

# Legal Reference Tips

## Legitimate Sources

- Context/Reliability
- Agreement
- Currency
- Jurisdiction

Reword question

Set expectations

Read directly from the source and avoid interpretation

Provide appropriate level of information

Look out for bias and treat the patron with respect

Librarians will interpret questions differently

## Suggestions

“I cannot give legal advice” should not be used as an excuse to not provide service.

## Phrases to Use or Avoid

- ✓ The law states...
- ✓ In general
- ✓ See this information from this source
- ✓ This may help answer your question
- ✓ This form is used for...
- ✓ Based on the information we have in the library...
- ✓ I am a librarian and can point you to information. I am not an attorney and can not give legal advice
- ✓ I don't know. Let me look into this and get back to you
- ✓ You will need to speak to an attorney to discuss your particular situation

- ✗ If it were me
- ✗ Let me fill that out for you
- ✗ Do this... and you are set
- ✗ My opinion
- ✗ Should
- ✗ That means
- ✗ I predict

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# Legal Research Resources

Book: Legal reference for librarians, by Paul D. Healey

Self-Represented Litigation Network Public Library: What Public Librarians Can Do

<https://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webjunction/03-1-Ethics.pdf>

Self-Represented Litigation Network

<https://www.srln.org/node/545/srln-brief-law-library-ethics>

Access to justice: best practices for public law libraries

<https://www.aallnet.org/gllsis/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/01/scllguide5.pdf>

How law libraries are serving self-represented litigants across the country

[https://www.aallnet.org/knwlctr\\_publegal/open-to-the-public-how-law-libraries-are-serving-self-represented-litigants-across-the-country/](https://www.aallnet.org/knwlctr_publegal/open-to-the-public-how-law-libraries-are-serving-self-represented-litigants-across-the-country/)

Law Libraries and Access to Justice

<https://www.aallnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/AccessToJusticeSpecialCommittee2014LawLibrariesAndAccessToJustice.pdf>

Legal Reference and the Unauthorized Practice of Law

<http://docplayer.net/15627630-Legal-reference-and-the-unauthorized-practice-of-law-a-guide-for-minnesota-public-librarians.html>

Case Law Research with Google Scholar

<https://wilawlibrary.gov/learn/tutorials/scholar.html>

***Serving the Wisconsin Supreme Court and State of Wisconsin***

Contact Wisconsin State Law Library staff for help any time.

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