

Self – Help Legal Reference—A Guide for Minnesota Public Librarians--2013

Prepared by Ramsey County Law Library, August 2013

Listed below are helpful legal information resources for public librarians. Many patrons appear in the public library as a first step in their search for legal help. New self help resources are available on websites; many volunteer attorney resources are also available. A partnership between public libraries and law libraries helps promote access to new legal resources that are created for the general public.

Centralized Resource for MN Librarians

- **WebjunctionMN:** MN State Library Services provides centralized legal resources on the Webjunction website. The legal resource topic was created through a partnership of professionals representing legal aid, state court, state and county law libraries and state library services. The site offers a one-stop-shopping approach to the many legal information resources available for MN public librarians.

<http://www.webjunction.org/partners/minnesota/mn-topics/legal.html>

Providing Reference, not Advice

- **Legal Reference vs. Legal Advice**, chapter 4 of SCALL's *Locating the Law*, 5th ed.
<http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/scall/locating.htm>
- **Minnesota Guide to Legal Reference in Libraries:**
<http://aallnet.org/chapter/mall/UPLGraphicsWithImages.pdf>

Minnesota Resources

- **Minnesota Judicial Branch:** <http://www.mncourts.gov/>

Self Help Center: <http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/>
(includes legal referrals and information, forms, videos)

MN Courts Self-Help Call-Center:

<http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/?page=2861>;

(Statewide resource staffed by attorneys; available Mon-Fri, 8:30 AM – 3 PM
651-259-3888 or call from local court house workstation)

Access to Trial Court Records: <http://www.mncourts.gov/publicaccess>

- **Lawhelpmn.org:** a collaboration of several agencies, this resource offers information on many legal topics, including a live chat feature and materials in foreign languages and Legal Fact Sheets: <http://www.lawhelpmn.org>
NEW!—A more localized version of LawHelpMN—[RamseyCountyLawHelp.org](http://www.RamseyCountyLawHelp.org)
- **Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL):** <http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/>

(many useful links including Internet access to primary legal authority for Minnesota and US)

MN County Law Library Directory:

<http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/cllppubdir.rtf>

Law for Laypeople: http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/law_for_laypeople.html

County and Municipal Ordinances: <http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/ordinance.html>

- **Minnesota Attorney General Publications** – *Free & easy to order/access online!*
<https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Publications.asp>

- **Minnesota Association of Law Libraries (MALL)**

Legal Resources for Public Libraries:

<http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/mall/legrespublib.pdf>

- **Call for Justice**—a United Way “211” phone referral service for legal help
<http://callforjustice.org/by-topic/>

Minnesota Referrals for Attorneys

- **Civil**
MN Legal Services Coalition—Civil Legal Services Directory (includes MLSC offices and non-MSLC office statewide):
www.mnlegalservices.org/localResources.cfm?pagename=Quick%20Reference%20Guide
- **Criminal**
MN Public Defenders (statewide list; services for people who income qualify)
www.pubdef.state.mn.us
- **General**
Minnesota State Bar Referral:
www.mnfindalawyer.com
MN Court Website:
Lawyer Locator: <http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/?page=252>
Legal Advice Clinics: <http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/?page=251>

National Resources for Helping Self Represented (*Pro Se*) Litigants

- **LawHelp.org:** <http://www.lawhelp.org>
Use the state list on the home page to find information helping with problems related to housing, work, family, bankruptcy, disability, immigration and other topics.

- **National Center for State Courts:**
Self Help Information and Programs:
<http://www.selfhelpsupport.org>
- **Self Representation Resource Guide:**
<http://www.ncsc.org/Information-and-Resources/Browse-by-Category.aspx>
- **Legal Services Corporation:**
LSC mission: promote equal access to justice, provide civil legal assistance to low-income populations
Find Legal Assistance (with map aid): <http://www.lsc.gov/map/index.php>

Pro Se Section: <http://www.lri.lsc.gov/prose/prose.asp>

National Legal Information Guides for Public Libraries

- **Legal Information Services to the Public (LISP)**
A Special Interest Section (SIS) of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL)

Public Library Toolkit: <http://www.aallnet.org/sections/lisp/Public-Library-Toolkit>

How to Research a Legal Problem: A Guide for Non-Lawyers (Text version 7/02):
<http://www.aallnet.org/sis/lisp/research.htm>

General Legal Internet Resources

- **Washlaw: legal research on the Web** - topical search links:
<http://www.washlaw.edu/doclaw/subject5m.html>
- **Legal Information Institute** <http://www.law.cornell.edu/>
Be sure to check **Wex!**
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/>
- **Justia:** <http://www.justia.com> From a co-founder of Findlaw: easy, informative, topical.
- **Nolo:** <http://www.nolo.com/> See Nolopedia / Free Legal Information by Topic from publisher of legal self help titles.