

Washington County (Oregon) Law Library

LEGAL RESEARCH GUIDE

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TOPIC: Small Claims: Researching Oregon Small Claims courts and procedures

- Small claims cases can be filed in [Oregon Circuit Courts and county Justice Courts](#). Please read the [Oregon Revised Statutes \(ORS\)](#) sections that apply to your specific situation.
- Individual county Circuit and Justice courts will have their own forms and procedures; before embarking on additional research, please contact the court where you plan to file.
- There is no *Oregon Small Claims Court* guide, handbook, or manual, but many Oregon court webpages will have information about how to file a small claims case.

1) BOOKS/PAMPHLETS/BROCHURES (TIP: Remember, not everything is online!)

- Oregon legal practice manuals on state law and practice are published by the Oregon State Bar and are available for reference at your county law libraries. Locate your local county law library: [Oregon Council of County Law Libraries directory \(OCCLL\)](#)
- Ask about legal self-help books at your public library and local bookstores: for example "[Everybody's Guide to Small Claims Court](#)" published by [Nolo Press](#). Articles on small claims courts are also available at [Nolo Press](#) and [HALT](#) websites. (*These are not Oregon-specific resources.*)
- Oregon public library links [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

2) ONLINE INFORMATION

- [Oregon Judicial Department \(OJD\)](#) links to your local circuit court where you can find your county's small claims procedures, forms, and fees. Visit the [Washington County Circuit Court](#) for one example.
- [Oregon Revised Statutes](#) (ORS): search using keywords such as small claims, justice court, evidence, witnesses, service, garnishment, collection, enforcement of judgment, jury trial and others that apply.
- [Oregon State Bar \(OSB\) Public Info](#) (503-684-3763) is another source of basic information on how small claims are handled by Oregon courts. You may also ask for a referral to an attorney who will serve as your Small Claims Coach or to review your documents.
- Service: Your county sheriff's department is one place to look for information on serving defendants notice of your lawsuit; see, for example, the [Washington County Sheriff's Department Civil Unit](#). There is also an Oregon publication called the "[Civil Process Manual](#)," which you may find at some county law libraries.
- [Oregon Corporation Division](#) is the place to look for information on business names and agents for service if you are bringing a small claim against a business.

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Legal Aid Services of Oregon \(LASO\)](#): 503-648-7163
- Oregon Judicial Department (OJD): [Self-Help Resources](#)
- A [directory of Portland Metro-Area Legal Services](#)
- [How to Find a Lawyer in Oregon and other legal research guides](#)
- Ask an Oregon librarian a question via email: [Oregon State Library / L-NET](#)
- [Oregon Legal Research blog](#)

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