TOPICS IN SESSION 1

- Introduce Law4AZ
- Collaboration with public libraries
- Legal information vs. Legal advice
- Legal reference services

What is LAW4AZ?
PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

• Partner with public libraries to increase access to legal information
• Offer training to public library staff on the basics of finding and providing legal information

LAW4AZ VISION

• To provide effective and equal access to legal information for all

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

• For Library Staff:
  • Increase knowledge and awareness of legal resources
  • Increase comfort level when working with legal information
  • Increase familiarity with referral resources
BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION (CONT.)

• For the Public:
  - Self-Represented Litigants can access information
  - Public Libraries are close to home and familiar
  - Public Libraries are uniquely situated to facilitate access to justice

COLLABORATION BEYOND LIBRARIES

• For Courts and Judges:
  - Better informed Self-Represented Litigants in court
• For Legal Service Providers:
  - Increased exposure
  - Points of referral

PUBLIC LAW LIBRARIES

• In-depth specialization and resources
• Some law librarians have legal training
• Partnerships with legal community to provide services to self-represented litigants
• Vision of providing equal access to legal information to the public
Legal Information vs. Legal Advice

WHAT IS LEGAL INFORMATION?

- Factual information about court processes and procedures, statutes or cases
- Not applying the information to an individual’s specific situation

WHAT IS LEGAL ADVICE?

- Application of legal information
- Interpretive and subjective
- Interprets some aspect of the law, court rules or procedures
- Recommends a specific course of action to take in a legal situation or proceeding.
- Requires special knowledge of the law and legal principles
WHAT IS UPL?

- Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL)
  - Non-lawyers practicing law
- Arizona Supreme Court Rule 31(a)
  - “Practice of law” includes preparing legal documents, expressing legal opinions, etc.

UPL AND YOU

- Stick with Legal Information
- Ethical considerations
- Maintain neutrality

LEGAL REFERENCE: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Provide access to statutes, case law, court rules, and administrative regulations
- Recommend books on particular legal topics
- Show patrons how to use resources – Table of Contents, Index, etc.
- Help decipher a citation
- Help to find broad definitions of legal terms
MORE YOU CAN DO:

- Demonstrate navigating legal websites
- Provide referrals
- Assist with typing and printing if needed to complete court forms online
- BUT - always allow customer to come to their own conclusion regarding their situation

WHAT CAN’T YOU DO?

- Do not interpret the law or apply the law
- Do not identify a specific law, case, or form as the law or form for their situation.
- Do not discuss what they “should” do
- Do not discuss the content of a form

OTHER THINGS TO AVOID

- Do not interpret any legal document from the court or attorney in their situation
- Do not recommend a specific attorney
- Do not do all of their legal research for them
- Do not become invested or try to predict the outcome
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

1. A patron approaches the reference desk and asks for the Arizona laws on drunk driving.

2. A patron asks “Is it legal for my landlord to refuse to accept my late rent payment?”

3. A patron asks “Where do I find the form to file to get my civil rights back?”

4. A patron says they were told they could get an attorney appointed in their case and want to know how they can do that.

5. A patron is requesting cases on illegal search and seizure.

6. A patron asks if they should file a lawsuit against their neighbor for not cutting down a branch that blew into and broke the patron’s window during a recent monsoon storm.
7. A patron asks if you think they have enough evidence to win their case.

8. A patron asks if you can recommend a “good” attorney for child custody issues.

9. A patron is filling out paperwork for divorce and wants to know if you can tell them what they should say on the form regarding spousal maintenance.

10. A patron asks how much it costs to file for a divorce in your county.

FOR NEXT TIME:
REVIEW EXERCISES

QUESTIONS?

• Contact your local county law library

OR

• State Library of Arizona, Law Reference
(602) 926-3870
reference@azlibrary.gov

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