

2016



# MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

# Minnesota State Law Library Annual Report

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## New Initiatives and Services

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### New Website

In January, the State Law Library rolled out a [new website](#). This was a much-needed revision, as our previous site was developed in the 1990s. Last year we had 914,472 hits on the website. Our most popular legal topics pages were Appeals; Wills, Trusts, & Estate Planning; and Child Custody & Parenting Time.

### Self-Help Appeals Clinic

The Law Library partnered with the Appellate Practice Section of the MSBA to start an [appeals clinic](#) for self-represented appellants. The clinic is held at the State Law Library, but customers who are not able to travel to the library can call in to speak to an attorney. In 2016, the clinic assisted 96 customers. The clinic was staffed by 21 volunteer attorneys and 5 librarian volunteers. 94% of the customers responded they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service.

### Why Treaties Matter Exhibit

In March, the law library hosted the exhibit [Why Treaties Matter: Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nation](#). This is a nationally recognized, award-winning, traveling exhibit developed by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, the Minnesota Humanities Center, and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian. Opening remarks were given by Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. In addition, Professor Colette Routel, Co-Director of the Indian Law Program at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, delivered a short presentation titled, "Finding the Indian Understanding of Treaties."



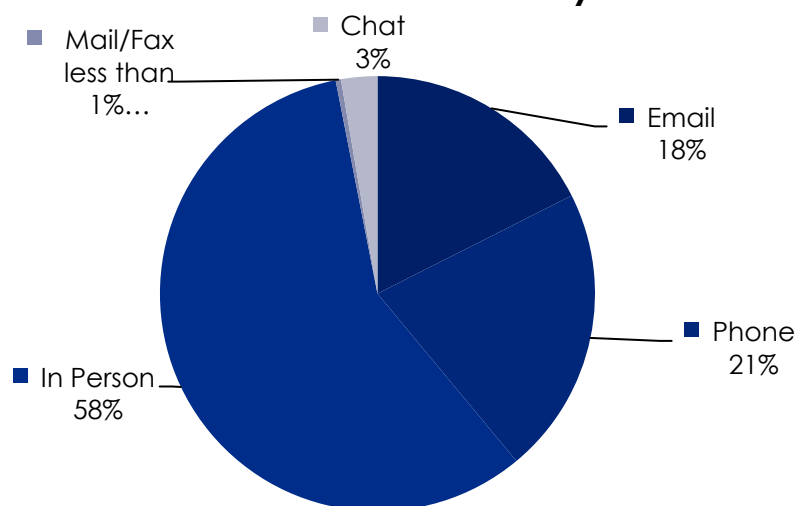
# Assisting our Patrons

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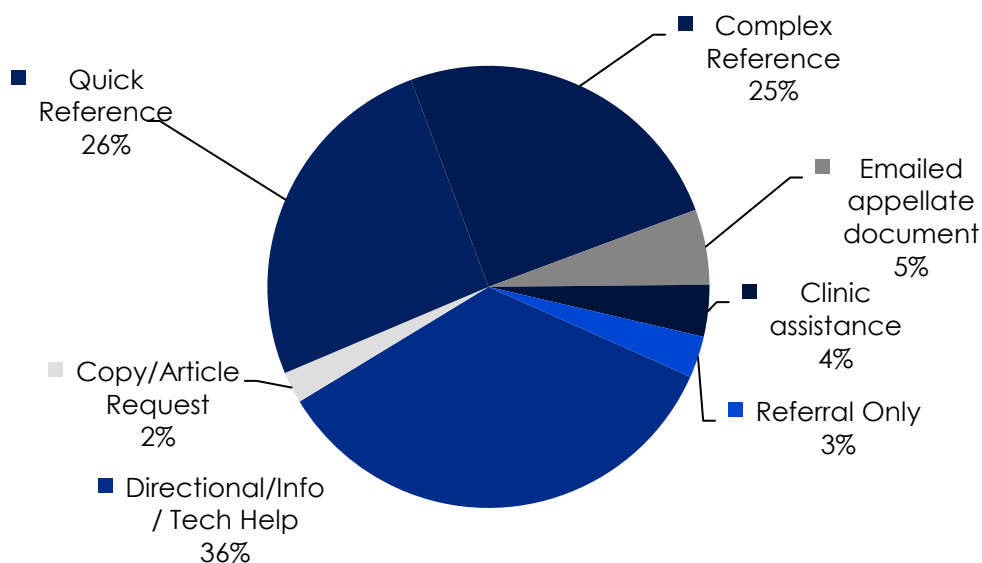
## Answering Questions

Our patrons contact us in-person, and via phone, email, and mail. We make an effort to serve people in the manner that they prefer. The reference librarians answered 6,595 questions. In addition, 1,391 people who did not need assistance from staff visited the library to use our resources, and just over 1,000 people toured the library over the course of the year.

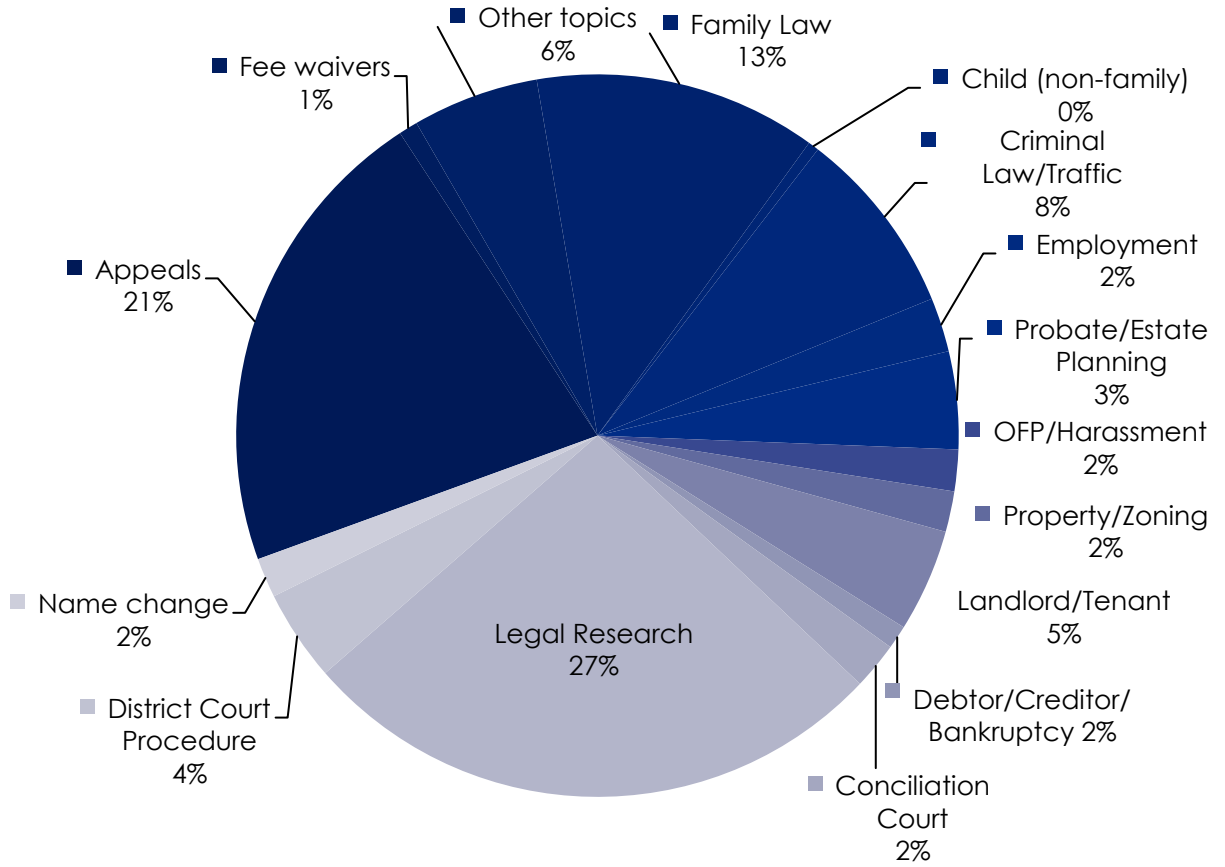
### Methods of Access to Library Staff



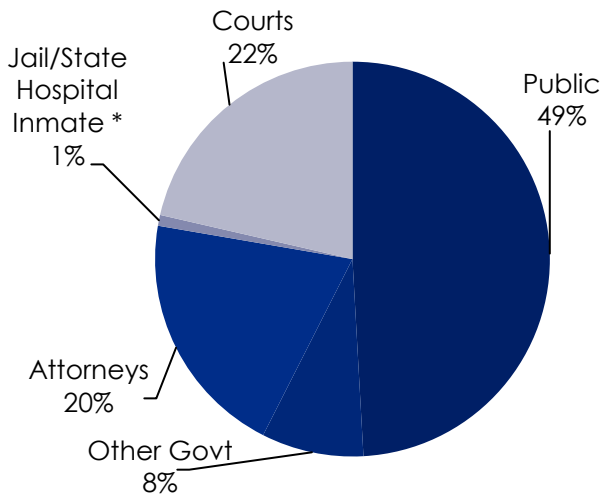
### Types of Questions



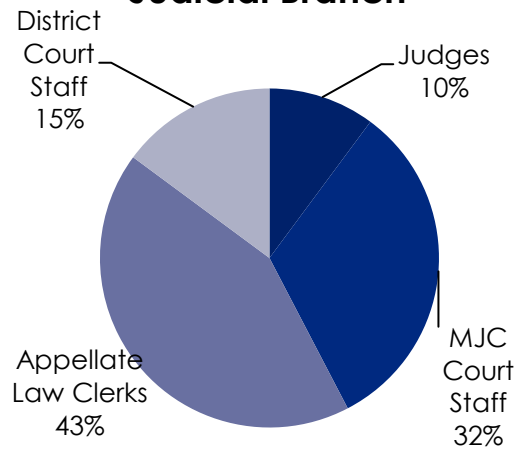
### Types of Questions by Subject



### Types of Library Patrons



### Types of Users in the Judicial Branch



## A Sampling of Interesting Questions

- I know there are laws for starting a human cemetery in Minnesota. Are there any state laws or guidelines to opening a pet cemetery? Are there any rules or regulations regarding the operation of a pet cemetery?
- How do I complain about impassable roads? I live in [a] township. The only way out is on 142 owned by [the] Township. It's impassable due to mud. The other route is on the DNR road which is also impassable due to mud. It's a minimum maintenance road. What laws apply? Who does the township answer to if they fail to maintain the roads?
- Can you help me find case law on seizure of crops for lack of payment on a farm lease?
- I am looking for case law or something on evicting an adult child. Perhaps the person is a licensee, rather than tenant?
- Is it Minnesota state law that someone making a verbal contract is obligated to comply with agreement if part or all of agreement is documented and when presented is not denied?
- Can an ex-wife give her niece the portion of pension that she was awarded in the divorce upon her death?
- I am in operation of an impound lot and we do not let people into their cars that are impounded for legal reasons, but just had a police department tell us we had to let them in to retrieve their stuff out of the car. Are we required to let them in their cars to retrieve personal belongings?
- Hello, I'm doing research on the Great Depression for a National History Day project. I was wondering if you could provide me with a digital copy of the 1933 Farm Foreclosure Moratorium passed in 1933 or any primary source photos related to that incident.
- Back in 2004 I received a felony DWI, no injury to any one, just a DWI, I would like to know when I would be able to use and own a firearm.
- Hello, I have a question about if there is ever a time where an employer can legally ask for their hourly employee to work without pay. This question comes from a job interview I recently had at a church. The job was for a part-time hourly paid position. However, I was told that expectations of the job are such that the work cannot be done in the hours provided and, therefore, it would be expected that I do some work off the clock. This off the clock work would not necessarily be every week, but a regular occurrence. The way this was explained to me is that the job is really a volunteer position where the worker would be compensated for only 10 hours a week. Can an employer, even a registered 501c 3 employer, expect a paid worker to also volunteer?
- Can you help me find information on the transfer of a guardianship? There are forms online but they all are terminating, not transferring.

## Self-Help Clinics

In addition to the new general Appeals Self-Help Clinic (see above), the State Law Library continues to offer an [Unemployment Appeals Self-Help Clinic](#) twice per month. In 2016, the clinic assisted 32 people who were considering appealing their denial of benefits to the Court of Appeals. The vast majority of these types of appeals (82%) involve an unrepresented party.

## Online Presence

### Opinion and Briefs Archive

Since 1996 the State Law Library has provided an online, [searchable database](#) of appellate court decisions. Significant improvements were made to the functionality of it during the website redesign project.

The library also maintains a searchable database of appellate briefs from published Minnesota Court of Appeals and Supreme Court cases. Coverage goes back to 2005.

### Social Media

The library now has 181 [Facebook](#) followers. This is an increase of 58% from 2015. The library's [Twitter feed](#) now has 1,239 followers, up 13% from last year.

## Current Awareness

Each month the State Law Library compiles a list of articles of interest to the courts and distributes the articles to all members of the Judicial Branch. In 2016, a total of 516 articles were sent, an average of 46 articles per month. The rate at which these articles were accessed varied from month to month, with a high of 383 total views in May (287 judicial staff and 96 by judges and justices) and a low of 63 views in November (45 by judicial staff and 18 by judges or justices). Articles that received the most attention were on topics such as legal writing, family law, and specialty courts. The single most accessed article, with 30 separate views was "New Best Interest of the Child Factor – A Summary of the New Provision in the Minnesota Family Law" which was published in the January issue of *Minnesota Bench & Bar*.

A separate list of diversity articles was also compiled over the course of 2016 and was made available with the release of the January 2017 monthly articles email. In addition to articles, tables of contents of legal periodicals were sent to MJC employees who indicated an interest in a particular journal or a particular topic.

## Interlibrary Loan

The State Law Library provides an interlibrary loan service for the Judicial Branch. This includes both books and journal articles. In 2016, the library obtained 54 items for the court and loaned 99 items to other libraries.

## Continuing Legal Education

The State Law Library offers [free CLEs](#) for the judicial branch and other interested attorneys. In 2016, the library hosted nine CLE programs (four standard credits, two ethics credits, and three elimination of bias credits).

## Law Clerk Assistance

The library has been actively reaching out to judicial law clerks. While appellate law clerks have long been active patrons of the law library, many district court law clerks have not been aware that the library can provide them research help. To remedy this, the library started a quarterly law clerk newsletter, and a dedicated [lawclerkhelp@courts.state.mn.us](mailto:lawclerkhelp@courts.state.mn.us) email account. It has become a popular resource and the library regularly gets emails from law clerks all over the state.

The State Law Librarian arranged several training sessions for the appellate law clerks on how to do Minnesota legislative history research. Many of the new Court of Appeals and Supreme Court clerks attended.

## Kudos

The State Law Library aims to provide excellent service to all of our patrons. We appreciate knowing if we are succeeding.

- You guys are truly an amazing resource. – *district court clerk*
- Thank you! The law library is such a wonderful resource. – *appellate court clerk*
- Thank you for your help. It was a pleasure having the contact, not only refreshing, insightful, but reminded me that people truly do care and stand on the importance that the truth does prevail. – *member of the public*
- Thank you so much! You are awesome and just made my day! - *legal assistant*
- The librarian was great in her assistance to me. I was there for an oral argument and I needed to see a retired edition of Minn. Stat. Ann. It wasn't on the shelf but she got what I needed on Westlaw in a few seconds. I'm not so good at Westlaw and had not been able to find it. – *attorney*
- Thank you so much! I am deeply appreciative of your prompt and thorough reports. – *district court judge*
- Thank you so much for tracking this down for me. I've long believed librarians are a key component to a high quality of life. If that sounds a bit over the top, you don't know the level of frustration you alleviated with your assistance. Please extend my thanks to the librarian who answered the phone. - *executive branch attorney*
- Excellent – thanks so much. Our staff certainly appreciates the value of having law librarians as a resource! – *district court staff*
- Thank you very much. I appreciate your fast and thorough response. You made my day better. – *member of the public*



- Thank you! Your CLEs are always well thought out, timely, and very interesting – *district court clerk*
- It is such an honor to have this service and the wonderful staff who year after year provide us here at [prison] with help and respect. You have reassured me that there are people who care. – *inmate*
- It has been such a pleasure getting to work with you this year! I have appreciated the assistance you and the rest of the folks in the library have provided. Please relay my gratitude. – *appellate court law clerk*
- Thank you so much for such a quick response, this was incredibly helpful. – *government attorney from Maryland*
- This is great information. Thank you to you and your staff for the help; much appreciated. – *court staff*
- Thanks! That is exactly what I needed. – *attorney*

## Outreach

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The State Law Library makes an effort to reach people outside of our walls. We travel to public libraries, bar associations, and county law libraries in order to raise awareness of the State Law Library and its services.

### Public Libraries

- January - La Crescent Public Library, training for staff and public
- January - Rochester Public Library, staff training
- April – Educational program for public librarians (co-sponsored with the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries)
- April - Rochester Public Library, training for the public
- September – Minnesota Library Association, Rapid Fire Reference – Legal Resources presentation

### Legal Community

- February – Liz Reppe presented the CLE “Minnesota Legislative History Research” for the Attorney General’s Office.
- March – Liz Reppe presented the CLE “Skip Tracing Using Free Web Resources” at the 1th District Bar Association meeting.
- April – Liz Reppe presented the CLE “Appellate Resources” for the Ramsey County Bar Association.

### County Law Libraries

- January – McLeod County Law Library visit
- February – Waseca County Law Library visit
- August - Cook County Law Library visit

- October – Educational program for county law library staff (co-sponsored with the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries)

## Managing the Collection

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The Technical Services Department is responsible for ordering, receiving, processing, and cataloging books and other media - including websites and online documents - for the library's collection. In addition, the department catalogs materials for seven county law libraries. The department also serves as a publisher of the Minnesota appellate courts' briefs on microfiche for county and academic law libraries.

### Staff Changes

The biggest changes to the Technical Services department this year involved the departure of a long-time staff member, the promotion of two current staff, and hiring of two new staff members after the realignment of an open position. Elizabeth Tuckwood was promoted to Librarian, Elizabeth Karges was promoted to Library Technician, Jacob Frank was hired to be a full-time clerk and Alyssa Matlon was hired as a part-time clerk.

### 2016 Statistics

- 1,137 items circulated
- 2,019 continuation items added in the three libraries (new replacement volumes and hardbound supplements)
- 363 new titles added
- 192 original cataloging records created
- 1,423 briefs processed
- 2,826 Federal Depository Library items added

### Minnesota Legal Periodical Index

The [Minnesota Legal Periodical Index](#) (MLPI) is a database of Minnesota legal periodicals that the State Law Library has developed and maintained since 1984. It includes periodicals published by Minnesota law schools, bar associations, and commercial publishers. The web version of MLPI is powered by LawMoose and is a collaboration between the Minnesota State Law Library and Pritchard Law Webs. In 2016, the Cataloger indexed 512 articles for the MLPI. The indexing process involves designating the journal, volume and issue, author, and title. In addition, up to three subject headings are assigned to each record to aid researchers in searching for articles by topic.

### Appellate Briefs

The library provides access to appellate briefs in various formats. For Minnesota appellate decisions that are published in the Northwestern Reporter, the library binds the briefs and

their addenda to ensure long-term access. These materials are heavily used by, and circulated to, attorneys.

- 72 volumes of bound briefs were added to the collection.
- 421 microfiche sheets were produced. (Library staff prepares the briefs for microfiche processing. Area law libraries that do not have print copies of briefs purchase the microfiche.)
- 2,161 briefs were redacted and added to the library's [online database](#).

## Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

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### About the Program

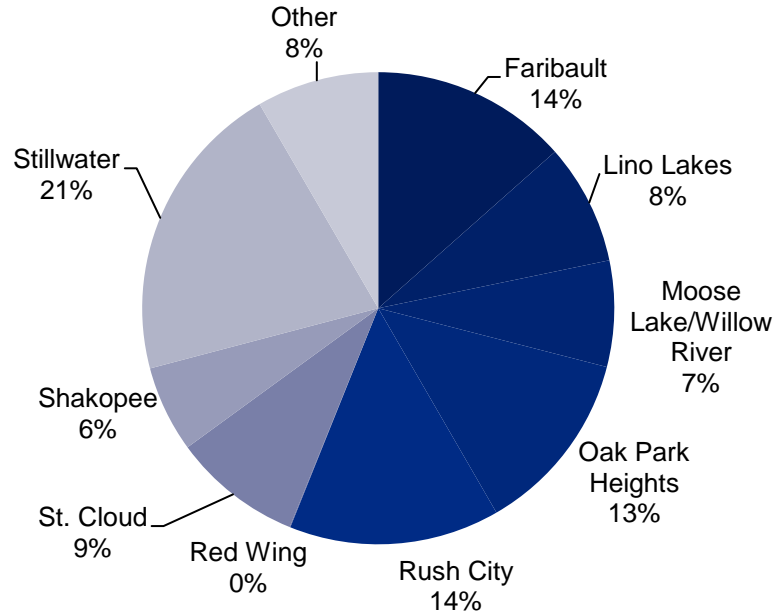
The mission of LLSP is to provide law library service to inmates incarcerated in Minnesota. LLSP is funded by an inter-agency agreement between the State Law Library and the DOC. The program expenses are provided by inmate canteen and phone services, and not paid for by Minnesota taxpayers.

Law librarians provide access to legal materials, both at the correctional facilities and the Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL). Circuit-riding prison law librarians, based at MSLL, conduct monthly visits at eight adult correctional facilities to meet with inmates. Questions that cannot be answered on-site using the prison collections of core legal materials are researched at MSLL. Inmates also write or call LLSP for assistance with their legal research. In addition, the program provides law library services to Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) staff and DOC inmates housed in other facilities, such as county jails, state hospitals, and other states.

### 2016 Statistics

9,869	DOC inmates (as of 01/01/2017)
96	MN Correctional Facility prison visits
8,767	Estimated miles travelled
1,217	Inmate interviews
2,656	Individual inmates assisted
40,309	Inmate requests processed

## Distribution of Total Inmate Requests by Facility 2016



## Professional Activities in the Legal/Library Community

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### Legal

- Liz Reppe served on the following committees:
  - Minnesota Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Rules of Public Access to Records of the Judicial Branch
  - MSBA Alternative Legal Models Taskforce
  - MSBA Legal Assistance to the Disadvantaged Committee
  - Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society's Preservation Committee

### Library

- November – Jean Anderson presented at the University of Saint Catherine on working in the Law Librarian for Prisoners Program.
- Erica Nutzman served on the Capitol Area Library Consortium (CALCO) Archives Committee.
- Sheri Huppert is a member of the Regional Advisory Group that represents depository libraries in Minnesota, Michigan, and the Dakotas. She is also a part of the Minitex Interlibrary Loan Committee.

- Elizabeth Tuckwood served on two MnPALS committees - Future ILS Task Force and Record Structure Task Force.
- Debby Hackerson is part of the American Association of Law Libraries Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section Technology Committee.
- Liz Reppe served on the Minitex Policy Advisory Council and the American Association of Law Libraries Digital Access to Legal Information Committee.

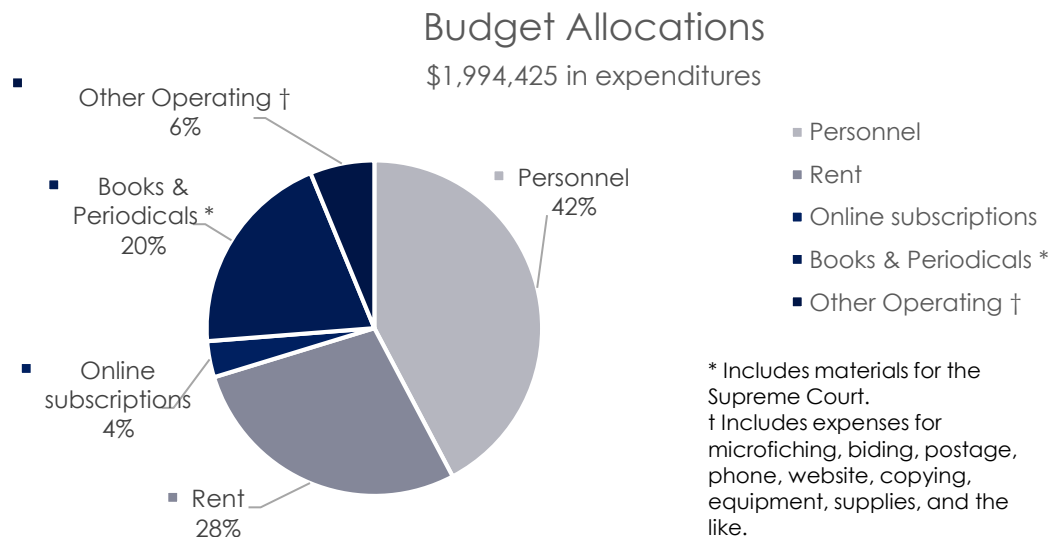
### Librarian-Authored Materials:

- Debby Hackerson - *Right of Access for Prisoners: How the Minnesota State Law Library is Serving Inmates*, published in AALL Spectrum March/April 2016
- Jean Anderson - *How to Use the Minnesota Statutes* published in several prison newspapers (Gold Rush Chronicle, Moose Lake Focal Point, The Lino Ledger, Oak Park Heights – A New Perspective)
- Jean Anderson - *Pardons & Commutations in Minnesota* published in several prison newspapers (Lino Lakes – The Lino Ledger, Oak Park Heights – A New Perspective, Stillwater Prison Mirror)
- Jean Anderson - *U.S. Good Time Survey* published in several prison newspapers (Rush City Gold Rush Chronicle, Moose Lake Focal Point, Oak Park Heights – A New Perspective, Stillwater Prison Mirror)

## Financial Summary

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This is the summary for fiscal year 2016.



## Library Staff

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Liz Reppe, State Law Librarian

### **Law Library Service to Prisoners**

- Jean Anderson, Librarian
- Bill Erlandson, Clerk (retired October 2016)
- Daniel Lunde, Head of Outreach (retired October 2016)
- Joan O., volunteer
- Stephanie Thorson, Librarian
- Susan Trombley, Librarian

### **Public Services**

- Danielle Becker, Electronic Services Librarian (until February 2016)
- Elvira Embser-Herbert, Electronic Services Librarian (since April 2016)
- Debby Hackerson, Reference Librarian
- Sheri Huppert, Government Documents Librarian
- Susan Larson, Head of Public Services

### **Technical Services**

- Jacob Frank, Technical Services Clerk (Nov. 2016 – present)
- Robin Horowitz, Librarian (Jan. 2016 – Aug. 2016)
- Alyssa Matlon, Technical Services Clerk (Nov. 2016 – present)
- Elizabeth Karges, Technical Services Clerk (Jan. 2016 – Oct. 2016), Technical Services Technician (Oct. 2016-present)
- Debbie Kitzmann, Technical & Outreach Services Clerk
- Erica Nutzman, Head of Technical Services
- Elizabeth Tuckwood, Technical Services Technician (Jan. 2016 – Oct. 2016), Librarian (Oct. 2016-present)

Many thanks go to Associate Justice David Stras, our Law Library Supreme Court Liaison.