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. 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. 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.

I. GOVERNANCE AND 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.*

A. 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 to ensure the greatest level of access to justice for all library users.

B. The library should have a written mission and vision statement reflecting the statutory mandate.

C. The library director is an integral part of the governing entity’s structure and serves as part of the management team.

D. 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.

E. The library director is responsible for all planning and implementation of activities related to budget, staffing and operations for the library. These responsibilities include:

1. Develop a guiding vision, mission statement, and strategic goals of the library. These written statements should reflect the library's statutory mandate;
2. Administer the library budget and pursue adequate funding to ensure that access to legal information and access to justice is provided to all those in the service area;
3. Provide information on the qualitative and quantitative value of library services offered;
4. Build a suitable and practical collection of resources;
5. Participate in library or related information networks;
6. Coordinate the implementation and upgrades of library technology;
7. Hire qualified library personnel to support library functions;
8. Plan and staff branch libraries, where appropriate;
9. Design and maintain the physical facility;
10. Coordinate outreach and partnerships within the organization and with the outside community. Develop and manage the library's engagement in Access to Justice initiatives;
11. Plan for the succession of personnel;
12. Manage all other library operations.

II. 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.

A. The budget of the library should be separate and distinct from the budgets of other operations of its governing entity.
B. The library director should prepare, justify, and manage the library budget, and it should be given equal priority with other services in the budgetary process of the governing entity. The library's budget request should be defended vigorously by the governing entity.
C. The budget of the library should be adequate to ensure a complete, up-to-date collection, including print, non-print and electronic resources, with provision for new
acquisitions and a qualified staff to maintain an acceptable level of library services described in these standards.

D. The budget should include but not necessarily be limited to the following categories:
   1. Personnel cost, including salaries and benefits;
   2. Library materials and services in appropriate formats;
   3. Supplies, equipment and appropriate technologies;
   4. Collection repair and preservation. This may include binding, cleaning, and archival materials;
   5. Resource sharing, including networking and online bibliographic utilities;
   6. Physical space and maintenance;
   7. Membership in professional organizations, training, and travel expenses for library staff;
   8. Resources that support Access to Justice initiatives; and
   9. Other categories as may be defined by law or practice.

E. 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.

III. 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.

A. The library should be staffed during all hours of operation with professional personnel, qualified through education, training and experience. As necessary to their individual duties, staff members should have expertise in administration, acquisitions, cataloging, reference, technology, and instruction. The Competencies of Law Librarianship, as established by the AALL may be used as an additional guideline. The library should be provided with a sufficient number of personnel to fulfill the library's mission and meet user needs.

B. The salaries of the library director and all other library personnel should be commensurate with their education, training, experience, and the extent of their responsibilities in keeping with similar positions in that jurisdiction.

C. The library director should select and evaluate library staff. At the discretion of the library director, other supervisory staff may participate in the selection and evaluation of library staff. All library positions, including the library director, should be specifically established within the governing entity's personnel classification system and covered by the governing entity's personnel policy.
D. All law librarians should hold a graduate degree in library or information science. A law degree meets the requirement if the librarian possesses substantial law library experience or relevant knowledge. The library director should have substantial experience or relevant knowledge of library management.

E. Many county public law libraries are related to an organization, institution, or government entity. In those cases, personnel from the related entity should be accessible to the library staff to support administrative, clerical, technical, and information technology functions.

F. All library staff should be given the opportunity to pursue a program of professional development that is relevant to the interests of the law library. The opportunity should include financial assistance.

G. The library staff should be encouraged to participate in local, regional, and national professional law library associations. The library's budget should make provisions for membership dues and other related staff development expenses.

H. The library staff should participate in conferences and online discussion groups as part of ongoing professional development and education.

IV. PHYSICAL PLANT AND 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 of providing access to electronic information 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. The library should make available directional information, systems, and spaces that facilitate learning and ease of use.

A. 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 by county officials, judges, court personnel, prosecutors and public defender staff, attorneys, litigants, the general public, and county jail inmates. Where appropriate, branch libraries should be considered at satellite court facilities.

B. The library's physical facility must meet basic structural requirements necessary to house and provide access to informational resources in a variety of formats. Attention should be given to existing building standards and floor loading capacity. Shelving should be arranged in a manner that allows for easy access to the print collection. There
also should be sufficient shelving or provision to permit adequate space for growth of the collection.
C. Space and facilities should be provided for the use and storage of non-print and fragile materials under environmentally sound conditions.
D. Public computers with printers should be made available to access commercial electronic services and the Internet.
E. There should be suitable and adequate equipment, work space, and comfortable seating for the library staff and users. Proper lighting and temperature control including heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and humidity control also should be included.
F. There should be suitable and adequate security for the protection of library staff, users, and the collection. Appropriate security measures may include an emergency preparedness plan, panic buttons, and security cameras in addition to or in lieu of trained security personnel.
G. The library should have networked connectivity for Internet access and office applications. The library should provide sufficient electrical outlets and equipment for photocopying, printing, scanning, and digital transmission.
H. Directories, library guides, and signage to assist customers should be readily available and visible.
I. The library's facilities should meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended.
J. There should be suitable and adequate space and equipment for training and educational programming, meetings, private attorney-client consultation, and legal clinics.

V. ACCESS AND 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.

A. The library's mission and goals statement should identify the levels of information service provided to its users, including self-represented litigants.
B. The library should augment its resources through interlibrary loans, cooperative agreements, networks, and in-house and remote on line electronic services.
C. Library policies approved by the governing entity (such as those addressing reference assistance and access procedures) should be conspicuously available to advise users.

D. The library may provide services, such as self-help legal clinics that expand a citizen’s access to the justice system, providing the library has the funds and staff to establish and maintain the programs. Libraries are encouraged to seek partnerships with local legal service providers.

E. Information access services should be appropriate for the community being served, including the availability of library materials in languages other than English.

F. The library should provide access to the Internet for users. An appropriate use policy, including time restrictions, may be developed for approval by the governing entity.

G. The library's online presence should be maintained independently, or in cooperation with the library's governing entity, to provide information about the library, reference services, and legal information related to state and local jurisdictions.

VI. 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.

A. Collection Development
   1. A written collection development policy should address selection of materials and services, discarding of materials, and the acceptance and disposition of gifts. The policy should be formulated by the library director after consulting with staff and library users and should be approved by the library's governing entity.
   2. The library director should implement the approved collection development policy or delegate the duty to a qualified staff member.
   3. All materials should be current and complete with respect to editions, continuations, supplementation and replacements. Multiple copies or additional access to heavily used materials is recommended. Superseded materials housed in the library should be clearly indicated and may be retained when useful.
   4. The library should acquire and provide access to legal information in the most appropriate format based on economic, technical, environmental, and customer considerations. Particular attention should be given to materials to assist self represented litigants.
   5. The library director should have the authority to join information networks to aid in acquiring, sharing, and providing access to materials and services. Participation in
cooperative networking agreements may provide assistance in purchasing and the sharing of resources.

6. Appropriate selection tools should be consulted to allow informed decisions related to all library resources.

B. Access to the Collection and Cataloging
1. Materials in the collection, regardless of format, should be cataloged and classified in a system promoting convenient identification and retrieval of materials by staff and library users. National standards for bibliographic records should serve as guidelines for cataloging and organizing the collection.
2. The library should belong to or otherwise utilize a network for cataloging and related library services. Complete holdings information should be included on library records to facilitate electronic access and sharing of information.
3. 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.

C. Collection Management
1. The library collection should be maintained in good physical condition. The library director should present for approval by the library governing entity, a written preservation policy that addresses security and environmental concerns such as lighting, air pollution, temperature, and humidity control for proper storage of all physical materials.
2. Binding may be considered to preserve various print materials.
3. The SCCLL has published a Disaster Planning Tool Kit that may be consulted to assist library staff with disaster preparedness. A written policy for preparing and recovering from disasters should be created by the library director and approved by the library governing entity.

VII. COUNTY PUBLIC LAW LIBRARY COLLECTION

The library should provide print or electronic access to the following resources which form the basis of a strong core collection for a county public law library. The list may be used as a checklist for collection evaluation purposes, but should not be used to limit the scope or development of a collection that meets or exceeds the standards. A proper mix of print and electronic resources is critical to county public law libraries. Format selection should be driven foremost by user needs and preferences. The librarians should remain knowledgeable of available formats and be diligent in acquiring alternate formats as needs change.

Alternative forms of publication or cooperative agreements with libraries within a reasonable geographic area will satisfy the collection requirements if staff is available to assist users in
effectively accessing remotely stored resources. County public law libraries should consider becoming federal or state depository libraries to assist the library in developing both its core and secondary collections.

Whenever possible, the library should provide reliable websites that provide free access to case, statutory and administrative law as well as forms, treatises and other material from the primary jurisdictions serving the library's user community.

A. Publications of the library's home state:
   1. A complete collection of the published decisions of state courts.
   3. Current statutory compilation, annotated if available. If space and budget permit, older statutory compilations and superseded volumes.
   4. A complete collection of session laws, including a current session law service, if available.
   5. The current state constitution as well as various historical versions of the constitution and any published debates/proceedings of state constitutional conventions.
   6. Local, county and municipal codes, charters, by-laws ordinances with in the area served.
   7. Current state administrative code, if available.
   8. Published decisions of state administrative agencies, if available.
   9. A complete set of attorney general opinions.
   10. The state legal encyclopedia, if available.
   12. Selected legal periodicals and newspapers.
   13. State and local bar publications and ethics opinions.
   14. The state digest or online case law classification service.
   15. A citation service, such as Shepard's or Keycite.
   16. State-oriented reference tools including state government manual, legal/social services directories, city and/or county directory.
   17. Significant state and local court publications including, but not limited to, annual reports, judicial statistics, court and general legal forms, policy statements, and items related to local legal history.

B. Publications covering federal law:
   1. Official or another reporter of the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States.
   2. A U.S. Supreme Court digest or online case law classification service.
   4. U.S. Statutes at Large or other commercial federal session law service.
7. Local federal rules and forms for courts within jurisdiction.
8. Federal case digest or online case law classification service.
10. A citation service, such as Shepard's or Keycite, for reports and codes held by the library.

C. General United States publications:
1. Current statutory compilations and court opinions for contiguous states, as needed.
2. American Jurisprudence 2d and/or Corpus Juris Secundum.
8. A basic collection of legal texts, treatises, practice materials and looseleaf services of contemporary value on subjects of interest to the legal community and the public.
10. A legal periodical index or comparable online service.
11. A citation service, such as Shepard's or Keycite, for case reporter and code units held by the library.
12. Legal reference tools including dictionaries, thesauri, judicial biographical and legal abbreviations directories, legal quotations compilations, and a standard legal citation guide such as the Harvard Bluebook.
13. General reference tools, including an unabridged dictionary, atlas, and statistical abstracts.
14. A collection of general legal and self-help titles on subjects of interest to the public and self-represented litigants, including print or online resources for people with limited English proficiency and materials in languages other than English to reflect the needs of users.