

# Legal Reference Tips

## Legitimate Sources

- Context/Reliability
- Agreement
- Currency
- Jurisdiction

## Suggestions

- Reword question
- Set expectations
- Read directly from the source and avoid interpretation
- Provide appropriate level of information
- Look out for bias and treat the patron with respect
- Librarians will interpret questions differently

“I cannot give legal advice” should not be used as an excuse to not provide service.

## Phrases to Use or Avoid

- ✓ The law states...
- ✓ In general
- ✓ See this information from this source
- ✓ This may help answer your question
- ✓ This form is used for...
- ✓ Based on the information we have in the library...
- ✓ I am a librarian and can point you to information. I am not an attorney and can not give legal advice
- ✓ I don't know. Let me look into this and get back to you
- ✓ You will need to speak to an attorney to discuss your particular situation

- ✗ If it were me
- ✗ Let me fill that out for you
- ✗ Do this... and you are set
- ✗ My opinion
- ✗ Should
- ✗ That means
- ✗ I predict

**Wisconsin State Law Library**  
[wilawlibrary.gov](http://wilawlibrary.gov)



# Legal Research Resources

## **Self-Represented Litigation Network Public Library: What Public Librarians Can Do**

<https://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webjunction/03-1-Ethics.pdf>

## **Self-Represented Litigation Network**

<https://www.srln.org/node/545/srln-brief-law-library-ethics>

## **Access to justice: best practices for public law libraries**

<https://www.aallnet.org/gllsis/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/01/scll-guide5.pdf>

## **How law libraries are serving self-represented litigants across the country**

[https://www.aallnet.org/knwlctr\\_publegal/open-to-the-public-how-law-libraries-are-serving-self-represented-litigants-across-the-country/](https://www.aallnet.org/knwlctr_publegal/open-to-the-public-how-law-libraries-are-serving-self-represented-litigants-across-the-country/)

## **Law Libraries and Access to Justice**

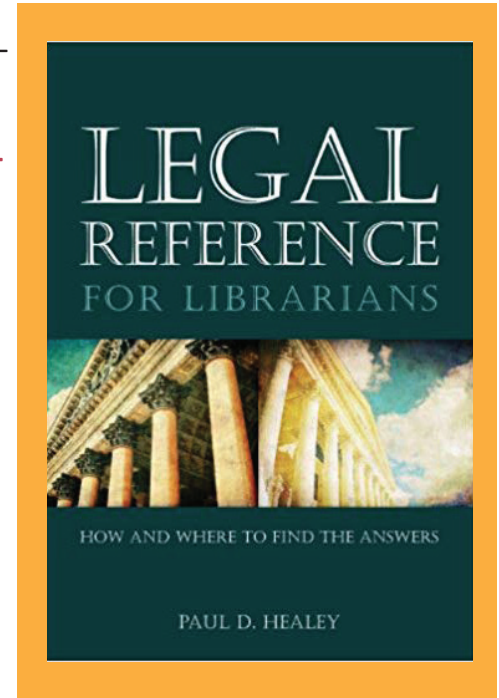
<https://www.aallnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/AccessToJusticeSpecialCommittee2014LawLibrariesAndAccessToJustice.pdf>

## **Legal Reference and the Unauthorized Practice of Law**

<http://docplayer.net/15627630-Legal-reference-and-the-unauthorized-practice-of-law-a-guide-for-minnesota-public-librarians.html>

## **Case Law Research with Google Scholar**

<https://wilawlibrary.gov/learn/tutorials/scholar.html>



## ***Serving the Wisconsin Supreme Court and State of Wisconsin***



Contact Wisconsin State Law Library staff for help any time.

[wsl.ref@wicourts.gov](mailto:wsl.ref@wicourts.gov)  
608-267-9696

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