

# Federal Legal Research

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# Federal Legal Research

Second Edition

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## Series Note

This book complements the Legal Research Series published by Carolina Academic Press, which 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 jurisdiction. Unlike more bibliographic texts, the Legal Research Series books seek to explain concisely both the sources of legal research and the process for conducting legal research effectively.



## Preface and Acknowledgments

*Federal Legal Research* complements the state-specific books that comprise the Legal Research Series published by Carolina Academic Press. The book offers concise, accessible explanations of primary authority in the federal system, along with chapters on secondary sources, updating with citators, bill tracking and legislative history, and legal ethics and court rules. Similar to other books in the series, *Federal Legal Research* takes a process-oriented approach to research, discussing strategies and techniques for conducting American legal research both online and in print. While the focus of the book is federal law, state law resources are briefly mentioned in some chapters to highlight variations and to provide connections to the other books in the series.

The primary updates to this edition concern the changes to Lexis and Westlaw since the revised printing last year. Specifically, Lexis Advance has been overhauled and Westlaw Classic is scheduled to be discontinued before this book is printed. Please note that we use the terms “Lexis” and “Westlaw” generically to refer to various platforms of each. We use the specific terms “Lexis Advance,” “Lexis.com,” and “WestlawNext” when referring to those specific platforms. Other major changes from the first edition appeared in the 2014 revised printing; these changes centered on legislative history, where the Congress.gov site replaced THOMAS, and citator platforms.

One challenge in writing a book for both novices and experienced researchers is when and how to introduce new terms. The novice needs background that the experienced researcher would probably find unnecessary. We have taken two approaches. First, the index to this book includes a “Words and Phrases” entry with subentries to basic terms and indications of where the terms are defined in the text. On the pages indicated, the terms will be italicized to help the reader find them. Second, each chapter of the book includes numerous cross-references to discussions in other chapters. While we tried to keep these cross-references to a manageable number, we decided to err on the

side of inclusion to provide guidance for a novice who might be feeling overwhelmed.

As in the first edition, each author was responsible for the following chapters: Mary Algero—secondary sources, judicial systems and judicial opinions, case law research, and court rules and rules of professional responsibility; Spencer Simons—research techniques, statutory research, and bill tracking and legislative history; Suzanne Rowe—legal authority and the research process, and citators; Scott Childs—administrative law research; and Sarah Ricks—constitutional law research. As series editor, Suzanne Rowe took the lead in harmonizing the contents of the chapters and the voices of five authors.

We are grateful to many colleagues, librarians, research assistants, and professional support staff for their contributions to this work. We are especially grateful for the editorial and research assistance of Lauren Russell. Please note that each of the authors has published other books on related topics, and some of their earlier work is reflected here.