

GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE TO PRISONERS

The chief purpose of the Alabama Supreme Court and State Law Library is to support the mission of the Judicial Department, the Justices of the Supreme Court, judges of the Court of Appeal, and their staff attorneys and law clerks by providing them with legal materials and reference services. Secondly, we serve judges from other courts, attorneys, and law students and the public.

We have limited service to prisoners in providing photocopies of cases and other, general, legal information. We have prepared a one-page instruction sheet for prisoners requesting legal services from the law library. These instructions include our policies, restrictions on services, and how to obtain assistance from us.

We cannot and do not perform legal research for prisoners. By limiting our services to providing photocopies of specifically requested items and refraining from research or interpretation of materials, we will avoid the possibility of stepping into the area of the unauthorized practice of law.

We always remind the prisoner that the service is provided by a librarian who is trained in the location of legal materials and instruction in their use, and not by an attorney knowledgeable of the complexities of law.

All original letters from prisoners are returned to them. Since they may not have access to a photocopier, this will assure them that they will have a record of their request. We keep a record of what has been copied and sent to the prisoner in case they contact us for future assistance.

If we are unable to respond to a request, or unable to provide what the prisoners have asked for, we send a list of other instructions that might be able to assist them.

We charge \$.50 per page for photocopies. In order to assure payment, we send the prisoner a letter informing of the cost prior to sending the copies. The minimum billing is \$5.00 for one to ten pages. When the payment is received, the copies are mailed first-class.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRISONERS REQUESTING LEGAL SERVICES
FROM THE ALABAMA SUPREME COURT AND STATE LAW LIBRARY**

Law library service is limited to providing photocopies of legal materials or general information.

- We will photocopy cases and other information for you if you provide us with accurate information. This should be the complete citation.
- If the only information you have is not complete, we will try to find the citation for you and send you the information.
- We will mail you general information of topics, but please be clear about what you require.

Please observe the following guidelines and requirements:

- We cannot research. Law librarians are not attorneys and cannot give legal advice. We do not have training, experience, information, time or authority to do the job an attorney can do for you.
- If we are unable to respond to your request, or unable to provide what the prisoners have asked for, we send a list of other instructions that might be able to assist you.
- We charge \$.50 per page for photocopies and will notify you of the charges prior to sending you the copies. The minimum billing is \$5.00 for one to ten pages. When we receive payment from you, the copies will be mailed first class. Please make your money order to the Alabama Supreme Court Law Library.
- We will do our best to fill your request as soon as possible. However, we are obligated to first serve our primary users, the Justices and judges of the courts. If you need the information by a certain date, please indicate that in your request.
- When send us a request, please be as specific as possible in asking for information. Again, we cannot do research for you.

Address your request to:

Alabama Supreme Court and State Law Library
Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building
300 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104-3741