

LEGAL ORGANIZATIONS REFERRAL LIST

Prepared by the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
July 2018

Generally, your **local legal services agency** covers many of the areas of law listed below. You should try to contact them first. You can find the contact information for your local legal services agency by going to <http://www.masslegalhelp.org/>. Click on the “Find Legal Aid” tab on the left. On the next page type in the name of your town or zip code, enter your household number and household income, then proceed to the topics below to answer questions that will direct you to the appropriate legal services agency. Masslegalhelp.org also provides informational resources on various topics.

GENERAL ATTORNEY REFERRALS

- 1. Volunteer Lawyer’s Project & Senior Partners for Justice.** You contact them by calling the Eastern Regional Legal Intake at 617- 603-1700 or 1-800-342-LAWS (5297), open Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. ERLI staff provides advice and screens cases for the Volunteer Lawyers Project & Senior Partners for Justice. Cases **VLP** handles: landlord/tenant, homeownership, foreclosure prevention, family law, uncontested guardianships, wills and trusts, bankruptcy, unemployment insurance, Masshealth prior approval, criminal record sealing, consumer cases and assistance to nonprofits. Visit them online at: <http://www.vlpnet.org/need-legal-help/> for more information. **SPFJ** handles: family law, guardianship, wills and estates, landlord/tenant, foreclosure, unemployment benefits, bankruptcy and consumer, and Masshealth prior approval. Both VLP and SPFJ have “lawyer for a day” programs. See <https://www.vlpnet.org/partners/> for more information.
- 2. Boston Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service.** You can contact them by phone at (617) 742-0625 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday. Some attorneys take reduced fee cases. Reduced fee referrals are limited to clients who document (A) annual gross household income no more than 300% of the 2017 Federal Poverty Guidelines; (B) household cash assets that do not exceed \$3,000 or 10% of gross annual household income (whichever is greater); and (C) total real estate holdings limited to one owner-occupied dwelling. No pro bono services are available. Also offers online referrals 24 hours a day at <http://www.bostonbarlawyer.com/request-attorney>.
- 3. Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service.** You can contact them online at <http://www.massbar.org/for-the-public/need-a-lawyer/lrs-online-request-form> or by phone at (617) 654-0400 or (866) 627-7577. Attorneys participating on the LRS service charge no more than \$25 for the first half-hour consultation. Reduced fee referrals are available in some areas of law and are limited to clients who are income eligible. No pro bono services are rendered. The Massachusetts Bar Association also offers a monthly **Dial-A-Lawyer program**, where members of the public can call in for free legal advice. This is held on the first Wednesday of each month between the hours of 5:30 and 7:30 pm. Call toll free: (877) 686-0711 or (617) 338-0610. Access their new 24 hour legal referral website at <http://www.masslawhelp.com>.
- 4. National Lawyers Guild- Massachusetts Chapter.** You can contact them online at <http://www.nlgmasslawyers.org/findalawyer/> or by phone at 617-227-7008. Initial phone consultation is free, while attorneys set their own fees on a case by case basis. Geared to low and moderate income clients. Callers must discuss rate options directly with attorneys. No pro bono services rendered. Provides referrals for most areas of the

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law including bankruptcy, criminal, civil rights, disability, discrimination, domestic, employment, immigration, tenants, and tort law.

5. **Jewish Family & Children Services.** Provides information and referrals to pro bono attorneys to clients below 200% of the Federal Poverty level in the following areas of the law: housing, family law, consumer, immigration, and public benefits. Call 781-693-1333 to do an intake.
6. **Tri-CAP, Inc. Pro Bono Legal Project.** Services Everett, Malden, Medford, and surrounding towns. Clients are put on a wait-list for pro bono or staff attorney. Visit them online at <https://laurasamplesite.wordpress.com/about/contact-us/>. Provides legal representation for bankruptcy, consumer, government benefits, wills, housing and divorce. Call 781-322-4125.
7. **Lawyers Clearinghouse** – Located at 16 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108. Call them at 617-778-2082. Lawyers Clearinghouse provides free legal clinics at seven Boston-area homeless shelters. Clients must be homeless, using shelter services or income eligible. Does not handle domestic relations cases.
8. **Lawyers for Affordable Justice.** No financial eligibility guidelines but emphasis on assisting low and moderate income clients. Handles business, employment, landlord/tenant, immigration, family, and criminal law. 857-277-1963.
9. **Law School Legal Clinic Offices.** Many of the law schools in MA offer legal clinics where law students, under the supervision of an attorney, represent individuals with various legal issues. You should look online and find the MA law school closest to you. Below is a list of several law school programs. Please note that many of these programs follow an academic calendar, so they may be closed during school breaks. Call the clinical program to determine whether they are taking new cases.

UMASS Dartmouth School of Law Legal Services Clinic. Located at 21 South Sixth Street in New Bedford MA 02740, this clinic provides legal assistance to New Bedford residents in the area of benefits law (Medicaid, social security), consumer, landlord-tenant and domestic violence. Call 508-979-7150 or 1-800-929-9721.

New England School of Law Clinical Law Offices. Contact them at 617-422-7380. Services Boston, Malden, Melrose and Wakefield. Domestic relations cases including child support, custody, visitation, divorce only with children in the marriage, SSI/SSDI and unemployment benefit appeals.

Harvard Law School Disability Litigation Clinic at Wilmer Hale Legal Services Center. Services offered for disabled, low-income, Boston area residents. Contact them at 617-390-2524. Services provided in both English & Spanish (and other languages as needed). Located next to Stony Brook T stop on the Orange line at 122 Boylston Street in Jamaica Plain. Services are offered in the areas of divorce, custody, DV orders, adoptions, LGBT law, HIV law, foreclosures, evictions, consumer, bankruptcy, predatory lending, estate planning, wills, health care access, and notary public services. Visit <http://www.law.harvard.edu/academics/clinical/lsc/index.htm> for more information.

Community Legal Aid (aka Wilmer Hale Legal Services Center). Services Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, Roslindale, West Roxbury, parts of Fenway, South End, Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan. Will consider cases outside this area on individual basis. Areas covered: government benefits, employment discrimination, civil rights, housing, estate and financial planning. Call 1-800-649-3718.

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Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. Areas of law covered: family law, housing, government benefits, and wage and hour cases. Family law cases considered include divorce, 209A issues, child support, custody, and contempt. Priority is given to custodial parents and cases involving domestic violence, restraining orders against opposing parties or a kidnapping/threat to kidnap. Only accepting housing cases for Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville residents. Housing cases considered include private evictions, public or subsidized housing at the Notice to Quit or Summons and Complaint stage, and section 8 voucher terminations at the court appeal stage. Government benefits cases considered include SSI/SSDI cases at the ALJ stage, and unemployment benefits cases in the DUA hearing stage in the Boston office only. Will not consider overpayment issues. Representation for wage and hour cases provided to clients who have not been paid wages, overtime and other compensation. Contact HLAB at 617-495-4408 or visit them online at <http://www.harvardlegalaid.org>.

Suffolk University Juvenile Defenders Clinic. Represents children charged with delinquency offenses in Juvenile court. Includes educational advocacy. Contact them at 617-305-3200.

Suffolk University Law School Housing Clinic. Contact them at 617-884-7568. Provides representation of eviction defense, discrimination, public and subsidized housing matters, consumer protection. The clinic handles administrative hearings before housing authorities, housing discrimination issues in front of MCAD and housing cases in Boston Housing court and Chelsea District Court.

Boston College Legal Services LAB. Serves Newton, Waltham and Watertown for housing evictions for tenants with priority to families with children, public housing denials, utility shut offs, family law cases and government benefits. Unemployment cases for Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley and Weston.

9. **County Bar Associations.** Contact your local county bar association for lawyer referrals. Fees must be discussed with each bar association or directly with attorneys. Several counties also offer free legal clinics:

Barnstable County Bar Association
3180 Main Street
P.O. Box 718
Barnstable, MA 02630
508-362-2121
508-362-7604 (fax)

<https://barnstablebar.org/legal-assistance>

Lawyer of the Day Program

Under this program, Barnstable County Bar Association volunteer lawyers are available each day in the Probate and Family Court to assist low-income and elderly individuals with the preparation of pleadings, documents and forms.

Middlesex County Bar Association
200 Trade Center, 3rd Floor, Rm 329
Woburn, MA 01801
781-939-2797
FAX 781-933-1291

<http://www.middlesexbar.org>

Middlesex County Bar Association
200 Trade Center, 3rd Floor, Rm 329
Woburn, MA 01801
781-939-2797
FAX 781-933-1291

Hampden County Bar Association
Hall of Justice
50 State Street
P.O. Box 559
Springfield, MA 01102-0559
413-732-4648
413-732-6882 (fax)

<https://www.hcbar.org/news/legal-resources/>

Hampshire County Bar Association
15 Gothic Street, Suite 10
Northampton, MA 01060-3084
413-586-8729
413-586-7388 (fax)

<http://hamshirebar.org/lawyer-for-a-day/>

Two Wednesdays every month, a lawyer will be present at the Hampshire Probate Court to meet with individuals for thirty minutes and will give that person assistance.

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Bristol County Bar Association
448 County Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
508-999-1322
508-999-0477 (fax)

Dukes County Bar Association
P.O. Box 2540
Edgartown, MA 02539
508-627-3711
508-627-3088 (fax)

Bar Association of Norfolk County
15 Cottage Avenue, Suite 206
Quincy, MA 02169
617-471-9693
617-770-9948 (fax)
www.norfolkbarassn.org
Free Legal clinic: Walk-in-clinic rotates
between Quincy and Dedham District
Courts on Tuesday evenings 6 to 8pm. Call
617-471-9693 for more information.
Provides free legal advice in all areas of the
law.

Essex County Bar Association
36 Federal Street
Salem, MA 01970
978-741-7888
978-741-1348 (fax)
E-Mail: p.surette@essexcountybar.org
www.essexcountybar.org

Plymouth County Bar Association
P.O. Box 7303
Brockton, MA 02303-7303
508-587-6000
508-584-8165 (fax)
www.plymouthcountybar.com

Franklin County Bar Association
20 Federal Street, Suite 4
Greenfield, MA 01301
413-773-9839
413-774-2994 (fax)
<http://www.franklincountybar.org/>
fcbar@franklincountybar.org

Worcester County Bar Association
19 Norwich Street, Second Floor
Worcester, MA 01608
508-752-1311
508-754-6909 (fax)
www.worcestercountybar.org
lrsinfo@infionline.net

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

1. **Women's Bar Foundation Family Law Project for Battered Women.** Pro bono referrals and/or limited advice and legal assistance for people who are victims of domestic violence. Services for victims up to 250% of the federal poverty guidelines who meet eligibility criteria. Call them at: 617-973-6666. Service area includes Suffolk, Middlesex, Norfolk, Essex, Worcester, Plymouth, Bristol and Barnstable counties. Intakes conducted Monday through Thursday from 10:30am to 4pm.
2. **Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc. Legal Advocacy Program.** Intake and legal help line: 617-521-0146. Domestic relations representation of clients who have been victims of domestic violence in a wide range of family law matters. Service area is Greater Boston area District Courts and Probate and Family Courts. The Legal Helpline is

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statewide and offers telephone information and advice, pro se assistance and referrals on civil matters related to domestic violence.

3. **Victim Rights Law Center.** Provides free civil legal assistance for sexual assault victims in areas such as safety, privacy, immigration, employment, education, housing, financial compensation and public benefits. Also provides brief assistance on criminal prosecution. Provides services to all victims of sexual assaults in MA regardless of gender or income. Call 617-399-6720 ext. 19 to leave a message for an intake.

SOCIAL SECURITY

1. **Harvard Law School Disability Litigation Clinic at Wilmer Hale Legal Services Center.** See page 3 for a description. Services offered for Disabled, low-income, Boston area residents. Contact them at 617-390-2524. Social Security benefits for those who are currently waiting for a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge get first priority (sometimes accepts clients at earlier stages). Clients who win have to pay 10% of back benefits to the Clinic.

FAMILY LAW

1. **Harvard Legal Aid Bureau.** See page 3 for a description. Service area for family law is Middlesex and Suffolk County. Call (617) 495-4408 to provide basic eligibility information. Clients can expect a call back within 48 hours to do a more in-depth interview. The primary focus in family law is domestic violence, but cases with other factors leading to a disparate level of access to the courts may be considered.
2. **Massachusetts Department of Revenue/Child Support Enforcement Division.** For custodial parents living in MA with a child under 18 years old call 800-332-2733. Assists parents seeking child support with locating absent parents, establishing paternity of children born out of wedlock, paternity blood testing and enforcing existing support orders.
3. **Women’s Bar Association, Family Law Project** – Provides pro bono referrals and limited advice and legal assistance for victims of domestic violence. Located at 105 Chauncy Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02111. Call them at 617-973-6666 ext. 2216 to schedule intake.
4. **The Family Court Answer Center** – Provides free information on certain family law matters, and offers referrals to family law attorneys. For questions, email Marisol.mancia@jud.state.ma.us or visit them online at <http://www.mass.gov/courts>. Drop-ins are accepted at free information workshops held on the second Thursday of each month at 24 New Chardon Street, Boston, MA 2nd floor.
5. **Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc.** – See listing above under “Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault”.

CHILDREN AND EDUCATIONAL LAW

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1. **Children’s Law Center of Massachusetts.** Provides a statewide helpline at: 1-888-KIDLAW8 (1-888-543-5298). For more information see their website: <http://www.clcm.org/>. CLCM provides legal representation to students with disabilities in areas such as restraint and seclusion, school discipline, special education, and other educational advocacy, immigration (unaccompanied Minors/SIJ), DCF custody, guardianship and CRAs.
2. **Center for Law and Education -- Boston.** The Pro Bono Education Project provides direct legal assistance to low income students being excluded from public schools through disciplinary exclusion or ineffective/inadequate education. Call 617-451-0855 Monday through Friday from 9am to 6pm for an intake. Provides services state-wide. Also provides administrative and legislative advocacy.
3. **Massachusetts Advocates for Children.** Provides statewide information and advocacy on special education, school suspension and expulsion and other educational issues. Priorities include children affected by trauma and children with autism. Call 617-357-8431 ext.223 or visit them online at <https://massadvocates.org/>.
4. **Suffolk University Juvenile Defenders Clinic.** See page 4 for description. Represents children charged with delinquency offenses in Juvenile court. Includes educational advocacy. Contact them at 617-305-3200. Closed until September.

HEALTH CARE LAW

1. **Health Care For All Helpline.** Helpline counselors inform callers of their health care options in MA as well as help callers apply for free and low-cost health insurance over the phone. Also makes referrals to HCFA’s legal team when caller needs help with a denial of care or medical bill case. Call 800-272-4232 or visit them online at <http://hcfama.org/helpline>. Provides services statewide.
2. **Health Law Advocates.** State-wide agency providing services to households under 300% of the federal poverty level. Provides legal advice and representation to clients who have been denied access to health care or health insurance, including denials of payment for services, problems accessing children’s mental health services, COBRA issues, denials and terminations of coverage, billing, and medical debt. Also represents groups or communities. Contact them at (617) 338-5241 or visit them online at <https://www.healthlawadvocates.org/>. Does not handle medical malpractice or general health care program information.
3. **Attorney General’s Insurance Hotline.** Call with questions about health, dental, disability, death, property, travel and credit insurance. Provides educational materials, and referrals. Will also advise callers on complaint processes and mediation options. Call them at 1-888-830-6277.
4. **JRI Health Law Institute** – Provides legal representation for HIV/AIDS positive low-income clients. Located at 75 Amory Street, Rear Entrance, Boston, MA 02119, or call 857-399-1910. Also visit them online at <http://www.jrhi.org>. Provides representation for housing, SSI/SDDI, public benefits, estate planning, discrimination, breach of confidentiality and CORI. Does not handle family, immigration, bankruptcy or criminal matters.
5. **AIDS Action Committee** – Located at 75 Amory Street, Boston, MA 02119. Reach their legal intake line at 617-450-1317. Provides legal services for housing, family law, discrimination, employment, basic estate planning, social security and public benefits appeals. Serves HIV/AIDS+ persons or transgender individuals who are clients of AAC’S TransCEND program.

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EMPLOYMENT LAW

1. **Fair Employment Project.** Provides information about employment discrimination and referrals to pro bono attorneys during the investigation stage at MCAD. Services available statewide. Call 617-390-2593 or visit them online <http://www.fairemploymentproject.org>.
2. **The Massachusetts Employment Lawyers Association.** For referrals to attorneys for wrongful termination and other employment issues see: http://www.massnela.org/?page_id=3 for a listing of MA lawyer referrals.
3. **Attorney General's Wage Hotline** – Call them at 617-727-3465 for claims involving wages. Inspectors and attorneys answering calls 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday.

HOUSING LAW

1. **Real Estate Bar Association for Massachusetts and REBA Dispute Resolution, Inc.** Call them at 617-854-7555 or 800-496-6799. Can request a lawyer online at: <https://www.reba.net/need-a-lawyer/>.
2. **Consumer Protection Clinic.** See page 4 for description of the clinic. Through the Western New England School of Law. Call 413-782-2298 for landlord/tenant issues in Springfield area. Students represent indigent consumers with complaints against landlords in housing court.
3. **Suffolk University Law School Housing Clinic.** See page 4 for a description. Contact them at 617-884-7568. Provides representation of eviction defense, discrimination, public and subsidized housing matters, consumer protection. Handles administrative hearings before housing authorities, housing discrimination issues in front of MCAD and housing cases in Boston Housing court and Chelsea District Court.
4. **Tenant Advocacy Project** – Harvard TAP. Contact them at 617-495-4394. Its mission is to provide closely-supervised, quality learning experiences for HLS students by representing tenants of and applicants to public and subsidized housing at administrative hearings at housing authorities throughout greater Boston.
5. **Housing Families Inc., Pro Bono Legal Services** – Provides pro-se answer and discovery clinic every Monday (Tuesday if Monday is a holiday) at 9:45 am. Provides assistance with eviction defense, public housing and subsidy termination/denials. They are located at 919 Eastern Ave., Boston, MA 02148, and can be reached at 781-322-9119 ext. 146.
6. **Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS)** – Located at 66-70 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143. Provides services for low-income Somerville residents who are at risk of homelessness due to eviction. Provides eviction defense assistance. Contact them at 617-623-7370.
7. **City Life/Vida Urbana** - Provides weekly meetings where clients at risk of losing their housing can speak with lawyers about affordable housing, foreclosure defense, and eviction defense. Located 284 Amory Street, Jamaica Plain 02130 (Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 pm); Our Savior's Lutheran Church basement, 28 Paris St., East Boston 02128 (Wednesdays 6-8:30 pm); and 65 W. Elm St., Brockton 02301 (every other Wednesday, 6-8:00 pm). Call them at 617-524-3541 or online at <http://www.clvu.org>.

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SMALL CLAIMS

1. **Small Claims Advisory Service** - Provides free legal information about small claims law and procedure. Call their hotline with questions at (617) 497-5690 or e-mail them at questions@masmallclaims.org. Visit them online at <http://masmallclaims.org/>. Includes information on auto, consumer, home improvement, landlord/tenant, and personal dispute law.

ELDER LAW

1. **National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys** - Most elder law attorneys are members of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), a non-profit association of over 4,000 attorneys specializing in legal issues affecting the elderly. The Massachusetts Chapter of NAELA is one of the most active chapters nationally, with more than 400 attorney members. To find a Massachusetts elder law attorney near you go to www.naela.org.
2. **Attorney General's Elder Hotline** - Provides information and referrals about health insurance, Medicare, telemarketing fraud, and home improvement scams. Call 1-888-AG-ELDER (1-888-243-5337).
3. **Executive Office of Elder Affairs** - Call 617-727-7750 for an array of information, including legal issues and prescription drug assistance, care giving, community resources, local programs, homecare, housing and assisted living facilities.
4. **Massachusetts Senior Legal Helpline** - State-wide helpline that provides free legal information, advice and referrals to senior citizens over 60 in civil law. Call 617-603-1700 or 1-866-778-0939, Monday – Friday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Located at 197 Friend Street, Boston, MA 02114.
5. **Women's Bar Foundation, Elder Law Project** – Provides pro bono referrals for simple wills, health care proxies, and powers of attorney. Clients must: (1) have income under 250% of Federal Poverty Guidelines; (2) total assets under \$50,000 (considering combined assets of married clients); (3) be over 60 years old or disabled; and (4) have less than \$1 million equity in their home. Serves Eastern Massachusetts. Call them at 617-651-2357 for intake.

CONSUMER LAW

1. **Consumer and Bankruptcy Law Unit** – ELRI provides legal services for consumer law and bankruptcy. Hosts a Fair Debt Collection Lawyer for a Day program at various court houses. Visit them online at https://www.vlpnet.org/volunteer/item.6165-Fair_Debt_Collection_Lawyer_for_the_Day_Discovery_Clinics.
2. **Attorney General's Consumer Advocacy and Response Division** - Call 617-727-8400 with complaints about consumer fraud. CARD handles cases involving defective products, car sales and financing, telemarketing scams, debt collection, mortgage servicing, home improvement contracts, utility bills, and identity theft.
3. **Pro Se Debtors Bankruptcy Clinic** - Consumer bankruptcy attorneys offer advice and forms to individuals considering chapter 7 or chapter 13 bankruptcies or who have filed for bankruptcy. Call 617-748- 5351.

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