



# The Resource Page



## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

### CARA

casetext.com

When a product wins the New Product of the Year award from the American Association of Law Libraries, you take note. When that product is offered as a free service for judges, you look more closely.

That's where we find ourselves with CARA, an automated legal-research tool provided by a company called casetext. So what got the American Association of Law Libraries excited about this product?

You can upload any brief or legal memorandum into CARA—and it will return a list of cases relevant but not already cited in the brief or memorandum. Obviously, that could be of great use to judges. For understandable reasons (not enough money to justify extensive research or briefing, sloppy work, etc.), the briefs we get from lawyers aren't always as thorough as they should be. CARA offers an easy way to quickly check for missing caselaw. And at the price, it's at least worth a tryout.

Many attorneys already subscribe to CARA and use its features by paying a subscription fee. Casetext tells us that it has no plans at this point to change its present practice, which is to make the CARA product (along with all of its features) available to judges at no cost. That lets you follow links of the cases to the full text, to see how later cases have summarized the original case, and to filter your searches by jurisdiction.

For judges who would like to try out the product, send an email to courts@casetext.com.



## NEW PUBLICATIONS

PAMELA CASEY, JENNIFER ELEK & ROGER WARREN, *USE OF RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION IN STATE SENTENCING*

PROCEEDINGS. National Center for State Courts, Center for Sentencing Initiatives, 2017. 5 pp.  
<https://goo.gl/EV9jDe>

The National Center for State Courts' Center for Sentencing Initiatives has issued another of its short, highly readable reports on key questions involved in criminal sentencing. Their reports are backed up by extensive footnotes (here, endnotes) citing to key research in the field.

The last report looks at risk-assessment instruments used to predict the risk of reoffending, as well as risk-and-needs-assessment instruments that also look to see what services might be offered to reduce an offender's likelihood of reoffending. These reports are structured around answers to a series of questions, in this case ones like how risk-and-needs-assessment scores are used at sentencing, how widespread is their use, is there evidence about the effects of their use, and are they biased against racial minorities?

If these questions seem relevant to your daily work—and you'd like to read some research-based answers—head over to the Internet link listed above to take a look at the report. It complements quite nicely the article by Professor Heilbrun and his colleagues found at page 116 of this issue.

JASON A. CANTONE. *ENHANCING COOPERATION THROUGH STATE-FEDERAL JUDICIAL COUNCILS*. Federal Judicial Center, 2017. 45 pp.  
<https://goo.gl/LmsFqX>

The Federal Judicial Center issues pocket guides to assist federal judges. One of the latest pocket guides, however, is aimed at both state judges and federal judges and details how enhanced cooperation between state and federal courts can increase overall efficiency and assist both courts. The pocket guide focuses on the use of state-federal judicial councils, which allow judges and administrators a forum to identify sources of potential tension (e.g., calendar and scheduling conflicts, certification of state-law questions,

access to records) and consider how to share limited resources (e.g., facilities, emergency preparedness, civics education programs, translators).

The Federal Judicial Center features the pocket guide on a new public website (<https://goo.gl/T1e165>) that also expands beyond the use of formal councils to show how state and federal courts can work informally to address areas of mutual concern. For courts interested in forming a state-federal judicial council (or expanding their current one), the pocket guide and website offer a list of topics that could benefit from collaboration, sample activities and handbooks already completed by active state-federal judicial councils, and sample forms for creating a charter or organizing a meeting. For courts not interested in a formal council, the website also features a 2016 Federal Judicial Center report detailing a survey on state-federal cooperation that went out to every federal chief district judge. The survey results showed a wide range of activities and topics benefiting from state-federal cooperation, federal judges' interest in further collaboration with state courts, and an ability to cooperate outside of formal councils. The website also encourages users to submit other examples of how cooperation between state and federal courts improves both judicial systems.

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON FINES, FEES, AND BAIL PRACTICES, *LAWFUL COLLECTION OF LEGAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS: A BENCH CARD FOR JUDGES*. National Center for State Courts, 2017. 2 pp.

Key leaders of the state courts, including the Conference of Chief Justices, have formed a task force to address issues concerning the handling in court of fine and fee collection and the setting of bail. As part of a new Resource Center (available at <https://goo.gl/Kv7LPK>), the task force has produced a two-page bench card for judges to use when determining whether to find someone in contempt for the failure to pay a fine or fee. We've reprinted the bench card for your use at pages 127-128 of this issue. Additional resources can be found at the website.