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STATE OF ALABAMA  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

TROY KING  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

August 2, 2005

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Honorable Scott Donaldson  
Presiding Circuit Judge  
Sixth Judicial Circuit  
Tuscaloosa County Courthouse  
714 Greensboro Avenue  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401

Law Library – Funds – Courts –  
Internet – Tuscaloosa County

Law library funds can be used to  
establish and maintain an Internet  
web site for the courts and clerks of  
Tuscaloosa County.

Dear Judge Donaldson:

This opinion of the Attorney General is issued in response to your  
request.

QUESTION

Can Tuscaloosa County Law Library funds  
be used to establish and maintain an Internet web  
site for the Tuscaloosa County Circuit and Dis-  
trict courts and clerks?

FACTS AND ANALYSIS

Your letter states that the public is increasingly expecting Internet-  
based services. You would like to provide the public with Internet infor-  
mation on the operations of the local courts and clerks, which could  
include information for jurors, filing fees, hours of operations, court  
dockets, standing court orders, and related trial and operational material.  
You have been unable to obtain any source of funding for these services  
within your judicial circuit.

Section 11-25-1 of the Code of Alabama authorizes the county governing bodies to establish, by resolution, and to maintain a county law library for each courthouse in the counties for the use and benefit of the county and state officials, court system, and the public. ALA. CODE § 11-25-1 (1989). The Tuscaloosa County Law Library was established under this section.

Section 11-25-8 of the Code of Alabama authorizes county law libraries to furnish the legal needs of books, *materials*, and copies to the county officials and circuit, probate, and district court officials at no cost. ALA. CODE § 11-25-8 (1989) (emphasis added). This section was cited by this Office in an opinion to Honorable Claude Harris, Jr. That opinion stated, in pertinent part, as follows:

It is my opinion that a county law library can furnish any reasonable trial aids, since this would simply be furnishing the legal needs of materials. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines "materials" as "apparatus (as tools or other articles) necessary for doing or making something." In my opinion trial aids, such as projectors, screens, anatomical charts, and skeletons are apparatus that are often necessary for effectively trying a case. Therefore, procurement of trial aids by the Tuscaloosa County Law Library is authorized by Section 11-25-1, et seq., Code of Alabama 1975.

Opinion to Honorable Claude Harris Jr., Circuit Court Judge, dated December 9, 1980, A.G. Opinion No. 81-00121.

In an opinion to Honorable L. Scott Coogler, this Office opined that the Tuscaloosa County Law Library could purchase a public address system for a courtroom as a material that is often necessary for effectively trying a case. The authority for this purchase was section 11-25-1, *et seq.*, of the Code of Alabama. Opinion to Honorable L. Scott Coogler, Circuit Judge, dated February 27, 2001, A.G. No. 2001-103.

Because the Internet web site would be a material that would facilitate the operation of the courts and benefit the citizens of Tuscaloosa County, it is the opinion of this Office that such a purchase by the Tuscaloosa County Law Library is lawful pursuant to section 11-25-1, *et seq.*, of the Code of Alabama.

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CONCLUSION

The Tuscaloosa County Law Library can lawfully use its funds to establish and maintain an Internet web site for the courts and clerks of Tuscaloosa County.

I hope this opinion answers your question. If this Office can be of further assistance, please contact Don E. Lawley of my staff.

Sincerely,

TROY KING  
Attorney General  
By:



BRENDA F. SMITH  
Chief, Opinions Division

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