



# Sonoma County Public Law Library

# Strategic Plan

2024 - 2029





*Sonoma County Old Court House*

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	4
<b>Mission</b> .....	6
<b>Vision</b> .....	8
<b>The Five Goals</b> .....	10
<b>Goal 1:</b> Ensure Stability and Sustainability.....	12
<b>Goal 2:</b> Empower Staff Development.....	14
<b>Goal 3:</b> Embrace Technological Advancements.....	16
<b>Goal 4:</b> Expand Collection & Access to Legal Information.....	18



*Law Library Reading Room*

# Introduction

The Sonoma County Public Law Library is a state local government agency, independent from the county government. By statute, the county government is required to provide the Law Library with space, utilities, and maintenance. The Law Library is governed by its own Board of Trustees, which consists of five judges, one representative from the Board of Supervisors, and one representative from the Bar Association. The Law Library's operations are primarily funded by a portion of civil filing fees. However, this revenue is declining statewide due to an increase in in forma pauperis filings and the use of alternative dispute resolution methods, which do not incur filing fees. The Library does not receive general fund revenue.

Currently, the Library is located at 2604 Ventura Avenue in Santa Rosa. It is open to the public Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The collection comprises over 29,000 books, CDs, and other materials, all available to the public free of charge. This includes updated federal and state codes, statutes, and regulations, as well as a vast array of secondary sources such as treatises, law reviews, encyclopedias, ALR annotations, Restatements, dictionaries, and legal newspapers. Guidebooks from publishers like CEB, Matthew Bender, Thompson Reuters, and Rutter Group are also accessible to the public. Additionally, the Library provides free access to online legal databases such as Lexis Advance and CEB OnLAW.

The library staff consists of a director, a full-time, and two part-time Library Technicians. They assist patrons in locating specific references or materials. Data collected by the library staff for 2023 shows an average utilization of approximately 10,200 patrons throughout the year. The primary users of the library are members of the public and self-represented citizens. Additionally, a significant number of local lawyers, who may lack access to a comprehensive collection, utilize the Library. Students and U.S. passport applicants also form part of the user base.



*Law Library Reading Room*

# Executive Summary

Over the past five years, the Sonoma County Law Library has successfully implemented 98% of the strategies and objectives outlined in our 2018-2023 strategic plan, reversing the previous decline, and significantly enhancing our services, resources, and community engagement. This period of revitalization has established a strong financial position, attributed to effective management, legislative lobbying, and securing stable funding sources.

The 2009 to 2015 period saw the Law Library grappling with severe budgetary difficulties, primarily due to a 39 percent decline in civil court filing fees, the Library's primary revenue source. However, the strategic initiatives set forth in the 2018-2023 plan, including the development of alternative revenue sources and substantial reductions in operational spending, have successfully reversed this trend, leading to positive budgetary balances over the past two fiscal years.

As we embark on our new strategic plan for 2024-2029, our focus will be on maintaining this financial stability while enhancing staff development and increasing the Library's visibility. This plan outlines our vision and strategic goals to ensure the continued growth and impact of the Law Library.

1. **Ensure Financial Stability and Sustainability:** We will continue to diversify our revenue streams, seek grants, build partnerships, and introduce new fee-based services to maintain financial health.
2. **Empower Staff Development:** Investing in our staff through continuous learning, mentorship programs, cross-training, wellness initiatives, and leadership development is crucial for our success.
3. **Enhance Visibility and Community Engagement:** Raising awareness about the Library's resources through community ambassador programs, mobile services, pop-up events, interactive workshops, and a library podcast will enhance our community presence.
4. **Embrace Technological Advancements:** Modernizing our technological infrastructure with VR resources, AI tools, digital literacy programs, an online appointment system, and smart library technologies will improve service delivery and operational efficiency.
5. **Expand Collection and Access to Legal Information & Resources:** We aim to expand our digital collections, improve mobile access, and increase language accessibility to ensure that all community members can access the legal information they need.

By focusing on these strategic goals, we aim to continue being a vital resource for the Sonoma County community, adapting to new challenges, and seizing opportunities for growth and improvement. The Strategic plan was drafted by the Law Library director Nikolaos Pelekis and approved by the Law Library Board of trustees in September, 2024.



*Kimberly Tucker Conference Room*





# Mission:

**Ensure access to justice  
and information**

**by offering the public  
and legal professionals**

**legal resources and  
exceptional service.**



*Judge Gayle C. Guynup & U.S. Rep. Douglas H. Bosco Conference Room*

# Vision

The vision of the Sonoma County Public Law Library is to be a significant legal information resource center, for Sonoma and neighboring counties, committed to excellent service. The Sonoma County Public Law Library strives to provide an environment that is conducive to learning and research.

Over the next five years we aim to continue being a vital resource for the Sonoma County community, adapting to new challenges, and seizing opportunities for growth and improvement to better meet the needs of ethnic minorities, seniors, low income, homeless, and other special populations of our community.



**ORDINANCE NO. 25.**

**T**HE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE County of Sonoma do ordain as follows: That the act of the Legislature of the State of California, entitled "An Act to Establish Law Libraries," approved March 31st, 1891, and each and all of the provisions of said act shall apply to and be in force in the said County of Sonoma.

This ordinance shall be in full force and effect on and after the 22d day of June, A. D. 1891.

Passed and approved this 5th day of June, A. D. 1891, by the following vote:

Supervisor Cady, Aye,  
Supervisor Clark, Aye,  
Supervisor Mead, Aye,  
Supervisor Sales, Aye,  
Supervisor Smith, Aye.

F. A. SMITH, Chairman.  
Attest: L. W. JUILLIARD,

[SEAL]  
County Clerk and ex-officio Clerk of said Board  
of Supervisors. jun12w2t

# The Five Goals

**Goal 1:**

Ensure Financial Stability & Sustainability

**Goal 2:**

Empower Staff Development

**Goal 3:**

Enhance Visibility & Community Engagement

**Goal 4:**

Embrace Technological Advancements

**Goal 5:**

Expand Collection & Access to Legal  
Information & Resources



# Goal 1: Ensure Financial Stability & Sustainability

- **Revenue-Generating Services**
  - Introduce revenue-generating services such as legal research services for law firms.
  - Introduce fee-based services that provide value to the community while generating revenue (e.g., proctor exam center).
- **Crowdfunding Campaigns**

Launch crowdfunding campaigns for specific projects or initiatives to engage the community in supporting the library.
- **Investment Strategy**

Develop a prudent investment strategy for existing funds to generate additional income while ensuring financial security.
- **Diversify Funding Sources**

Explore and secure diverse funding streams, including grants, donations, and partnerships, to ensure financial stability.
- **Cost-Effective Practices**

Implement cost-effective practices and green initiatives to reduce operational costs and promote sustainability.
- **Corporate Sponsorships**

Seek corporate sponsorships and partnerships with local businesses to support specific library programs and services.
- **Staff Compensation Alignment**

Increase staff salaries to align with the hourly rates of other similar-sized county law libraries, ensuring fair and competitive compensation to attract and retain talent.





# Goal 2: Empower Staff Development

- **Continuous Learning Culture**  
Establish a continuous learning culture for staff to access online courses and certifications relevant to their roles.
- **Cross-Training**  
Encourage cross-training among staff to ensure versatility and coverage across different library functions and to foster knowledge sharing and professional growth.
- **Professional Development**  
Offer continuous training and development programs to keep staff updated on the latest legal and library service trends.
- **Recognition and Rewards**  
Implement a recognition and rewards system to celebrate staff achievements and milestones.
- **Employee Feedback Systems**  
Create channels for staff to provide feedback and suggestions, ensuring their voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes.
- **Regular Staff Meetings**  
Hold staff meetings every six months to review progress and address concerns.
- **Knowledge Expansion**  
Visit other County Law Libraries to expand knowledge and practices to improve our services.



# Goal 3:

## Increase Community Visibility & Engagement

- **Library Pop-Up Events**  
Participate in events at various community locations such as farmers' markets, fairs, and community centers to raise awareness about the library.
- **Interactive Workshops**  
Offer interactive workshops on relevant legal topics, inviting guest speakers and experts to engage with the community.
- **Podcast Participation**  
Participate in podcasts featuring interviews with legal experts, community leaders, and discussions on legal topics and community resources.
- **Social Media Engagement**  
Strengthen our social media presence by regularly posting updates, resources, and success stories, and engaging with the community online.
- **Media Partnerships**  
Collaborate with local media outlets to feature stories about the library's impact, services, and upcoming events.
- **Community Partnerships**  
Strengthen partnerships with local legal aid organizations, law firms, and educational institutions to broaden our outreach and collaborative efforts.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns**  
Implement campaigns to raise awareness about the library's services and resources, targeting underserved populations.
- **Outreach Initiatives**
  - Implement booths/kiosks in Sonoma Public Libraries' branches and mobile Library trucks.
  - Visit neighboring County Law Libraries to expand visibility with the communities there.



*Reading Room*

# Goal 4:

## Embrace Technological Advancements

- **AI Tools**  
Implement AI tools for research assistance, providing patrons with more efficient and accurate search results.
- **Digital Literacy Programs**  
Offer digital literacy programs to help patrons navigate online legal resources and databases effectively.
- **Online Appointment System**  
Introduce an online appointment system for legal consultations and research assistance, improving convenience and accessibility.
- **Smart Library Technologies**  
Invest in smart library technologies such as automated check-in/out systems, for efficient library management.
- **IT Upgrades**  
Invest in state-of-the-art technology to support library operations and patron services (e.g., PCs, printers, photocopier machines).
- **Virtual Services**  
Expand virtual services, including online legal consultations and remote access to resources.
- **Innovative Tools**  
Integrate innovative research tools and platforms to enhance the user experience.
- **Website Improvement**  
Improve the Law Library's website for better user experience and accessibility.



## Goal 5:

# Expand Collection & Access to Legal Information & Resources

- **Multilingual Resources**  
Expand the collection to include more multilingual resources, catering to the diverse linguistic needs of the community.
- **User-Driven Acquisitions**  
Implement a user-driven acquisition system where patrons can suggest and request new titles and resources.
- **Collaborative Collections**  
Collaborate with other law libraries to share resources and provide access to a broader range of materials.
- **Virtual Legal Clinics**  
Offer virtual legal clinics that provide remote access to legal consultations and advice.
- **Self-Help Resources**  
Create and distribute self-help legal kits and guides for common legal issues faced by the community.
- **Interactive Online Tools**  
Develop interactive tools and resources on the library's website to assist patrons in navigating legal processes.
- **Expanding Digital Resources**  
Increase our digital collections, including e-books and online databases.
- **Remote Access**  
Implement ways to access material for those who cannot physically be at the Law Library.



Windsor



Petaluma



Russian River Guerneville



Bodega



Armstrong Redwoods



Wineries Cloverdale



Apple Orchard Sebastapol



Fort Ross Jenner



Sonoma