



Access to
Civil Legal
Justice

Public Libraries as Partners in Access to Justice

Public libraries make great partners with legal aid organizations in increasing access to justice. As local anchor institutions, libraries help patrons find information to address their civil legal needs and can connect them to appropriate organizations. Learn how to partner with public libraries to extend the reach and impact of your legal aid services and improve access to civil legal justice.

Why public libraries?

REACH: There are **17,000 library locations** across the country that often are open past traditional business hours.

PROGRAM DELIVERY: Libraries host **1.3 billion visits** and offer **5.4 million public programs** each year.

COMMUNITY TRUST: Public libraries are familiar institutions to turn to for reliable information, making them a natural partner for the development and delivery of pragmatic solutions to pressing issues.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: For many—especially in rural areas—libraries can provide the most consistent and reliable internet connection.

Partner with public libraries

CONNECT WITH HARD-TO-REACH COMMUNITIES THROUGH RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Colorado Legal Services partners with rural public libraries to virtually connect legal aid attorneys in Denver with clients in remote areas. The public library offers community members space to access a reliable internet connection and the legal aid organization benefits from the library's community trust.

Read more: <http://bit.ly/3f63Gyy>

HOST LEGAL CLINICS AT THE LIBRARY

Southeast Louisiana Legal Services partners with several public library systems to host virtual and in-person legal clinics. A clinic's offerings may include civil legal information, on-site attorneys that can provide specific legal advice, or connecting patrons eligible to receive free civil legal services to the right attorney.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3f8MqZl>

Getting started

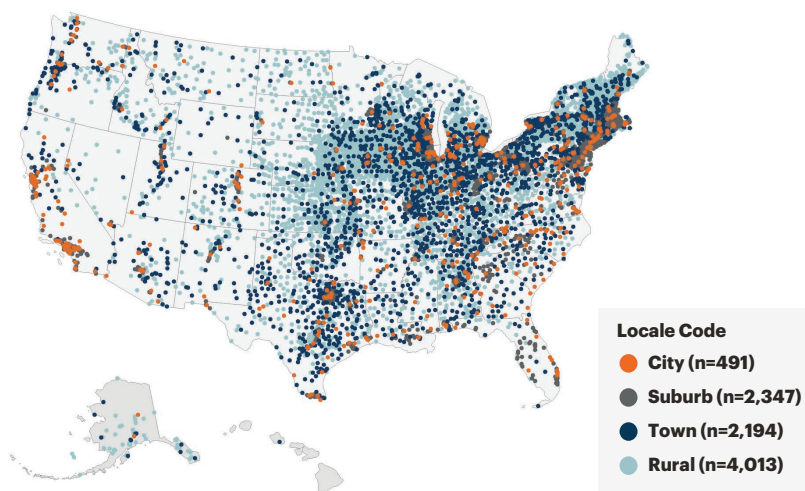
Partnership possibilities begin with building a relationship.

In **large library systems**, you might start with contacting the director, research librarian, or outreach coordinator.

Small and rural libraries tend to have fewer staff, making it even easier to find the right person who can help you.

Be bold and make the first move! This can be as simple as dropping off business cards or flyers or picking up the phone to introduce your organization.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE US



Source: Public Libraries in the United States, FY 2017, IMLS

Visit oclc.org/legal-justice to learn more.

OCLC's WebJunction and the nonprofit Legal Services Corporation have partnered to design and deliver free, national online training to strengthen access to civil legal justice through public libraries.

This project is made possible in part thanks to financial support from these organizations:

