

PROFESSIONAL LEGAL RESEARCH

Family law is the body of law that deals with the traditional landscape of family relationships as well as important new legislation and case law relating to areas such as domestic partnerships, same-sex marriage, parentage, and adoption. This quick reference guide highlights the family law resources on Westlaw and shows you how to retrieve relevant documents.

Family Law

Family law practice typically involves issues such as those relating to marriage, divorce, child custody and support, child abuse and neglect, adoption, paternity, and other domestic-relations issues. Other areas of law, such as tax, bankruptcy, estate planning, and criminal, are often a part of the decision-making process in the practice of family law.

Family Law Resources on Westlaw

Westlaw includes an extensive collection of family law materials, including state and federal primary law, secondary sources, forms, and briefs. In each category listed below, a few key databases are highlighted. These databases and other family law–related resources can be accessed in the right frame of the tabbed Family Law Practitioner page (Figure 1). In the left frame of the Family Law Practitioner page you can do any of the following:

- Type a database identifier, e.g., **ffl-usca** for the Federal Family Law–U.S. Code Annotated database, in the *Search for a database* text box to display its Search page.
- Click **View Family Law Directory** to display the *Family Law* section of the Westlaw Directory.
- If you know the citation of a document, type your citation in the *Find by citation* text box.

STATE STATUTES AND COURT RULES

Statutes and court rules that relate to family law are contained in the Individual State Statutes–Annotated databases (XX-ST-ANN), where XX is a state’s two-letter postal abbreviation, e.g., CA-ST-ANN. To access a state’s child support guidelines, click a state-specific link, e.g., **Ohio Child Support Guidelines**, in the *Statutes and Administrative Materials* section of the Family Law Practitioner page. To add individual states to the *Statutes and Administrative Materials* section, click **Edit** at the top of the right frame. Select the check boxes for states you want to add, then click **Save**. At the Edit: Resources page, click **Save** again.

Category:

Practice Area Fundamentals

For research assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call the West Reference Attorneys at 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378)

or click **Help** on Westlaw® for a live help session.

STATE CASE LAW

Court decisions that construe and review family-related laws and regulations are another important source of information when you research family law. State family law cases are found in the Individual State Family Law Cases databases (XXFL-CS), where XX is a state's two-letter postal abbreviation, e.g., CAFL-CS.

FEDERAL FAMILY LAW MATERIALS

Federal statutes pertaining to family law are contained in the FFL-USCA database. Cases from all federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, pertaining to family law are found in the Federal Family Law–Cases database (FFL-CS).

FORMS, CHECKLISTS, AND CLAUSES

The All State and General Family Law Forms, Clauses, and Checklists database (FAMFORM-ALL) contains forms, clauses, and checklists that are helpful in the practice of family law. To retrieve forms in a particular area of family law, click a link, e.g., *Custody*, in the *Forms, Checklists, and Clauses* section of the Family Law Practitioner page. A search template is displayed.

The screenshot shows the Westlaw Family Law Practitioner page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Westlaw logo and several utility links: FIND&PRINT, KEYCITE, DIRECTORY, KEY NUMBERS, COURT DOCS, FORMFINDER, SITE MAP, HELP, and SIGN OFF. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'Westlaw', 'Law School', and 'Family Law Practitioner'. The main content area is organized into several sections:

- Shortcuts:** Includes a search for a database field, a 'Find by citation' field, and a 'KeyCite this citation' field.
- Resources:** Contains several sub-sections:
 - Client Evaluation:** Links to PeopleMap, Ohio People Finder, National People Finder, Ohio Client and Party Background, National Client and Party Background, Bankruptcy Dockets, Ohio Criminal Records, Multi-state Criminal Records, and Ohio Public Records Combined database.
 - Forms, Checklists & Clauses:** Provides access to a wide range of family law forms, clauses, and checklists. It lists 'OHIO:' (Prenuptial Agreements, Custody, Paternity, All Family Law Topics) and 'NATIONAL:' (Prenuptial Agreements, Custody, Paternity, All Family Law Topics).
 - Statutes & Administrative Materials:** Links to Ohio Child Support Guidelines, Ohio Statutes Annotated, Ohio Administrative Code, and USCA Family Law Statutes.
 - State Statutes - 50 State Surveys:** A search tool to retrieve one document that lists all relevant state statutes.
- Related Family Law Resources:** Links to Tax, Estate Planning, and Criminal.
- Recent Developments:** Links to Family Law Briefs Updates.
- Westlaw Research Aids:** A section for research aids.

Figure 1. Family Law Practitioner page

For assistance using Westlaw, call 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).
For free reference materials, visit west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides.