

Preface

The law ...should surely be accessible at all times and to everyone.

--Franz Kafka

The Southern California Association of Law Libraries (SCALL) Committee on Public Access to Legal Information (PALI) is charged with providing consulting services and related educational programs to public and other non-law libraries offering open access to legal information.

Public access to legal information is extremely important in today's rapidly changing legal environment. In recognition of the public's need to know their legal rights and how statutes, administrative regulations, and judicial cases affect their lives, SCALL is pleased to present the fifth edition of *Locating the Law: A Handbook for Non-Law Librarians*, 2009. This publication, as each of the earlier editions pointed out, is not intended to replace a detailed legal research guide nor is it to be a substitute for the advice of a licensed attorney. *Locating the Law* is intended to provide basic information about California and federal legal materials: what they are, how they are organized, and how to use them.

The full text of the fifth edition of *Locating the Law* will be available free of charge on the SCALL Web site. For economic and environmental reasons the publication will no longer be produced in print format. Additionally, the electronic only version will make updating more effective and efficient. Web site addresses have been supplied for most of the materials discussed in each chapter. Further, when *Locating the Law* is viewed over the Internet, readers will be able to find sources of information almost instantly by clicking on the hyperlinked text provided throughout this publication. As used in this handbook, Internet access means electronically available. When commercially available Internet services are described within, they are identified as fee-based services.

As a member of SCALL for fifteen years (1992-2007) and former PALI chair, I know that previous editions of this handbook have been used by librarians both within and outside of California and have assisted paralegals, law students, legal administrative assistants, attorneys and others. The editor and authors hope the fifth edition will continue to be an important resource for locating legal information.

Readers with questions, comments and suggestions for revisions may use the *Contact Us* link on the *Locating the Law* page at <http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/scall/locating.htm>.

LOCATING THE LAW, FIFTH EDITION

With your help, the members of the PALI Committee will strive to keep this new online edition as up-to-date as possible.

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