

Finding the Answers to Legal Questions, 2nd.

By Virginia M. Tucker & Marc Lampson. (2018), 232 pages, ISBN: 9780838915691. \$75

Subject: General legal research

Useful for: Useful for public librarians, new law and pre-law students, paralegals, and others seeking an understanding of legal information, its structure, and how to find answers.

Format: Chapters with index, with a companion website and both print and online appendixes to supplement the legal sources described in the book.

Reviewer's Comments:

Finding the Answers to Legal Questions will be useful to anyone seeking to assist patrons with legal information needs or questions about the legal system. However, it provides a general overview of legal research and as such is not aimed at librarians with advanced legal experience or education. The book is organized into four parts:

Part I introduces readers to the structure of the legal system in the United States. The chapters provide an overview of primary law and describe the role that secondary sources play in legal research. Recommendations for federal, state, and local primary sources are included. Part II introduces readers to legal research basics such as citation and keyword searching, determining jurisdiction, and checking for the most current information. Outside resources for legal research and considerations when choosing a lawyer are also discussed.

Part III delves into more specific legal questions. It is divided into eight chapters, each covering areas that generate the most frequently asked questions from pro se patrons, including lawsuits more generally; family law; landlord-tenant; wills, estate planning and probate; debts, collections and credit; bankruptcy; employment and unemployment; and criminal law.

Part IV appears the least traditional part and is intended for public library staff wanting to create a basic collection or website. While Chapters 15 and 16 contain useful information regarding online resources and the importance of evaluating the trustworthiness of resources, Chapter 17 is focused on how to create a library webpage and basic legal collection and seems somewhat out of place for a general legal research book.

RIPS-SIS Legal Research Text Review

Quite useful are the “resources recap” charts included throughout the book, and resource updates are available via the book’s companion website at www.GetLaw.net. Additionally, “closer look” discussions of various legal research issues may be of interest. The book contains three appendixes, two at the back and one online, which supplement the sources described in the book. Appendix A is a glossary of legal terms, while Appendix B summarizes free, online go-to legal resources. Appendix C is available at www.GetLaw.net and is a directory of free online resources for legal information from all 50 states as well as Washington, D.C.

Finding the Answers to Legal Questions is a useful resource for those without advanced knowledge of the law. With the exception of Part IV, it is full of practical suggestions to help understand the legal system, locate resources, and find answers to legal questions.

Reviewed by: Ashley Arrington, University of Houston Law Center, in 2021.