

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## The Trial Court

### Probate and Family Court Department

#### **Administrative Office of the Probate and Family Court**

Please feel free to contact any member of the Administrative Office with constituent or other inquiries.

Name	Position	Contact Regarding
<b>Hon. John D. Casey</b> John.casey@jud.state.ma.us	Chief Justice	Judges of the Probate and Family Court
<b>Domenic DiCenso</b> Domenic.dicenso@jud.state.ma.us	Acting Deputy Court Administrator	General procedures and policies of the Probate and Family Court, Technology
<b>Diane Beswick, Esq.</b> Diane.beswick@jud.state.ma.us	Managing Attorney	All legal issues related to Probate and Family Court
<b>Matthew Abraham</b> Matthew.abraham@jud.state.ma.us	Field Coordinator	Mass.gov website, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
<b>Denise Fitzgerald, Esq.</b> Denise.fitzgerald1@jud.state.ma.us	Manager of Legal Research Services	Legislation filed, Fee Generating Appointments, Child Support Guidelines
<b>Brian Pariser, Esq.</b> Brian.pariser@jud.state.ma.us	Deputy Legal Counsel	Department of Revenue, Child Welfare, Guardianship of Minors, Adoption, ICWA
<b>Evelyn Patsos, Esq.</b> Evelyn.patsos@jud.state.ma.us	Deputy Legal Counsel	Fiduciary Litigation Session, MUPC/Adult Guardianships, Public Guardianship Services, Limited Assistance Representation, Parent Education

Resource for information about the Probate and Family Court:

[Probate and Family Court | Mass.gov](#)

Resource for information about domestic relations and probate law:

[Massachusetts Laws by Popular Name | Mass.gov](#)

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## Facts and Figures

- < The Probate and Family Court has jurisdiction over domestic relations matters such as: abuse prevention, divorce, paternity, child support, custody, parenting time, adoption, and termination of parental rights and probate matters: such as wills, the administration of estates and trust, guardianships and related medical decisions, conservatorships, change of name, and partition of real estate. The Probate and Family Court also has general equity jurisdiction.
  - There is a Division of the court in each of the state's fourteen counties.
  - The Court has fifty-one authorized judges. Currently 49 judges are appointed.
- < The number of cases filed in the Probate and Family Court in FY 2019 was 130,224 and the number of cases filed in FY 2020 was 113,945.
- < The nature of the Probate and Family Court caseload has changed dramatically over the last two decades from primarily probate cases, which are paper driven cases with a certain life and minimal court appearances, to primarily domestic cases, which are people driven, have an uncertain life, and involve multiple court appearances. Since 1980, our caseload has shifted gradually from approximately sixty (60%) percent probate and forty (40%) percent domestic relations to approximately sixty-five (65%) percent domestic relations and child welfare and thirty-four (34%) percent probate.
- < We estimate that at least 150,000 litigants appear in the 14 divisions of the Probate and Family Court each year without the assistance of a lawyer in any aspect of their case. These litigants seek and receive procedural assistance from court staff. Unlike other Departments of the Trial Court, there are no prosecutors from the District Attorney's Office or attorneys from the Department of Children and Families to prepare the pleadings, the case schedule, and appear in court to present the case.
- < The judges of the Probate and Family Court are being asked to decide some of the cutting-edge legal issues of our times. They are required by statute to write findings of fact and rulings of law in more cases than judges of any other Department of the Trial Court.
- < Four of divisions of the Probate and Family Court operate from multiple court locations, requiring courtroom, registry, and probation staff. Staff is also required to coordinate and transport files between the Registry of Probate and the satellite locations.
- < The Probate and Family Court is a court of record. The Court is required to file, maintain, and have available records of its cases for an indefinite period.

