Basic Legal Research for Any Librarian
Annotated List of Websites Referenced

Federal Court Basics
http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-informed/federal-court-basics.aspx. Last visited 5/8/14.
This federal website contains information that will help librarians and library users understand the processes court cases follow.

Federal Statutes
http://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes.php. Last visited 5/8/14
Provided by the Law Library of Congress, this page provides an overview of federal statutes, sources of statutes, codification (subject arrangement) of statutes, and tips for locating statutes.

A Guide to the Rulemaking Process
http://www.federalregister.gov/uploads/2011/01/the_rulemaking_process.pdf. Last visited 5/8/14
This document explains the conditions necessary for agencies to begin generating proposed rules, how new rules are proposed, how the public notice and comment periods function, the publication of a final rule, and the codification (subject arrangement) of new rules into the *Code of Federal Regulations*.

Municode
https://www.municode.com/. Last visited 5/8/14
Municode is a valuable tool to help users locate local ordinances. Ordinances are created and govern within counties, villages, cities, etc. They follow a similar process as statutes when becoming law—with the entire process happening at the local level. Municode is a free resource, and it is worth checking whether the ordinances for the cities/counties that make up your patron base are available there. If not, you may have to consult your local government website or other (print) publishers to access local ordinance information.

FindLaw
http://www.findlaw.com/ Last visited 5/8/14
FindLaw is a Thomson Reuters business and would likely be most helpful for public library or academic library patrons because of the "Learn About the Law" information. Displayed on that page of the website are links to brief articles that address issues that regularly come up on the reference desk, such as divorce/child support, landlord/tenant, etc. The site also makes forms available for purchase.

FindLaw For Legal Professionals
http://lp.findlaw.com/ Last visited 5/8/14
FindLaw For Legal Professionals is a companion site to FindLaw.com. It includes a search for cases in the U.S. Supreme Court, all federal Circuit Courts of Appeal, and a small selection of state appellate courts. There are also links to state statutes, articles on legal topics, and forms available for free or for purchase.

Nolo: Law for All.
http://www.nolo.com/. Last visited 5/8/14
This website includes free legal information (under the heading "Get Informed") as well as materials available for purchase. Nolo is a publisher of both print and electronic materials that began publishing

do-it-yourself legal guides. The materials are general, rather than state specific, and written in accessible language for patrons.

Legal Information Institute (LII).
http://www.law.cornell.edu. Last visited 5/8/14
A free service focused on providing open access to the law, the Legal Information Institute provides both primary source materials (federal and state statutes, regulations), as well as a legal encyclopedia. There are links out for users who would like to purchase legal forms, as well. This resource is a credible, though unofficial, source for state and federal legal information.

The Public Library of Law.
http://www.plol.org/Pages/Search.aspx. Last visited 5/8/14
This site allows users to search for cases back to 1997, as well as for statutes, regulations, and court rules. Both state and federal constitutions are available. The data is provided by Fastcase, which also has an application for smart devices that allows users to access the primary source materials (cases, statutes, regulations) for free using their smart devices.

Google Scholar.
http://scholar.google.com/. Last visited 5/8/14
Google scholar provides free opportunities to search for cases, law review articles (secondary source material that may help a library patron understand a legal issue), and patents.

LawHelp.org: Helping People Find Solutions to Their Legal Problems.
http://www.lawhelp.org/. Last visited 5/8/14
Powered by probono.net, which is a site directed toward the legal community, this site provides resources and referral information that support a librarian's ability to make a quality referral to a patron with legal questions. There are 55 sub-websites for United States jurisdictions (including Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands).

Federal Digital System: America's Authentic Government Information.
http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/. Last visited 5/8/14
Maintained by the U.S. Government Printing Office, this is an official source for federal statutes (the *United States Code*), federal regulations (the *Code of Federal Regulations*), as well as a multitude of other valuable government materials. Notably, the documents viewed here are authentic copies, as indicated by the eagle symbol in the upper left of a document page.

Pacer: Public Access to Court Electronic Records.
http://www.pacer.gov/. Last visited 5/8/14
Pacer provides docket and case information for federal courts. The site includes tutorials, and users may open individual accounts. If charges accrued in a quarter are less than $15.00 (accruing at a rate of $.10/page), no bill is sent. Docket information tells the story of a case, starting with who filed the papers that initiated the action and including all the documents or pleadings filed throughout the action.

United States Patent and Trademark Office: An Agency of the Department of Commerce.
http://www.uspto.gov/. Last visited 5/8/14
This is an example of a federal agency website that provides a tremendous amount of helpful information for non-lawyers. Whether you are a university librarian with a professor inquiring about inventions, or you are a public librarian with a patron inquiring about an invention, the resources

available on this site are a great starting point. Many other federal or state agencies also provide similarly comprehensive content.

How to Apply Online for Social Security Retirement Benefits.
http://www.ssa.gov/planners/about.htm. Last visited 5/8/14
This website, a part of the Social Security Administration's web presence, provides information and a portal for patrons who wish to apply for retirement benefits. When patrons have questions about agency action, the agency website can be a valuable resource for information or other leads that will answer the patron question.

United States Senate: Senators of the 113th Congress.
http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm. Last visited 5/8/14
This House of Representatives has an analogous website. If you have a patron who would like to know who their congressional representatives are and how to contact them, this is a great place to start.

Georgia General Assembly.
http://www.legis.ga.gov/en-US/default.aspx. Last visited 5/8/14
In most states, the state legislature or assembly provides information regarding current (and sometimes recent) bills that are going through the legislative process to become laws. Alternatively, you may find that there are separate sites for the state senate and house. The Georgia General Assembly site also includes links for information to state agencies and a link directing users to the current Official Code of Georgia.

Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp.
http://sos.ga.gov/. Last visited 5/8/14
Check the Secretary of State website for your state to find helpful information. Typically available information includes company registration records; voter information; professional licensure information; state regulations. Most states have sophisticated searches available for corporate filings. Others have somewhat more antiquated systems. Nearly all states provide much of this information for free but a few, most notably Delaware, charge fees for anything beyond the most basic corporate identifying information.

Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia.
http://rules.sos.state.ga.us/cgi-bin/page.cgi. Last visited 5/8/14
Most states make available their current regulations. The regulations will amplify or elaborate on statutes, providing details. In the state context, you may find rules governing the licensure of various professionals (barbers, chiropractors, engineers, and land surveyors), the functioning of agencies (Department of Education, Election Board, and Board of Corrections), etc. Public patrons may not realize that they need to check for regulations, and so it may be helpful to incorporate information about agency regulation into the reference interview.

GeorgiaGov.
http://georgia.gov/. Last visited 5/8/14
It is worth checking to see if your state has a corollary to this type of website. It contains information for state residents including a lists of state agencies, cities and counties, and state-wide elected officials with their websites, as well as a list of popular 'how-to' topics with instructions and links to relevant agencies. The site includes select forms and general instructions, ranging from burn permit forms to tax forms to the state power of attorney form.

Judicial Branch of Georgia: Self Help Resources.
http://www.georgiacourts.gov/aoc/selfhelp/index.html. Last visited 5/8/14
The website provides self help resources for Georgia court users. Information is available regarding domestic relations proceedings, civil cases, and forms. The forms available are for probate court, juvenile court, civil case filing, domestic violence/protective orders, and inmate/habeas corpus civil actions. It is worth checking both the website of the court that the patron is planning on using (specific federal district court or specific state court) and looking to see if there is a general state website that provides forms for "self-represented litigants," pro se litigants," or other "access to justice" or "self help materials."

Fulton County Clerk of Superior Court Cathelene "Tina" Robinson.
http://www.fcclk.org/forms.htm. Last visited 5/8/14
In Georgia, it is recommended to check specific court websites for forms. The Fulton County Clerk of Superior Court provides a variety of civil, criminal, and general forms for completion. The forms available on this site do not completely mirror those available from the Judicial Branch of Georgia: Self Help Resources site.

Some other Municipal/County Ordinance providers to try, not a comprehensive list – all last visited 5/9/14
Walter H. Drane Company, http://www.walterdrane.com/online_codes.html
Code Publishing, Inc., http://www.codepublishing.com/onlinecodes.html
Franklin Legal Publishing, http://www.franklinlegal.net/codes.html
American Legal Publishing, http://www.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm&vid=amlegal:allcodes_mc
General Code, http://www.generalcode.com/codification/ecode/library
Colorado Code Corporation, http://www.colocode.com/online-code-books.html
Sterling Codifiers, Inc., http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codes-online
Coded Systems LLC, http://www.codedsystems.com/codelibrary.html