

# MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

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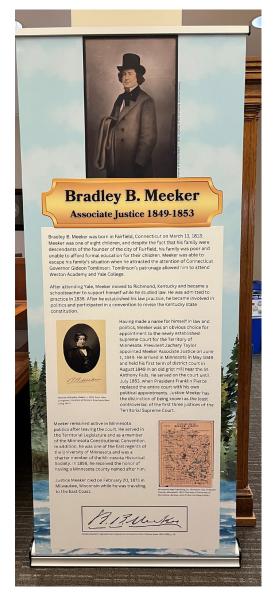
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# 2024 Highlights

# 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Territorial Court and Territorial Library

In March the library celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Territorial Court and Territorial Library. Erica Nuzman and Sarah Larsen did extensive research to create a series of 20 banners that provided information on each territorial justice, the early court, the first library, and the territorial librarians. A reception and CLE was held to debut the banners. The CLE, Tales from our Territorial Days: Early Court History, was presented by Carol Chomsky, Professor of Law at the University of Minnesota Law School, and Judge Timothy Baland (retired, 7th Judicial District Court).





# Native American Voting Rights Exhibit

In June the law library hosted an exhibit on Native American voting rights. The American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress created the traveling exhibit, "100 Years After the Indian Citizenship Act: The Continuing Struggle to Guarantee Voting Rights to Native Americans." The exhibit explores Native American Voting Rights long before the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 as well as how the act failed to ensure Native American participation in elections.

In conjunction, the library sponsored a CLE entitled "The Dual Citizenship of Tribal Members: Tribal Nations and U.S. Citizens", presented by Professor Angelique EagleWoman. Professor EagleWoman is the Director of Native American Law and Sovereignty Institute at Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

# Minnesota Digital Law Library

The State Law Library has established a new digital archives management tool, the <u>Minnesota Digital Law Library</u>. It includes digitized copies of archival materials, such as videos, photographs and documents. Digitization work has been ongoing for the past several years and will continue as the library staff focus on digitizing fragile materials that are in high demand.

#### Contents include:

- Law in Action, hosted by Doris Simonett and John Kanniainen, aired from 1989-1997 and Meet Your Court, hosted by Hon. Kevin Burke, aired from 2001-2008, both on cable access channels. Both shows interviewed people working with the courts in Minnesota, including, judges, lawyers, politicians, and court staff. They educated Minnesotans on the court system and related topics of concern at the time. The project entailed locating all of the videos, transferring them into MP4 format, indexing them, and adding closed captioning.
- 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Court of Appeals materials.
- MN Code of Agency Rules (MCAR) Includes agency materials produced prior to 1984, when the publication *Minnesota Rules* began. Prior to our scanning project, this content was only available in paper booklets.
- Court history investiture ceremonies, MJC history, career book presentment ceremonies.

### Marvin R. Anderson Portrait

The library's special collection room is named after Marvin Anderson, former State Law Librarian (1980-2002). There had never been a picture of Marvin in the room, so the law library had one created. There was an unveiling in December. Several current and former law library staff attended, as well as members of the Supreme Court and former State Court Administrator Sue Dosal.



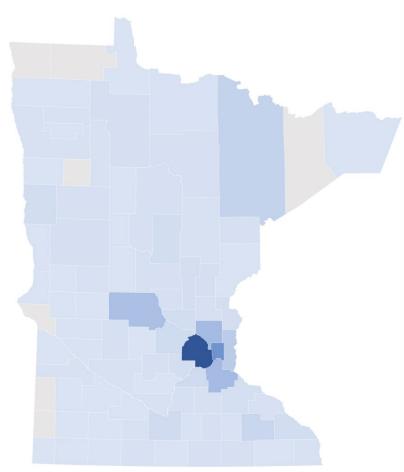
Marvin R. Anderson and his wife Gloria Anderson

# Assisting our Patrons

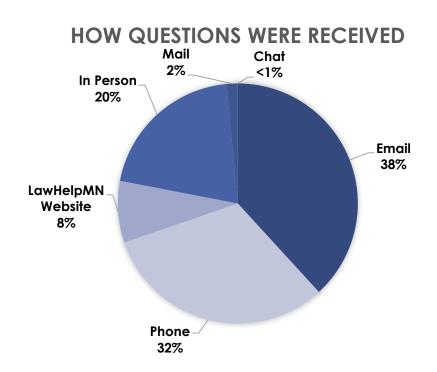
# **Answering Questions**

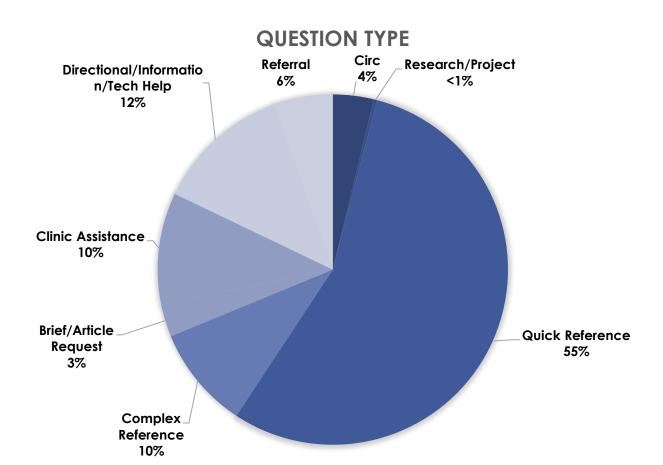
Our patrons can contact us in person, via phone, chat, email, and mail. We try to serve people in the manner that they prefer. In 2024, the reference librarians answered over 9,700 questions.

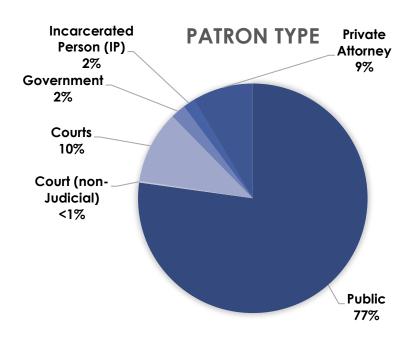
The State Law Library strives to provide statewide service. The library can determine which county a patron is in for many questions that are received via email. (Either in emails that are initiated by clicking on "Ask a Librarian" on our website and emails coming from LawHelpMN.org.) The image below demonstrates that in 2024 the library received email questions from almost every county in the state. While seven counties are shown in grey, it is possible that residents of those counties did receive assistance from the law library by calling the library or sending an email directly to our specific email address (askalibrarian@courts.state.mn.us).

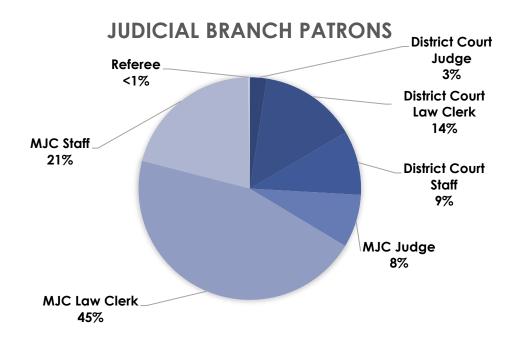


Counties from which the library received emails in 2024









Topics of Questions Asked	Percentage
Legal Research	16.8
Appeals	14.8
Probate and Estate Planning	13.6
Family Law	10.0
Criminal Law/Traffic	6.7
Landlord/Tenant	6.2
Court/Vital Records	3.9
General Civil	3.7
Court Process	3.4
Employment	2.5
Brief Request	2.5
Homeowners/Real Estate	2.2
OFP/HRO	2.1
Conciliation Court	2.0
Consumer Issue	1.4
Article Request	1.1
Name Change	1.1
Bankruptcy/Creditor/Debtor, Business,	Each topic
Government Benefits, Attorney/Judge	accounted
Complaints, Tax, Immigration, Juvenile Court, Civil/Human Rights, Other	for 1% or less

# A Sampling of Interesting Questions

- Do you have to be 18 to buy dry ice? Can you find a Minnesota statute regarding this?
- I am wondering if you can provide me some research materials to determine what a county attorney can do if they do not agree with what an agency would like in a child maltreatment case. Are they ethically required to represent the agency if the agency will not follow the attorney's direction?
- Hello, my ex is over \$10,000 in child support arrears. I heard that a lien can possibly be put on his vehicle for the arrears. My child support case worker said she didn't know and suggested that I contact you.
- I am trying to find in the Minnesota state regs/laws anything about a specific oath (e.g., Hippocratic Oath) that physical therapists licensed by the State of MN are required to take? Could you help?
- I have an inquiry regarding reasonable accommodations for a deaf family. If a family who is deaf requests that there be a strobe fire alarm and strobe doorbell installed to their apartment, would this be a request that the landlord must fulfill?
- Is there a statute that says you have to be embalmed in the state of Minnesota?
- How many meetings can a County Commissioner miss in one year before he needs to step down?
- I am wondering what debts I am responsible for. My husband passed away last year and I have had some people tell me I am not responsible for any of his debts. But I was told today that I am responsible for his medical debt and I don't know what to do.
- I'm wondering if it is legal in Minnesota to have a Savannah cat as a pet?
- How is the ordinary low water level determined for navigable public waters?
- Are there statutes on whether a city is required to have a city clerk under Minnesota law?
- If one parent is paying child support, are they required to split the cost of school supplies?
- Could you please direct me as to where I would find the appropriate information/law(s) pertaining to my neighbors allowing their daughter and her small children to live in a motorhome on their property?
- If you lived in a residence for 28 years without parents asking for rent and suddenly they demand rent or you have to leave. Can they ask such things or is it unlawful?

# Appellate Self-Help Clinics

Cases with at least one pro se party constituted 27% of all filings to the Court of Appeals in 2024. To assist, the State Law Library offers two appellate self-help clinics. The general Appeals Self-Help Clinic is offered once per month. In 2024, the clinic assisted 154 people. The top three types of cases seen at the clinic were family law (47%), HRO (17%), and general civil (15%). 11 customers were referred by clinic attorneys for full representation and five were provided free appellate representation by a volunteer attorney.

The State Law Library also continues to offer an <u>Unemployment Appeals Self-Help Clinic</u> twice per month to assist people appealing a denial of unemployment benefits to the Court of Appeals. The vast majority of these types of appeals (90%) involve an unrepresented party. In 2024 the clinic assisted 35 people.

### **Probate Clinic**

The law library's Probate Clinic offers brief legal advice for simple probate process questions. It is a phone clinic, so it is available to people statewide. Issues not covered are guardianship/conservatorship, tax, medical assistance, and questions about the law in other states. 235 people were assisted by the clinic in 2024. This is a 145% increase from 2023.

### Online Presence

### Website

Our <u>legal research guides</u> had 189,078 views total. The five most popular guides in 2024 were Appeals; Homeowners/Real Estate; Neighbor Law; Child Custody and Parenting Time; and Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning.

#### Opinion and Briefs Archives

Since 1996, the State Law Library has provided an online, <u>searchable database</u> of appellate court decisions. In 2024, the library added 1,183 opinions to the database.

The library also maintains a <u>searchable database</u> of appellate briefs from precedential Minnesota Court of Appeals and Supreme Court cases. Comprehensive coverage goes back to 2002, and staff adds additional older briefs or briefs from non-precedential cases as requested. Last year library staff added 1,538 briefs to the online archive. 669 of the added briefs were digitized from microfiche and added to the library's archive. 505 briefs were added upon request. The database is complete back to 651 N.W.2d.

### Social Media

The library now has 537 <u>Facebook</u> followers. The library's <u>X (Twitter) feed</u> now has 351, a sharp decline from last year's 1,395 followers.

### Current Awareness

Each month, the State Law Library complies a list of articles of interest to the courts and distributes the articles to all members of the Judicial Branch via email. The library also sends out a <u>list of new books</u> each month.

### Interlibrary Loan

The State Law Library provides an interlibrary loan service for the Judicial Branch. This includes both books and journal articles. In 2024, the library obtained 51 items for the court and loaned 56 items to other libraries.

# Continuing Legal Education

The State Law Library offers <u>free CLEs</u> for the judicial branch and other interested attorneys. In 2024, the library hosted twelve public CLE programs (8 standard credits, 1 mental health, 1 ethics, and 2 elimination of bias credits). There were 2,148 attendees for the CLEs in 2024.

The library also offers several CLEs for on-demand credit via its website. This has been a popular feature. The library had 24 CLEs available for on-demand credit during 2024. The courses had a total of 9,935 views during the year. 2,123 lawyers reported attendance for these courses (for a total 11,136 total CLE credits).

### Judicial Law Clerk Assistance

The library communicates to the court's law clerks via a quarterly law clerk newsletter and has a dedicated law clerk assistance email account. It is a popular service, and the library regularly gets emails from law clerks all over the state. (25 counties in 2024.)

Liz Reppe and Sarah Larsen taught several training sessions for the new appellate law clerks on how to conduct Minnesota legislative history research. In addition, Sarah Larsen provided training for the new appellate clerks on the Minnesota legal resources available at the State Law Library.

The law library organized a three-part series of family law CLEs specifically for law clerks (district court and appellate). The topics included the following: Social Issues: Custody and Parenting Time (121 attendees); Financial Issues: Child Support, Spousal Maintenance, and Property Division (80 attendees); and Third-Party Custody Overview: When Non-Parents Request Custody in Family Law Cases (97 attendees).

### Kudos

The State Law Library aims to provide excellent service to all our patrons. We appreciate knowing if we are succeeding. Below is a sampling of feedback we have received.

- Exactly what I was looking for. Thanks for saving the day, ~law firm paralegal

- Thank you SO MUCH for the link. That appears to be the exact perfect information that this person needs. I'm afraid she's gotten herself into a bit of a pickle, but according to the link, she's not the first to have done so. Regardless, your suggestion is very helpful and very much appreciated. ~private attorney
- Oh my goodness, [the attorney] was wonderful! I appreciate this clinic so much. ~public patron
- God BLESS you!!! This is perfect! Thank you so so so much! ~district court law clerk
- Oh my gosh, that is so helpful. Thank you so much! ~appellate court law clerk
- I just want to say "thank you." The selection of articles that you share is always very interesting. Sadly, I rarely find time to read as many as I would like. But it's great to have the option! ~ district court judge
- I am very impressed, whomever you are. Not only was your answer prompt, my question was answered. You are a wonderful asset to the people of this state. Thanks for your help. ~public patron
- Thank you so, so much for this detailed information I feel like I have a much better handle on what records may or may not be available. ~doctoral student
- Thank you so much for how fast you did this! It is much appreciated. ~government attorney
- This is just what I needed, thanks! ~appellate court law clerk
- Thank you so much. I greatly appreciate that. Have a wonderful day. ~district court judge
- Thank you for your response, it was extremely helpful! I appreciate the time you took to write such a thorough and complete response-it helped me connect the dots to figure out the last few steps for finding the audio I need. ~district court law clerk
- Amazing information, I appreciate you so much. ~public patron
- Thanks! You are so fast! ~appellate court judge
- This is so helpful I appreciate the time and research! ~private attorney
- Thank you SO much for your assistance. This was faster than I could have possibly imagined. ~law firm librarian

# Outreach

The State Law Library works to reach people outside of its walls. In a typical year staff travel to public libraries, bar association meetings, and county law libraries to raise awareness of

the State Law Library and its services. Since 2017, the law library has had a librarian dedicated to these activities.

# Legal Community

Organization/Event	Outreach Activity	Staff	Date
St Thomas Law School, Understanding Legislative Intent course	Presentation: Minnesota Legislative History Research	Liz Reppe	April
MSBA Solo and Small Firm Summit	Informational table	Sarah Larsen	May
New Attorney Swearing In	Informational table	Sarah Larsen	Мау
Minnesota State Bar Association CLE	Presentation: The Librarian's Corner, Law Library Resources, Tips and Strategies for Legal Research Online and at the Library	Liz Reppe, Presented with John Murphy and Karen Westwood	June
Minnesota CLE	Presentation: How to Conduct an Online Search of People, Businesses and Assets	Sarah Larsen	June
New Attorney Swearing in	Informational table	Sarah Larsen	October
Minnesota State Bar Association CLE	Presentation: Law Library Stories: What You Might Not Know About Today's Public Law Libraries and Access to Justice	Liz Reppe, presented with Karen Westwood, Rob Trousdale, and Shannon Stoneking	December
State Court Judges' Conference	Informational table	Sarah Larsen	December

# Library Community/Public

Organization	Outreach Activity	Staff	Date
Washington County Library Staff Day	Presentation: Legal Reference 101	Liz Reppe	April

MnPALS Spring Gathering	Presentation: Videos, Closed Captions and Islandora	Erica Nutzman	April
Minnesota Association of Law Libraries Spring Meeting	Presentation: Creating the 175th Anniversary Display	Sarah Larsen, Erica Nutzman	Мау
University of Minnesota Libraries Enhancing Quality Staff Symposium	Presentation: Law Library Services for Incarcerated People in Minnesota	Ally Ososki, Valerie Salazar	Мау
American Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting	Poster Presentation: Using an Anniversary Celebration to Collaborate with Our Community	Erica Nutzman	July
Minnesota State Fair	Court's informational booth	Elvira Embser, Sarah Larsen, Liz Reppe	August
Minnesota Library Association Annual Conference	Presentation: Creating Engaging Multimedia Exhibits	Sarah Larsen, Erica Nutzman	October
Twin Cities Archives Round Table	Presentation: Court of Appeals 40th Anniversary Project	Erica Nutzman	November

# County Law Libraries

By <u>statute</u>, the State Law Librarian is tasked with assisting and advising county law libraries. The library has two programs for county law libraries. Members receive materials and assistance from the State Law Library. In 2024, 48 county law libraries (out of 82) opted in. 20 of those counties opted for a level of service that includes a visit from either the State Law Librarian or the County Law Library Program Coordinator.

Date	Activity
January	Traverse – attend board meeting
March	Big Stone – attend board meeting Grant – attend board meeting
April	Wilkin – attend board meeting
June	June - visit Goodhue – visit McLeod - visit Meeker – visit

	Sibley - visit
July	Big Stone – attend board meeting Lincoln-Lyon – visit Mille Lacs - visit
August	Cook – visit and attend board meeting Todd – visit
September	Cottonwood - visit Mower – visit Murray - visit Nicollet – visit Nobles - visit
October	Grant – visit Kandiyohi – visit Norman - visit Pennington – visit Traverse - visit
November	Nicollet – return visit
December	Le Sueur – visit Steele - visit



McLeod County Law Library

### **Newsletters**

The State Law Library uses three newsletters to connect to patrons. There is a newsletter for law clerks that goes out four times per year, a county law library version that goes out twice per year, and a general newsletter, <u>Inter Alia</u>, that is sent four times per year.

### **Book Club**

The library continues to host the Minnesota Judicial Center book club. The first meeting in November 2023 was attended by 17 people. The current distribution list includes 101 people.

# **Display Cases**

Library staff create new displays throughout the year to engage visitors to the library and promote the library collections. Often the displays connect with events or exhibits. In 2024, the library continued to showcase the exhibit related to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Minnesota Court of Appeals. In the fall a new display showcasing the library's Supreme Court Bobbleheads was installed.



# Preserving Court History

The library is working with LLMC Digital to digitize the collection of historic handwritten briefs. This project is expected to take several years due to the fragile nature of the materials. 76 volumes were scanned by the end of 2024. The scans are available in the LLMC database.

# Managing the Collection

The Technical Services department is responsible for making all types of library materials available to the public and the judiciary. This department ensures that the library materials are relevant, current, and easy to find, both on and off-line. It is also responsible for making briefs available to the public in a variety of formats: print, microfiche, and through the online archive. In addition, the department preserves historic court materials. The cataloger works with four county law libraries to make their materials searchable online.

### 2024 Statistics

- 474 items circulated, 1,475 items used in the library
- 1,240 updates added in the three libraries (new replacement volumes, hardbound supplements, loose-leafs, pocket parts)
- 330 new titles added
- 3688 electronic resources added
- 90 original cataloging records created
- 416 Federal Depository Library items added, 618 deleted
- 152 titles cataloged for County Law Libraries, 219 deleted
- 11,747 visits to the online catalog

# Minnesota Legal Periodical Index

The <u>Minnesota Legal Periodical Index</u> (MLPI) is a database of Minnesota legal periodicals that the State Law Library has developed and maintained since 1984. In 2024, the cataloger indexed 1,012 articles for the MLPI. Many of the added articles are from the earlier paper versions of the MLPI from before it went online, which gives the databased a deeper set of resources to draw from when searching.

# **Appellate Briefs**

The library provides access to appellate briefs in multiple 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 attorneys. All briefs associated with precedential opinions are added to the archive and all briefs filed in Supreme Court cases are added weekly.

- 61 volumes of bound briefs were added to the collection.
- 1,538 briefs were redacted and added to the library's online database.

- 669 of the added briefs were digitized from microfiche and added to the library's archive.
- <sup>-</sup> 505 briefs were added upon patron request

# Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

# About the Program

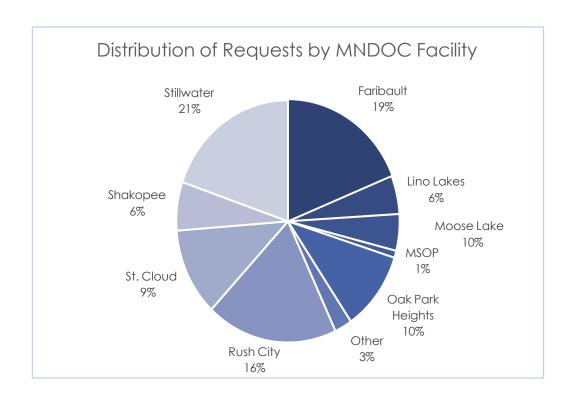
Under an Inter-Agency Agreement between the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MNDOC) and the Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL), the Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP) program provides law library service to people incarcerated in a MNDOC facility or otherwise under MNDOC jurisdiction.

Legal information requests are accepted by "kite," a request form available to Incarcerated Persons (IPs) at their facility. In addition, IPs may submit requests via phone or letter. LLSP librarians also conduct video visits in which IPs meet via Zoom with an LLSP librarian to discuss their legal information request.

For 2024, there was a spike in virtual visits. At the end of 2023, LLSP was doing virtual visits in Faribault, Lino Lakes, Rush City, Saint Cloud, Shakopee, and the Stillwater prison facilities. LLSP was able to add Moose Lake and Oak Park Heights to that list during 2024.

### 2024 Statistics

8,306	DOC prison population (as of 07/01/2024)
20,221	Questions answered
991	Phone calls (28% increase from 2023)
425	Video visits (16% increase from 2023)
31,013	Items sent (21% increase from 2023)
2,439	Individual IPs assisted (4% increase from 2023)



# Professional Activities in the Legal/Library Community

# Legal

#### Sarah Larsen

- Member, Minnesota Judicial Branch Self-Represented Litigant Working Group
- Member, MSBA Access to Justice Committee, Resource Development Subcommittee and State of the State Workgroup
- Member, Minnesota Judicial Branch State Fair Steering Committee

#### Erica Nutzman

Member, Minnesota Supreme Court Historical Society's Preservation Committee

# Library

#### Leslie Greenwood

 Chair, Bylaws Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries

### Gabby Holzmer

Member, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

### Sheri Huppert

- Member, Regional Advisory Group, Federal Depository Library Program
- Member, Midwest National Collection Service Area (NCSA) Steering Committee

### Sarah Larsen

- Member, Annual Meeting Program Committee, American Association of Law Libraries
- Chair, 50 State Toolkit Committee, Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Chair, Nominations Committee, Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Member, Education Committee, Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section, American Association of Law Libraries
- Mentor, American Association of Law Libraries Leadership Academy

#### Erica Nutzman

- Member, MNPALS Consortium Governing Board
- Treasurer, Capitol Area Library Consortium (CALCO)
- Chair, Archives Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

### Ally Ososki

- Member-At-Large, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries
- Chair, Diversity Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries
- Board Advisor, ITHAKA

### Liz Reppe

- Member, Nominations Committee, American Association of Law Libraries
- Mentor, American Association of Law Libraries
- Member at Large, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

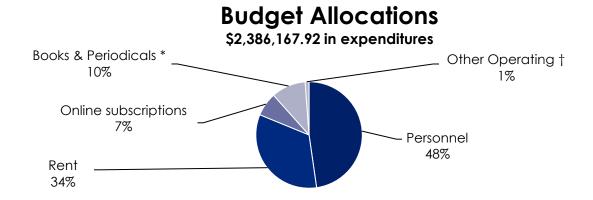
#### Valerie Salazar

Chair, Newsletter Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

### Elizabeth Tuckwood

- Member, MNPALS Consortium Board
- Convener, MNPALS Cataloging Policy Group
- Member, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Minnesota Association of Law Libraries

# Financial Summary (FY24)



<sup>\*</sup> Includes materials for the Minnesota Supreme Court

# Library Staff

Kaitlin Crawford, Technical Services Clerk

Elvira Embser, Head of Public Services

Leslie Greenwood, Reference Librarian

Gabby Holzmer, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian

Sheri Huppert, Government Documents Librarian

Karen Kenison, Technical Services Technician

Debbie Kitzmann, Technical & Outreach Services Clerk

Sarah Larsen, Outreach Librarian

Cecile Nicholas, Technical Services Clerk (started November 2024)

Erica Nutzman, Head of Technical Services

Allyson Ososki, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian

Moe Perez, Technical Services Clerk (until October 2024)

Liz Reppe, State Law Librarian

Valerie Salazar, Law Library Service to Prisoners Librarian

Elizabeth Tuckwood, Technical Services Librarian

Scott Uhl, Electronic Services Librarian

# Leadership

Many thanks go to Associate Justice Paul Thissen who is the library's Supreme Court liaison. The law library appreciates his interest and guidance.

t Includes expenses for binding, postage, phone, website, copying, equipment, supplies, etc.