

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY PUBLIC LAW LIBRARY  
ANNUAL REPORT TO TRUSTEES AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
July 2017 – June 2018**



**INTRODUCTION:**

Business and Professions Code §6340 mandates that each county in California have a law library located in the county seat. Contra Costa County is highly compliant, having a main branch of the law library in Martinez as well as a smaller branch inside the Richmond Courthouse. A third branch has been available inside the Pittsburg Courthouse since 2010, but lack of funding forced the closure of that branch, effective September 1, 2017. The Contra Costa County Public Law Library serves everyone, including the general public, judicial officers, members of the bar, and students.

**MISSION OF THE LIBRARY:**

The library's mission statement guides the activities of the library: *To provide all members of the community access to research materials to aid in understanding and preserving legal rights.* Law library trustees and staff want the people of Contra Costa County to recognize the law library as their primary source for legal information. The law library strives to render the highest quality of service to the community by providing a current, balanced collection of materials and resources along with trained staff dedicated to assisting users in meeting their legal information needs.

**FUNDING:**

- The amount of funding public law libraries receive from tax-based sources is zero. County law libraries in California receive over 90% of their funding from a small portion of civil court filing fees.
- In Contra Costa County, 93% of the law library's revenue is derived from civil filing fees.
- Senate Bill 1407, passed in 2007, established a moratorium on increases in filing fees. The moratorium was later extended. The result has been an inability of law libraries to increase their primary revenue source despite the fact that publishers of legal material raise their costs an average of 10-15% per year.
- During that same time period, the Contra Costa County Public Law Library's filing fee revenues declined 39%
- Other factors, including filing fee reductions granted to select individuals, and fee waivers, along with changes in the jurisdictional limits for small claims court during the last decade, have contributed to declining revenues, not only for law libraries, but also for the courts.
- County law libraries throughout California are experiencing the same revenue shortfalls that we are seeing in Contra Costa County, all the while, the number of self-represented litigants seeking help in California's county law libraries continues to grow.
- The Council of California County Law Librarians has been working to seek solutions to this complex and serious problem for many years, but there is still not a viable plan, such as a piece of legislation, in place to protect funding for county law libraries, although the governor did sign off on a budget which included some emergency funding for county law libraries.
- Creating sustainable funding for California's county law libraries is a critical goal for the immediate future. Sustainability for the law library is estimated at 5 years, based on the current revenue stream. This means that unless changes are made in the way county law libraries in California are funded, the future of all law libraries, including the Contra Costa County Public Law is under serious threat, and public law libraries may cease to exist, despite a state statute mandating their existence.

### **THE COLLECTION:**

- The library holds more than 40,000 books.
- Collections are up to date and kept in good order and condition.
- Holdings include more than 100,000 non-book items (microforms and CD-ROMs).
- Subscriptions to online services include the following: Westlaw, and Commerce Clearinghouse Tax Service. Online subscriptions make it possible for staff and library users to access statutory and case law for all 50 states and Washington D.C., a large body of law review and journal articles, as well as other extensive content. These services are very popular with both user groups and are frequently requested. Collection development is an ongoing process for the library. This means that the library's collection is constantly scrutinized for changes that need to be made, with an eye toward serving the needs of our patrons in the most cost effective manner possible.
- For several years, declining revenues have necessitated collection development aimed at identifying material that could be eliminated and replaced with a less expensive source. All library materials are evaluated when they come up for renewal or when updates are received. Although care is taken to avoid reductions which would result in a decreased level of service to our users, declining revenues force the library to cancel subscriptions wherever possible.

### **PERSONNEL:**

- The main branch (Martinez) has staff permanently assigned to the location.
- The Richmond branch is staffed by a combination of extra help workers and permanent staff from the main branch who rotate through the schedule.
- The Pittsburg branch was also staffed by a combination of extra help workers and permanent staff from the main branch during the months of July and August, 2017; however, decreased funding necessitated its closure effective 9/1/17.
- Although the demand for services is rising, the library is unable to increase staffing due to declining revenues.

### **PROJECTS AND PLANS:**

- Plans for the upcoming fiscal year will focus on the library's ability to continue to meet the research and information needs of its users within a difficult economic climate.
- The library's plan to reduce its expenditures by approximately \$120,000 during fiscal year 17-18 was accomplished with the following steps:
  - Closure of the Pittsburg branch of the law library;
  - Renegotiating the library's contract with our largest vendor, Thomson Reuters and reducing the number of print subscriptions;
  - Cancelling print titles from LexisNexis Matthew Bender so as to reduce expenditures in this area by approximately \$20,000.
- The practice of evaluating all updates and renewals of library materials will continue and staff will work closely with the board of trustees to ensure that a balance of materials is available to serve our diverse users.

## Appendix A: Analysis of Fiscal Year End Financial Information, July 2017- June 2018

(Based on County General Ledger Closing - dated 08/31/2018 - Prepared by Carey Rowan 09/25/2018)

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
Filing fee revenue	\$778,137.00
Faxes, copies & donations	62,547.00
Revenue from pooled earnings	11,439.00
<b>TOTAL Revenues</b>	<b>\$852,123.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Permanent salaries	\$181,944.00
Temporary salaries	68,154.00
F.I.C.A.	7,852.00
Retirement expenses	64,092.00
Employee group insurance	35,385.00
Retiree health insurance	25,153.00
Unemployment insurance	1,459.00
Workers' compensation insurance	1,733.00
GASB payment	6.00
Office expenses/ Outreach/ Forms	24,783.00
Postage	254.00
Communications	6,869.00
Telephone exchange service	4,527.00
Minor computer equipment	343.00
Food	447.00
Memberships	720.00
Rents and leases- Equipment	11,038.00
Maintenance- Equipment	3,939.00
Requested Maintenance	14.00
Travel (Employees)	45.00
Non County Prof Specialized Services	12,003.00
Data processing services	3,589.00
Electronic database services	183,750.00
Information security charges	224.00
GSD courier service	984.00
Insurance	3,463.00
Reference materials/Library books	250,082.00
Specialized printing	1,580.00
Training and registrations	20.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$894,452.00</b>

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## Appendix B: STATISTICAL AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS, JULY 2017 – JUNE 2018

	MARTINEZ		PITTSBURG		RICHMOND		TOTAL	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
NUMBER OF WEBSITE VISITS	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,651	100%
NUMBER OF WEBPAGES VISITED	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,043	100%
NUMBER OF VISITS (GATE COUNT)	34,590	82%	356	1%	7,102	17%	42,048	100%
NUMBER OF FACEBOOK TRANSACTIONS	-	-	-	-	-	-	348	100%
<b>MATERIALS / RESOURCES USED</b>								
BOOKS— LEG. PROFESSIONALS	1,119	68%	3	>1%	526	32%	1,648	100%
BOOKS—GENERAL PUBLIC	1,594	76%	63	3%	435	21%	2,092	100%
BOOKS—TOTAL	2,713	72.5%	66	1.8%	961	25.7%	3,740	100%
CD-ROMS— LEG. PROFESSIONALS	26	100%	0	0	0	0	26	100%
CD-ROMS— GENERAL PUBLIC	5	83%	0	0	1	17%	6	100%
CD-ROMS--TOTAL	31	97%	0	0	1	3%	32	100%
COPIER USE— LEGAL PROFESSIONALS	445	78%	32	6%	93	16%	570	100%
COPIER USE—GENERAL PUBLIC	1,234	79%	151	10%	178	11%	1,563	100%
COPIER USE—TOTAL	1,679	78.7%	183	8.6%	271	12.7%	2,133	100%
COMPUTER USE— LEGAL PROFESSIONALS	688	82%	31	4%	116	14%	1,523	100%
COMPUTER USE—GENERAL PUBLIC	2,316	76%	213	7%	515	17%	3,044	100%
COMPUTER USE—TOTAL	3,004	77.44%	244	6.29%	631	16.27%	3,879	100%
<b>SERVICES RENDERED</b>								
REFERENCE/RESEARCH— LEGAL PROFESSIONALS	28	64%	0	0	16	36%	44	100%
REFERENCE/RESEARCH—GENERAL PUBLIC	382	69%	0	0	173	31%	555	100%
REFERENCE/RESEARCH—TOTAL	410	68%	0	0	189	32%	599	100%
QUICK ASSISTANCE— LEGAL PROFESSIONALS	189	81%	10	4%	35	15%	234	100%
QUICK ASSISTANCE— GENERAL PUBLIC	2,809	76%	323	9%	553	15%	3,685	100%
QUICK ASSISTANCE—TOTAL	2,998	76.5%	333	8.5%	588	15%	3,919	100%
HELP BY PHONE/EMAIL—LEGAL PROFESSIONALS	15	79%	0	0	4	21%	19	100%
HELP BY PHONE/EMAIL—GENERAL PUBLIC	820	74.75%	17	1.55%	260	23.7%	1,097	100%
HELP BY PHONE/EMAIL—TOTAL	835	74.8%	17	1.5%	264	23.7%	1,116	100%
HELP WITH FAX— LEGAL PROFESSIONALS	9	100%	0	0	0	0	9	100%
HELP WITH FAX— GENERAL PUBLIC	47	72%	15	23%	3	5%	65	100%
HELP WITH FAX— TOTAL	56	76%	15	20%	3	4%	74	100%
CASH TRANSACTIONS— LEGAL PROFESSIONALS	353	88%	26	7%	21	5%	400	100%
CASH TRANSACTIONS—GENERAL PUBLIC	8,396	91.15%	222	2.41%	593	6.44%	9,211	100%
CASH TRANSACTIONS—TOTAL	8,749	91%	248	3%	614	6%	9,611	100%
<b>PROGRAMS &amp; SPECIAL SERVICES</b>								
LAWYER IN THE LIBRARY (ATTENDANCE)	259	68%	0	0	123	32%	382	100%
CONSERVATORSHIP WORKSHOPS (ATTENDANCE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	129	100%