

LEGAL RESEARCH FOR NON-LAW LIBRARIANS

Erin Waltz and Marissa Mason
Supreme Court of Ohio Law Library

LEGAL INFORMATION V. LEGAL ADVICE

Librarians CAN:

- Provide legal information
- Assist patrons in starting their research
- Explain how to find and use legal resources
- Provide samples of forms

Librarians CANNOT:

- Provide legal advice
- Interpret legal information
- Suggest a specific form
- Help a patron fill out a form or draft a legal document



DISCLAIMER

I hope this material will help you get started with your research.

Legal research is often complicated, even for what seems like a simple question.

If you need someone to research and interpret the law for you, you should consider talking to an attorney.

ANSWERING A LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTION

1. Listen

2. Interview

3. Search

4. Respond

5. Follow up/Refer

- Local county law library - <http://cocll.ohio.gov/Links.aspx>
- Supreme Court of Ohio law library - <http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/LegalResources/LawLibrary/default.asp>
- Local bar association - <http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/RelatedOrgs/bar/default.asp>
- Local legal services - <http://www.ohiolegalservices.org/programs>

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- My spouse filed for divorce. Which form do I use to respond, and how long do I have to file it?
- Where do I find a copy of the 2009 version of ORC 2929.12?
- What is the statute of limitations on consumer credit card debt in Ohio?
- Can you help me find the briefs for the Ohio Supreme Court case State v. Broom?

LEGAL RESEARCH SOURCES

Primary authorities

- Constitution
- Legislative
- Executive
- Judicial

Secondary authorities

- Treatises
- Encyclopedias
- Law reviews

RESEARCHING PRIMARY AUTHORITIES

Constitution – <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/laws/ohio-constitution>

Legislative

- Statutes (current) - <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/>
- Acts - <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/>

Executive

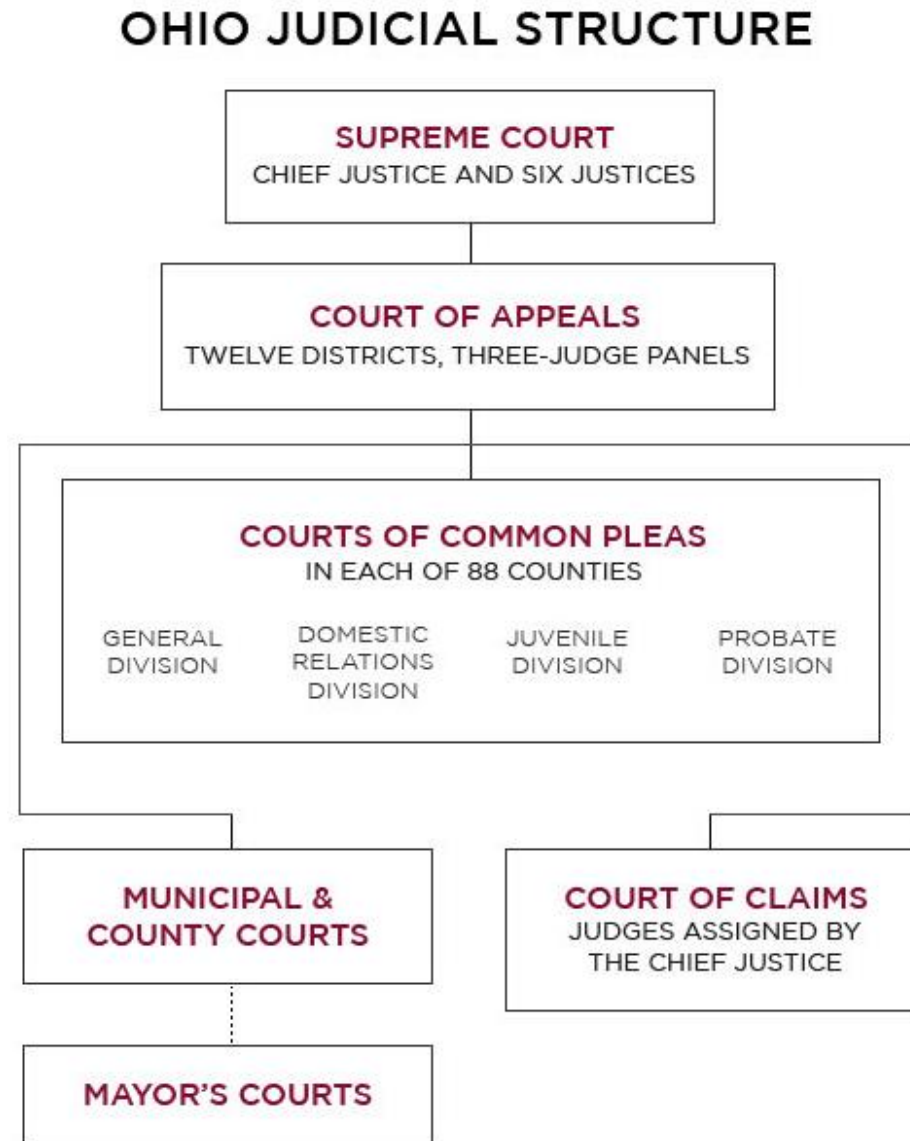
- Regulations - <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/>

Judicial

- Court opinions - <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/ROD/docs/>
- Court filings – Check with the Clerk of Court
- Court rules - <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/LegalResources/Rules/default.asp>
- Forms

OHIO'S COURT SYSTEM

- Ohio is not a unified court system.
- A number of courts have been established in the state by the Constitution and by acts of the General Assembly.
- The Supreme Court is responsible for the administration of the judicial branch in Ohio.



RESEARCHING SECONDARY AUTHORITIES

- Treatises – Ohio Practice Series and Ohio Handbook Series (West Publications)
- Encyclopedias – Ohio Jurisprudence, American Jurisprudence, CJS
- Law reviews -
http://www.americanbar.org/groups/departments_offices/legal_technology_resources/resources/free_journal_search.html
- OSBA Law You Can Use -
<https://www.ohiobar.org/ForPublic/Resources/LawYouCanUse/Pages/LawYouCanUse.aspx>
- Ohio Attorney General's website - <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/>

IF ALL ELSE FAILS...

The Supreme Court of Ohio Law Library is here for all the citizens of Ohio.

Anytime:

libref@sc.ohio.gov

Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM:

614-387-9680

Ohio Judicial Center, 65 S. Front St, Columbus, Ohio