

CAN THE COURT SERVICE CENTER ASSIST ME WITH THE TYPE OF CASE I HAVE?

Before connecting with the Court Service Centers (CSCs), please check the list below to see if Court Service Centers assist with your type of case. Don't see your legal issue listed below? The Court Service Centers may still be able to help. You may connect with the [Virtual Court Service Center](#) to discuss your matter and determine whether CSCs can assist, provide helpful materials, forms, or resources.

Case Types Court Service Centers Do Assist With	Case Types Court Service Centers Do Not Assist With
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Family Matters (Divorce, Custody, Child Support, Parenting Time) ✓ Guardianships of Minors or Adults ✓ Petitions for Name Changes or Corrections of Vital Records ✓ Voluntary Administrations ✓ Landlord/Tenant Matters ✓ Abuse Prevention/Restraining Orders/Harassment Orders ✓ Civil Commitments: Alcohol or Substance Misuse §35 and/or Mental Illness §12 ✓ Small Claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Formal/Informal Probates of Estate X Adoptions X Appeals X Immigration X Joint Petitions for Divorce X Joint Modifications X Most matters in Juvenile Court

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO BRING TO THE COURT SERVICE CENTERS FOR ASSISTANCE

Before visiting a Court Service Center, please make sure you are prepared with the following documentation and/or information (see chart below):

Case Type	Who is this case type for?	What you will need	Please note
1B and Fault Divorces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When only one person is filing for divorce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of your marriage certificate (and certified translation if it is not in English). <input type="checkbox"/> Your spouse's current address (if unknown, please be able to provide a last known address). <input type="checkbox"/> If there were children born during the marriage, full name(s), and date(s) of birth of the child(ren). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ If you are filing your complaint in Essex Probate and Family Court, you will be required to complete a financial statement. Please bring information about your income, debts, and assets. If you receive paystubs from an employer, please bring a recent paystub that reflects what you make in a typical week. If you receive government assistance, know those benefit amounts.
Complaint for Separate Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For married persons seeking a court order while remaining married to their spouse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of your marriage certificate (and certified translation if it is not in English). <input type="checkbox"/> Your spouse's current address (if unknown, please be able to provide a last known address). <input type="checkbox"/> If there were children born during the marriage, full name(s), and date(s) of birth of the child(ren). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ If you are filing your complaint in Essex Probate and Family Court, you will be required to complete a financial statement. Please bring information about your income, debts, and assets. If you receive paystubs from an employer, please bring a recent paystub that reflects what you make in a typical week. If you receive government assistance, know those benefit amounts.
Complaint for Custody Support and Parenting Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For parents who have never been married to one another. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>and</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where both parents are listed on the birth certificate <u>or</u> there is a court order identifying a second parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of the child's birth certificate (and certified translation if it is not in English). <input type="checkbox"/> Current address of the other parent, or if unknown to you, the last known address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ General rule is that the child must have resided in Massachusetts for at least 6 months and the case will be filed in the Probate and Family Court in the county in which the child resides.

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Complaint to Establish Paternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For parents who have never been married to one another. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>and</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where there is no second parent listed on the child's birth certificate. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>and</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where there is no court order identifying a second parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If you are the <u>mother</u>, then you will need a certified copy of the child's birth certificate (and certified translation if it is not in English). <input type="checkbox"/> Full name and date of birth of the child. <input type="checkbox"/> Current address of the other parent. If their address is unknown to you, please connect with the Virtual Court Service Center or your local Court Service Center to discuss what options may be available to you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ General rule is that the child must have resided in Massachusetts for at least 6 months and the case will be filed in the Probate and Family Court in the county in which the child resides.
Name Change of Adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For adults seeking to legally change their name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified long form copy of birth certificate and any prior judgments or records amending your name such as a marriage certificate or divorce certificate (along with certified translations of any of those documents if not in English). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ This paperwork requires notarization. If person requesting the name change does not have a valid photo ID, please inform CSC staff. ☞ This will be filed in the Probate and Family Court in the county where the person seeking the name change lives.
Name Change of a Minor Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For those seeking to change the name of a child under 18 years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of the child's birth certificate (certified translation if it's not in English). <input type="checkbox"/> Current address of the other parent, or if unknown to you, the last known address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ This paperwork requires notarization. If person for whom the name change is sought is between 12 and 17 years old and does not have a valid photo ID, please inform CSC staff. ☞ This will get filed in the Probate and Family Court in in the county in which the child lives.

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<p><u>Guardianship of Incapacitated person</u></p>	<p>✓ For those seeking to make medical decisions for an incapacitated person over 18 years of age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Clinical Team Report or Medical Certificate (see next column to the right to help you determine which you will need). <input type="checkbox"/> Full names (with correct spelling) and addresses of all interested parties in the case (for example, spouse, children, siblings, parents, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ <u>Clinical Team Report:</u> used for an incapacitated person with an intellectual disability (such a Down’s Syndrome or low IQ). Typically used when an adolescent reaches age of majority (18 years old). Must be signed by physician, psychologist, and social worker (all three). Valid for 180 days from the earliest exam date. ☞ <u>Medical Certificate:</u> used when a medical professional determines that someone is no longer able to make decisions or fully function in some or all areas of their life. Includes conditions such as coma, dementia, Alzheimer’s, or Schizophrenia. Signed by one of the following: registered physician, licensed psychologist, or certified psychiatric nurse clinical specialist. Valid for 30 days from exam date. ☞ If you are having difficulty determining which medical documentation you need, please connect with the Virtual Court Service Center or your local center for guidance.
<p><u>Guardianship of Minor</u></p>	<p>✓ For people seeking “custody” of a child under the age of 18 of whom they are not the parent (grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Full name and current address of known parents. If any of the addresses are unknown, please bring the last known address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ If minor is 14 or older, some court locations will require a <u>Notarized and Verified Consent (MPC 441)</u> signed by the minor and notarized before you can file. ☞ Filed in the Probate and Family Court in the county in which the child resides.

Starting a New Case: Probate and Family Court

Case Type	Who is this case type for?	What you will need	Please note
Petition to Correct a Marriage/Birth/Death Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For those trying to correct a clerical error on a vital record such as the spelling of a name, place of birth or date of birth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of the birth, marriage, or death certificate that contains the error. <input type="checkbox"/> Documents that prove there is an error or that you feel may be helpful. 	
<u>Voluntary Administration</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For an estate that is valued under \$25,000 plus one car. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>and</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The person filing is a spouse, blood relative, or listed in the will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of the death certificate. <input type="checkbox"/> List of assets that you are trying to access. <input type="checkbox"/> Original will if there is one. <input type="checkbox"/> Addresses for all living heirs and/or devisees of the deceased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Filed in the Probate and Family Court in the county in which the deceased lived. ☞ A Voluntary Administration cannot be filed if the decedent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned real estate; or • Was not a resident of MA at the time of death.

Modifying or enforcing an existing order/judgment

Case Type	Who is this case type for?	What you will need	Please note
<u>Complaint for Modification</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For people seeking to <u>modify</u> the terms of an existing judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Current address of the other party, or if unknown to you, the last known address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ If you are seeking a modification of child support, some counties will require you to submit a financial statement when filing a Complaint for modification. ☞ Please bring information about your income, debts, and assets. ☞ If you receive paystubs from an employer, please bring a recent paystub that reflects what you make in a typical week. If you receive social security, please bring a recent statement. If you receive government assistance, know those benefit amounts.

Case Type	Who is this case type for?	What you will need	Please note
Complaint for Contempt	<p>✓ When there is an order or judgment, that the other party isn't following. The person filing is seeking to enforce the order/judgment.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Current address of the other party. If their address is unknown to you, please connect with the Virtual or your local Court Service Center to discuss what options may be available to you.</p>	<p>☞ If you are seeking to enforce a child support order, please have the amount the other party owes you available. The Department of Revenue may be able to provide you a printout.</p>
<p>Complaint to Enforce a Foreign Decree</p>	<p>✓ When there is an out of state judgment, that the other party isn't following. The child now resides in MA for <u>at least 6 months</u> and the person filing is seeking to enforce the judgment.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of the foreign (out-of-state) judgment (certified translation if it isn't in English).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current address of the other party. If their address is unknown to you, please connect with the Virtual or your local Court Service Center to discuss what options may be available to you.</p>	<p>☞ General rule is that the child(ren) must have resided in Massachusetts for at least 6 months and the case will get filed in the county in which the child resides.</p>
<p>Complaint to Revise or Alter a Foreign Decree/ Modification of Foreign Decree</p>	<p>✓ When there is an out of state judgment and the person filing is seeking to modify the terms of that judgment regarding things such custody or parenting time. The child now resides in MA for <u>at least 6 months</u>.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Certified copy of the foreign (out-of-state) judgment (certified translation if it isn't in English).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current address of the other party. If their address is unknown to you, please connect with the Virtual or your local Court Service Center to discuss what options may be available to you.</p>	<p>☞ General rule is that the child(ren) must have resided in Massachusetts for at least 6 months and the case will get filed in the county in which the child resides.</p>

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<u>Eviction Answer and Discovery</u>	<p>✓ For tenants who have been served with summary process (eviction) summons and complaint</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Summons and complaint for eviction. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice to quit (if available). <input type="checkbox"/> Lease (if available). 	
<u>Small Claims (\$7,000 or less)</u>	<p>✓ For people who are suing in a civil action for \$7,000 or under</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Defendant’s address. <input type="checkbox"/> Any documents you feel are important in supporting your claim. <input type="checkbox"/> The amount you are suing for. 	<p>☞ You may be required to present information on how you verified the Defendant’s current address. See <u>DC-SC 7 Form.</u></p>