



Civil Appeals Research Guide

Domestic Relations Law: Dissolution of Marriage & Parentage

Getting Started with Legal Research

Legal research involves identifying the statutes and case law that apply to your case. The easiest way to start is with “secondary sources,” which are materials that discuss and explain the law but are not the law itself. This guide provides secondary sources that can be used as a *starting place* for your research. Some websites are included, but most resources are books. Look for them at your nearest law library.

Important Terms

- Statutes – the law written by the elected legislature. Illinois statutes are enacted by the Illinois General Assembly and can be found in the *Illinois Compiled Statutes* at the law library or on the General Assembly’s website (<http://ilga.gov/>).
- Case law – the law based on judicial opinions. Case law can be found in books of Reports, on the Court’s website (<http://illinoiscourts.gov/>), or in online databases.
- Court Rules – the rules set out by the Illinois Supreme Court, including very specific rules about Appeals. They can be found in the book series *Illinois Court Rules and Procedure* or on the Supreme Court website (<http://illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/Rules/>).
- Dissolution of marriage – divorce. While researching, look for materials on “dissolution of marriage” because this is the legal terminology used in Illinois.

General Research Resources

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

- *Black’s Law Dictionary* (Thomson/West)
- *Nolo’s Free Dictionary of Law Terms and Legal Definitions* (<https://www.nolo.com/dictionary>)
- *Illinois Law & Practice* (Thomson/West) – legal encyclopedia
- *Illinois Jurisprudence* (LexisNexis) – legal encyclopedia

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

- *Civil Appeals: State and Federal* (2018)

Books about Civil Appeals

- *Appeals to the Illinois Supreme and Appellate Courts*, by Edward J. Kionka (ISBA)
- *Illinois Appellate Practice Manual*, by Timothy J. Storm (Thomson/West)
- *Nichols Illinois Civil Practice with Forms*, by Clark A. Nichols (Thomson/West)
- *A Guide to Illinois Civil Appellate Procedure*, Appellate Lawyers Association, online at [www.applawyers.org/resources/Documents/Civil Appeals Guide Revised 2019 01 10.pdf](http://www.applawyers.org/resources/Documents/Civil%20Appeals%20Guide%20Revised%202019%2001%2010.pdf)

Books about Conducting Legal Research in Illinois

- *Illinois Legal Research*, by Mark E. Wojcik (Carolina Academic Press)
- *Finding Illinois Law: A Librarian’s Guide for Non-Lawyers*, by the Chicago Association of Law Librarians, online at <http://chicagolawlib.org/finding-illinois-law/>

Resources on Illinois Dissolution of Marriage & Parentage:

Check your local public law library for the following books. You can use them to learn about the legal principles affecting your case. They will also point you to important statutes and case law.

IICLE Books:

- *Family Law: Dissolutions of Marriage Court Proceedings* (2017)
 - Specifically, see Chapter 6 on Appeals.
- *Family Law: Child-Related Issues in Dissolution Actions* (2018)
- *Family Law: Property and Financial Aspects of Dissolution Actions* (2019)
- *A Practitioner's Guide to the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act and the Illinois Parentage Act* (2019)

Books on Divorce:

- *Gitlin on Divorce: A Guide to Illinois Matrimonial Law*, by Gunnar J. Gitlin (LexisNexis)
- *Divorce in Illinois: The Legal Process, Your Rights, and What to Expect*, by Steven N. Peskind (Addicus Books)
 - Specifically, read the chapter on appeals. This book is laid out as sets of questions and answers.
- *Divorce Proceedings in Illinois: What You Need to Know*, by Mark D. Brent (Aspatore)
- *The Illinois Practice of Family Law*, volumes 12 & 13 of the *Illinois Practice Series* (Thomson/West)
- *Nichols Illinois Civil Practice with Forms*, originally authored by Clark A. Nichols (Thomson/West)
 - This is a more general Civil Practice book. You will find information about Family Law in Chapter 123 of volume 7. Section J addresses appeals.

Books on Special Topics in Divorce:

- *The Military Divorce Handbook: A Practical Guide to Representing Military Personnel and Their Families*, by Mark E. Sullivan (American Bar Association, Section of Family Law)
- *The Special Needs Child and Divorce: A Practical Guide to Evaluating and Handling Cases*, by Margaret "Pegi" S. Price (American Bar Association, Section of Family Law)

Websites:

- Illinois Divorce and Family Law (DivorceNet, Nolo): <https://www.divorcenet.com/states/illinois>
- FindLaw Divorce Guide: <https://family.findlaw.com/divorce.html>
- Appeals and Motions to Modify the Divorce Decree: <https://family.findlaw.com/divorce/appeals-and-motions-to-modify-the-divorce-judgment.html>

Seeking Additional Help

Law librarians may help you find the books listed in this guide or other suitable replacements if these are not available. 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.