Books

This set of books provides political history, culture and details of important issues surrounding state government and politics for each state. The second half of the second volume is a general encyclopedia that has articles on major issues in politics and government and relates these to state and local government.

**The Book of the States:** JK 2403.B6 Reference (not Ready Ref)
Published by the Council of State Governments each year. This book provides a series of articles and comparative data about state government. It focuses heavily on government functions rather than on specific policy. Anyone focusing on how governments operate will want to look at this book. Also government finance is well covered here.

**Almanac of the 50 States:** HA 215.A52 2009 Ready Reference
Quick data book that you can look up by state instead of by topic like other almanacs. Also has rankings at the back of the book.

**Almanac of American Politics:** JK 271.B343x Ready Reference
This book will not tell you much about state government but it can tell you about a state’s political culture. While much of the book provides biographical information on national politicians, the overviews of the states and biographies of Governors are excellent reading.

**Lass Center for Minnesota Studies:**
Special Collection of books and documents related to Minnesota. Located on the second floor of the library and the collection is fully searchable in the library catalog.

Guides to State Government Information on the Web

**Minnesota Legislative Reference Library:** [http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/](http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/)
This is the place to go for Minnesota information. You can search the library catalog to the left. Many of the recent documents listed here have links to the full text of state documents. Consider resorting your results by date if you use the search box. Underneath the library catalog search box is a link to Minnesota state documents if you would like to browse. Further below that link is “Links to the World” and “Minnesota Issues” both pages can guide you to great information. On top of this all digital state legislative material is available from this site.

**Minnesota North Star:** [http://www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/home.do?agency=NorthStar](http://www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/home.do?agency=NorthStar)
This is Minnesota’s government portal. You can search or browse for all types of information here. Most states have a similar type web site that is often a place to begin your search. Some sections of the web page are easier to use than others.

A Blue Book is a generic name for a state government manual/directory. Not every state produces a Blue Book, but they often provide background information about the state and its history, biographies of legislators and executive branch employees. Most importantly they provide an explanation of the different government agencies, departments, and governmental structure. The *Minnesota Legislative Manual* (MN’s Blue Book) is included on this page. We also have this available in paper, with the most recent in the Ready Reference shelves and older editions on the 2nd floor in the Lass Center for Minnesota Studies. Call number: JK6131 .A252x
Washington University Law School has maintained this excellent portal to legal information on the web. While it is geared to the interests of law students and lawyers, their state government pages are fantastic starting places...compare with State and Local Government on the Net which is listed below.

**State and Local Government on the Net**: [http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm](http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm)
Along with Washlaw, this is a good portal to state government web sites. If searching the web isn’t getting you to the state government web pages you think should be there, browse through the links here as the pages basically follow the outline of the state government. Remember that different states may use different titles to refer to departments and agencies that do similar things.

**State List**: [http://www.library.illinois.edu/doc/researchtools/guides/state/statelist.html](http://www.library.illinois.edu/doc/researchtools/guides/state/statelist.html)
This page directs you to individual state government document pages. I noticed a few links were not working or misdirected, but this page could still be helpful. The links are supposed to direct you to pages listing new state government documents. Many of the links take you to a list of documents rather than the documents themselves. Don’t worry, if you see a document you think would help you and the page does not provide a link, just search the title in Google as many recent state government documents are available electronically.

This is a portal to state government-created databases. Many of these databases contain information that would be considered part of the deep web and may not be indexed by Google. The level of coverage and benefit to your research will depend on the state. Worth a look!

**Google Uncle Sam**: [http://www.google.com/unclesam](http://www.google.com/unclesam)
This page limits your search to government web sites, drawing from Federal and state government pages. Google by itself will work for most...if you have a topic of interest but haven’t picked a state, try searching here. Often states where your issue is of greater importance or at great debate will have pages that rise to the top of your results.

### Research Reports and other Secondary Material on the Web

Click on Issues and Research for a list of broad topics...then look to the left hand side for different subtopics. There are numerous reports, documents and news stories and even comparative tables addressing each state. On the main page there are also relevant reports listed under the section “Legislatures and Elections”.

**Council of State Governments**: [http://www.csg.org/index.aspx](http://www.csg.org/index.aspx)
Different than the National Conference of State Legislatures in that this focuses on all areas of state government. From the main page click on Policy & Research. Then look on the left hand side of the page for a list of topics. Under each topic are examples of recent policies and programs and then links to CSG publications. The CSG publications at the bottom of these pages can be very helpful!

**National Governors Association: The Center for Best Practices**: [http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.50aeae5ff70b817ae8ebb856a11010a0/](http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.50aeae5ff70b817ae8ebb856a11010a0/)
The NGA focuses on five broad policy areas: 1. Education, 2. Environment and Natural Resources, 3. Heath, 4. Homeland Security and Technology, and 5. Social, Economic and Workforce Programs. Scroll to the bottom of the main page and you will see the links to each of these areas. From there browse for relevant publications.

Also available in paper in the Library Periodicals Collection at JK2408.G686
A magazine focused on state and local government issues. The online archive is searchable on the web site and goes back at least 20 years.
Library Databases—Articles—Find these by clicking Article Databases A-Z on the library home page.

**ProQuest Newspapers:**
Local newspapers are often the best place to follow issues of state government. Use this as an alternative to going to directly to newspaper web sites like the Minneapolis Star Tribune or Wisconsin State Journal. Unfortunately not all newspapers that will be relevant to your research will be represented here.

**EBSCO MegaFile:**
Searches multiple EBSCO article databases, including Academic Search Premiere and Business Source Premiere. Covers a wide range of topics. About 50% of articles are “full text”...if you don’t see the full text link...click the link “Click Here for Other Article Options” to find out if we subscribe to the journal you are looking for.

**Sage Premiere:**
One publisher’s search engine, but has a number of journals covering public administration and American government. All articles here are “full text”!

**Worldwide Political Science Abstracts and PAIS:**
These two databases that can be searched simultaneously, focus specifically on politics and political science. While mostly providing information about journal articles there are some records for books and government reports. The articles here are not “full text” so if you find an article you would like, click “Get Article” and it will search to see if we have the article you are looking for. To search these two databases simultaneously, after clicking on either database, look for a link below the search box that says “specific databases” and add the other (or additional databases) to your search.

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**Getting Help!**

On the right side of the Library Web Page look for:

| **In Person:** At the Reference Desk on the first floor of Memorial Library | **By E-mail:** Your question will be answered by a member of the reference staff within 1-2 working days. E-mail the reference team by selecting Get Help with Research from the library homepage. |
| Fall & Spring Semester Hours* | **By Chat:** Chat online with a reference librarian by selecting Get Help with Research from the library homepage. |
| Mon. – Wed. 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. | **By Phone:** 507-389-5958 |
| Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. | |
| Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. | |
| Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. | |
| Sunday 1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. | |
| *Check the library’s website for schedule variations | |

You can also contact me. My phone is 389-2460 and e-mail is evan.rusch@mnsu.edu

Thanks so much!