

PROFESSIONAL LEGAL RESEARCH

Civil rights are the fundamental rights of citizens to personal freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by subsequent acts of Congress such as the Voting Rights Act. This quick reference guide highlights the civil rights law content on Westlaw and shows you how to retrieve relevant documents.

Civil Rights Law

Civil rights law practice typically involves issues relating to employment, real estate transactions, child custody disputes, law enforcement, zoning regulations, transportation of students, claims of age discrimination, and the funding of collegiate sports.

Civil Rights Law Resources on Westlaw

Westlaw includes an extensive collection of civil rights law materials, including primary law, secondary sources, practice materials, and briefs. In each category listed below, a few key databases are highlighted. For a complete list of civil rights databases, click **Directory** at the top of any page. The Westlaw Directory is displayed. Click **Topical Practice Areas**, then click **Civil Rights**.

You can also access a database by typing its identifier, e.g., **fcivrtacts** for the Federal Civil Rights Acts, Third Edition database, in the *Search for a database* text box in the left frame of the Westlaw Directory or a tabbed page.

Remember that the easiest way to retrieve a specific document when you have the citation is to use the Find service. Type your citation in the *Find by citation* text box in the left frame of a tabbed page and click **Go**.

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

Statutes are the foundation of civil rights law. The Federal Civil Rights–U.S. Code Annotated database (FCIV-USCA) contains documents from the *United States Code Annotated*® that relate to violations of individual rights and discrimination based on age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual preference, or other grounds. In addition, you can access databases containing specialized information such as the Arnold & Porter Legislative History: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 database (ADA-LH).

CASE LAW

Court decisions that construe and review civil rights laws, regulations, and agency decisions are another important source of information when you research civil rights law. The Federal Civil Rights–Cases database (FCIV-CS) includes cases from the federal courts that relate to violations of individual rights and discrimination based on age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual preference, or other grounds.

Category:

Practice Area Fundamentals

For research assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call the West Reference Attorneys at 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378) or click **Help** on Westlaw® for a live help session.



SECONDARY SOURCES

The Civil Rights–Law Reviews, Texts, and Bar Journals database (CIV-TP) includes analytical texts, law reviews, and other legal periodicals that relate to violations of individual rights and discrimination based on age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual preference, or other grounds. Among the leading treatises available on Westlaw is *Federal Civil Rights Acts*, Third Edition, which is available in the FCIVRTACTS database.

Using KeySearch®

KeySearch is a research tool that makes it easy to retrieve relevant cases and secondary sources, such as law review articles. You select terms from a classification system based on the West Key Number System®. KeySearch identifies the key numbers and terms most relevant to your issue and automatically provides a query for you.

CIVIL RIGHTS RESEARCH WITH KEYSEARCH

To access KeySearch, click **Key Numbers** at the top of any page. Then click **KeySearch** under *Browse Key Numbers*. A list of topics along with selected subtopics is displayed. Click the **Browse** icon (📁) next to *Civil Rights* to display a list of subtopics (Figure 1). Continue to click the **Browse** icons as necessary to view each successive level of subtopics.

To select a subtopic for which KeySearch will provide a query, click the **Search** icon (🔍) next to the subtopic or click the **Search all of ...** link at the top of the page. At the KeySearch search page, choose the source containing the type of documents you want to retrieve and, if desired, add your own terms in the *Add Search terms* text box. KeySearch supplies a query for you based on the topic or subtopic you selected, the source you selected, and any search terms you added. Click **Search** to run the KeySearch query.



Figure 1. KeySearch topics under *Civil Rights*

For assistance using Westlaw, call 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).
For free reference materials, visit west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides.