



Supreme Court Law Library

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Our Mission:

The mission of the Supreme Court Law Library is to provide and produce legal information for the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of state government, the legal community, and the public at large so they may have equal access to the law, effectively address the courts, make laws and write regulations, better understand the legal system, and conduct their affairs in accordance with the principles of law.

SUPREME COURT LAW LIBRARY: FY2026 –1 SERVICES & STATISTICS SNAPSHOT

By: Stephanie Wilson, State Law Librarian

The New Mexico Supreme Court Law Library is the state's public law library that is open to all. It has been serving the Judiciary, government, legal community, and public throughout New Mexico for 175 years. The Legislature established it as the Territorial Library in 1851 and as the Supreme Court Law Library in 1915. During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2026 (July-September 2025), the Library staff worked to benefit and engage with our statewide and local service communities, in support of our Mission Statement. Some of the highlights include:

A. Reference, Research, and Circulation Services accomplishments:



- Responding to all 694 requests for information from people, who emailed (18.2%), mailed (6.5%), called (15.9%), or walked in (59.5%) for help with legal research, forms, library cards, document delivery, and other types of library services. People from across New Mexico and the U.S. -- including the judiciary (22.3%), government (2.6%), legislative (1.7%), academic organizations (16.3%), other libraries (1%), inmates in New Mexico, other states, and federal facilities (6.9%), lawyers and law firms (12.2%), and the public (39.5%) -- contacted the Law Library for reliable information and knowledgeable help with their legal questions. In-person interactions via walk-in remained our patrons' most preferred method of contacting us. Library staff also assisted people from other states, including Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, and Washington, as well as Canada.

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- **Providing access to online legal research information and services and a safe workspace for all Library users.** Library staff administered the Library's public website by maintaining information about statutes, rules, regulations, legal forms, cases, legal referral services, and other resources. The Library's public computers were used by **57 patrons** for free access to specialized research resources, including NMOneSource, Westlaw Patron, Lexis Patron, HeinOnline, and the LexisNexis Digital Library of law e-books. They also used free general computer resources such as the Internet, email, word processing programs, apps, and Wi-Fi. **223 people used the Library** to read books, make copies, print documents, attend events, use the study alcoves and tables, watch livestreamed Supreme Court hearings, and conduct research with its extensive collection of over **276,153** cataloged books and documents.

B. Technical and Collection Management Services accomplishments: Updating the Library's collection of print and electronic resources; organizing, processing, inventorying, repairing, and shelving materials; and cataloging and classifying materials. The Library acquired new print and digital material from various publishers and updated the EOS.Web Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) to keep the collection current and help patrons locate library resources quickly and easily. Check the monthly [New Titles List](#) posted on the Library's online catalog for more information.

C. Outreach, Public Programs, and Education Services accomplishments: Promoting the Law Library's services and collections, providing library and legal research instruction, and engaging in public relations with the community. The State Law Librarian attended meetings of the New Mexico Public Records Commission, the Supreme Court's Equity and Justice Commission, the Access to Justice Commission, the First Judicial District's Pro Bono Committee, and the New Mexico Archives & Archivists Special Interest Group. Library staff posted weekly on the Library's X (Twitter) account and published the Library's monthly SCLL Newsletter. Library staff **curated 12 thematic displays** on a variety of topics to highlight areas of the book collection. Staff assisted with **45 tours** (self- and staff-guided) of the Law Library and Supreme Court Building for the public and court staff. The Library hosted events including a program session for the Conference of Court Public Information Officers, a Constitution Day celebration, a law clerk orientation, and court staff training. The Library staffed exhibitor tables at the New Mexico State Bar Conference in Albuquerque, the Law-La-Palooza Legal Fair in Albuquerque, and at District Court Legal Fairs in Taos and Las Vegas to provide information about library services and legal resources and to promote access to justice.

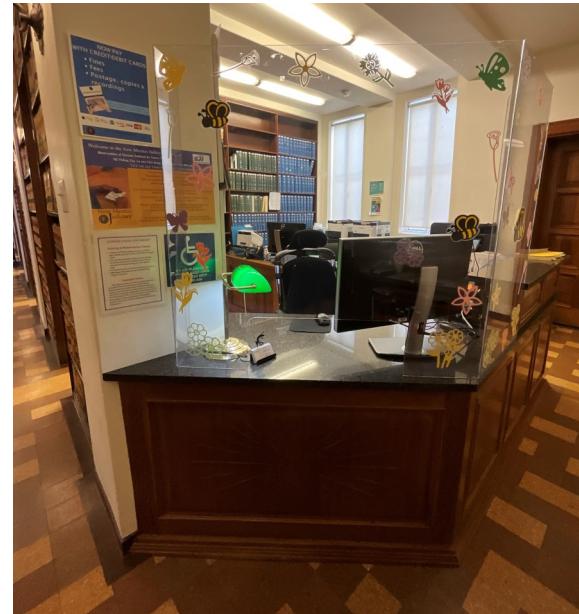
D. FY26-1 Law Library Statistics Summary:

- 694 reference interactions
- 48 responses to letters from prisoners
- 8 new patrons registered for library cards
- 550 circulation transactions
- 3 interlibrary loan requests
- 616 items of mail received and processed timely
- 54 new titles cataloged
- 151 titles enhanced and updated in the catalog
- 332 new items added to the catalog
- 288 federal government publications received via the FDLP
- 31-plus staff hours spent updating books with loose-leaf filing and supplements
- 9,456 views of the Library's public website

ABOUT THE LAW LIBRARY

The Supreme Court Law Library has been providing legal reference services and access to legal information to the courts and people throughout New Mexico for 175 years.

- Our Reference team welcomes your questions! We can assist you by walk-in, telephone at (505) 827-4850, mail, or email at libref@nmcourts.gov.
- Law Library hours are Monday – Friday 8:00-12:00 and 1:00-5:00. The Library is closed 12-1.
- The Law Library has books, forms, government documents, online resources, public computers, study alcoves, a public microfilm reader/scanner, a public copier and printer, document delivery services, and free internet access.
- Visit our website at <https://lawlibrary.nmcourts.gov>
- Follow us [@NM_LawLibrary](https://twitter.com/NM_LawLibrary) on .



SUPREME COURT LAW LIBRARY PUBLIC OUTREACH AT NEW MEXICO LEGAL FAIRS

By: Amy Schaefer

The [Law Library](#) is committed to providing legal information to the public at large so they may have equal access to the law, effectively address the courts, better understand the legal system, and conduct their affairs in accordance with principles of law. We accomplish this mission by curating and maintaining the legal collection of books, forms, government documents, and electronic resources, and by providing reference services directly to the public at our physical library. Yes, our library is open to the public! Additionally, the Library staff attends various pro bono legal fairs throughout the year.

Legal fairs provide the public with an opportunity to receive an in-person consultation with an attorney at no charge. Attending legal fairs allows our staff to connect with a user group we may otherwise

never see. Along with other service providers like the State Bar of New Mexico Modest Means Helpline and the Child Support Services Division, the Law Library staff distribute information and provide basic on-site reference services to the public and to legal service providers.

This fall, the staff of the Law Library have been busy attending three legal fairs offered by [New Mexico Legal Aid's Volunteer Attorney Program](#). These Legal Fairs all operated on a first-come, first-serve basis, and no pre-registration was required. The areas of civil and family law served included divorce, custody, visitation, guardianship, landlord/tenant, creditor/debtor matters, wills, probate, power of attorney, unemployment benefits, and contracts.

On September 18th we were in Las Vegas at the New Mexico Highlands University Student Union Building. The next day, September 19th, we traveled to the Eighth Judicial District Court in Taos. On October 3rd we attended Law-la-Palooza at the Taylor Ranch Community Center in Albuquerque. During these three events, we served more than 50 New Mexicans, including the public and members of the legal community.

Our table had a wealth of resources, including information about the New Mexico court system, copies of the 2025 New Mexico Constitution, brochures about federal government resources, and even some fun swag items. Our most popular item during these three legal fairs was the updated New Mexico Constitution that was published in January 2025! We also distributed Self-Help Guides, Law Library brochures, judicial coloring books, bookmarks, and more.

If you would like more information about upcoming legal fairs and teleclinics, visit our [If You Need Legal Assistance](#) webpage. For information about volunteering, visit the [New Mexico Legal Aid Volunteer Opportunities](#) webpage.

As always, the Law Library is here to assist you with your legal research and reference questions. You can call our reference desk at 505-827-4850, email us at libref@nmcourts.gov, or come by the Library. We are open to the public Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. [And, follow us on X!](#) ♦



ELECTIONS IN GENERAL

By: Kendra Patlak

Last December, the Supreme Court Law Library wrote about the [Electoral College](#). This election season, the Law Library is providing readers with information about elections in general.

What is a primary election? “[P]rimaries are used to select which candidates will represent a political party in the general election.” U.S. Election Assistance Commission, *Primary Election Types* (Apr. 30, 2024), <https://www.eac.gov/voters/primary-election-types>. What are the different types of primary elections? There are open, closed, partially open or closed, and other types of primary elections. *Id.* Twenty-two states hold open primaries, which “generally allow all voters to participate, regardless of their political affiliation.” *Id.* Ten states hold closed primaries, “in which only voters affiliated with the political party holding the primary are eligible to participate.” *Id.* Thirteen states hold primaries that are partially open, meaning “voters are generally allowed to vote for candidates with a different party than they are affiliated,” or partially closed, meaning “state parties decide whether they permit voters registered without a political party affiliation to participate.” *Id.* Five states hold primaries that take other forms. *Id.*



Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

What is a general election? In November of even-numbered years, general elections “fill federal, state (both statewide and district-level), and county seats.” Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk, *Types of Elections in New Mexico*, <https://www.santafecountynm.gov/clerk/elections/types-of-elections-in-new-mexico> (last visited Oct. 15, 2025). Voters can “vote for any candidate from any party,” regardless of whether “[they] are registered with a political party.” USAgov, *Do you have to vote for the party you are registered with?*, <https://www.usa.gov/voting-political-party> (last visited Oct. 15, 2025). Moreover, voters “can vote in the general election even if [they] did not vote in [their] state’s primary.” *Id.*

What about special elections? In New Mexico, special elections are “mail-only elections that occur at specified intervals between Primary, General, Local, and Municipal elections.” Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk, *supra*.

How are the President and Vice President elected? The President and Vice President are elected “[e]very four years . . . during the general election.” USAgov, *Presidential general election*, <https://www.usa.gov/presidential-general-election> (last visited Oct. 15, 2025). Election Day is “the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November,” but “the voting period may be extended.” *Id.*

How are legislators elected? U.S. Senators, 100 in total, “serve six-year terms, with one-third of them up for election every even-numbered year.” Federal Voting Assistance Program, *About Elections*, <https://www.fvap.gov/info/about-absentee-voting/elections> (last visited Oct. 15, 2025). U.S. Representatives, 435 in total, “serve two-year terms, with the entire House up for election every even-numbered year.” *Id.* At the state level, forty-two New Mexico Senators “run for office every four years,” while seventy New Mexico Representatives “run for office every two years.” New Mexico Legislature, *State Legislature Primer*, <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Publications/Visitors/StateLegislatureHandbook16.pdf> (last visited Oct. 15, 2025).

For more information on voting and elections in New Mexico, visit the [Voter Information Portal](#). For further reading, consult the Law Library’s resources dedicated to [Elections and Voting](#). ♦

WATER COURTS REORGANIZATION

By: Cassandra Wenzel

On October 1, 2025, the reorganization of the water courts under [Supreme Court Provisional Order #S-1-AO-2025-00017](#) took effect for civil water cases. A civil water case is a “dispute between parties over usage under a previously determined scope of rights”, New Mexico Courts, *Civil Water (non-adjudication) and Water Rights Adjudication*, <https://nmcourts.gov/resources/water-rights-adjudication/> (last visited Oct. 6, 2025). There is no change to the [Animas](#), [Cow Creek](#), [Lower Rio Grande](#), or [San Juan River Basin](#) Adjudications from this reorganization. These water rights adjudications “involve a system-wide declaration of water rights in a basin” *Id.* As the reorganization of the courts for civil water cases has recently taken effect, the Supreme Court Law Library would like to provide some information about the Civil Water Rights Reorganization to its patrons.

There are new resources created for attorneys and self-represented litigants filing civil water cases in the reorganized water courts. A new rule, [Rule 1-077.2 NMRA](#). [Water court structure and procedure](#) has been promulgated by the New Mexico Supreme Court. This rule details the new structure of the water court as divided into water regions 1, 2, and 3. Water Region 1 includes the First, Second, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Judicial Districts. Water Region 2 includes the Third, Sixth, and Seventh Judicial Districts. Water Region 3 includes the Fourth, Fifth, Eighth, and Ninth Judicial Districts, *Water Court Structure and Procedure – Rule 1-077.2 NMRA*, <https://nmcourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/New-Rule-1-077.2-NMRA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 6, 2025). Rule 1-077.2 NMRA also has sections about the appointment of water judges, as well as the assignment and excusal of these judges. There will be one district court judge appointed for the first water region, two for the second water region, and one for the third water region. The jurisdiction of the water judges includes cases that “implicate or invoke” [NMSA 1978 sec. 72-1-1 to 72-20-103](#), [73-1-1 to 73-20-19](#), [72-7-1](#) (administrative appeals from the Office of the State Engineer), and “cases involving significant impairment of a water right” under [NMSA 1978, sec. 72-12-28](#), *Id.* In addition, the Rule keeps the current status quo over water rights adjudications.

More administrative matters about case assignment, filing, and continuing education are also dealt with in this Rule. Section F provides for “Venue, filing, and case management”, while Section G gives details about “Case priority”. Generally, in “Venue, filing, and case management”, water cases shall be filed in the district court for the county where disputed waters or a point of diversion is located and the clerk of the court shall direct the case to a water clerk in the water region in question. Parties and attorneys shall comply with requirements in Rule 1-077.2 NMRA and the applicable [Rules of Civil Procedure for the District Courts](#). In terms of case priority, water matters are heard in addition to other matters on the water judge’s docket and “shall receive” the same priority as



Image of Water Rights Adjudications and New Water Regions in New Mexico: [Civil Water \(non-adjudication\) and Water Rights Adjudication](#).

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juvenile and children's court cases, *Id.* Section H gives information about "Water court clerks" and Section I gives an outline for further "Education and training". One water court clerk "shall be assigned" to each water region, and water judges and water law liaisons for the appellate courts will attend water law training "identified" by the Court Education Institute (CEI), *Id.*

In addition to Rule 1-077.2 NMRA, attorneys and self-represented litigants are provided with filing instructions under the reorganized system. [Attorneys filing](#) a civil water case are encouraged to determine what type of case they have and to read the Supreme Court Provisional Order #S-1-AO-2025-00017 and Rule 1-077.2 NMRA to determine what types of cases qualify as civil water cases. After this is done, attorneys are provided with eFile & Serve instructions to use when filing. Self-represented litigants are provided with [similar instructions](#) to read the provisional order and the new rule and, like the attorneys, provided with a copy of the Supreme Court Provisional Order within the instructions. For both types of litigants, and those looking for all of the documents referenced, the [Civil Water \(non-adjudication\) and Water Rights Adjudication page](#) is available under [Resources](#) at the top of the main New Mexico Courts page.

Patrons looking for further reading on water and water law can find resources on the Law Library's World Water Day Special Titles [list](#), its Acequias Special Titles [list](#), and its World Oceans Special Titles [list](#) found in the online catalog. Particular titles of interest may be [Beyond Litigation: Case Studies in Water Rights Disputes](#), which includes a case study on New Mexico and Texas' relationship over Pecos River management as of 2002; [Cases and Materials on Water Law](#), which includes an introduction to the topic, prior appropriation, groundwater rights, interstate issues and other topics, with a publication date of 2010; and [Water Rights in New Mexico](#), with a discussion of prior appropriation, a legislative update as of 2024, and water rights evaluations. These are just a few of our resources. Please [contact](#) the Reference Desk by phone, email, or by coming to the library in person if you have further questions about water law or any of the resources that the Law Library offers. ♦



LAW LIBRARY OUTREACH EVENTS — in October

Left Top: Meow Wolf Archives Month; Left Bottom: Law-La-Palooza Legal Fair; Right Middle: New Mexico Library Association Conference; Right Bottom: Constitution Day in the Law Library



BOOK DISPLAYS IN THE LAW LIBRARY— in October

Top Left: Baseball & Sports Law;

Bottom Right: Elections & Voting



BOOK DISPLAYS IN THE LAW LIBRARY — in October

Top Left: Cybersecurity Awareness and Global Media & Information Literacy
Bottom Right: Halloween



Visit the Law Library:

Supreme Court Building
237 Don Gaspar Avenue
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501



Contact the Law Library:

Phone: (505) 827-4850
Email: libref@nmcourts.gov
Web: lawlibrary.nmcourts.gov