



# Law Library Service to Prisoners

Liz Reppe, Minnesota State Law Librarian

# About the MN State Law Library

CHAP. CXXI. — *An Act to establish the Territorial Government of Minnesota.*

March 8, 1849.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That from and after the passage of this act, all that part of the territory of the United States which lies within the following limits, to wit: Beginning in the Mississippi River, at the point where the line of forty-three degrees and thirty minutes of north latitude crosses the same, thence running due west on said line, which is the northern boundary of the State of Iowa, to the north-west corner of the said State of Iowa, thence southerly along the western boundary of said State to the point where said boundary strikes the Missouri River, thence up the middle of the main channel of the Missouri River to the mouth of the White-earth River, thence up the middle of the main channel of the White-earth River to the boundary line between the possessions of the United States and Great Britain; thence east and south of east along the boundary line between the possessions of the United States and Great Britain to Lake Superior: thence in a straight line to the northernmost point of the

Temporary gov-  
ernment for Ter-  
ritory of Minne-  
sota established.  
Boundaries.

9 Stat. 403

An Act to establish the Territorial Government of Minnesota.

# 9 Stat. 403

## An Act to establish the Territorial Government of Minnesota.

Appropriation  
of \$5000 for li-  
brary.

**SEC. 17.** *And be it further enacted,* That the sum of five thousand dollars be, and the same is hereby, appropriated, out of any moneys in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, to be expended by and under the direction of the said governor of the Territory of Minnesota, in the purchase of a library, to be kept at the seat of government, for the use of the governor, legislative assembly, judges of the Supreme Court, secretary, marshal, and attorney of said Territory, and such other persons and under such regulations as shall be prescribed by law.

Description of

**SEC. 18.** *And be it further enacted,* That when the lands in the said

# MN Constitution

The supreme court shall appoint to serve at its pleasure a clerk, a reporter, a state law librarian and other necessary employees.

# MN Statutes

480.09 STATE LIBRARY.

Subdivision 1. Supervisory control; supreme court.

The State Library shall be maintained under the supervision of the justices of the supreme court...

# Current Collection

Focus on the Minnesota Appellate Courts



## Federal

- GPO selective depository library
- All federal primary sources

## Minnesota

- All Minnesota legal materials
- Appellate Briefs

## Other States

- Historical (territorial, pre-statehood, constitutional conventions)

Treatises covering topics reaching the appellate courts

# About the Program

- History
  - Pilot Project 1984
  - 1985 – 2,509 requests were filled for 274 inmates
- Funding
  - Interagency agreement
  - FY24/FY25 - \$530,000
  - Where does the \$ come from?
  - What DOC pays for



# About the Program

- Staffing
  - # of staff
  - Classification of staff
  - Training/Education
  - Duties
    - State Law Library role
    - Role re: DOC librarians



# About the Program

- Who we assist
  - 8 prisons
  - IPs housed outside of the prisons





# About the Program

- How IPs make requests/get info
- What we provide
  - Legal materials in our collection
  - How we provide it
- Turn-around time
- “legal mail” handling



# Kite given to prison librarian

## Minnesota Department of Corrections OFFENDER KITE FORM

Offenders are encouraged to communicate with staff at all levels, but it is expected that the chain of command will be used. Your kite should be directed to the staff who can best answer your question. If you send a kite requiring an answer to the wrong staff, it will be returned to you. Kites are to be used for offender to staff correspondence only. If your kite is not specific, and/or the top portion is not completely filled out, legible, and using your committed name, it will be returned for additional information. If you want your kite reviewed further up the chain of command, you must attach all previous kites to show the previous responses. Offender kite form 303.101A is used for general inquiries. Use kite form B for Health Services, Behavioral Health, and treatment inquiries.

To: Law Librarian Date: 10/10/23

From: [REDACTED] OID# [REDACTED]

Facility/Unit ANTHONY Room/Cell 2084 Case manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Other staff you have contacted regarding this issue and the outcome/decision (attach responses):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Issue: may i please have papers to start a restraining order please n thank you

For me and my child.

Response from: ASMTA Date: 10/9

A copy of this kite has been sent to LLSP. You can expect a mailed response within 2-3 weeks.

Return to: [REDACTED]

Letter sent directly to LLSP

To: Minnesota State Law Library  
From: [REDACTED]

Please provide:

(1) A Search Result of a cross reference on: "Social Security Administration Records" and "Social Security Administration Policies";

(2) Search Results on Federal Statutes and Case law on: "Declaration of Life";

(3) (if possible) the Congressional Act of U.S. Statutes-at-Large of the "Social Security Act";

09/02/2023

Thank You!!

# About the Program

- What the prisons provide on site
  - Library and librarians
    - Part of Education Department of DOC
  - “Core Collection”
  - Lexis



**Core Collection of Legal Materials for Prison Libraries**  
**Effective 9/1/2023**

<i>Research and Writing</i>				
Title/Edition	Author/Editor	Publisher	Most Recent Edition	Available at MCF Library
<i>Black's Law Dictionary</i>	Garner, Bryan Editor	Thomson Reuters	11 <sup>th</sup> edition 2019	Any edition
<i>Legal Research: How to Find and Understand the Law</i>	Elias, Stephen and Levinkind, Susan	Nolo Press	19 <sup>th</sup> Edition 2021	Current edition only
<i>Legal Writing: Process, Analysis, and Organization</i>	Edwards, Linda	Aspen Publishers	8 <sup>th</sup> edition 2022	6 <sup>th</sup> edition or newer

<i>Primary Resources</i>				
Title/Edition	Author/Editor	Publisher	Most Recent Edition	Available at MCF Library
<i>Department of Corrections Policy Manual</i>	MNDOC	MNDOC	Updated monthly	Current policies on offender network
<i>Minnesota Statutes</i>	-----	Revisor of Statutes, State of Minnesota	2022	Current set only
<i>Minnesota Rules</i>	-----	Revisor of Statutes, State of Minnesota	2022	Current set only
<i>Laws of Minnesota (MN Session Laws)</i>	-----	Revisor of Statutes, State of Minnesota	2021	Current set only
<i>Minnesota Rules of Court: State</i>	-----	Thomson Reuters	2023	Current volume only
<i>Minnesota Rules of Court: Federal</i>	-----	Thomson Reuters	2023	Current volume only
<i>Federal Civil Judicial Procedure and Rules</i>	-----	Thomson Reuters	2022	Current volume only
<i>Federal Criminal Code and Rules</i>	-----	Thomson Reuters	2023	Current volume only



<i>Finding Tools and Manuals</i>				
Title/Edition	Author/Editor	Publisher	Most Recent Edition	Available at MCF Library
<a href="#">Minnesota Legislative Manual</a>	Minnesota Secretary of State	MN Secretary of State's Office	2021-2022	Current edition only
<i>Minnesota Judges' Criminal Benchbook</i>	-----	MN State Bar Assoc. Continuing Legal Education	2023 8 <sup>th</sup> edition	Current edition only, hard copy or pdf version
<i>Protecting Your Health and Safety: A Litigation Guide for Inmates</i>	Toone, Robert E.	Southern Poverty Law Center	2009 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition	Current edition only
<a href="#">A Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual</a>	-----	Columbia Human Rights Law Review	2020 12 <sup>th</sup> edition	Current edition only, hard copy or pdf version
<i>Prisoners' Self-Help Litigation Manual.</i>	Boston, John, and Daniel E. Manville.	Oceana	2010 4 <sup>th</sup> Edition	Current Edition only



<i>Self-Help Materials</i>	
Child Support Basics	<a href="https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Final%202022%20Child%20Support.pdf">https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Final%202022%20Child%20Support.pdf</a>
Dealing with Debt	<a href="https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Final%202022%20Debt%20English.pdf">https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Final%202022%20Debt%20English.pdf</a>
Getting a Divorce: A Basic Guide to Minnesota Law	<a href="https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Final%202022%20Divorce_0.pdf">https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Final%202022%20Divorce_0.pdf</a>
Rights and Responsibilities of Unmarried Parents	<a href="https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Final%202022%20Paternity_1.pdf">https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Final%202022%20Paternity_1.pdf</a>
Termination of Parental Rights	<a href="https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/F-10%20Termination%20of%20Parental%20Rights.pdf">https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/F-10%20Termination%20of%20Parental%20Rights.pdf</a>
Unmarried Father's Guide: Paternity, Custody, Parenting Time and Child Support in Minnesota	<a href="https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Unmarried%20Fathers%20Guide%202018.pdf">https://www.lawhelpmn.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Unmarried%20Fathers%20Guide%202018.pdf</a>

<i>Lexis Advanced</i>	
Title	Provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Supreme Court Cases</li> <li>United States Code Service, including annotations and archives</li> <li>Minnesota State and Federal Rules of Court, including archives</li> <li>United States Constitution</li> <li>Minnesota Supreme Court Cases from 1861</li> <li>Minnesota Court of Appeals Cases from 1983</li> <li>Minnesota Annotated Statutes, including archives</li> <li>Minnesota Annotated Constitution               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minnesota Civil Practice</li> <li>Ballantine's Law Dictionary</li> </ul> </li> <li>Constitutional Rights of Prisoners</li> </ul>	LexisNexis

<i>Forms</i>	
Power of Attorney	<a href="https://www.lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/fact-sheet/powers-attorney">https://www.lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/fact-sheet/powers-attorney</a>
IFP/District Court Packet	<a href="http://www.mncourts.gov/GetForms.aspx?c=19&amp;p=69">http://www.mncourts.gov/GetForms.aspx?c=19&amp;p=69</a>
IFP/Appeals Court Packet	<a href="http://www.mncourts.gov/GetForms.aspx?c=19&amp;p=70">http://www.mncourts.gov/GetForms.aspx?c=19&amp;p=70</a>
Service of Process Forms/District Court	<a href="http://www.mncourts.gov/GetForms.aspx?c=33">http://www.mncourts.gov/GetForms.aspx?c=33</a>
Service of Process Forms/Appeals Court	<a href="#">Minnesota Judicial Branch - Court of Appeals Help Topics (mncourts.gov)</a>

Highlighted Resources available on Law Library Computers

# About the Program

## What we don't/cannot provide

- Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) materials (including lien requests)
  - <https://mncourts.libguides.com/sovereign-citizens>
- DOC policies
- DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual)
- Non-legal materials
- Legal advice

# About the Program

## Challenges

- Language
- Literacy
- Mental health
- Lock-downs
- Coordination with prison staff



### **These items should be filled at the facility Library:**

- Court Rules and Statutes: Local Library staff should be providing this when an IP provides a citation or a specific topic (ex. *Please send me the statute on 5<sup>th</sup> degree possession.*). If you're unsure, ask a colleague or LLSP for assistance.
- Requests for definitions from the Black's (print) or Ballantine's (electronic) law dictionary.
- DOC policies. These always come from us. If you're unsure what an IP is asking for, provide them a copy of the Table of Contents or advise them to research the policies on the computer (where possible).
- Pardon/Commutation information. The [Pardon Board](#) is a DOC entity that IPs should contact directly with questions, including requests for forms. The address is on the website (Spoiler alert: It's Central Office.)
- Tax Forms.
- Ombuds Complaint Forms.

### **These questions should be routed elsewhere:**

Questions about Social Security, including enrolling for benefits upon release. If you're asked for the address for an SSI address, provide it. If IPs have questions about their benefits or eligibility, they need to contact the SSA directly. Transitions provides general information and helps IPs get their SS card if they don't already have it. IPs who are applying for SS benefits as part of their release plan would work with their case manager.

Questions about education, including how to get transcripts or checking on licenses, etc. IPs should be directed to the Education department where appropriate. If they're asking for a specific government or school, then you can provide that information.

Questions about Detainers. Refer the IPs to Records/Detainer Unit. Note: IPs are notified by Records when a detainer pops up. If the case is untried, Records provides the paperwork to pursue a speedy disposition. If the case is tried, then the individual must work with the county in question. In either circumstance, their questions should be directed to Records.

## **LLSP and Prison Library Staff Responsibilities in Providing Law Library Service to IPs**

To assure that staff of the Law Library Service to Prisoners program and the prison law librarians provides the best possible service to IPs, we recommend the following responsibilities for both LLSP and prison library staff.

### **LLSP Responsibilities:**

**LLSP staff will...**

1. Provide materials that are not available in the prison core collection.
2. Encourage IPs to use legal services available within the prison law library and its core collection.
3. Assist with legal research.
4. Respond to additional kites, as needed, when prison law clerk is not available, during facility lockdown, or during prison librarian absences.
5. Mail court-deadline responses weekly and other responses every two weeks, based on the date that LLSP receives the requests and on the page/item limitations set by LLSP.
6. Inform prison librarians when LLSP staff is on vacation.
7. Inform prison librarians of LLSP program or staff changes.

### **Prison Law Librarians Responsibilities:**

**The prison library staff will...**

1. Provide all materials that are available in the prison core collection.
2. Encourage IPs to use legal resources available in the prison law library and its core collection.
3. Send kites at a minimum 2 to 3 times per week to LLSP.
4. (If aware of an IP's pending court date) highlight that information on the kite or have the IP make that information prominent on the kite.
5. Send a courtesy e-mail message to LLSP if librarian will be out for any length of time (week or more) and have a backup person mail kites to LLSP.
6. Inform LLSP of any facility lockdowns or law clerk changes that may affect visits or LLSP workload.
7. Assist with coordinating virtual visits to prison housing units, if needed.
8. Advertise LLSP program and virtual visits.



# Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP)

## What is LLSP?

- LLSP is a legal information service provided to people incarcerated under the jurisdiction of the MN Dept. of Corrections.
- LLSP provides incarcerated persons (IPs) with access to legal information and law library materials.
- LLSP librarians offer monthly virtual visits (where available) to discuss legal information needs.

## What can LLSP do?

- Send you court forms and legal information materials from the MN State Law Library's collections.
- Provide contact information for legal assistance organizations.

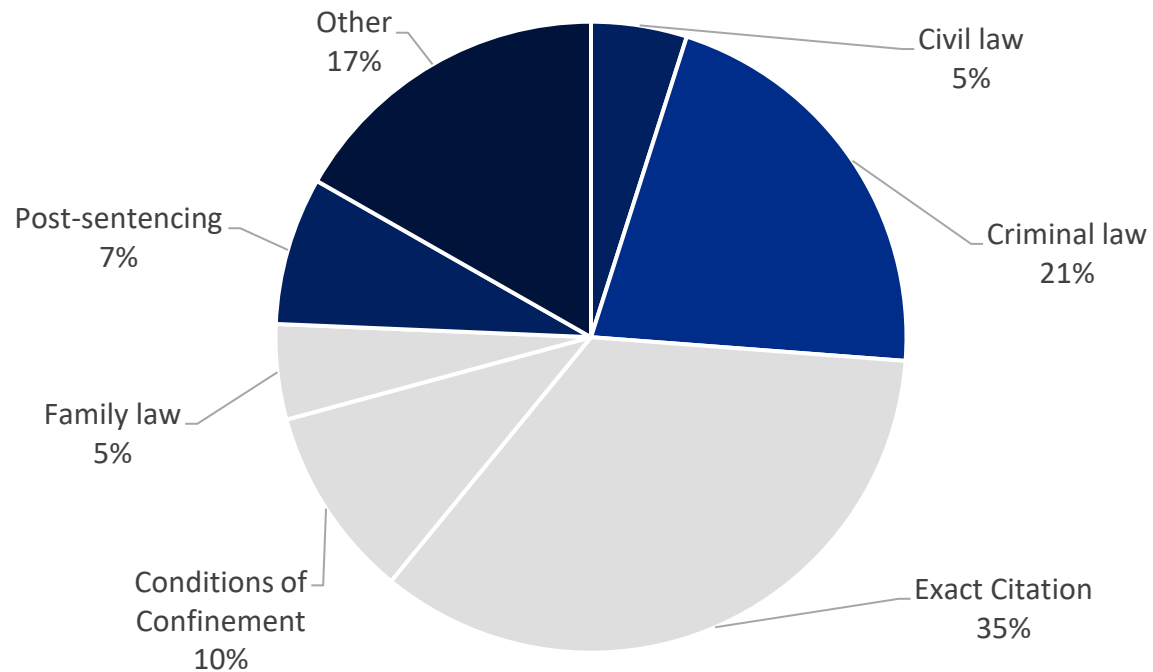
## What can't LLSP do?

- LLSP librarians cannot provide legal advice.
- LLSP cannot assist in completing or filing court forms.

## How do I contact LLSP?

- **Request a reference interview.** This will be a virtual meeting with the law librarian. Ask facility librarian about availability.
- **Send a kite** to LLSP via facility librarian or education department.
- **Write** to the program at the following address:  
**Law Library Service to Prisoners**  
**Minnesota State Law Library**  
**Minnesota Judicial Center, Room**  
**G25 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King**  
**Jr. Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55155-6102**
- **Call** (651) 297-4969. LLSP accepts prepaid phone calls from IPs M-F 8:00AM-3:30PM. LLSP is closed on court holidays.

# What do IPs ask for?



# 2022 Statistics

- 7,833 DOC inmates (as of 07/01/2022)
- 17,792 Questions answered
- 731 Phone calls (20% increase from 2020)
- 155 Video visits
- 23,577 Items sent
- 2,129 Individual inmates assisted

# Thank you

“Just a note to let you know how appreciative and thankful I am for all your help. You have gone above and beyond for me, and I see your good deeds. Thank you so much for sending me the information I needed. It put me on the right track for learning. **Having the right information is empowering.”**

~ note to law librarian from IP

Questions about this program?

Liz Reppe

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