



## LIBRARY PUBLIC USERS GUIDE

Welcome to the Charlotte School of Law Library! This guide will answer some of the questions that members of the public often have about using the Library and conducting legal research.

- [Where are you located?](#)
- [What are your public hours?](#)
- [Where is the library catalog?](#)
- [How do I find North Carolina forms?](#)
- [How do I find federal or state statutes?](#)
- [How do I find court cases?](#)
- [How can I get help with my legal matter?](#)
- Where can I find information on . . .
  - [Adoption and foster care?](#)
  - [Divorce?](#)
  - [Domestic violence?](#)
  - [Child custody and support?](#)
  - [Bankruptcy?](#)
  - [Debt collection and other consumer issues?](#)
  - [Job layoffs?](#)
  - [Health care?](#)
  - [Problems with a landlord or tenant?](#)
  - [Small claims court?](#)
  - [Worker's compensation?](#)

### Where are you located?

- 2145 Suttle Avenue
- Click [here](#) for driving directions.

### What are your public hours?

- 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday
- Each public patron is limited to one (1) library visit per week.
- Library closings will be announced on the [library web site](#).

### Where is the library catalog?

The library has an electronic catalog, fully searchable, that is available [here](#).

### How do I find North Carolina forms?

- [North Carolina court forms](#) – Search by form number or by title. Forms available in English or Spanish.
- Often, the courthouse staff will often tell you that you need a “motion to dismiss form” or a “counterclaim form.” These are not pre-printed court forms; they are documents that you or your attorney will have to create. The contents of the documents depend on the



circumstances of your case. The library has several books that contain examples of North Carolina documents.

- [Douglas' Forms](#)  
**Location:** Reference: Carolinas, KFN 7468 .D68 2005
  - [Thorp's North Carolina Trial Practice Forms](#)  
**Location:** Reference: Carolinas, KFN 7930 .A65
  - [North Carolina Criminal Trial Practice Forms 5d](#)  
**Location:** Reference: Carolinas, KFN 7975 .A65 P74 2003
- The library has a detailed guide on how to locate forms in the library. You can read the guide [here](#).

## **How do I find federal or state statutes?**

Federal statutes are laws that are passed by Congress and signed by the president. State statutes are passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor. Examples are the Fair Credit Reporting Act (federal statute) and the North Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act (state statute).

Click [here](#) to read a detailed guide on locating federal or state statutes.

## **How do I find court cases?**

The word “case” is often used interchangeably with “opinion” or “decision.” Opinions are written by appellate judges in the course of actual disputes. The opinions discuss the legal issues that the cases have raised. Important opinions—i.e., opinions that set precedents—are published in sets of books called reporters.

On the state level, reported cases generally come from the appellate courts—i.e., the court of appeals and the supreme court. Trial court cases are rarely reported. On the federal level, some cases from the trial courts, which are called U.S. District Courts, are reported. U.S. Circuit Courts are the intermediate appellate courts, and most of their opinions are reported. Finally, all the opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court are reported.

A detailed list of case reporters and their locations in the library is available [here](#). To read about how to use these reporters to find actual cases, click [here](#).

## **How can I get help with my legal matter?**

The North Carolina Bar Association operates a statewide [lawyer referral service](#). The Mecklenburg County Bar operates a [similar service](#) limited to Mecklenburg County. For a small fee, you are entitled to a **30-minute consultation** with an attorney. Other places to inquire about free or low-cost legal assistance are

- [Legal Aid of North Carolina](#)
- [Legal Services of Southern Piedmont](#)
- [Council for Children's Rights](#)
- [26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Self Serve Center](#)
- [Findlegalhelp.org](#)