

## Basic Online Pennsylvania Legal Research for Librarians

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Librarians engage in reference interviews where knowledge of legal research is necessary, but they may not have formal training in legal research. Understanding a few basic elements of legal research will create a foundation of knowledge from which librarians can learn to effectively help patrons locate legal resources. The author presents these elements and describes their application in the context of researching free online Pennsylvania legal resources, including special advice to clarify the librarian's role when working with patrons who are conducting legal research. The author also discusses the value of librarians creating a toolkit of free online Pennsylvania resources.

### Introduction

Many librarians assist patrons who are conducting legal research. These patrons may be parties involved in litigation, may not be able to afford an attorney, or may be seeking to confirm advice already provided by an attorney. Regardless of the reason, patrons expect reference librarians to assist them when they come to the library. However, non-specialist librarians may lack training in legal research. Fortunately, becoming an expert in law is not necessary to help patrons find legal materials. Librarians can readily learn the basic concepts of legal research, which will give them more confidence when assisting patrons.

This article will provide an explanation of the basic concepts of legal research, forming the foundation of knowledge necessary for librarians to effectively assist patrons seeking legal materials. The discussion of basic legal research concepts will focus on free online legal resources available in Pennsylvania. Referenced websites are included in the toolkit attached in the appendix and will serve as a valuable resource for librarians and patrons. Finally, a discussion of the difference between helping patrons find legal materials and providing legal advice will help clarify the librarian's role when working with patrons engaged in legal research.

## Basic Training

### Building the foundation

Legal research is complex and takes years of practice to master. Complex research builds on the strong foundation of a few basic concepts. Understanding the concepts of authority and precedent, as well as having a basic understanding of government hierarchy, specifically the judiciary, creates the foundation from which advanced legal research can be undertaken. Because of the complex nature of the law, different aspects of the law must be synthesized and applied concurrently, building on the information already learned. Any structure of advanced legal research can be built on the strong foundational bricks of basic legal concepts (Figure 1). Non-specialist librarians will be able to effectively answer a legal reference question with this foundation of basic legal concepts.

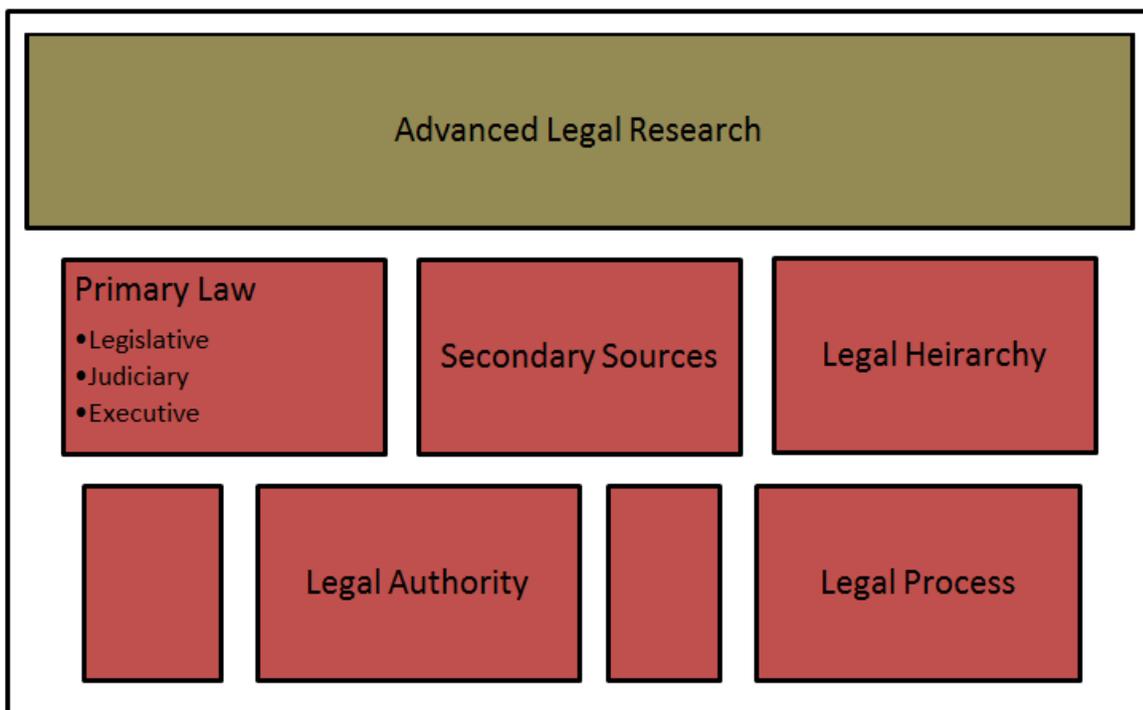


Figure 1

*Advanced legal research built on a foundation of basic legal concepts*

By understanding legal authority, the legal process, primary law, and secondary sources, librarians will be able to find legal resources. If a non-specialist librarian can help a patron find requested legal materials, the patron's question has been effectively answered. Questions that go beyond finding resources should be referred to a specialist. A discussion on how to deal with patron requests for legal advice is included below.

### Legal authority and legal hierarchies

Legal authority is a term with two meanings: "In discussions about legal research, the term authority is used to refer both to the types of legal information and to the degree of persuasiveness of legal information" (Barkan, Mersky, & Dunn, 2009, p. 2). Legal information is categorized as primary or secondary authority. Primary authority

is composed of law created by the three branches of government. Secondary authority is a written format that describes, analyzes, interprets, explains, or otherwise discusses the law but is not the law. The concept of primary and secondary authority should be familiar to librarians. The concept is analogous to a primary source being the original source, such as a transcript of an interview, and the secondary source would be anything that describes the interview by adding information beyond the original interview transcript.

The degree of persuasiveness “is an estimation of the power of information to influence a legal decision” (Barkan et al., 2009, p. 2). If the authority is binding, the court must adhere to it. If the authority is persuasive, a court may consider the information but is not required to follow it. Whether an authority is binding or persuasive is linked to the hierarchies of the legal system. Some hierarchies exist only because of the intentional nature of checks and balances that exist between the three branches of government, such as the governor vetoing a bill that has been passed by the legislature or the legislature changing a rule created by the judiciary. Internal hierarchies exist within each particular branch of government. These internal hierarchies are most obvious in the structure of the courts, in which a higher court can change the decision of a lower court. Similarly, an opinion issued on a specific topic controls a later decision in a lower court on that same topic. This custom is called precedent. However, precedent is dependent upon jurisdiction.

*Black’s Law Dictionary* (Garner, 2004) defines jurisdiction as “a government’s general power to exercise authority over all persons and things with its territory” and as “a court’s power to decide a case or issue a decree” (p. 867). Therefore, jurisdiction refers to both a geographic location and the power of a court. For example, within the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania, the opinions issued by the Supreme Court, which is the highest-level court, control all lower court decisions on the same issue. However, opinions issued by courts in other states are not binding on Pennsylvania courts but can be used in a persuasive argument before the court. Similarly, federal court opinions are binding within the federal hierarchy but are not necessarily controlling over state courts because the jurisdictional power granted to state and federal courts is different and only overlaps in specific matters.

Mastering the nuances of authority, precedent, and jurisdiction takes time, study, and practice. However, knowing that these concepts exist and will affect the outcome of a case is an integral part of the foundation of legal research. Librarians should understand the difference between primary and secondary authority and that in-depth analysis is required to evaluate whether a court is bound by the cited authority.

## Primary law

Primary law is *the law*. This is the body of information created by the three branches of government: (a) the legislature, (b) the judiciary, and (c) the executive branch (Sloan, 2009). In Pennsylvania, primary law created by all three branches of government can be found online for free. Current primary legal materials are available online and will usually meet the legal research needs of library patrons. Older material may need to be retrieved from print sources or other archives.

## Legislature

Pennsylvania laws are enacted when they are signed into force by the governor (Pennsylvania House of Representatives, para. 115). The *Laws of Pennsylvania* are the first official form of the laws and are bound into volumes in the order in which they are enacted (Liu, Fishman, Rao, & Beru, 2008). After first publication, laws are codified. Codification of laws refers to the arrangement of laws by subject, which allows related laws to be placed together in a logical format. This, of course, is analogous to cataloging books. The *Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes* are the official form of codified laws in Pennsylvania (Busharis & Tavares, 2007). The laws are commonly referred to as statutes.

The website of the Pennsylvania General Assembly ([www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us)) is the online resource for laws both before and after enactment. The site includes information about laws under consideration, member information, live video feeds, voting information, and access to statutes. The site includes a search feature that can be used to locate legislation but does not currently contain a search function that can be used to search the site. Educational information about the General Assembly is located on the webpage of the Pennsylvania Capitol ([www.pacapitol.org](http://www.pacapitol.org)) and can be found by clicking "Visitor Information" and selecting "Teacher Tools" from the dropdown list. The educational information will help patrons understand how the Pennsylvania General Assembly operates and how laws are created in Pennsylvania, while the main General Assembly site is the resource for statutes. The "Statutes" tab on the Pennsylvania General Assembly website links to the most useful resources for researchers seeking a specific Pennsylvania law. Current laws can be found using the search feature under "Consolidated Statutes." An alternative is to use the *Unofficial Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes from West* found under "Additional Resources" in the right column. The text of the law will be the same in either resource, but the latter incorporates both consolidated and unconsolidated statutes into one resource.

When the legislature undertakes a review of the statutes to eliminate outdated provisions and refine the provisions to improve clarity and overall organization, the statute is said to have been consolidated. Not all of the Pennsylvania statutes have been consolidated yet; therefore, the *Consolidated Statutes* appear to be incomplete but are merely unfinished. Liu et al. (2008) provide a full explanation in *Pennsylvania Legal Research Handbook*. Together, consolidated statutes and unconsolidated statutes make up the full complement of statutes in Pennsylvania, all of which can be found online.

Using online sources to locate statutes is convenient and cost-effective. However, neither of the cited online resources contains annotations, which are references to related case law and secondary sources. In annotated resources, each statutory section is followed by citations, including short descriptions of cases that have interpreted that particular statute and secondary sources that discuss or analyze the particular statute. Annotations are very useful in guiding further research but are editorial content created by independent publishers and are not part of the official law. Annotations can only be found in the print version of *Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes Annotated* (Thomson Reuters, 2013) or through a fee-based database, such as Lexis Advance, LexisNexis Academic, WestlawNext, Westpack, or Bloomberg Law. If a library has a print copy of *Purdon's* or has access to one of the above databases, it is important to tell patrons that the other versions contain useful information not found in the free online version.

## Judiciary

The Judiciary is the branch of government that interprets laws created by the legislative and executive branches and creates legal rules referred to as common law. These interpretations are issued as court opinions and form a separate source of law called case law (Sloan, 2009). Statutes are the law as created by the legislature but may require judicial interpretation in specific circumstances when the law is unclear. Once a court has issued an opinion interpreting a statute, the enforcement of that law will follow the statute as it has been interpreted by the court. In effect, both the statutes and case law must be consulted to understand how a given law will be enforced. On balance, if a court creates a common law rule, the legislature may enact a statute to change or abolish the common law rule (Sloan, 2009). As discussed above, determining what case law applies in specific circumstances requires an analysis of legal authority, precedent, and jurisdiction.

The website of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania ([www.pacourts.us](http://www.pacourts.us)) is the centralized online resource for Pennsylvania Courts. The website includes an excellent educational section under the "Learn" link, which contains information about the history of the Pennsylvania Courts from pre-colonial time to the present, information about court operations and jury duty, as well as instructional videos. Court opinions from the Superior Court, the Commonwealth Court, and the Supreme Court can be located by clicking on the "Opinions" link in the

upper-right corner of the main page. Clicking through this link will take researchers to the search interface. It is important to note that the search feature defaults to the Supreme Court and that each court must be searched separately. The default page includes current court opinions listed below the search interface and can be viewed by scrolling down the page. Selecting a different court from the dropdown list in the “Court Type” box and clicking “Search” will show the most recent opinions for the selected court below the search interface area. Adding additional search filters will alter the search results and allow researchers to locate specific opinions.

Opinions available on the website for the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania do not include opinions from the lower courts. To obtain lower court opinions, consult the website of the county court to see whether the materials are available online. If the materials are not online, the website may explain how to obtain materials. If no procedure for requesting documents can be found, researchers should contact the county Prothonotary’s office (or Clerk of Court) to find out how to request documents.

## Executive branch

The executive branch serves many functions, but this discussion will focus on administrative agencies and the primary law created by those agencies. Administrative agencies are units of government created by the legislature to serve a specific purpose and whose powers are delineated in the agency’s enabling act. The enabling act both creates the agency and limits the scope of power of the agency (Busharis & Tavares, 2007). Agencies serve a quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial function, meaning that they both create their own law, called regulations, and conduct court-like hearings to interpret the regulations and issue opinions, called decisions (Liu et al., 2008). In Pennsylvania, if a party feels that an agency decision has been made in error, it may appeal to the Commonwealth Court.

The online list of state agencies ([www.pa.gov/Pages/Agency-Directory.aspx](http://www.pa.gov/Pages/Agency-Directory.aspx)) can be used to access the webpages of individual agencies. Although agencies are similar units of state government, the webpage of each agency is uniquely designed to support the programs and needs of a specific agency and will, therefore, contain information deemed most relevant by that agency. Most agencies refer researchers to official sources for regulations but may have created educational resources concerning the rulemaking process of the agency. For example, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has created an online library of documents ([www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/HomePage](http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/HomePage)), which includes a document about rulemaking within the agency, but the library does not contain the regulations.

The official compilation of Pennsylvania regulations is the *Pennsylvania Code*, which as with statutes, is arranged by subject (Busharis & Tavares, 2007). Proposed regulations, adopted regulations, and other materials are published in the official gazette, the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. The homepage of the online version ([www.pabulletin.com](http://www.pabulletin.com)) states, “the Pennsylvania Bulletin Online includes the following: Statewide and local court rules; the Governor’s Proclamations and Executive Orders; Actions by the General Assembly; Rulemakings by State agencies; Proposed Rulemakings by State agencies; and State agency notices” (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Legislative Reference Bureau, 2014). Essentially, the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* is a temporary supplement to the *Pennsylvania Code* until the adopted regulations first published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* have been fully integrated into the *Pennsylvania Code* through printed or online updates.

Researchers can use the search or browse features in the online version of the *Pennsylvania Code* ([www.pacode.com](http://www.pacode.com)) to find regulations. The accuracy of the results when using the search feature is highly dependent on word choice; a keyword search will return a high number of results, which may be burdensome for researchers. Browsing the titles and sections by subject is often easier than using the search feature. After finding a regulation, they should consult the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* to ensure that there are no recent or pending changes to the relevant sections of the *Pennsylvania Code*. In this case, the search feature is quite useful in returning accurate results

that will allow researchers to find the most recent changes to agency regulations. By using the “Current Issue” feature in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* online, they can read the weekly gazette in full.

The other type of primary law created by administrative agencies is decisions, which interpret agency regulations in a specific case. Agency decisions are notoriously difficult to obtain, because they are not binding (i.e., the agency is not required to come to the same conclusion in future cases). Such decisions usually must be obtained directly from the agency and can be reviewed to see how the agency has ruled in similar cases (Busharis & Tavares, 2007). If a party to an agency hearing feels that the decision was not correct, that party may appeal the decision to the Commonwealth Court.

## Secondary sources

Secondary sources “are materials about the law that are used to explain, interpret, develop, locate, or update primary sources” (Barkan et al., 2009, p. 10). Secondary sources are not binding on courts but are very good research tools, because they direct researchers to primary law and provide explanations and commentary on the law. By first reviewing secondary sources, novice researchers develop a foundation of basic concepts before reading the primary law, which will help them better evaluate their research problem (Sloan, 2009). Some sources, such as *The Pennsylvania Law Encyclopedia* (LexisNexis, 2007 supp. 2013), have a broad scope of subject coverage but do not analyze concepts in great detail. Other sources provide an in-depth analysis on a limited aspect of the law, such as *Pennsylvania Child Custody: Law, Practice, Procedure* (Bertin & Bertin, 2014). This 878-page book explains every aspect of child custody in Pennsylvania in great detail and includes references to relevant cases, statutes, and regulations.

Finding high-quality secondary sources is very important because of the vital role they serve in legal research. Unfortunately, secondary sources in print are not usually held by non-law libraries because they contain specialized content for a limited audience and are too expensive to justify purchasing. Many online resources have been created as an alternative to expensive print resources. It is critically important to evaluate online secondary sources to ensure that the materials have been created by a legitimate self-help organization or a government entity, and that the sources contain information specific to a researcher’s location. Unfortunately, many online legal resources exist for the sole purpose of luring consumers to purchase information or services and are often very general or inapplicable.

The first place to look for online secondary sources is the local county court’s website. Many counties have information and forms readily available. Then, look for legitimate organizations that are in the business of providing free or low-cost legal services, or those that are part of a county or state bar association. Examples of legitimate organizations and their website addresses have been included in the toolkit in the appendix.

## Legal process

The legal process is how a matter wends its way through the court system. The Pennsylvania court system is made up of four levels: (a) local courts, (b) county or trial courts, (c) appellate courts, and (d) the court of last resort. The Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania has created an interactive diagram that explains many of the details of each level of the court and can be found in the “Learn” section of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania website ([www.pacourts.us/learn](http://www.pacourts.us/learn)) and is reproduced in Figure 2. The number of judges at each higher court level decreases such that the court structure can be represented as a pyramid. The minor courts have 558 judges, the Courts of Common Pleas have 93 judges, the Superior Court has 15 judges, the Commonwealth Court has 9 judges, and the Supreme Court has 7 justices (Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania, 2013).

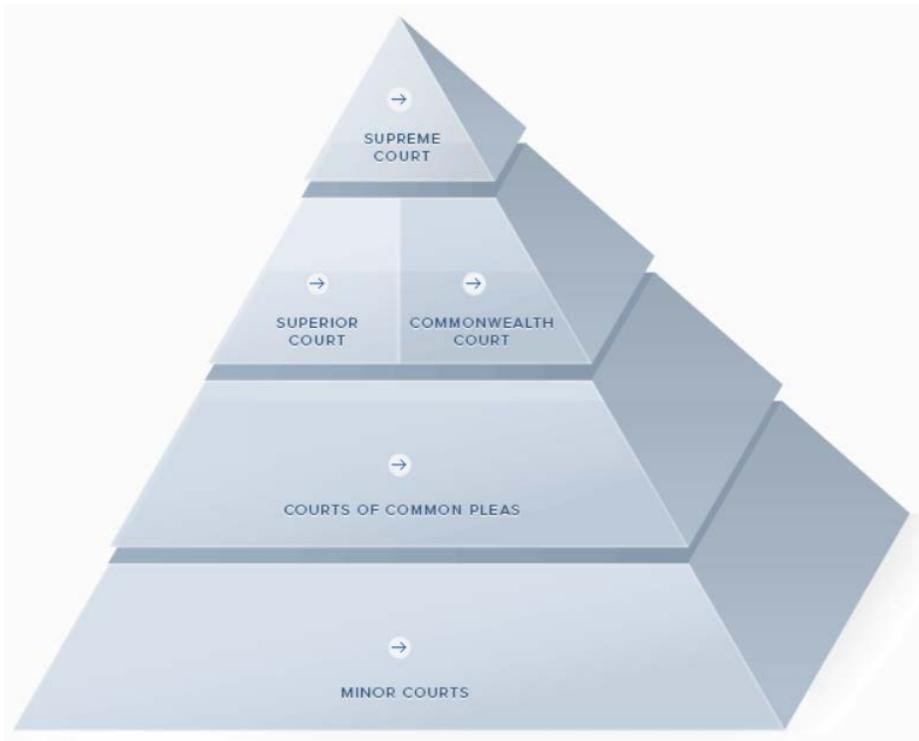


Figure 2

*Graphic representation of the Pennsylvania Courts (Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania, 2013)*

In Pennsylvania, the local courts are called “minor courts” and include magisterial district courts, traffic courts, and municipal courts. The magisterial courts are often referred to as “district courts” and are found across the state. The traffic courts and municipal courts tend to be found in more urban areas. Matters heard in these local courts can be appealed to the county-level trial courts, known as the Court of Common Pleas. Although real-life trials rarely live up to the drama of those shown on television, the trial court system serves as the workhorse of the legal system, and it is where most cases are heard and finalized.

A party has a right to appeal to the appellate court if it believes that the Court of Common Pleas has made a mistake in deciding the case. Most appeals are heard in the Superior Court. Pennsylvania is the only state in the country to have a second appellate court, called the Commonwealth Court. The Commonwealth Court hears appeals when the Commonwealth is a defendant or when a state agency decision is being appealed. For example, an appeal in a criminal case will be heard by the Superior Court, but an appeal from a decision made by the Department of Public Welfare, a state agency, will be heard by the Commonwealth Court.

There is no right to appeal to the court of last resort, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. However, if a party is not satisfied with the decision from the appellate court, the party may seek permission to appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Because few cases are granted permission to appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the Superior or Commonwealth Court will be the final arbiters in many appellate cases.

## Synthesis

Learning how to do legal research requires synthesizing and applying multiple elements concurrently. Understanding the legal process is a vital part of legal research and places the concepts of legal authority, legal hierarchy, and jurisdiction in context. The legal process stands as an element completely separate and yet fully-

integrated with the research process. If one is engaged in litigation, understanding the legal process is an important first step in knowing how a case will or could proceed. However, without the foundational basics of legal authority, primary law, and secondary sources, one will find it difficult to know where to begin looking for legal resources.

For librarians, the process is simplified. They should focus on knowing where to find primary law and legitimate secondary sources by understanding legal authority and legal hierarchy. Having the basic foundation of legal research will give them the confidence necessary to assist patrons in locating primary law. This knowledge will also help them identify which questions require a more skilled legal researcher or should be referred to an attorney.

## On Not Giving Advice

Librarians should never offer legal advice or opinions to patrons. Penalties exist for the unauthorized practice of law (see *Penalty for Unauthorized Practice of Law*, 2002). While the difference between a practicing attorney and a librarian should be obvious, sometimes librarians must explain this to patrons. Out of an abundance of caution, some librarians take this warning too far and refuse to assist patrons with legal research. They should keep in mind that there is a difference between offering advice and helping patrons find a legal resource. When working with patrons on a legal research problem, they should state, "I can help you find resources, but I can't offer any advice," and repeat this as often as necessary to ensure patrons clearly understand the role of the librarian.

Patrons can become insistent in requesting additional assistance once the source is located. If the source is complicated, such as the search features of the online *Pennsylvania Code* ([www.pacode.com](http://www.pacode.com)), librarians can show patrons how to browse the source. However, they should not tell patrons which law applies in their circumstance. Sometimes not telling patrons which law applies may seem like withholding the answer, but finding the precise information that applies to the facts at hand is where information-seeking becomes advice-giving. Patrons must read the material and decide what information is relevant and useful. This is when it will be most important for librarians to remain firm and repeat, "I can't offer any advice." Although it may feel awkward to keep repeating the same phrase, and it goes against all good customer service training, it is necessary. Over time, it will roll off the tongue as easily as "How can I help you?"

## Toolkit

A library should create or have access to a legal research toolkit for librarians and a different one for patrons. Librarians need access to a broader scope of legal research resources, especially a list of legal aid offices for the entire state. A typical patron needs resources focused on a specific geographic area or subject. Librarians can rely on the full toolkit found in the appendix, which lists legal resources that are useful for conducting online legal research in Pennsylvania.

For patrons, the information should be customized by removing the links to organizations outside the geographic region of the normal patron-base of the library, such as the low-cost legal resources that are tied to certain counties or regions. This eliminates unnecessary information that may cause confusion. In addition, having this resource readily available may assist patrons in becoming more self-reliant when conducting legal research.

## Conclusion

By understanding basic legal research concepts, librarians can build the foundation of knowledge needed to assist patrons in locating legal resources. This basic overview illustrates both basic legal concepts and where to find free online Pennsylvania resources. This information, including advice on handling patrons and having access to the

legal research toolkit, will give librarians more confidence in dealing with legal research questions that may arise in the library.

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## Appendix: Pennsylvania Law—Basic Legal Research Toolkit

### Creating a Toolkit

#### Suggested Elements

- Resources for Primary Law
- Secondary Resources – found through legal service providers
  - Highlight sources that may be of particular use to your patrons
  - Include reliable reference to forms (see Forms section)
- General Resources

Customize for your library/region/patrons

### Suggested Elements

#### *Primary Pennsylvania Legal Resources*

##### Legislature

- Pennsylvania General Assembly [www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us)
  - Legislation [www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/bills](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/bills)
  - Statutes [www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/public](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/public)
  - Consolidated Statutes [www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/Public/cons\\_index.cfm](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/Public/cons_index.cfm)
  - *Unofficial Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes*  
[government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=pac-1000](http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=pac-1000)
  - Educational Resources [www.pacapitol.com/teachers\\_tools.html](http://www.pacapitol.com/teachers_tools.html)

##### Judiciary

- Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania [www.pacourts.us](http://www.pacourts.us)
  - Opinions [www.pacourts.us/courts/supreme-court/court-opinions](http://www.pacourts.us/courts/supreme-court/court-opinions)
  - Learn [www.pacourts.us/learn](http://www.pacourts.us/learn)
  - Forms [www.pacourts.us/forms](http://www.pacourts.us/forms)
  - Minor Courts [www.pacourts.us/courts/minor-courts](http://www.pacourts.us/courts/minor-courts)

##### Executive & Administrative

- Office of the Governor [www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/governor\\_pa\\_gov/20650](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/governor_pa_gov/20650)
- Agencies of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania [www.pa.gov/Pages/Agency-Directory.aspx](http://www.pa.gov/Pages/Agency-Directory.aspx) (Click cancel when password is requested)
- *Pennsylvania Code* [www.pacode.com](http://www.pacode.com)
- *Pennsylvania Bulletin* [www.pabulletin.com](http://www.pabulletin.com)
- Local Government – add any local resources that would be of particular use to your patrons
  - County website
  - County agencies
  - Town/township websites

## Secondary Resources

### *Legal Service Providers – by Region*

- Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network [www.palegalaid.net](http://www.palegalaid.net) (link to map)
- North Penn Legal Services [www.northpennlegal.org](http://www.northpennlegal.org)
  - Bradford
  - Carbon
  - Clinton
  - Columbia
  - Lackawanna
  - Lehigh
  - Luzerne
  - Lycoming
  - Monroe
  - Montour
  - Northampton
  - Northumberland
  - Pike
  - Snyder
  - Sullivan
  - Susquehanna
  - Tioga
  - Union
  - Wayne
  - Wyoming
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services [www.splas.org](http://www.splas.org)
  - Greene
  - Fayette
  - Somerset
  - Washington
- Mid Penn Legal Services [www.midpenn.org](http://www.midpenn.org)
  - Adams
  - Bedford
  - Berks
  - Blair
  - Centre
  - Clearfield
  - Cumberland
  - Dauphin
  - Franklin
  - Fulton
  - Huntingdon
  - Juniata
  - Lancaster

- Lebanon
- Mifflin
- Perry
- Schuylkill
- York
- Laurel Legal Services [www.wpalaw.org](http://www.wpalaw.org)
  - Armstrong
  - Cambria
  - Clarion
  - Indiana
  - Jefferson
  - Westmoreland
- Philadelphia Legal Assistance Center [www.philalegal.org](http://www.philalegal.org)
  - Philadelphia
- Northwestern Legal Services [www.nwls.org](http://www.nwls.org)
  - Cameron
  - Crawford
  - Elk
  - Erie
  - Forest
  - Mercer
  - McKean
  - Potter
  - Venango
  - Warren
- Neighborhood Legal Services Association [www.nlsa.us](http://www.nlsa.us)
  - Allegheny
  - Beaver
  - Butler
  - Lawrence
- Legal Aid of Southeastern PA [www.lasp.org](http://www.lasp.org)
  - Bucks
  - Chester
  - Delaware
  - Montgomery
- Community Impact Legal Services [www.pabar.org/public/probono/cils.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/probono/cils.asp) (unrestricted)
  - Bucks
  - Chester
  - Delaware
  - Montgomery

### *Legal Service Providers – by Subject or Group*

- Pennsylvania Health Law Project [www.phlp.org](http://www.phlp.org)
- Pennsylvania Utility Law Project [www.rhls.org/pa-utility-law-project](http://www.rhls.org/pa-utility-law-project)
- Regional Housing Legal Services [www.rhls.org/home](http://www.rhls.org/home)
- Friends of Farmworkers [www.friendsfw.org](http://www.friendsfw.org)
- Community Justice Project [www.communityjusticeproject.org](http://www.communityjusticeproject.org) (unrestricted)

### *General Legal Sources*

- Pennsylvania Bar Association Pro Bono Resources [www.pabar.org/public/probono/probonohome.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/probono/probonohome.asp)
- Self Help Support [www.selfhelpsupport.org](http://www.selfhelpsupport.org)
- How To Research a Legal Problem [www.aallnet.org/main-menu/Publications/products/How-To-Research-A-Legal-Problem/howtosearchlegalproblem.pdf](http://www.aallnet.org/main-menu/Publications/products/How-To-Research-A-Legal-Problem/howtosearchlegalproblem.pdf)
- Pro Bono Net [www.probono.net](http://www.probono.net)
  - Webinars for librarians [www.probono.net/librarywebinars](http://www.probono.net/librarywebinars)
- PA Pro Bono Net [www.paprobono.net](http://www.paprobono.net)
- Jenkins Law Library [www.jenkinslaw.org/research/resource-guides/research-links?active\\_tab=299540](http://www.jenkinslaw.org/research/resource-guides/research-links?active_tab=299540)

### *Forms*

- Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania [www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public](http://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public)
- Dauphin County [www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center/Pages/default.aspx) (Click cancel when password is requested)
- Allegheny County
  - [www.alleghenycounty.us/forms/dept.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/forms/dept.aspx)
  - [www.alleghenycourts.us/family/CourtManual/Adult.aspx](http://www.alleghenycourts.us/family/CourtManual/Adult.aspx)