

Standing Order 2-23 of the Boston Municipal Court

Department: Consumer Debt Lawyer for the Day Program

As Chief Justice of the Boston Municipal Court Department, I issue the following Standing Order pursuant to my authority under G.L. c. 211B, § 10 and G.L. c. 218 §§ 21 and 51A.

It is hereby ORDERED, effective September 5, 2023:

A Volunteer Lawyer for a Day Program (“LDP”) serving unrepresented litigants in consumer debt collection cases¹ shall be permitted to operate in any division of the Boston Municipal Court Department (“Division”) as operational needs allow and under the following guidelines:

1. The LDP provider is subject to the approval of the Chief Justice or their designee, the respective First Justice, and respective Clerk Magistrate of each Division;
2. The LDP shall be sponsored and administered by a state or local bar association, law school, or legal services organization;
3. The Division shall notify unrepresented litigants of the LDP’s schedule and services;
4. The Division shall, where practicable, provide space within the courthouse, or virtual equivalent, for the LDP to operate;
5. The Division shall make every effort to maximize the number of unrepresented litigants served by the LDP where practicable;² and
6. LDP attorneys providing limited assistance representation shall comply with all applicable guidelines and provisions of the Massachusetts Rules of Professional Conduct and Trial Court Rule XVI: Uniform Rule on Limited Assistance Representation;
7. Each First Justice and Clerk Magistrate shall submit a plan to the Chief Justice for the operation of a LDP program in their respective Division no later than August 25, 2023;
8. The LDP providers shall provide the Chief Justice an annual report containing data regarding number of cases referred, number cases handled, and number of cases resolved in each courthouse. The first report shall be due one year from the issuance of this Standing Order; and
9. This Standing Order shall be reviewed by the Chief Justice upon receipt of the reports.

¹A consumer debt collection case is an “Action” as defined in Massachusetts Rule of Civil Procedure 8.1.

² Examples to consider include the following: allowing the LDP to provide information about its services in the courtroom or virtual equivalent before the call of the list; consolidating dockets; scheduling consumer debt collection magistrate hearings to be heard on specific days of the week or month; providing docket lists to the LDP in advance of sessions; and communicating with the LDP regarding issues encountered.

This Order is effective September 5, 2023, and shall remain in effect until further order of this Court.



Hon. Robert Ronquillo, Jr.
Chief Justice of the Boston Municipal Court

Promulgated: August 10, 2023