

**Notice of Special Meeting of  
Marin County Law Library Board of Trustees – Five-Year Strategic Plan Committee  
Marin County Law Library  
20 North San Pedro Road, Suite 2007  
Conference Room  
San Rafael, CA 94903**

**Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at 5:30 P.M.**

**Agenda**

**Call to Order\***

1. New Business

**1.1 Discussion:** Discussion re Status of Previous Five-Year Strategic Plan

**1.2 Discussion and Action Item:** Discussion and Action re Development of New Five-Year Strategic Plan

2. Board Members' Suggestions for Next Agenda

3. Adjournment

***If requested, pursuant to Government Code Section 54953.2, this agenda shall be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Section 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. To make a request for disability-related modification or accommodation, please contact (415) 473-4381 (Voice/TTY) or 711 for the California Relay Service or e-mail [disabilityaccess@marincounty.org](mailto:disabilityaccess@marincounty.org) at least five working days in advance of the meeting.***

***A complete agenda packet is available at the front desk of the Marin County Law Library, on the Law Library's bulletin board, and on the Law Library website at [www.marincountylawlibrary.org](http://www.marincountylawlibrary.org). It is also available 24/7 outside the ground floor lobby of the middle archway entrance to the Civic Center (the one allowing access to the Courts floor) at 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.***

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2016

### MISSION

The Marin County Law Library serves the public by providing access to legal information resources through a variety of media, research assistance, and technologies needed to give practical expression to the law while maintaining a flexible and supportive presence that fosters the ends of community service and social justice.

### SYNOPSIS

The users and patrons of the law library have dramatically changed over the past five years. More and more users of the library are non-attorneys who seek to assist themselves in legal matters. The poor are no longer the only people representing themselves in court; much of the general middle class public also do not have the resources to hire an attorney and use the Law Library on an increasing basis. This changing demographic is something that the Library has not been able to keep up with, and as such, is not as effective a community resource as it could be. In 2005, a moratorium on the increase in filing fees was created by Government Code section 70601. The Law Library, which receives \$32 per filing, has not been able to seek an increase in funding since that time. This has resulted in inflation chipping away at the Library's budget every fiscal year and preventing the modernization and updating of its infrastructure. This strategic plan takes this into consideration and seeks solutions that will stabilize the Library's resources and benefit the community now and for generations to come.

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR 2014-2016

#### 1. Improve Legal Research Capabilities and Reference Assistance

- **Adjust collection development priorities to suit changing user needs, new technologies, and budgetary restrictions**

The Law Library has encountered two trends in collection development over the last three years – a funding crisis and a rise in publication costs. Both have put considerable pressure on the Library budget. During the past few years, more fee waivers are being granted which impacts the income of the Law Library. Additionally, there is a decline in overall filings due to the growing use of alternative dispute resolution. Not surprisingly, those obtaining filing fee waivers are the same individuals utilizing the Law Library. Thus, while the Library is continually experiencing a decrease in revenue it is simultaneously seeing an increase in the community's demand for Library services. With an 8 to 15 percent inflationary rise of publication expenses per year, the Library has been unable to keep up. With steady declines in the Library budget, subscriptions have been significantly cut to make adjustments.

We can resolve this budgetary squeeze by redefining our mission. Instead of seeking to maintain a large amount of scholarly literature that benefits our collection but remains less

used, we will provide access to much of it through leaner contracts with the publishers, cooperative agreements with other institutions, and better interlibrary loan services. We can achieve more through these partnerships than we can alone, and some goals can only be achieved in partnership with others. Each of our goals will begin by asking who our partners might be and what can be achieved collectively. Ultimately, this will reduce the costs of maintaining those collections while still making them available to interested patrons.

- **Make our resources available to patrons on multiple technological platforms**

With the expansion of electronic resources and the financial benefits of consortial purchasing, the Library will seek additional resources through electronic technologies, such as Lexis, Onlaw, and Westlaw. At present, there are only two Westlaw computer terminals. This makes Westlaw often limited and ineffective as a resource due to accessibility issues. Obtaining additional terminals will be difficult at the outset, but will be increasingly helpful for the multitude of people who will be served long-term by these resources. The Library must have a budget for both book research and computers systems to usher in new technology. This will allow the Library to provide services for all of its users, and in so doing, will allow those users to be more efficient and effective in their legal research.

While the growth in electronic resources has assisted the Library in certain areas, it has led to new expectations on the part of our patrons for remote access to scholarly resources. However, increased expectations have not yet been accompanied by an increase in funding. Although in many cases the Library has been able to avoid the duplication of costs by canceling print equivalents, in other cases provision of electronic access has meant new expenses that require funding not yet available. During the strategic plan of operation, the Library will seek to enter into an MOU with the Marin County Superior Court to obtain additional licenses for increased electronic resources.

- **Create a unified partnership with Marin County legal service agencies in order to direct people to the most appropriate form of assistance**

The Law Library encounters a number of Marin residents who need legal services and are unsure of where to turn. A partnership with the Marin County Self-Help Center, Legal Aid of Marin, the Canal Community Alliance, and other legal service providers will make a major contribution by removing some of the roadblocks in the legal process. Focused referrals to specific legal service providers will allow patrons to connect with the appropriate agency as long as they meet certain criteria.

In order to create an effective partnership within the community, the Law Library will collaborate with all of Marin County's legal service agencies in order to better understand their role within the community. Many of the non-legal practitioners who utilize the Library ultimately need to be referred to one of these agencies, but often they return to the Library because a specific service agency could not serve them for a variety of reasons. The Library will coordinate outreach to these service agencies and ultimately act as a triage for when patrons initially come to the Library in an effort to determine what service agency might

serve them best. This would not only make the Library more efficient and effective in its service to the public, but would also help reduce unnecessary back and forth trips between the Library and local legal agencies. This desperately needed service can only be accomplished by funding an increase in Library staff hours.

The Law Library continues to be the first point of reference for patrons with legal questions. Partnering with local agencies will not only help Marin residents navigate the legal system, but also help relieve some of the pressure courts face in meeting the needs of unprepared litigants. Likewise, when litigants have the correct form in hand, clerks can more readily expedite filings. Judges may rule on an issue more effectively when relevant facts and the appropriate laws have been presented.

- **Partner with the Marin County Bar Association so that we may provide attorneys for legal workshops for the community**

The Law Library's partnership with MCBA will provide limited pro bono services that are not otherwise provided for by local legal agencies. These workshops will be available on evenings and weekends and present an invaluable service to Marin residents whose work or other obligations during the day might otherwise prevent them from receiving affordable legal counsel.

The ultimate aim of these workshops would be to facilitate brief access to information and referral from Marin attorneys who serve pro bono. Because the Library's mission is to connect people with legal information, the Library envisions this program as forging yet another connection between the private bar and the community members who are least likely to otherwise access such opportunities.

## **2. Utilize Mobile Technologies to Effectively Reach More People Within the Community and Increase Environmental Consciousness and Responsibility Among Library Staff and Patrons**

- **Create and implement a green online card catalog that allows attorneys, students and community members to access the Library's card catalog remotely**

During the strategic plan of operation, the Law Library proposes modernizing its card catalog by replacing it with a green online card system. To put the seriousness of modernization into perspective, the Los Angeles Public Law Library installed their system in 1995. After nearly 20 years of computerized systems being in place, this makes our transition long overdue. If funding can be found, then the whole community will benefit. Marin residents will have the ability to quickly find materials and search the database online before arriving at the Library.

This project will more than pay for itself by allowing the public to have much easier and efficient access to the Library's entire inventory. This massive undertaking can be performed both by increasing the hours of the Library's current part-time employees, and also by

utilizing an additional employee. Once the system is up and running, it would only require regular maintenance to keep it effective for Marin residents.

- **Expand public access to legal information through library web pages and a green online forms catalog**

The Law Library also intends to serve the public through an electronic library with an online forms catalog. The Library will host the site on its new website and will be responsible for daily site administration, technological planning, legal updates, and, through collaboration with the Law Library Board of Trustees, development of new information resources. The Director of the Law Library will be responsible for ensuring clear and effective communications between library patrons and website management. Additionally, library reference staff will offer recommendations for new content based on incoming reference questions from the general public.

Our new green catalog will provide residents and employees of Marin County with a common access point to forms and template pleadings. Managed by staff, the forms catalog will contain electronic versions of current forms, allowing patrons to more easily conduct business within the County of Marin.

- **Implement an electronic document delivery service for county employees and the general public**

In addition to maintaining a green forms catalog, the Library will create a document delivery system via the internet for use with our online card catalog. This service is already provided as a courtesy to a number of County employees but will expand to include PDF delivery to the public, thereby allowing people to access information remotely. This service will lessen the need to visit the Library in person, which benefits the environment. Most importantly, document delivery will serve as an additional source of revenue for the Law Library.

### **3. Develop a Well Trained Team for the Delivery of Legal Reference Services**

- **Invest in career skills and professional development for library staff**

The Law Library is committed to providing staff with opportunities to learn and grow professionally. The Library seeks to add this commitment to our budget, which will include funding for technology and research training for staff in all areas. Library staff are quite often required to assist users, both legal practitioners and laypeople, in using the research tools. As research mediums are constantly changing and being updated, staff should have ongoing training to allow them to better assist library patrons. As part of the Library's mission to provide the most complete and thorough service to its myriad users, we cannot underestimate the value of well trained staff.

The Library director is also encouraged to attend conferences and workshops to learn current trends and developments happening in libraries locally and across the country. In addition to

these learning opportunities, the director is a member of the California Council of County Law Librarians and is encouraged to attend their annual conferences to learn about innovation and ideas from other libraries and institutions around the state. Such ideas and information will be brought back for discussion and possible implementation within our library.

- **Hire a fulltime Assistant Librarian to assist the Marin community with informational needs**

One of the most significant changes over the last several years is the growing number of self-represented patrons, with 52 percent of Library respondents identifying as non-attorneys. These individuals are not trained in the law and require a great degree of assistance that in turn requires staff to spend their time explaining what each source contains and how to utilize them. Library staff must often clarify the difference between statutory law and case law as well as the difference between primary and secondary authority. The Law Library also acts as a distribution point for court forms and instructions, producing and assembling forms in multiple languages.

While these services can take the burden away from court departments that are not equipped to provide research training and referrals, the Library is finding that it is unable to keep up with the community's increasing demands without hiring a fulltime assistant librarian. An assistant librarian would provide the requisite skills of online research, assistance to laypeople, referrals to various service agencies, organization of the online card catalog, and assistance in the multitude of daily needs that are thrust upon the Library. Such an employee would be critical to helping the Library become an efficient and effective source of legal research for its patrons. This would help the public to better understand their legal matters, thereby creating less congestion at the court, less hassle for county employees, and better informed citizens overall.

On a statewide level, county general fund support for law libraries continues to vary from county to county and from year to year. For example, the staff at the Solano and Tulare County law libraries are county employees and are paid from the general fund. In other counties, county general fund support has since been withdrawn, which contributed to the closure of the Plumas, Alpine, and Sutter County law libraries. While we do not intend to convert each of our employees into the county system, we will ask the Marin County Board of Supervisors to exercise the power given it under California Business and Professions Code § 6324, enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Law Library, and "to appropriate from the county treasury for law library purposes such sums as may in their discretion appear proper" for the purposes of hiring a fulltime assistant librarian who will assist the citizens of Marin County. There is no doubt that Marin County deserves to have a first rate public law library with an excellent online presence, the appropriate resource tools, and a qualified permanent fulltime staff to connect people seeking access to justice.

- **Explore new avenues for library internships, volunteers, and other recruiting initiatives**

The Law Library will build upon its successful experience with volunteers and school interns and develop a program for students from paralegal schools such as Berkeley, San Francisco and Sonoma State University to intern on site. This project will assess the current program, identify best practices, implement standardized protocols and create guidelines and policies that will ensure continuity and secure a documented and replicable history. The result will be a formalized intern program with streamlined orientation and education and efficient utilization of staff time invested in implementing an optimum intern experience.

The internship program will offer students the opportunity to work on special projects as well as the opportunity to gain experience and enhance their research and reference skills. Past projects include exploring social media uses for the library, creating an attorney listserv, and working on the digitization of rare books.

Meeting for developing the Marin County Law Library Strategic Plan  
Saturday, August 11, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Not a board meeting. A workshop to create a five-year plan for Law Library**

**9:00-9:15 Welcome**

**Agenda**

9:00-9:15	Welcome
9:15-9:45	Where have we been
9:45-10:45	Where do we want to go
10:45-11:00	Break
11:00-12:30	How do we get to where we want to go
12:30-12:45	Wrap Up, Next Steps
12:45-1 p.m	Public Comment.

**Purpose & Goals.**

- To come away with a five- year (August 2023) plan with stated action items, responsibilities, bench marks/celebrate progress
- To identify roadblocks and develop strategies for dealing with them

**Ground rules:**

- Stay on topic and remain focused.
- Make agreements by consensus (not majority, not compromise, what we can live with it)
- Begin and end on time.
- Balanced conversation, hear from everyone.
- One person speak at a time

**Roles:** facilitator, recorder, group member

- Speak up if facilitator misunderstands, skips over something important

- Speak up if recorder doesn't get something or skips important

### **9:15-9:45 Where we have been**

- Interviewed all 7 trustees and Laurie
- Learned Marin County law library been around since 1891
- 2006 State adopted act that froze increase in money
- Cut back staff and hours
- 4,000 visitors a year
- One time funding from State, just a stopgap
- Started Lawyers in Library

### **Individually, and in two small groups, look at the years that passed.**

To know where we are going it helps to look at where we've been.

Write on a piece of paper:

- Looking back on this date two years ago.
- This is what we were doing.
- This was my vision for the years.
- These were the pleasant surprises.
- Looking back, these are our prouds and sorries: (milestones, goals not met. Write sorries on a separate piece of paper)

### **Share what you wrote down with small group**

#### **Checking in with the Past:**

- Grateful for librarian.
- Initial discussion re fundraising.
- Realization of Friends group.
- Lawyers in Library put us on map.
- Updating resources; equipment, etc.
- Achieved basic stability financially.
- Quality and stability of staff.

- Cohesive board of trustees.
- Trustees go above and beyond call of duty.
- Board recognition of transformation of types of patrons.
- Volunteer contributions.
- Bill Hale enlightened me to needs of self-represented patrons.
- Support from judiciary.
- Support from MCBA.

### **9:45-10:45 Where we want to go**

#### **How we will achieve our 2023 goals:**

- Set specific goals.
- Celebrate our progress.
- Have people to help us, a group of people, colleagues, friends of friends, others.
- Strategies and plans to achieve our vision for success.
- Strategies for dealing with roadblocks
- Add new or take out what's no longer relevant.

#### **Visioning:**

It's now August 2023. Our vision is realized.

This is how the Law Library is doing today:

These were the outside influences:

We learned these new things to help manage the organization:

We overcame these obstacles:

These were our milestones:

We took these steps to fulfill our vision:

#### **Creating our vision, our plan:**

1. Write your vision down.

2. **Make the description of your vision as vibrant as you possibly can.** Include colors, sounds, smells. Talk about the kind of people we will work with, who our clients are, what a typical day is like, what a typical week is like. Provide as much detail as you can. Define, as specifically as you can, the specific achievements that are important to you. What do those achievements represent? How does it feel to have accomplished them?
3. **Capture the challenges.** As you dream about what you want to do, listen to the soft voices that tell you that you can't. Write them down and put them aside. These are challenges to your success. When you move on to the planning phase, you will develop strategies to overcome, or avoid these roadblocks.
4. **Develop a "kitchen cabinet".** A kitchen cabinet is a group of people who can advise us on our vision, help us develop it, and later, help us develop the strategies for achieving our vision. Our kitchen cabinet should be made up of people and organizations that you admire, who have widely varying skills. Some of these individuals you may know well; others may be more casual acquaintances.
5. What does this group need from me to complete its goal? What do I need from the group? What qualities and skills do I have to offer in this process? What does the group need to accomplish its goal (time, resources, commitment, etc.)

### **10:45-11:00 Break**

### **11:00-12:30 Developing Action Plan**

#### **Including the VISION**

Looking back at what is **working** and **not working**, how can we shore up what is working and how can we tackle those items that are not working?

#### **Themes**

A Theme is 2 or more people said it

### ***Working***

#### **Funding:**

1. Recent updating computers for self-represented
2. Maintaining Lexisnexis, Westlaw and similar subscriptions
3. Able to keep doors open, made right decisions, i.e. Cuts to budget
4. Laurie getting health ins and days off

#### **Other**

5. Board commitment, also promoting LL to courts and lawyers
6. Laurie hard work, dedicated and knowledgeable staff
7. Lawyers in the Library
8. Quality of library over time
9. Excellent resource for community
10. Serving the underserved

### ***Not working***

#### **Funding**

11. Updated resources<sup>?</sup>
12. Turning people away from L in L
13. Can't help all who need help
14. Staff pay and benefits
15. Not enough people to do work both staff and vols
16. Not open enough hrs.

#### **Other**

17. Safety: Mentally ill and how to deal w them -
18. County vs LL financial system
19. Familiarity w Brown Act, Roberts Rules
20. Lawyers and public know about us

#### **Ideas/parking lot (for ideas may not use now but later):**

- Need more users incl attys (they have the money)

- Getting into providing workshops for CEB and other workshops for public
- Many sole proprietors could use library if more aware and could donate, even \$100
- “Access to justice” should be slogan

**Action Plan:**

What, who, by when/on what date?

What materials/resources needed?

What roadblocks and how do we deal with them?

**Action Plan on Separate sheet.**

**12:30-12:45 PM Wrap Up**

**Plus/delta**

- Was goal of meeting reached?
- Were all views brought out?
- Is everyone clear as to what s/he is to do?

Plus (what worked):

- We made a lot of progress.
- Written list helpful.

Delta (what like to have changed):

- Would have liked to have more time.

Next steps:

- Get notes
- At next Board meeting vote on priorities, assign subcommittees, secure commitments.
- Agendize Strategic Plan as per timeline.
- Create timelines of due dates.

**12:45-1:00 PM Public Comments**

**See attached**

**1:00 PM Adjourn**

## **Checking in with the Past**

- Grateful for Librarian
- Initial discussion re fundraising
- Realization of Friends Group
- Lawyers in Library put us on map
- Updating resources; equipment, etc.
- Achieved basic stability financially
- Quality and stability of staff
- Cohesive Board of Trustees
- Trustees go above and beyond call of duty
- Board recognition of transformation of types of patrons
- Volunteer contributions
- Bill Hale enlightened me to needs of self-repped patrons
- Support from judiciary
- Support from MCBA

## **Sorries**

- Unable to pay staff their worth yet
- Departure of Bettina because of not being able to ensure safety of staff
- Slow progress of fundraising

## **Vision Consolidated**

- Improve compensation for staff
- Offer various programs; 1-stopshop for self-represented litigants
- Weed out publications
- Library is vital hub and “front of mind” resource
- Marketing and branding

## Law Library Vision Brainstorm

- Law Library well-known and utilized (1 pink/1 yellow dot)
- Library is vital hub and “front of mind” resource (3 green/1 yellow)
- When need legal help, library is first resource thought of among others
- Need more bodies in the building
- Law Library erstwhile partner to those seeking legal services
- Offer various programs; 1-stop shop for self-repped litigants. Eg. Reasonable accommodations, workshop, restraining orders, simple will (1 pink, 3 green, 1 yellow)
- Partnering with other agencies (1 yellow)
- “Access to Justice” services
- Partnership with self-help legal services at Civic Center, i.e. Forms vs research, more time (we have)
- Raise \$1,500/month (1 pink)
- Partner with others to offer computer skills training (checked)
- Support staff training (1 pink/1 green) (checked)
- State of the art technology (1 pink/1 yellow)
- More welcoming environment-plants, etc. (1 pink)
- Video library of legal procedures, etc.
- Expand staff to meet new needs-resources (1 green/3 yellow)
- More money and sources of money-educate superes and public regarding costs to run Law Library (1 pink)
- Visibility and utility of library will result in self-perpetuating viability
- Marketing and branding (2 pink)
- Dynamic and interactive website
- Sponsorship by law firms and legal service providers (2 green) (checked)
- Make sponsorship visible to public i.e. Plaque, website, public, and renewable annually (1 yellow)
- Recognition events-publicity (1 yellow)
- Funding to provide for above
- Weed out publications-decision-making re what to toss: blue ribbon panel of experts (2 pink/1 green) (checked twice)
- \$ resource for solo practitioner to be “champion of underdog” (checked)
- Adhere to fundamental purpose of County Law Library
- Leverage County for more resources, i.e. Staff (1 pink/1 green)
- Improve compensation for staff (3 pink)
- Increase relationship with Friends of Law Library (1 green)
- Offer Law Library memberships for benefits/services; scaled to income (2 yellow) (checked)
- Improve Law Library catalog service
- Offer MCLE Credits as revenue stream (2 green)

# Marin County Law Library

## Annual Report

### FY 2021/2022

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#### **Mission Statement**

The Marin County Law Library serves the public, attorneys, and residents of Marin County by providing access to legal resources, research assistance, and technologies.

#### **Vision Statement**

Bringing Justice to Marin County Through Legal Information.

#### **Overview and History of the Marin County Law Library**

County law libraries in the State of California were first established and maintained as a resource for members of the state bar, officials of the state and county, the judiciary, and the residents of the county.

In the last decade or so, however, the Marin County Law Library has been seeing an increase in demand from individuals who have had no formal legal training.

At the same time, the primary and traditional funding source for county law libraries – a percentage of California Superior Court civil filing fees – has decreased over time.

Some possible reasons are the following: (1) the uniform filing fee provisions do not allow for periodic law library filing increases; (2) the number of filings in Superior Courts have decreased due to the increase in arbitration and other dispute mechanisms; (3) the expense of legal representation; and (4) the increased use of filing fee waivers.

During Fiscal Year 2021/2022 (July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022), the Law Library was open for individuals with appointments required but began removing the appointment requirement around February 2022.

The amount collected from the filing fees increased 20.94% in Fiscal Year 2021/2022 with \$168,853 from Fiscal Year 2020/2021 with \$133,489 but the overall trend is a decrease in filings fees since Fiscal Year 2011/2012 with \$230,611.

The initial months of the fiscal year were focused on reopening the Law Library for public use as well as adapting the Law Library's community service programs, Lawyers in the Library and First Thursdays at the Law Library, to the Zoom Meetings platform.

#### **What the Demographic Shift Means**

Individuals with little access to and little understanding of the legal system need additional attention and place a greater demand on staff because of the time required to assist them.

Library staff must explain to them the various legal resources and how to use those resources.

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The demographics of participants in the Lawyers in the Library program on Zoom, for the period July 2021 through June 2022 reflect that self-represented patrons were approximately 49% women, 56% white, 33% employed, 20% retired, 11% were living on unemployment benefits, and 44% of 75% who answered the question about income had incomes of \$3,000 or less per month.

#### **Profile**

The Marin County Law Library is currently celebrating 131 years in 2022 as a resource for our legal community and county residents. The Marin County Law Library operates as an independent local government agency pursuant to California Business and Professions Code sections 6300 through 6364. It is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees comprised of five delegates appointed by the Judges of the Superior Court, who serve for three-year terms, and two delegates appointed by the Marin County Board of Supervisors who serve for one-year terms.

The Marin County Law Library is a primary source of legal information and assistance to Marin County residents, Superior Court Judges, 1 Court Commissioner, 1 Referee, and Marin County attorneys.

The Law Library was open 35 hours per week, from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday; and 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday; it was closed on weekends.

#### **Board of Trustees**

The Marin County Law Library is fortunate to have both long-standing and new members on its Board. Their expertise, experience, and leadership across a broad spectrum of community service areas helps keep the library in touch with the needs of the community. In addition, they provide valuable advice and counsel to the Law Library Director.

**Marin County Law Library**  
**Annual Report**  
**FY 2021/2022**

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<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Office / Affiliation</b>
Kristine Fowler Cirby, Esq.	Nov. 17, 2020 – Nov. 16, 2023	President/Delegate of the Court
Tracy Barrett, Esq.	Apr. 12, 2022 – Apr. 11, 2023	Vice President/Delegate of the Board of Supervisors
Denise Bashline	June 20, 2021 – June 19, 2024	Delegate of the Court
Open		Delegate of the Board of the Board of Supervisors
Donald Drummond, Esq.	June 17, 2020 – June 16, 2023	Delegate of the Court
Walter Cook, Jr., Esq., MLIS	Nov. 17, 2020 – Nov. 16, 2023	Delegate of the Court
Alexander Johnson, Esq.	May 31, 2022 – May 30, 2025	Delegate of the Court

**Services of the Law Library**

The staff provides assistance regarding legal materials available, how to use them, and how to conduct legal database searches as well as internet searches for information, laws and forms that may be difficult to locate. Staff do not, however, provide legal advice, although we refer patrons to other legal service providers and programs where patrons might receive legal advice.

The kinds of assistance untrained patrons might receive include explanations of:

- 1) Legal materials;
- 2) Differences between primary authority and secondary authority;
- 3) Instruction in the use of Westlaw Patron Access, Google Scholar, and CEB OnLAW.

The success of a patron's visit may very well depend on the law librarian's availability and ability to be a patient and effective instructor, as well as offering support to individuals who are usually under a lot of stress.

Library staff typically track patron demographics.

First Thursdays at the Marin County Law Library is a community service program that was launched in-person in November 2019. The purpose is twofold; first, to provide an informal opportunity for representatives of various local service agencies, nonprofits,

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county departments and county programs to inform the public about the services they offer, and second, to increase public awareness of the legal resources and services available at the Law Library. Currently, this program is a virtual program.

Presenters this fiscal year have included the Marin County District Attorney and Legal Aid of Marin.

**Lawyers in the Library** is another community service program offered at the Law Library. It was created in collaboration with the Marin County Bar Association in the Fall of 2016. Attorney volunteers meet with members of the public for 20 minutes on a first come, first served basis to provide legal information and guidance. The program helps members of the public in particular legal areas such as civil, landlord/tenant law, and estate planning (including probate). Lawyers in the Library, however, does not discriminate based off income level, a feature which distinguishes it from other legal services programs in the county. Currently, this program is offered through video conferencing software (which can include telephone communication).

The online registration process has been a hindrance for some patrons, but the Marin County Law Library does its best to assist them and provide an option to register in person at the Law Library, if necessary.

#### **Library Collection**

The Law Library maintains a collection of 19,765 print publications, including reporters, treatises, practice manuals, law reviews and journals, periodicals, and other printed materials. The Law Library spent \$62,236 updating its publications. We acquired 152 new volumes, discarded 116 outdated volumes, sold 13 volumes, and received 0 donated used books during the 2021/2022 Fiscal Year.

Because the cost of legal materials has been increasing, not all sets of publications are being kept current as funding for the law library has not kept pace with the rate of inflation. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the amount spent on materials and our total expenditures.

# Marin County Law Library

## Annual Report

### FY 2021/2022

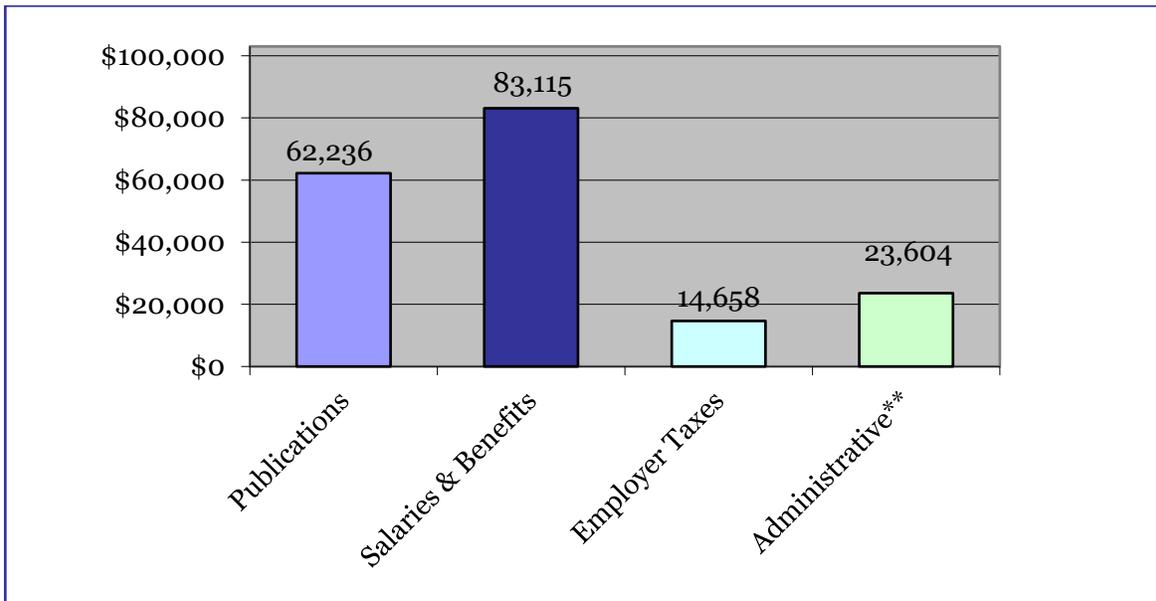


Fig. 1

#### **Electronic Resources**

The Law Library continued its subscription to the Westlaw Patron database, which includes cases and statutes for all federal circuits, an extensive California database, and a wide selection of secondary materials, such as the Rutter California Practice Guides and Witkin Treatise Library. KeyCite, Westlaw's legal citator, is critical for checking the currency of legal authorities cited in pleadings and briefs filed with the Court. The Board approved renewal of the Law Library's subscription to CEB OnLAW, a digital database of CEB's entire set of California practice and procedure publications.

#### **Infrastructure and Other Resources**

The Law Library has six computer workstations (four available to the public), three printers, two photocopiers and one multifunction printer/copier/scanner/fax machine. The workstations provide access to legal resources on the Internet. The four public access computers are available for general and legal research, downloading of forms, and legal word processing tasks at no cost to the public.

The remaining two computer stations are for staff use only, as are one printer and a combined fax/scanner/copier/printer. The staff facsimile/scanning machine is used to provide fee-based scanning and fax services to Law Library patrons, with fees based on a per-page usage. Wireless internet service is also available to Law Library patrons.

Some of the newer editions of Nolo print publications provide forms which are downloadable from the Internet.

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The Law Library also has an electric typewriter available for public use.

#### **The Law Library Website**

The Law Library's website seeks to inform and engage the public. It provides information about services offered by the Law Library, including the Lawyers in the Library and First Thursdays at the Marin County Law Library programs, conference room rentals, and research assistance, as well as links to the Law Library's catalog of publications and many legal resources. In addition, board meeting agendas, minutes, financial reports, projected budgets, annual reports, trustee information, and the Law Library's bylaws and patron rules of conduct are posted on the website for easy access by the public.

The Law Library receives numerous inquiries and requests for information about its services from the email link on its website. To meet the demands of an increasing number of self-represented litigants, the Law Library maintains electronic links to legal resources on its website.

#### **Financial Report**

The Closing Financial Statement for Fiscal Year 2021/2022, showing all income and expenditures, is attached hereto.

The Law Library had a negative budget balance for 2021/2022 of \$3,997. This is attributable to the extra costs that were incurred in replacing and updating parts of our digital infrastructure and increases to employee salaries during Fiscal Year 2021/2022 to reopen the library. The Law Library's fund balance as of June 30, 2022 was \$258,902.

#### **Library Funding**

Stable, consistent, and adequate funding is a pressing issue for the Law Library – and for county law libraries across the state. Historically, the Law Library has derived more than 90% of its annual operating funds from a fixed share of designated civil filing fees: \$32 from fees paid for every first-appearance paper filed with the Marin County Superior Court. That \$32 figure has not changed since 2006 while the fees received from first appearance papers filed with the Court has declined.

Fortunately, the California Legislature has committed to annual budget allocations for county law libraries in the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 and Fiscal Year 2022/2023 budget years. However, there is no guarantee of future funding commitments after that so it is anticipated that county law libraries will be pushing further advocacy.

In addition to the steady annual decrease in the number of cases filed with the courts, the Law Library's sole means of keeping up with inflation was removed when the Uniform Civil Fee and Standard Fees Schedule Act of 2005 was established for the trial courts

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statewide effective January 1, 2006. Prior to that time each county had the authority to adjust filing fees and to approve limited annual increases of up to \$3 per filing to the portion of those civil filing fees that was allotted to Law Libraries.

#### **Income Streams and Reserves**

##### **Filing Fee Income**

In Fiscal Year 2021/2022 the Law Library received \$168,853 in filing fees, a 20.94% increase from Fiscal Year 2020/2021.

##### **California Legislature Allocation**

In Fiscal Year 2021/2022, the California Legislature committed a set of funds for California County Law Libraries, which the Marin County Law Library received \$92,713.

##### **Donations**

In Fiscal Year 2021/2022, the Marin County Law Library received \$2,655 in donations from various members of the Marin County community.

##### **Self-generated Revenue**

The Law Library raised \$3,162 in self-generated revenue, down 16.02% from Fiscal Year 2020/2021. This revenue source includes fees for photocopies, faxes, conference room rentals, and book sales. The self-generated revenue comprised 1.18% of our total revenue for Fiscal Year 2021/2022.

##### **Reserve Funds**

The Law Library has \$200,000 in reserve funds at the present time.

##### **Effect of Decreasing Budget**

Due to the funding decline since Fiscal Year 2011/2012 the Law Library has been forced to cancel many legal publications, cut back its operating hours and reduce its staff. To maintain a reasonably up-to-date collection of important publications, the Law Library has partnered with larger, better-funded County Law Libraries to receive their discarded year-old updates.

As one can surmise, the Marin County residents most in need of access to legal resources bear the heaviest burden of these cuts because access to justice has become more restricted with the steady loss of funding. Law Library staff consistently see an increasing number of laypersons seeking legal forms and assistance with matters such as landlord-tenant issues, foreclosure proceedings, criminal proceedings, probate, and divorce and child custody procedures. Providing the most basic assistance has been a daily occurrence at the Law Library.

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#### **Fundraising Possibilities**

The Law Library's network infrastructure is outdated, increasingly unreliable and needs to be replaced. First, the Law Library's internet bandwidth had to be increased to accommodate the technological demands of online programming. Now, several essential components of our network infrastructure need to be replaced and upgraded to maintain a secure and reliable internet connection. The Law Library plans to seek grants to defray some of the cost but will need additional funding sources.

The Marin County Board of Supervisors may at any time exercise its authority pursuant to California Business and Professions Code Section 6324, which allows them to "appropriate from the county treasury for law library purposes such sums as may in their discretion appear proper". Given the Trustees' commitment to helping self-represented patrons because of the large unmet need for these services in Marin County, it is hoped that the Marin County Board of Supervisors would recognize that a small investment to support the Law Library's effort could reap great rewards.

#### **Conclusion**

The Trustees of the Marin County Law Library remain committed to providing access to legal resources and information for the attorneys and residents of Marin County. Fiscal Year 2021/2022 continued the process of reopening the Law Library after the major COVID-19 period. In addition, the Marin County Law Library continued to move in a forward direction, but much work is still required for the future. This work includes updating and replacing the Law Library's digital infrastructure, obtaining other revenue streams, bringing in more staff, and finding alternatives for legal resources.