

chicago style citation examples for government documents

The Accurate Application of Chicago Style Citation Examples for Government Documents

chicago style citation examples for government documents are crucial for academic integrity and scholarly communication, especially when referencing official publications. Navigating the intricacies of citing government sources can be complex, as these documents often originate from various levels of government and take diverse forms. This comprehensive guide will demystify the process, offering clear, detailed examples for different types of government publications. We will explore citing legislation, court decisions, reports from government agencies, and other official governmental records, ensuring your bibliography is both accurate and compliant with Chicago's meticulous standards. Understanding these nuances is vital for researchers, students, and anyone needing to incorporate official data into their work, bolstering the credibility of their research.

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Understanding the Core Components of Chicago Style Citations for Government Documents

Chicago style, renowned for its flexibility and thoroughness, requires specific information to accurately identify and locate government documents. Whether employing the notes-bibliography system or the author-date system, consistency is key. Generally, a citation will include the authoring body, the title of the document, publication details (like date and location), and often a document number or identifier for precise retrieval. The "author" in the case of government documents is typically the specific agency, department, or legislative body responsible for its creation.

The descriptive nature of Chicago style ensures that readers can readily find the source material themselves. This is particularly important for government documents, which can be vast and sometimes difficult to access without

precise bibliographic information. Identifying the issuing body clearly distinguishes it from other similarly titled works. The title should be presented as it appears on the document, often italicized if it's a standalone publication or in quotation marks if it's part of a larger collection or series.

Citing Legislation in Chicago Style

Citing legislation requires careful attention to the specific type of law and its jurisdiction. For federal laws in the United States, you'll typically cite the Public Law number and the chapter number, along with the year it was enacted. State legislation follows similar principles, though the specific naming conventions might vary.

U.S. Federal Statutes

When citing a federal statute, the primary elements include the title number (if applicable), the name of the act, and the relevant section of the U.S. Code or Statutes at Large. For example, a Public Law is often cited as PL [number], [volume] Stat. [page number] ([year]). However, for ongoing references within a text or for more specific pinpointing, citing the U.S. Code is often preferred.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- Immigration and Nationality Act. 8 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq. (2018).

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq. (2018).

U.S. State Statutes

State statutes are cited similarly, but you'll need to refer to the specific compilation of statutes for that state. The format often involves the state's abbreviation, the code title and section number, and the year of the code edition. Always check the specific state's legislative citation style guides if available.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- California Penal Code § 187 (West 2020).

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. California Penal Code § 187 (West 2020).

Citing Court Decisions and Legal Documents in Chicago Style

Legal citations for court decisions are highly standardized in Chicago style, drawing heavily from legal citation conventions. The key components include the case name, the volume and reporter where the decision is published, the page number, and the court and year of the decision.

U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

For U.S. Supreme Court cases, you will cite the case name (italicized), the volume number of the United States Reports, the starting page number, and the year the decision was rendered. Other reporters may also be cited if they are commonly used.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- *Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966).

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. *Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966).

U.S. Federal Circuit or District Court Decisions

For lower federal courts, you'll cite the case name, the volume and reporter for that specific court (e.g., Federal Reporter, Federal Supplement), the page number, and the court and year. The abbreviation for the reporter is crucial for identification.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- *United States v. Jones*, 770 F.3d 1003 (2d Cir. 2014).

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. *United States v. Jones*, 770 F.3d 1003 (2d Cir. 2014).

Citing Government Agency Reports and Publications

Reports and publications from government agencies, such as the Congressional Research Service, the Government Accountability Office, or specific federal departments, are common sources. The citation typically includes the agency as the author, the title of the report, and publication details.

Reports from U.S. Federal Agencies

When citing a report, identify the publishing agency, the title of the report, any report numbers or series designations, and the publication year. If a specific division or office within a larger agency is primarily responsible, it can be listed as the authoring entity.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- United States Congressional Budget Office. *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2023 to 2033*. Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, 2023.

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. United States Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2023 to 2033* (Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, 2023).

Reports from State or Local Agencies

Similar to federal agencies, state and local government publications should attribute authorship to the specific agency or department. The city, state, or locality should be mentioned in the publication information where applicable.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. *Community Health Survey: 2022 Report*. New York: The Department, 2023.

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Community Health Survey: 2023 Report* (New York: The Department, 2023).

Citing Congressional Hearings and Debates

Congressional hearings and debates are valuable legislative records. These are typically cited by the committee holding the hearing, the subject of the hearing, the Congress and session number, and the date of the hearing or debate.

Congressional Hearings

The citation for a congressional hearing should include the name of the committee and subcommittee that held the hearing, the title of the hearing, the Congress and session, and the date of publication or the hearing itself. If it's part of a larger publication series, that should be noted.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- United States Congress. Senate Committee on the Judiciary. *Nominations of [Nominee's Name]*. Hearing, 117th Cong., 2nd sess., March 15, 2022.

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. United States Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Nominations of [Nominee's Name]*, Hearing, 117th Cong., 2nd sess., March 15, 2022.

Congressional Record

Debates and proceedings of Congress are recorded in the Congressional Record. Citations include the volume number, the abbreviation "Cong. Rec.," the page number, and the specific date of the entry.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- 116 Cong. Rec. 10567 (2020).

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. 116 Cong. Rec. 10567 (2020).

Citing International Government Documents

Documents from international governmental organizations like the United Nations or the World Health Organization follow similar principles, with the organization serving as the authoring body. The structure often involves the organization's name, the title of the document, and its publication details.

United Nations Documents

United Nations documents are often identified by document numbers, which are crucial for retrieval. The citation includes the issuing body, the title, the document symbol (e.g., A/RES/76/1), and the date.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- United Nations General Assembly. "Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2021: The Situation in Ukraine." A/RES/76/225.

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. United Nations General Assembly, "Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2021: The Situation in Ukraine," A/RES/76/225.

World Health Organization Documents

Citing documents from the WHO requires identifying the specific branch or committee responsible, the title of the report or resolution, and any relevant resolution or document numbers.

- **Bibliography Entry Example:**

- World Health Organization. *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2023.

- **Note Entry Example:**

- 1. World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2023).

Best Practices for Chicago Style Citation Examples for Government Documents

When working with Chicago style citation examples for government documents, always prioritize accuracy and consistency. Double-check all elements of your

citation against the original document to avoid errors. If a government document is available online, include the URL and the date you accessed it, especially if it's a dynamic or frequently updated resource.

Furthermore, familiarize yourself with the specific requirements of your institution or publication. While Chicago style provides a robust framework, editors may have particular preferences. Consulting the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* is always recommended for the most up-to-date guidance. Understanding the issuing body, title, publication information, and any unique identifiers (like document numbers or Public Law numbers) will ensure your citations are both informative and correct.

FAQ

Q: What is the most crucial element when citing a U.S. federal government report in Chicago style?

A: The most crucial element is accurately identifying the issuing federal agency or department as the authoring body. This ensures clarity and helps readers locate the specific document within the vast landscape of government publications.

Q: How do I cite a government document that doesn't have a clear author listed?

A: In such cases, Chicago style directs you to use the name of the specific government agency, department, or committee responsible for the publication as the author. If no specific entity can be identified, you would use the name of the larger governmental body, such as the United States as a whole for federal documents.

Q: Should I italicize the titles of all government documents in Chicago style?

A: Generally, standalone government publications, such as reports or official studies, should have their titles italicized. However, if the document is part of a larger series or collection, like a chapter in a government publication or an article within a government journal, it would be placed in quotation marks.

Q: What is the difference between citing a U.S. statute and a U.S. Code section in Chicago style?

A: When citing a U.S. statute, you typically refer to its Public Law number

and its citation in the Statutes at Large (e.g., Pub. L. No. 117-286, 136 Stat. 1415 (2022)). Citing the U.S. Code refers to the codified and updated version of laws, for instance, 18 U.S.C. § 1001 (2018). The U.S. Code is often preferred for ongoing references as it reflects current law.

Q: How do I cite a legislative bill that has not yet been enacted into law?

A: For un-enacted bills, you would cite the bill number, the Congress and session, and the date. For example: H.R. 1234, 117th Cong., 2nd sess. (2022).

Q: Is it necessary to include the URL for online government documents in Chicago style?

A: Yes, when citing a government document accessed online, it is highly recommended to include the URL along with the date of access. This is crucial for navigability and verification of the source material.

Q: How do I cite a treaty or international agreement in Chicago style?

A: Treaties and international agreements are typically cited by their official title, the treaty series in which they appear (e.g., United Nations Treaty Series), and the date of ratification or entry into force. The issuing country or international body is also often included.

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