



Thomas M. Cooley Law Libraries' Research Guide Series

Form Books: A Selective Research Guide

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| I. How to Use Form Books | II. General Form Books |
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Overview:

This research guide is a selective guide to assist the legal researcher in knowing when and how to use form books. It is not comprehensive in scope or intended to be a catchall source, but rather to act as a starting point for the researcher to find additional sources and relevant information. The resources listed are those owned or available at the Cooley libraries.

I. HOW TO USE FORM BOOKS

The preparation or drafting of legal documents can be time consuming, difficult and require an acute attention to detail. To avoid duplication of effort, law students and attorneys have come to rely on form books. Law students use them as a way to gain experience on the appropriate language to use that will accomplish their objective. Alternately, attorneys use them to conserve valuable time.

Form books are an excellent starting place to find standardized forms that can be drafted to fit a specific situation. It is important to think of the forms provided in form books as samples—they should be refined to fit a particular need or function. Copying language without consideration of the situation it will be used for could be ruinous.

Form books may be categorized: general, subject, federal or state specific. In the case of this research guide, general, federal and state specific forms will be discussed. Other subject specific guides dealing with areas of the law such as bankruptcy, family law, real estate, and contracts are also available at the Cooley libraries. For more information on where to find these materials, please see a Reference Librarian.

General form books can be further categorized by either being transactional in nature or covering the pleading and practice portion of the law. Transactional forms give examples of proper formats on substantive matters such as contracts, wills, deeds and mortgages. Pleading and practice forms provide examples of pleadings and motions, both criminal and civil, that are filed with a court during litigation. Pleading and practice forms provide the proper language for complaints, answers, motions dismissals and a variety of other motions.

General forms are not state specific. They can be encyclopedic in size and may provide a topical index to help legal researchers narrow down their search for a specific form. Also, the



jurisdiction in which the form is being drafted should be taken into consideration. A form can be rendered useless if the guidelines governing the specific jurisdiction the form is being used in it are not applied.

Overall, form books are a time saving aid for students and attorneys. By narrowing down the type of form that is needed, users are on their way to utilizing a helpful resource.

II. GENERAL FORM BOOKS

American Jurisprudence Legal Forms 2d

Location: KF 170 .A542

Arranged alphabetically by legal topic, *American Jurisprudence Legal Forms* provides a form for almost every situation which would require one. The beginning of each chapter provides a "Scope of Chapter," "Research References" and an outline of forms falling under that chapter's subject area. Also, if applicable, instructions are made available for the form. This set of form books also contains an Index for easy searching.

American Jurisprudence Legal Forms Annotated

Location: KF 170 .A54

American Jurisprudence Legal Forms Annotated is an excellent resource for pleading and practice forms as well as administrative forms. The difference between the two is that the Annotated set also offers a "Rules Applicable" section; a section that briefly covers the principles governing that topic of law. In addition to "Rules Applicable," the Annotated set contains case notes from various jurisdictions.

American Jurisprudence Proof of Facts 3d

Location: KF 8933 .A42 1988

Encompassing more than just forms, *American Jurisprudence Proof of Facts* largely incorporates "articles" that assist attorneys and students in dealing with difficult issues and questions surrounding various subject matters. Background text, primary legal issues and problems, damages and elements of proof help supplement the topic. Model interrogatories are also available.

American Jurisprudence Pleading and Practice Forms Annotated

Location: KF 8836 .A45

American Jurisprudence Pleading and Practice Forms Annotated offers a "carefully compiled and edited collection" of forms. Through their Key Number classification, this set is assembled to also coordinate with the West Digests and Westlaw. Besides the numerous forms, a useful feature is the "Procedural Timetable" in volume 1. It serves as a reminder to students (and attorneys) to take the appropriate steps in essential order.

Bender's Federal Practice Forms by Louis R. Frumer and Marvin Waxner

Location: KF 8836 .F78 1951

Bender's Federal Practice Forms is not just a form book. It also provides thorough information on the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and all of its various parts. The forms corresponding to each rule are included at the end of each chapter. A "Commencement of Action Checklist" is included before each form to inform users of the process preceding each form.



Bender's Forms of Discovery

Location: KF 8900 .A3 B4

Bender's Forms of Discovery is a twenty-seven volume looseleaf compilation of interrogatories designed to enable student and attorneys obtain information from individuals that may be essential to trial. Topics are arranged alphabetically from Accountants to Zoning and offer three appendices covering uniform interrogatories, discovery rules and disclosure implementation reports. There is also an Index.

Current Legal Forms, with Tax Analysis by Jacob Rabkin and Mark H. Johnson

Location: KF 170 .R3

Current Legal Forms is considered an important form book covering tax information and is often referred to as simply "Rabkin and Johnson" by attorneys and students alike. Frequently updated, this title provides tax background for each chapter topic as well as drafting guidelines and then the forms themselves.

Essential Formbook, The by Gary A. Munneke

Location: KF 318 .A65 M85

As defined in the preface, the purpose of *Essential Formbook* is to provide attorneys and law firms a text in which to serve clients better; to provide good service. The content of the form book includes a table of contents, general introductory or explanatory text, checklists, forms (with description and explanation) as well as resources.

Every Man His Own Lawyer, and Business Form Book by John G. Wells

Location: KF 387 .W4 1871

Written in 1871, *Every Man His Own Lawyer* provides historical forms for bankers and creditors, merchants (city and country), farmers, mechanics and attorneys (again, city and country). Wells' purpose in writing the text was to allow the working man the ability "to draw up any instrument in writing that may be required."

Federal Procedural Forms, Lawyers Edition

Location: KF 8836 .F4

Published by West, *Federal Procedural Forms* provides practice-oriented forms for Federal, judicial and administrative proceedings. It employs the Key Number system and also includes court rules, administrative regulations, checklists and checkpoints. Perhaps most useful, is a Table of Abbreviations which aids the user.

Federal Procedure Forms by John Guandolo

Location: KF 8836 .G82 1949

Author John Guandolo is of the opinion that the "augmentation of federal authority has so greatly enlarged the scope of practice of the present-day attorney, that he has found it necessary to devise ways and means of the diminishing the time and labor required to prepare the various pleadings which he is called upon to draft." To aid in this time-saving effort, forms in *Federal Procedure Forms* are arranged in alphabetical order and with consideration to the logical sequence of action. The forms are also consecutively numbered for quick reference.



Legal Opinion Letters Formbook ed. by A. Sidney Holderness, Jr., and Brooke Wunnicke

Location: KF 250 .L395 2003

Legal Opinion Letters Formbook is intended for attorneys familiar with legal opinion practice. The book does provide a review of current developments, reminders and explanation on some of the more difficult aspects of preparing legal opinions. A thorough introduction is available in Chapter One while “Essential Writing Skills” is covered in Chapter Two.

Legal-wise by Carl W. Battle

Location: KF 170 .B37 1991

This book provides users with a basic understanding of the laws and legal forms to aid them. It also provides an estimated cost should the user decide to use legal counsel. Written in a straightforward, easy-to-read fashion, *Legal-wise* is better suited to the *pro se* patron rather than the seasoned practitioner.

Modern Legal Forms

Location: KF 170 .M6

Utilizing West’s Key Number system, *Modern Legal Forms* works in conjunction with other West publications. The forms have been keyed to sections of *Corpus Juris Secundum*, explanatory comments and notes have been expanded and case citations have also been provided. Topics are arranged alphabetically from Abstracts of Title to Zoning. A thorough index is also available at the end of the set.

More Everyday Legal Forms by Margaret C. Jasper

Location: KF 170 .J32 2001

More Everyday Legal Forms is comprised of eleven chapters discussing arbitration and mediation, contracts, corporations and business associations, estate planning, personal relationships and copyright, patent and trademark issues. Unannotated and simple in delivery, this single volume text is an excellent title for quick reference on various topics.

Nichols Cyclopedia of Federal Procedure Forms by Clark Asahel Nichols

Location: KF 8836 .N53 1952

Intended for the federal court practitioner, *Nichols Cyclopedia of Federal Procedure Forms* is regularly updated when the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Rules of the Supreme Court of the United States, and Rules of Appellate Procedure are amended. This set includes the forms necessary for federal court cases and removing cases from state court. Existing forms are regularly updated and amended and new forms are added as necessary.

Nichols Cyclopedia of Legal Forms Annotated by Clark Asahel Nichols

Location: KF 170 .N5

Nichols Cyclopedia of Legal Forms Annotated is designed to be user-friendly. Each chapter and topic is arranged alphabetically and includes four basic sections: Suggestions, Tax Introduction, Research and Drafting Aids and Forms. If applicable, the forms are then arranged by state for easier use. In addition, under Tax Notes, a number of general checklists have been added on tax and estate planning matters.

West’s Federal Forms

Location: KF 8836 .W4



West's Federal Forms is arranged by type of proceeding and the court for which they pertain: Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, Civil and Criminal District Courts, Bankruptcy Court, Admiralty Court and Tax Court. This set also includes a meticulous index, table of statutes and court rules. Along with the forms, comments are provided at the end of each section that gives users background information on how the form was adapted and the decisions that shaped it.

West's Legal Forms 3d

Location: KF 1384 .A65 W47 1996

West's Legal Forms is a set dedicated to the discussion of and the forms relating to business organizations. Information on tax law is also included, with regards to business organizations. Volume 1, for example, offers the user basic tax terms and concepts before launching into concepts and accompanying forms. As indicated in the preface, the author has been careful to "give the user a variety of formats (from simple to complex)."

III. MICHIGAN FORM BOOKS

Law of Contracts in Michigan: Exhaustively Treating Internal Structure with Forms, The **by Franklin A. Beecher**

Location: KFM 4350 .B4 1910

Written in 1910, *Law of Contracts in Michigan* was initially included in the "Michigan Written Instrument Series." Part One is primarily an introduction to the principles of contracts that serves as a refresher for the user. Part Two contains the forms relating to contracts. The author was careful to note that many of the forms are taken from the Supreme Court Reports.

Michigan Approved Court Forms

Location: KFM 4730 .A65 M5

Michigan Approved Court Forms is easy to use and straightforward to search. A two-volume set, users can search for the form that they require by using one of the following: the numerical index, the alphabetical index or the subject index. Circuit Court forms are separated from Michigan Court forms to prevent confusion. The forms in this set are ready to be drafted to meet the needs of the attorney or student.

Michigan Basic Practice Handbook

Location: KFM 4277 .M522

Michigan Basic Practice Handbook is a two volume set that is perfect for the new attorney or the seasoned practitioner. It contains information on basic law for over 20 practice areas such as opening a law practice, drafting contracts, debt collection and administering decedents' estates. New chapters "Alternative Dispute Resolution" and "Preparing, Filing and Serving the Complaint" bring this resource up to date.

Michigan Basic Practice Series

Location: KFM 4280 .M47 1960

The three volumes of *Michigan Basic Practice Series* are written "to fill the gap between the theories learned in law school and the actual handling of a law practice." The volumes include forms, samples and checklists to aid young attorneys in handling the issues and



problems of a law practice. The volumes are not intended to provide in-depth information, but rather to offer basic knowledge and practical guidance.

Michigan Business Formbook

Location: KFM 4352 .A65 M532

With topics covering LLCs, corporations, partnerships and professional ethics, *Michigan Business Formbook* is an excellent resource for the attorney or student. This two volume set also includes an overview for the topic of each chapter. This overview outlines when certain forms are to be used and for what purpose.

Michigan Causes of Action Formbook

Location: KFM 4730 .A65 M524

Michigan Causes of Action Formbook covers the major areas of civil litigation. Each section provides a brief introduction to the topic being discussed and is followed by summaries and complaints for numerous causes of action. Topics covered are: pleadings, torts, contract and business disputes, employment claims, special actions as well as many others.

Michigan Civil Practice Forms by Harold B. (H.B.) Clark

Location: KFM 4730 .A65 C53

Michigan Civil Practice Forms is designed to be a guide for the forms required in the various courts of Michigan. Arranged alphabetically by topic, the forms are largely intended for action dealing with a particular subject, however, there are practice forms available. Text "has been held to a minimum," although, suggestions and reminders are included at the start of every chapter.

Michigan Civil Procedure Forms: practice by Jeffrey N. Shillman

Location: KFM 4730 .A65 S54 1989

This text is designed to assist the user in locating various forms to implement the Michigan Court Rules. Pleadings, court papers and other related documents are all available. The author does note, however, that not every Michigan Rule is discussed in this title, only those that "generate or affect the forms of pleadings or other court papers." An accompanying CD also provides many of the forms on disk.

Michigan Corporate Forms by Charles W. Borgsdorf

Location: KFM 4413 .A65 M5 2001

Michigan Corporate Forms is intended for the attorney or student working within the area of corporate, limited liability or partnership practice. The editors of the two volume set intend for it to serve two components: one, "to serve as an introduction to the areas covered," and two, "to assist the practitioner in filling a planning and compliance gap that may arise." Each form also contains notes explaining the subject matter of the chapter.

Michigan Criminal Law and Procedure, with forms by Glenn C. Gillespie

Location: KFM 4761 .G5 1978

Gillespie's *Michigan Criminal Law and Procedure, with forms* is intended to act as a handy reference guide covering the subject matter of criminal law. Not only containing forms, this set also includes statutes, court rules and rules of evidence. Each chapter is thoroughly indexed for easy searching.



Michigan Legal Forms

Location: KFM 4268 .M53

Attorneys and students are able to save time drafting documents with *Michigan Legal Forms*. Designed with certain situations in mind, the forms inside these eleven volumes may also be customized and have been approved for court use. Chapter topics include “Business Corporations,” “Estate Planning,” “Family Law,” “Real Estate” and the “Uniform Commercial Code.”

Michigan Litigation Forms and Analysis by Theodore E. Hughes

Location: KFM 4730 .A65 H84 1992

What’s useful to note about this set of materials, *Michigan Litigation Forms and Analysis*, is that the set is not arranged alphabetically, but by the order of the process from notice to appeal--beginning with “Trial Court Proceedings” and ending with “Supreme Court Appeal.” The forms are pre-drafted and include research references for additional information and reading.

Michigan Pleading and Practice

Location: KFM 4730 .M52

Model forms are included along with discussion of practice civil litigation in *Michigan Pleading and Practice*. Related legal issues are discussed and footnotes are provided that hold relevant case information. For those unsure on where to start, Chapter 1 holds “an introduction to the Michigan judicial system and discusses generally the law that governs Michigan.”

Michigan Real Estate Formbook by Ralph Jossman

Location: KFM 4326 .A65 J67 1982

A unique compilation of transcribed forms combined with samples of the actual forms (circa 1982), *Michigan Real Estate Formbook* combines over 140 sample forms and sample clauses often used in real estate transactions. Chapters include: Listing Agreements, Sales Agreements, Closing Documents, Financing Statements, Building Contracts, Powers of Attorney, Land Contracts, and Landlord-Tenant Documents.

Michigan Real Estate Forms: practice by John G. Cameron, Jr.

Location: KFM 4326 .A65 C36 1988

Michigan Real Estate Forms is a text intended for Michigan attorneys and students seeking forms to help document the most common real estate transactions. Along with each form, the chapters include explanation of the specific topic along with warnings and considerations upon utilizing that specific form. Unlike other form books, case citations are not provided, however, cross references to the author’s other work, *Michigan Real Property*, appear frequently.

Michigan Real Estate Practice and Forms by Nyal D. Deems

Location: KFM 4326 .D438

Acting as a real estate handbook, *Michigan Real Estate Practice and Forms* includes checklists, practice aids and forms. Before diving in, users may want to begin with the chapter “The Lawyer’s Role” for a broader view on how to deal with real estate issues and actions. Other subjects include land contracts, condominiums, water interests, construction



and development issues, leases and land use regulations. There are over 170 model forms in this two volume set.

IV. DATABASES

Westlaw

Federal Procedural Forms (FEDPROF), West's Federal Forms (FEDFORMS), All Forms (FORMS-ALL), All State and General Contracts/Commercial Forms (CMLFORMS-ALL), All State and General Real Property Forms (RPFORML-ALL), American Jurisprudence Legal Forms (AMJUR-LF), American Jurisprudence Pleading and Practice Forms (AMJUR-PP), Nichols Cyclopedic of Legal Forms Annotated (NICHOLS-LF), West's Legal Forms (WEST-LF), Michigan Civil Practice Forms (MI-CIVPRAC), Michigan Pleading and Practice (MI-PP), Michigan Legal Forms (MI-LF),

Lexis

Bender's Federal Practice Forms (MATBEN; FDPAC), Current Legal Forms (CURRENT LEGAL FORMS)

V. INTERNET RESOURCES

All About Forms

<http://www.allaboutforms.com>

All About Forms offers over 2000 free legal forms to the public. Forms are available in HTML or RTF format and are organized by legal topic such as "Estate Planning," "Employment," and "Credit." A useful FAQ section provides users with commonly asked questions and answers regarding on how to use the site and its forms. Submitting one's own personal question via email to the site's contributors is also an option.

FedForms

<http://www.fedforms.gov>

Deemed as the "U.S. Government's Official Hub for Federal Forms," this site offers users a variety of ways to search for the form they need: by form number, agency, agency list, and alphabetical list. There is also a section of "Frequently Used Forms" for quick reference and use. For those still unable to find what they need, *FedForms* provides users with the links to FirstGov and the Government Services Administration library.

FindForms

<http://www.findforms.com>

FindForms separates their site between forms that are free for download and those that cost a nominal fee before being downloaded. The "Find" box in the middle of the homepage allows users to search for the desired form and a list of the 25 most popular forms is also provided. An email newsletter is also an option to keep users abreast of changes to the site and up-to-date on new forms that are added regularly.

Findlaw Forms

<http://forms.lp.findlaw.com>



The forms portion of this popular website can tend to be cluttered with advertisements mentioning form preparation services for a fee. However, what divides this site from the others previously mentioned is that it classifies its forms by “Federal Court Forms” and “State Court Forms.” This makes it easier for users to locate the form they need for the jurisdiction they live in.

Forms Guru

<http://www.formsguru.com>

Boasting a collection of over 11,000 forms, *Forms Guru* resembles other sites in its organization. A list of the 25 most popular forms is available as well as a handy check-out system for forms that are available for a fee. A lengthy list of example business letters can accompany many of the forms listed on *FormsGuru*.

Internet Legal Resource Group

<http://www.ilrg.com/forms/>

Also boasting the Internet’s largest collection of free legal forms—2000+ and growing—*Internet Legal Resource Group (ILRG)* tries to make a commitment to its users. *ILRG* provides \$50.00 to those who can demonstrate that their forms are not in compliance with state law. The site also seeks feedback if users are not able to find a specific form, stating that they’ll try to include that form in the future. These efforts may make *ILRG* more user friendly.

The ‘Lectric Law Library Forms Room

<http://www.lectlaw.com/formb.htm>

The ‘Lectric Law Library Forms Room divides its forms into two sections: Business and General (Real Estate, Corporations, Employment, etc.) and Legal Practice (Law Practice Management, Litigation, etc.). Besides offering just forms, this site also offers articles on recent developments in the law and a legal dictionary.

Legaldocs...Legal Documents Online

<http://legaldocs.com/index.htm>

While openly stating that some forms are free and some are available at a charge, *Legaldocs* allows users to preview all forms for free. This proves to be helpful for the user who is slightly unsure of the form they’re looking for. The price for those forms that are available at a charge will vary depending upon the complexity of the form. A click on “Free Docs” brings users directly to those forms that are free of charge.

LexisOne Forms

<http://www.lexisone.com/store/catalog?action=main>

Users may search for forms three ways on LexisOne: by reviewing a list of automated forms (packages of forms that can be purchased and are organized by topic or state), by accessing their forms subscriptions (for those already a forms customer and have set forms subscriptions determined) and by reviewing a list of free legal forms. An “Advanced Search” box and “Search Tips” suggestions are provided for those unsure of how to navigate the site.

WashLaw WEB

<http://www.washlaw.edu/legalforms/>



Compiled by the Washburn School of Law, *WashLaw* has a link to a legal form resource page that offers state business forms, state tax forms, state company formation forms, real estate forms, contract forms, will forms and federal and state court forms. Forms are not available for all 50 states under each section, so users need to determine if their state is listed under the various sections.

