

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the State Library

What is the purpose of the State Library?

The State Library's mission is to collect, preserve, and make available to the public the foundation of Mississippi law.

Is the State Library a separate state agency?

No, the State Library has been a department of the Supreme Court of Mississippi since 1989.

What makes the State Library's collection unique?

It has sets of Mississippi General Laws, Mississippi House & Senate Journals, and Mississippi Local & Private Laws that cannot be matched by any other library.

What types of materials are in the general collection?

State and federal legal sources including court decisions and rules, codes, regulations, citators, law reviews, government documents, and texts make up the basic collection. These sources are in print and available through the library's subscription to Westlaw, an online computer research service.

Who uses the State Library?

Open to everyone during weekdays, the library attracts all types of users from courts, schools, state agencies, law firms, and other libraries. Although being familiar with legal sources is very helpful, it is not a requirement to use the library.

Where is the State Library?

The entrance to the State Library is on the second floor of the new Gartin Justice Building located at 450 High Street in downtown Jackson, MS. Entry into the Gartin Justice Building is through the first-floor entrance on the east side of the building. Designated visitor parking is available in a lot between the Gartin Building and George Street, on the ground level of the parking garage behind the Sillers Building, and in a small lot between the Sillers parking garage and George Street.

When is the library open to the public?

The library's hours are 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for state holidays.

Should I expect law librarians to conduct research and help me with a personal legal problem?

Effective librarians help people get started with research projects. Librarians are trained to suggest sources that provide an overview of a topic and show how those sources are organized. However, librarians will not offer legal advice, interpret passages from law books, nor become involved with in-depth legal research.

Volunteer attorneys provide basic legal information about civil matters through the Mississippi Bar's telephone service – Legal Line. For more information, call that service at 1-800-682-6423 or 601-960-9572.

How do I find a legislative history of a particular law in Mississippi?

For legislation that becomes part of the Mississippi Code, notes at the end of each code section indicate when the law was passed and amended by the Legislature. Each annual General Laws of Mississippi provides the actual text of legislation as passed. The House and Senate Journals (also published annually) usually denote the sponsors' names, committees which considered the bill, and roll call votes. Legislative history is limited because committee reports, transcripts of hearings, and records of floor discussions are not published.

Can books be checked out?

Yes, if the book has a white card in the pocket on the front cover, the book can be checked out for two weeks. An orange card means the book can be checked out for three nights. A book with a green card can only be removed from the library for a few hours.

Books with white and orange cards may be renewed once over the phone (601-359-3672). Overdue fines are 25 cents per day.

Will I be issued a library card?

No. In order to check out books for the first time, patrons who are not members of the Mississippi Bar are required to present a driver's license and give a current telephone number.

Does the State Library have legal forms?

Although the library does not distribute blank forms of any type, the library has a collection of form books that provide samples for attorneys to use in drafting various legal documents.

Librarians will not make suggestions on how to choose or adapt samples for personal situations.

What online research is available inside the State Library?

Patrons of the library may use Westlaw research for all state and federal jurisdictions. The State Library has one public access terminal for Westlaw research on the library's first floor.

Which Mississippi state court decisions are available at the State Library?

Supreme Court and Court of Appeals decisions are published in the Southern Reporter; however, Mississippi circuit, chancery, and county court decisions are not published.

How can I determine if there is a particular book or law review in the State Library?

Visit the library's online catalog at http://www.mssc.state.ms.us/state_library/statelibrary.html

What is the computer policy of the State Library?

Patrons are encouraged to bring computers and use the study carrels designed for portable computer use. A few public access computers are provided for online legal research and online catalog searching only. These computers are not provided for any other personal use.

What is the charge for making photocopies?

15 cents per page by patron or 30 cents per page by library staff.

Are cell phones allowed in the library?

Yes, if cell phone conversations are made in a remote section of the library and do not disturb others.

What if my question about the State Library was not on this list?

Please call us at 601-359-3672.

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