

Public Libraries, Legal Information and Access to Justice

The number of people conducting their own legal research and representing themselves in court continues to grow as the economy remains weak. This program will provide an introduction to working with the self-represented litigant in your library.

This workshop is paid for with funds from a grant from the National Center for State Courts. No registration fee is required. .2 CEUs are available for public librarians who request them when registering.

Program Locations and Times

- Marquette, Peter White Public Library (Friday, Oct. 8, 9:30am - Noon)
 - o <http://www.uproc.lib.mi.us/pwpl>
- Southfield, Southfield Public Library (Friday, Oct 15, 9:30am - Noon)
 - o <http://www.sfldlib.org>
- Allegan, Allegan District Library (Thursday, October 21, 1:00pm – 3:30pm)
 - o <http://www.alleganlibrary.org/>
- Houghton Lake, Houghton Lake Public Library (Friday, October 29, 9:30am - Noon)
 - o <http://www.hlpl.org/>

Presenters

Kimberly Koscielniak has been with the Library of Michigan since 2008. Kim has a degree in Library Science from the University of Michigan, a law degree from Wayne State University and is a member of the State Bar of Michigan. She has worked in various legal positions since 1998 and has experience in law firm, public and school libraries. She is Collection Development Specialist in Law at the Library, and is involved in all aspects of State Law Library operation. She is currently a member of a statewide SOS (Solutions on Self-Help) Task Force Workforce Group established by Justice Marilyn Kelly.

Laura Mancini is the Director of Library Services for the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, where she oversees the three libraries that serve the county government, including the Adams Pratt Law Library, the only public law library in southeastern Michigan. She is also an adjunct faculty member for the School of Library and Information Science at Wayne State University. Laura has a master's degree in Library and Information Science from Wayne State University. She also has a bachelor's degree summa cum laude in History from Wayne. Laura is a member of the State Bar Committee on Libraries, Legal Research and Legal Publications. She is currently a member of the Chief Justice's SOS Taskforce. In 2010, she was the recipient of the Alene and Martin Doctoroff Liberty Bell Award from the Oakland County Bar Association for her efforts in presenting a public interest lecture series on various topics in the law.

Program Agenda

Hour 1

Introduction: Legal information vs. legal advice

Introduction to the world of lawyers and legal systems OR “Who Does What, With What?”

1. Congress, Council and Legislature: Compiled laws, statutes and local ordinances
2. Executives and Administrative Agencies: Regulations and administrative decisions
3. Courts and the Judiciary: Case or common law

Break (15 minutes)

Hour 2

Legal resources for the public library: Basic sources for commonly asked about areas of the law and how to access them and use them

1. Free electronic resources
2. Print materials that a layman can love

Recap: Legal information vs. legal advice

1. Common fears about providing legal information
2. Why the public librarian should not give legal advice and how this might be explained to a patron

Beyond your library – finding legal assistance organizations and libraries with special legal collections

Hour 3 (.5 hours)

Plans for the Future: The Statewide Task Force on Access to Justice

Your concerns and questions: Please bring any examples or anecdotes concerning requests for legal information or assistance received by you or a colleague. Please be inclusive – there are legal issues hiding behind any number of requests for “general information.”