

Welcome to the  
Probate and Family Court  
Department of the  
Massachusetts Trial Court.

We are here to help you  
in any way that we can.  
However, we  
are allowed to help  
you only in certain ways,  
since we must be  
fair to everyone involved in  
your case.

Many Probate and  
Family Law matters  
involve complex and  
valuable legal rights.  
You should always speak  
with an attorney before  
filing any papers. Please  
ask court staff for "Looking  
For Legal Assistance?", a  
list of local lawyer referral  
services and legal aid  
agencies.

# BEFORE ASKING FOR HELP.....

This booklet  
contains a list of some  
of the things the court staff  
can and cannot do for you.

Please read it carefully  
before asking for help.

## WE CAN

Give you a list of lawyer referral services and legal service agencies.

Provide you with a list of law libraries which are open to the public.

Explain and answer questions about how the court works.

Tell you what the requirements are to have your case considered by the court.

Answer questions about the meaning of terms used in the court process.

Give you some information from your case file.

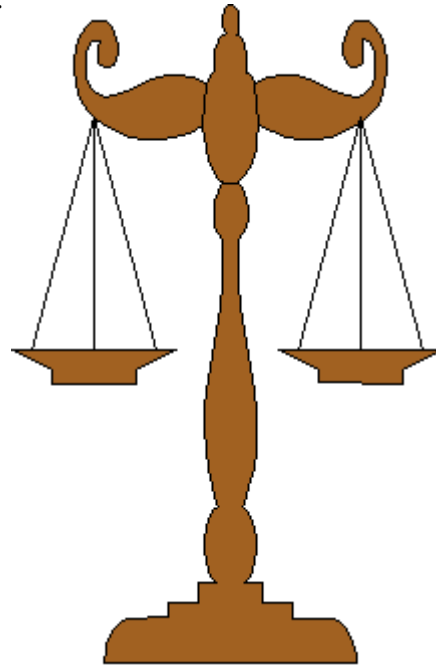
Provide you with court forms to begin a case.

Provide you with basic direction on how to fill out the forms.

Check forms for completeness.

Usually answer questions about court deadlines, rules, procedures and practices.

Tell you how to get a case scheduled.



## WE CANNOT

Recommend a lawyer or give you legal advice. Only a lawyer can give you legal advice.

Provide legal research.

Tell you what words to put on forms.

Tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court.

Tell you what to say in court.

Give you an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.

Give you any information that we would not give to the other person in your case.

Talk to the judge for you about what might happen in your case.

Tell you a judge's decision until it is issued by the judge.

Let you talk to the judge outside of court.

Change a judge's order.