

LAW LIBRARY SERVICE TO PRISONERS 2003 ANNUAL REPORT

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Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP) continued its longstanding tradition of service in 2003 by providing over 1,500 inmates incarcerated in Minnesota Correctional Facilities with assistance in finding and using legal information. For the second year in a row, LLSP's statistics kept pace with the prison population growth. After a dramatic increase in items delivered in 2001, LLSP implemented measures designed to rein in growth for 2002. These measures are now bearing fruit. In 2003, LLSP delivered 24,914 items, a 5.5 percent increase over 2002. By contrast, the adult inmate population increased over 10 percent during the same time period.

Created in 1984 by an interagency agreement between the Minnesota State Law Library (Law Library) and the Minnesota Department of Corrections, LLSP will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2004. Under this arrangement, circuit-riding law librarians visit each of the adult correctional facilities on a regular basis. Librarians meet with inmates in person and help them find and use the legal resources available in their prison law library. If a question cannot be answered at the prison, the Law Librarian researches the answer upon return to the Law Library. By supplementing the core collection of legal materials available at each prison with the resources of the Minnesota State Law Library, LLSP eliminates the need to maintain costly and extensive law libraries at each facility. By helping inmates to educate themselves about the law, their legal rights, and the merits of any potential claim, LLSP assists in channeling inmate concerns in a productive direction and reduces the likelihood that

inmates will file frivolous lawsuits or engage in unnecessary litigation.

MCF-Rush City witnessed the largest increase in the number of items delivered in 2003, posting a 44 percent gain over 2002. Likewise, meetings at MCF-Rush City increased from 94 in 2002 to 203 in 2003 – an increase of 116 percent. LLSP attributes this growth to the increasing population at MCF-Rush City. As the population at MCF-Rush City reaches capacity, LLSP expects the number of items delivered and the number of on-site meetings to stabilize. MCF-Oak Park Heights posted the second largest increase, 32 percent, in the number of items delivered in 2003. Again, LLSP attributes this growth to the opening of a new unit and the corresponding increase in inmate population. MCF-Shakopee saw the largest decrease in both on-site meetings and in individual meetings with the inmates. This decrease may be due to the reduction of visits at MCF-Shakopee. Currently, the LLSP Librarian is only able to provide library orientation to one half of the incoming inmates.

The Law Library provided LLSP with new technology in 2003. The LLSP librarians each received new computers from the Law Library. Additionally, the Law Library purchased a subscription to Lexis-Nexis™, a legal research database. This database has provided librarians with a valuable research tool to locate both published and unpublished cases and statutory information for inmates. Citations can be Shephardized® electronically with this service. Shephards® allows librarians to find cases, statutes and law review articles that examine, discuss, or refer

to a particular case or citation. Finally, the Law Library purchased other on-line databases useful in finding law reviews and journal articles.

LLSP librarians met with Brad Colbert, Director of Legal Assistance to Minnesota Prisoners (LAMP) in October. This meeting provided a chance for the two programs to share information and ideas on how to serve prisoners' legal needs. LAMP and LLSP discussed coordinating appropriate referrals to each other's services. Since LAMP reduced the service it provides inmates, LLSP has created research guides on family law issues to handle questions formerly referred to LAMP.

The hard work and dedication of LLSP's volunteers and interns help provide inmates with research in a timely manner. Volunteers locate and photocopy cases and law review articles. In 2003, our volunteers and interns logged in 506 hours. Joan, LLSP's long-term volunteer, has been here for more than eight years. Additionally, we hosted Jolien during the summer.

Working as the LLSP intern provides library school students with the opportunity to learn hands-on legal research in a fast-paced, supportive environment. Although the

internship is unpaid, LLSP profited from interns of a high caliber this year. Dan, our spring intern, completed his Master of Library Science Degree during his internship. As the LLSP intern, Dan researched answers to legal questions from inmates, and created a database reference for the Law Library. Sheri, our fall intern, will complete her Master of Library Science Degree in 2004. In addition to working on inmate requests, Sheri updated research guides.

Timothy H. Baland authored an article, "How to Look Up a Statute: A Guide for Minnesota Prisoners," published in various prison newspapers in 2003. Baland was also featured in the March/April 2003 issue of the *MCF-St. Cloud Pillar*. Additionally, Baland attended the 2003 Criminal Justice Institute sponsored by the Minnesota State Bar Association. LLSP librarians maintain memberships in various professional associations. Karen Westwood and Baland both belong to the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries (MALL). Stephanie Thorson is also a MALL member. Susan Trombley belongs to the Minnesota Library Association (MLA).

Statistical Summary

LLSP Activities	2001	2002	2003	2002-2003 CHANGE
<i>Requests Processed</i>	30546	23617	24914	+5.5%
<i>On-Site Meetings</i>	2315	1520	1680	+10.5%
<i>Individuals Assisted</i>	1721	1562	1504	-3.7%

Requests processed quantifies the activities involved in providing law library service to prisoners.

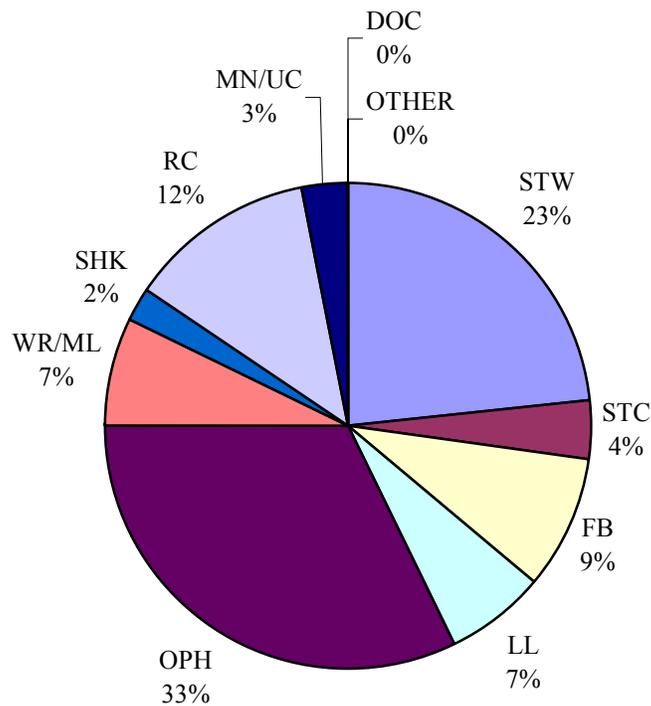
On-site meetings is the number of inmate reference interviews conducted in-person.

Individuals assisted is the total number of people we provide information to whether in-person, by telephone, or through the mail.

Change in Items Delivered By Institution

Prison	2001	2002	2003	% Change 2002-2003
STW	8008	5086	5829	14.61%
STC	3211	1495	934	-37.53%
FB	2856	1787	2235	25.07%
LL	2601	2511	1685	-32.90%
OPH	6220	6060	8010	32.18%
WR/ML	2080	1781	1759	-1.24%
SHK	1034	972	605	-37.76%
RC	1687	2143	3091	44.24%
MN/UC	695	852	735	-13.73%
DOC	73	42	31	-26.19%
OTHER	2081	888	0	-100%
TOTAL	2081	23617	24914	5.49%

2003 % DISTRIBUTION BY INSTITUTION



LLSP Items Delivered - Population 1985 - 2004

