

CLARK COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Board of Trustees Annual Report

2008

Introduction

The Clark County Law Library Board of Trustees presents this 2008 Annual Report, as required by RCW 27.24. This Report is based on information supplied by Maria Sosnowski, Law Librarian. This Annual Report covers the period from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

The Clark County Law Library strives to provide access to legal information to all patrons who come through the door. The Library offers personal, professional assistance without any strings attached. Our mission is to ensure that the Clark County Law Library provides a community resource for access to justice for people of any age, income, or educational level.

We invite your comments and cooperation. Please feel free to contact members of the Board, or Law Librarians Maria Sosnowski and Lesley Buhman, to share your thoughts about the Library. Board members include Judy Zeider (Chair), Commissioner Marc Boldt, Judge John Nichols, Judge Roger Bennett, and Meridee Pabst.

Who the Library Serves

The general public is the largest user group in the Law Library. During 2008, 78% of the reference questions answered in the Library came from members of the public. Two paralegal programs (Clark College and Everest College) use the Library to teach their students legal research.

The Library also serves 10 Superior Court judges, 6 District Court judges, a magistrate, 4 court commissioners, 500 or more Clark County attorneys as well as attorneys from other counties and Oregon. The Library also provides reference services to inmates in the Clark County Jail and provides interlibrary loan services to other libraries on an as-needed basis. In addition, the Law Library provides collection maintenance services to the Jail Law Library pursuant to an interlocal agreement with the Sheriff's Department.

Collection

As of December 31, 2008, the Clark County Law Library had approximately 20,500 volumes and 1,000 supplements and advance sheets not attached to individual volumes. The Library also has Washington State Supreme Court Briefs, individual local court rules, and the periodical Jury Verdicts Northwest.

The Law Library currently subscribes to two on-line legal databases, Shepard's citations and Westlaw. Westlaw has databases for cases and statutes from all states and federal circuits, numerous Washington materials, and various secondary source materials. Shepards offers the ability to check to see if a cited case is still good law.

Currently, 44 items are on the missing materials list. This does not include missing books that have been replaced, or outdated items that would have been discarded due to age. The Library has sometimes been able to replace missing items at no cost from various listserves to which the Librarian belongs.

Donations

The Clark County Bar Association's Law Library Committee set up a sponsorship and donation program in 2003. A liaison from that committee, Josephine Townsend, also attends Law Library Board meetings. Each year, a notice to the membership is printed in the CCBA newsletter, letting them know about our sponsorship program and asking for monetary donations. This year, Louis Byrd Jr. became a new sponsor under that program.

During 2008, the Library received cash donations from Bill Nelson and Brian Leahy. David Ridenour and Kurt Ryland both donated services in revising and copyrighting our Eviction by Landlord kit, and Kurt also donated the copyright registration fee.

The Law Library accepts book donations if they are materials that the Library can use or which are likely to sell. Mary Ann Royal donated a title under this program.

The Law Library added two volumes to the collection in exchange for the Law Librarian writing reviews for them. Those were: *Preparing Legal Documents Nonlawyers Can Read*, and *From Law School to Law Practice: The New Associate's Guide*.

Books and Print Materials

Due to the escalating costs of maintaining the sets that we have, the Library has been reluctant to make many new acquisitions unless they are low cost or Washington-specific titles. And due to space restrictions, we cannot purchase items that need extensive shelf space. We have been purchasing some small specialized treatises to try to build up areas of the collection that are weak or in subjects that are popular.

These are some of the titles the Library purchased in 2008:

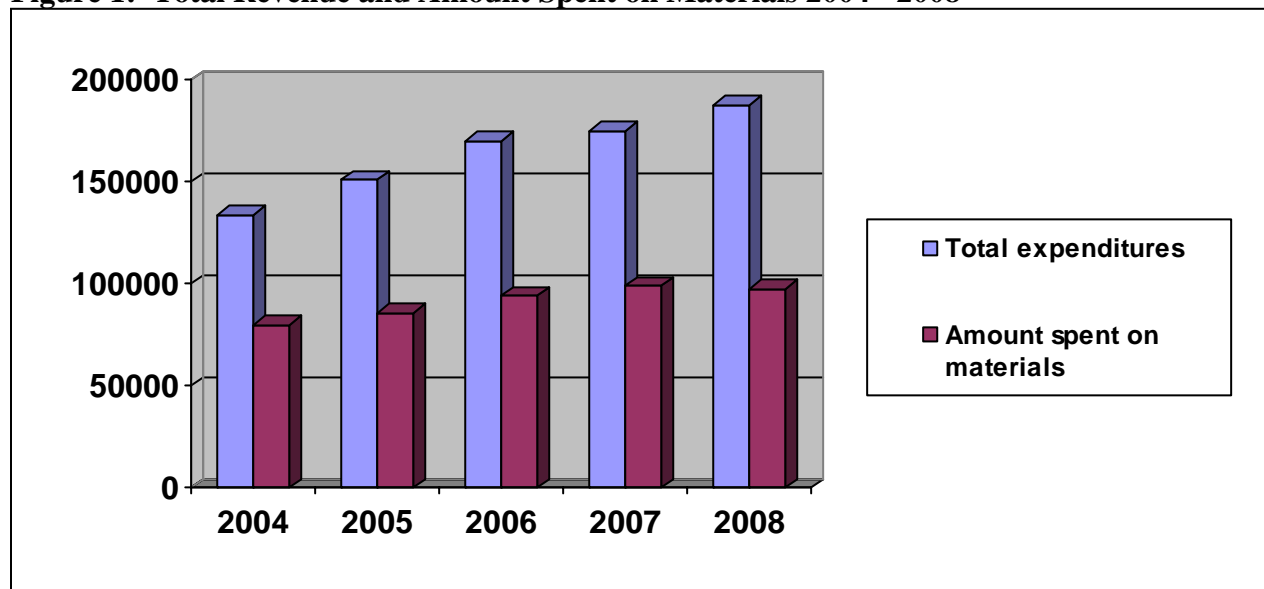
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties – Section 1983 Law
- Washington Insurance Law – two, replacing missing copies
- Defending DUI in Washington – second copy available for check-out
- Understanding Constitutional Law
- Defending Drinking Drivers
- Attacking and Defending Drunk Driving Tests

The Library also continues to purchase nearly all of the new Continuing Legal Education books from the state bar or the Washington State Trial Lawyers Association and all of the Washington State Bar Association Deskbooks. We also purchased CLE books from Lorman, NBI, and the King County Bar Association. During 2008 we purchased 116 CLE books. We continue to receive free CLEs from the Clark County Bar Association, due to their generous policy of giving us a complimentary copy of each CLE.

The Library also continues to receive state Supreme Court briefs from the State Law Library, and Jury Verdicts Northwest/Northwest Arbitration from the publisher.

This year 52% of our expenditures were on materials, which includes both computer databases and print materials. (Due to some 2008 expenses being assigned to 2009 by the auditor’s office, the actual amount is 56%, but we are using the figures in our reports) We have been setting revenues aside into our reserve account. We are also limited in our purchases by space constraints. And we have been paring materials expenses to offer more open public hours. (See Expanded Public Hours Lead to Increased Use, below) Figure 1 shows the relationship between the amount spent on materials and our total expenditures.

Figure 1: Total Revenue and Amount Spent on Materials 2004 - 2008



Database and Computer Resources

The Library offers internet-based Shepards and Westlaw. The Westlaw subscription includes cases and statutes for all states and federal circuits, an extensive Washington database, and some secondary materials. This contract was renegotiated during 2006 and will expire in the fall of 2009. Westlaw is an attractive service to attorneys, is used regularly by pro se patrons doing legal research, and is also used by the Librarian to assist patrons.

We also continue to offer Shepards, a Lexis product, as an online subscription. This contract is the same from year to year and offers national Shepards service with a case citation.

The Library offers printing from the computers at 25 cents per page. This allows patrons to print materials they find on free websites as well as our paid subscription websites. Some of that material is not available in print in the Library.

Expanded Public Hours Lead to Increased Use

On January 22, 2008, open hours increased by 50% from 20 to 30 hours per week. This increase in hours is made possible because we have been saving, rather than spending, the additional money we get from the filing fee increase that started in July, 2005. Our self-generated revenues have also been steady, which will help us absorb the added expense of more hours.

While hours increased 50%, use increased a great deal more. We had an 87% increase in the number of questions asked during 2008. The earlier opening time makes it easier for pro se patrons to meet the 11:00 a.m. filing deadline for ex parte appearances.

Space Issues

In 2007, the County paid for new shelving along the back wall of the library. This will help the library maintain its collection and accommodate growth in sets for a few more years. Although this allows more room for materials, it cut down on the space for seating in the reading area. Now the library is limited to 4 tables and a total of 12 chairs in the reading area. As patrons often use an entire table for one person, given the need for multiple resources and documents, this has resulted in all of the tables being full at the same time more often, and the need for strangers to share a table.

Clark College uses the library to teach a legal research class, and they regularly have 20-25 students in the library, which means some of them don't have a place to sit down.

Outreach Efforts

During the summer of 2008, the law library began an outreach program to departments in the courthouse. We had “legal prescription” pads printed up, and distributed them to court clerks, judicial assistants, the facilitator, and judges.

These forms provide an easy way to jot down information about what the patron is seeking, so that after they talk to someone about what they need they can leave with written information in their hand.

This has helped some pro se patrons, and we have received positive feedback on it. The most common reaction is that people feel like they are getting more help instead of feeling like they are getting “the run-around” and it makes it more likely that they remember what they were told to look up at the law library. In many cases, they are told to look for a specific form, or to look up a particular topic, and because they don’t understand what they are looking for, they often forget what was said by the time they arrive in the law library.

A copy of the front of the sheet is shown here. These are printed on green half-sheets. Hours and location information is on the back of the sheet.

The Law Library also facilitated the donation of books from Thomson West for the Volunteer Lawyers Program, which assists low-income people with their legal issues.

We also allowed CVTV to film a short public announcement about the increased hours in the law library.



A Legal Prescription

Ask a law librarian for information about:

Suggested materials:

book title:

website:

form:

other (please explain):

Please bring your prescription to the Clark County Law Library so that we can help you! (see reverse for details)

Cost of Materials

The Library is still experiencing disproportionate inflation in subscription costs. Our print materials tend to increase in cost from 5-20% each year. Superior Court filing fees, our largest single revenue source, increased by 3% for the year. Due to selective returns during the year, the increase in filing fee revenues, and budgeting to spend less than our available revenues, the Library has been able to avoid cuts to the budget for several years.

Washington materials are all kept updated according to publisher's schedules. That is not true for many other materials. There are a number of sets in the Library which are no longer updated regularly, but instead are on a multi-year cycle. There are also some sets that the Library maintains but due to the cost lack a current index. While this is not as desirable as having fully updated materials, it is one way the Library is trying to stretch our revenue and budget for the future.

The Law Library has been setting aside a reserve account as a portion of each year's budget, to pay for replacement of book sets on multi-year cycles. This saves money because it is far cheaper to replace sets every few years than to update them annually. However, this also means that these sets are no longer current.

Use Statistics

The door counter counts the number of times its electronic beam is broken, so when multiple people come in as a group it may not accurately count each person. However, it will show a trend over time of the number of people entering the library each day.

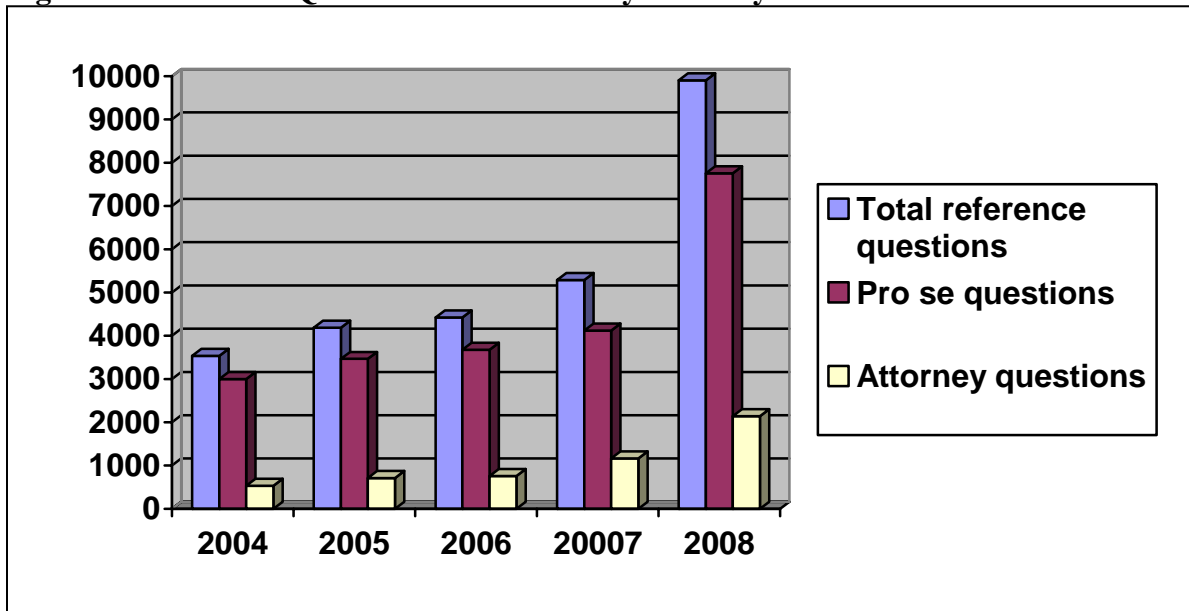
A. Number of people through the door

This year we had 14,172 people through the door, including 11,215 during open hours and 2,957 during closed hours. (Attorneys with keycards can enter during closed hours so long as the building is open.) This is an increase of 39% over the door count of 10,207 for the previous year.

B. Reference questions

The Library answered 9,903 reference questions during 2008, up from 5,292 during 2007. This is an 87% increase in the number of reference questions in just one year. While we expected an increase in questions due to the expansion of our public hours, 87% greatly exceeded our projections. Of the total questions, 7,758 of them (78%) came from pro se patrons (non-attorneys) with the rest (22%) coming from attorneys. Figure 2 on the next page shows the increase in reference questions from 2004 to 2008.

Figure 2: Reference Questions 2004 – 2008 by Attorneys and Pro Se Patrons



C. Circulation

Non-reserve books may be checked out on the honor system by judges, lawyers, and county officials. During 2008, 607 items were checked out. One item was sent and 28 items were received through interlibrary loan during this period. The State Law Library is a wonderful resource for us when we need materials that we don't own, and Lewis and Clark Boley Law Library is also very generous with their lending policies.

D. Inmate Requests

During the period covered by this report, the Library received six documented inmate requests.

E. Westlaw Use

During the year, library patrons conducted 4,773 transactions using Westlaw, a decrease of 13% from the 5,499 total transactions last year.

Financial Report

The money in our budget comes from our statutory share of filing fees and any additional funds we are able to generate ourselves. The Law Library continues to look for ways to increase our self-generated revenues (see Figure 3 on the next page for a comparison of income from filing fees vs. self-generated revenues). Our revenues came from the following sources:

1. Filing fees. In 2008, we received \$46,715 from District Court filing fees, and \$132,781 from Superior Court. This was an increase in filing fees of 10% from District Court and 3% from Superior Court over 2007. The jurisdictional level for District Court was increased to \$75,000 during the year, which resulted in more filings.

2. Form kits. We sold two types of form kits during the year, which raised \$11,650 in net revenues during the year. This is a decrease of 11% from 2007 revenues. Our kits are also wholesaled to other law libraries.

3. After-hours access keycards. We continue to charge attorneys for after-hours keycards, which raised \$3,594 in 2008, compared with \$5,556 in 2007.

4. Copier. We raised \$1,021 from our share of copier revenues, an increase of 8%.

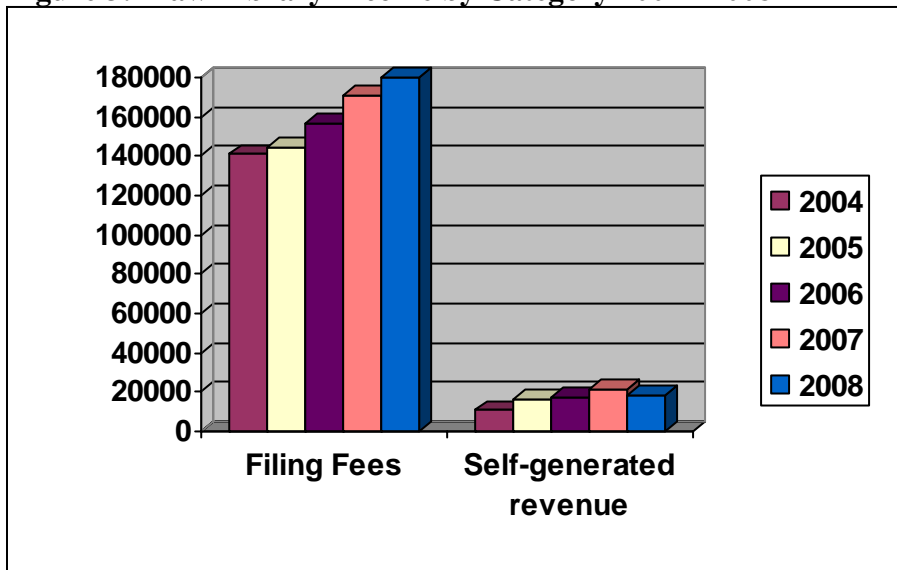
5. Sale of outdated materials. Certain materials, which in the opinion of the Librarian are likely to sell, are listed for bid. This allows the Library to raise a nominal amount of money from items that would otherwise be discarded. During the year, we raised an additional \$306 this way.

6. Jail contract. The Board of Trustees has an interlocal agreement with the Clark County Sheriff to provide services to the county jail facility to maintain their law library. In return, the Jail compensates the Library for the time of the law librarian. We received \$1,674 from the Jail during the year.

7. Investment interest. We earned \$7,852 in interest on our account during the year.

Total self-generated revenues: Our total self-generated revenues were \$18,245 for the year, which is 9% of our total revenue. This is a decrease from the \$21,311 we were able to generate during 2007. We have not included investment interest in this category because we are only including active, rather than passive, sources of revenue.

Figure 3: Law Library Income by Category 2004 - 2008



*Self-generated revenue includes revenue from after hours access keycard sales, a portion of copy card revenue, and revenues from the sale of form packets. Beginning in 2005, it also includes money from bids on discarded items. Beginning in 2007, it also includes money from servicing the jail law library.

We have been setting aside a portion of our revenues each year to pay for updates of titles that are only updated every 3-5 years, to pay for the cost of additional shelving or moving the library in the future, and to absorb the cost of future increases in the cost of books and online resources. The Library also needs a reserve account to cover months when the Law Library is not credited for its share of filing fees on time, or to cover unexpected expenses such as equipment repair and replacement. And we project that in the future expenses will again exceed revenues. As a result, our expenses have been kept below our income in order to allow our reserve account to grow.

Figure 4 shows our total income compared with both budgeted and actual expenses for the last 5 years. Our revenues exceeded projections by \$18,955. However, because of an error by the auditor's office which assigned some 2008 expenses to 2009, our reports are off in the amount of \$7,975. So the correct amount by which our revenues exceeded expenses is actually \$10,980. However, we are using the \$18,955 figure that is in our financial report, and will include a similar explanation in the 2009 annual report.

Figure 4: Income and Expenses for 2004 - 2008

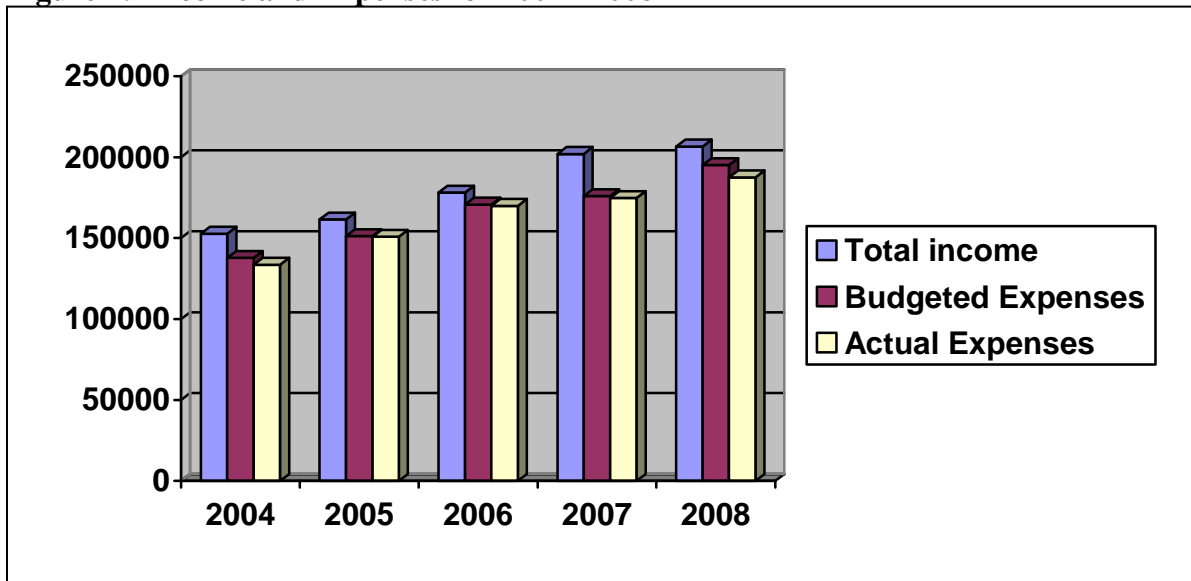


Figure 5 on the next page shows a pie chart of expenses broken down by category. The greatest expense is books and materials. The reserve account is also partially for future purchases of books that are updated only periodically.

**Figure 5:
Expenses for 2008**

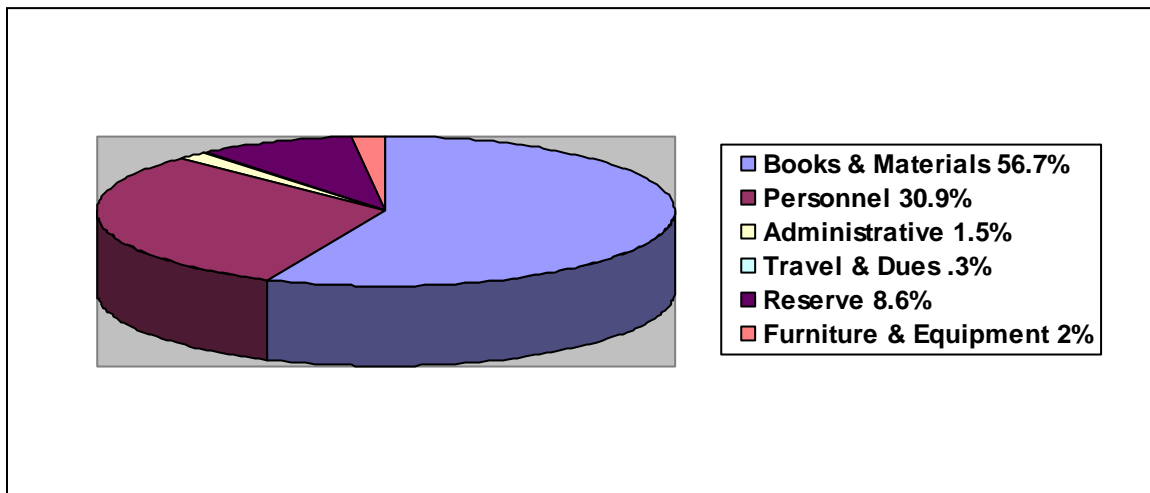


Figure 6 shows revenues by source. And finally, Figure 7 on the next page lists expenditures and revenues by category and provides totals for each category.

Figure 6: Revenues for 2007

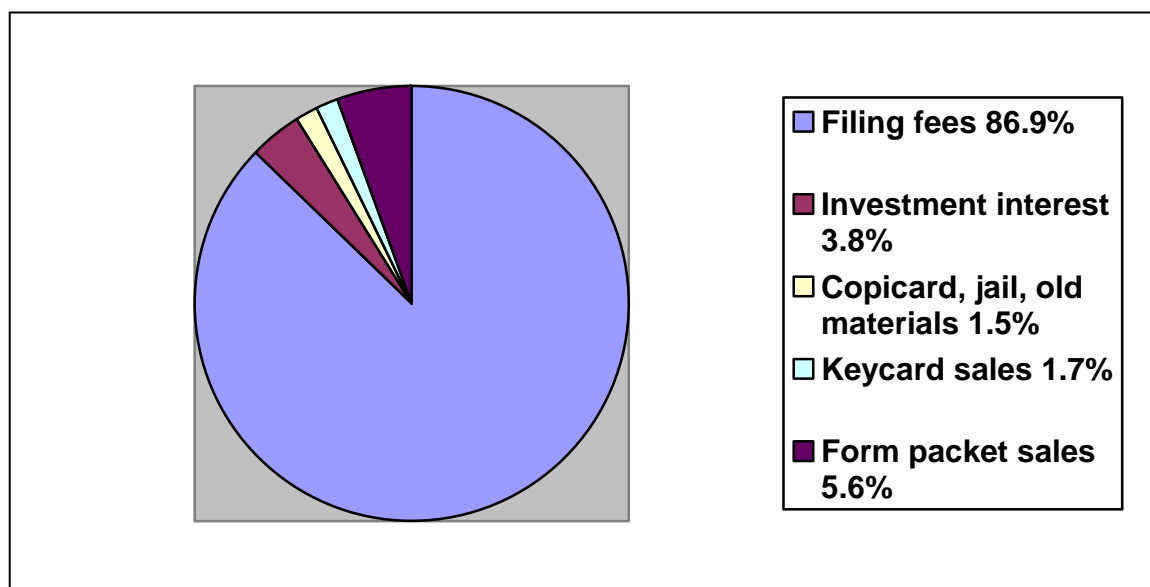


Figure 7: January – December 2008 Expense and Revenue Numbers

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Percent of budgeted amount</u>
District Court filing fees	40,000.00	46,715.00	117%
Superior Court filing fees	128,000.00	132,781.00	104%
Interest	9,000.00	7,852.00	87%
Copicards	800.00	1,021.00	128%
After hours access keycards	4,000.00	3,594.00	90%
Form packets	12,000.00	12,869.00	107%
Jail Law Library services	1,300.00	1,674.00	129%
Income Subtotal	195,100.00	206,506.00	106%
 <u>Expenses</u>			
Salaries	48,274.00	57,754.00	120%
Employee benefits	20,641.00	19,641.00	95%
Books, materials, and databases	111,663.00	97,691.00	87%
Office supplies and printing	2,500.00	2,345.00	94%
Temporary employment	1,400.00	647.00	46%
Telephone	275.00	253.00	92%
Long distance travel	300.00	31.00	10%
Equipment maintenance/repair	500.00	0.00	0%
Computer maintenance	300.00	222.00	74%
Dues and conferences	1,000.00	417.00	42%
Furniture	0.00	303.00	n/a
Reserve account	8,247.00	8,247.00	100%
Expenses Subtotal	195,100.00	187,551.00	96%

Staff Development

Continuing education is important in helping the law librarians provide service to our patrons. It allows staff to learn about new products and technologies, gain ideas from peers, and establish contacts in other law libraries.

During 2008, staff attended the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) annual meeting, the Washington Access to Justice conference, and meetings of the Washington Association of County Law Librarians (WACLL). Memberships include WACLL, AALL and both the regional chapter (Westpac) and the special interest section for county law librarians (SCCLL).

Summary

During 2008, the Law Library continued its policy of conservative budgeting and ended the year with revenues in excess of expenditures. However, the Library continues to deal with a lack of space and spiraling materials costs, which have negatively impacted the currency and extent of the collection.

For 2009, the Library will continue to focus on serving more patrons with our increased hours. Each item that comes into the Library will be evaluated in terms of cost, space, and potential alternatives in order to offer the best possible collection within our limitations. We will also continue to look for ways to increase our outreach to make it easier for patrons to find us and use our services.

Submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees by:

/s/ Judy Zeider
Judy Zeider, Chair

5/28/08
Date