

Starting points for frequently asked legal questions

1. How do I find a lawyer?
2. How do I research a law?
3. How do I find legal forms?
4. How do I write a will or deal with probate issues?
5. How do I find legal information on divorce (dissolution)?
6. How do I find information on landlord tenant issues?
7. How do I find information on bankruptcy?
8. How do I find information about small claims court or representing myself without a lawyer?

1. How do I find a lawyer?

Lawyer locators

If you are low income or a senior:

Contact **CLEAR** (see weblinks for details).

You might also go to Northwest Justice Project website and check their links to Program/Advocacy groups. www.nwjustice.org/links/lis_programs.html

If you are not low income, these websites may be helpful:

Go to **lawforwa.org** and click on 'Finding and Working with Lawyers'

Try the Washington State Bar Association website **wsba.org** and click on 'Lawyer Directory'

There is also a 'Lawyer Locator' at **martindale.com**

Pamphlets online

washingtonlawhelp.org has general information on hiring a lawyer. Go to the home page, click on 'More legal information', then click on 'Information about lawyers'

The Washington State Bar Association has several consumer information pamphlets on working with lawyers, including one on legal fees. Go to www.wsba.org/public/consumer/default.htm

2. How do I research a law?

Legislative law

The Library has a small collection of legislative law:

Revised Code of Washington the laws of Washington State

Bellingham Municipal Code the laws of the City of Bellingham

Whatcom County Code the laws of Whatcom County

Washington Administrative Code the laws and regulations of State agencies.

All of these resources have subject indexes. They are also all online and can be searched by keyword. The easiest way to access all of the above is to go to **www.mrsc.org** and click on 'Legal Resources'.

Case law and other help

If you are looking for case law or annotated guides to legislative law, you may want to start at the **Whatcom County Law Library** (see weblinks for more information). They also have links for 'Legal Research' on their website. Go to www.whatcomlawlibrary.org

For free online resources, start at the **State Law Library** www.courts.wa.gov/library and click on 'Legal Research on the Internet' for many helpful links.

Or try the King County Law Library whose website has a page of links under 'Internet research guide' and another page on 'Web links for public sleuthing'. Go to www.kcll.org and click on 'Research Guides' and then on 'Legal research on the Internet'. Or go to www.kcll.org and click on 'Research links' and then on 'Public Sleuthing'.

3. How do I find legal forms?

If you are looking for samples of general legal forms; the Library has books on this topic. Ask for assistance at the Information Desk or check the Library catalog, using these **subject keywords**:

Forms (Law)
Contracts forms
Wills forms
Power of Attorney forms
Landlord and Tenant forms

If you are looking for **court** forms, a good place to start is washingtonlawhelp.org, click on 'More legal information' then on 'Forms'.

You may also try The Washington State Court website for forms used statewide in Washington Courts, www.courts.wa.gov/forms

For local court forms, check out the Whatcom County Superior Court website at www.whatcom.wa.us/superior/forms/forms.jsp

Check out the Internet Legal Research Group's website for a large collection of sample legal forms. Go to www.ilrg.com/forms

Or try Nolo, a publisher of legal self help books. They want to sell you their products, but their website has a wide variety of free information about legal forms. Go to www.nolo.com.

4. How do I write a will or deal with probate issues?

The Library has books on wills and probate. Ask for assistance at the Information Desk or check the Library catalog, using these **subject keywords**:

Wills popular works
Wills forms
Probate law and practice

Try a website that the King County Law Library recommends: Washington State Probate at www.wa-probate.com. Written by a lawyer, this site has information specific to Washington State on probate and wills and has many forms.

Pamphlets and other general information online

The Washington State Bar Association has several pamphlets on wills and trusts. Go to www.wsba.org/public/consumer/default.htm

5. How do I find legal information on divorce (dissolution)?

The Library has books on divorce. Ask for assistance at the Information Desk or check the Library catalog, using these **subject keywords**:

Divorce
Divorce forms
Divorce popular works

Custody of children
Domestic relations forms
Domestic relations popular works

We also have reproducible paper copies of dissolution (divorce) forms used in Washington State. Ask at the Information Desk. Divorce in Washington State is referred to as dissolution.

Forms and instructions

You may want to start at the Washington LawHelp website which has a whole range of instructions and access to forms (some interactive) for all aspects of dissolution in Washington State. Go to: **www.washingtonlawhelp.org** and click on 'Family law'.

The Washington State Courts website also has dissolution forms. Go to **www.courts.wa.gov/forms**.

The Whatcom County Courthouse Facilitators may also be able to help you with dissolution forms. Check the weblinks for details.

Pamphlets and other guides

The Washington State Bar Association has several pamphlets covering dissolution topics. Go to **www.wsba.org/public/consumer/default.htm**.

Legal Voice also has helpful information on marriage, partnerships and dissolution. Go to **www.nwwlc.org**, click on 'Tools to help you' and then on 'Family law'.

The Northwest Justice Project has compiled many links to information on dissolution. Go to **www.nwjustice.org/links/family.html**

6. How do I find information on landlord tenant issues?

The Library has books on landlord tenant issues. Ask for assistance at the Information Desk or check the Library catalog, using these **subject keywords**:

Landlord and tenant
Landlord and tenant popular works
Rental housing

The Opportunity Council of Whatcom County has resources to help with landlord/tenant problem solutions. Their ResourceCenter at 1111 Cornwall Ave., Bellingham is open weekdays from noon to 3:30 p.m. Call them at 360-734-5121 ext. 370 for more information. Their website is **www.opcco.org**

The Attorney General of Washington's website has a variety of information on landlord/tenant issues, including the law in Washington State. Go to **www.atg.wa.gov/ResidentialLT/default.aspx**

Washington LawHelp also has information and links to information on landlord/tenant topics. Go to **www.washingtonlawhelp.org**, click on 'Housing' and then click on 'Tenant's rights'.

The Law Advocates provide help through the Tenant Clinic. The clinic takes place at the Whatcom County Courthouse in the Second Floor Hall, beginning at 12:30 p.m. on every Friday that the Superior Court is in session. Services may include: information about Landlord Tenant Laws, document review and advice, negotiation with landlord attorney, and in some cases, limited in-court presentation. Go to **www.lawadvocates.org** for more information.

The Attorney General of Washington has helpful links to a variety of landlord-tenant resources. Go to **www.atg.wa.gov**, click on 'Safeguarding consumers', then on 'Consumer issues', then on

'Landlord-tenant'.

Pamphlets

The Washington State Bar Association also has a pamphlet covering landlord tenant issues. Go to www.wsba.org/media/publications/pamphlets/landlord-tenant.htm

7. How do I find information on bankruptcy?

The Library has books on landlord tenant issues. Ask for assistance at the Information Desk or check the Library catalog, using these **subject keywords**:

Bankruptcy popular works

Debtor and creditor popular works

You may want to start with the website of the United States Bankruptcy Court Western District of Washington. This comprehensive site has laws, rules, forms and self help information. Go to www.wawb.uscourts.gov

A website with helpful links is the Consumer/Debt page on Northwest Justice Project site. Go to www.nwjustice.org/links/consumer.html

The King County Law Library has helpful information and links on bankruptcy. Go to www.kcll.org, click on 'Research guides' and then on 'Bankruptcy Law'.

A non-governmental website with helpful information and frequently asked questions is Washington Bankruptcy Law. Go to www.washington-bankruptcy.com

Pamphlets

The Washington State Bar Association has a pamphlet with basic information about bankruptcy. Go to www.wsba.org/public/consumer/default.htm

8. How do I find information about small claims court or representing myself without a lawyer?

The Library has books on representing yourself without a lawyer. Ask for assistance at the Information Desk or check the Library catalog, using these **subject keywords**:

Small claims court

Pro se representation popular works

The Whatcom County District Court tries small claims cases. Their address is 311 Grand Avenue, Suite 401, Bellingham. They have daytime and night court hours. Call 360-676-6770 for more details. Their website has forms and a link to the Washington State Courts website with information on small claims. Go to www.co.whatcom.wa.us/districtcourt/smclaims.jsp

You may want to check Washington LawHelp's website which has information on representing yourself. Go to www.washingtonlawhelp.org, click on 'More legal information' and then on 'Representing yourself'.

The King County Law Library has a page on their website with Small Claims Court information. Go to www.kcll.org/researchhelp/researchguides/smallclaims.html

Pamphlets

The Northwest Justice Project has produced a pamphlet on Small Claims Court. To access it, go to www.washingtonlawhelp.org, put 'small claims' in the search box.