



POLICY RESEARCH 101



*A guide to getting started researching interests,
issues, laws, and policies*

September 2015



THINGS YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ISSUE...

- What are some of the root causes of the issue?
- What current policies are in place concerning my issue?
- What has been tried before in efforts to address this issue?
- What is being tried elsewhere / in other cities?
- Who is already working on this issue? What does their research say?
- Who is most effected by this issue?
- Who has the decision-making power to make the desired change

TYPES OF INFORMATION YOU MAY WANT TO FIND..

- **Quantitative:** *Concerned with quantity and data*
 - Survey Results
 - Census Information
 - Statistics
 - Ratios and probabilities
 - Budgets and cost figures
- **Qualitative:** *Concerned with quality and meaning*
 - Interviews and Focus Groups
 - Observations (Seeing and listening)
 - Document Analysis
 - Case studies

TYPES OF INFORMATION YOU MAY WANT TO FIND...

- **Primary Sources:** *First hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic.*
 - Personal testimonies
 - Audio and Video recordings
 - Laws and legislative hearings
 - Census or demographic records
- **Secondary Sources:** Analysis or interpretation of primary sources.
 - Review articles
 - Book Reviews
 - Editorial
 - Biographies

Try to include some primary sources!



YOUR BEST FREE RESOURCE...



San Francisco Public Library



SFPL BRANCH AND ACCESS INFO...

- You can access library resources by getting a free library card. Ask YC staff how to get a library card.
- SFPL has 28 libraries and the Main Library is right across from the YC office!

Main Library
415-557-4400

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
12-5	10-6	9-8	9-8	9-8	12-6	10-6

100 Larkin St.

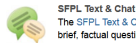


WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH YOUR LIBRARY CARD?

- Ask reference librarians questions by phone, text, or email
- Remotely access millions of journal articles via SFPL's extensive database subscriptions
- Access e-books
- Walk in and request research help from a reference librarian or teen librarian
- Check out most titles through a vast network of partner libraries (Link +)
- ALSO: Check out books, magazines, and DVD's and Access tutoring and homework help and tons of events

Ask a Librarian

Ways to Contact a Librarian with Your Questions



SFPL Text & Chat
The SFPL Text & Chat service works best for answering brief, factual questions. In depth questions will be forwarded in email format to subject specialists, who will try to get back to you within 2 days.



Email Reference
Submit a question to an SFPL librarian via email. Emailed questions may not be answered immediately, for a quicker response, use SFPL Text & Chat or call your local library.



Live Homework Help
Thousands of lessons, worksheets, study guides and videos to help all levels including AP and college. Live one-to-one help.



Telephone Reference
Call during business hours to speak with an SFPL librarian at (415) 557-4400.



Visit Us
Visit the Main Library or neighborhood libraries in person.

Government Information Center - 5th Floor

100 Larkin St.
San Francisco, 94102
(415) 557-4500
[Directions](#) | [Email](#)

Hours

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
12:00 - 6:00	10:00 - 6:00	10:00 - 6:00	10:00 - 6:00	10:00 - 6:00	10:00 - 6:00	10:00 - 6:00

The Government Information Center provides free access to United States, California, San Francisco, and Bay Area regional agency government documents, and to materials on public policy, political science, public administration, and the law. It houses the Patent and Trademark Center and the Environmental Center.

Patent & Trademark Center
Environmental Center

At Affordable Care Act Information and Workshops

November 5, 2013 Election Information

Collections and Services Available

- Tax Information
- Elections
- San Francisco Government
- Annual Reports of City Agencies
- Database of San Francisco Board and Commission Appointments
- Directory of Public Notice pages published by all City Agencies
- San Francisco Baker Proposals Database
- San Francisco Building Codes
- San Francisco Statistics
- Presidio, Hunter's Point, Treasure Island and Fort Baker Documents
- Bay Area Regional Government Agencies
- California Government
- United States Government
- Census Material for Genealogists

ARTICLES AND DATABASES

San Francisco Public Library

Home | [Articles and Databases](#)

All Databases


- Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)**
A collection of articles covering the physical sciences, technology, medicine, social sciences, the arts, theology, literature and more. Among its full-text coverage, it includes full-text of the New York Times back to 1985. Updated daily.
- Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)**
Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)
- ALLDATA Online**
Accessible only in the Main Library
Printable full-text automotive diagnostic and repair information manuals.
- America's News (Newsbank)**
U.S. News content from local, regional, and national sources that include printed and online newspapers, blogs, journals, newsletters,
- Periodical Plus**
- Cross Database Search**
- Open Links for Education**
- Biological Information Guide**
- Print from Argyle**

SFPL Chat

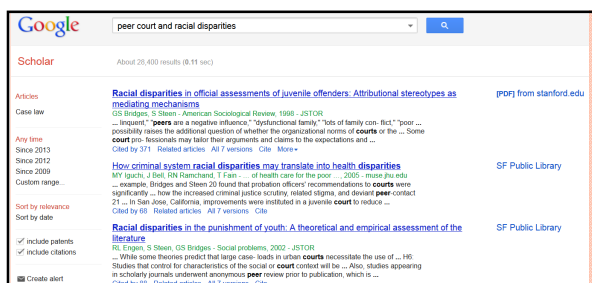
Type here to chat. Press ENTER to send.

RECOMMENDED SFPL JOURNAL DATABASES

- o **Government Information Center**
- o **Peer-reviewed academic journals:** Research done on your topic by university researchers. These articles will usually be longer and denser.
- o **News Databases:** Comprehensive searches of national or international news on your topic. This is a good way to see what is being done in other places, or what kind of press your issue has gotten.
 - America's News (NewsBank)
 - Ethnic NewsWatch (ProQuest)
 - Newspapers (Proquest)
 - SF Chronicle (Newsbank)
 - Lexis Nexus (not at SFPL, if you have access to university library login)
- o **Searching contents of other libraries:** WorldCat (FirstSearch)
- o **Statistics and Government Info:**
 - ProQuest Statistical Insight
 - RAND California
 - ProQuest Congressional
- o **Databases on particular topics:** Look on the site to see what is available
 - Health and Wellness Resource Center and Teen Health & Wellness
 - Environmental Databases
 - LGBT Life
 - Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center = Pros/Cons



- o **Google Scholar** is a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines
- o You can use it to look up the closest matches to your search inputs using the broadest possible search
- o Use Google Scholar settings to add "Library link" to SFPL. Search results will then include links to full text versions that SFPL holds a subscription to.



Google Scholar search results for "peer court and racial disparities". The search returned about 20,450 results in 0.11 seconds. The results list several articles, including "Racial disparities in official assessments of juvenile offenders: Attributional stereotypes as mediating mechanisms" (PDF from stanford.edu), "How criminal system racial disparities may translate into health disparities" (SF Public Library), and "Racial disparities in the punishment of youth: A theoretical and empirical assessment of the literature" (SF Public Library).

Ways to learn more about using Google searches:

- Ask YC staff
- Use this tutorial, created by Google: http://www.google.com/intl/en_us/insidesearch/tipstricks/basics.html
- SFPL offers in-person workshops and support on using google scholar. Contact: Jerry Dear jdear@sfpl.org or ask YC staff to schedule a workshop.


SEARCH TERMS AND TRICKS...

TERM:	FUNCTION:	EXAMPLE:
"Quotations"	Search exact words or phrases	"arming juvenile probation officers"
Minus -	Subtract search results that include a certain term	Salsa -dance
Plus +	Search separate terms in a database (not google)	Juvenile + police + training
Tilde ~	Show results with similar terms	~inexpensive: will show cheap, affordable, low cost
Asterisk*	Placeholder when you do not know exact phrase	Another * in paradise
Elipses...	Search ranges	SF Mayors 1930...1960

SEARCHING TIPS...

- o Use likely Words
- o Avoid using a question
- o Avoid phrases like, "article about"
- o Be Specific; Example) "High School Graduation Requirements" vs. "Graduation requirements"
- o Be Brief
- o Google ignores common words; Example) 'summertime jobs in SF' vs. 'summertime jobs SF'

OTHER NON-LIBRARY WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

- o Youth Vote Student Survey 
- o SFUSD.edu 
- o American factfinder: Census info by area
factfinder2.census.gov
- o Purdue Online Writing Lab: has dozens of online guides and tutorials for primary research, writing, formatting citations – a GREAT resource!
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Home | About the Board | Clerk of the Board | Legislative Research Center (LRC) | Meeting Information | Legislation Introduced | Legislation Passed | Forms | Divisions | Request Information

USING SF GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

- o SF Board of Supervisors Legislative Research Center: sfbos.org > [Legislative Research Center](#) > [Legislation](#)
 - Look up BOS files including resolutions, hearings, motions, etc.
 - Search by file number, sponsor, date range, keyword, or date range.
 - Download PDF versions of proposed legislation
 - See where legislation was referred, how it was voted on, etc.

<http://www.amlegal.com/library/ca/sfrancisco.shtml>

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Library

San Francisco, California

This online version of the San Francisco Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 209-13, File No. 130785, approved October 9, 2013, effective November 8, 2013, operative January 1, 2014.

Please select how you would like to view the codes from the options below.

All San Francisco Codes

- 1996 Charter
- Administrative Code
- Business and Tax Regulations Code
- Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code
- Environment Code
- Fire Code
- Health Code
- Municipal Elections Code
- Park Code
- Planning Code (including Zoning Maps)
- Police Code
- Port Code
- Public Works Code
- Subdivision Code
- Transportation Code
- Building, Electrical, Housing, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes**

Comprehensive Ordinance List

Address:
 City of San Francisco
 City Hall, Room 168
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett
 Place
 San Francisco, CA
 94102-4678

Official website:
www.sfgov.org

Order San Francisco Codes Comprehensive Ordinance List

Notes: The Bookmark flags may have trouble displaying accurately in some newer versions of Internet Explorer. If you experience difficulty in obtaining a URL link for a title, chapter or section, you may wish to try an alternate browser such as Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome. Additionally, the staff at American Legal Publishing would be happy to assist you as needed.

LOOKING AT MINUTES AND AGENDAS FOR OTHER CITY COMMISSIONS...

- o Listen to audio, Watch SF Gov TV, or read minutes or past meetings and agendas of upcoming meetings
- o KNOW which commissions are most closely tied to to your work (examples: Police Commission, Board of Education, etc.)
- o Use SF Gov TV to see what was discussed and which advocates and members of the public were involved in certain issues:

www.sfgovtv.org



FINALLY....REFINE AND ASK!

You can always ask staff from city departments!
 Government information and records are PUBLIC!
 Just be sure to **REFINE** your questions and
DIRECT them to the correct people.

LOOKING AT REPORTS FROM ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

- o Who is already doing work on the issue locally or nationally? GO ONLINE AND FIND OUT!
- o Search organizational websites, especially by looking at the "Resources" and "Links" pages to find publications or other organizations doing similar work
- o Look at citations in reports and factsheets to see what primary sources were used—then look them up!
- o Look at staff bios to see who you can contact to ask for further documentation on their work
- o Example: While writing a resolution against the arming of SFPD with tasers, commissioners found that Amnesty International had released a report on deaths from tasers: http://ddq74coujkw11.cloudfront.net/Taser-Amnesty_Intl_Report-Dec_2008.pdf

**GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY
RESEARCHING!!**



**Let YC staff know if you have
questions!**