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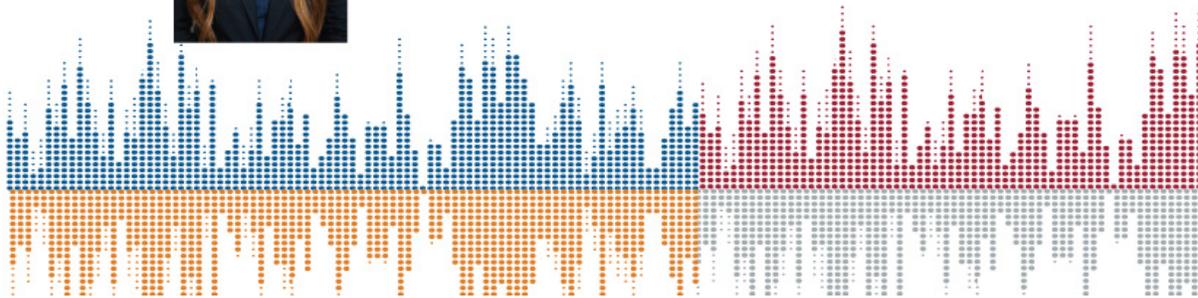
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## **Storytimes to Statutes: My Transition From Public Libraries to Public Law Libraries by Jenna Pontious**

I recently made the transition from public libraries to public law libraries. I left a position as the City of Riverside's main library supervisor, which entailed supervising 15 employees, security incidents, covering programs, and anything and everything. Now I am the Riverside County Law Library's reference and instruction librarian. There have been some adjustments to working in a law library, such as services provided by the library and customer service techniques. Even with the adjustments, I have been struck by the similarities in customer service and use of the library services and space as intended, and the feeling that all libraries are moving towards a community center model.

In my patron interactions, I am employing the reference interview that I learned at the public library, but with slight differentiation for legal research. I've discovered the reference interview at the law library can be longer than the public library, as I work with the patron to find facts of the case, jurisdiction, and what they are specifically looking for. The patrons I'm interacting with can be more emotional than the ones I've encountered at the public library, as they come in for legal questions and help. I am working on balancing how much time should be spent assisting a patron, the number of sources to share, and not giving information as legal advice. As an internal guide, I think of the policy at the public library: getting the patron to the resources or information and having them review those materials themselves. The example I keep in my mind is getting a patron logged on to a computer and showing them how to get to a website, but stating they need to review the website themselves.

As in public libraries, the law library is a public space, welcome to those who abide by the rules of conduct, with the caveat that the patrons should be using our library for legal research. Our library is not a lending library, but we offer public computers with databases for legal research an hour a day and print materials for review in house. However, we are seeing a rise in incidents involving patrons who come in to use the Wi-Fi all day and use the public computers for tasks other than legal research (watching YouTube music videos, for example). We also have issues with customers bathing in the restrooms, which is a common occurrence in the public library. When I accepted the position at the law library, I didn't realize how much of the same disruptions and use issues I would encounter, as I imagined the law library as more of an academic setting. Like the public library, we have a rules of conduct to set expectations on patron behavior and actions, and like in the public library, there are patrons who do not like being told to abide by these rules.

I believe my public library background will serve me well in the law library, as we adapt to customer use habits changing and clearly define what the use of the law library means. I've discovered issues of emotional fatigue, difficult conversations, and self-care are being discussed amongst the law library and with my past trainings and experience in the public library setting, I believe I have valuable contacts and insights to share with my colleagues. I look forward to working at the Riverside County Law Library and working towards adapting to patrons' changing needs and assisting colleagues with the future look of law libraries.

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