
Conducting research to learn what the law is on a given situation is often a challenge, especially for a researcher unacquainted with the law’s esoteric vocabulary and organization. Fortunately, Virginia Tucker and Marc Lampson have produced a capable guide that will make finding authoritative information on a legal question a bit less daunting. Finding the Answers to Legal Questions is a solid choice for public and academic libraries.

The tone of the book is encouraging, but for some legal issues the authors are realistic in noting that some of the resources mentioned are unlikely to be available outside of major public or academic law libraries. A section that will be especially useful for reference librarians covers eight areas of law patrons are likely to research, including family law, estate planning, and bankruptcy. At various points the book reminds the reader that no librarian (even a law librarian) is permitted to provide legal advice, and provides guidance on searching for an attorney when needed. Given that the intended reader’s closest library is probably not a law library, the book focuses on relatively affordable print materials and free online resources. The two major proprietary databases, Westlaw and Lexis, are also briefly discussed.

A number of other legal research guides are available, including Legal Research Made Easy, 4th Edition, and Legal Research: How to Find and Understand the Law, 15th Edition. For more experienced researchers, Legal Research in a Nutshell is a compact but advanced option. Any legal source is always at risk of becoming obsolete, and to the extent the book relies on online resources, its value beyond a couple years will depend greatly on careful maintenance of its companion website. An accessible primer for legal research, Finding the Answers to Legal Questions is recommended for public and academic libraries that assist patrons with practical questions.—Benjamin J. Keele, Reference Librarian, William & Mary Law Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA 23187, USA 

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