State does accept these forms from Law Help Interactive. They are structured for simple matters. The website goes directly to Hot Docs.

## **MINNESOTA**

- Minnesota Statewide Law Library-Self-Help Center Workgroup report: <http://mn.gov/lawlib/StatewideLLReport.pdf>
- Central Minnesota Legal Services received a LSC TIG award to develop legal aid-library collaborations. This included a statewide webinar series conducted in the fall of 2012 to train librarians about online legal resources, including resources available from law libraries: <http://www.lawhelpmn.org/resource/public-libraries-access-to-justice-project>. In addition, the State Law Library now helps to staff the LiveHelp service on the LawHelpMN.org website, which is housed at Legal Services State Support.
- Has a Statewide Self Represented Litigant (SRL) Service Center Manager who manages the development and delivery of statewide services to educate and assist self-represented litigants, and enhancing public access to justice and the efficiency of court operations. It includes managing a centralized “virtual” Self Help Center that provides services to litigants statewide through web content, email and telephone support, as well as over-seeing the day-to-day operations of the 4th Judicial District’s (Hennepin County) two walk-in Self Help Centers, located at the Hennepin County Government Center and Family Justice Center. There are offices in both the Hennepin County Government Center in downtown Minneapolis and the Minnesota Judicial Center in Saint Paul and provides work direction and supervision to multiple attorneys and other staff positions and reports to the Director of Court Services.

## **MONTANA**

- The State Law Librarian is on two subcommittees for the Montana Supreme Court’s Access to Justice Commission. <http://courts.mt.gov/supreme/boards/a2j/default.mcpX>. These subgroups are:
  - Self-Represented Litigants: [http://courts.mt.gov/supreme/boards/self\\_represented\\_litigants/default.mcpX](http://courts.mt.gov/supreme/boards/self_represented_litigants/default.mcpX)
  - Communication and Outreach.
- Within the Self-Represented Litigant Subcommittee, the State Law Librarian is heavily involved with form production.
- The State Law Librarian is also involved with the local bar association efforts to create a pro bono legal representation clinic in the state law library and serves on several committees for Montana Legal Services. She also serves on several committees for the Montana State Bar with the goal of providing legal materials to individuals other than attorneys. She also works in a variety of capacities to bring legal information to public libraries in Montana and their self-represented patrons.

## NEBRASKA

- Has a Pro Se committee headed by the Supreme Court. Committee is comprised of lawyers, judges, Legal Aid, the Nebraska Bar and a law librarian.
- <http://supremecourt.ne.gov/2554/nebraska-supreme-court-implementation-committee-pro-se-litigation>

## NEW MEXICO

- The State Law Librarian is co-chair of New Mexico's Access to Justice Commission's Pro Bono Working Group.
- The New Mexico Supreme Court Law Library collaborates with New Mexico Legal Aid and other organizations to provide technical support at law fairs including pro bono consultation via Skype.
- The New Mexico Supreme Court Law Library is beginning to train public librarians to provide limited legal information and is working to facilitate collaborations between public libraries and the Access to Justice Commission.

## OREGON

- The Clackamas County Bar Association (CCBA) is working on a partnership with Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO), the Clackamas Service Center (CSC), and the Clackamas County Law Library to create and coordinate a pro bono project.
- LASO would screen and schedule potential clients and CCBA attorneys would provide pro bono services. The pro bono project will serve vulnerable Clackamas County residents living at below 125% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. Contact: Jennifer Dalglish, Clackamas County Law Librarian: <http://www.clackamas.us/lawlibrary/>

## TEXAS

- County law librarians serve on the Texas Access to Justice Commission Self-Represented Litigants Committee and Uniform Forms Task Force: <http://www.texasatj.org/>
- Texas Legal Services Center's (TLSC) Self-Represented Litigants' Project has four components: 1) installing two self-help workstations in the Lubbock County Law Library; 2) producing a self-help video giving self-represented litigants basic information such as how to file documents with the clerk's office and what happens in an uncontested divorce hearing.
- TexasLawHelp.org is a website dedicated to providing free, reliable legal information to low-income Texans. It is part of a broader effort within the national legal aid community to use technology, specifically the Internet, to enhance and expand the delivery of legal aid. In 2013, the website attracted more than 815,000 unique visitors, with 5,900,000 pages viewed.
- The Legal Services Corporation provided initial funding for the website. TexasLawHelp.org is a program of the Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC). TLSC is a non-profit law office founded in 1977 whose mission is to improve the quality of advocacy and expand availability of legal

services for low-income Texans. The website is also supported by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, Travis County Law Library, and Pro Bono Net.

- The Texas Law Help website now has interactive forms, the Supreme Court approved divorce forms, and videos. The Texas Court Help website: <http://texaslawhelp.org/>
- Not sure if law or public librarians are or were included in these other A2J groups: Texas Court Help: <http://www.texascourthelp.org/> or the Texas Access to Justice Commission: <http://www.texasatj.org> (see also <http://www.texasatj.org/SRL>). The former refers SRL to public law libraries and the latter ???

## UTAH

- The Utah State Courts has a Standing Committee on Resources for Self-Represented Parties that consists of representatives from the courts (the law library, judges and court clerks), legal aid agencies, attorneys, the state bar, and the community.
- This was a court initiative to respond to the problem of self-reps overwhelming the courts.
- [https://www.utcourts.gov/resources/reports/docs/ProSe\\_Strategic\\_Plan-2006.pdf](https://www.utcourts.gov/resources/reports/docs/ProSe_Strategic_Plan-2006.pdf)

## WASHINGTON STATE

- The Justice Without Barriers Committee is a standing committee of the Washington Supreme Court's Access to Justice Board. Law Librarians serve on committees and panels of the ATJ Board: <http://www.wsba.org/atj>
- See also Equal Justice Coalition <http://www.ejc.org/>

## OTHER RESOURCES:

Round-ups of access to justice (A2J) program resources are available from [Richard Zorza's Access to Justice website](#) and from [Charles Dyer](#), including, but not limited to the following:

- [ABA Access to Justice Resource Center](#): "The Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives was created to better serve bar, bench and legal services leaders who are engaged in establishing or expanding state access to justice efforts...."
- [SelfHelpSupport.org](#) is a national clearinghouse of information on self-representation This website has links to and from a wide range of people, organizations, and information.
- Ditto: [Self-Represented Litigation Network](#)
- In 2012, Pro Bono Net produced a four-part national webinar series on the role of libraries in access to justice and legal aid-library partnership models. Recordings and materials from the series are posted here: <http://www.probono.net/librarywebinars>

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