

OLA Annual Report 2013-14

OLA Unit

Legal Reference Round Table 2014-15

Division, RT, Committee Board Members

Chair: Sue Ludington, Washington County Law Library

Overall goals and responsibilities of your unit

To improve the quality of legal reference service in all types of Oregon public libraries, by opening up lines of communication and increasing professional interaction between Oregon public law library and non-law public library reference staff.

Specific objectives and activities planned for current OLA membership year

1. Continue to increase the promotion of county law libraries to the OLA community.
2. Continue to explore ways to provide legal reference training to public librarians.
3. Consider strategies for recruiting more members to join the roundtable.
4. Continue to update and improve the LRRT website to provide valuable resources to all Oregon librarians that encounter legal reference questions.

Progress made toward goals and objectives

1 and 2. The LRRT made strides in increasing county law library awareness and providing legal reference training by serving as one of the sponsors for the 2014 OLA Annual Conference session "Plaintiffs, Pills, and Passports: How to Reply to Legal, Medical, and Government Services Questions." In the presentation, two county law librarians explained effective use of a variety of legal referrals; additionally, an "Oregon Legal Assistance Resource Guide" compilation was distributed and later made available via Northwest Central, the Libs-Or listserv, and Answerland, among other outlets.

3. Recognizing that the LRRT (like some other RTs) has a small membership, informal discussions were held between the LRRT Chair, the Reference Round Table (RRT) Chair, and select members of both RTs to brainstorm how our two groups might maximize our impact within OLA. While increasing RT membership is desirable, tactics for boosting participation by current members emerged as an initial focus. Some ideas debated included collaborative projects, trainings, and/or conference programs; a joint listserv; or even possible merger. No final decisions were reached, but, with LRRT encouragement, the RRT listserv was revived and promoted to members of both RTs.

4. Although no significant updates were made to the LRRT website, it is anticipated that potential alliances with the RRT will offer inspiration and suggestions in the coming year for enhanced or increased site information that will be most useful to OLA members.

Goals for 2014-15

1. Explore partnership opportunities between county law libraries, public libraries, and the State of Oregon Law Library to provide legal reference assistance and training for public library staff, particularly in areas that have limited legal information resources.

2. Create a list of recommended legal self-help publications appropriate for public library collections.
3. Consult and communicate with the OLA Library Legislation and Development Committee regarding legislation or policies affecting county law libraries and provision of access to legal information.
4. Evaluate the LRRT website “Resources” section for currency and relevance, and update accordingly.
5. Determine if quarterly or tri-annual telephone conference meetings are feasible and if such meetings would facilitate progress towards meeting RT goals.

Other comments to be included in your report

The LRRT continues to identify ways it may serve as a valuable resource for the OLA community. As Oregon public law library services and resources (e.g., staffing, collections, building hours, etc.) vary dramatically statewide and change often, the LRRT endeavors to keep decision-makers informed of these libraries’ trends, challenges, and aspirations. LRRT members acknowledge the need for equitable access to legal information, and, as such, wish to express their open-minded and forward-thinking position regarding strategies for dissemination and delivery of that information. Many RT members look forward to furthering productive conversations with other OLA units in order to achieve those goals.