

PREFACE

The Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin is a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries and represents all segments of the law library community, including private, corporate, county, state, federal and academic law libraries. The objectives of LLAW are to promote law librarianship, to enhance the usefulness of law libraries, and to foster a spirit of cooperation among members.

In 1989, the Public Access to Legal Information Committee (PALI) of the Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin produced the first edition of this manual as a guide for non-law librarians who are occasionally called upon to answer questions involving legal materials. As with the original edition, this revised edition is intended to be a starting point, and covers only the most basic materials used in federal and Wisconsin legal research.

Lists of major sources follow each subsection of the Judicial, Legislative, and Administrative sections. Within each list of sources, titles are generally arranged in order of significance. Consult the glossary in Appendix A for unfamiliar terms.

Many Wisconsin libraries will maintain a current set of the *Wisconsin Statutes* but few other primary legal resources. Consult Appendix B for a listing of the libraries that provide the most comprehensive legal collections in the state. Contact one of these libraries for additional information about the titles discussed in this manual or with questions involving legal bibliography. Trained law librarians are available to assist with inquiries and to provide instruction in legal research procedures. For further reading on the subject of legal research, consult section V. G., “Legal Research Texts and Manuals.”

The current edition takes into account the growing availability of legal information available online. The guide identifies selected electronic resources that are either freely available over the Internet or otherwise available in electronic format to any user at certain libraries.¹ Again, the emphasis is on federal and Wisconsin legal research. Throughout the guide, sources that are available electronically are identified with the following symbol: ☞. The same symbol is also used to refer the reader to the “Electronic Access” segments that come at the end of many of the sections. For a list of gateways to electronic resources, consult section V. H., “Gateways to Online Resources.”

Finally, some words of appreciation. Thanks to Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company for providing the printing facilities for this publication, and to Pat Ellingson (law librarian) for arranging this. Thanks to Bill Ebbott at the UW-Madison Law Library and Connie Von Der Heide at the Wisconsin State Law Library for

¹ See section VI. of this guide for discussion of fee-based electronic resources such as *LexisNexis* and *Westlaw*.

proofreading the draft and for their valuable suggestions. Thanks also to Bonnie Shucha at the UW-Madison Law Library. Many of the electronic resources included in this guide are licensed for use at particular institutions, but are nevertheless free to users visiting those institutions. Bonnie's *Sources of Legal Information for the Wisconsin Attorney*, UW-Madison Library, <http://library.law.wisc.edu/guides/bibliographies/legalinfo.htm>, was helpful in compiling this information. And thanks especially to the members of the 1988-1989 PALI committee who authored the first version, and provided an outstanding framework upon which to build. See Appendix G for a list of the 1988-1989 PALI members.

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