

Washington County (Oregon) Law Library

LEGAL RESEARCH GUIDE

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TOPIC: VITAL RECORDS *(where to file and obtain vital records for Oregon, including birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, and divorce certifications).*

QUICK RESEARCH TIP: in most cases, you need to be an immediate family member to obtain another person's vital records.

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

- Check your public library for the book Where to Find Vital Records in Oregon by the Oregon Center for Health Statistics. Your local public library might also have historic vital records indexes (frequently available on microfiche or microfilm).
- Oregon public library links [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).
- Many legal research resources are not online. Ask at your [county](#) or [state](#) law library for titles.

2) ONLINE INFORMATION

- The [Oregon State Center for Health Statistics](#) (CHS) has a web page for [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) about Vital Records](#). The CHS is responsible for issuing certified copies of vital records, including birth, death, marriage, and divorce certificates for events that occurred in Oregon. The CHS has certified birth and death records beginning in 1903, marriage records in 1906, and divorce records in 1925. Information on ordering Oregon vital records can be found at the [CHS website](#).
- Oregon CHS also provides [information on making changes to Oregon vital records](#).
- The [Oregon State Center for Health Statistics Registration Unit](#) is responsible for registering Oregon vital records and provides [information on why vital records are registered](#) and instructions on registering different types of vital records.
- The [Oregon State Archives](#) maintains older vital records for Oregon, including birth, death, marriage, and divorce documents.
- Check with your local county copies of recently recorded vital records. For example, the [Washington County Health & Human Services](#) Vital Records web page on [Birth Certificates and Death Certificates](#) has information on obtaining certified copies of birth and death certificates that occurred in the county within the past 6 months. Locate your local county's website using the [Oregon Blue Book](#). The [Oregon Administrative Rules](#) provide [county retention schedules for vital records](#).
- To obtain vital records for other states, you can start at the U.S. [National Center for Health Statistics'](#) web page on [where to write for vital records](#). The site also provides [guidelines to use when applying for records](#).
- For vital records from outside Oregon, the fee-based service [VitalChek](#) offers official government birth, death, marriage, and divorce certificates. The VitalChek website offers a [listing of cooperating government agencies](#) (including Oregon CHS Vital Records).

3) OTHER RESOURCES

- [Oregon State Bar \(OSB\) Public Info](#) (503-684-3763)
- [Legal Aid Services of Oregon \(LASO\)](#) and [Oregon Law Help](#)
- [Oregon Law Center](#) (503-640-4115) – Hillsboro Regional Office
- A directory of [Portland-Metro Area Legal Services](#)
- Ask an Oregon law librarian a question via email: [Oregon State Library/L-net](#)
- [Oregon Legal Research blog: post on locating vital records](#)
- [Oregon Legal Research website](#)
- Other [Washington County Law Library legal research guides](#)

Keywords: vital records, marriage license, death certificate, birth certificate, divorce certificate.