

# Self – Help Legal Reference—A Guide for Minnesota Public Librarians--2009

Prepared by Ramsey County Law Library, October 2009

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.

## Providing Reference, not Advice

- **Legal Reference vs. Legal Advice**, chapter 4 of SCALL's *Locating the Law*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition  
<http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/scall/locating.htm>
- **Pro Se Users, Reference Liability, and the Unauthorized Practice of Law: Twenty-Five Selected Readings**, by Paul D. Healey  
[http://www.aallnet.org/products/pub\\_llj\\_v94n01/2002-08.pdf](http://www.aallnet.org/products/pub_llj_v94n01/2002-08.pdf)

## Minnesota Resources:

- **Minnesota Judicial Branch:** <http://www.mncourts.gov/>  
  
*Self Help Center:* <http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/>  
*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>
- **Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL):** <http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.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](http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/law_for_laypeople.html)  
*County and Municipal Ordinances:* <http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/ordinance.html>  
and many other useful links!
- **Minnesota Attorney General Publications – Free & easy to order/access online!**  
<http://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>

## **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](http://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](http://www.pubdef.state.mn.us)
- **General**  
Minnesota State Bar Referral:  
[www.mnfindalawyer.com](http://www.mnfindalawyer.com)  
MN Court Website:  
Lawyer Locator: [www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/?page=252](http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/?page=252)  
Legal Advice Clinics: [www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/?page=251](http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp/?page=251)

## **Help for 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:**  
*Directory of Court-Based Self Help Programs:*  
<http://www.ncsconline.org/WC/Publications/ProSe/contents.htm>  
*Legal Services by State:*  
<http://www.ncsconline.org/wc/CourTopics/statelinks.asp?id=108&topic=ProSe>
- **Self Representation Resource Guide:**  
<http://www.ncsconline.org/wc/CourTopics/ResourceGuide.asp?topic=ProSe>
- **Legal Services Corporation:**  
LSC mission: promote equal access to justice, provide civil legal assistance to low-income Americans  
*Find Legal Assistance* (with map aid): <http://www.lsc.gov/map/index.php>  
*Pro Se Section:* <http://www.lri.lsc.gov/prose/prose.asp>
- **SelfHelpSupport.org:** Resources for Self Represented Litigants  
[http://www.selfhelpsupport.org/help/item.Resources\\_for\\_SelfRepresented\\_Litigants](http://www.selfhelpsupport.org/help/item.Resources_for_SelfRepresented_Litigants)

## 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/sis/lisp/toolkit.htm>  
*How to Research a Legal Problem: A Guide for Non-Lawyers* (Text version 7/02):  
<http://www.aallnet.org/sis/lisp/research.htm>
- **Southern California Association of Law Libraries (SCALL):** *Locating the Law, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*  
<http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/scall/locating.htm>

## General Legal Internet Resources:

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