

Chapter 10

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES

Legal information resources geared toward the non-lawyer have changed dramatically since the previous edition of this book was published in 2011. At that time, [Nolo Press](#) was the primary source for books that might help the novice legal researcher interpret the legalese of primary law materials (i.e., statutes, cases and regulations) or learn how to proceed in handling a legal matter (e.g., filing a lawsuit, responding to a summons, establishing copyright protection, changing your name, etc.). Nolo Press continues to dominate the self-help arena. However, thanks to the Internet, what is available online not only supplements, but often replaces, what is available in print. Now, one can often find step-by-step guidance from authoritative sources online.

This chapter consists of an annotated, selective bibliography of legal self-help books and websites aimed at providing guidance to the non-attorney and non-law librarian in California. For California resources outside the self-help arena, please see Chapter 5: California Law and Chapter 6: Bibliography of California Resources of this publication.

The books and Web sites listed below have proven reliable over the years. They are arranged under the following subject headings:

[Art Law](#)

[Bankruptcy](#)

[Business Law](#)

Includes corporations, limited liability companies and partnerships, small businesses and nonprofits

[Civil Procedure & Litigation](#)

Includes enforcing judgments, superior & appellate court practice, personal injury, traffic and small claims procedure, troublesome neighbors and their pets

[Consumer & Individual Rights](#)

Includes right of patients, privacy, and identity theft

[Contract Law](#)

Includes independent contractors and forms for personal use

[Copyright, Trademarks & Patent Law](#)

[Criminal Law](#)

[Employment Law](#)

Includes workers' compensation, family and medical leave, and discrimination

[Estate Planning](#)

Includes wills and trusts, probate

[Family Law](#)

Includes marriage, divorce, unmarried couples, children, adoption, guardianship, conservatorship, elder law, gay rights

[Financial Planning](#)

Includes credit and debt collection

[Free Forms](#)

[Immigration Law](#)

[Landlord-Tenant Law](#)

[Lawyers](#)

Includes attorney-client relationship, directories, bar associations, lawyer referral

[Legal Research](#)

[Public Records Data](#)

Includes trial verdicts, dockets, registrar records

[Real Property Law](#)

Includes mortgages and foreclosures

[Social Security](#)

Includes Medicare

[Tax Law](#)

[Veterans' Rights & Benefits](#)

Proceed with caution: Remember that laws are continually changing. Publishers attempt to keep their resources current, but it is sometimes beyond their control. The books and websites listed are current as of the publication date of this guide. Because many public libraries have [Nolo Press](#) books in their collections, please consult your local library catalog or call the reference desk. In any case, the books included in this bibliography should be available in any large county law library (see Appendix C for locations) or through your local bookstores.

Art Law

[California Lawyers for the Arts](#). Offices in Santa Monica, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Berkeley.

For a small fee, attorneys will provide a 30-minute consultation with clients on topics of interest to artists (i.e., copyright, contract drafting and negotiation, independent contractors, and mediation and arbitration). If appropriate, a client may apply for assistance in CLA's pro bono program.

Crawford, Tad. [Business and Legal Forms for Fine Artists](#), 4th ed. New York, NY: Allworth Press, 2014.

Includes arbitration agreements, promissory notes, and general releases. Also includes various sample contracts, as well as step-by-step instructions and checklists.

Crawford, Tad. [Legal Guide for the Visual Artist](#), 5th ed. New York, NY: Allworth Press, 2010.

Provides a comprehensive overview of the legal issues faced by visual artists. The book covers: copyright, contracts, censorship, moral rights, sales taxes, estate planning, museums, collecting, grants, graffiti art, privacy and the visual artists, and online copyright issues.

Duboff, Leonard D. [The Law \(in Plain English\) for Photographers](#), 3rd ed. New York, NY: Allworth Press, 2010.

Intended to answer the professional photographer's business and legal questions. Topics include: copyright, contracts and remedies, defamation and libel, censorship, taxes, estate planning, leases and insurance. There is also information on right of publicity laws protecting images of deceased celebrities, post-9/11 restrictions on photographing in "sensitive" environments, and online registration procedures at the Copyright Office.

Fishman, Stephen. [*The Public Domain: How to Find & Use Copyright-Free Writings, Music, Art & More*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Helps find and identify creative works that are not protected by copyright.

Includes new developments in international copyright.

Stim, Richard. [*Getting Permission: Using and Licensing Copyright-Protected Materials Online & Off*](#), 6th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Discusses how to use copyrighted materials, including information on public domain, fair use, academic permission, and the use of trademarks. Includes agreements for acquiring authorization to use copyrighted materials.

Stim, Richard. [*Music Law: How to Run Your Band's Business*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2015.

How to book performances, copyright song lyrics, sign contracts, write a band partnership agreement, trademark a band name, sell music, find a manager, and much more.

Bankruptcy

O'Neill, Cara. [*The New Bankruptcy: Will it Work For You?*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Determine whether you qualify for bankruptcy, which debts would be included, how repayment plans work, and how bankruptcy would affect your property.

Includes worksheets, checklists, and sample forms.

O'Neill, Cara & Albin Renauer. [*How to File for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy*](#), 20th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Information on when and how to file your own bankruptcy. Gives details on exempt assets and non-dischargeable debts, what you get to keep and what you have to give back, how bankruptcy will affect your credit rating in the future, and whether or not bankruptcy is the proper course for you to take. All forms and instructions necessary for filing are included.

O'Neill, Cara. [*Chapter 13 Bankruptcy: Keep Your Property & Repay Debts Over Time*](#), 14th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Learn how to determine if you qualify for Chapter 13 bankruptcy, stop a foreclosure, and construct a repayment plan.

U.S. Courts, [Bankruptcy Forms](#).

These Bankruptcy Forms are provided on the U. S. Courts Web site. The forms are fillable and may be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat. Many forms include instructions and committee notes.

Business Law

American Bar Association. [The American Bar Association Legal Guide for Small Business](#), 2nd ed. New York, NY: Random House Reference, 2010.

Guide to starting a small business, including initial set up and financing, employment laws, safety issues and insurance, extending credit, franchising, copyrights and trademarks, business taxes, retirement, and selling the business.

[Better Business Bureau](#).

Locate your local better business bureau, get information or file a complaint about a company, etc.

Bray, Ilona. [Effective Fundraising for Nonprofits: Real-World Strategies That Work](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Explains how to work with individual donors, plan events, solicit grants, start a side business, and more.

California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development,
[California Business Portal](#).

Step-by-step instructions for starting a business in California.

Fishman, Stephen & Ronald J. Barrett. [Nonprofit Fundraising Registration: The 50-State Guide](#), Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press. Updated semi-annually: January and July.

Discusses fundraising registration. Includes information on exemptions, registering in and contact information for other states, filing requirements, and a tutorial on the Unified Registration Statement.

Mancuso, Anthony. [The Corporate Records Handbook: Meetings, Minutes & Resolutions](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Contains forms and instructions related to corporate, shareholders, directors, and paper meetings; participant list; shareholder proxy; and resolutions, etc.

Mancuso, Anthony. [*Form Your Own Limited Liability Company*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2015.

How to set up a limited liability company in any state, including how to choose a valid name, prepare and file articles of organization, and manage an LLC.

Mancuso, Anthony. [*How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation: A Step-by-Step Guide to Forming a 501\(c\)\(3\) Nonprofit in Any State*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Includes complete instructions for obtaining federal 501(c) (3) tax exemption and for qualifying for public charity status.

Mancuso, Anthony. [*How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation in California*](#), 16th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2015.

Includes complete instructions for obtaining federal 501(c) (3) tax exemption and for qualifying for public charity status. Discusses California's specific legal and tax requirements.

Mancuso, Anthony. [*How to Form Your Own California Corporation*](#), 17th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Contains information on forming a corporation, issuing and selling stock, tax issues, and post-incorporation paperwork.

Mancuso, Anthony. [*LLC or Corporation? How to Choose the Right Form for Your Business*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Provides easy-to-understand explanations of the basics of business entities, personal liability under different business entities, differing tax treatments, converting a business from one entity to another, and conducting business out-of-state.

Mancuso, Anthony. [*Nolo's Quick LLC: All You Need to Know About Limited Liability Companies*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Essential information for business owners in any state: how LLCs are formed by filing articles of organization with the state, the required ongoing legal and tax paperwork, choosing between a member-run and manager-run LLC. Includes URLs and phone numbers for required LLC forms.

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- Mancuso, Anthony. [*Your Limited Liability Company: An Operating Manual*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.
Advises business owners on how to maintain the legal validity of their LLC, by providing tips on preparation of management minutes and how to fill out an LLC records book. State LLC statutes and state filing office locations are included. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.
- Mancuso, Anthony & Bethany K. Laurence. [*Business Buyout Agreements: Plan Now for All Types of Business Transitions*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.
Provides guidance on the creation of buy-sell agreements. Includes worksheets and sample agreements.
- McKeever, Mike. [*How to Write a Business Plan*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.
Learn how to estimate operating expenses, prepare cash flow, create profit and loss forecasts, determine assets and liabilities, and present your plan to lenders and investors.
- Pakroo, Peri H. [*The Small Business Start-Up Kit for California*](#), 12th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.
Explains how to choose a business structure, write a business plan, file the right forms, draft contracts, manage finances, and file taxes. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.
- Pakroo, Peri H. [*Starting & Building a Nonprofit: A Practical Guide*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press. 2017.
Includes step-by-step instructions on how to structure a nonprofit, choose a federal tax-exempt status, create a mission statement, and develop a strategic plan and initial budget, and much more.
- Steingold, David M. [*Nolo's Guide to Single-Member LLCs: How to Form and Run Your Single-Member Limited Liability Company*](#). 1st ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press. 2016.
Provides an overview of how to form, fund, and manage an SMLLC. Includes a sample operating agreement and consent forms.
- Steingold, Fred S. [*Legal Forms for Starting & Running a Small Business*](#), 10th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.
Contains over sixty forms covering topics including business contracts, hiring employees, trade secrets, non-compete agreements, borrowing and lending money, leasing space, and bylaws.

Steingold, Fred S. [*Legal Guide for Starting and Running a Small Business*](#), 15th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Includes information on how to get licenses and permits, how to buy or sell a business, how to insure your business, how to hire independent contractors, how to understand small business tax law, and many other day-to-day issues.

Steingold, Fred S. [*The Complete Guide to Buying a Business*](#), 4th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2015.

Learn how to negotiate a payment plan, prepare a sales agreement, and protect yourself from existing liabilities. Includes more than twenty forms.

Warner, Ralph & Denis Clifford. [*Form a Partnership: The Complete Legal Guide*](#), 10th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Provides an overview of partnership agreements, buy-outs, partnership disputes, and taxes. A Nolo webpage designed for the book includes partnership agreement forms.

Civil Procedure & Litigation

[American Arbitration Association.](#)

A non-profit provider of dispute resolution services. The website has news, rules for commercial and civil arbitration, and links to additional resources on mediation.

Bergman, Paul and Albert Moore. [*Nolo's Deposition Handbook*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Explains how to prepare for a deposition, respond to questions, and ask the right questions.

Bergman, Paul & Sara J. Bergman-Barrett. [*Represent Yourself in Court: How to Prepare & Try a Winning Case*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

How to handle a civil court case from start to finish. Includes analyzing whether you have a good case, lining up witnesses, how to present testimony, how to cross-examine opponents, and many other aspects of litigation.

Brown, David. [*Fight Your Ticket and Win in California*](#), 16th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2015.

This book helps readers prepare and present evidence, argue before a judge, and

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cross-examine a police officer's testimony. It appears that Nolo no longer publishes this title, so check for the last edition at a library.

California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District. [*Civil Appellate Practices and Procedures for the Self-Represented*](#). Los Angeles, CA: California Court of Appeal, 2016.

Step-by-step manual to appealing a civil case in the California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District. The appendices include a timeline and glossary. The final section of the book contains sample forms and instructions for filling them out. The self-help manual (linked above) may be downloaded for free in its entirety or individual chapters viewed on the [California Courts](#) Web site.

California Department of Consumer Affairs. [*The Small Claims Court: A Guide to Its Practical Use*](#).

This guide is available at the Small Claims Court Clerk's Office, by calling the Consumer Affairs' Publications Hotline at (800) 952-5210, in PDF at the link above (click the words Printer Friendly Version), or by sending a [Publication Order Form](#) to Department of Consumer Affairs, Office of Publications, Design & Editing (PDE), 1625 N. Market Blvd., Suite N-119, Sacramento, CA 95834. The Department of Consumer Affairs has publications on a variety of concerns to consumers (i.e., contracts, credit, hiring contractors, smog, etc.).

Goren, Julie A. [*California Civil Litigation and Discovery*](#), (Litigation by the Numbers Substantive Companion). Los Angeles, CA: Lawdable Press, 2018.

According to the publisher's description, this book "takes a substantive approach to litigation, e.g., what the pleadings should say..., rather than what they [should] look like." Alternatively, refer to *Litigation by the Numbers* (directly below) for up-to-date information on format and filing and service deadlines.

Goren, Julie A. [*Litigation by the Numbers*](#), Los Angeles, CA: Lawdable Press, 2018.

This loose-leaf is designed to walk the reader through the lifecycle of a California state court civil lawsuit. It provides step-by-step instructions on how to handle a case from filing all the way to enforcement of a judgment.

Jordan, Cora and Emily Doskow. [*Neighbor Law: Fences, Trees, Boundaries & Noise*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

This book answers basic questions about legal issues that often trouble neighbors: fences, trees, boundaries, and noise.

Judicial Council of California, [Self-Help Center](#).

The Self-Help Center's assists researchers in "find[ing] legal information and free or low-cost legal help." The site links to Common Legal Topics like Expungement and Going to Court. It also lists more topics alphabetically and is searchable. The Self-Help Center does not provide legal advice.

Matthews, Joseph. [How to Win Your Personal Injury Claim](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2015.

Use this resource to learn how to protect your rights after an accident, how to evaluate what the claim is worth, how to negotiate a fair settlement, etc.

Randolph, Mary. [Every Dog's Legal Guide: A Must-Have Book for Your Owner](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2012.

Discusses dog owner liability, animal cruelty, estate planning, and licensing issues. It appears that Nolo no longer publishes this title, so check for the last edition at a library. Another option might be [Neighbor Law](#), described below.

U. S. Courts, [Post Judgment Interest Rate](#).

Access rates from the most recent auction of 52-week Treasury bills.

U.S. District Court, [Legal Help Center Templates & Packets](#).

Developed by the Justice and Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco, the packets include instructions and templates (blank forms) to help pro se patrons proceed in the federal Northern District Court of California. The list of resources includes a link to a Legal Research Guide for Pro Se Litigants.

U.S. District Court, [Representing Yourself in Federal Court: A Handbook for Pro Se Litigants](#).

This 76-page guide provides civil procedure information, including a glossary, for self-represented litigants who are part of a civil case in federal court. Scroll down the page to download the entire guide in PDF format.

Warner, Ralph. [Everybody's Guide to Small Claims Court in California](#), 17th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

This book guides you step-by-step through small claims procedure, providing practical information on how to evaluate your case, file and serve the papers, prepare and present the case, and then collect when you win. Several types of cases are discussed, including landlord-tenant and vehicle accident.

Consumer & Individual Rights

[American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU). 125 Broad St., 18th Floor, New York, NY 10004. (212) 549-2500.

The website identifies resources on a multitude of legal-based individual rights concerns; i.e., rights of the poor, families, Native Americans, women, and LGBT people; and rights related to immigration, voting, criminal justice, and privacy.

[California Department of Consumer Affairs](#). 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite N-112, Sacramento, CA 95834. (800) 952-5210.

Includes a license search database and information about filing a complaint, including a sample complaint letter.

California Department of Justice. [Legal Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Justice, 2003 (with 2006 updates).

This eighty-five-page PDF discusses California and federal laws that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.

California Secretary of State, [Elections and Voter Information](#).

Includes information about registering to vote and voting rights, as well as statistics, proposed regulations, campaign finance, and other election and voting related resources.

[Consumer Action Handbook](#). Pueblo, CO: USA.gov, 2017. (152 pages)

Besides the Consumer Action Handbook, USA.gov provides a [Consumer Issues](#) page, which contains instructions on how (and where) to file a complaint, and links to information regarding banking, cars, insurance, recalled products and more, in the context of consumer protection. To locate information in Spanish, click the [GobiernoUSA.gov](#) link at the bottom of the page.

[Disability Rights Advocates](#).

Nonprofit disability rights legal center that represents people whose civil rights have been violated. The website includes California-based resources on topics ranging from lawyer referral to housing and employment discrimination.

[Federal Trade Commission.](#)

The FTC “is the only federal agency with both consumer protection and competition jurisdiction in broad sectors of the economy.” Its work is performed by the Bureaus of Consumer Protection, Competition and Economics and aided by the Office of General Counsel and seven regional offices. Under the Policy tab the website contains a database of advisory opinions, federal register notices, policy statements, and more. The [FTC Complaint Assistant](#) will help you file a consumer complaint.

[Lambda Legal.](#)

Lambda Legal is the “oldest and largest national legal organization whose mission is to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and those with HIV.” The website includes a state-by-state breakdown of legal rights in the areas of employment, public accommodation, and marriage.

Loftsgordon, Amy & Cara O'Neill. [*Credit Repair: Make a Plan, Improve Your Credit, Avoid Scams*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Learn how to rebuild credit, avoid identity theft, and add positive information to your credit report. Includes a sample letter to negotiate with creditors and forms to fix errors in your credit report.

[National Consumer Law Center.](#)

This non-profit corporation is an advocate for “consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people.” Its web site has a wealth of information on issues (e.g., credit cards) and projects (e.g., domestic violence survivors), which can be used as guidance for the public and other advocates. According to the agency’s Web site, attorneys from all over the world view the center’s books as authority for consumer law.

[National Immigration Law Center.](#)

NILC is dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of low-income immigrants. The website includes in-depth information about DACA, immigration enforcement, workers’ rights, and immigration reform.

[Native American Rights Fund.](#)

Nonprofit organization that provides legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide. Their website links to resources, such as the National Indian Law Library.

Contract Law

Editors of Nolo. [*101 Law Forms for Personal Use*](#), 10th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Available as tear-outs and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book, the forms include bills of sale, promissory notes, wills, power of attorney forms, contracts, releases, and notices.

Fishman, Stephen. [*Consultant & Independent Contractor Agreements*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

For those contracting their services to others or hiring independent contractors. Instructions on how to put your agreement in writing, define a project's scope, components and duration, satisfy IRS requirements, and avoid disputes. Includes forms and electronic agreements in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Fishman, Stephen. [*Working for Yourself: Law & Taxes for Independent Contractors, Freelancers & Gig Workers of All Types*](#), 10th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Includes sample agreements, forms, lists of state sales tax agencies and state offices that provide small business help. Also covers insuring your business, record keeping, and pricing your services.

Stim, Richard. [*Contracts: The Essential Business Desk Reference*](#), 2nd ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Defines common contract terms, discusses the importance of contractual clauses and how to change them, and focuses on the legal rules for electronic contracts. Also includes sample contracts and clauses.

Copyright, Trademarks & Patent Law

Fishman, Stephen. [*The Copyright Handbook: What Every Writer Needs to Know*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Provides step-by-step instructions and forms for protecting all types of written works under U.S. and international copyright law. Covers fair use and copyright infringement.

Fishman, Stephen. [*Trademark: Legal Care for Your Business & Product Name*](#), 11th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

This book is designed for the small business and shows how to trademark the name of a service or product. Covers procedures for conducting a trademark search and registering a trademark, as well as forms and instructions.

Hitchcock, David. [*Patent Searching Made Easy: How to Do Patent Searches on the Internet and in the Library*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Includes information on how to verify the patent status of an idea, search Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries, and use online patent search services.

Pressman, David. [*Patent It Yourself*](#), 19th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Step-by-step procedures for protecting, patenting, and selling an invention. Covers use, licensing, and marketing advice. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Pressman, David & Jack Lo. [*How to Make Patent Drawings: Save Thousands of Dollars and Do It With a Camera and Computer!*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2015.

Learn how to create a patent drawing that will comply with the rules of the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Pressman, David & Richard Stim. [*Nolo's Patents for Beginners*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Explanations of patent principles, and instructions on how to document an invention, acquire patent rights, determine patent ownership, and find patent information. Provides sample forms and letters and a glossary of terms.

Stim, Richard. [*Getting Permission: Using & Licensing Copyright-Protected Materials Online & Off*](#), 6th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

This book includes agreements for the authorized use of text, photographs, artwork, and music, as well as worksheets, licenses, and permissions, which are available on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Stim, Richard. [*Patent, Copyright & Trademark: An Intellectual Property Desk Reference*](#), 15th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Discusses issues such as who owns creative works and how to protect ownership-rights, resolve intellectual property disputes, and transfer rights to others.

[U.S. Copyright Office.](#)

The Copyright Office Web site provides copyright laws, regulations, forms, legislation, and related links to GPO Access, and WIPO and URAA agreements. U.S. Copyright Office records are searchable at this web site from 1978 to date, including COHM (all materials except serials and documents), COHD (documents), and COHS (serials). For the period 1891 to 1978, check the *Catalog of Copyright Entries* available at many larger public libraries. The Copyright Office Web site cautions users about the inconclusiveness and exceptions in conducting copyright investigations. Many public libraries are equipped to assist users in searching copyright records, and the office will provide searches and other records for a fee set by statute.

[U.S. Patent & Trademark Office.](#)

The USPTO's official site provides instructions on how to search for patents and trademarks and apply for patent and trademark rights. Patent grants are searchable in full text since 1976; patent applications are searchable from March 15, 2001. The trademark electronic application system (TEAS) allows online application filing through e-TEAS or PRINTEAS if the form cannot be filed electronically. To discover if a trademark is previously registered electronically, select TESS (U.S. Trademark Electronic Search System) from the home page of the Patent and Trademark Office. TESS contains more than 3 million pending, registered, and dead federal trademarks.

Criminal Law

Bergman, Paul & Sara J. Berman. [The Criminal Law Handbook: Know Your Rights, Survive the System](#), 15th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Explains how the system works, including arrests, booking, preliminary hearings, bail, arraignment, plea bargains, and sentencing.

Judicial Council of California, [California Courts Self-Help Center for Criminal Law](#).

Describes criminal procedure, explains how to clean up your criminal record, provides links to forms, etc.

MacKay, Heather and the Prison Law Office. [*The California State Prisoners Handbook: Everything You Need to Know about Prison and Parole Law*](#), 4th ed. San Quentin, CA: The Prison Law Office, 2008 (with 2014 supplement).

Discusses in detail the laws governing prisoner rights and the policies and practices of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Also includes sample forms and model pleadings.

Prison Law Office. [*State Habeas Corpus Procedure: A Manual for California Prisoners*](#). San Quentin, CA: The Prison Law Office, 2008.

Twenty-nine page description of the steps in the California state habeas corpus process. Includes a checklist of pleadings to submit to the court and documents to submit in response to the court, and sample court pleadings. The California Courts Web site links to a form for a [Petition of Writ of Habeas Corpus](#).

Employment Law

Ball, Christopher A. [*California Workers' Comp: How to Take Charge When You're Injured on the Job*](#), 11th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Outlines steps in filing a claim, dealing with insurance companies, presenting a case at a hearing, and rating a disability using the workers' comp rating manual.

[California Labor and Workforce Development Agency](#).

Includes information on workforce oversight, appeals and benefits (including eligibility for unemployment insurance and disability), and workforce development.

DelPo, Amy & Lisa Guerin. [*Dealing with Problem Employees: How to Manage Performance and Personality Issues in the Workplace*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Find out how to recognize a problem employee, investigate complaints, and suspend or fire employees.

Guerin, Lisa. [*The Essential Guide to Workplace Investigations: A Step-by-Step Guide to Handling Employee Complaints & Problems*](#), 4th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Includes a ten-step plan for resolving workplace complaints, such as harassment, discrimination, violence, and employee theft. Also includes forms, checklists, and sample policies for states.

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Guerin, Lisa & Amy DelPo. [*Create Your Own Employee Handbook: A Legal & Practical Guide for Employers*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Covers at-will employment, hiring, payroll, performance evaluations, discrimination, complaints, leave, and discipline.

Guerin, Lisa & Deborah C. England. [*The Essential Guide to Family & Medical Leave*](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Discusses the Family Medical Leave Act, including eligibility qualifications, quantity, and notice obligations. Links to a Nolo webpage with checklists, forms, and worksheets.

Guerin, Lisa & Amy DelPo. [*The Essential Guide to Federal Employment Laws*](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Legal topics covered include the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Equal Pay Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Mader-Clark, Margie. [*The Job Description Handbook*](#), 3rd ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2013. This book helps employers create job descriptions that are useful throughout the employee's tenure, as a means for hiring and evaluating employees' job performances.

Repa, Barbara Kate. [*Your Rights in the Workplace*](#), 11th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Discusses illegal firings, how to challenge job loss, privacy, safety, testing, harassment, discrimination, and worker's compensation.

Rosenfeld, David A., Miles E. Locker, and Nina G. Fendel. [*California Workers' Rights: A Manual of Job Rights, Protections and Remedies*](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: UC Berkeley Labor Center, 2016. [Chapter 1](#) is free online.

Describes California and federal legal protections for workers, focusing on: rights during the hiring process, investigations, police records, wages and hours, benefits, discrimination, health and safety, workers' compensation, union organizing, whistleblower protections, discharge, and discipline.

Steingold, Fred S. [*The Employer's Legal Handbook: Manage Your Employees & Workplace Effectively*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

This handbook includes information related to hiring, personnel practices, wages, benefits, OSHA requirements, discrimination, termination, and relevant state laws.

[UC Berkeley Labor Center](#).

"[P]ublic service and outreach program of the UC Berkeley Institute for Research on Labor and Employment... that conducts research and education on issues related to labor and employment." Topics covered by the website include black workers, immigrants, minimum wage law, workers' rights, labor in China, and retirement security.

Estate Planning

Barnes, Richard. *Estate Planning for Blended Families: Providing for Your Spouse & Children in a Second Marriage*, 1st ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2009.

Provides information on estate and gift taxes in a second marriage, choosing executors, trustees, and guardians, and working with lawyers, financial planners, and other experts. Includes sample estate plans, current tax information for your state, and the latest information about which federal and state laws apply to you. It appears that Nolo no longer publishes this title, so check for it at a Library.

Clifford, Denis. [*Estate Planning Basics*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Learn how to choose a beneficiary, and create a will or living trust. The book also discusses probate-avoidance and estate tax reduction methods.

Clifford, Denis. [*Make Your Own Living Trust*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

How to avoid probate through the use of living trusts. Explains how living trusts work, how to create the trust and transfer property to it. Includes instructions and forms needed to create a basic living trust, a marital life estate trust, and a back-up will. Not applicable in Louisiana. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Clifford, Denis. [*Quick & Legal Will Book*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Provides forms and step-by-step instructions to make a basic will. Topics include naming beneficiaries, choosing a guardian, setting up a trust, naming an executor, finalizing a will, and changing or revoking a will.

Clifford, Denis. [*Plan Your Estate*](#), 14th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Detailed information about the many aspects of estate planning. Includes information on estate and gift taxes, trusts, durable powers of attorney, living wills, funerals and burials. Not applicable to the state of Louisiana.

CHAPTER 10: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES

Cullen, Melanie & Shae Irving. [*Get It Together: Organize Your Records So Your Family Won't Have To*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Shows you how to keep track of instructions for survivors, passwords, final arrangements, estate planning documents, employment records, insurance policies, tax records, retirement accounts, government benefits, and real estate records.

Irving, Shae. [*Living Wills and Powers of Attorney for California*](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Provides step-by-step instructions for the creation of a living will, a durable power of attorney, and a do-not-resuscitate order. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Nissley, Julia & Lisa Fialco. [*How to Probate an Estate in California*](#), 24th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Written for the layperson that is responsible for guiding an estate through the probate process. Explains how to read a will, handle probate paperwork, collect benefits owed to the estate, pay bills and taxes and distribute property.

Randolph, Mary. [*8 Ways to Avoid Probate*](#), 12th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

This book discusses payable-on-death accounts, naming beneficiaries, small estates, joint ownership of property, living trusts, and making gifts.

Randolph, Mary. [*The Executor's Guide: Settling a Loved One's Estate or Trust*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

This guide helps you understand legal procedures and terminology, including claiming benefits; making sense of wills, taxes, probate court, and trusts; and researching state laws.

Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles. [*Wills, Estates, and Trusts*](#).

Contains instructions and forms related to probate. Check the Superior Court website for the relevant jurisdiction if you reside outside of Los Angeles County.

Urbatsch, Kevin & Michele Fuller. [*Special Needs Trusts: Protect Your Child's Financial Future*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Learn how to leave money for a disabled loved one without jeopardizing government benefits. Special trusts can pay for things like annual checkups, transportation, insurance, and rehabilitation.

Family Law

American Bar Association. [*You and Your Aging Parents: The American Bar Association Guide to Legal, Financial, and Health Care Issues*](#). New York, NY: Random House Reference, 2009.

Covers the social issues faced by family caregivers in a question- and-answer format. Topics covered include housing options, power of attorney, mental health concerns, and taking care of the caregiver. It appears the ABA no longer publishes this title so check for it at a Library.

California Department of Child Support Services. [*Child Support Handbook*](#). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Child Support Services, 2012.

This thirty-six page booklet provides general information about California's child support services program and child support laws.

[Center for Families, Children & the Courts \(CFCC\)](#). Contains links to publications on topics such as child support, delinquency, domestic violence, and self-represented litigants. According to the website's FAQ section, "The primary purpose of the CFCC is to maximize the effectiveness of court services for children and families." Contact information: 455 Golden Gate Ave., 6th Fl., San Francisco, CA 94102-3660; phone number: 415-865-7739; e-mail: cfcc@jud.ca.gov.

Doskow, Emily & Frederick Hertz. [*A Legal Guide for Lesbian & Gay Couples*](#), 19th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

This book covers important legal aspects of living and working together as a gay/lesbian couple. Straightforward information explains the legal options and alternatives of child custody and visitation rights; relating to former spouses; foster children and adoption; buying and selling houses; transferring deeds; dividing property; living-together arrangements; and planning for death. Included are sample letters, forms and agreements. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Doskow, Emily. [*Nolo's Essential Guide to Divorce*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Helps you "understand the divorce process," "work with mediators or lawyers," "avoid expensive and painful court battles," figure out alimony, establish child custody and visitation, determine child support, divide money and property, and "draft[] a marital settlement agreement." Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

CHAPTER 10: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES

Doskow, Emily and Marcia Stewart. *The Legal Answer Book for Families*, 2nd ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2014.

A reference book that includes an overview of the laws that affect families, answers to everyday legal questions, and a collection of family law rules and resources, with details for all 50 states. It appears that Nolo no longer publishes this title so check for the last edition at a Library.

Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law. [*California Family Law Basics*](#).

Manual to the current forms in California dissolution and paternity cases.

Hegland, Kenney F. and Robert B. Fleming. [*New Times, New Challenges: Law and Advice for Savvy Seniors and Their Families*](#). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010.

The first part of the book deals with living wills and the aging process. The second part of the book is divided into six sections, including retirement, family matters, elder abuse, estate planning, disability and death, and getting help.

Hertz, Frederick and Emily Doskow. [*Making It Legal: A Guide to Same-Sex Marriage, Domestic Partnerships & Civil Unions*](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

A guide to same-sex relationship laws in the United States. Reviews the issues that influence the decision to marry and breaks down the complex and ever-changing rules of same-sex relationship laws.

Hertz, Frederick & Lina Guillen. [*Living Together: A Legal Guide for Unmarried Couples*](#), 16th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

This book includes topics such as “the legality of living together, having and raising children,... ownership agreements,” and getting authorization to make medical decisions for a partner. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Judicial Council of California. [*Going to Court Without a Lawyer: Handbook for Litigants – A Guide for Handling Uncontested Divorce and Legal Separation*](#). San Francisco, CA:

Judicial Council of California, 2015.

Explains the court process and legal forms needed for an uncontested divorce, legal separation, or annulment. [79-page PDF]

Judicial Council of California. [*Families & Children*](#).

Informational website devoted to topics such as child custody, guardianship, and adoption. Each topic includes instructions, forms, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Matthews, Joseph L. [*Long-Term Care: How to Plan & Pay for It*](#), 11th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Learn how to assess long-term care insurance, arrange home care, choose a nursing facility, consider options beyond nursing homes, use Medicare and Medicaid, protect your assets, and avoid elder fraud.

Sedano, Lisa & Emily Doskow. [*How to Change Your Name in California*](#), 14th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2014.

This book is aimed at people who wish to change their names, return to their former names after divorce, alter their children's names, obtain new ID documents related to a name change, or change their gender designation. Includes the tear-out forms and instructions necessary for the court petition and change of name. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Sherman, Ed. [*How to Manage a Contested Divorce in California in 2017*](#). 15th ed. Santa Cruz, CA: Nolo Press Occidental, 2017. Covers cases that are gently contested to those that are flat-out wars (with or without an attorney). Explains how to understand and plan your case, how to get information from the other side, how to respond to legal action, and how to select and supervise an attorney if you need or want one. Includes a CD-ROM with forms, pleadings, codes, and more.

Siegel, Lawrence M. [*The Complete IEP Guide: How to Advocate for Your Special Ed Child*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Addresses how to understand your child's rights and special education eligibility rules and assessments; collect school records; develop a blueprint of programs and services; research alternatives; prepare for IEP meetings; and resolve disputes with your school district. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Siegel, Lawrence M. [*Nolo's IEP Guide: Learning Disabilities*](#), 7th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Learn about your child's rights to an education, and learn how to present an argument for your child's eligibility for special education, how to develop IEP goals, how to resolve disputes, and how to do legal research on learning-disability issues. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

CHAPTER 10: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES

Stoner, Katherine E. & Shae Irving. [*Prenuptial Agreements: How to Write a Fair & Lasting Contract*](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Explains “whether a prenup is right for your relationship,” how to decide what a prenup should include, creating a draft agreement and turning it into a contract, and communication strategies. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Stoner, Katherine E. [*Divorce Without Court: A Guide to Mediation & Collaborative Divorce*](#), 5th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

This book explains how mediation works, how collaborative divorce works, how to increase opportunities for settlement, and formalizing an agreement in writing. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles. [Self Help](#).

Includes instructions and forms related to adoption, child custody, child support, divorce, separation, and spousal support. Check the Superior Court website for the relevant jurisdiction if you reside outside of Los Angeles County. A list of superior courts in California is available [here](#).

Woodhouse, Violet. [*Divorce & Money: How to Make the Best Financial Decisions During Divorce*](#), 12th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Discusses how to “avoid tax problems, handle alimony and child support,” make decisions about property, protect yourself against misuse of joint accounts, divide debts, reduce investment risk, and understand how a court evaluates assets.

Zemmelman, Mimi. [*Building a Parenting Agreement that Works: Child Custody Agreements Step by Step*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2014.

Presents parenting issues and solutions, including issues related to medical care, education, religion, living arrangements, holidays, and money. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Financial Planning

Loftsgordon, Amy & Cara O'Neill. [*Credit Repair: Make a Plan, Improve Your Credit, Avoid Scams*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Discusses how to read and correct mistakes on a credit report, how to protect your Social Security number, and how to work with creditors. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Loftsgordon, Amy & Cara O'Neill. [*Solve Your Money Troubles: Strategies to Get Out of Debt and Stay That Way*](#), 16th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Discusses types of debt, working with creditors and debt collectors, bankruptcy, and credit discrimination. The book comes with access to a Nolo webpage with worksheets, checklists, and forms.

Free Forms

California Franchise Tax Board, [Forms and Publications](#).

Includes forms for the current and previous years. Browse by name, number and topic. Forms are available in Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese.

California Judicial Council, [Browse All Forms](#).

Users can access the Judicial Council forms by category, by number, or by name. All forms are provided in PDF, may be downloaded, and some can be filled out electronically.

California Secretary of State, Business Programs Division, [Forms, Samples & Fees](#).

Samples and forms are in PDF format and are drafted to meet the minimum statutory filing requirements. Includes forms related to business entities, notary public, special filings, trademarks and service marks, and the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC).

FindLaw, [Forms and Contracts](#).

FindLaw provides links to sample legal forms and business contracts. Browse by type of form, industry, or company name. Scroll down the page for federal and state court forms.

FindLaw, [Corporate Counsel Center](#).

Browse by company name, contract type, and industry.

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Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Dept. of the Treasury, [Forms, Instructions & Publications](#).

May search for forms and publications by form and instruction number, publication number, year (back to 1980), or the topical index.

Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, [Forms](#).

Categories include civil, family law, probate, small claims, unlawful detainer, mental health, juvenile, and miscellaneous. Forms are available in PDF and are fillable unless otherwise noted.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, [Forms](#).

Provides forms related to adoptions, employment, family, green card, humanitarian, and citizenship and naturalization. Be sure to read the directions carefully.

United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit, [Forms](#).

Alphabetical list of forms including attorney admission forms and instructions, mediation forms, and student practice forms.

United States District Court, Central District of California, [Forms](#).

Includes appeals forms, civil & criminal forms, general forms, and pro se packets.

WashLaw, [Legal Forms](#).

This page provides links to a variety of forms, including business registration forms, tax forms, real estate forms, trademark forms, UCC forms, and state and federal court forms.

Immigration Law

[American Immigration Council](#).

Nonprofit organization that promotes laws, policies, and attitudes that honor our history as a nation of immigrants. Website includes information about immigration reform, DACA/DAPA, deportation waivers, immigration enforcement, and due process.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice – LA). [*Citizenship 101: Your Guide to Citizenship*](#).

Video and workbook cover the basics of U.S. citizenship. The video is available in English, Cantonese, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. See also, [US Citizenship Podcast](#).

Bray, Ilona. [*Becoming a U.S. Citizen: A Guide to the Law, Exam & Interview*](#), 8th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Includes information regarding eligibility, deportation, application forms, citizenship exam, and the interview.

Bray, Ilona. [*Fiancé & Marriage Visas: A Couple's Guide to U.S. Immigration*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Learn about the immigration process, including eligibility, the testing period, dealing with bureaucracy, meeting with U.S. officials, and documenting your marriage.

Bray, Ilona & Loida Nicolas Lewis. [*How to Get a Green Card*](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018. (Updated by Kristina Gasson)

Discusses how to determine eligibility, deal with bureaucracy, work with U.S. officials, and get a green card through family, lotteries, political asylum, refugee status, etc. The book does not address work-related green cards. It does cover “the expanded provisional waiver of unlawful presence.”

Bray, Ilona. [*U.S. Immigration Made Easy*](#), 18th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Learn how to qualify for work visas, student visas, refugee status, green cards, and citizenship. Includes step-by-step instructions for completing and filing immigration forms.

[California Immigrant Policy Center](#).

The website states, “CIPC advances inclusive policies that build a prosperous future for all Californians.” Includes information about new and proposed California state laws, as well as fact sheets and community education tools.

[Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#).

Seeks to improve immigration law and policy, expand the capacity of legal service providers, and advance immigrant rights. Includes information for immigrant families, people with DACA status, fact sheets on sanctuary policies, and more.

[National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild.](#)

Promotes justice and equality of treatment in all areas of immigration law. Includes information about immigrant rights, immigration enforcement, and DACA/DAPA programs, etc.

[U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.](#)

Website includes forms, descriptions of immigration services and benefits, the text of immigration laws, and federal regulations.

Landlord-Tenant Law

Brown, David Wayne et al. [The California Landlord's Law Book: Rights and Responsibilities](#), 17th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

This concise legal guide for California landlords describes how to avoid legal pitfalls by understanding leases, rental agreements, rent rules, rent control, repairing property, and abandoned property, etc. Forms (including lease and rental agreements) appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Brown, David & Nils Rosenquest. [The California Landlord's Law Book: Evictions](#), 17th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

This manual for California landlords details the steps in evicting tenants and addresses circumstances when eviction is required and when it is impermissible. The book covers how to file and conduct an uncontested eviction lawsuit (residential tenants only) and how to collect a money judgment. For legal questions regarding roommates, Nolo recommends [The California Landlord's Law Book: Rights and Responsibilities](#). Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

California Department of Consumer Affairs, [California Tenants: A Guide to Residential Tenants' and Landlords' Rights and Responsibilities](#), 2012.

Fishman, Stephen. [Every Landlord's Tax Deduction Guide](#), 15th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

This book explains how to maximize deductions, complete IRS Schedule E, utilize real estate tax credits, deduct losses, and keep proper tax records.

National Housing Law Project, [*HUD Housing Programs: Tenants' Rights*](#), 5th ed. Oakland, CA: National Housing Law Project, 2018. (Also referred to as the Green Book) Comprehensive manual on many of the issues arising in the representation of tenants and applicants under HUD's major low-income housing programs, including admissions, rents, utilities, maintenance, leases, and evictions, and terminations. See the website's [Publications tab](#) for more information.

Portman, Janet & J. Scott Weaver. [*California Tenants' Rights*](#), 21st ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Written for the tenant, this book discusses deposit returns, breaking a lease, getting repairs made, using small claims court, and dealing with an unscrupulous landlord. Contains sample letters, rental agreements, and rent control charts. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Portman, Janet et al. [*First-Time Landlord: Your Guide to Renting Out a Single-Family Home*](#), 4th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Includes information on property rental basics for landlords: how to determine whether the property will turn a profit, finding the right tenants, preparing and signing the lease, handling repairs, complying with rental laws, dealing with problem tenants, and preparing for the sale of the property.

Portman, Janet & Marcia Stewart. [*Every Tenant's Legal Guide*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Learn how to inspect a rental property, negotiate a lease, understand rent control, get repairs, protect your privacy, break a lease, and prepare for eviction proceedings. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Portman, Janet & Marcia Stewart. [*Renters' Rights*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Addresses leases and rental agreements, discrimination, rules regarding rent, security deposits, privacy, roommates, and repairs and maintenance.

Stewart, Marcia & Janet Portman. [*Every Landlord's Legal Guide*](#), 14th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Learn how to choose tenants and a property manager, prepare a lease, manage deposits, provide maintenance, limit liability, and deal with problem tenants. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

CHAPTER 10: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES

Stewart, Marcia, et al. [*Leases & Rental Agreements*](#), 12th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Discusses how to prepare leases and rental agreements, make required disclosures, do credit checks, conduct a final inspection, and generally comply with landlord-tenant laws. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, [*Tenant Rights, Laws and Protections: California*](#).

Includes information on California landlord-tenant law, a guide for tenants and landlords, and links to relevant agency Web sites.

Lawyers

The American Bar Association, [*Consumers' Guide to Legal Help*](#).

This site guides the user to a list of resources by state. Provides links to lawyer referrals, commercial directories, legal aid for low-income people, self-help, and court information. See also the [*Consumers' Guide to Legal Help: Legal Terms Glossary*](#).

Bar Associations.

Most local county bar associations throughout the U.S. can assist in locating attorneys. For example, the [*Los Angeles County Bar Association*](#) has a lawyer referral and information service called [*SmartLaw*](#), where one can find a lawyer by area of law and language. (An alternative is to call LACBA's Lawyer Referral Service: (213) 243-1525). Go to the Hieros Gamos [*Bar Associations*](#) page for a comprehensive list of associations worldwide. Scroll down to the bottom of the page for links to U.S. bar associations, which includes local bar association information as well. Another resource is FindLaw's [*State Bar Associations*](#) page.

[*FindLaw Lawyer Directory*](#).

Features profiles of lawyers from across the U.S. May search or browse by legal issue and location. Note the link to FindLaw's [*Guide to Hiring a Lawyer*](#).

LawHelpCalifornia.org.

Provides low-income Californians with easy online access to basic legal resources and attorney information. Does not provide direct legal services. Provides referrals by topic or one may browse the directory (under the Find Legal Help tab, click View legal directory by service area), which lists organizations alphabetically and by service area. Note that resources are available in 28 other languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Punjabi, and Russian.

Martindale-Hubbell's Lawyer Locator.

This database of over 1 million lawyer profiles allows users to search for lawyers or law firms—by name, organization, publication, location, or practice area. Advanced search options filter the results by peer and client reviews, languages spoken, law school attended, etc. In the middle of the page, the Comprehensive Attorney Coverage section allows for browsing by practice area or location.

Nolo Lawfirms & Lawyers.

Each attorney provides the same information for his or her profile. Nolo has confirmed that every listed attorney has a valid license and is in good standing with the applicable bar associations at the time they are listed in the directory. Lawyers are required to notify Nolo within three business days if they become subject to any disciplinary action by a bar association. The website is organized for browsing by location and practice area.

Public Counsel.

Self-described as the “largest *pro bono* law firm in the nation.” In California, the organization assists low-income children, youth, adults, and families in the areas of childcare law, children’s rights, community development, consumer law, homeless assistance, and immigration. Public Counsel, in association with Centro Maravilla, offers free legal help on all consumer-related matters. See the [Offices](#) and [Services](#) pages for more information.

The State Bar of California, [Attorney Search](#).

The public can check a California attorney’s bar membership record by name or by bar number. Users can search names that “sound like” the search term, which comes in handy if you are not certain of the spelling of a person’s name. Profiles contain contact information, law school attended, date of admission to the bar, as well as whether there is a record of discipline against the attorney.

Legal Research

California County Public Law Libraries, [Mini Research Class](#).

This mini research guide helps users learn the legal research process, with guidance on where to start and how to access different types of legal resources. The sections are linked separately so that you may access any or all of them in whatever order you choose.

Cohen, Morris L. & Kent Olsen. [Legal Research in a Nutshell](#), 12th ed. St. Paul, MN: Thomson West, 2016.

This succinct guide covers major primary and secondary sources, including Web resources such as Congress.gov and PACER (Public Access to Electronic Court Records) as well as online databases and print materials. It addresses legislative history, administrative law, practice and specialized resources, and research in comparative and international law.

Elias, Stephen. [Legal Research: How to Find & Understand the Law](#), 18th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Well-illustrated guide on the legal research process. It includes an overview of the law, an explanation of statutes, case law, and Shepard's citators, and examples relating to specific cases and legal questions. There are also chapters on how to obtain information under the Freedom of Information Act and how to conduct computer-assisted legal research.

FindLaw, [Introduction to the U.S. Legal System](#).

Explains civil and criminal cases, federal versus state court, and the litigation process.

[Law Libraries Resource Exchange](#).

Law librarian-developed website that provides "up-to-date information on a wide range of web research and technology-related issues, applications, resources and tools." Includes articles and continuing education resources. The archives goes back to 1997, providing a historical perspective on technological issues.

Law Library Web sites

County and university law libraries have Web sites with links to primary (statutes, regulations, cases) and secondary (explanatory and analytical) legal sources:

- LA Law Library, [Find Legal Information](#), [Government Documents](#), etc.
- Orange County Public Law Library, [Legal Research Resources](#)
- San Diego County Public Law Library, [Research a Legal Issue](#)
- Cornell Law School, [Legal Information Institute \(LII\)](#)
- UCLA Law Library, [LibGuides](#)
- Washburn Law School, [WashLaw](#)

Martin, Daniel W. *Henke's California Law Guide*, 8th ed. Lexis Law Publishing, 2006.

Dan Martin, Law Professor and Library Director at Loyola Law School, continues to edit this excellent explanation of all facets of California research sources: constitutional, statutory, administrative, judicial, etc.

[Nolo Press](#)

This legal how-to publisher's Web site contains a [legal dictionary](#), [legal research](#) section, [frequently asked questions/encyclopedia](#), and a [product catalog](#).

Tucker, Virginia and Marc Lampson. [Finding the Answers to Legal Questions: A How-To-Do-It Manual](#). 2nd ed. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2018.

Self-described as "an ideal book for practicing librarians looking to better serve users' legal needs..." The author focuses on small to medium-size public libraries. There are four basic parts: (1) "Foundation: Legal Information Overview," (2) "Preparation: Understanding Legal Information Needs," (3) "Information: Specific Legal Questions," and (4) "Collection: Building a Basic Collection or Website." Three appendices provide a glossary and bibliography of online legal sources.

Public Records Data

Adair, Kristin and Catherine Nielsen. [Effective FOIA Requesting for Everyone: A National Security Archive Guide](#). Washington D.C.: National Security Archive, 2009.

Describes how to obtain federal government records from executive branch agencies through the Freedom of Information Act and other means.

[BRB Publications, Inc.](#)

A publisher of sourcebooks used for locating public records, this site includes a Free Resource Center.

[California Bar Journal](#)

This monthly publication includes a section called “Trials Digest,” a “summary of trials, awards, settlements, arbitrations,” in California civil cases. Archived issues of the Journal from 1996 are available free online. The summary is not comprehensive, but it is free. All other online services are fee-based, including *O’Brien’s Evaluator*, *Verdictum Juris*, *Tri-Service*, and the *Los Angeles Daily Journal’s Verdicts and Settlements*.

California Secretary of State, [FAQs – Personal Information in Public Filings](#).

Produces a six-page publication on [Guidelines for Access to Public Records](#), which describes the counter services and research facilities accessible to the public at the California State Archives and regional offices. A formal request pursuant to the California Public Records Act is not necessary for inspection and copying of public records that are routinely available at the public counters and the research facility. There are public counters at the regional offices in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.

FOIA.gov, [How Do I Make a FOIA Request?](#)

Learn about the FOIA process, including how to file a request with particular agencies. Use the Find tab to search across all agencies for information they have already released. The website includes a [glossary](#) of FOIA terms and a section with [agency reports](#) of FOIA activities.

Justia, [Dockets & Filings](#).

A free searchable database of U.S. federal district court and court of appeal civil cases. It includes over 1 million civil cases filed since Jan. 1, 2004 and is updated multiple times each day. Selected high profile cases dated earlier than 2004 are included. Search by party name, jurisdiction, lawsuit type, and date. Users may also browse by state, circuit, and nature of suit.

[PACER](#) (Public Access to Court Electronic Records)

PACER provides access to dockets and documents from federal cases in the U.S. Courts of Appeal, U.S. District courts, U.S. Bankruptcy courts, and the U.S. Party/Case Index. Free registration is required. PACER charges \$.10 per page. The charge applies to the number of pages that result from any search, including a search that yields no matches (one page for no matches). The charge applies whether or not pages are printed, viewed, or downloaded. There is a cap of \$3.00 charged for any single document, although that cap does not apply to some results. See the Web site for more information.

Registrar Records.

Your local county is the official source for retaining public records related to fictitious business names, marriage licenses, death certificates, and assessor records. For a list of California counties and their websites, see the website of the [California State Association of Counties](#).

[Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles](#).

Some Superior Courts allow the public online access to court documents for a fee. The L.A. Superior Court makes available online only documents filed in general jurisdiction civil cases at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, and a criminal defendant index. The only free search for court records available from the L.A. Superior Court website is a Case Summary search for dockets with the case docket number.

VerdictSearch California Reporter. San Diego, CA: VerdictSearch California Reporter, 2003-. (continues *California Jury Verdicts Weekly*)
This print resource may be available in larger law libraries.

Real Property Law

Bray, Ilona & Marcia Stewart. [Nolo's Essential Guide to Buying Your First Home](#), 6th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2016.

Learn how to get financing, find inspectors and insurance, and negotiate with sellers. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Devine, George. *For Sale by Owner in California*, 11th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2014.
Practical tips on how to sell a home without a broker. It appears that Nolo no longer publishes this title, so check for the last edition at a library.

Doskow, Emily & Lina Guillen. [Neighbor Law: Fences, Trees, Boundaries & Noise](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Discusses laws "concerning common neighbor disputes," such as fences, trees, boundaries, blocked views, noise, water, dangers to children, etc.

Jasper, Margaret C. *Home Mortgage Law Primer*, 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

From Oceana's Law for the Law Person Series. Covers the mortgage loan process, home equity financing, real estate closing, mortgage loan discrimination, the Truth-in-Lending Act, the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA), and

foreclosure. It appears that Oceana no longer publishes this title so check for the last edition at a library.

Loftsgordon, Amy. [*Foreclosure Survival Guide: Learn How to Avoid Foreclosure & Stay in Your Home*](#), 6th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Provides information on foreclosure and alternatives such as bankruptcy, short sales, workouts, and deeds in lieu of foreclosure. Addresses mortgage-related issues and credit.

Warner, Ralph at al. [*How to Buy a House in California*](#), 16th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Strategies for buying a house plus all necessary real estate forms and worksheets. Forms appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

Social Security

Bernan Press, [*Social Security Handbook Overview of Social Security Programs*](#). Lanham, Md.: Bernan Press, 2018.

Arranged by section number, the Handbook is a comprehensive and easy-to-read guide to many of the benefit programs that are covered under the Social Security Act and related laws, including retirement, survivors, medical and disability insurance, supplemental security income, veterans' benefits, unemployment insurance, and public assistance and welfare services.

Matthews, Joseph L. [*Social Security, Medicare & Government Pensions: Get the Most Out of Your Retirement & Medical Benefits*](#), 23rd ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Includes information and instructions on how to get retirement and disability benefits; dependent and survivor benefits; and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Covers the nuts and bolts of Medicare and Medicaid and how to claim government pensions and veterans' benefits.

Morton, David A. III. [*Nolo's Guide to Social Security Disability: Getting & Keeping Your Benefits*](#), 9th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Explains what Social Security disability is, what benefits are available to disabled children, how to prove a disability, how age, benefits and work experience affect benefits, how to appeal a denial of benefits, and how to respond to a Continuing Disability Review. Medical listing files appear in the book and on a Nolo webpage designed for the book.

[U.S. Social Security Administration.](#)

Use the official Web site to estimate your retirement benefits, check the status of your application, and find a local Social Security office. The website provides access to [forms](#) and [publications](#) (e.g., *How You Earn Credits*, *Disability Benefits*, *Benefits for Children with Disabilities*, *Medicare*, and *The Appeals Process*).

Tax Law

[California Franchise Tax Board.](#)

Responsible for administering two of California's major tax programs: Personal Income Tax and the Corporation Tax. The public will find forms, bills, notices, tax return basics, and assistance and resources for individuals and businesses.

Daily, Frederick W. [Stand Up to the IRS](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2017.

Learn how to "file a late return, work out a long-term payment plan, get a Taxpayer-Assistance Order,... stop collection efforts, avoid property seizures," protect assets, and appeal the auditor's decision.

Daily, Frederick W. [Tax Savvy for Small Business: A Complete Tax Strategy Guide](#), 19th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Includes information on deductible business expenses, bookkeeping, and payroll taxes, as well as a discussion of the different types of corporations, partnerships, and limited liability companies. Also addresses how to buy or sell a business and how to deal with the IRS.

Fishman, Stephen. [Home Business Tax Deductions: Keep What You Earn](#), 14th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Discusses how to "write off start-up and operating expenses" related to travel, health insurance, inventory, etc.

Fishman, Stephen. [Tax Deductions for Professionals: Pay Less to the IRS](#), 13th ed. Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press, 2018.

Discusses common tax deductions and how to choose the best legal structure for your business. Other topics include deductions related to retirement, how hiring decisions affect deductions, incorporating, paying expenses, IRS audits, etc.

Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury, [Publications Online](#).

Publications available online include Employer's Tax Guide, Armed Forces' Tax Guide, and Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad.

Veterans' Rights & Benefits

[National Veterans Legal Services Program](#).

The NVLSP is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization that advocates for veterans' rights. Their Web site offers information for veterans on many matters and provides links to [publications](#), [a correspondence course](#) for people who help veterans obtain benefits, and affiliations with pro bono organizations.

U.S. Department of Defense. [Compensation & Benefits Handbook: For Seriously Ill and Injured Members of the Armed Forces](#) (2016).

The handbook describes the disability eligibility process, various program qualifications, application procedures, and numerous resources with associated contact information.

U.S. Department of Defense. [Office of Warrior Care Policy](#).

"Proactively supporting wounded, ill, and/or injured service members in their recovery and reintegration or transition to civilian life." The Web site includes caregiver resources, links to DoD policies, and a resource directory.

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, [Board of Veterans Appeals](#).

The Web page is designed to assist citizens and veterans in understanding the appeals process, and to provide copies of application forms. Decisions of the Board are included from 1992 to the present.