

**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL
COUNTY OF NEVADA**

ALISON A. BARRATT-GREEN, COUNTY COUNSEL
AMANDA S. UHRHAMMER, ASSISTANT COUNTY COUNSEL
JAMIE L. HOGENSON, DEPUTY COUNTY COUNSEL
SCOTT A. MCLERAN, DEPUTY COUNTY COUNSEL
RHETTA K. VANDER PLOEG, DEPUTY COUNTY COUNSEL



ERIC ROOD ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
950 MAIDU AVENUE, SUITE 240
NEVADA CITY, CA 95959
TELEPHONE (530) 265-1319
FACSIMILE (530) 265-9840
county.counsel@co.nevada.ca.us

**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Board Agenda Memo**

MEETING DATE: January 23, 2018
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Alison A. Barratt-Green, County Counsel
SUBJECT: Letter of Support to the Governor for Additional State Funding to Help Maintain and Restore County Law Library Services

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the attached Letter of Support and authorize the Chair to sign the letter.

FUNDING: Not applicable.

BACKGROUND:

California law requires that every California county has a public law library. The law library's primary mission is to provide open access to a reasonable collection of legal materials accessible to all members of our community, including self-represented litigants, as well as legally trained staffing to assist the public who are researching these materials. County law libraries provide a valuable public resource for the more than 80% of litigants in landlord-tenant matters (including evictions), family law matters (including child custody and child support), debt collection and small claims court who do not have the benefit of paid counsel.

County law libraries are almost exclusively funded from civil court filing fees. However, due to changing methods of dispute resolution, including increases in the use of alternative dispute resolution and decreases in the number of local civil court filings, available funding for County law libraries has decreased significantly. According to the Council for California Law Librarians, these changes have resulted in a 40% decrease since 2009.

The Nevada County Law Library is located on the first floor of the main County Courthouse in Nevada City and shares space with the court's Self-Help Center. In fiscal year 2016-17, over 4,369 patrons used the services of the combined resources of the Law

Library and Self-Help Center. In recent years, our own Law Library Board of Trustees discontinued many of the print publications and replaced them with online versions of the same material. However, due to the continued downward funding trend, the Nevada County Law Library has now been forced to further cut these electronic resources and its hours of operation resulting in the loss of valuable and scarce legal resources in our small rural County.

The Council for California Law Librarians has requested a line-item allocation of \$16.5 million to be included in this year's state budget as well as an ongoing budget allocation to supplement County law library budgets and restore funding to 2009 levels. While the County is not in a position to assess the amount of funding necessary to supplement the county law library budgets statewide, we do support an increased and more stable source of State funding for our local County Law Library to ensure that this important local public resource can be sustained.

The Nevada County Law Library Board of Trustees has requested a letter of support for additional State funding to help it maintain and restore resources to our local law library. It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors support the Nevada County Law Library funding effort and send the attached letter of support to Governor Brown.

Item Initiated and Approved by: Alison A. Barratt-Green

Submittal Date:
Revision Date: