



# Navigating the Michigan Court of Appeals Website

By Sandra Schultz Mengel

**T**he Michigan Court of Appeals (COA) website provides easy access to a wide range of information for practitioners. It's available around the clock, at no charge. This article highlights the offerings and provides tips for finding exactly what users need.

## Accessing the Website

Users can go directly to the website at <http://courtofappeals.mijud.net>, or they can access the website through the home page of the Michigan judiciary at <http://courts.michigan.gov>. The judiciary's web page also provides access to the websites for the Michigan Supreme Court, Michigan trial courts, the Hall of Justice Learning Center, the Michigan Judicial Institute, and the State Court Administrative Office.

## Finding What You're Looking For

The COA home page organizes court information into three main categories: About the Court, Clerk's Office, and Resources.

Here's a look at what you'll find within each main category:

### About the Court

- Welcome message
- History of the Court
- Judicial biographies
- Judges from 1964 to the present
- Information concerning the court settlement program
- Frequently asked questions
- General court policies

### Clerk's Office

- Internal operating procedures
- District offices (maps and contact information)

- Case call schedule (schedules of oral argument)
- Court holidays
- Comment form

### Resources

- Case inquiry (individual case dockets, lists of cases by attorney, and lists of cases by party)
- Court opinions (Supreme Court and Court of Appeals opinions from 1996 to the present)
- Michigan Appellate Digest
- Pro per manuals
- Court rules
- Forms
- E-filing
- Budget information
- Press releases
- Media information
- Legal links
- Employment opportunities
- Reports (annual reports and work group reports concerning delay reduction, dependency appeals, record production, and summary disposition track)
- Time calculator

Additionally, the "What's New" section of the home page provides notices and alerts about court business. Links to other judiciary websites appear at the top and bottom of all primary pages.

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## Practitioner Tips

The following table identifies common questions about the Court and quick tips for finding the answers on the COA website.

I'm Looking For:	How to Find It:
<p><b>Scheduled for argument?</b></p> <p>I've been tracking a case on which I am not an attorney of record. How can I find out if it has been scheduled for oral argument?</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, Case Inquiry.</i></p> <p>If you know the docket number, select that search option, enter the number, and click Search to open the case docket on your screen. A docket event titled <i>Submitted on Case Call</i> will appear toward the end of the case docket. The date in the left column is the date on which the case will be submitted to the panel. That event also states the city where the panel will sit.</p>
<p><b>Time and date?</b></p> <p>But how do I know if the case will actually be argued, or what time it will be argued?</p>	<p><i>Go to Clerk's Office, Case Call Schedule.</i></p> <p>Click the month in which the case will be submitted and search for the docket number using the Find function on your computer (e.g., CTRL + F). The 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. sessions are distinguished on the case call schedule, and each case will indicate whether the attorneys have preserved oral argument.</p>
<p><b>An opinion or order?</b></p> <p>I have a case on which I've been waiting for an opinion or an order. I don't want to wait for the mail.</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, Case Inquiry.</i></p> <p>Enter the docket number. Scroll through the docket events to look for the opinion or order you are seeking. The case dockets are updated nightly, so you can see orders and opinions that were entered the previous day. Each event includes a hyperlink to the opinion or order so that you can immediately read or print it.</p>
<p><b>All opinions?</b></p> <p>I have too many cases to check each one. And I want to know about all opinions issued by the Court, not just my own.</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, Court Opinions, Email Release Notification.</i></p> <p>Follow the instructions to send an e-mail to <a href="mailto:listserv@listserv.michigan.gov">listserv@listserv.michigan.gov</a> with the phrase "Subscribe AppellateOpinions" in the message body. Both words must be on the same line. The day after either the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeals issues opinions, you will receive an early-morning e-mail listing all the cases and providing links to the opinions (and to Appellate Digest entries where available). This page also allows you to register for a separate listserv of all Supreme Court orders sent to subscribers on the same next-day basis.</p>
<p><b>Last week's opinions?</b></p> <p>I heard that a big opinion came out last week in my practice area. How can I find it fast?</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, Court Opinions.</i></p> <p>Click Search Options, Field Search. Specify <i>Last Week</i> in the Dates field. Specify the court and the type of opinion in the All Opinions field.</p> <p>Or click Search Options, Text Search to search for unique text words or phrases.</p>
<p><b>Downloading opinions?</b></p> <p>Is there a way that I can download a group of opinions for faster review at my desk?</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, Court Opinions.</i></p> <p>Click Downloadable Zip Files. Select the desired date and type of opinions. You must have an unzip utility to use this service.</p>
<p><b>Court rules?</b></p> <p>I'm working from home. I don't have a copy of the court rules with me, and I'm not even sure which rule I need.</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, Court Rules.</i></p> <p>This option provides access to all of the Michigan Court Rules, the Rules of Evidence, administrative orders, local court rules, the Rules of Professional Conduct, the Rules Concerning the State Bar of Michigan, the Rules for the Board of Law Examiners, the Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct, and the Michigan Uniform System of Citation. All rule amendments are included in this version of the rules on their effective dates. A search field at the top of the page allows you to narrow the options if you are unsure which rule you need. Use the Find function on your computer to look for your search terms among the results. Use your computer's copy function to quote from the rules in your pleadings.</p>

I'm Looking For:	How to Find It:
<p><b>Forms?</b></p> <p>I have to file a docketing statement and I don't know where our office keeps those forms.</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, Forms.</i></p> <p>Search the alphabetical list of forms. Click the link to access a copy of the form. Some of the forms are interactive, so check whether you can complete the form on the screen and then print it for filing. Depending on the software that you are running on your computer, you may be able to save a completed form into your electronic case file in your office.</p>
<p><b>IOPs?</b></p> <p>Now that I see the docketing statement form, I'm wondering if there's an internal operating procedure that I should read before I file the form.</p>	<p><i>Go to Clerk's Office, Internal Operating Procedures.</i></p> <p>Open the document. Use the Find function on your computer to search for the phrase. Or, if you know the court rule that governs the topic you are researching, go to that IOP number. The IOPs are numbered consistently with the court rules, to the extent possible. Each item in the table of contents is a link to the matching section of the IOPs, so you can click the link and go directly to that IOP without having to scroll through the document.</p>
<p><b>Contact information?</b></p> <p>I found an IOP that says I can advise the Court about my scheduling conflicts. I need a clerk's office telephone number so I can ask where to send my conflicts information.</p>	<p><i>Go to Clerk's Office, District Offices, Contact Information.</i></p> <p>Pertinent names and numbers are listed on that page. We welcome the opportunity to answer questions by phone. Or, you could send a letter detailing your scheduling conflicts to any of the offices. We take inquiries and filings by mail as well as by delivery to one of our offices.</p>
<p><b>Maps and directions?</b></p> <p>I want to make my filing in person. Is there a page that will help me find the right office location?</p>	<p><i>Go to Clerk's Office, District Offices, Directions.</i></p> <p>Select the district where you want to make the filing. Scroll down the district page to see the address, map, construction alerts, driving directions, and parking instructions.</p> <p>If you want to file where the case file is located, go to <i>Clerk's Office, District Offices, Case Filing District Map</i>. Click on the county for the trial court from which the case originated. That will link you to the district page showing the map, construction alerts, and driving and parking instructions.</p>
<p><b>Judicial districts?</b></p> <p>I'm interested in knowing which judges are elected from each district. Do you have a map of election districts for the Court of Appeals?</p>	<p><i>Go to About the Court, Judges, Election District Map.</i></p> <p>Click on any county in each district to link to a list of the judges for that district, with their biographies. The election district map reflects the realignment of the counties in March 2002 along population lines.</p> <p>Or go to <i>About the Court, Judges, Current Judges</i>. Click a judge's name to link to his or her biography. The biographies are sorted by district.</p>
<p><b>E-Filing?</b></p> <p>I don't want to drive or mail my filings anywhere. When can I expect to be able to make my filings electronically?</p>	<p><i>Go to Resources, E-Filing.</i></p> <p>This page provides a summary of the Court's e-filing program, together with links to e-filing guidelines, necessary forms, and the Wiznet website on which COA e-filing is accomplished. Initially, the project was restricted to certain classes of cases, but the Court plans to expand e-filing to more cases in the future.</p>
<p><b>Questions about the website?</b></p> <p>While I was learning about the website, I spotted something that I think is an error. What's the quickest way to bring this to the Court's attention?</p>	<p><i>Go to the bottom of any primary page.</i></p> <p>Find the sentence that states: Questions about the content on this site should be sent to coawebinfo@courts.mi.gov. Click the link to open an e-mail to our webmaster. We welcome your comments and suggestions about the website.</p>

*Sandra Schultz Mengel is the chief clerk of the Michigan Court of Appeals. She is the Court's liaison to the State Bar of Michigan Appellate Practice Section Council and a member of the planning committee for the tri-annual Michigan Appellate Bench Bar Conferences. She recommends the Court's website to practitioners and non-practitioners alike and attributes the website's scope and functionality to the creativity and skill of the Court's in-house information systems staff.*