

Handy Legal and Government Websites 2009

The website addresses included in this handout are current and working as of September 18, 2009. Please remember that website addresses may change without notice, and websites may disappear entirely.

General Legal Information:

Ohio State Bar Association - www.ohioabar.org/Pages/Public.aspx - legal pamphlets and other information provided by the bar association to the public, including a book about Ohio law and courts that can be printed out by chapter.

Ohio Legal Services – www.ohiolegalservices.org – select “For the Public” to reach an alphabetical list of legal topics. Click through the various “steps” by selecting the appropriate links until reaching the “Questions & Answers” page. Continue with the Questions & Answers, or select one of the other tabs (“Forms & Education,” “Courts & Hearings,” “Non-Legal Resources”). Some links may lead back to previously-viewed pages. This site has articles, links to courts, agencies, specific articles on the Ohio State Bar Association site, etc. Also has a toll-free number to contact Legal Aid and find an office or other resources in your area. The Cuyahoga County legal aid office is Legal Aid Society of Cleveland (www.lasclev.org) at 216-687-1900.

Cleveland Law Library Association – www.clelaw.lib.oh.us – also called the county law library, the website has an excellent “Frequently Asked Questions” section divided into topics. Each topic has links to (mostly free) online information such as the Ohio Revised Code or Administrative Code, the courts, the Ohio Bar Association articles, social service agencies, and other informational websites.

Cleveland State University’s Law School Library – www.law.csuohio.edu/lawlibrary/ has a research services librarian at 216-687-6877. Online resource guides offer instruction on how to research various areas of the law – geared for law school students and refers to materials at the law school. The librarians CANNOT give legal advice or do your legal research, but can help you with the library’s materials.

Court Sites:

Bedford Municipal Court – www.bedfordmuni.org - has sample expungement, small claim, and forcible entry and detainer (eviction) forms. Explains how the small claims court works and procedures to follow for filing in small claims court. Includes a list of legal terms with definitions. Has separate dockets for traffic/criminal cases and civil cases.

Cleveland Municipal Court - www.clevelandmunicipalcourt.org/home.html - has sample forms for filing in small claims court and a few forms on garnishment. Please note that just about every link leads first to the court’s mission statement, with tabs across the top of the page, including the item you were trying to get to (like Small Claims or Forms). The court docket is not available online.

Cleveland Housing Court – www.clevelandhousingcourt.org/ - has frequently asked questions, glossary of legal terms, civil and criminal forms used by the court for landlord-tenant disputes and housing violations. Some forms may be useful as samples for other courts (objections to magistrate's report, blank motion, motion for relief from judgment, etc.).

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, General Division - <http://cp.cuyahogacounty.us/internet/index.aspx> - includes links to the court dockets and information about the court, jury duty, Clerk of Court's website, etc. There are a very few sample court forms on the main site and the clerk's page.

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Domestic Relations Division – <http://domestic.cuyahogacounty.us> – includes links to the Forms and Guideline page that contains pull-down menus of sample court forms for divorce, dissolution of marriage, child support and custody, etc. Moderately useful for pre-decree cases, not so useful for contested cases or post-decree (after the divorce) motions.

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Juvenile Division – <http://juvenile.cuyahogacounty.us> – has very limited selection of sample forms for custody, but has packets for expunging or sealing juvenile court records. The FAQs are limited and mostly tell people they will be “referred to an attorney.”

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Probate Division – <http://probate.cuyahogacounty.us/home.htm> – Probate Court has a separate docket for probating estates, guardianships of minors and adults, etc. There is a separate Marriage License Search Docket for marriages performed in Cuyahoga County. The Probate Court has a full range of forms for uncontested matters – probating estates, adoptions of minors or adults, guardianships of minors or adults, name change, release of assets, and a handful of forms for testamentary trust matters.

Eighth District Court of Appeals – <http://appeals.cuyahogacounty.us> – the appellate court for Cuyahoga County.

Ohio Supreme Court – www.supremecourt.ohio.gov – has Ohio Supreme Court opinions and Ohio appellate court opinions free online back to the 1990s. Has the court rules free online under “Ohio Laws and Rules of Court” in the left frame. Has an attorney directory listing all attorneys authorized to practice in Ohio and attorneys who have been disciplined by the Court under “Attorney Information.” Also has the complaint procedure and form to file complaints against attorneys, magistrates, and judges under “Disciplinary System.”

Laws/Statutes/Codes:

Ohio Revised Code – <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc> - full-text version of Ohio's laws

Ohio Administrative Code - <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac> - full-text version of regulations for Ohio government agencies

Ohio Legislation and Documents - www.legislature.state.oh.us/search.cfm - from the Ohio General Assembly website, searchable back to 1997.

United States Code – www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html - full-text version of the laws of the United States (federal statutes)

Code of Federal Regulations – www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html - full-text version of the regulations for government agencies

Legal Information Institute – www.law.cornell.edu – links to federal and state laws and general legal information on the Cornell Law School website.

Library of Congress – THOMAS website – <http://thomas.loc.gov> – this site, named after Thomas Jefferson, contains bills introduced or passed by Congress, going back to 1989 (the 101st Congress). Also has copies of the Congressional Record, treaties, and other documents back to 1989.

Local ordinances may be available on your city’s website, if it has one. Try using the Google search engine (www.google.com) to find your city’s website.

Living Wills and Health Care Powers of Attorney:

Ohio Hospice and Palliative Care Organization – www.ohpco.org has an online booklet (44 pages) with instructions on how to complete the living will and other advanced directive documents as well as samples of the forms. Print only selected pages or the entire pamphlet. The Ohio Bar Association works with the Hospice organization to keep the pamphlet updated.

Attorney Information:

Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association’s Attorney Referral Service
www.clemetrobar.org or call 216-696-3532.

Ohio Bar Association’s Find a Lawyer service on its website at
www.ohiobar.org/Pages/FindALawyer.aspx

Ohio Supreme Court Attorney Directory
www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/AttySvc/AttyReg/Public_AtorneyInformation.asp

Martindale-Hubbell Legal Directory – www.martindale.com – useful for out-of state attorney searches. *Please note that many lawyers no longer provide full listings in Martindale-Hubbell.* Many attorneys include links to their firm home pages with more complete information about areas of practice and experience.

Government Websites:

Cuyahoga County – www.cuyahogacounty.us – the main website for Cuyahoga County agencies, boards, commissions, etc.

State of Ohio – www.ohio.gov – the main website for Ohio government, with links to state agencies, boards, commissions, and so on.

Ohio General Assembly – www.legislature.state.oh.us – has links to current bills under consideration by the House or Senate and archived bills back to 1997 (122nd General Assembly). Includes brief articles about the legislative agencies, a history of Ohio’s government, and histories of the executive (governors) and judicial (Supreme Court) branches of Ohio government. Links to Ohio House and Senate.

Ohio House of Representatives – www.house.state.oh.us

Ohio Senate – www.senate.state.oh.us – how to contact your state Senator, biographical information, etc.

usa.gov (formerly Firstgov) – www.usa.gov – this is the central “gateway” to government information with links to all federal agencies and commissions, all branches of the federal government, etc. The search field at the top of the screen allows searching millions of documents available free online.

U.S. House of Representatives – www.house.gov – includes how to contact your Representative, biographical information about members of the House, sponsorship of bills, frequently asked questions about the House, etc.

U.S. Senate – www.senate.gov – includes how to contact your Senator, biographical information on the Senators, sponsorship of bills, frequently asked questions about the Senate, etc.

Miscellaneous Links:

First Call for Help – dial 411 – a service of United Way, the First Call for Help operators can direct you to social service and government agencies that may be able to help with both legal and non-legal questions.

Cleveland Tenants Organization – www.clevelandtenants.org or call 216-432-0617.

Cuyahoga County Home Page – main page that links to county agencies, courts and court dockets - www.cuyahogacounty.us

Ohio Hospice and Palliative Care Organization – www.ohpco.org or 1-800-776-9513

U.S. Supreme Court Decisions – www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/opinions.html

Historic Supreme Court cases – www.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html - available on the Legal Information Institute site at Cornell Law School, the cases are arranged by topic.