

Washoe County Law Library

Annual Report 2024

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 2024, the Law Library's receipts for District Court filing fees, copier receipts, and fines totaled \$73,930.20. The Law Library's disbursements during Fiscal Year 2024 totaled \$1,089,303.78,¹ including employee salaries and benefits, and electronic and print items.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Law Library was awarded a \$44,535.90 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 was used to purchase and install upgraded internet wiring, new PCs, 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 project was completed June 12, 2024. Law Library patrons will benefit from this project for years to come.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Law Library received donations from two local attorneys: \$200.00 from Kathleen T. Breckenridge, Esq. and \$200.00 from Maximillian A. Stovall, Esq.

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 2024, the Law Library Board of Trustees approved a \$3,584.73 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 the Lawyer in the Library volunteers for the year. The celebration was held on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at the Law Library.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Law Library Board of Trustees approved a \$3,026.36 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 one employee at the 2024 American Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting and Conference in Chicago. The employee that attended was Sarah Bates, Law Librarian & Manager. The conference dates were July 20-23, 2024; thus, the funds were expended in Fiscal Year 2025.

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

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. Between January 1, 2024, and November 30, 2024, approximately 17,743 people visited the Law Library. 6,525 patrons were assisted over the telephone. There were 3,208 live chats through the court website, and 1,078 patron emails. Law Library staff answered a total of 15,113 questions.

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 52,487 items. The number of lost or missing items is 47. The total number of items and number of lost or missing items includes all items in the catalog (print, microfiche, video, CD-ROMs, and electronic items).

Electronic resources include subscriptions to the LexisNexis 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. Onsite access to Lexis+ will be coming in January 2025.

The Law Library is a Federal Depository Library that receives select materials from the Government Printing Office (GPO). As a Selective Depository Library, some print and electronic items are received from the Federal Government free of charge. This past year, the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) announced that it will be transitioning to a "digital-first" program, greatly reducing the number of print items it will be distributing, and instead favoring electronic distribution of GPO materials. 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 56 donated books in 2024.

In addition to books and legal research databases, the law library offers many other resources to the community.

IV. Programs and Services

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. Legal topics include family law, probate law, landlord/tenant law, and a general civil law option. The former in-person program was converted to an online program using the Zoom platform in 2020 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.

This year, the Law Library celebrated its 25th anniversary of this tremendously popular program and a record number of participants were assisted. Between January 1, 2024, and November 30, 2024, 60 volunteer attorneys, which includes 18 new volunteers, assisted 1,589 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. Other programs offered include special Law Day Lawyer in the Library events and database trainings.

Services and resources available at the Law Library include, but are not limited to:

- Wi-Fi
- Public Internet computers with Word and Adobe Acrobat Pro
- Printer (including mobile printing), photocopier, and scanner
- Zoom rooms for attending virtual court hearings and meetings
- Conference room that is reservable by the public during business hours
- Public phone
- Phone charging station
- Quiet study area
- Court forms and packets
- Assistance with electronic filing with the Second Judicial District Court
- Live chat on the Court's website
- Access to the Second Judicial District Court record via Contexte terminals
- Children's area for young children accompanied by parents/guardians
- Language Link interpretation services

V. 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
Kristal Jacobson	Law Library Assistant III
Kyle Olson	Law Library Assistant III
Yanitzia Perez-Galvan	Law Library Assistant III
Natasha Wolz	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