

Iowa Legal Research

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Series Note

The Legal Research Series published by Carolina Academic Press includes titles from many states around the country. The goal of each book is to provide law students, practitioners, paralegals, college students, laypeople, and librarians with the essential elements of legal research in each state. Unlike more bibliographic texts, the Legal Research Series books seek to explain concisely both the sources of state law research and the process for conducting legal research effectively.

Foreword

Chief Justice Mark S. Cady
Iowa Supreme Court

Lawyers and law students endure years of formal education in a wide variety of subjects and are institutionally trained in the art of critical analysis and precise communication. These tools are refined for years following graduation, and they are tested outside the classroom with issues affecting citizens of our state every day. Of course, these trials in research can be motivated to excellence by the desire to more efficiently serve clients in order to make a living, and every lawyer in Iowa has an obligation to the client, the courts, and the profession to uphold the established standards of service to society. But Iowa lawyers have long been committed to providing legal service above and beyond the call of duty. When the rule of law is critically examined in each new factual circumstance, well-trained servants of the law can also be agents of change in our laws because they have a new understanding of the world in which we live. This ability to provide legal counsel that constantly challenges established principles is our strength as a community. It is only through a spirited commitment to resolving the legal issues presented in each case that our law develops over time. As advocates for this standard of practicing law, it is essential that the most effective method of performing legal research be the cornerstone of our practice.

Because effective legal research is so fundamental, a lawyer's education is not complete without it. For over one hundred years, the Iowa legal community has had the benefit of the Drake University Law School's legal research program, which has been at the forefront of both technological and methodological innovations. True to their reputations as dedicated legal research educators, Dean John Edwards

and Professors Sara Lowe, Karen Wallace, and Melissa Weresh have tirelessly worked to produce this invaluable guide for law students and Iowa lawyers. *Iowa Legal Research* is the first comprehensive research book that synthesizes various sources of Iowa law with the process necessary to isolate a research path among those sources and follow it confidently to its conclusion. I am honored to have the opportunity to introduce such an exemplary piece of the work done to advance Iowa legal research.

The book begins where all legal practice should: by keeping the client's problem central to the research process. As a result, the researcher's understanding of the issue will sharpen as the research evolves. Effective research does not always unveil a definitive answer to the problem that is presented like a treasure at the end of a rainbow; instead, effective research typically creates more need for research. This book identifies that the sustainable practice of legal research starts with the recognition that research and analysis are intertwined and their development is codependent. As the authors point out, "[l]egal research cannot be divorced from legal analysis." Yet, under the direction of this Iowa-specific guide, researchers in Iowa can begin the intricate process of research and analysis without first having to spend countless hours acquainting or reacquainting themselves with methods for finding the applicable sources of law.

The authors have left no practical stone unturned. Consistent with the practice in most other industries today, much of Iowans' legal work is done electronically. Researchers unfamiliar with local web hosts need not spend time attempting to assess the credibility of these sources on their own; this book includes reputable Iowa-specific online databases and websites for lawyers and law students looking for Iowa-specific practice aides at little or no charge. Additionally, this book presents information about researching legal ethics opinions and disciplinary actions in Iowa. Sources of law related to professional regulation can be particularly difficult to locate as a new attorney, but this thorough guide lightens the burden of the search considerably.

The legal community is enriched by the publication of this book, which gives law students, practitioners, and anyone seeking the sources of Iowa law a firm foundational tool for any research task that lies before them.

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