



Grandparents

You are not alone!

Legal Resources For Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

ONLINE

- **The commission web site: www.massgrg.com**
This web site contains legal resources in the **HELPFUL LINKS** section for grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren.
- **MassLegalHelp.org**
The ***Children and Families*** section of this website has information about child support, custody and visitation, divorce, separation and annulment, paternity and the children of unmarried parents, the Department of Social Services now called the Department of Children and Families (DCF), guardianship, names and name changes, CRA, and Care and Protection cases. There is also information about the Probate and Family Court, family law practices and procedures, as well as official legal forms and applications and useful brochures, booklets, and pamphlets.
- **Lawyer Referral Services**
If you would like to hire an attorney, many bar associations provide a lawyer referral service. For a list of these services and their contact information, please follow this link. Many have online request forms.
<http://www.mass.gov/courts/programs/legal-assistance/ma-legal-referral-gen.html>
- **Local legal services offices that provide free or low cost legal assistance**
To find out the name and number of the program in a particular area, go on masslegalhelp.org or use the Legal Resource Finder at <http://www.masslegalservices.org/findlegalaid>. Some, but not all, legal services offices have income limits. The legal resource finder will ask for information about your monthly income. You will get links to legal information and self-help materials no matter what.
- **State representative or state senator**
If you have a question or concern about state laws concerning guardianship, you can contact your state representative or state senator. You can find out who represents your area by checking the following website: <https://malegislature.gov/>. Put in the name of your city/town or zip code in the “Find a Legislator” box at the top of the page.



Legal Resources

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IN PERSON

- **Court Service Centers**

Court Service Centers help people navigate the court system. Centers are open whenever the courts are open, and are available to all court users, with or without attorneys. These centers provide information about which forms should be used to pursue a guardianship and assistance with completing the required forms.

There are currently two court service centers: one in Suffolk County and one in Franklin County. Court service centers will be opening in Brockton, Lawrence, Springfield and Worcester soon. Please check this website for additional information.

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/court-management/plan-initiatives/court-service-centers.html>

- **Lawyer of the day programs at Probate and Family Courts.**

The Lawyer of the Day provides:

- Consultation and assistance with completing court paperwork;
- Does not go into the courtroom to represent litigant;
- No lawyer-client relationship established;
- Cannot assist anyone who is represented by an attorney.
- To see a lawyer of the day on a specific date, you may check with the court that day or the day before to make sure a lawyer is scheduled to appear.

- **Free legal help is available at the Suffolk, Middlesex, and Norfolk Probate and Family Courts to low-income people who qualify for legal aid and:**

- are trying to become guardian of a child or an adult who can't care for him or herself;
- are guardians of child or adult family members and need help with the Care Plans and Annual Reports guardians need to fill out and give to the court.

- **One morning a week, lawyers and law students will be at these courthouses to help low-income people:**

- **Suffolk County Probate & Family Court in Boston**
Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the 3rd Floor of the Brooke Courthouse in the hallway outside the Register's office.
- **Middlesex County Probate & Family Court in Cambridge**
Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the 2nd Floor of the Courthouse in East Cambridge.
- **Norfolk County Probate & Family Court in Canton**
Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Register's office.