

AALL Review: *Find 50-State Law Surveys Fast!*

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As a librarian, have you ever had the challenge of finding and compiling that needle-in-a-haystack 50-State survey? Or locating the resources to retrieve that subject survey quickly? What about a regulatory survey?

Cheryl Rae Nyberg, of the University of Washington, Gallagher Law Library and author of *Subject Compilation of State Laws (2006-07) An Annotated Bibliography*, provided shortcuts and tips on how to quickly locate a 50-state law survey by any topic. This article is a brief summary of where a librarian can locate 50-state law surveys fast!

The *Subject Compilation of State Laws*, now in its 23rd volume, is available on HeinOnline with over 18,000 bibliographic records. Librarians can search across a specific topic, by entry number or journal title for example. It contains live links to quickly access the survey needed.

Both Westlaw and LexisNexis offer 50-state law survey databases. The main difference expressed by Nyberg is the survey formats; LexisNexis uses excel and Westlaw provides tables. Both services provide live links to the full text and the surveys are searchable. Table of contents is offered to quickly locate the topic of choice. Both services contain both statutory and regulatory surveys.

If the *Subject Compilation of State Laws* database, Westlaw and LexisNexis do not have what a patron is looking for, a librarian may want to consider searching those associations and government agencies that deal with the subject. Several examples included for multiple subject, try the National Conference of State Legislatures, www.ncsl.org, or the American Bar Association, www.abanet.org. Both contain many law surveys. Below is a list of subject specific resources that may have the survey needed:

Abortion & Reproductive Rights: Guttmacher Institute, www.guttmacher.org; NARAL/Pro-Choice America, www.naral.org

Aged: National Center on Elder Abuse, www.ncea.aoa.gov

Agriculture & Farming: National Agricultural Law Center, www.nationalaglawcenter.org

Animals: Animal Legal & Historical Center, www.animallaw.info

Child Abuse & Welfare: Child Welfare Information Gateway, www.childwelfare.gov

Criminal Law: American Prosecutors Research Institute, www.ndaa.org/apri/index.html;

National Criminal Justice Reference, www.ncjrs.gov/index.html

Education: Education Commission of the States, www.ecs.org

Firearms: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, www.atf.gov/index.htm;

National Rifle Association, www.nraila.org

Gays & Lesbians: Lambda Legal, www.lambdalegal.org

Labor & Employment: US Department of Labor, www.dol.gov

News Media & Reporters: Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, www.rcfp.org

Traffic & Transportation: Governors Highway Safety Association, www.ghsa.org;

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, www.iihs.org;

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, www.nhtsa.dot.gov

In conclusion, Nyberg provided several helpful search queries in Google, Bing, USA.gov: try “states have laws on,” “state law survey,” or “state statutes [legislation] on.” This session was a brief overview of how to find those subject 50-state surveys quickly and efficiently.