

AALL Standards for County Public Law Libraries

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Consider Your Library

1. What does your library do particularly **well**? **Pick two.**
2. What **challenges** does your library face when it comes to budget, personnel, collection, structure, user services, technical services, physical plant, etc.? **Pick two.**

{ Hold that thought. }



Preamble

Believing that the county public law library is an **integral** and **vital** part of the legal community and of citizens' access to a **just legal system**, the members of the Government Law Libraries Section (GLL) of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) urge county governments, courts, and/or governing entities to **adhere to the following standards**.

These standards serve as **guidelines** for libraries to ensure the **highest quality personnel, collection, and library services** in county public law libraries throughout the United States.



Areas of Focus

The County Public Library Standards cover:

- I. Governance and Administration
- II. Budget
- III. Personnel
- IV. Physical Plant & Facilities
- V. Access & Information Services
- VI. Technical Services
- VII. Collection



New and Improved!

Previous standards were revised in 2009.

Current standards were recommended by State, Court, & County Law Libraries (now GLL) SIS Standards Committee and approved by the AALL Executive Board in April 2015.



What Changed?

- **Rewrites** substantially the 2009 Standards
- Uses **streamlined** language & formatting
- Looks to the future and the **changing landscape** of law libraries and particularly of county public law libraries
- Adds **outreach** and **succession planning**
- **Ties budget to strategic planning**
- Indicates **responsibilities of governing entity** or county
- Emphasizes **programming, training, and support** for clinics
- Includes broad language about **newer technologies**
- Acknowledges **appropriate format** for population served
- Addresses **user services, self-represented litigants, self-help, and access to justice**



A High Standard

“ The members realize that because of the great variation in size and governance among county public law libraries, **certain standards will be harder to achieve than others.** ”

Will we be audited on these standards?

We'll never meet that expectation!

Do they know how many people work here?

My board would never go for that!

Who is providing the money for me to do this, anyway?



Governance & Administration

“Operational and financial stability for county public law libraries is best achieved when **mandated by statute**. The law will help the governing entity establish the service direction of the library. That direction goes hand-in-hand with an **experienced, educated and capable director** who serves as a **member of the governing entity's management team**. The **responsibilities of the library director should be clearly stated** to aid in the fulfillment of the library's vision, mission, and goals.”



Governance & Administration

- ✓ The **establishment and funding of a county public law library should be mandated by law**. The statutes should **define the governance of the library** and provide the governing entity **authority** to work collaboratively or in partnership with other entities
- ✓ The library should have a **written mission and vision statement** reflecting the statutory mandate.
- ✓ The library director is an integral part of the governing entity's structure and **serves as part of the management team**.
- ✓ The library director's role on the management team should be defined by written policy. **Ongoing communication** between the governing entity and the director is necessary to ensure the director's participation in any policy development or changes affecting library operations.
- ✓ The library director is responsible for **all planning and implementation** of activities related to budget, staffing and operations for the library.



Governance & Administration



How does your library stack up?

{ Discuss }



Budget

“A budget quantitatively describes the county public law library's projected operations. The budgeting process typically **begins with a strategic plan** that management will then apply to develop a master budget. The budget should **accurately reflect all costs associated with the operation of the library**, including personnel and technological requirements. The **library director is primarily responsible for drafting and managing** the library budget.”



Budget

- ✓ The budget of the library should be **separate and distinct** from the budgets of other operations of its governing entity.
- ✓ The library **director should prepare, justify, and manage** the library budget ... **equal priority** ... request should be **defended vigorously** by the governing entity.
- ✓ The budget of the library **adequate** to ensure a **complete, up-to-date collection** ... and a **qualified staff** ...



Budget

- ✓ The budget should include **personnel** cost, library **materials** and **services, supplies, equipment and appropriate technologies, collection repair** and **preservation, resource sharing, physical space** and **maintenance, membership in professional organizations, training,** and **travel** expenses for library staff, resources that support **Access to Justice** initiatives; and **other categories** as may be defined by law or practice.
- ✓ When the library's primary source of revenue, such as filing fees, is insufficient to cover ordinary expenses, **supplemental funding from another source** should be provided.



Budget



How does your library stack up?

{ Discuss }



Personnel

“A sufficient number of qualified personnel is essential to the smooth operation of a county public law library and to the delivery of research services. These personnel should be **integrated into the workforce of the governing entity when possible, and should **receive the support necessary** to fulfill the library's mission.”**



Personnel

- ✓ **Sufficient number of qualified professional personnel during all hours of operation.**
- ✓ **Salaries** of all library personnel should be **commensurate with their education, training, experience.**
- ✓ The library director should **select and evaluate** library staff. The governing entity's **personnel classification system** and **personnel policy** should apply to all staff.
- ✓ All law librarians should hold a **graduate degree** in library or information science.
- ✓ **Personnel from the related entity** should be accessible to the library staff to **support** administrative, clerical, technical, and information technology functions.



Personnel

- ✓ All library staff should be given the opportunity to pursue a **program of professional development with financial assistance**.
- ✓ The library staff should be encouraged to participate in local, regional, and national **professional law library associations**, with provision for **membership dues** and **related staff development expenses**.
- ✓ The library staff should participate in **ongoing professional development and education**.



Personnel



How does your library stack up?

{ Discuss }

Physical Plant & Facilities

“A county public law library should be **conveniently located** in or adjacent to the county court building. In counties with large geographical areas or with outlying courts, library services may be extended by a **branch library or electronic remote access**. A crucial component ... is the baseline need for **coordinated connectivity** to reliable electronic networks. The importance of a **user-friendly orientation** cannot be overstated. It is not enough to make current, accurate legal information available; the library has an obligation to provide **facilities and technologies that help users to find and use the law.**”



Physical Plant & Facilities

- ✓ The library and any branch library should be **housed in the same building or in close proximity** to the courts to provide convenient library access.
- ✓ The library's physical facility must meet **basic structural requirements** necessary to house and provide access to informational resources in a variety of formats.
- ✓ Shelving should be arranged in a manner that allows for **easy access to and growth** for the print collection.
- ✓ Space and facilities should be provided for **non-print and fragile materials** under environmentally sound conditions.
- ✓ **Public computers** with printers should be made available to access commercial electronic services and the Internet.



Physical Plant & Facilities

- ✓ Suitable and adequate **equipment, work space, and comfortable seating** with **proper lighting, temperature, and humidity control**.
- ✓ Suitable and adequate **security** for the protection of library staff, users, and the collection.
- ✓ **Networked connectivity** for Internet access and office applications. The library should provide **sufficient electrical outlets and equipment**.
- ✓ Readily available, visible **directories, library guides, and signage**.
- ✓ The library's facilities should meet the **requirements of the ADA**.
- ✓ Suitable and adequate space and equipment for **training and educational programming, meetings, private attorney-client consultation, and legal clinics**.



Physical Plant & Facilities



How does your library stack up?

{ Discuss }

Access & Information Services

“The county public law library should provide **access** to legal information in a manner that is **efficient**, **economical**, **reliable**, and in accordance with accepted **standards** and **measures of performance**. Service should support **all customers** seeking **access to justice** through legal information. By **sharing** with other libraries and service organizations a library can increase the information available. Technology has proven essential in these endeavors as the **use of technology** greatly enhances the information available while providing service to **remote customers**.”



Access & Information Services

- ✓ The library's mission and goals statement should identify the **levels of information service provided** to its users.
- ✓ The library should **augment its resources** through interlibrary loans, cooperative agreements, networks, and in-house and remote online electronic services.
- ✓ Library **policies** approved by the governing entity should be **conspicuously available**.
- ✓ The library may provide **services** such as self-help legal clinics that **expand a citizen's access to the justice system**.
- ✓ Information access services should be **appropriate for the community being served**.
- ✓ The library should provide **access to the Internet** for users.
- ✓ The library's **online presence should be maintained independently**, or in cooperation with the library's governing entity.



Access & Information Services



How does your library stack up?

{ Discuss }



Technical Services

“Written policies should cover **collection development, preservation, and disaster preparedness and recovery.** These policies should be coordinated by the library director and **approved by the governing entity.** The county public law library should provide **resources in various formats to assist its diverse customer groups.** The library's collection must be **accessible to users through a catalog** allowing them to identify resources.”



Technical Services

Collection Development

- ✓ A **written collection development policy**, approved by the governing entity and followed by the library, should address **selection** of materials and services, **discarding** of materials, and the acceptance of **gifts**.
- ✓ **All materials should be current and complete** with multiple copies or additional access as needed. Superseded materials should be clearly indicated and may be retained when useful.
- ✓ The library should acquire and provide **access to legal information in the most appropriate format**. Particular attention should be given to **materials to assist self represented litigants**.
- ✓ The library director should have the authority to join **information networks** and participate in **cooperative networking agreements**.
- ✓ Appropriate **selection tools** should be consulted to allow informed decisions.



Technical Services

Access to the Collection & Cataloging

- ✓ Materials in the collection, regardless of format, should be **cataloged and classified** following national standards.
- ✓ The library should belong to or otherwise utilize a **network for cataloging** and related library services and offer complete holdings information.
- ✓ The library catalog and other files should be created and maintained in **electronic format** based on national standards.
- ✓ Existing paper catalogs and files should be **converted to electronic** ones.



Technical Services

Collection Management

- ✓ The library collection should be maintained in **good physical condition**. The should have a written **preservation policy**.
- ✓ **Binding** may be considered to preserve various print materials.
- ✓ GLL has published a Disaster Planning Tool Kit that may be consulted to assist library staff with **disaster preparedness**. The library should have a **written policy** for preparing and recovering from disasters.



Technical Services



How does your library stack up?

{ Discuss }

Collection

“The library should provide a **proper mix of print or electronic access** to ... a **strong core collection** ... The list ... should **not be used to limit** the scope or development of a collection... **Format selection should be driven foremost by user needs and preferences** ...

Alternative forms of publication or cooperative agreements with libraries ...will satisfy the collection requirements if staff is available to assist users ...Libraries should consider becoming federal or state **depository libraries** ... The library should provide **reliable websites that provide free access** to case, statutory and administrative law as well as forms, treatises and other material...”



Collection: State Law

- ✓ Published decisions of state courts
- ✓ Annotated state & local court rules
- ✓ Current annotated statutory compilation
- ✓ A complete collection of session laws
- ✓ Current state constitution as well as various historical versions
- ✓ Local, county & municipal codes, charters, by-laws or ordinances
- ✓ Current state administrative code
- ✓ Published decisions of state administrative agencies
- ✓ Complete set of AG opinions
- ✓ The state legal encyclopedia
- ✓ Significant state-oriented legal treatises & practice materials
- ✓ Selected legal periodicals & newspapers
- ✓ State & local bar publications and ethics opinions
- ✓ The state digest or online case law classification service
- ✓ A citation service, such as Shepard's or Keycite
- ✓ State-oriented reference tools like state government manual, legal/social services directories, city and/or county directory.
- ✓ Significant state & local court publications



Collection: Federal Law

- ✓ Official or another reporter of the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States
- ✓ A U.S. Supreme Court digest or online case law classification service
- ✓ An annotated version of the United States Code
- ✓ U.S. Statutes at Large or other commercial federal session law service
- ✓ All published decisions of the U.S. District Courts, U.S. Courts of Appeal, and U.S. Bankruptcy Courts
- ✓ Federal court rules and forms
- ✓ Local federal rules and forms for courts within jurisdiction
- ✓ Federal case digest or online case law classification service
- ✓ Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations
- ✓ A citation service, such as Shepard's or Keycite, for reports and codes held by the library



Collection: General U.S. Publications

- ✓ Current statutory compilations & court opinions for contiguous states
- ✓ Am Jur 2d or CJS
- ✓ ALR or ALR Federal
- ✓ General legal forms set.
- ✓ ABA/BNA Lawyers Manual of Professional Conduct
- ✓ ALI Restatements
- ✓ Uniform Laws Annotated
- ✓ Basic collection of contemporary value on subjects of interest to the legal community and the public
- ✓ A selection of legal periodical titles
- ✓ A legal periodical index or comparable online service
- ✓ A citation service, such as Shepard's or Keycite
- ✓ Legal reference tools
- ✓ General reference tools
- ✓ A collection of general legal and self-help titles on subjects of interest to the public and self-represented litigants



Collection



How does your library stack up?

{ Discuss }

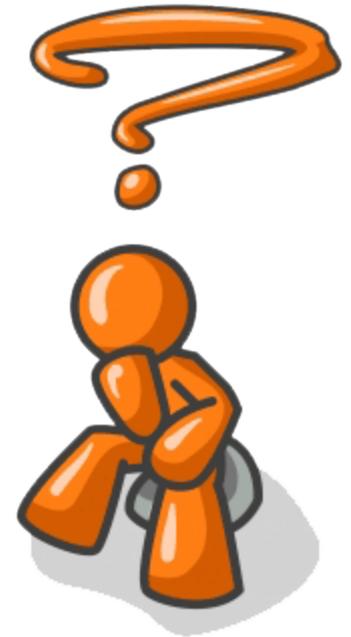
Wrap Up

What **authority** do these standards have?

How can my library meet these expectations?

How can these standards be used to **leverage resources** or to **encourage collaboration** with other libraries?

What is **one action I can commit to**, related to these standards?



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