Feb 21st, 1:45 PM - 2:45 PM

Georgia and State Research Resources

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Brannon, Pamela C., "Georgia and State Research Resources" (2019). Continuing Legal Education Presentations. 5.  
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SESSION 5 – GEORGIA AND STATE RESEARCH RESOURCES

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GEORGIA AND STATE RESEARCH RESOURCES

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General Resources
Below are several resources that can be helpful when you are trying to get started in researching state materials, whether in Georgia or in another state.

National Association Websites

There are several national organizations geared toward different types of state government officials or bodies. These organizations generally do a good bit of research on the work of the states in a particular area, and place the results of that research on the Internet. In addition to providing links to state resources in their purview, these associations can be particularly useful if you want to find another state’s law to compare/contrast with Georgia’s, or to investigate how other states address a particular issue.

National Association of Secretaries of State
http://www.nass.org

As the major professional association for Secretaries of State, NASS conducts surveys of state laws and practices in areas such as elections, administrative rules publication, voter registration, management of business registration, and notaries public.

NASS Administrative Codes and Registers Section
http://www.administrative-rules.org/administrative-rules

The NASS Administrative Codes and Registers Section gathers and distributes information on the publication of administrative rules and codes. As a part of this, the Administrative Codes and Registers Section maintains a site providing links to each state’s administrative law. For each state, the site links to the administrative register, administrative code, and any manual on rule writing or filing provided by the Secretary of State.

National Conference of State Legislatures

The National Conference of State Legislatures provides a variety of resources designed to assist state legislatures. Among these resources are a number of reports and surveys on state laws covering a number of topics, such as child support and medical malpractice. The NCSL also maintains a number of databases tracking new proposed and passed legislation on specified subjects. These materials are available under the “Research” link on the homepage.

National Center for State Courts
http://www.ncsc.org
The National Center for State Courts is the premier source for information on the functioning of state courts across the nation. Topics studied include courtroom technology, the selection and function of juries, how courts handle complex litigation, and specialized courts. The NCSC also makes it easy to compare courts of different states on a number of measures, such as caseload, language access, and civil appellate procedures.

**Law Library Research Guides**

Virtually every law library with a website will have some sort of research guide on that website; it’s what we do. If you are beginning research on a particular state’s law, the best approach is to look for a research guide on that state’s law from a law library in that state.

Why focus on a law library in that state? Because the law librarians in that particular state know that state law better than librarians in another state would. We all generally know how to do research in different states, but in general we’re best at doing research in our state.

**Search: [state] law research guide**

For many purposes the best course of action is to go to your internet search engine of choice and type in a basic search such as “Georgia law research guide.” Be sure to check the sources for your results and choose the guides from law libraries in the state which you are researching, as these are more likely to be complete and detailed.

**Law Library of Congress Guide to Law Online**


The Law Library of Congress has put together a series of research guides on the legal research resources in every state and territory. These research guides primarily consist of links to official state government websites and a collection of general guides to the law of each state. Usefully, each guide links to the websites of law libraries in the state, from which it is easy to locate more discrete information.

**Georgetown Law Library Research Guides**

[http://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/home](http://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/home)

Similar to the Law Library of Congress, the Georgetown Law Library has a collection of basic research guides for every state. Each guide includes links to both paid services (Westlaw, Bloomberg, LexisNexis, HeinOnline, and LLMC), government websites, and direct links to research guides from law libraries in that state.
Other Sites

Google Books
https://books.google.com

Internet Archive
https://www.archive.org

Due to their goal to include as much content as possible, Google Books and the Internet Archive contain a large number of historical legal materials, primarily published prior to 1924. Examples include historic state statutes, legislative journals, agency and government reports, and case law.

OpenStates
https://openstates.org

OpenStates provides a one-stop source for information on current legislation in every state legislature. Information on pending legislation is collected directly from the state legislatures, updated daily, and available in a consistent, easy-to-use format. Although it is easy to navigate, there is no search functionality built into the site.

CourtListener
https://www.courtcustomer.com/

Provided by the Free Law Project, CourtListener currently contains the searchable text of over 3.5 million precedential opinions from state and federal courts across the country. Although CourtListener does not claim to have every opinion available in paid services such as Lexis and Westlaw, it is quickly approaching relatively comprehensive coverage. Coverage of Georgia courts goes back to 1841.

Georgia Constitutional Resources

Georgia Secretary of State

The Georgia Secretary of State’s website contains the current iteration of the Georgia Constitution, including amendments.

Georgialnfo
https://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/topics/government/articles/constitutions
GeorgiaInfo contains copies of all Georgia Constitutions, from the 1732 colonial charter to the 1983 Constitution. Each Constitution is presented as ratified, without subsequent amendments, making further research necessary if you wish to locate the Constitution in force as of a particular date. Although the GeorgiaInfo website is still available, it is no longer being updated or maintained.

**Georgia Official and Statistical Register**
http://statregister.galileo.usg.edu/statregister/

Published from 1923 to 1990, the Official and Statistical Register in the 1980s included the full text of the current Constitution. Although prior editions did not contain the entire Constitution, the text of Constitutional amendments put up for vote and results of the election on those amendments were routinely included.

**Georgia Government Publications**
http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?dbs=ggpd&ini=ggpd.ini&userid=public&query=Authors:%22Georgia.+Constitution.%22

Among the numerous resources in Georgia Government Publications, the database includes a number of Georgia Constitutions from 1942 to 2009. Not every year is represented; however, the Constitutions in the database generally incorporate any amendments prior to their publication.

**State of Georgia Select Committee on Constitutional Revision, 1977-1981**
http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?dbs=ggpd&ini=ggpd.ini&userid=public&query=Authors:%22Georgia.+Select+Committee+on+Constitutional+Revision.%22

An invaluable source of legislative history in the drafting of the current Constitution, this set presents the full, verbatim transcripts of meetings where the members of the Committee debated revisions to the Georgia Constitution. In addition to the transcripts, material available to the Committee at the sessions is included, such as committee reports, draft versions with strikethroughs, and cross-reference tables showing proposed changes.

**Georgia Legislative Materials**

**Codes**

**Current Code of Georgia (free access)**
https://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/gacode

The current text of the Georgia Code is made available to the public for free through an agreement between the State of Georgia and the publisher, LexisNexis. Because it is published
by LexisNexis, this version of the Georgia Code allows for advanced terms and connectors searching. The online, freely available version does not contain any annotations, but does include the history line.

**Historic Georgia Digests and Codes**

https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/ga_code  
https://archive.org/details/ugalaw

The University of Georgia Law Library has digitized each of the digests, compilations, and codifications of Georgia’s laws from the original 1799 Watkins Digest to the 1933 Code. In addition to making these historical codes available through the UGA Law Library website, the codes are available from the Internet Archive. The Internet Archive versions can be browsed and searched easily without downloading the full volume.

**Session Laws**

**Georgia Legislative Documents, 1799-1999**  
http://www.galileo.usg.edu/express?link=zgl

Georgia Legislative Documents provides access to the full text of the Georgia session laws from 1799 to 1999. Despite the search indicating the presence of laws from 1755, the earliest session laws are from 1799. The laws are presented in HTML format; however, there is clear delineation of page changes. Several useful search functions are available, including a year/page search, which allows users to quickly locate a law from a citation to the *Georgia Laws*.

**Georgia Government Publications, 2000-present**  
http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20(ga%20l407)

Georgia Government Publications has picked up where Georgia Legislative Documents left off, posting the full PDF of each edition of *Georgia Laws* published from 2000 to the present. The online search capability leaves something to be desired, as it does not allow for a year/page search or searching within an individual volume; however, each volume can be downloaded and searched offline as well.

**Legislative History and Bill Tracking**

**Georgia Legislature**  
The Georgia Legislature’s website provides a wealth of information about the legislative process for recent years. Most information is available by selecting the “Advanced Search” option or by navigating to the websites for the House of Representatives and the State Senate. The “Advanced Search” provides access to legislation back to 1996, and offers functionality such as searching by O.C.G.A. title affected. The majority of the legislative history information is available on the House and Senate sites, which contain video broadcasts of the legislative session and committee meetings, as well as committee reports, agendas, minutes, and documents.

**Georgia State University Law Review Peach Sheets**

https://readingroom.law.gsu.edu/gsulr

Published since 1985 and written by members of the Georgia State University Law Review, the Peach Sheets provide legislative history information for legislation considered by the Georgia General Assembly. The coverage of legislation is selective, and includes significant legislation that did not ultimately become Georgia law, either because it failed to pass or because of a gubernatorial veto. Legislative histories are compiled from sources available from the Legislature, tracking of news articles, and interviews with legislators and interested parties. Notation is made of changes from prior law, amendments to the legislation as it made its way through the General Assembly, and relevant history or precipitating events. The Georgia State University Law Review website contains the full text of all published Peach Sheets, as well as the option to perform a search only within the Peach Sheets.

**Georgia House Journals**

http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20(ga%20l404)

**Georgia Senate Journals**

http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20(ga%20l402)

Along with a wealth of other information, the Digital Library of Georgia has digitized the entire history of the Georgia House and Senate Journals and posted them online in Georgia Government Publications. As a source of legislative history, the House and Senate Journals are of limited use, as no details of floor speeches are included. However, the House and Senate Journals do contain information on committee substitutes, the dates that bills were discussed, and voting records.

**AJC Legislative Navigator**

https://legislativenavigator.myajc.com

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s Legislative Navigator provides a variety of ways to view information about the current legislative session. Information is available on members, including a “batting average,” sponsored legislation, recent votes, and demographic
information on their district. Bill information includes a list of actions, links to versions, records of votes, and a forecast of each bill’s likelihood of passage.

**Georgia Lobby**  
[https://galobby.com](https://galobby.com)

Designed with lobbyists in mind, Georgia Lobby is a subscription-based service providing monitoring and updating for a variety of activities at the Georgia Capitol. Subscribers can receive updates on bills, committee activities, and agency activities, such as public meetings. Subscription prices range from $500 to $1700, billed annually.

**Georgia Administrative Materials**

*Rgregulations*

**Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia**  

The Secretary of State’s office makes the full text of the current Georgia regulations available for free online through an agreement with the publisher, Lawriter, LLC. Each rule contains a citation to legislative authority as well as a history line including effective dates and notations of amendments.

**Georgia Agency Websites**  
[https://georgia.gov/agency-list](https://georgia.gov/agency-list)

In addition to the website provided by the Secretary of State, many Georgia agencies post or link to their rules and regulations. On an agency site, look for a link to “Laws and Rules,” which may be either on the home page or on an “About Us” page. In addition to current regulations, several agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Division and the Department of Labor, post notices of potential rules amendments and public meetings.

**Executive Orders**

**Georgia Governor’s Website, 2019 - present**  

The Governor’s website is generally the best source for the latest executive orders, as it is updated as each executive order is issued. However, the Governor’s website generally refreshes when a new Governor takes office, and orders issued by the previous administration are often removed.
Georgia Government Publications, 1983 – Present
http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?dbs=ggpd&ini=ggpd.ini&userid=public&action=results&rset=007&crumbs=%5BExecutive+Order%5D

In addition to the Governor’s website, Georgia Government Publications contains a collection of executive orders. This collection spans administrations, from 1983 to the present, and thus provides a readily available source of historical executive orders. There can be a slight delay in posting articles to the database, however, so those looking for the most recent executive orders are advised to first check the Governor’s website.

**Attorney General Opinions**

**Attorney General’s Website, 1992 – present**
https://law.georgia.gov/opinions

The website of the state Attorney General contains both official and unofficial opinions from 1992 to the present. These opinions are searchable by opinion number and keyword. In addition to the text of the opinions, the Attorney General site includes a list of opinions rendered obsolete or modified by subsequent legislation or judicial action.

http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20(ga%20l310)

Included in Georgia Government Publications are scanned PDFs of the bound volumes of the state Attorney General opinions, including tables and indices. Coverage becomes more spotty for early years; however, there are opinions available as far back as 1882. From 1882 to the 1920s, opinions were published as a part of the Attorney General’s report.

**Administrative Decisions & Materials**

**Administrative Law Report**
http://www.administrativelawreport.com

Launched in 2013, the Administrative Law Report provides access to decisions of and information about the Office of State Administrative Hearings. Each decision is accompanied by a short summary, and is categorized by both topic and the administrative law judge hearing the case. Although the decisions are not themselves searchable, the summaries can be searched. The Administrative Law Report also contains the annual reports of the Office of Administrative Hearings.
Georgia State Board of Education Decisions

The Georgia Board of Education posts its decisions in appeals from local school board cases on its website; the archive of decisions goes back to the 1970s. Decisions are searchable by keyword, appellant, or appellee. Decisions are available in PDF format.

Georgia State Board of Worker’s Compensation Published Awards
https://sbwc.georgia.gov/published-awards

The Board of Worker’s Compensation makes available on its site published appellate decisions from 2009 to the present and trial decisions from 2011 to the present. Names of parties are redacted, so searching by judge, issue, county, or date is suggested.

Georgia Department of Revenue Rules & Policies
https://dor.georgia.gov/rules-policies

The Georgia Department of Revenue Rules & Policies page includes among the resources a number of letter rulings on specific tax situations. Access to the letter rulings is available by selecting the appropriate topic, then the “Letter Rulings” link. The letter rulings are searchable once located within a topic; however, they are redacted, so searching by party is not advised.

Judicial Materials

Georgia Judicial Gateway
http://georgiacourts.gov/

Presented by the Judicial Council of Georgia, the Georgia Judicial Gateway is a portal linking to judicial resources throughout the state. Included in the portal are links to the state appellate courts, uniform rules, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the judicial directory, and direct links to eFiling in county State and Superior courts. Through the Administrative Office of the Courts, you can locate the Councils of Judges for the State, Superior, Magistrate, Probate, and Municipal courts.

Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council CaseLaw Update
https://pacga.org/caselaw-updates/

Produced on a weekly basis, the CaseLaw Update provides detailed commentary on new decisions of interest to those practicing criminal law. The case summaries range from two paragraphs to over a page; however, due to the frequency of publication, each issue only consists of a few pages, making it an easy way to stay up-to-date on the latest in criminal law.
Municipal Ordinances

Municode
https://library.municode.com/

Municode is the country’s largest publisher of municipal and county codes; it is also the publisher adopted by most Georgia counties and cities. Searching across all codes is available with a MuniPRO subscription, currently $495.

American Legal Publishing
http://www.amlegal.com/code-library/

American Legal Publishing provides publishing services for municipalities and counties across the country, most notably in North Carolina, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. Although not listed on their website, American Legal Publishing publishes the code of Harlem, Georgia. Searching across all codes (including Harlem) is available from the “View All State Codes” link.

General Code
https://www.generalcode.com/resources/ecode360-library/

eCode360 is the online library of codes published by General Code, LLC. General Code primarily publishes codes in New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Midwest. There does not appear to be an option to search across all codes.

Code Publishing Company
https://www.codebook.com/listing/

Code Publishing Company primarily publishes municipal and county codes from the Western United States, with a few codes available in other states, such as Pennsylvania. Code Publishing Company also publishes several codes from tribal governments and special districts. Each code must be searched separately.

Sterling Codifiers
https://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/#codes

Most codes from Sterling Codifiers are from municipalities and counties west of the Mississippi. Unlike many other sites, Sterling Codifiers allows searching across all codes from a single state.

Franklin Legal Publishing
http://www.franklinlegal.net/search-codes
Franklin Legal Publishing provides full-text searching of online codes in over 300 municipalities in Texas. Searching across codes is not available.

**Quality Code Publishing**  
[http://www.qcode.us/codes.html](http://www.qcode.us/codes.html)

Quality Code Publishing primarily publishes municipal codes in California, although a few municipalities in other western states are also represented. In addition to the municipal codes, some specialized plans and codes, such as development codes, are available. Each code must be searched separately.
Pam Brannon is the Coordinator of Faculty Services at the Georgia State University College of Law Library. She received her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Georgia and her Masters of Science in Information and Library Science from the Pratt Institute. Prior to her time at GSU, she worked at the New York Public Library and at the UGA libraries. At GSU, Pam is responsible for the library’s work with the College of Law faculty, including assisting with faculty research on a wide variety of subjects. In addition to her work with faculty, Pam provides reference assistance and teaches a section of Research Methods in Law, a required first year law school class.