

Washoe County Law Library

Annual Report 2023

The mission of the Washoe County Law Library is to enhance access to justice by (1) providing legal information, education, resources, tools, and materials, in print and digital formats, to those engaged with the justice system, and (2) partnering with the courts, bar associations, legal clinics, civil organizations, and government entities to help ensure the legal needs of the community are addressed. The Law Library serves as a first contact for the public when entering the legal system, and answers questions about services available within the courthouse and about the services of other agencies in the area. Additional assistance is offered to self-represented litigants through the Lawyer in the Library program and court-approved packets and forms.

I. Funding

The Law Library receives funding from a portion of District Court filing fees and from County general funds. In Fiscal Year 2023, the Law Library's receipts for District Court filing fees, copier receipts, and fines totaled \$67,610.00. The Law Library's disbursements during Fiscal Year 2023 totaled \$909,334.07,¹ including employee salaries and benefits, and electronic and print items.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Law Library was awarded a \$10,431.00 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records. The funds were used to create a Children's Corner in the Library. The colorful, new space now includes a computer loaded with learning games, including a bilingual option for Spanish speakers, many educational and sensory toys, and comfortable seating. It is a dedicated space for children to spend their time while their parents or caretakers conduct legal research and/or fill out court forms.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Law Library was awarded a \$41,479.00 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records. Funding will be used to purchase and install upgraded internet wiring, and related hardware and software to increase the speed of the internet and improve other aspects of computer usage for the public at the Washoe County Law Library. The grant was awarded on June 15, 2023, and the project must be completed by August 31, 2024.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Law Library was awarded a \$1,281.00 continuing education grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records. The funds were used to send Senior Law Library Assistant, Liz Williams, to the American Association of Law Libraries Western Chapter 2023 Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA. The grant was awarded on August 3, 2023, and the dates of the travel were September 28-30, 2023.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Law Library received donations from local attorneys, including: \$1,000.00 from L. Edward Humphrey, Esq., \$500.00 from Eurik O'Bryant, Esq.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Law Library received a donation of \$200.00 from attorney Patrick M. Kealy.

¹ This information is provided pursuant to NRS 380.090(2).

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Law Library received a donation of \$10,170.00 from the Washoe County Bar Association to fund the ongoing operations of the Law Library.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Washoe County Bar Association's Board of Directors made the decision to relinquish oversight of the Law Library sanctions fund. Sanction funds are now being held with the Community Foundation of Northern Nevada and overseen by the Law Library Board of Trustees.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Board of Directors of Washoe County Bar Association approved a \$2,903.64 disbursement from the Law Library account held with the Washoe County Bar Association to hold the annual Lawyer in the Library volunteer appreciation luncheon and awards ceremony to recognize all our Lawyer in the Library volunteers for the year. The celebration was the first in-person volunteer lunch since 2019 and occurred on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at the Law Library.

In May 2023, the Law Library Board of Trustees approved a \$3,407.59 disbursement from the Law Library sanction fund account held with the Community Foundation of Northern Nevada to cover the cost of travel and attendance of the 2023 American Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting and Conference in Boston. The employee that attended was Sarah Bates, Law Librarian & Manager. The conference dates were July 14-18; thus, the funds were expended in Fiscal Year 2024.

II. Reference and Technical Services

The Law Library provides access to legal information through reference and technical services. Reference services are provided to both attorneys and non-attorneys to assist them in finding legal information and resources. Legal information is provided through print and electronic materials, as well as access to historical legal information through microfiche. The public has several different options when contacting the Law Library. Law Library staff can be reached over the phone, via email, in-person, or through the live chats on the Court's website. Additional programs offered include special Law Day Lawyer in the Library events, Continuing Legal Education classes, and trainings. Between January 1, 2023, and November 30, 2023, approximately 16,904 people visited the Law Library. 7,032 patrons were assisted over the telephone. There were 2,460 live chats through the court website, and 891 patron emails. Law Library staff answered a total of 13,654 questions.

Lawyer in the Library is a long-running program serving the community where attorneys volunteer to assist members of the public with individual legal counseling. The former in-person program was converted to an online program using the Zoom platform during the pandemic and will remain a Zoom program for the foreseeable future. Both volunteers and participants enjoy the convenience of attending from the comfort of their home or workplace, so there are no plans to return to an in-person program. Between January 1, 2023, and November 30, 2023, 61 volunteer attorneys, which includes 16 new volunteers, assisted 1,346 members of the public. The Lawyer in the Library program is a vital service for this community, and multiple referrals from throughout the County are received daily.

Additionally, the Law Library continues to review and modify its collection and library catalog to better meet the needs of patrons.

III. Collection

The Law Library collection contains 53,124 items. The number of lost or missing items is 40. The total number of items and number of lost or missing items includes all items in the catalog (print, microfiche, video, compact disk, and electronic items).

Electronic resources include subscriptions to the Lexis Digital Library, Westlaw, HeinOnline, Gale Legal Forms, the Vital Law Elder Law & Trust Library, the National Consumer Law Center Digital Library, and EBSCO legal databases. We are particularly excited about the recent addition of remote access to the VitalLaw Elder Law & Trust Library. Over the last few years, it has been clear that the public desires home access to resources and proudly, all our electronic databases, except for Westlaw, are now available remotely.

This year, the Law Library celebrated its 25th anniversary as a Federal Depository Library that receives select materials from the Government Printing Office. As a Selective Depository Library, some print and electronic items are received from the Federal Government free of charge. The Law Library is responsible for all print items received and is required to maintain them in the library. To maintain its status as a Federal Depository Library, the Law Library must keep a minimum of 10,000 books that are not part of its Government Printing Office collection.

The Law Library received approximately 93 donated books and materials.

IV. Personnel

Alicia L. Lerud, Esq.	Court Administrator/Clerk of Court
Emily Reed, Esq.	Assistant Court Administrator
Sarah Bates, MLIS	Law Librarian & Manager
Liz Williams	Senior Law Library Assistant
Jessica Burgoon	Law Library Assistant III
Kristal Jacobson	Law Library Assistant III
Kyle Olson	Law Library Assistant III
Kyle Rock	Law Library Assistant III

V. Board of Trustees

Honorable Connie Steinheimer, Chair
Honorable Lynn K. Jones, Chief Judge
Honorable Tamatha Schreinert
Cortney Young, Secretary
Patricia Halstead, Esq.
Michael Kattelman, Esq.
Aurora Partridge
Lindsay Liddell, Deputy District Attorney assigned to the Board of Trustees