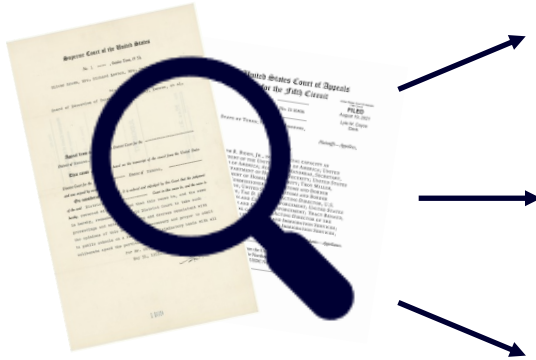




Finding court case documents can be complicated research. Knowing where different case records are located makes the process much easier.



Tips for finding cases:

- Try to gather as much information about the case as you can: a citation, the case number, party names, the judge's name, if the case is civil or criminal, and where the court is located.
- If you only have a party name, use a print digest or an online database that allows you to search by party names.
- If you don't have a citation or a digest, you can try using the main search bar in an online legal database like Lexis, Westlaw, or Bloomberg Law and filter your search results.
- **Not every ruling released by the courts is made public. Sometimes an opinion is designated not for publication, in which case you will need to use PACER or contact the Clerk of Court's office. In certain situations, appellate and district courts can issue opinions that are sealed from the public.**
- Use Headnotes in a case opinion and citators like West's KeyCite and Lexis's Shepard's to find cases related by topic or point of law.
- Your local law library may have public access to legal research databases and print reporters. Reach out to them for help.

PACER

Federal court cases

[Public Access to Court Electronic Records \(PACER\)](#) provides electronic public access to federal court records. Registered users pay per document viewed.

Reporters

Federal or state court decisions

Reporters contain only the court's opinions in cases, not the complete case history with briefs and other filings. Law libraries may have reporters in print, and electronic versions are available using commercial databases.

Case opinions are grouped together and published chronologically by court:

Supreme Court → [United States Reports](#)

Appellate Courts → [Federal Reporter](#)

District Courts → [Federal Supplement](#)

Bankruptcy → [Bankruptcy Reporter](#)

Commercial databases

Federal or state court cases

Federal and state case documents can be found in online commercial databases like: [Westlaw](#), [CourtLink](#), [Caselaw Access](#), [Free Law Project](#)

Clerk of Court

Federal or state court cases

A Clerk of Court maintains court records. Many have online public access to case documents, but some require going to the courthouse in person to view filings.