

THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW LIBRARY

Pathfinder Series

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Cost Effective Legal Research

Regardless of where you will be working, keep research costs down.

- ❖ **Meet and embrace the Library Staff.** They know what resources are available, how to use them, and which are appropriate for your research.
- ❖ **Learn what resources are available & what they cost** – Online Services, Interlibrary Loans, document delivery service and time. Find out how these costs are billed to clients.
- ❖ **Exhaust local resources** –*APP* or *GAB* = “ask a person” or “get a book”.
- ❖ **Check the Internet**, especially for recent administrative decisions, appellate court decisions, and congressional documents.
- ❖ **Learn your attorney’s idiosyncrasies.** Does she prefer paper or electronic copies?
- ❖ **Know your deadlines.**
- ❖ **How does Lexis and Westlaw bill your organization?** *The pricing options are:*
 - *Transactional pricing:* you incur a charge every time a new search is entered. Start with very broad searches and narrow them using locate or focus. Avoid new searches. The larger the file, the more the cost.
 - Lexis Advance is based on a subscription price structure. Packages can start at \$150-\$175 per month. See *Lexis Advance® Price Guide for Commercial Markets; Lexis Advance® 10 Cost Effective Research Tips.*
 - Westlaw charges are referenced in its Pricing Guide. For a sample of Retail rates on WestlawNext go to “Tools”, then go to “Pricing Guide.”
- ❖ **Additional charges** are incurred for:
 - *Fixed Rate plans:* based on anticipated or past use. Contracts are customized and usually restrict access to parts of the service.
- ❖ **Plan your search.**
 - Make sure what you are looking for is actually available on Lexis or Westlaw.
 - Cheapest way to find out what’s available – **printed database listings.**
 - Find the name of the database or file you wish to search.
 - Choose the smallest relevant database.
 - Use segment and field searching. (Both vary from database to database.)
 - When you **know the citation**, simply type your citation.
 - To **update** information use:
 - *Shepard's* on Lexis and *KeyCite* on Westlaw are conversely integrated into searches relevant to case, statutory, and administrative law.

- ❖ **Take advantage of Lexis and Westlaw Customer Service. Use people,** call the Reference Librarians and let them run your search first. They will formulate a search or determine if the kind of information you seek is actually available **FOR FREE**. Always have them email their results to you.
- ❖ **Sign off if your search is not going well.** Ask a Librarian or Customer Service.
- ❖ **GET A BOOK -- GAB**
 - **Use Printed Materials When Possible – They are Free!**
 - If you're researching new issues, or an issue that is difficult to describe in words perform manual research first.
- ❖ **ASK A PERSON -- APP**
 - Lexis or Westlaw questions – call Customer Service
 - Lexis: 1-800-45-LEXIS / 1-800-455-3947
 - Westlaw: 1-800- 450-West / 1-800-850-9378
 - If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask a Librarian or call the Reference Desk at 713-313-1108.