

THE UNITED STATES CODE

All federal statutes currently in force are collected and arranged by subject into 50 titles in a set called the *United States Code (U.S.C.)*. The U.S.C. is the official text of the federal statutes. A new edition of the code is published every six years and updated by annual supplements. U.S.C. has several finding aids, listed below. However, the U.S.C. is published slowly and can be many months to several years out of date. Further, it does not provide annotations, or cases decided by courts that interpret or cite the statutes.

U.S. Code Finding Aids

- a) A general subject index.
- b) Popular Name Table.
- c) Revised Titles Table: shows where laws revised since 1926 are found in current code.
- d) Revised Statutes of the United States of 1878: provides current cites for 1878 laws.
- e) Statutes at Large Table provides cites to the code or says if repealed or eliminated.
- f) Table for Executive Orders, Proclamations, and Reorganization Plans:
indicates where noted in the code, or if eliminated.
- g) References in Text provides information on internal cross-references in code.

ANNOTATED U.S. CODES

There are two sets of commercially published annotated codes, the *United States Code Annotated (U.S.C.A.)* and the *United States Code Service (U.S.C.S.)*. These codes include all the features and tables of U.S.C.. In addition, they are updated yearly, include annotations, have detailed indexes for each title and provide historical notes of amendments and legislative history.

COMPARISON OF ANNOTATED FEDERAL CODES

Similarities

Both Annotated Codes Provide:

1. Annotations of cases interpreting statutes.

2. References to amendments and legislative history documents.
3. General indexes to the complete code and each title.
4. Updates by annual pocket parts and supplementary volumes.
5. References to C.F.R. rules promulgated.
6. Cross-references to related code sections.

Differences

1. U.S.C.A. is published by West.
U.S.C.S. is published by LexisNexis.
2. U.S.C.A. has more annotations than U.S.C.S.
U.S.C.S. is selective, avoiding repetitive decisions.
3. U.S.C.A. has references to West topics and key numbers.
U.S.C.S. has a Research Guide with citations to other publications.
4. U.S.C.A. publishes court rules within the body of the code.
U.S.C.S. publishes court rules in separate volumes.
5. U.S.C.A. does not publish uncodified laws.
U.S.C.S. has separate volumes for uncodified legislation
6. U.S.C.A. follows the text of the U.S. Code.
U.S.C.S. follows the text of public laws as they appear in the session laws.
7. U.S.C.A. updates yearly supplements with public laws.
U.S.C.S. updates yearly supplements with Later Case and Statutory Service.

FINDING FEDERAL STATUTES

1. **Index method**
 - A. All three codes have general indexes.
 - B. The U.S.C.A. and U.S.C.S. have detailed individual title indexes.
2. **Topic method**
 - A. Use general index or Words & Phrases in U.S.C.
 - B. Use detailed index for each title in U.S.C.A. and U.S.C.S.
3. **Popular Name Table and Shepard's Acts & Cases by Popular Name**
 - A. All three codes have popular name tables.
 - B. Some acts known by a popular name which differs from the name of the act.
 - C. Example: 42 USC 14701 concerning registration of sex offenders is known as "Megan's Law."

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

1. Westlaw (password only)
 - A. Provides access to U.S.C.A. and U.S.C.

- B. Find citation; search or browse code, index, Popular Name Table.
- 2. Lexis (password only)
 - A. Provides access to U.S.C.S.
 - B. Find citation; search or browse code.
- 3. LexisNexis Academic Universe (public access from on-campus).
 - A. Provides access to U.S.C.S.
 - B. Search or browse code and Popular Names of Laws.
- 4. HeinOnline (public access from on-campus).
 - A. Provides access to U.S. Code from 1925.
 - B. Includes Early Federal Laws Collection.

WEB RESOURCES

FDSys <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

Government Printing Office website provides access to government documents from all three branches of government. U.S. Code available from 1994 at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionUScode.action?collectionCode=USCODE>

Legal Information Institute <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

Cornell University Law School website provides access to the current U.S. Code by title, section number, keyword and Popular Name.

Office of the Revision Counsel <http://uscode.house.gov/lawrevisioncounsel.shtml>

Provides access to current U.S. Code by title, section number, keyword, and Popular Name. Also provides tables, information on currency and download options.

Thomas <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>

Maintained by the Library of Congress, Thomas provides tracking for current legislation as it makes its way through Congress. Provides the full-text of bills beginning with the 101st Congress (1989-present) and bill summaries from the 93rd Congress (1973-present).