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Civil Legal Justice: The Crucial Role of Libraries

Webinar – February 11, 2020

Thank you to our Funders and Partners!

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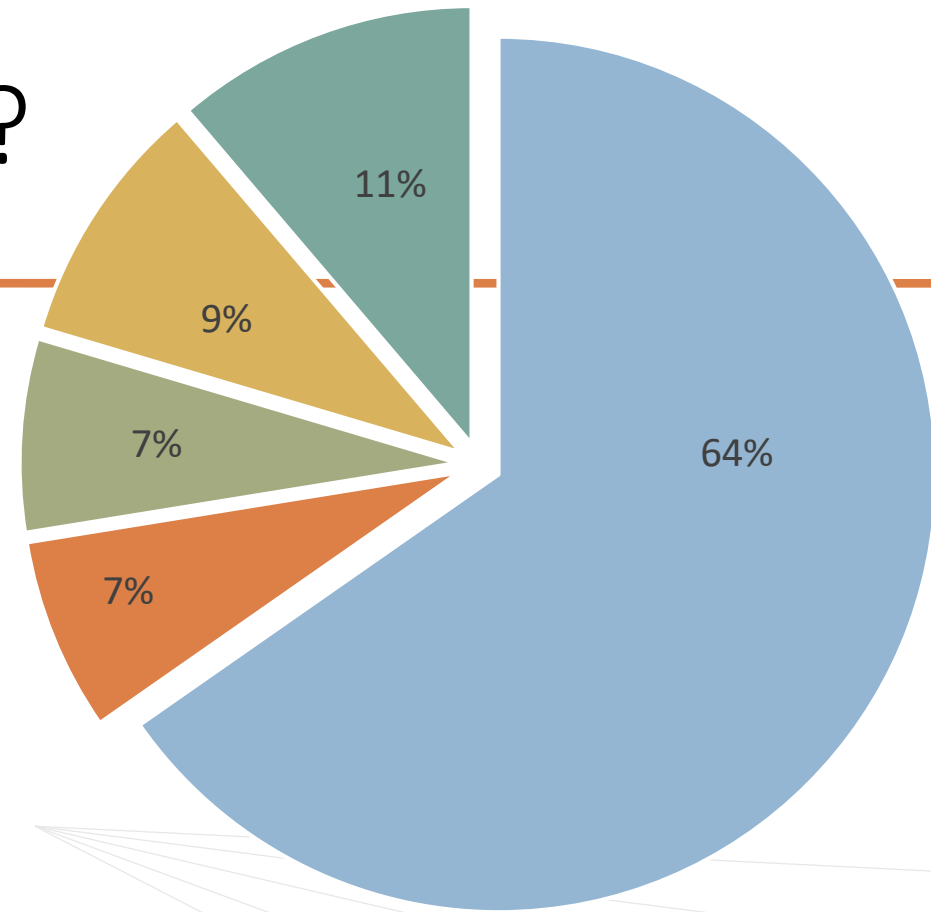


 **WebJunction**[®]
The learning place for libraries.

Agenda

- Welcome
 - The Justice Gap
 - The Experience of a Reference Librarian
 - The Public Library Connection
 - The Live Online Course
- 
- A series of thin, light gray lines radiate from a central point on the right side of the slide, extending towards the bottom and left edges, creating a subtle geometric pattern.

Who's in the audience?



- Public Library
- Federal / National Govt, Library Consortium & Special Library
- State Agency / Association
- Academic Library
- NA & Other

Annotation Tools



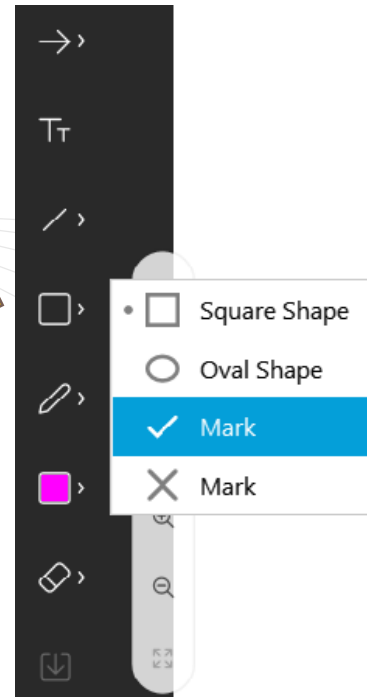
1. Mouse over slide to find **small pill menu** at far left

2. Select top **squiggle icon** to open annotation tool panel

3. Select **square icon**

4. Select **check mark**

5. Click on slide **to practice**



What is your experience with providing civil legal reference?

- ☐ I am not at all experienced
- ☐ I have some training but have not applied it at my work
- ☐ I have provided civil legal reference in a public library
- ☐ I am comfortable and confident about providing civil legal reference



The Justice Gap

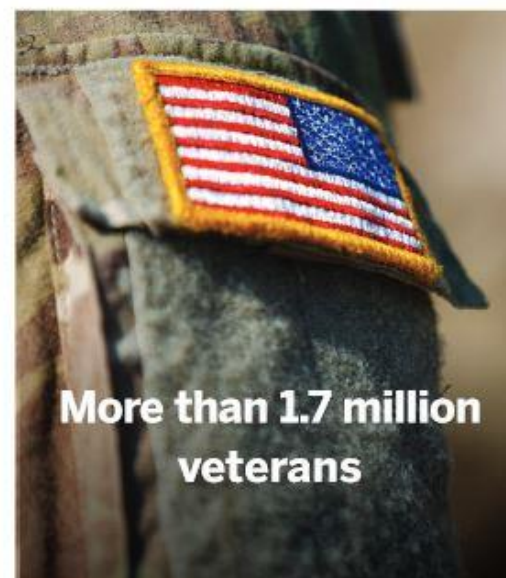
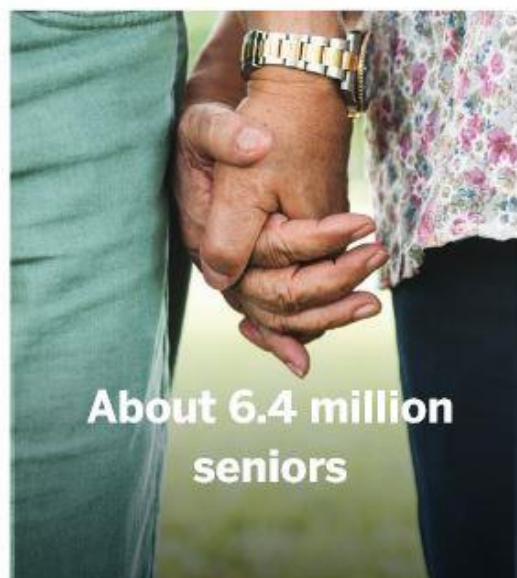
The Justice Gap – by the numbers

86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans in the past year (2017) received **inadequate or no legal help.**

Data source: Legal Services Corporation, Justice Gap Report, June 2017

The Justice Gap – low-income families

More than **60 million** Americans have family incomes at or below 125% of FPL, including:



Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2015 1-year estimates

Image source: Justice Gap Report: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans, LSC, June 2017

The Justice Gap – by the stories



Real people
behind the statistics

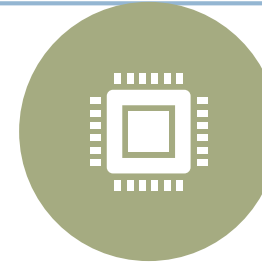
“The public library is the local centre of information making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users.”

—IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994

Where libraries fit in



LIBRARIES ARE
TRUSTED
COMMUNITY
INSTITUTIONS



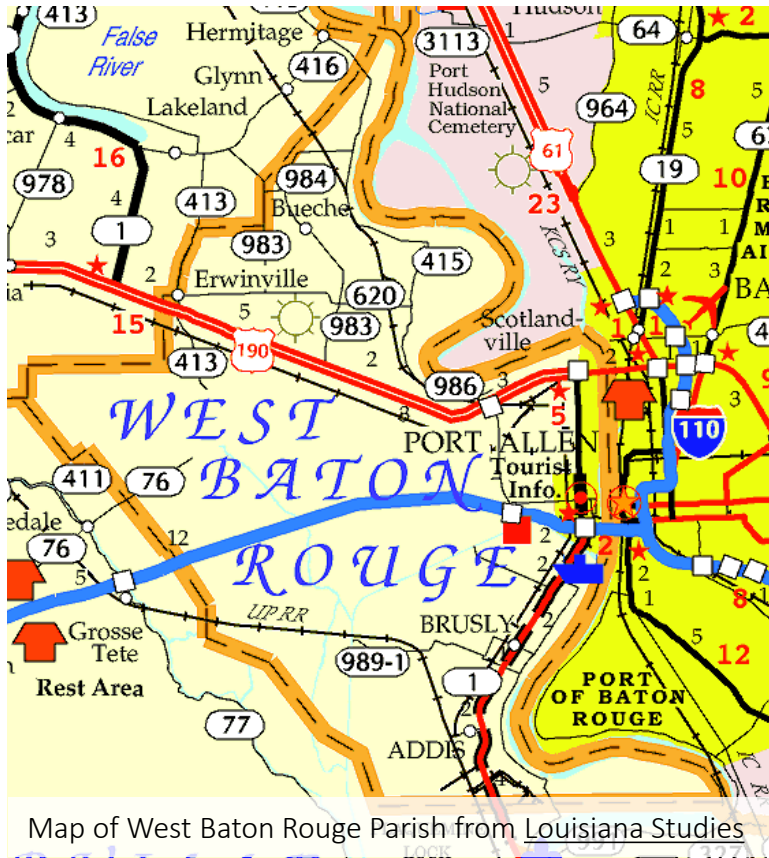
LIBRARIES ARE A
GATEWAY TO
INFORMATION



LIBRARY STAFF
HAVE EXPERIENCE
WITH SENSITIVE
INTERPERSONAL
INTERACTIONS



The Experience of a Reference Librarian



Luis Interiano

- Reference Librarian, West Baton Rouge Library, Port Allen, Louisiana
- MLIS from LSU School of Library & Information Science (2006-09)

CODE
OF
ORDINANCES
WEST BATON
ROUGE PARISH
LOUISIANA

REFERENCE



SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA
LEGAL SERVICES

Free Legal Aid for Low-Income People



Louisiana
State Bar
Association

Serving the Public. Serving the Profession.

FEB
12

Legal Assistance

Public · Hosted by West Baton Rouge Library and Southeast Louisiana Legal Services - SLLS

✓ Interested ▼

Going...

➦ Share ▼

...

Wed, February 12th, 2020
12:00 AM

West Baton Rouge Library

● Adults & Seniors

Details:

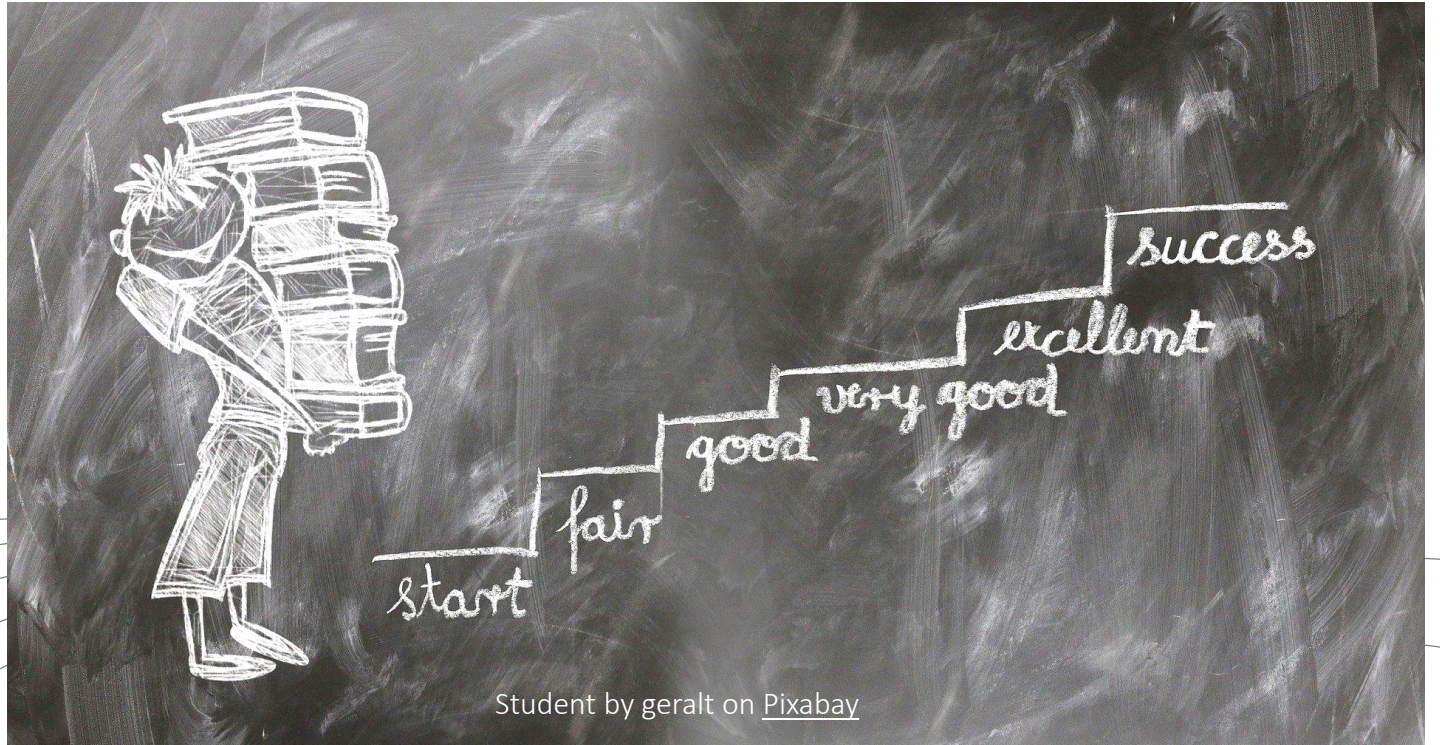
The second Wednesday of every month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., a representative from Southeast Louisiana Legal Services will be available to answer your legal questions. Walk-ins welcome. Call (225)342-7920, ext. 221 for more information.



The Public Library Connection

Building a Foundation

- Time
- Exposure
- Experience
- Self-education

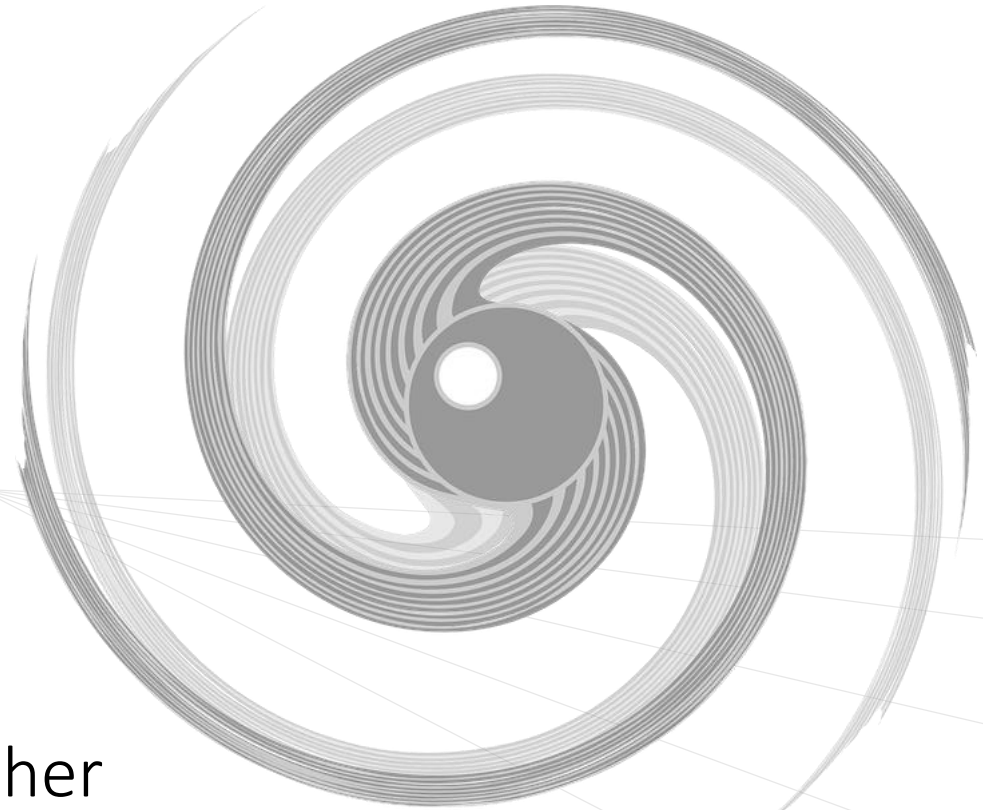


It's okay if you're starting from zero.

Common Civil Legal Issues

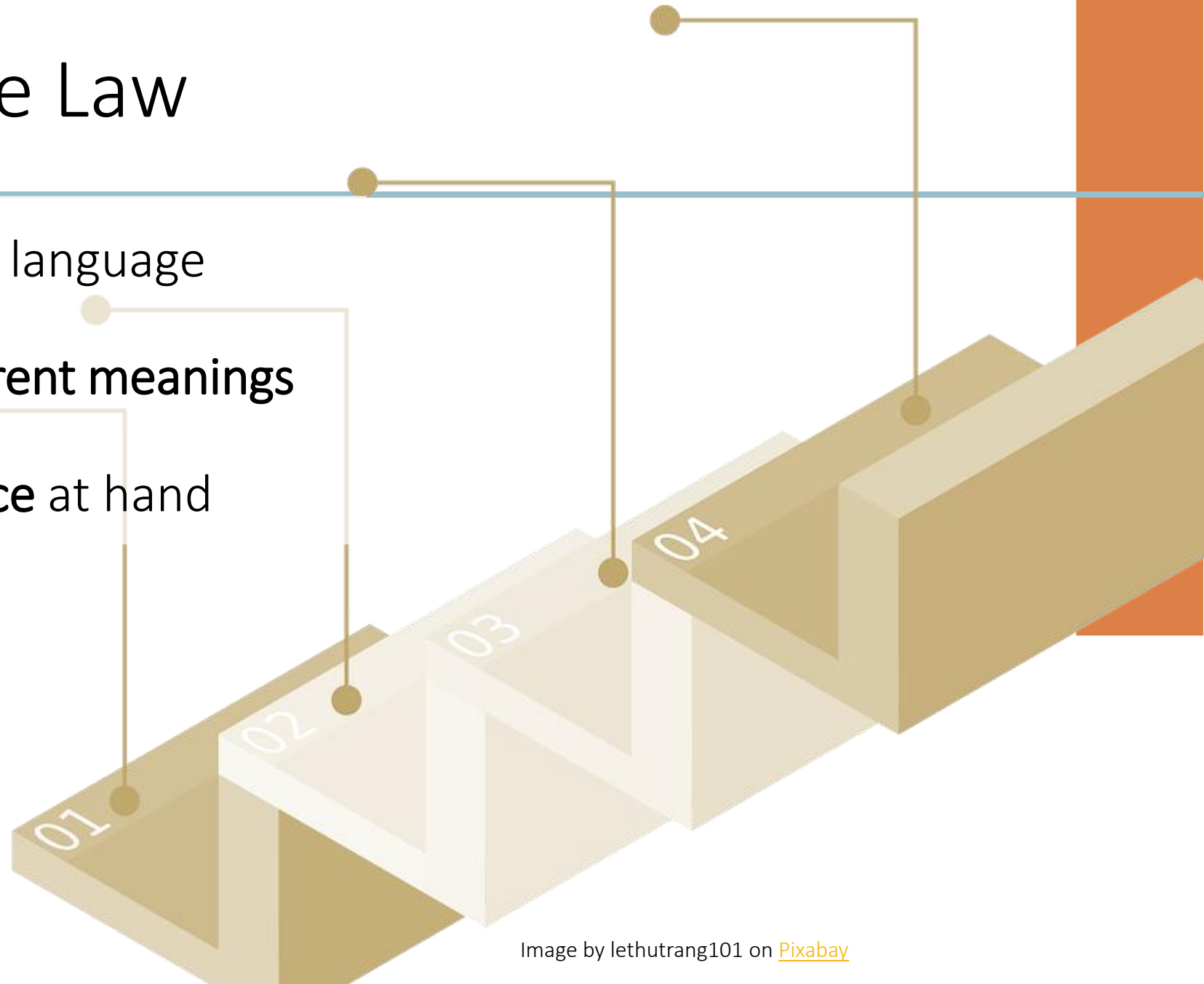
- Family law
- Debt collection
- Consumer concerns
- Landlord-tenant
- Employment

Spiral effect – one issue leads to another



Language of the Law

- **Formal and structured** language
- Words may have **different meanings**
- Keep a **reliable resource** at hand



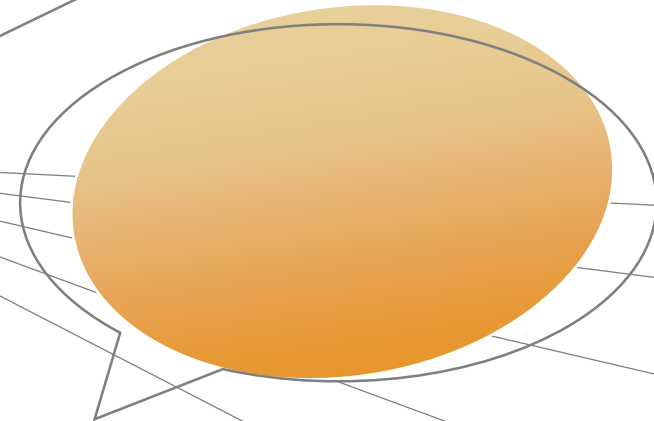
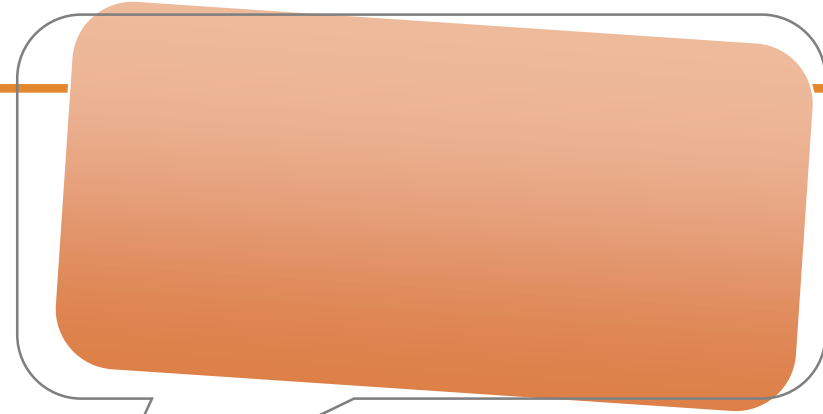
Interpersonal Dynamics of the Interaction



- Legal issues have significant consequences
- Emotions impact the interaction
- Managing emotion is part of the job
- Provide positive force

How you say it matters

- Respond – not answer
- Focus on the "*can*"
rather than the "cannot"
- Develop and practice scripted language



Legal Information v. Legal Advice

- What is the difference?
- Power of decision-making
- Rephrase
 - You don't have to respond to the question as they phrase it
 - Look for the information core in the question
 - "I understand you are asking for information about..."

Looking for Law

- Get a foundation in civics
 - Law written on multiple levels and branches
- Evaluate free versions for reliability

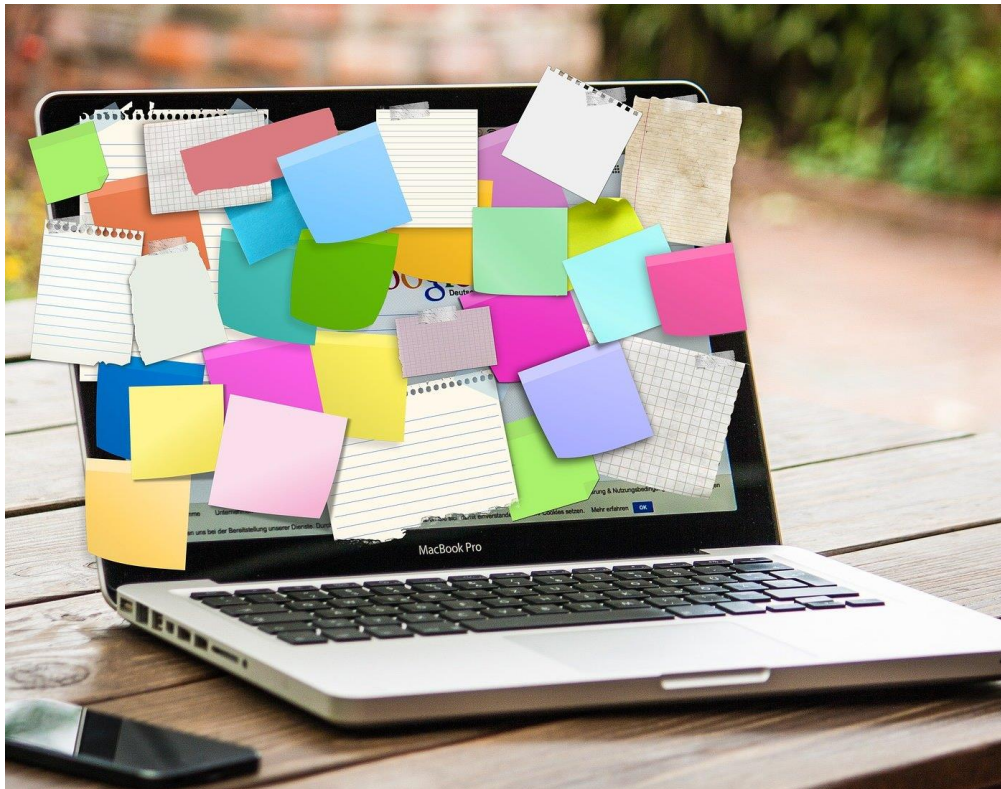


Value of Secondary Sources

- Best starting point
- Describe law in everyday, accessible language
- Point to primary text

Secondary sources explain the law
(encyclopedias, dictionaries, textbooks,
practice materials, self-help materials)

Search Skills



- Play to your strengths
 - Term selection
 - Indexing
 - Google Advance search
- What can you access?
Know your resources

The Value of Partnerships

- Sources for education
- Multiple organizations = diverse opportunities to connect
 - Legal aid
 - Law library
 - Bar association
 - Community services (government, non-profit)
- Both broad and narrow topical coverage

Connecting with Partners

- Identify areas of need
- Locate partners with related authority and ability
- Make contact

What do you have to lose?





The Live Online Course

The overall training plan



Live online instructor-led course: April 2020



Self-paced online course: launches in October 2020



Facilitator training: March 2021

Course Topics



Understanding the
role of public libraries
in addressing the
justice gap



Recognizing the
difference between
legal information and
legal advice



Conducting the **legal**
reference interview



Reviewing and
strengthening your
library's **civil legal**
reference collection



Examining commonly
addressed and
important **civil legal**
topics,



Exploring trusted
local- and state-
specific **online self-**
help resources



Identifying and
cultivating
relationships with
local organizations

Instructors



- **Sara Pic** – Head of Public Services, Law Library of Louisiana



- **Sarah Larsen** – Outreach Librarian, Minnesota State Law Library



- **Catherine McGuire** – Head of Reference and Outreach, Thurgood Marshall State Law Library, Maryland

When

- April 6 – May 8
- Four live, online, instructor-led sessions over 5 weeks
 - Tuesdays, 3pm ET / 12pm PT
- Readings, activities, and discussions in between live sessions

How to Enroll

- Follow link in chat
- Click on **Course Title**
- May need to **create free account** in WebJunction catalog

April 6-12
Lesson 1

Live session: April 7

April 13-19
Lesson 2

Live session: April 14

April 20 – May 3
Lesson 3

Live session: April 21

May 4-8
Lesson 4

Live session: May 5

Thank you!

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