

Note: This summary is of a work in progress that is at the development stage. I would like to present the work to receive feedback on further development.

## What's the Plan: Evolving Law Library Collection Development and Management

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Current ABA Standards require that a law library “formulate and periodically update a written plan for development of the collection.” For a site visit, a law library must describe how it meets the standard and provide a copy of the plan. Proposed ABA Standards offer many revisions in the law library standards, but currently still include this requirement for a collection development plan.

Meeting this ongoing requirement can be frustrating given the challenges facing law libraries. Academic law libraries for many years have faced declining budgets. There have been extensive cancellations of print subscriptions with increasing and often extensive reliance on online sources. With shrinking budgets driving many collection decisions, it is difficult to think about “development” of the collection. Academic libraries are moving away from active “just in case” collections to “just in time” collections with archives of older materials.

Given these challenges, how can law libraries engage in meaningful collection planning and plan creation? What should a plan include?

To address these questions, I will examine the history of the ABA requirement for collections and plans and how those requirements are related. I will include a discussion of AALS requirements. I will also explore the history of collection plans for academic libraries as to the purpose of the plans and suggested plan provisions. To compare approaches over time, I will review some actual plans in their past and present forms.

I will explore a vision of collection planning that focuses on intent or philosophy rather than just certain details or procedures. This planning would relate to the mission of the law school and the envisioned role of the law library. This focus on the individual law school is also a theme in the ABA Standards. In addition, I will consider how libraries might also address support for broader communities of researchers. This could include support for the public. It could also include support for a broader community of researchers through maintaining an archival collection. I might provide some suggested language or points to consider in creating a plan.