



WYOMING LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

## Research Memorandum

### MULTISTATE SURVEY OF REMOTE PUBLIC ACCESS MODELS TO COURT RECORDS

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**QUESTION:** Provide an overview of different models in states that support remote access to court records.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** This memorandum surveys models of remote access to court records in four states: Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Utah. Each state represents a distinct approach, and the memorandum illustrates various practices for remote access to court records nationwide. For each state, the memorandum outlines:

- The authority permitting remote access, whether through judicial rules or statute;
- The categories of restricted and accessible records;
- An overview of the web portals used to conduct case searches; and
- Whether web portals are free to use.

Before analyzing the four surveyed states, the memorandum provides a brief overview of remote access in Wyoming. Currently, remote public access is largely limited to free access to Wyoming Supreme Court docket information for public cases, and fee-based access for registered users to Wyoming Chancery Court records.

A common feature across all four models is the effort to balance transparency and public accessibility with the need to protect confidentiality. Each state restricts access to certain records, including those containing sensitive personal data; those involving particular case types, especially those concerning minors or family matters; or whether the case is civil or criminal, and whether the nature of these restrictions is derived from federal law, state law, or rule. Each state then grants a different degree of remote access, ranging from limiting access to docket sheets in Pennsylvania, which mostly provides summary information about a case, to allowing PDF downloads of court records in Missouri and Minnesota.

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One notable difference among these approaches is how each state defines “remote access.” For example, Minnesota and Pennsylvania explicitly distinguish between public access and remote access, meaning that some records available at a courthouse or state law library may not be accessible from a private citizen’s device connected to the internet, resulting in a tiered-access model. In contrast, Missouri appears to treat public and remote access equally, where all publicly accessible documents are also available remotely. With the recent passage of legislation by the Utah Legislature, the state appears to be moving from a model that distinguishes between the two concepts to one that treats them as equivalent.<sup>1</sup>

The passage of legislation in Utah in 2026 marks a stark departure from the other states’ models. While court rules govern remote access in Minnesota, Missouri, and Pennsylvania, which appear to be more permissive than obligatory, Utah statutes will, effective January 1, 2027, require free remote access to all public court records on a statewide portal governed by the state’s judicial branch. Until the effective date of the new law, Utah operates under a model in which remote access to records is available through a pay-to-access portal that charges for searches and file downloads. The pay-to-access portal applies to lower-level courts and excludes access to appellate court records, which have remained free.

"The memorandum concludes with a survey of state statutes that permit remote access to court records or mandate the development of remote access policies. This memorandum does not discuss redaction policies for uploading or providing public access to court records or protections against third-party websites harvesting bulk data from web portals.

## **DISCUSSION:**

**WYOMING:** Currently, remote public access to court records in Wyoming is largely limited to the Wyoming Supreme Court’s online docket system, which provides free access to docket information and certain publicly available case documents through the Appellate C-Track and Electronic Filing Portal. Supreme Court opinions are also available on the Wyoming Judicial Branch’s website. Remote access to Wyoming Chancery Court filings is available for registered users for a fee.<sup>2</sup>

Remote access is currently not an option for cases in district or circuit courts, but public access is available through courthouse public terminals at each court location. Through these terminals, the public may review any nonconfidential court record held by a district court clerk in Wyoming.

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<sup>1</sup> Utah Legislature, House Bill 540 Judicial Transparency and Information Access Amendments, <https://le.utah.gov/Session/2026/bills/static/HB0540.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>2</sup> Wyoming Judicial Branch, Media Center, Covering Wyoming’s Courts, <https://www.wyocourts.gov/media-center/#tabV3> (last accessed April 20, 2026).

While the public cannot print from courthouse terminals, the district court will produce copies of court records for a fee set by rule or statute.<sup>3</sup>

**MINNESOTA:** In 2005, the Minnesota Supreme Court adopted a rule governing remote access to court records for district courts and appellate courts (the Minnesota Court of Appeals and Supreme Court).<sup>4</sup> The rule distinguished between public access at a court facility and remote access via the internet on a device not under the control of the judicial system. The court rule defines remote access as “the ability to electronically search, inspect, or copy court records without physically visiting a court facility.”<sup>5</sup> The rules further clarify that, although the state court administrator may designate publicly accessible locations other than court facilities for document access, that access does **not** constitute remote access.<sup>6</sup>

Minnesota's current rules create a tiered system for remote access to court records, with access levels determined by case type. Records in domestic abuse and harassment cases are not remotely accessible at all, partly due to federal law.<sup>7</sup> Limited remote access is allowed for some case types, such as involuntary commitment and family law matters, while civil and criminal cases not specifically excluded have the least restrictive access.<sup>8</sup> The rules also exclude certain personal data, as specified below, from remote access to protect privacy and safety.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to records restricted from remote access but publicly accessible, Minnesota court rules identify materials that are not accessible to the public at all, including, among others, medical records, minor identifying information, driver's license or passport numbers, and images containing sexual content or nudity.<sup>10</sup>

The following sections describe Minnesota's tiered remote access system, restrictions for specific case types and records, and an overview of the Minnesota Court Records Online Portal, the free statewide online repository for district court records. Free remote access to court records for appellate court records is available through a separate system, which is not covered in this memorandum.

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> 2005 Advisory Committee Comment on Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8.

<sup>5</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2.(a)(5).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2.(d).

<sup>8</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2.(g).

<sup>9</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2.(b).

<sup>10</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 4.

## Personal Data Restrictions

The rules limit remote disclosure of specific personal data for involved parties, including:

- Social Security numbers and employer identification numbers;
- Street addresses, unless made available through an access agreement approved by the state court administrator and the Minnesota Judicial Council;<sup>11</sup>
- Telephone numbers;
- Financial account numbers; and
- Any information that reveals or could reveal the identity of jurors, witnesses, or victims.<sup>12</sup>

The rules recommend that court personnel limit the inclusion of this personal data in records to address privacy concerns associated with remote access. Additionally, the rules direct the Minnesota Judicial Branch’s Information Technology division to prevent records in pending criminal cases from being searchable online by a defendant’s name until the case is resolved.<sup>13</sup>

## Case Types Prohibited from Remote Access

In addition to restrictions on personal data, the rules prohibit remote access to certain categories of publicly accessible district court case types. The distinction between publicly accessible and remotely accessible records is that these case types may only be accessed at a court-designated public access terminal or at the Minnesota State Law Library. The publicly accessible case types with prohibited remote access include:

- Domestic abuse cases (after the respondent is served with a protective order);
- Harassment cases (after the respondent is served with a restraining order);
- Felony juvenile delinquency cases; and
- Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS)–related cases, as well as cases involving children in voluntary foster care for treatment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The purpose of the Minnesota Judicial Council is to govern the Judicial Branch through the establishment and monitoring of administrative policies

<sup>12</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2.(b).

<sup>13</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2.(b) and (c).

<sup>14</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2(d). The restriction of remote access to domestic abuse and harassment records is mandated by the federal Violence Against Women Act. 18 U.S.C. § 2265(d)(3) states, “A State, Indian tribe, or territory shall not make available publicly on the Internet any information regarding the registration, filing of a petition for, or issuance of a protection order, restraining order, or injunction in either the issuing or enforcing State, tribal or

## Case Types Remotely Accessible with Restrictions on Document Availability

The rules prohibit remote access to certain records for involuntary commitment, family, and post-adjudication paternity cases. The degree of restriction varies; involuntary commitment cases are the most limited, while family and paternity cases share a slightly broader set of permissions.

For involuntary commitment cases, the custodian of records must provide remote access to the public portions of the following records only: the register of actions, calendars, indices, and judgment dockets. All other records are excluded from remote access.<sup>15</sup>

For family and post-adjudication paternity cases, the rules permit a wider range of access. In addition to the records available for involuntary commitment cases, the custodian must also make judgments, orders, appellate opinions, and court-prepared notices remotely accessible.<sup>16</sup>

## Case Types Remotely Accessible

The Minnesota court rules direct the custodian of records to provide remote access to publicly accessible portions of public records for the following cases:

- **Civil Records:** All major and minor case types, including land titles, torts, consumer credit, contracts, employment, forfeiture, condemnation, personal injury, conciliation, implied consent, and unlawful detainer.
- **Probate and Trust:** Formal and informal probate, guardianship, conservatorship, and trust proceedings.
- **Criminal Records:** All felony, gross misdemeanor, and misdemeanor case types.
- **Historical Records:** All electronic case records publicly accessible under court rules and that have been in existence for more than 90 years.<sup>17</sup>

Since 2025, the rules allow for remote access to appellate court briefs filed before April 1, 2025, with redaction requirements for personal data, appendices or addenda to briefs, as well as records that are not publicly accessible.<sup>18</sup>

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territorial jurisdiction, if such publication would be likely to publicly reveal the identity or location of the party protected under such order.”

<sup>15</sup> The custodian is the person responsible for the safekeeping of any records held by any court, court administrator, or clerk of court & Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2(e).

<sup>16</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2(f).

<sup>17</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2(g).

<sup>18</sup> Minn. R. Pub. Access to Recs. Jud. Branch 8, subd. 2(h).

## Exceptions to Restrictions

The Minnesota rule outlines exceptions to restrictions for remote access to court records. One exception allows a presiding judge in a case to direct the court administrator to provide remote electronic access to otherwise inaccessible records, after notice and an opportunity for the parties to be heard. Additionally, the rule allows a custodian of records to share publicly accessible records by email or other electronic methods that are typically excluded from remote access.<sup>19</sup>

## Minnesota Statewide Portal

The Minnesota Court Records Online (MCRO), available through the Minnesota Judicial Branch website, is a free-to-access repository and search tool for records and documents filed in most district courts on and after July 1, 2015. MCRO also includes judgments, orders, appellate opinions, and court-generated notices filed between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2015, for case types that were publicly and remotely accessible at the time of filing.<sup>20</sup>

Records filed before July 1, 2015, have limited availability on MCRO. Public orders, judgments, appellate opinions, and court-generated notices may be accessible, but party-submitted records, such as motions and affidavits, are not.<sup>21</sup>

The MRCO allows users to access court records and other documents by providing the following four research tabs:

- **Case Search:** Allow users to find court cases by name, case number, citation, or attorney bar number.
- **Document Search:** Allow users to locate online public records by case number.
- **Hearing Search:** Allow users to retrieve details about scheduled hearings by name, case number, judicial officer, or attorney.
- **Judgment Search:** Search for money judgment details and satisfactions by debtor name.<sup>22</sup>

**MISSOURI** In June 2022, the Missouri Supreme Court approved rule changes, effective July 1, 2023, expanding remote public access to court records on Case.net, a government-operated and statewide case search portal. Before then, Case.net offered limited remote access. Registered e-

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<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Minnesota Judicial Branch, Handout – Minnesota Court Records Online (MCRO) Accessible Cases Types and Documents, [https://mncourts.gov/\\_media/migration/mcro/Handout-MCRO-Accessible-Case-Types-and-Documents.pdf](https://mncourts.gov/_media/migration/mcro/Handout-MCRO-Accessible-Case-Types-and-Documents.pdf) (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> Minnesota Judicial Branch, Minnesota Court Records Online (MCRO), <https://publicaccess.courts.state.mn.us/> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

filing users, mostly legal professionals or court personnel, could view case records, while the public could access only certain information, such as docket entries or party and attorney details. Other court records were available only at courthouse computer terminals. The new rule applies prospectively, covering records filed on or after July 1, 2023.<sup>23</sup>

While the new rules took effect on July 1, 2023, document availability was not immediate for all affected courts. Court records for the Missouri Supreme Court and the Missouri Court of Appeals were accessible on the effective date; the rollout for Missouri's 46 circuit courts (the state's courts of general jurisdiction) occurred in stages based on geographic criteria. As a condition of expanding remote access, the rules mandated that all records filed on or after July 1 must comply with new redaction policies from the Missouri Supreme Court.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike other surveyed states' rules, which differentiate between remote access and public access, the Missouri court rules combine the two under a single "public access" definition, which reads:

"Public access means that the public may inspect and obtain a copy of the information in a court record either by direct access in the courthouse or remote access over the Internet if and when it becomes available."<sup>25</sup>

By combining the two concepts, the same court records will eventually be accessible both at a courthouse terminal and remotely, as stated in another rule:

"All public records filed on or after the Expanded Remote Access Implementation Date [July 1, 2023] that are available at a public access terminal shall be available remotely on a schedule approved by the Missouri Court Automation Committee."<sup>26</sup>

The following sections outline restrictions on accessibility, accessible records for civil and criminal cases, and a brief overview of Missouri's web portal.

### **Restrictions on Accessibility**

While current Missouri court rules presume that court records are open to the public, this presumption does not extend to records deemed confidential by statute, court rule, or judicial order.

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<sup>23</sup> Missouri Courts, Supreme Court of Missouri to expand public access to court records, June 28, 2022, [https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=89450&utm\\_source](https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=89450&utm_source).

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum from the Missouri Judicial Branch addressed to all attorneys, Missouri Courts, <https://www.16thcircuit.org/Data/Sites/1/media/public-legal-notice/remote-public-access-and-implementation-schedule.pdf> (last accessed April 10, 2026)

<sup>25</sup> Mo. Ct. Op. R. 2.03(k).

<sup>26</sup> Mo. Ct. Op. R. 2.04(c).

Records explicitly excluded from public access include judicial staff work products, such as internal emails, memoranda, drafts, and appellate case assignments.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, rules permit the temporary removal of a case from the internet for up to five days upon a prosecutor's request, provided a warrant is pending, and there is a high risk of physical injury should the defendant become aware of its issuance.<sup>28</sup>

### List of Records Remotely Accessible

The rules distinguish between civil and criminal cases in determining the remote availability of public court records and limit remote availability to an enumerated list of records, provided the records are not confidential by statute or rule.

For civil cases, the enumerated list of available records for remote access includes:

- **Party and Attorney Information:** Attorneys' names and addresses, party names and types, party addresses, and year of birth.
- **Case Information:** Case number and type, file date, calendar dates, disposition type, and docket entries.
- **Judge Assignment:** Trial judge currently assigned and trial judge at disposition.
- **Judgment and Outcomes:** Judgment or appellate decision, judgment or appellate mandate date, and satisfaction of judgment date.
- **Enforcement:** General execution, garnishment, and sequestration information.<sup>29</sup>

The rules specify that, in accordance with Missouri law, adult and child protection order cases are available only by entering the exact case number until a full protection order is issued.

For criminal cases, the enumerated list is similar to civil cases but additionally includes:

- Defendant's name, address, and year of birth;
- Appellate opinion, if any;
- Bail amount;
- Pending charges;
- Law enforcement agency;
- Sentence, sentence date, and offenses for which sentenced;
- Offense tracking number;
- Violation code, date, and description; and

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<sup>27</sup> Mo. Ct. Op. R. 2.02(a).

<sup>28</sup> Mo. Ct. Op. R. 2.04(b).

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

- Suspended imposition of sentence prior to successful completion of probation.<sup>30</sup>

The rules also specify financial information available to the public, which can be summarized as follows:

- Debt balance due and debt details;
- Payment plan details; and
- Bond balance.<sup>31</sup>

### Missouri Statewide Online Portal

The Missouri Judicial Branch maintains Case.net, a public search portal for accessing court records. As authorized by court rules, users can locate records using five specific search categories:

- Litigant name;
- Filing date;
- Case number;
- Scheduled hearings; and
- Judgment index.<sup>32</sup>

In each search category, users may refine their search, for example, by limiting it to a specific court. Upon finding a specific case, users can download court records in PDF format for free. In late 2023, the Missouri Judicial Branch added a “Not an Official Record” watermark to all downloaded PDF records.<sup>33</sup>

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Remote access to Pennsylvania court case information is available through the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania Web Portal. The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts governs and promulgates rules on remote access. Unlike Minnesota or Missouri, which offers more expansive remote access to court records, Pennsylvania’s public web portal generally provides access only to docket sheets and selected case summary information for appellate courts,

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<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> Mo. Ct. Op. R. 2.04(a).

<sup>33</sup> The Missouri Bar, Case.net public documents accessed by the public now display a watermark, <https://news.mobar.org/casenet-public-documents-accessed-by-the-public-now-display-a-watermark/#:~:text=Case.net%20public%20documents%20accessed,logged%20in%20to%20Case.net>. (last accessed April 10, 2026).

courts of common pleas (Pennsylvania's courts of general jurisdiction), magisterial district courts, and the Philadelphia Municipal Court.<sup>34</sup>

Pennsylvania, like Minnesota, distinguishes between remote access and public access. Under the governing rules, remote access refers to the ability to search, inspect, print, or copy case-record information without physically appearing at the court where the record is maintained or submitting a request to the court or a records custodian.<sup>35</sup> The rules further reinforce the distinction between remote and public access by imposing stricter standards on records made available remotely than on those accessible through in-person public access.

The following sections outline in detail the records restricted from remote access and those accessible remotely, primarily docket sheets, as well as an overview of the statewide web portal.

### **Restrictions on Remotely Accessible Records**

The rules governing remote access establish a tiered system for court records accessibility, including a list of records that are not available to the public, even at courthouse terminals, as well as additional records restricted from remote access. The rules also impose stricter limitations on accessible docket fields in family court, estate, and protective services cases.

**Non-public records:** The first set of restricted records covers those not accessible by the public at a court facility or through remote access, which include:

- Confidential records, including personal and financial information, minors' names and birthdates (unless criminally charged), abuse victims' addresses, education and youth services records, medical/psychological files, marital property inventories, income and expense statements, and agreements between parties.
- Case records involving birth certificates, including corrections, amendments, or obtaining certified copies of birth certificates, except for the docket and any court order or opinion;
- Case records concerning incapacity proceedings, except for the docket and any final decree adjudicating a person as incapacitated;
- Information sealed or protected pursuant to court order;
- Information to which access is otherwise restricted by federal law, state law, or state court rule; and

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<sup>34</sup> The Unified Justice System of Pennsylvania Web Portal, Case Information, Public Web Docket Sheets, <https://ujportal.pacourts.us/Home/CaseInformation> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>35</sup> 204 Pa. Code § 213.81, Section 1.0 (O).

- Information that the Court Administrator, with approval of the Chief Justice, has determined poses a risk to security, privacy, or the administration of justice.<sup>36</sup>

**Not remotely accessible records:** In addition to non-publicly accessible records, the rules also designate the following categories as not remotely accessible (but may be accessed at court facilities):

- In criminal cases, information that either specifically identifies or from which the identity of jurors, witnesses (other than expert witnesses), or victims could be ascertained, including names, addresses, and phone numbers;
- Full court transcripts;
- Requests to waive court fees due to financial hardship;
- Family court case records, except for dockets, court orders, and opinions;
- Estate and protective services cases for vulnerable or older adults, except for dockets, court orders, and opinions; and
- Certain official record materials governed by Pennsylvania appellate procedure rules.<sup>37</sup>

**Stricter Access Standards for Certain Case Types:** For family court and estate and protective services cases, remote access to dockets is limited to the following fields only:

- A party's name;
- The city, state, and ZIP code of a party's address;
- Counsel of record's name and address;
- Docket number;
- Docket entries indicating generally what actions have been taken or are scheduled in a case;
- Court orders and opinions;
- Filing date of the case; and
- Case type.<sup>38</sup>

### **Records Remotely Accessible**

In Pennsylvania, remote access to court records is primarily restricted to docket sheets and court summaries, which are only available for certain cases. Docket sheets serve as a comprehensive, chronological log of a case's history. Docket sheets list every filing, order, and notice, as well as calendar events and the current case status. Docket sheets also include information on participants (parties, legal counsel, and law enforcement agencies), details on specific charges for criminal

<sup>36</sup> 204 Pa. Code § 213.81, Section 9.0.

<sup>37</sup> 204 Pa. Code § 213.81, Section 10.0(A).

<sup>38</sup> 204 Pa. Code § 213.81, Section 10.0(B).

cases, financial information regarding payment history and restitution, and information on disposition and sentencing.<sup>39</sup> In contrast to Minnesota and Missouri, Pennsylvania does not allow users to download any files filed as part of the docket sheet.

### **Pennsylvania Statewide Online Portal**

The Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania web portal maintains a free search engine for public users to locate case information. Users can search for cases using different criteria, including attorneys, participants' names, calendar events, filing dates, and docket, incident, or complaint numbers. For each criterion, the search engine requires filling at least one field, but it also offers additional fields to refine a search. For example, if a person is looking for a case by a participant's name, the engine requires the last name and can further refine the search by selecting a court, a specific date range, the docket number, or other available options. The search engine will generate a list of relevant cases, and for each result, a user will be able to access docket sheets and, where available, case summaries.<sup>40</sup>

**UTAH:** In Utah, remote access to court records currently depends on the type of court within the state's judicial system. For both of the state's appellate courts, a free webpage allows users to search for case details by entering a case number. Unlike other surveyed platforms, users may not search for appellate cases by participants' names, case type, or other criteria. The accessible information for appellate court cases appears to be limited to a case overview listing the parties, the originating court, and the case status, as well as a chronological record of filings and procedural steps in the appeal, with no apparent way to download any filed records. For lower-level courts—justice and district courts -- remote access to public records is available through Xchange, a subscription-based and state-run system.<sup>41</sup> While access to Xchange is free of charge at most district courthouses, many justice courts, and the Utah State Law Library, remote access from a personal device requires a paid subscription.

In 2026, the Utah Legislature enacted a bill, effective January 1, 2027, requiring the state judicial branch to establish and maintain a single website allowing the public to search for all public court

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<sup>39</sup> Determination of the information included in a Pennsylvania docket sheet involved browsing through docket sheets for multiple cases using the web portal.

<sup>40</sup> The Unified Justice System of Pennsylvania Web Portal, Case Search, <https://ujportal.pacourts.us/CaseSearch> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>41</sup> Justice courts are limited jurisdiction courts. Cases handled in justice courts include most class B and C misdemeanors, infractions, and traffic cases. As of 2009, all small claims cases are filed in justice courts.

records for free. In contrast to other states surveyed in this memorandum, Utah is the only state that will statutorily require remote access to public court records.<sup>42</sup>

The following sections outline how court records are classified and whether they are remotely accessible under current Utah Supreme Court rules. They also provide an overview of the current Xchange system, including its subscription requirements and document access costs, as well as recent 2026 legislation to overhaul Xchange by making it a free platform.

### Restrictions on Remote Accessibility

The rules of the Utah Supreme Court establish a general presumption that court records are public unless otherwise classified or restricted by rule.<sup>43</sup> The rules also define several categories of non-public records, which are largely excluded from access on Xchange but may be available to authorized personnel, including:

- **Sealed court records** are not accessible to the public and include adoption and gestational records, expunged records, pen register orders, confidential informant identities, deposited wills, video recordings of proceedings, and any records sealed by court order.<sup>44</sup>
- **Private court records** are generally not accessible to the public. But certain information within these records, including case histories, court orders, judgments, and records of public hearings, may remain publicly accessible in limited circumstances, depending on the type of case. Private records include:
  - Involuntary commitment proceedings; adoptions and gestational agreements (until sealed);
  - Cases involving removal from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System firearm database;
  - Sex designation changes and combined name/sex designation changes;
  - Child support and custody proceedings;
  - Protective orders;
  - Sensitive information, including medical, psychiatric, and psychological records, as well as financial information such as detailed income and asset disclosures; and
  - Administrative requests, including fee waiver applications and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation requests.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Utah Legislature, House Bill 540 Judicial Transparency and Information Access Amendments, <https://le.utah.gov/Session/2026/bills/static/HB0540.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>43</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(1).

<sup>44</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(3).

<sup>45</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(4).

- **Protected court records** are not accessible to the public and include attorneys' work product records subject to attorney-client privilege, court security plans, and some confidential business records such as trade secrets and procurement data.<sup>46</sup>
- **Juvenile social and legal court records** are not accessible to the public.
  - **Juvenile court social records** include assessment and treatment of juveniles, including medical evaluations, probation and institutional reports, treatment plans, custody and parental fitness evaluations, and pre-disposition summaries.<sup>47</sup>
  - **Juvenile court legal records** include documents generated in juvenile proceedings, such as pleadings, motions, orders, subpoenas, and court hearing transcripts.<sup>48</sup>
- **Safeguarded court records** are not accessible to the public and include:
  - **Protective Order and Stalking Cases:** Upon a person's request for protection, the court will safeguard identifying information, including residential addresses, contact information, and current location data.
  - **Child Custody Proceedings:** Contact and identity information (excluding the legal names of the parties or children) may be safeguarded upon request. The requesting party must provide an affidavit demonstrating that disclosure would reasonably jeopardize the health, safety, or liberty of a party or the child.
  - **Jurors:** Courts safeguard the location, contact information, and identities of prospective and summoned jurors.<sup>49</sup>

### Records Remotely Accessible Under Current Law

While the Utah Supreme Court Rules provide a non-exhaustive list of public court records, not all public records are accessible remotely via Xchange.<sup>50</sup> Xchange currently serves as a repository for district and justice court case information and primarily provides access to summary information of a case, including the party names and addresses, assigned judges, attorneys of record, and a listing of filed records, hearing schedules, and case outcomes. When images of records filed in district courts are available, Xchange users may download them for a fee.<sup>51</sup>

Records available on Xchange are pulled from the Courts Information System (CORIS) by court staff in the courthouses where the case files are located and available immediately upon entry into the local court's computer system. While nearly all district courts have used CORIS since the late

<sup>46</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(5).

<sup>47</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(6).

<sup>48</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(7).

<sup>49</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(8).

<sup>50</sup> Utah R. Jud. Admin 4-202.02(2).

<sup>51</sup> Utah Judicial Courts, Xchange: Public Case Search, <https://www.utcourts.gov/en/court-records-publications/records/xchange.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

1990s, information on the timeline for adoption among justice courts is unavailable.<sup>52</sup> The Utah Judicial Branch, however, specifies that expunged records are unavailable on Xchange.<sup>53</sup>

The 2026 legislation may result in a different list of remotely accessible records, as it requires access to **all** public court records.<sup>54</sup>

### Fee Schedule and Account Types

As opposed to other court document databases surveyed in this memorandum, Xchange is currently not free of charge for remote users and offers three different types of accounts:

- **Guest account:** A user will be charged an initial fee of \$10, with each search costing \$0.35 and each document accessed costing \$1.00. Charges will be credited from the initial \$10 fee, and any remaining credits will be forfeited.
- **One-time use account:** The initial amount and fees for searches and image downloads are the same as for a guest account, but users can create an account to return and use leftover credits.
- **Monthly Subscription account:** Users subscribe to the service for \$25.00 and set up automatic monthly payments of \$40.00. The fee covers 500 free searches per month but charges \$1.00 per document. Users may unsubscribe at any time.<sup>55</sup>

The accounts only apply to remote access. Free access is available to most district courts, certain justice courts, and at the Utah State Law Library.<sup>56</sup>

### Legislation to Remove Fees and Subscriptions

In 2026, the Utah Legislature passed House Bill 0540, which, among other judicial transparency issues, requires the Utah Judicial Branch to establish and maintain a public court records website by January 1, 2027. The new site must be prominently visible on the judicial branch's main website and provide remote public access to **all public** court records. The bill requires that users be able

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<sup>52</sup> Id.

<sup>53</sup> Utah Judicial Courts, Xchange Case Search: Repository of Court Records, <https://www.utcourts.gov/en/court-records-publications/records/xchange/faq.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>54</sup> Utah Legislature, House Bill 540 Judicial Transparency and Information Access Amendments, <https://le.utah.gov/Session/2026/bills/static/HB0540.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>55</sup> Utah Judicial Courts, Subscribing to Xchange and Xchange Fees, <https://www.utcourts.gov/en/court-records-publications/records/xchange/subscribe.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>56</sup> Utah Judicial Courts, Searching District and Justice Court Records at the Courthouse, <https://www.utcourts.gov/en/court-records-publications/records/court-records/coris.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

to search records using the following criteria: court name; party, judge, or attorney name; judicial district; case number; case type; filing date; case status; and, for criminal cases, the applicable Utah Code section and the disposition of any charged offense. In addition, the bill requires that access must be secure and restricted to registered users who must provide their identity, address, and citizenship status upon registration.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast to current policies on the Xchange platform, the bill prohibits the Utah Judicial Branch from charging any fee for accessing the site, creating an account, conducting a search, or downloading records.<sup>58</sup> The transition to a free platform did not come with an appropriation per the bill's fiscal note; however, the fiscal note anticipates a net biennial cost of close to 4 million dollars for Fiscal Years 2027-2028.<sup>59</sup>

### **Statutes Authorizing Remote Access or Directing Development of Remote Access Policies**

While Utah has enacted legislation requiring remote access to all public court records, other states, including Virginia and Washington State, have statutes that either authorize, but do not require, remote access or instruct courts to develop policies to enhance remote access.

Virginia law provides that the clerk of any county or city may provide remote access to all nonconfidential court records on an automated case management system or other system maintained by the clerks. Virginia law requires clerks to ensure that proper security measures are implemented and maintained to prevent unauthorized access to confidential information. Clerks must also ensure that remote users cannot modify or destroy any accessible records.<sup>60</sup>

Washington statutes require the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and all superior and district courts to implement policies promoting public electronic access to judicial information and services through technologies that provide continuous, low-cost access and are accessible to users without advanced technical skills.<sup>61</sup>

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact LSO Research and Evaluation at 777-7881.

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<sup>57</sup> Utah Legislature, House Bill 540 Judicial Transparency and Information Access Amendments, <https://le.utah.gov/Session/2026/bills/static/HB0540.html> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>58</sup> *Id.*

<sup>59</sup> Utah Legislature, Fiscal Note of House Bill 540 Judicial Transparency and Information Access Amendments, <https://pf.utleg.gov/public-web/sessions/2026GS/fiscal-notes/HB0540S02.fn.pdf> (last accessed April 10, 2026).

<sup>60</sup> Va. Code Ann. § 17.1-225.

<sup>61</sup> Wash. Rev. Code § 2.68.050.