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

Luis Interiano
Reference Librarian, West Baton Rouge Library, Port Allen, Louisiana

Betha Gutsche
WebJunction Programs Manager, OCLC
Thank you to our Funders and Partners!
Agenda

- Welcome
- The Justice Gap
- The Experience of a Reference Librarian
- The Public Library Connection
- The Live Online Course
Who’s in the audience?

- Public Library: 64%
- Federal / National Govt, Library Consortium & Special Library: 11%
- State Agency / Association: 7%
- Academic Library: 7%
- NA & Other: 9%
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:

- About 6.4 million seniors
- More than 11.1 million persons with disabilities
- More than 1.7 million veterans
- About 10 million rural residents

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
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)
Legal Assistance

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

Wed, February 12th, 2020
12:00 AM

West Baton Rouge Library

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?

Image by fauxels on Pexels
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

1. Understanding the role of public libraries in addressing the justice gap
2. Recognizing the difference between legal information and legal advice
3. Conducting the legal reference interview
4. Reviewing and strengthening your library’s civil legal reference collection
5. Examining commonly addressed and important civil legal topics,
6. Exploring trusted local- and state-specific online self-help resources
7. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 6-12</th>
<th>April 13-19</th>
<th>April 20 – May 3</th>
<th>May 4-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live session: April 7</td>
<td>Live session: April 14</td>
<td>Live session: April 21</td>
<td>Live session: May 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!