

# Legal Research Resources:

Great Legal Reference and Referral in the Public Library

An *Infopeople*  Webinar

Thursday, October 4, 2012  
12 Noon

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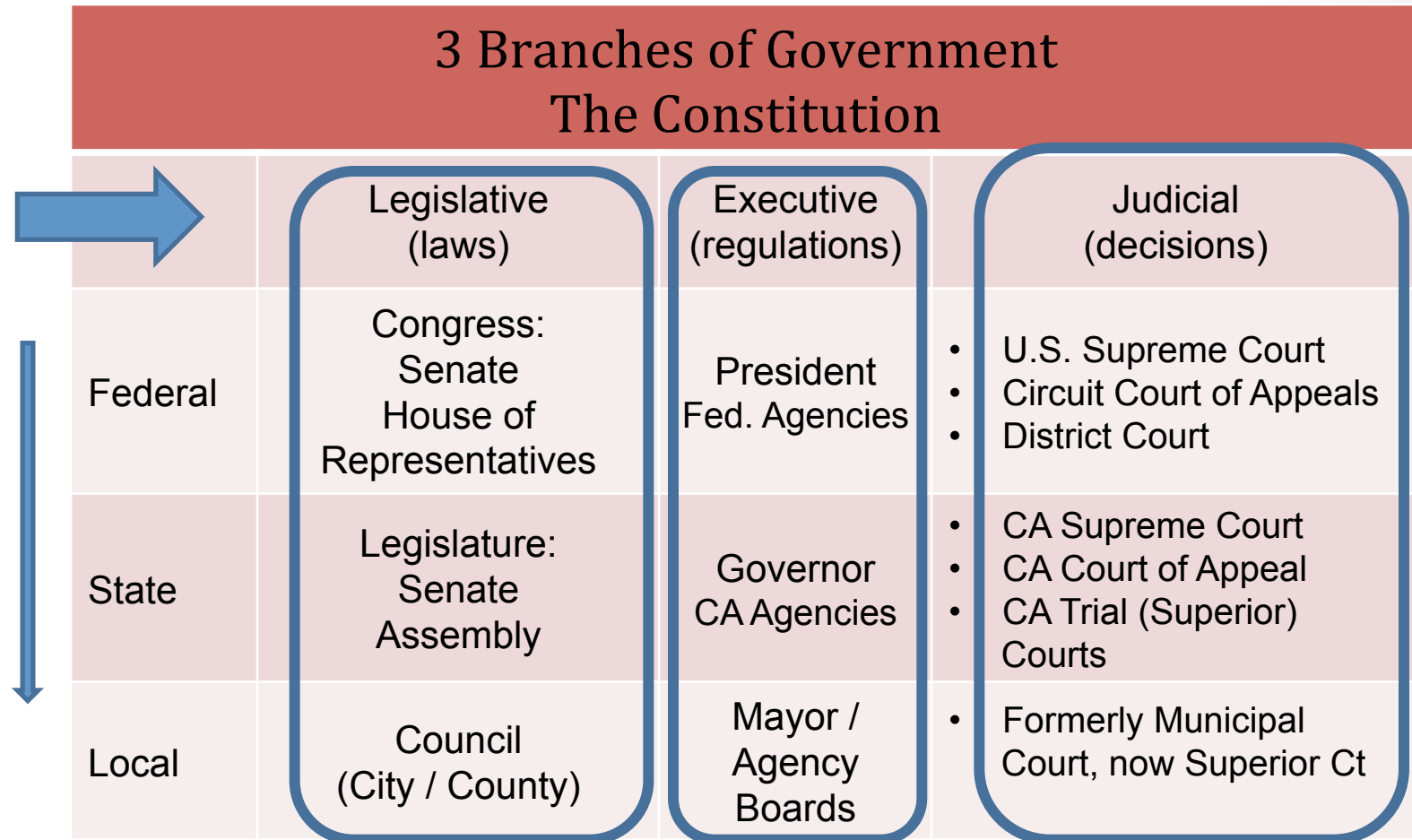
# Agenda

- Provide an overview of the American legal system and resources
- Explore trustworthy self-help websites and referral sources
- Discuss best practices for responding to legal questions
- Learn how your county law library can help



# American Legal System and Authority

# American Legal System



# American Legal System

3 Branches of Government			
	Legislative (laws)	Executive (regulations)	Judicial (decisions)
Federal	Congress: Senate House of Representatives	President Fed. Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Supreme Court</li> <li>• Circuit Court of Appeals</li> <li>• District Court</li> </ul>
State	Legislature: Senate Assembly	Governor CA Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CA Supreme Court</li> <li>• CA Court of Appeal</li> <li>• CA Trial (Superior) Courts</li> </ul>
Local	Council (City / County)	Mayor / Agency Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formerly Municipal Court, now Superior Ct</li> </ul>

“How do I find the law on medical marijuana?”

Researching a legal issue can be complex and touch on multiple branches and levels of government .....

# Legal Research: Find / Filter / Interpret / Apply

Venue Appeal TRO Municipal Statute  
Code  
Ordinance Answer Rules of Court Statute of Limitations  
Writ Precedent Common Law Administrative Law  
Injunction Petition Motion Contract CCP §2002  
Ex Parte  
Arbitration Hearing Proof of Service  
Plaintiff Cal. Civ. Code § 3523 Jurisdiction Default Mediation  
Small Claims Court  
Defendant Local Rules Pleading Paper Deposition  
Evidence Regulations  
Interrogatory Cal. Jur. FRCP  
Unlawful Detainer Witkin Discovery Minute Order 12 Cal.4th 186  
Continuance Complaint Subpoena Order  
Habeas Corpus  
Memorandum of Points and Authorities

Sources for Finding  
Primary Authority  
- The law itself

# Legislative Branch

## Finding Bills, Statutes (Laws) & Codes

### Federal

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

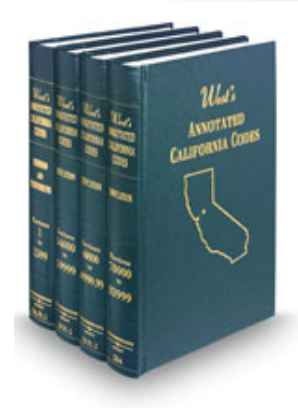
### California

<http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

### Local

City or County:

<http://igs.berkeley.edu/library/cagovdocs/calcodes.html>





# United States Code

[www.law.cornell.edu/uscode](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode)

Sample federal laws that can be found on this website:

Bankruptcy

Freedom of Information Act

Civil  
Rights

Foreclosure

Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and  
Consumer Protection Act

Copyrights

Trademarks

Medicare

Food Drug & Cosmetic  
Act

HIPPA (Health Insurance  
Portability and Accountability  
Act)

Patriot Act

Taxes

Military

Family Medical Leave Act

No Child Left Behind Act

Americans with Disabilities Act

Patents

Social Security

McCain Feingold  
Campaign Finance  
Reform Act

Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act

Immigration

National Parks

# California Legislative Branch

<http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

California LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

Quick Search: Bill Number [ ] GO

Bill Information California Law My Subscriptions

California Law >> Text Search

Code Search Text Search

**FIND RESULTS:**

ALL of these words or phrases: security deposit AND landlord AND days  
at least ONE of these words or phrases: [ ] OR [ ] OR [ ]

SELECT/UNSELECT ALL

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> California Constitution - CONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Code - FIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Probate Code - PROB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business and Professions Code - BPC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fish and Game Code - FGC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Contract Code - PCC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil Code - CIV	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food and Agricultural Code - FAC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Resources Code - PRC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Code of Civil Procedure - CCP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government Code - GOV	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Utilities Code - PUC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial Code - COM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harbors and Navigation Code - HNC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue and Taxation Code - RTC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporations Code - CORP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety Code - HSC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Streets and Highways Code - SHC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education Code - EDC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Insurance Code - INS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unemployment Insurance Code - UIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elections Code - ELEC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Labor Code - LAB	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Code - VEH
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence Code - EVID	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military and Veterans Code - MVC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Code - WAT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family Code - FAM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Penal Code - PEN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Welfare and Institutions Code - WIC

Sample question: How many days does a landlord have to return a tenant's security deposit?

# California Legislative Branch

<http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

California Law >> [Text Search](#) >> Search Results

Answer

## Results

Code Search

**Text Search**

Bills Returned: 5 Bills Displayed: 1 - 5 Page 1 of 1 pages

[CIV - 1946.7. - CHAPTER 2. Hiring of Real Property \[1940. - 1954.1.\]](#)

... **landlord** under this section, the tenant shall be responsible for payment of rent for 30 days. (d) If a **security deposit** shall apply. (e) If within...

[CIV - 1950.5. - CHAPTER 2. Hiring of Real Property \[1940. - 1954.1.\]](#)

... **deposit** is authorized to be applied thereto by the rental agreement. (c) A **landlord** may... completed within 21 calendar **days** after the tenant has...

[CIV - 1950.7. - CHAPTER 2. Hiring of Real Property \[1940. - 1954.1.\]](#)

... and the **security deposit** equals no more than one month's rent plus a deposit amount... from the date the **landlord** receives possession of the premises...

The answer: 21 days

California Civil Code section 1950.5(g) (1):

“No later than 21 calendar days after the tenant has vacated the premises, but not earlier than the time that either the **landlord** or the tenant provides a notice to terminate the tenancy ..... the **landlord** shall furnish the tenant, by personal delivery or by first-class mail, postage prepaid, a copy of an itemized statement indicating the basis for, and the amount of, any **security** received and the disposition of the **security** and shall **return** any remaining portion of the **security** to the tenant.”

# California Codes

<http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

Sample questions that can be answered on this website:

My son wants to join a fraternity really badly and this fraternity has been known for its hazing. Isn't there a law against that?

My friend told me that if you're under 18 you can't talk on your cell phone while you drive at all. I thought anyone could talk on their cell phone while they drive as long as it was hands free. Which is right?

I was cleaning my house the other day and found a gift card from like 2002. It still has \$10 on it. Isn't there a California law that says gift cards don't expire?

I want to sue my doctor for malpractice. How much time do I have to file my case?

We're supposed to dissect frogs in biology class next week. I told my teacher I don't want to and she told me I had to. Isn't that against the law to make me dissect a frog?

My car broke down. It's old and I don't want to fix it. Is it against the law to just leave it on the side of the road?

# Executive Branch Finding Regulations

Federal: Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

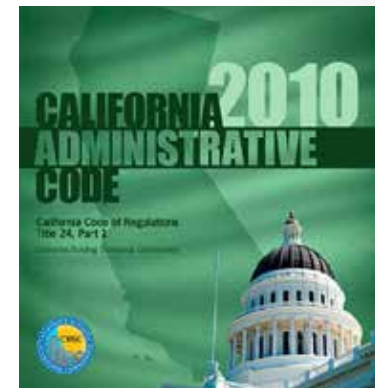
- <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>
- <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/>

State: California Code of Regulations

- <http://ccr.oal.ca.gov/>

Local: City of Los Angeles Department

- <http://cityfone.lacity.org/>



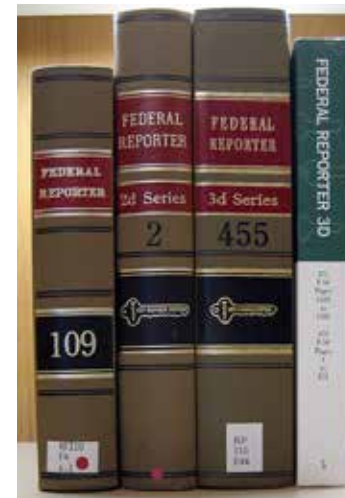
# Judicial Branch

## Finding Opinions – Decisions - Cases

State and Federal Case Law

- <http://scholar.google.com>

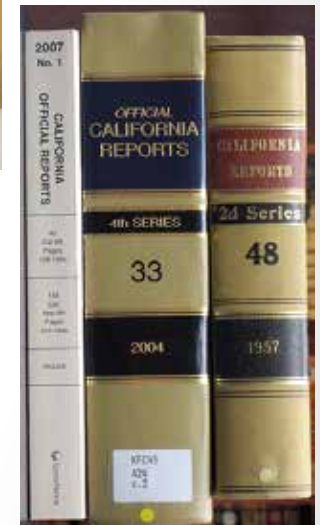
Federal Reporter Citation: 1 F.2d 325



California Case Law

- <http://www.lexisnexis.com/clients/CACourts/>

California Reporter Citation: 7 Cal.App.3d 446



# California Case Law

<http://www.lexisnexis.com/clients/CACourts/>

## CALIFORNIA COURTS

THE OFFICIAL CASE LAW OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Welcome to the California Official Reports page, created to provide Californians with access to official case law free of charge.

HOME

SEARCH

- By Terms
- By Citation
- By Party Name
- By Judge
- Advanced

Read Cases with Official Headnotes and Summaries from LexisNexis®

Special Sessions of the California Supreme Court and California Courts of Appeal

Deerings Annotated Code

Read Unannotated California Codes

Search Court Records

Find a Lawyer

Browse LexisNexis® Bookstore

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### Search By Terms Criteria

**Select Court to Search**

- CA Published Cases, Combined
- CA Supreme Court Published Cases
- CA Court of Appeal Published Cases

**Search for Opinions by Natural Language Word or Phrase**

**Restrict by Decisions Date**

No Date Restrictions  From:  To:

**Retrieve the 25 most relevant cases based on your input**

**6. Granberry v. Islay Investments**, No. S035591. , SUPREME COURT OF CALIFORNIA, 9 Cal. 4th 738; 889 P.2d 970; 38 Cal. Rptr. 2d 650; 1995 Cal. LEXIS 707; 95 Cal. Daily Op. Service 1752; 95 Daily Journal DAR 2987, March 6, 1995, Decided , Rehearing Denied April 20, 1995, Reported at: 1995 Cal. LEXIS 2727.

... three weeks after the termination of tenancy a landlord must **return** the **security deposit** paid by a former tenant and provide a written accounting ...

... abused its discretion by not requiring defendants to disgorge all **security deposits** received from the members of the plaintiff class and to ...

... the first month was in fact rent and not a **security deposit** within the meaning of section 1950.5, subdivision (b), 3 and therefore ...

... were to find the increased rental payment was a refundable **security deposit**

Section 1950.5, subdivision (b) provides: "As used in this section, '**security**' means any payment, fee, **deposit** or charge, including, but not limited to, an advance payment ...

✓ Search terms highlighted in the results

✓ Select a court or all courts

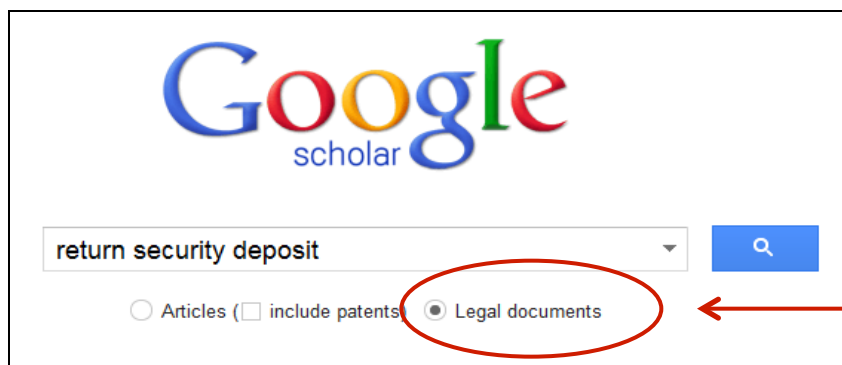
✓ Select a search method

✓ Select a date range

✓ Enter search terms

# Google Scholar

[www.scholar.google.com/](http://www.scholar.google.com/)



1. From the search screen:  
Enter search terms  
and select Legal  
documents

2. From the results screen:  
Narrow results by  
selecting a specific  
state or federal court.  
Can also narrow by  
date.

Google Scholar

return security deposit

Scholar About 1,310 results (0.07 sec)

Articles  
Legal documents  
Federal courts  
California courts  
Select courts

Any time  
Since 2012  
Since 2011  
Since 2008  
Custom range...

Sort by relevance  
Sort by date

include citations  
 Create alert

[Kraus v. Trinity Management Services, Inc.](#)  
999 P. 2d 718, 96 Cal. Rptr. 2d 485, 23 Cal. ... - Cal: Supreme ..., 2000 - Google Scholar  
... "(4) To remedy future defaults by the tenant in any obligation under the rental agreement to restore, replace, or **return** personal property or appurtenances, exclusive of ordinary wear and tear, if the **security deposit** is authorized to be applied thereto by the rental agreement." ...  
Cited by 312 - How cited - Related articles

[Granberry v. Islay Investments](#)  
889 P. 2d 970, 9 Cal. 4th 738, 38 Cal. Rptr. 2d ... - Cal: Supreme ..., 1995 - Google Scholar  
... An important provision of our statutory landlord-tenant law provides that within three weeks after the termination of tenancy a landlord must **return** the **security deposit** paid by a former tenant and provide a written accounting of any portion retained as compensation for unpaid ...  
Cited by 131 - How cited - Related articles

[Epstein v. DeDomenico](#)  
224 Cal. App. 3d 1243, 274 Cal. Rptr. ... - Cal: Court of Appeal, 1st ..., 1990 - Google Scholar  
... The **return** of the Epsteins' \$75,000 **security deposit** was included in the settlement.  
On April 4, the Epsteins obtained an order returning their \$75,000 **security deposit**.  
The Epsteins then became dissatisfied with the settlement. ...  
Cited by 47 - How cited - Related articles

[Metropolitan Water Dist. v. Adams](#)  
32 Cal. 2d 620, 197 P. 2d 543 - Cal: Supreme Court, 1948 - Google Scholar  
... On March 7, 1944, the district filed "an application for orders for **return** to plaintiff of interest earned on moneys deposited by plaintiff in court as **security** to enable ... made." Requested 625 were an order directing the clerk of the court to withdraw moneys on **deposit** and to ...  
Cited by 107 - How cited - Related articles



Sources for Finding  
Secondary Authority  
– About the law

# American Legal System: 3 Types of Legal Materials

## Primary

Laws

Regulations

Court  
Decisions

## Secondary

Encyclopedias

Treatises/  
Practice  
Guides

## Finding Aids

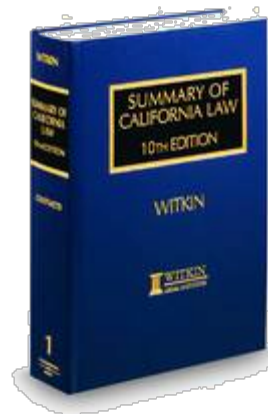
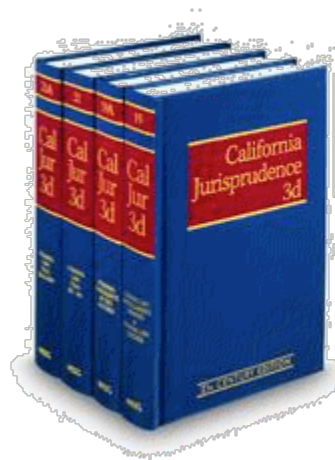
Indexes

Digests

Form Books

# Legal Commentary and Practice Guides - aka “Secondary Authority”

- Expresses ideas *about* the law or decisions
- Helps point to laws, judicial opinions and other topical publications
- Discusses how to *do* something relating to a particular legal practice or procedure
- Persuasive, not binding
- Written by legal scholars and practitioners



# Self Help – General Law & Dictionaries

-Findlaw-

<http://public.findlaw.com/>



**Accidents and Injuries**  
Personal Injury, Medical Malpractice, More »



**Criminal Law**  
Crimes A to Z, Your Rights, Expungement, More »



**DUI**  
State DUI Laws, DUI Resources, More »



**Employee Rights**  
Losing a Job, Wages, Harassment, More »



**Marriage, Family Law & Divorce**  
Adoption, Child Custody, Child Support, Divorce, More »



**Real Estate**  
Foreclosure, Tenants, Landlords, Neighbors, More »



**Small Business**  
Incorporation, Forms & Contracts, Employment, More »



**Bankruptcy and Debt**  
Bankruptcy, Foreclosure Alternatives, Debt Relief, More »



**Immigration**  
Citizenship, Green Cards, Visas, More »



**Car Accidents**  
Truck Accidents, Motorcycle Accidents, More »



**Dangerous Products**  
A to Z, Asbestos, Toyota, More »



**Estate Planning**  
Wills, Trusts, Living Wills, Probate, More »



**Traffic Violations**  
Tickets A to Z, DMVs, More »



**Civil Rights**  
Employment, Housing, Laws, Enforcement, More »

- A starting place for learning about the law
- Articles vary in length & detail
- May incorporate references and links to state specific laws
- New at Findlaw: legal forms .....

FindLaw Legal Documents

Provided By:

**USLEGAL**  
USLEGALFORMS.COM

# Self Help – General Law and & Legal Dictionaries -Nolo -

Legal Dictionary

Plain-English definitions for legal terms

<http://www.nolo.com/dictionary>



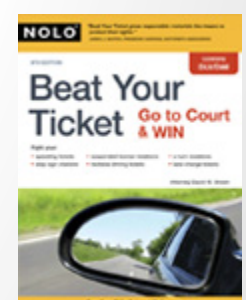
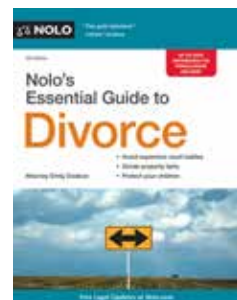
Legal Encyclopedia

Thousands of free articles on everyday legal topics

<http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/>

## EBSCO Host

- Searchable full-text database of Nolo publications
- Available on many California county law library websites



# Self Help – General Law and & Legal Dictionaries EBSCO Host

California consortium hosts full access  
by county  
Example: LA Law Library  
[www.lalawlibrary.org](http://www.lalawlibrary.org)  
Login: CA / LA



**Browse by Category**

<b>Business &amp; Corporations</b>	<b>Family Affairs &amp; Divorce</b>	<b>Immigration &amp; Travel</b>	<b>Money &amp; Financial Planning</b>
<b>Patents, Copyright &amp; Trademarks</b>	<b>Property &amp; Real Estate</b>	<b>Rights &amp; Disputes</b>	<b>Wills &amp; Estate Planning</b>

**Legal Forms by U.S. State**

Statutes attempt to lay out the ground rules of the "law" and vary from state to state. Click link below to search legal forms by U.S. state.

[Search By State](#)

**Browse Popular Legal Forms**

- ▶ Accident Claims
- ▶ Bankruptcy

# Self-Help Resources Statewide

# Self Help – Statewide Websites

## **California Courts Self Help Center:**

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>

- Self help information on 12 topics, including: families & children, divorce & separation, evictions & housing, seniors, name change, traffic, small claims court, civil lawsuits, criminal cases, and appeals.
- Information in Spanish

## **LawHelpCalifornia:**

[www.lawhelpca.org](http://www.lawhelpca.org)

Provides self help information on 14 topics including: housing, families & kids, public benefits, health, disability, seniors, immigration, and civil rights.

- Also provides referrals to low cost legal providers and contains information on most topics in languages other than English.



# CA Courts Self Help Center – List of Topics

<b>Getting Started</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Court basics, researching the law, preparing for court, fee waivers, etc.</li></ul>	<b>Small Claims</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suing someone or being sued, going to court, collecting/paying the judgment</li></ul>
<b>Families and Children</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Custody and visitation, child support, child abuse and neglect, guardianship, emancipation, adoption</li></ul>	<b>Divorce or Separation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Filing or responding to a divorce, annulment, property and debt, spousal/partner support</li></ul>
<b>Abuse &amp; Harassment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Domestic violence, civil harassment, workplace violence</li></ul>	<b>Eviction and Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eviction, foreclosure, security deposits</li></ul>
<b>Name Change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changing adult or child names</li></ul>	<b>Traffic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to pay a ticket, traffic &amp; ticket basics, traffic court, etc.</li></ul>
<b>Seniors &amp; Conservatorship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elder abuse, when seniors are unable to care for themselves</li></ul>	<b>Problems with Money</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suing someone or being sued for any amount of money</li></ul>
<b>Criminal Law</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cleaning your criminal record, understanding criminal court</li></ul>	<b>Appeals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Civil, small claims, and traffic appeals</li></ul>

# California Courts Self Help Center

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>

Search  [Advanced Search](#)

**CALIFORNIA COURTS**  
THE JUDICIAL BRANCH OF CALIFORNIA

Judicial Branch Home

[Courts](#) [Self-Help](#) [Forms & Rules](#) [Opinions](#) [Programs](#) [Policy & Administration](#) [News & Reference](#)

Self-Help

## Online Self-Help Center

Welcome, Self-Help will help you find assistance and information, work better with an attorney, and represent yourself in some legal matters. [En español.](#) [More languages.](#)

[Print](#) [Español](#)

Search Self-Help Center

### GETTING STARTED

- [Finding Free and Low-Cost Legal Help](#)
- [Help From Your Court](#)
- [Fee Waivers](#)
- [Resolving Your Case Out of Court](#)
- [Preparing for Court](#)
- [More Topics](#)

[MORE »](#)

### SMALL CLAIMS

- [Suing Someone](#)
- [Being Sued](#)
- [Collecting Your Judgment](#)
- [Mediation](#)

[MORE »](#)

### FAMILIES & CHILDREN

- [Custody & Visitation](#)
- [Child Support](#)
- [Asking for Guardianship](#)
- [How to Adopt a Child](#)
- [Child Abuse & Neglect](#)
- [If Your Child is Arrested](#)

[MORE »](#)

### DIVORCE OR SEPARATION

- [Filing for Divorce or Separation](#)
- [An Easier Way to Get Divorced](#)
- [Responding to a Divorce](#)
- [Spousal Support](#)
- [Dividing Your Property](#)

[MORE »](#)

### COURT LOCATIONS


Jury Info, Court Info, Court Websites

Enter city or zip  [Find](#)

### QUICK LINKS

- [Lawyers and Legal Help](#)
- [Help From Your Court](#)
- [Ask a Law Librarian](#)

### CALIFORNIA SELF-HELP AND FAMILY LAW FACILITATOR LOCATIONS



# California Courts Self Help Center

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>

Judicial Branch Home

CALIFORNIA COURTS  
THE JUDICIAL BRANCH OF CALIFORNIA

Courts Self-Help Forms & Rules Opinions Programs Policy & Administration News & Reference

Self-Help

Welcome, Self-Help will help you find assistance and information, work better with an attorney, and represent yourself in some legal matters. [En español](#). [More languages](#).

**GETTING STARTED**

- Finding Free and Low-Cost Legal Help
- Help From Your Court
- Fee Waivers
- Resolving Your Case Out of Court
- Preparing for Court
- More Topics

[MORE »](#)

**SMALL CLAIMS**

\$7,500

- Suing Someone
- Being Sued
- Collecting Your Judgment
- Mediation

[MORE »](#)

**FAMILIES & CHILDREN**

- Custody & Visitation
- Child Support
- Asking for Guardianship
- How to Adopt a Child
- Child Abuse & Neglect
- If Your Child is Arrested

[MORE »](#)

**ABUSE & HARASSMENT**

- Domestic Violence
- Elder and Dependent Abuse
- Civil Harassment

[MORE »](#)

**EVICTON & HOUSING**

- Eviction
- Foreclosure
- Security Deposits

[MORE »](#)

**COURT LOCATIONS**  
Jury Info, Court Info, Court Websites  
Enter city or zip

Print Español

Exercise question:

A customer approaches the reference desk and says:

“I just moved out of my apartment. How long does my landlord have to give back my security deposit? I need that money so I can pay my tuition this semester.”

# California Courts Self Help Center

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>

CALIFORNIA COURTS  
THE JUDICIAL BRANCH OF CALIFORNIA

Judicial Branch Home

Courts

Self-Help

Forms & Rules

Opinions

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Policy & Administration

News & Reference

Self-Help > Eviction & Housing

## Self-Help

Getting Started

Small Claims

Families & Children

Divorce or Separation

Abuse & Harassment

### Eviction & Housing

» Eviction

» Foreclosure

» Security Deposits

» FAQs

Name Change

Traffic

Seniors & Conservatorship

Problems With Money

Criminal Law

Civil Appeals

Self-Help Glossary

## Eviction & Housing

Print Español

Access information about evictions, foreclosures, and security deposits. Find instructions, forms, and answers to frequently asked questions.

### COURT LOCATIONS

Jury Info, Court Info, Court Websites

Enter city or zip

Find

### Evictions (Unlawful Detainer)

Learn about the eviction process with a guide for landlords, a guide for tenants, detailed instructions, forms, and resources.

### Foreclosure

Find information and resources regarding the foreclosure process.

### Security Deposits

Learn about security deposits, what are valid legal reasons for a landlord to keep all or part of a security deposit, and how to go to court to ask for return of a security deposit.

### RELATED INFORMATION

- [Find out in you live in a rent-controlled city](#)
- [Small Claims](#)

## Return of security deposit

After a tenant moves out, a landlord has 21 days to:

- Return the tenant's deposit in full, or
- Mail or personally give to the tenant:
  - A written letter explaining why he or she is keeping all or part of the deposit,
  - An itemized list of each of the deductions,
  - Any remaining refund of the tenant's deposit, and
  - Copies of receipts for the charges/deductions, unless repairs cost less than \$126 or the tenant waived (gave up) his or her right to get the receipts. If the repairs cannot be finished within the 21-day period, the landlord can send the tenant a good faith estimate of the cost of repairs. Then within 14 days of the repairs being done, the landlord must send the tenant the receipts.

Answer: 21 days

# California Courts Self Help Center

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>

Sample questions that can be answered on this website:

“How do I change the amount of child support that I owe?”

“I just moved out of my apartment. How long does my landlord have to give back my security deposit?”

“I’m getting married, what do I need to do to legally change my name?”

“My girlfriend got a restraining order against me and I want to challenge it. What can I do?”

“My friend got arrested and they’re going to charge him with a crime. He said his arraignment is tomorrow. What does that mean? Will he be getting out of jail?”

“How do I file an appeal? Do I file my paperwork in the same court where my case was held?”

“I just got my first traffic ticket. Do I have to pay it? What are my options?”

# Law Help California

[www.lawhelpca.org](http://www.lawhelpca.org)

## LawHelpCA.org

Helping Californians find legal aid & self-help resources

[About Us](#) | [Site Help](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Survey](#)

Find Legal Information

Find a Lawyer or Court Program

Search

GO

- Click a topic below for legal help and information.
- [Click here](#) for criminal matters.
- [Click here](#) to get California court forms.



- Set your location

Please enter a city, county, or zip code

SET

### Housing



Homelessness  
Homeownership  
Housing Discrimination  
[More issues](#)

### Families and Kids



Adoption  
Child Support  
Custody/Visitation  
[More issues](#)

### Public Benefits



Child Care / Foster Care  
Disability and Public Benefits  
Emergency Assistance  
[More issues](#)

### Protection from Abuse



Child Abuse/Neglect  
Domestic Violence  
Elder Abuse  
[More issues](#)

### Health



Control Over Health Care Decisions  
Health Insurance  
Medi-Cal  
[More issues](#)

### Consumer & Small Claims



Bankruptcy  
Cars  
Contract and Warranty Problems  
[More issues](#)

### Disability



Assistive Technology  
Disability and Public Benefits  
Education Rights  
[More issues](#)

### Veterans and Military



Appeals  
Citizenship through Military Service  
Disabled Veterans  
[More issues](#)

### Seniors

60+

Elder Abuse  
IHSS (In-Home Supportive Services)  
Medicare  
[More issues](#)

**More Issues:** Work, Individual & Civil Rights, Immigration, Life & Estate Planning, Native American Issues

### More Languages

Spanish / Español  
Chinese / 中文  
Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt  
Korean / 한국어  
[All Languages](#)

### Welcome to the new LawHelpCA.org!

LawHelpCA.org provides Californians with easy online access to basic legal resources and attorney information.

While our look has changed, our mission remains the same. Please email [admin@lawhelpca.org](mailto:admin@lawhelpca.org) if you have any comments or suggestions about the new site.

# Law Help California

[www.lawhelpca.org](http://www.lawhelpca.org)

## LawHelpCA.org

Helping Californians find legal aid & self-help resources

[About Us](#) | [Site Help](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Survey](#)




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Find a Lawyer or Court Program

Search

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[HOME](#)

 SHARE  EMAIL  PRINT




### Housing

Click on the sub-topic that best matches your legal problem to get legal information and to find help.

- Homelessness
- Homeownership
- Housing Discrimination
- Landlord and Tenant Issues
- Mobile Homes and Manufactured Homes
- Predatory Lending
- Small Claims Court
- Other Housing Issues
- Foreclosure Prevention
- Public Housing and Subsidized Housing



Los Angeles 90012

-Set your location 

Please enter a city, county, or zip code

SET

### More Languages

Spanish / Español

Chinese / 中文

# Law Help California

[www.lawhelpca.org](http://www.lawhelpca.org)

Find Legal Information Find a Lawyer or Court Program

HOME > FIND LEGAL INFORMATION > HOUSING

SHARE EMAIL PRINT

← HOUSING

### Landlord and Tenant Issues

LIBRARY OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES

- Evictions (6)
- General Information (26)
- Moving out (5)
- Repairs (1)

FIND A LAWYER OR COURT PROGRAM

FILTER BY:  
▶ Language

### Landlord and Tenant Issues

- ▶ **How to Get Back Possessions You Left in a Rental Unit**  
Content Detail  
By: California Department of Consumer Affairs,
- ▶ **Options for a Landlord: When a Tenant's Personal Property Has Been Left in the Rental Unit**  
Content Detail  
By: California Department of Consumer Affairs,
- ▶ **Tenant's Right: Security Deposits**  
The following information may be useful to you in your effort to get your security deposit back from your landlord. Content Detail  
By: Legal Services of Northern California - Sacramento Office (Serves Sacramento County),  
Read this in: Russian / Русский, Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt,

- ▶ **Write a Letter to Your Landlord Demanding the Return of Your Security Deposit**  
Click here for an online computer program that will help you write a letter to your landlord demanding the return of your security deposit. Content Detail  
By: Administrative Office of the Courts,
- ▶ **Write a Letter to Your Landlord Demanding the Return of Your Security Deposit**  
This program asks questions and prepares a letter to a landlord requesting the return a security deposit. Content Detail  
By: Los Angeles Superior Court,



# Law Help California

## [www.lawhelpca.org](http://www.lawhelpca.org)

HOME



### Languages

- Amharic / Amharic (3)
- Arabic / العربية (60)
- Armenian / Հայերէն (53)
- Cambodian / Khmer (23)
- Chinese / 中文 (190)
- Farsi / فارسی (40)
- French / Français (43)
- Greek / Ελληνικά (35)
- Gujarati / ગુજરાતી (2)
- Haitian Creole / Kreyòl ayisyen (1)
- Hebrew / עברית (5)
- Hindi / हिन्दी (12)
- Hmong / Hmoob (32)
- Italian / italiano (1)
- Japanese / 日本語 (8)
- Korean / 한국어 (100)
- Kurdish / کوردی (3)
- Laotian / ລາວ (17)
- Polish / polski (41)
- Portuguese / português (40)
- Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (8)
- Russian / Русский (78)
- Russian / Русский (6)
- Samoan / Gagana Samoa (2)
- Somali / Soomaali (7)
- Spanish / Español (646)
- Tagalog / Tagalog (64)
- Thai / ไทย (8)
- Turkish / Türkçe (4)
- Urdu / اردو (10)
- Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt (127)

# Law Help California

[www.lawhelpca.org](http://www.lawhelpca.org)

## Sample questions that can be answered on this Website:

“I accidentally left some things in a closet when I moved out. My landlord won’t return my calls. How can I get my stuff back?”

“My friend got fired after his boss found out he was HIV positive. Isn’t that against the law?”

“Debt collectors are calling me every night. How can I stop them from harassing me?”

“I want to visit my grandchildren, but my son-in-law refuses to allow me to see them. What are my rights?”

I need some legal advice on \_\_\_\_\_, but can’t afford a lawyer. Do you know any lawyers or an agency that can help me?

“I missed the last couple months of my mortgage payment. What can I do to make sure my house doesn’t go into foreclosure?”

# Self Help Resources Local

Courts, Agencies,  
Non-Profits &  
Law Libraries

# Self Help – Courts

## **Contra Costa Virtual Self Help Center:**

<http://cc-courthelp.org/>

Includes:

- Legal research for public library staff
- “Your Day in Court” presentation



## **San Mateo Superior Court:**

<http://www.sanmateocourt.org/selfhelp>

Includes:

- “You’re thinking of filing a lawsuit?”

[http://www.sanmateocourt.org/self\\_help/guide\\_lawsuit.php#](http://www.sanmateocourt.org/self_help/guide_lawsuit.php#)

- “I have a case in court, now what?”

[http://www.sanmateocourt.org/documents/self\\_help/havecase.pdf](http://www.sanmateocourt.org/documents/self_help/havecase.pdf)

# Self Help – Law Libraries

- **Alameda County Public Law Library**

<http://acgov.org/law/refservices/researchguide.htm>

- Los Angeles Law Library

<http://www.lalawlibrary.org>

- Orange County Public Law Library

[http://ocpll.org/links\\_cal.html](http://ocpll.org/links_cal.html)

- Riverside County Public Law Library

<http://www.rclawlibrary.org/reference-services/legal-research/>

San Francisco Public Law Library

<http://sflawlibrary.org/index.aspx?page=31>

- **Sacramento County Public Law Library**

<http://www.saclaw.org/pages/legal-research-guides.aspx>

- San Diego County Public Law Library

<http://www.sdcpll.org/resources/guides.htm>

- San Mateo County Public Law Library

<http://www.smcll.org/research.html>

- Stanislaus County Public Law Library

<http://www.stanislauslawlibrary.org/internetguides.html>



# Alameda County Public Law Library

25+ Resource guides

Links to websites & community resources

[http://www.acgov.org/law/refservices/  
researchguide.htm](http://www.acgov.org/law/refservices/researchguide.htm)

Topical guides include resources for:

- Conservatorship
- Homeowners
- Employees
- Guardianship & Adoption
- Estate Planning
- Obtaining and Amending Vital Records
- Small business start-ups
- Artists, Authors and Inventors
- Dealing with Debt
- Cleaning Up Your Criminal Record
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Going to Small Claims Court
- Child Custody and Family Support
- Resolving Neighbor Disputes

# Sacramento County Public Law Library

65+ Legal Resource Guides

<http://www.saclaw.lib.ca.us/pages/legal-research-guides.aspx>

Topics Include:

- Adult Adoption
- Bankruptcy
- Child Support
- Civil Rights Litigation
- Consumer Law
- Criminal Law
- Custody and Visitation
- Deeds
- Divorce
- Education Law
- Elder Law
- Filing a Lawsuit
- Foreclosure
- Traffic Law
- Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning
- Workers' Compensation

## Self Help – Additional Referral Guides and Directories

### ***Lawyer Referral Services***

Statewide (California Bar Association):

- <http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Public/LawyerReferralServicesLRS.aspx>

Los Angeles County Bar Association:

- [www.smartlaw.org/](http://www.smartlaw.org/)

### ***Dept. of Consumer Affairs Resource & Referral Guides***

100+ page referral guides cover a broad range of consumer / legal topics

Statewide:

- <http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/guide/index.shtml>

Los Angeles County:

- <http://dca.lacounty.gov/ResourceDirectory.pdf>

***California State Bar*** – Pamphlets on 22 topics in FAQ' s format

- <http://www.calbar.ca.gov/public/pamphlets.aspx>

***Self-Help Centers in California*** – Forms and court procedures assistance

- <http://www.courts.ca.gov/1083.htm>

Los Angeles County Superior Court Self Help Centers

- [www.lasuperiorcourt.org/familylaw/ui/pdfs/SelfHelpCentersLocations.pdf](http://www.lasuperiorcourt.org/familylaw/ui/pdfs/SelfHelpCentersLocations.pdf)

### ***Rainbow Resources Directory***

Social services directory for Los Angeles County

Legal Assistance Resources at pp. 474-490



# Free Online Legal Dictionaries

# Free Online Legal Dictionaries

<p><b>California Courts Self Help Center, Self-Help Glossary</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-glossary.htm">http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-glossary.htm</a></p>	<p><i>Subpoena: An official order to go to court at a stated time. Subpoenas are commonly used to tell witnesses to come to court to testify in a trial. The term subpoena is also used generally to apply to a subpoena duces tecum.</i></p>
<p><b>Nolo's Plain English Law Dictionary</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.nolo.com/dictionary/">http://www.nolo.com/dictionary/</a></p>	<p><i>Subpena (subpoena): A court order issued at the request of a party requiring a witness to testify, produce specified evidence, or both. A subpena can be used to obtain testimony from a witness at both depositions (testimony under oath taken outside of court) and at trial. Failure to comply with the subpena can be punished as contempt of court.</i></p>
<p><b>FindLaw Legal Dictionary</b></p> <p><a href="http://dictionary.findlaw.com/">http://dictionary.findlaw.com/</a></p>	<p><i>Subpoena also subpena: n [Latin sub poena under penalty] : a writ commanding a designated person upon whom it has been served to appear (as in court or before a congressional committee) under a penalty (as a charge of contempt) for failure to comply compare summons</i></p>

# Legal Reference in the Public Library Setting

# Best Practices

## Library staff are navigators

Library Staff:	The Patron / Customer:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Directs to legal publications in the collection</li><li>• Suggests websites to try</li><li>• Assists with searching the public or law library catalog</li><li>• Helps to find definitions of legal words, references, concepts or phrases</li><li>• Identifies government agency, community or legal resources</li><li>• Refers to a Law Library</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does his / her own research</li><li>• Selects and fills out forms</li><li>• Interprets the meaning of a specific law or case</li><li>• Composes his / her own original legal documents</li><li>• Selects legal counsel</li><li>• Hits the 'send' button on the computer</li><li>• Decides on a specific course of action</li></ul>

# Legal Reference Interviews Are Similar To General Reference Interviews

## **Step 1: Determine if the customer is**

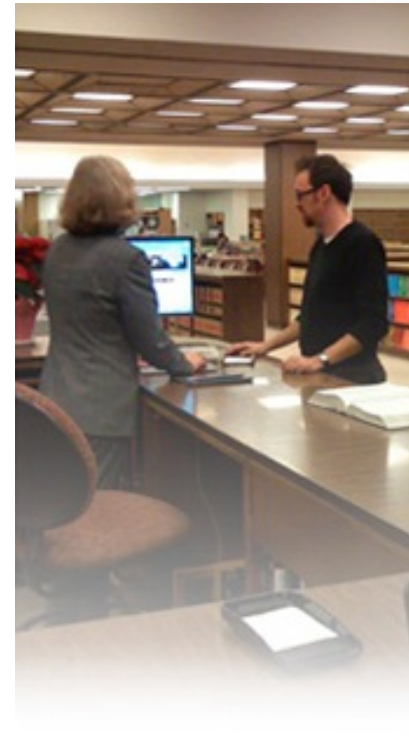
- **Looking for something specific or**
- **For general information on an issue**

## **Step 2: Ask follow-up questions. Clarify**

- **Define unfamiliar terms & concepts**
- **Collaborate on synonyms**
- **Use open ended questions to learn what the customer knows and needs**

## **Step 3: Identify the appropriate action**

- **Answer**
- **Refer**
- **Defer**



# Learning Opportunities and Help

# Learn More about Legal Reference & Research -Online Resources-

SCALL: Locating the Law

<http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/scall/locating.htm>

- A primer on legal research for non-law librarians
- Downloadable e-book



Council of California County  
Law Librarians

<http://www.publiclawlibrary.org/research.html>

- Legal research guide for the public
- California law libraries locator



The Council of California County Law Librarians

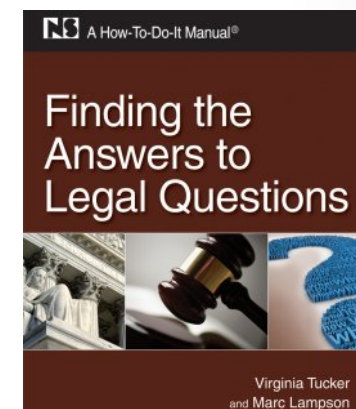
# Learn More about Legal Reference & Research -Print Resources-

## Legal Research How to Find and Understand the Law.

15<sup>th</sup> Ed., (Nolo, 2007)



Tucker, Virginia &  
Lampson, Marc. Finding  
the Answers to Legal  
Questions. New York.  
(Neal-Schuman, 2011)





# What Public Law Librarians Do For The Public (and public library staff)

- Respond to reference questions in-person, on the phone and via e-mail
- Suggest research avenues and resources
- Identify and locate appropriate print materials
- Demonstrate how to use legal research databases
- Help find forms & sample motions
- Participate in AskNow, a state-wide legal reference chat service
- Teach classes on legal resources and research
- Help understand the law making process
- Provide resources and referrals to legal services, clinics and government agency support





where is the level?

# Thank You!

Malinda Muller  
Director, Programs & Partnerships  
LA Law Library  
[mmuller@lalawlibrary.org](mailto:mmuller@lalawlibrary.org)





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