



## Research Guide for Self-Represented Litigants: Housing Law

### Getting Started

Legal research involves identifying the statutes and case law that apply to your case. The easiest way to start your legal research is with “secondary sources,” which are materials that discuss and explain the law but are not the law itself. Many resources can be found for free online, but this guide also points you to books and subscription databases that you may be able to use at your local public law library.

This guide is specially focused on housing law. For basic information regarding legal research and starting a case, see our guide “Starting and Responding to a Civil Case.”

### Important Terms

- Eviction – a case where a landlord tries to get the tenant to move out
- Foreclosure – the legal process where a property is sold because the owner did not make payments on a loan

### Online Resources

#### Legal Self-Help

- Illinois Legal Aid Online: <https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/house-apartment>
- Lawyers’ Committee for Better Housing: <https://lcbh.org/get-legal-help>
- Nolo:
  - Eviction: <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/evictions-terminations>
  - Foreclosure: <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/illinois-foreclosure-law-center>
- Illinois State Bar Association: <https://www.isba.org/public/guide/landlordtenant>
- American Bar Association:  
[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_education/resources/law\\_issues\\_for\\_consumers/everydaylaw0/real\\_estate/renting\\_a\\_home/evictions/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/resources/law_issues_for_consumers/everydaylaw0/real_estate/renting_a_home/evictions/)
- FindLaw:
  - Eviction: <https://realestate.findlaw.com/landlord-tenant-law/eviction.html>
  - Foreclosure: <https://realestate.findlaw.com/foreclosure.html>
- National Consumer Law Center: <https://www.nclc.org/issues/foreclosure-and-mortgages.html>

#### Government Agencies

- Department of Housing and Urban Development: <https://www.hud.gov/states/illinois>
- Illinois Housing Development Authority: <https://www.ihda.org/>

### Forms

- Foreclosure:  
[http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/mortgage\\_foreclosure/mortgage\\_foreclosure.asp](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/mortgage_foreclosure/mortgage_foreclosure.asp)
- House and Apartment (from Illinois Legal Aid Online): <https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/form-library/515096/forms>

### **Resources at Your Local Law Library**

You will find many resources available for free at your local public law library that are not available on the internet. These may include online subscription databases, like Westlaw and LexisNexis. They also include the library's book collection. Check for these books or ask a librarian to help you find something similar.

**IICLE's** – stands for Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education. These books offer easy-to-understand analysis on a wide variety of legal issues.

- *Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure: Practice and Procedure* (2016)
- *Illinois Mortgage Foreclosure: Corresponding Issues* (2016)
- *Real Estate Litigation* (2016)
- *Illinois Condominium Law* (2016)
- *Creditors' Rights* (2019)
- *Forcible Entry and Detainer Actions* (2015) – Chicago and Evanston only.
- *Commercial Landlord-Tenant Practice* (2020)
- *Eviction Actions* (2020)

### **Books on Eviction**

- *Every Tenant's Legal Guide*, by Janet Portman & Marcia Steward (Nolo)
- *Every Landlord's Legal Guide*, by Marcia Steward, Ralph Warner, & Janet Portman (Nolo)
- *Landlord and Tenant Law in a Nutshell*, by David S. Hill & Carol Necole Brown (West Academic)
- *HUD Housing Programs: Tenants' Rights* (National Housing Law Project)
- *Renters' Rights*, by Janet Portman & Marcia Stewart (Nolo)

### **Books on Foreclosure**

- *Illinois Foreclosure: What You Need to Know*, by Jodine Mayberry (Thomson/West)
- *Home Foreclosures*, by Geoff Walsh, Tara Twomey, John Rao, & Odette Williamson (National Consumer Law Center)
- *The Foreclosure Survival Guide: Keep Your House or Walk Away with Money in Your Pocket*, by Stephen Elias (Nolo)
- *Foreclosures: Mortgage Servicing, Mortgage Modifications, and Foreclosure Defense*, by John Rao, John W. Van Last, & Emily Green Caplan (National Consumer Law Center)
- *Mortgage Servicing and Loan Modifications*, by John Rao & Stephen Sharpe (National Consumer Law Center)

### **Seeking Additional Help**

Law librarians may help you find the books listed in this guide or other suitable replacements if these are not available. They may have their own resource guides or recommendations. In general, library staff can help you find information and develop search strategies, but they are unable to provide legal advice or interpret the law.