

MHLAC provides information and conducts intake for these current areas:

- **Access to Education** (request intake online)
- **Family Law** (request intake online)
- **Group Home Evictions** (request intake online)
- **Access to Mental Health Treatment** (Live answer for individuals currently inpatient)

We may provide representation to people with, or perceived to have, a mental health condition, when the legal problem fits within these priority intake areas. Even if we don't take your case for representation, the stories, and experiences you share with us help inform MHLAC's strategies to improve mental health care within systems and our communities.

◆ **What to expect when you submit an online request form**

For intake requests not handled during weekly LIVE CALL HOURS, you must submit your request for intake online. MHLAC will contact you within 8-10 business days to complete an intake interview. Look at this webpage to help prepare for your intake interview <http://mhlac.org/legal-help>.

◆ **Accommodations**

For anyone who cannot reach us as instructed or you do not have access to a computer or you have trouble speaking about your legal problem, we want to connect with you. Please call 617- 227-6500 or 617-338-2345 and press 0 for the operator to speak to MHLAC or have someone call for you so that we can plan a way to talk with you.

◆ **Have an important issue you think MHLAC should know about?**

Intake is one of many strategies MHLAC uses to tackle the systemic issues harming individuals; preventing many from accessing the support and services to live a full life. MHLAC regularly reviews current priorities to make sure we are implementing the smartest and most effective strategy. If you think there is an issue that we should focus our attention on, email intake@mhlac.org to let us know.

Disclaimer: Leaving a message, sending an email, or submitting an online/website form does not create an attorney client relationship with our office, the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee. We maintain all information collected via our communication platforms in a secure and confidential location. We will not share your information without your authorization.

Intake Area Descriptions

Access to Education

General Priority intake criteria:

1. Student attends a Public or Charter School in MA and
2. Student has a known or perceived mental health condition and;
3. Student has experienced one or multiple of the following:
 - Student has been suspended, expelled, asked to withdraw, has been unenrolled or has been otherwise excluded from school; OR
 - Student is not attending school (e.g., chronic absenteeism, CRA/truancy), has dropped out; OR
 - Student is being forced to go to an alternative school or another school in the district; OR
 - Student has been unfairly searched, arrested, or otherwise targeted by law enforcement and/or school resource officers at school; OR
 - Student has been harassed on the basis of their mental health condition and/or disability; OR
 - Students who are not receiving appropriate services to meet their language needs.

AND Any of the following criteria for Holyoke students/families:

- Student with an IEP is not getting timely evaluations;
- The IEP process is stalled or delayed because of lack of interpreters/translators;
- The student's parents are of limited English proficiency, **and**:
 - o have received correspondence from the school only in English;
 - o have been asked to sign documents in English which they did not understand;
 - o have attended meetings or hearings at which interpreters were not available or in which the school used untrained interpreters;**and** are unable to communicate with school staff because of lack of interpreters; OR have been asked by the school to waive rights.

How to request an education intake: MHLAC prioritizes referrals, directly from organizations, professionals, and advocates. Complete the Education [online form](https://mhlac.org/education-intake-page) <https://mhlac.org/education-intake-page> to request an intake interview. Once the intake is

completed, families should be prepared to provide documents (student's education record) so we can evaluate the case for representation.

In evaluating cases for intake, the case is screened by the Education Project staff, and the levels of assistance may vary and includes possible limited or full representation, information and referral, and brief advocacy. If your case does not meet the stated criteria, we encourage individuals who need education advocacy to continue searching for assistance by using the Massachusetts Legal Resource Finder <https://masslrf.org/en/home>

Family Law

Intake criteria:

- Parents with custody and parenting time cases, that can also include divorce, 209A orders, child support, alimony, limited property division or
- Termination or denial of DCF services or program to a parent with a mental health or psychiatric disability or
- Technical assistance to attorneys and case workers on behalf of parents with mental health issues in child welfare/DCF involved cases.

How to request a family law intake: Complete the Family Law Project [online form](https://mhlac.org/request-family-law-project-intake) <https://mhlac.org/request-family-law-project-intake> to request an intake interview. Once the intake is completed, the case is screened by the Family Law Project staff. The assistance levels may include information and referral, brief advocacy, or full representation.

Group Home Evictions

Intake criteria:

- Eviction or the threat of eviction of a person under the Community Residency Tenancy "CRT" law. The Massachusetts Community Residence Tenancy "CRT" Law protects rights for individuals living in group homes and other community residences licensed, funded or operated by the Department of Mental Health "DMH."

How to request a group home evictions intake: Individuals or their advocate can complete an [online form](https://mhlac.org/crt-intake-page) <https://mhlac.org/crt-intake-page>.

Access to Mental Health Treatment in hospital emergency departments and inpatient units

Intake criteria:

- Experiences of mistreatment and rights violations in a hospital emergency room or mental health facility or
- Allegations of improper disclosure of confidential mental health treatment information

How to request an access to treatment intake: Individuals currently in a hospital emergency department or inpatient unit can call and speak to an intake advocate during MHLAC'S LIVE CALL hours Mondays and Tuesdays 1pm – 3pm and Thursdays and Fridays 9am-11am (see website for any changes to the weekly LIVE CALL schedule), complete an [online form https://mhlac.org/treatment-access](https://mhlac.org/treatment-access), or write to us. MHLAC will screen and conduct the intake interview at the time of the call and provide information and referral. Brief advocacy is offered on a case-by-case basis.

If your legal problem is not listed, go to the [Massachusetts Legal Resource Finder \(https://masslrf.org/en/home\)](https://masslrf.org/en/home) to find legal help. We unfortunately cannot help with every type of legal problem.

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