

## The Massachusetts Probation Service

In Massachusetts, there are 105 separate Probation departments throughout the 12 counties: eight divisions of the Boston Municipal Court (BMC); 12 Superior; 62 District; 11 Juvenile; and 12 Probate & Family courts.

In **Superior** Court, Probation Officers supervise the most serious felony cases.

**District and Boston Municipal (BMC)** Court Probation Officers supervise criminal cases.

**Juvenile** Court Probation Officers supervise children, adolescents and young adults involved in delinquent, youthful and status offending behavior, as well as, monitor the welfare of children who are before Juvenile Court as subjects of parental abuse and neglect.

**Probate & Family** Court Probate Officers are involved in assisting the court in civil matters such as domestic issues, divorce, paternity, guardianship and adoption. Probate & Family Court Probation Officers are asked to perform tasks such as investigating custody issues, resolving disputes regarding visitation and enforcing court orders regarding child support as well as drug testing and supervision of job search activity.

## Office of Community Corrections

The Office of Community Corrections is a division of the Commissioner of Probation. There are 21 Community Corrections sites throughout the state. The Community Corrections Centers, including Juvenile and Women's Resource Centers, serve as an alternative to incarceration. There are Probation Officers In Charge assigned to each of the 21 centers. The centers are community supervision sites where offenders must check in several times weekly. Substance abuse treatment, GED preparation and job training are offered at the centers. There is also a community service component. Offenders perform such tasks as park clean-up, snow removal, and delivery of food to soup kitchens.

## Office of the Commissioner of Probation

The Office of the Commissioner of Probation (OCP) is a department of the Massachusetts Trial Court and the administrative office for the Massachusetts Probation Service and the Office of Community Corrections both of which are managed by the Commissioner of Probation.



Commissioner  
Edward Dolan

## Mission Statement

The Massachusetts Probation Service is at the center in the delivery of justice through investigations, community supervision of offenders/litigants, diversion of appropriate offenders from institutional sentences, reduction in crime, mediations, service to victims, and the performance of other appropriate community service functions.

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## Changing Lives, Building Futures

## What is Probation?

Probation is a court-ordered sanction placed on a person by a judge. The offender is allowed to remain in the community under the strict supervision of a Probation Officer.



The goal of the Massachusetts Probation Service is to help keep communities safe and to provide probationers with the rehabilitative tools they need to live a safe and law-abiding lifestyle.

Probation partners with local law enforcement and human service agencies to keep communities safe and provide a wealth of programs, initiatives and resources such as substance abuse counseling and educational and job training.

The agency collaborates on a regular basis with federal, state and local police; Sheriff's Departments; Parole Board; Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB); as well as state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Department of Youth Services. Probation also works closely with local schools.

Probation updates and maintains Court Activity Record Information (CARI) and the Civil Restraining Order Registry. The agency screens applicants during the court intake process to determine indigency or eligibility for a court-appointed attorney. The agency is also charged with the sealing of records.

## The Role of A Probation Officer



Probation Officers are the “eyes and ears” of the court. They enforce the orders of the court and make recommendations to a judge.

When probationers fail to comply with court orders, it is the Probation Officer's responsibility to bring the offender before the court. If a court order is violated, a Probation Officer will order the offender to appear before the court and may recommend additional conditions to improve offenders' behavior or incarceration.

Probation Officers supervise offenders in the community through unannounced visits to an offender's home to ensure that they are following the terms of their probation. Probation Officers also facilitate therapeutic and rehabilitative specialty programs for offenders and referrals. In addition, offenders are provided specialty services at the court..

These Programs include:

- Community Service
- Changing Lives Through Literature
- Drug and Mental Health Courts
- Electronic Monitoring (ELMO) Program
- Parenting Initiatives: Mother and Fatherhood Programs
- Prisoner Re-entry Program.
- Sex Offender Containment Unit

## Probation's Firsts



The Massachusetts Probation Service has set an impressive record of “Firsts.” Established in 1841 by Boston shoemaker John Augustus, the Service is the nation's first Probation Department.

The Massachusetts Probation Service was the first to introduce non-traditional community supervision in the form of the Operation NiteLite Program through which Probation Officers visit the homes, workplaces, and haunts of offenders.



Massachusetts Probation became the first in the state to monitor offenders 24 hours a day, seven days a week using the Electronic Bracelet. The Service also established the country's first database of civil restraining orders which has been instrumental in aiding law enforcement agencies in the fight against domestic violence.

