

Resources for comparing state laws

Compiled by Ed Sadowski, Arapahoe Community College Library

Adapted from Harvard Law School Library

Legal researchers as well as students are often called upon to compare laws from multiple states on a particular topic. Comparing a few states is straightforward, but a comprehensive survey of state laws is more difficult. Before beginning, it is worthwhile to find out if a survey on your topic already exists (articles, websites, or specialized books listed below). Because state laws change frequently, previously compiled surveys are quickly outdated. Even with a survey in hand, the careful researcher will ultimately locate and review each statute they wish to compare. Many state law topics may be covered by a Uniform Law or Model Act.

A good starting source, online or print: National Survey of State Laws. Provides citations and brief summaries of state laws on a highly selective list of topics. Print and online versions, updated every couple years or so, may be more current in online version. Print available at DPL, Douglas, Englewood. Online version available at DPL, Douglas Co., as part of Gale Virtual Reference Library database.

Online:

Colorado statutes: Michie.com/Colorado . A few other states at Michie.com (CA, DC, DE, MD, MS, TN, UT, VT).

Colorado General Assembly: leg.state.co.us

State laws, regulations, legislatures: LLSDC llsdc.org/state-leg

State laws, regulations, and more: WashLaw washlaw.edu/uslaw/index.html

Uniform Commercial Code Locator (by subject area for all states):

law.cornell.edu/uniform/ucc.html

Article databases such as LexisNexis, EBSCOhost, Academic OneFile, ProQuest for articles on particular national issues spanning across states. LexisNexis has the strongest collection of law-related materials. Googling also will yield results.

[National Conference of State Legislatures](#)

The National Conference of State Legislatures offers a huge number of substantive, comparative articles on state laws. See the "Issue Areas" tab and browse the wide range of topics and subtopics. For each, activities of states at the forefront of the issue are mentioned, and for many topics there are tables listing state laws and bills with citations.

[National Governors Association](#)

The National Governors Association provides news on current issues in state government. See Center for Best Practices for reports and publications on an extensive list of issues explaining which states are implementing creative solutions to thorny problems. Some tables are descriptive only and do not provide citations.

[Federation of Tax Administrators: State Comparisons](#)

Provides summaries and tables comparing state tax rates, state revenues and burdens, tax amnesty programs, sales taxation of services and other state tax issues. See also [State Tax Facts](#) from the Tax Policy Center for other state tax related comparisons.

[National Association of Secretaries of State](#)

The National Association of Secretaries of State provide comparative looks at issues related to state voting and elections through news items, fact sheets, and short reports.

[50-State Surveys](#) (Westlaw password required)

Contains surveys of state laws on a full range of topics. Search by keyword or browse the Table of Contents. Surveys provide citations, usually linked, but not necessarily explanatory text. Source material is derived from Richard Leiter's National Survey of State Laws; LRC Multijurisdictional Surveys; as well as surveys compiled by West editors.

Print:

National Survey of State Laws (Richard A. Leiter). See above.

[Martindale-Hubbell Law Digest](#) (at DPL)

Part of the famous Martindale-Hubbell legal directory, the Law Digest volumes have uniformly organized explanations of major legal topics in each state with citations.