



N.C. State Statutes, County and Municipal Ordinances

Usually the first step in legal research is determining if there is a governing statute, ordinance, or rule in effect. Many of the resources needed to locate North Carolina statutes or county and municipal ordinances are available in the Law Library or the nearby School of Government. Only rarely will the researcher have to go to the [Legislative Library](#) in Raleigh.

Background Information

North Carolina General Statutes can be found [online for free](#).

The following titles provide essential background information on the legislature, state agencies, county officials, and the law-making process in North Carolina.

North Carolina Manual (Law Library Stacks: editions from 1917-2007/08; the latest edition is at the Reference Desk, [JK4130 .N673](#)) is published biennially and contains historical data about North Carolina, biographical information about legislators, information about state agencies, the judiciary, and county officials, election statistics, and other facts of general interest.

The North Carolina Manual is also available electronically through the [UNC catalog](#) or through the N.C. Secretary of State [website](#).

State Legislative Leadership, Committees, and Staff (Law Library Stacks: editions from 1979-1995; [JK2403 .B62](#)) is a source containing information on committee objectives, committee leadership, and the individuals associated at the various levels of the legislative structure in North Carolina.

Statutes

A statute set has all the public laws currently in force, arranged by subject matter.

General Statutes of North Carolina (Law Library Stacks, at Reference Desk, and on Reserve, [KFN7430 1943 .A24](#); available [online for free](#); also available on LexisNexis) is the official version published by LexisNexis. At the end of the statute is a legislative history line that shows the date of initial passage as well as any subsequent amendments to that statute. This resource also has annotations such as cases and attorney general opinions that have interpreted a statute.

Locating and reading the documents listed in the legislative history line and annotations may provide all the information needed to ascertain legislative intent. However, if a careful reading of the documents listed in the notes does not provide a clear answer, it may be necessary to begin a more extensive research process.

West's North Carolina General Statutes Annotated (Law Library Stacks, [KFN7430 1943 .A241](#); also available on Westlaw) is the unofficial annotated version of the general statutes published by West. The annotations include notes on cases interpreting the statutes.

The North Carolina General Statutes can also be found online through the General Assembly of North Carolina's [website](#). On the right-hand side is a shortcut to the general statutes. The online version does not include case annotations.

Session Laws

Session laws are a bound compilation of ratified bills adopted by a session of the legislature. The session laws are divided up by

legislative session and arranged chronologically within the volumes. To find a particular statute, the researcher must know the year it was passed.

North Carolina Session Laws (4th Floor North Carolina Reference Collection; 2nd Floor North Carolina Stacks; some older copies in Rare Books Room; [KFN7425 .A22](#); library also has some years on microfiche) are held in hard copy for the years 1777 to the present. Local laws are available online through the General Assembly of North Carolina [website](#) beginning with the 1959 session; public laws are available beginning with the 1981-1982 session. To access this material, use the shortcut to Session Laws on the right-hand side of the General Assembly homepage. North Carolina Session Laws are also available on [HeinOnline](#) and at [LLMC Digital](#), both of which can be accessed through the Law Library's webpage at Legal Databases.

North Carolina Colonial Session Laws (Microfiche; [KFN7425 .A22](#); available online to the UNC community through HeinOnline) correspond to the years 1715 to 1776.

County and Municipal Ordinances

Ordinances are laws or regulations created by local governments. The Law Library has scattered holdings of city and county ordinances. Search the catalog for detailed information about the city ordinances that are available and which UNC library has them.

Municipal Code Corporation is a private company that publishes municipal ordinances for some local governments. The ordinances can be accessed through their [online library](#).

American Legal Publishing Corporation is another private company that publishes some local North Carolina ordinances. The ordinances can be accessed through their [online library](#).

A few North Carolina counties and towns publish their ordinances on their own websites. A list of county websites can be found through the UNC School of Government's [website](#). The School of Government also has a [list](#) of North Carolina city, town, and village websites.

Administrative Rules

North Carolina Register (4th Floor North Carolina Reference Collection, [KFN7434 .A2](#)) includes information about state agency rules, administrative rules, executive orders and other notices. The Register can also be found online at the North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings [website](#). Older versions of the North Carolina Register have been digitized by the UNC Law Library and are available here. The Register is published bimonthly.

The North Carolina Administrative Code is a compilation of current state regulations. These regulations are created by administrative agencies and have full force of law.

State of North Carolina Administrative Code (4th Floor NC Collection & 2nd Floor North Carolina Stacks, [KFN7435 1998 .A26](#)) is a collection of all the rules adopted by the state agencies and occupational licensing boards in North Carolina. The Administrative Code can also be found [online](#) and on Westlaw and LexisNexis.

Other Sources

North Carolina maintains an official state [website](#) that provides comprehensive information on the State of North Carolina. Links are provided to local and national government officials, the N.C. court system, the General Assembly, state employees, laws and regulations, and local government information.

The North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings [website](#) provides a great deal of information concerning the administrative rules, the N.C. Register, and the administrative rules process. You can also access reports and hearing forms there.

The UNC School of Government's [website](#) provides several links for anyone researching local government. Information on the School of Government's website includes links to the North Carolina League of Municipalities, a list of N.C. city and town homepages, a list of N.C. county homepages, the County Government Directory, and N.C. Chambers of Commerce.

The North Carolina Legislative Library also publishes a helpful [research guide](#) on finding local government charters and ordinances.

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