

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.

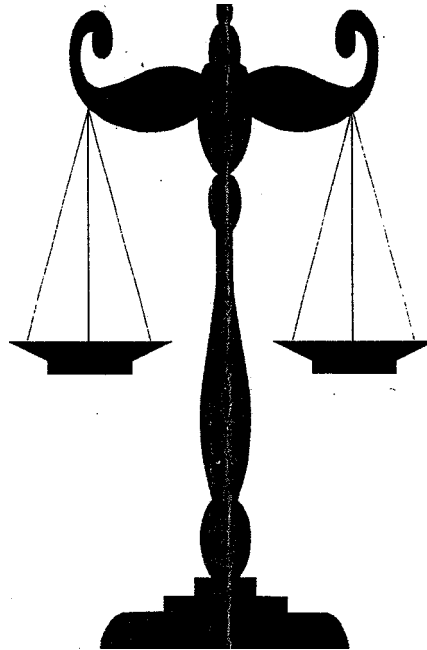
Many Probate and
Family Law matters
involve complex and
valuable legal rights.
You should always speak
with an attorney before
filing any papers. Please
ask court staff for "Looking
For Legal Assistance?", a list
of local lawyer referral
services and legal aid
agencies.

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 your 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.