

Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) – October 22, 2020

In-person (virtual) meeting minutes

Attendees: Mary Jo Lazun, Stephanie Levasseur, Joan Bellistri, Sandy Brewer, Julia Viets, Steve Anderson, Lonni Summers, Catherine McGuire and James Durham

Meeting was all about news and updates:

Catherine shared first. The Legal Reference in the Public Library training partnership has been busy with presentations. First, the partnership was asked to present the program at the Maryland Library Association/Delaware Library Association joint annual conference. Originally scheduled for Spring 2020, due to COVID concerns, the presentation was rescheduled for October and moved to a virtual format. Catherine and Julia Viets presented a pair of two-hour virtual trainings, the first session on Basics of Legal Reference and Best Practices, and the second session on the topics of Family Law and Landlord-Tenant Law. In addition to the MLA/DLA programs, the Public Library training partnership has been presenting topic-specific one-hour trainings through the Fall, hosted by the Montgomery County Public Library through their Zoom platform. Sessions on Family Law, Landlord-Tenant Law, and Life & Health Planning Law have been held. Upcoming presentations in October and November will be on Abuse; Public Benefits; and Consumer Law.

Lonni provided an update next. Lonni shared that the annual report was submitted and included the drafted CMCLLD information. Lonni reminded everyone to share encounters with patrons that might be good for the Conference's video being made by the Maryland Judiciary. The Maryland Judiciary's Legal Help Line is short staffed right now (due to COVID). Walk-in Centers are open.

Mary Jo shared that traffic at Charles County Law Library is slow right now.

Julia said that Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library is currently assisting the public and bar with remote services. The Law Library is likely to resume in-person services by appointment soon. This Fall, law library staff have been busy assisting senior judges to schedule and to conduct Zoom hearings. This additional duty is set to end mid-November.

Steve said that the Thurgood Marshal State Law Library's numbers have been up significantly since reopening. The State Law Library had nearly 90 reference questions one day in early October. The pre-COVID reference rate was about 220/week; since returning to in-person service on June 8th, the State Law Library's rate is now about 250/week. For email alone, pre-COVID average was 138/week; since reopening, the State Law Library is averaging 183 email requests per week. For in-person comparison, over the 20 weeks pre-closure, the State Law Library had 691 in-person requests; since the June 8th reopening, there have been 395 in-person requests.

James shared that the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library allows visitors by appointment only. Also, a panel (including library, procurement and JIS staff members) is currently evaluating proposals for acquisition of a new reference management system. The Collection Development Committee is currently negotiating a contract renewal with Wolters Kluwer.

Joanie talked about moving the Anne Arundel Law Library to a temporary new space. The court is using the law library space for jurors to meet the COVID spacing requirements. Joanie shared that the new law library area is a struggle due to outside noises that can be heard. The library can accommodate four

patrons at the same time due to COVID concerns. Walk-in traffic has decreased as a result of the move and spacing issues.

Sandy said that the Howard County Law Library & Legal Resource Center is experiencing business as usual. Traffic is high – although there are more phone calls than usual and less in person visitors. The library can accommodate four patrons at the same time due to COVID concerns. The in person legal assistance programs – Civil Law Center and Family Law Assistance Program are continuing to offer advice from local volunteer attorneys. The court cut the services' hours a bit due to COVID.

Stephanie shared that the Baltimore County Law Library keeps its doors closed; a patron must call in to get permission to enter the law library. Ten people are allowed in the law library at one time, and so far, the maximum in the space has been eight. Mostly, around four to six people are in the law library at its busiest times.