

# Providing Access to Justice for Public Library Patrons

Navigating the Trial Court Law Libraries & Court Service Centers

An overview of services

with specific illustrations addressing family and housing proceedings

## A Collaborative Webinar





# Massachusetts Court System

**Trial Court Law Libraries and Court Service Centers**

**Working together to help public librarians help their patrons seek access to justice.**

## **Your guides:**

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**Kathy Ludwig** - Head Law Librarian, Franklin Law Library [Kathleen.Ludwig@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:Kathleen.Ludwig@jud.state.ma.us)

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# We're going to discuss



## 1. The services and expectations for patrons

Court Service Centers

Law Libraries

## 2. Examples to illustrate how we serve patrons with family and housing issues

Court Service Centers

Law Libraries



# CSCs & TCLLs Services and Expectations





# What is the Difference?



SERVICES	CSCs	LAW LIBRARIES
Legal Information	Yes	Yes
Legal Advice	No	No
Represent you in Court	No	No
Handout Court Forms	Yes	Yes
Assist with Legal Research	No	Yes
Help with Court Forms	Yes	No
Referrals	Yes	Yes
Online Chat	No	Yes
Online Research Tools	No	Yes



# Court Service Centers

- Services are remote at this time- first-come/first-serve assistance
- One-to-one help filling out/completing court forms
- Information about court rules, procedures, and practices
- Access to interpreter services via language line
- Referrals to and contact information for community resources, legal assistance programs, social service agencies, and law libraries

**“Court Service Centers: What Public Librarians Should Know”**  
Video available at <https://vimeo.com/344105271>

**Presented June 19, 2019**



# Court Service Center Cases

## What type of cases we **DO** handle:

- Probate and Family Court  
*e.g.: divorces, custody, child support, guardianships, restraining orders*
- Housing Court  
*e.g.: evictions, small claims*
- District Court  
*e.g.: harassment orders, small claims*
- Others  
*e.g.: CORI sealing, criminal complaints*

## What type of cases we **DO NOT** handle:

- Review of Administrative Decisions  
(section 30A)
- Appeals  
(except for Notice to Appeal eviction cases)
- Probate of Estates  
(**except for Voluntary Administration**)
- Adoptions
- Immigration
- Other complex matters

However, we **may answer** general questions and make referrals for the previous matters.

# Virtual Court Service Centers



- Operations are being provided virtually- there are no in-person services at this time
- Universal Zoom Room (“UZR”) 9 am-12 pm Is being used to triage cases
- Local CSCs have Zoom sessions, telephone calls, and email contact for assistance with the direct service for prioritized cases

For more information:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-court-service-centers>

<https://www.mass.gov/important-update-about-court-service-centers#1479046>

**Court Service Center UZR M-F 9am-12pm:**

**Videoconference:**

**<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1615261140>**

**Zoom phone:**

**(646) 828-7666 (Meeting ID 1615261140)**

**CSCs must prioritize cases during Covid:**

- **209A Abuse Prevention Orders (restraining orders) & 258E Harassment Prevention Orders**
- **Commitments (Section 35 and 12)**
- **Emergency Guardianship of an Incapacitated Person & Emergency Guardianship of Minor**
- **Emergency Probate and Family Court filings relating to custody/parenting time/child support**
- **Emergency Housing Cases**



People contact us overwhelmed, not knowing where to go, how to start, or what to do



## What to Expect . . . Virtual at this time

- Court users contact CSCs via Zoom/phone/email
- *Initial Disclosures (both at UZR & local CSC session):*
  - Provide only legal information, **not legal advice.**
  - CSCs can help both parties in a case.
  - No attorney-client relationship (not confidential)
- Initial screening (UZR-Triage) *Emergency/live transfer, Callback referral, Brief Question*
- CSC staff will assist with forms, including providing electronic signatures
- Completed forms can be submitted directly to the court department by email from the CSC, or emailed to the court user to be printed and mailed to the court (**forms prepared by CSC-stamped**)
- CSCs DO NOT represent any court users, so it is the users responsibility to follow up and keep track of the process, including required steps in the process (notice/service/return of service)
- Remote services often take longer and require multiple contacts





## Virtual Court Service Center Emergency Assistance

Monday – Friday - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Due to COVID-19, the Court Service Centers (CSCs) are providing **emergency cases**. If you have safety, family or other issues, you can get help with:

- legal information about your options,

### STEP 1: Do I have an emergency?

#### Safety concerns

- Domestic violence or harassment
- Loved ones in crisis due to mental health or substance use

#### Family issues

- Emergency Guardianship
- Emergency Custody
- Emergency Parenting time/Visitation
- Modification of Child support

#### Housing issues

- Lockouts, forced eviction, utility shut-off, severe harassment, serious health violations or destruction of property
- If you had a default or dismissal issued since March 1, 2020

- **What:** what you want
- **When:** in what times

B. Gather important information related to your case for a list of things you need before.

C. Do you already have a court case? If so, please provide the case number, names of the parties, and a copy of the judgment.

- **case number, names of the parties, and a copy of the judgment.**

### STEP 3: Join our daily Zoom Meeting

### STEP 2: Get ready

#### HOW TO DOWNLOAD THE ZOOM APP

The best way to get help from the CSCs is by using the Zoom app. Courts are also using Zoom, so it will be good for you to practice. The Zoom app is available on both computers and phones (Android and iPhone).

#### To download the **phone app**:

- a) Go to your app store
- b) Look for "Zoom Cloud Meetings"
- c) Click download

#### To download the **computer app**:

- a) Go to <https://zoom.us/download>.
- b) Click the download button for "Zoom Client for Meetings".
- c) Follow the instructions to install.

After you download, you can create an account with Zoom, or sign in with Google or Facebook.



### STEP 4: Get help

2. If English is not your first language, say the language you speak - for example, Spanish - and we will get an interpreter.
3. If you have limited minutes or data on your phone plan, let us know.
4. When you are ready to fill-out court forms, we will transfer you.
5. You will meet with the CSC team member by phone call or Zoom



# Court Service Center Locations

Court Service Centers are in 7 courthouses:

- **Edward W. Brooke Courthouse in Boston**

24 New Chardon St., 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02114

\* Green highlight indicates that, in Boston, there is a CSC, but no TCLL, in the same general location

- **Franklin County Justice Center in Greenfield**

43 Hope St., Greenfield, MA 01301

- **Fenton Judicial Center in Lawrence**

2 Appleton St., 2nd Floor, Law Library, Lawrence, MA 01840

- **George N. Covett Courthouse in Brockton**

215 Main St., 1st Floor, Brockton, MA 02301

- **Roderick L. Ireland Courthouse in Springfield**

50 State St., 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01102

- **Worcester Trial Court Complex**

225 Main St., 1st Floor, Worcester, MA 01608

- **Lowell Justice Center**

370 Jackson St. Lowell, MA 01852

# Trial Court Law Libraries

Serving the public as well as lawyers and judges

- Locations throughout the State
- Phone, email, text, or walk-in
- Legal reference
- Books in print and audio CDs
- Borrowing privileges
- Online legal research available

**“Legal Reference and Beyond for Public Librarians”**

Video available at <https://vimeo.com/311726547>

Presented October 30, 2018 and November 8, 2018



For more information or to verify the availability of services, see:

<https://www.mass.gov/lawlib>

Or contact the library in your area.

# Enhanced Delivery of Services during Covid

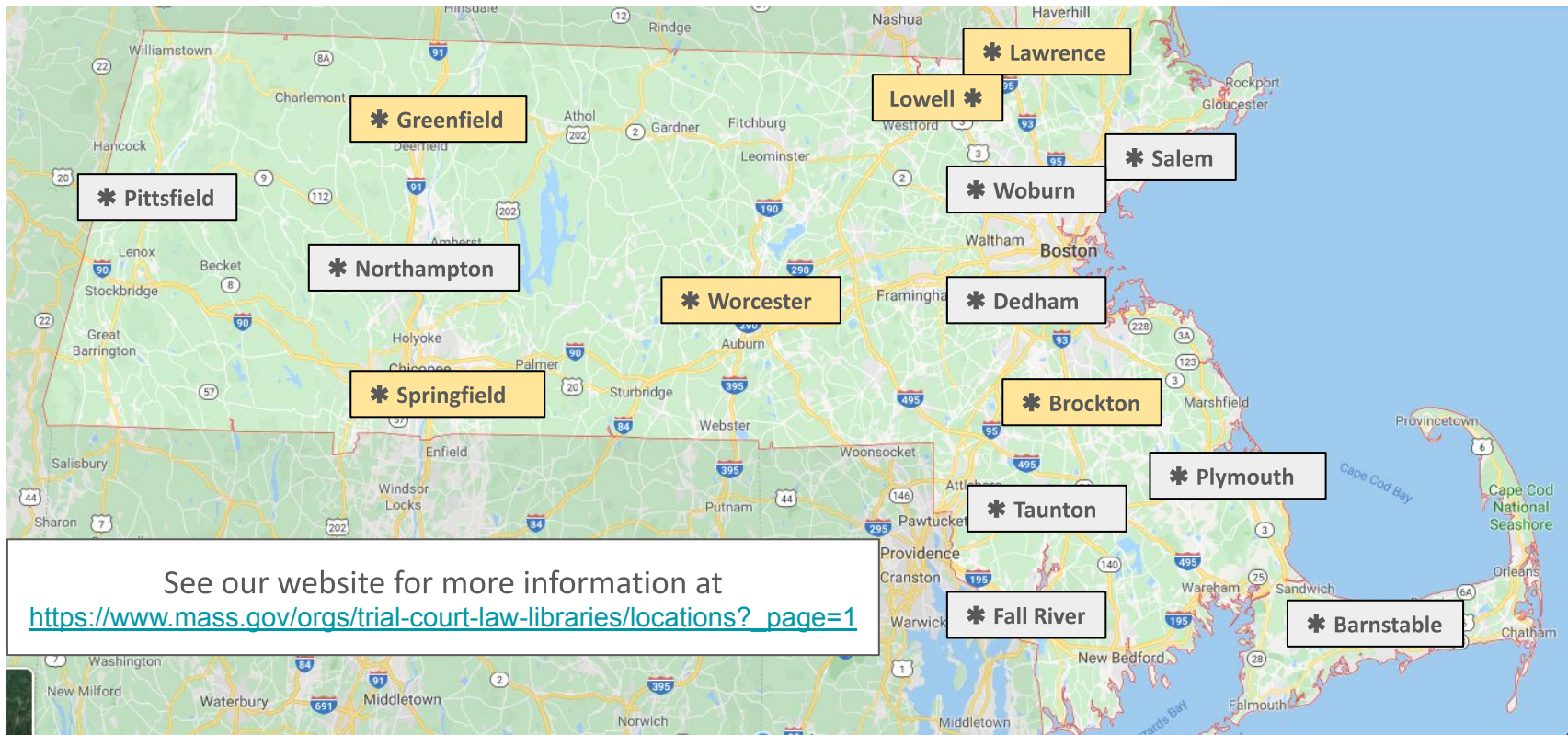


- **Curbside circulation (available at most locations):**  
The law librarian will help you find the materials you need in print, and arrange for you to pick it up curbside
- **Temporary electronic cards (e-cards):**  
Enables remote access to Nolo self-help law books and Retrievelaw  
<https://www.mass.gov/alerts/get-a-temporary-electronic-law-library-card#1500656>
- **Westlaw and Lexis available remotely:**  
Enables remote access to these legal research databases  
<https://www.mass.gov/alerts/lexis-and-westlaw-provide-temporary-free-remote-public-access-to-library-patrons#1500701>
- **Massachusetts Law About COVID-19 page:**  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-covid-19>

# Law Libraries are in 15 locations

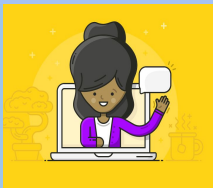


- \* Yellow boxes indicate a TCLL and a CSC in the same general location



# Trial Court Law Library Services

Live Chat



Email us a question

<https://www.mass.gov/forms/ask-a-law-librarian-by-email>

Visit us in person



**These are the ways to  
access services from  
the Law Libraries**



Call our 800 number (within MA only)  
(800) 445-8989  
(or your local law library)

Text us at (617) 674-1455

**Borrow materials**

◆ Library cards issued in person

◆ Library cards for court employees:

<https://www.mass.gov/forms/library-cards-for-court-employees>

**Request a document**

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/request-law-library-documents>

# Massachusetts Law About ... A to Z



Subject guides to Massachusetts legal topics - laws, regulations, cases and websites.

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-law-about>

Abortion  
Adoption  
Adverse Possession  
Alimony  
American Indians  
Animals  
Anti-SLAPP  
Attorneys  
Automobiles  
Bankruptcy  
Beach Rights  
Bicycles  
Bullying  
Change of name  
Chickens  
Child abuse and neglect  
**Child custody  
and parenting time**  
Child labor

Child support  
Child support over 18  
Civil procedure  
CORI  
Dead bodies  
Domestic Violence  
Drafting a complaint  
Employment  
**Eviction**  
Gender Identity  
Grandparents' visitation  
Guardians & caregivers  
Guns  
Sexual harassment  
Sharing economy  
Small claims  
Snow and ice  
Town meetings  
**AND MORE!**

Massachusetts law about families and children →

## Massachusetts law about child custody and parenting time

A compilation of laws, regulations, cases and web sources on the law of child custody and parenting time (visitation) in Massachusetts.

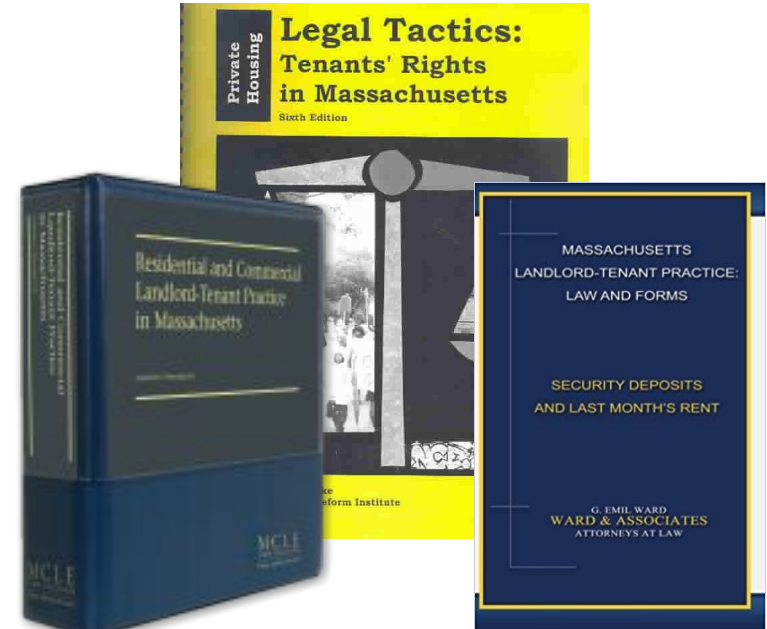
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ✓ Massachusetts laws
- ✓ Selected cases
- ✓ Forms
- ✓ Web sources
- ✓ Print sources
- ✓ Contact
- ✓ Related

# How to get print resources

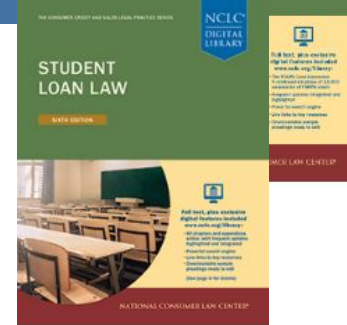


**Popular Family Law print titles**



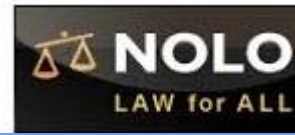
**Popular Landlord and Tenant print titles**

# These are the databases available to you through the Law Libraries



## Massachusetts Administrative Law Reporters:

- Land Court Reporter
- MCAD
- Special Education Reporter
- And more



Access to . . .



. . . self-help resources



## Examples to illustrate how TCLLs & CSCs serve patrons with family and housing issues





# How CSCs provide family law information

## Family Law

- “I want to get custody of my children.”
- “I need child support.”
  - prior court case vs. new/first filing?
  - married vs. never married?
  - jurisdiction and venue?
- “How do I get divorced?”
  - uncontested- 1A or Contested- 1B (no fault vs. fault)?
  - jurisdiction and venue?

\*While the Virtual CSCs are operating, the above types of cases will receive priority for assistance if it is an emergency. For instance, court users seeking assistance with uncontested divorces (1A) will have a *longer* wait for assistance versus someone needing an Emergency Guardianship of a minor immediately.

# How TCLLs provide family law information



## Family Law

### LEGAL RESEARCH, SAMPLES:

- “Law About” web pages

We describe how to use pages such as *Law About Divorce*, *Law About Alimony*, *Law About Child Support*, *Law about COVID-19 - Children and family resources*

- Print resources

We point to relevant materials such as *Family Law Advocacy*, *Valuation of Divorce Assets*, *Tax Aspects of Marital Dissolution* for discussions of the law and samples

- Electronic resources such as Westlaw and Lexis

We perform research and/or teach how to find legal standards and similar family law cases



# How do TCLLs & CSCs work together on a family law case?

\*Virtual/Zoom/telephone

Contact the CSC  
for help with  
answer and  
counterclaim.\*

CSC helps litigant to complete answer and counterclaim, and explains process and procedure of filing and giving notice.

Litigant has questions about wife's relocation to Kentucky with the children. CSC helps to make sure that is part of the answer and counterclaim.

CSC refers litigant to Legal Aid and/or TCLL for the legal standard regarding relocation.



Contact TCLL for  
in-depth legal info.

Apply for Legal  
Aid or go to Bar  
Assn for lawyer  
referral\*

Refers litigants to  
family lawyer



Offers legal advice for  
eligible litigants.



TCLL may also refer litigant  
to Legal Aid or to Bar Assn  
at any point.

Defendant in divorce action was in Court/on Zoom Session for a case management conference. He's allowed to file a late answer and counterclaim. Judicial Case Manager refers litigant to CSC.



Family Law Advocacy and  
How to Try a Removal Case, in  
print. Offers legal research on a  
particular issue.





# How CSCs provide housing law information

## Housing Issue

- “My landlord told me I have to leave. I have no place to go. What are my rights?”
- “My landlord shut off my heat and hot water and told me to get out.”
- “My tenants have not paid rent for two months. How do I evict them?”
- Is there still a Moratorium?
- How do I access the Court? I want to evict my tenant.



**MA MORATORIUM ENDED 10/14/20 FEDERAL MORATORIUM ENDS 3/31/2021**

MA Notice to Quit- See Executive Office Transmittal 21-2- Summary Process Update 1/15/2021

Referrals to relevant agencies and resources

# EVICTON QUICK ACTION PLAN

Has the Tenant received a **Notice to Quit**?

**YES**

**NO**

Assure the Tenant they do not need to move out. They have the right to fight the eviction in Court.

What is the reason given in the Notice to Quit?

**Non-payment**

**No reason**

**Other**

Provide **CDC Declaration** and **refer to rental assistance** (for tenants behind on rent) and refer to **Legal Aid**

Refer to **Legal Aid** & Refer the Tenant to **Masslegalhelp.org** for information

Has the Tenant received a **Summons and Complaint**?

**YES**

**NO**

Tell the Tenant the next step is for a sheriff or constable to serve them with a Summons and Complaint. Refer to **Legal Aid**

An Answer, Discovery Requests, and Jury Demand must be filed with the Court and given to the Landlord 3 business days before the first hearing date. Refer the Tenant to **GBLS.org/MADE** or provide them with **Answer** and **Discovery** forms.

Refer to **Legal Aid**.

Has the Tenant received a **Summons and Complaint** or any other documents from the Court?

**YES**

**NO**

Does the Tenant owe rent?

**YES**

**NO**

Provide **CDC Declaration** and **refer to rental assistance**. Refer to **Legal Aid**.

Refer the Tenant to **Masslegalhelp.org** for information on landlord/tenant law

Mass.gov:

[mass.gov/eviction-for-landlords](https://mass.gov/eviction-for-landlords)

Masslandlords.net:

[masslandlords.net/laws/covid-19-coronavirus-landlord-tenant-laws-and-regulations/](https://masslandlords.net/laws/covid-19-coronavirus-landlord-tenant-laws-and-regulations/)

Suffolk County Constable's Office:

<https://sccoboston.com/>

Flowchart geared toward landlords found at <https://kja.603.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Eviction-Flowchart-1-Page-Long-WEBSITE.pdf>

“How to be a landlord and avoid legal trouble” (May 2020):

[attorneyross.com/landlord.pdf](https://attorneyross.com/landlord.pdf)

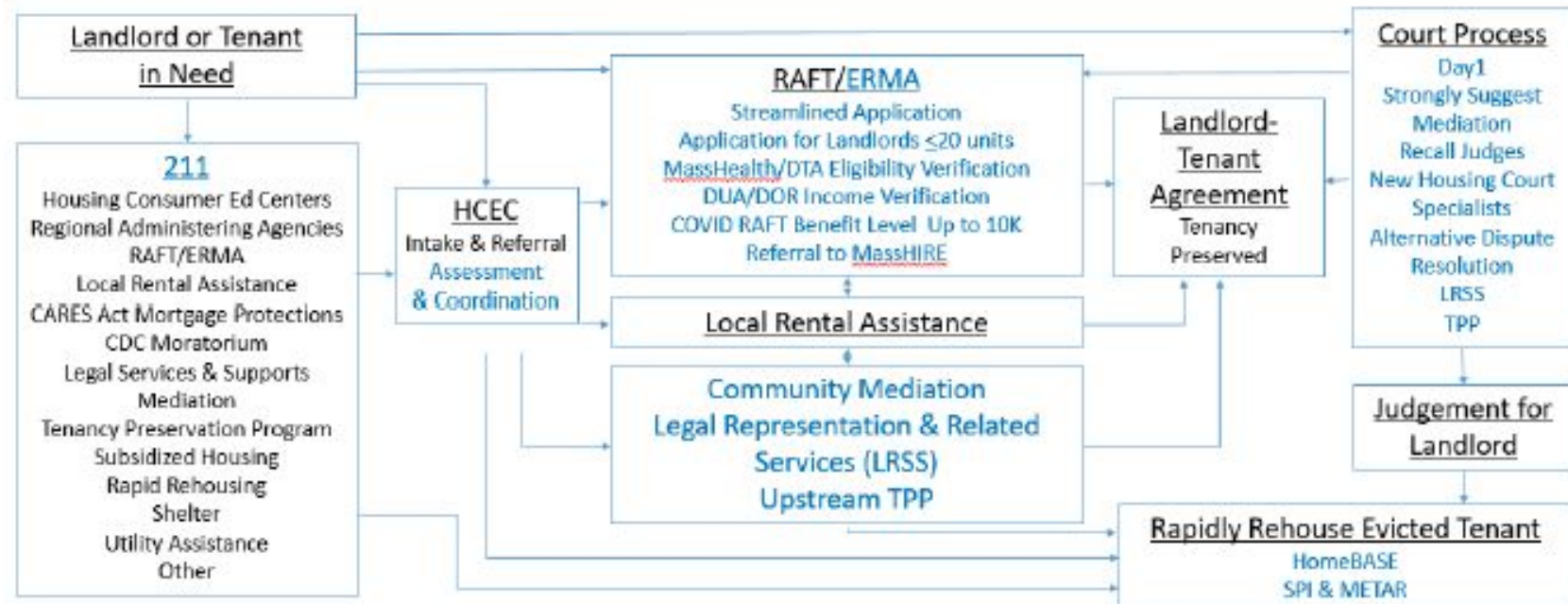
# Eviction Diversion Road Map

## Multiple Interventions from Pre-Filing to Post-Eviction



### Public Info Campaign: 211, Social Media, Webinars, Information Resource Sheets

Courts & Court Service Centers, Legislators, Other State Agencies, Family Resource Centers, Municipal Offices, Housing Agencies, Legal Services, Social Service Orgs, Community Action Agencies, CDCs, CHAPA, MMA, Landlord Orgs, Shelters, RPAs, Community Based Orgs, Faith Based Orgs, Community Health Centers



Blue denotes new or expanded initiative

10/10/2020



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Housing Court Department

## IMPORTANT

Your hearing may be done virtually by Zoom. You **MUST** attend your court hearing by following the instructions provided in your court notice. Please see section on how to use Zoom on the back side of this page. If you do not attend, the Court may rule for the other side.



## Lawyer for the Day Program

A Lawyer for a Day Program ("LDP") is a program in which volunteer attorneys are available to provide free legal advice and assist unrepresented Landlords, and Tenants.

For more information, Please Contact:

For Tenants:  
Community Legal Aid  
<https://www.hcbar.org/>  
(855)-252-5342

For Landlords:  
Hampden County Bar Association  
(For All Counties)  
<https://www.hcbar.org/>  
(413)-733-6500

## Limited Assistance Representation

Some courts allow people to have a lawyer to help with a part or portion of your case, rather than the whole case. This is called limited assistance representation (LAR). LAR attorneys can draft documents or represent you in court at one or more hearings.

Information about LAR:  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/limited-assistance-representation-information-for-the-public>

You can find an electronic version of this form at:  
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/housing-court-resources>

## Your Court Case

If you filed the case you are the Plaintiff. If the case was filed against you, you are the Defendant and you can file an answer.

Whether you are the Plaintiff or the Defendant, every time the Court you must make sure the other side gets a copy.

To look up your case file online, please visit : <https://Mass.gov>

## E-Filing your documents with the Court

Online Court Forms can be downloaded from:

<https://www.mass.gov/lists/housing-court-forms>

To file any forms, documents, or evidence, you can mail electronically through the courts e-filing website: <http://www.mass.gov/e-filing>

Please see Housing Court E-filing Guide:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/efiling-in-the-housing-court>

If you need assistance in drafting and filing court forms, Service Center section on the back side of this page.

At all stages of the cases both parties must follow all court rules go to: <https://www.mass.gov/trial-court-rules/trial-summary-process-rules>

## Emergency Rental & Mortgage Assistance

Renters and Homeowners who are struggling to make housing payments are encouraged to apply for emergency assistance. You may be eligible for assistance to pay overdue or upcoming rent, mortgage payments, or moving costs (First, Last, Security Deposit).

Any income-eligible individuals and families affected by COVID-19 or who are struggling to make housing payments, may apply.

You can apply for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) and/or the Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) program by applying at any one of the 11 regional housing agencies.

APPLY TO  
PROCESSING

Attention  
available  
city or town  
assistance

If you have trouble participating in a virtual conference or need a free **Interpreter** or **Reasonable Accommodations**, as soon as you receive this notice please call (413)-748-7838.

## Connecting to Zoom

You can connect to your  
Hearing through  
the Zoom app.

Zoom is available both by  
computer and by phone.

## Housing Specialist Department

Housing specialists (HSD) are employees of the court who serve as mediators for cases that are filed in the housing court. They provide information about Massachusetts housing laws to the public and assist parties to reach a settlement. The housing specialists can provide information and referrals to



## Virtual Counters

You are able to contact the court virtually using the Zoom application. The courthouse has a virtual counter where you can connect with the court personnel to get information about your case.

Available Monday-Friday 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Location	Meeting ID	Password
HSD Virtual Counter	161 639 4166	1234
Clerk's Office Virtual Counter	161 639 4166	1234

You can also access the virtual counters by telephone by calling (646)828-7666 and entering the above Meeting ID and password.

1. Contact the Court and notify court staff that you do not have access to zoom. The court will you provide with information and a phone number to call.

2. If the Court notice provides a phone number for your hearing

appointment, and respond to emergency referrals made by court departments.

## Tenancy Preservation Program

The Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP) is a program that works with tenants, including families with children, facing eviction as a result of behavior related to a disability. TPP functions as a neutral party and works with the property owner and tenant to determine whether the disability can be reasonably accommodated, and the tenancy preserved.

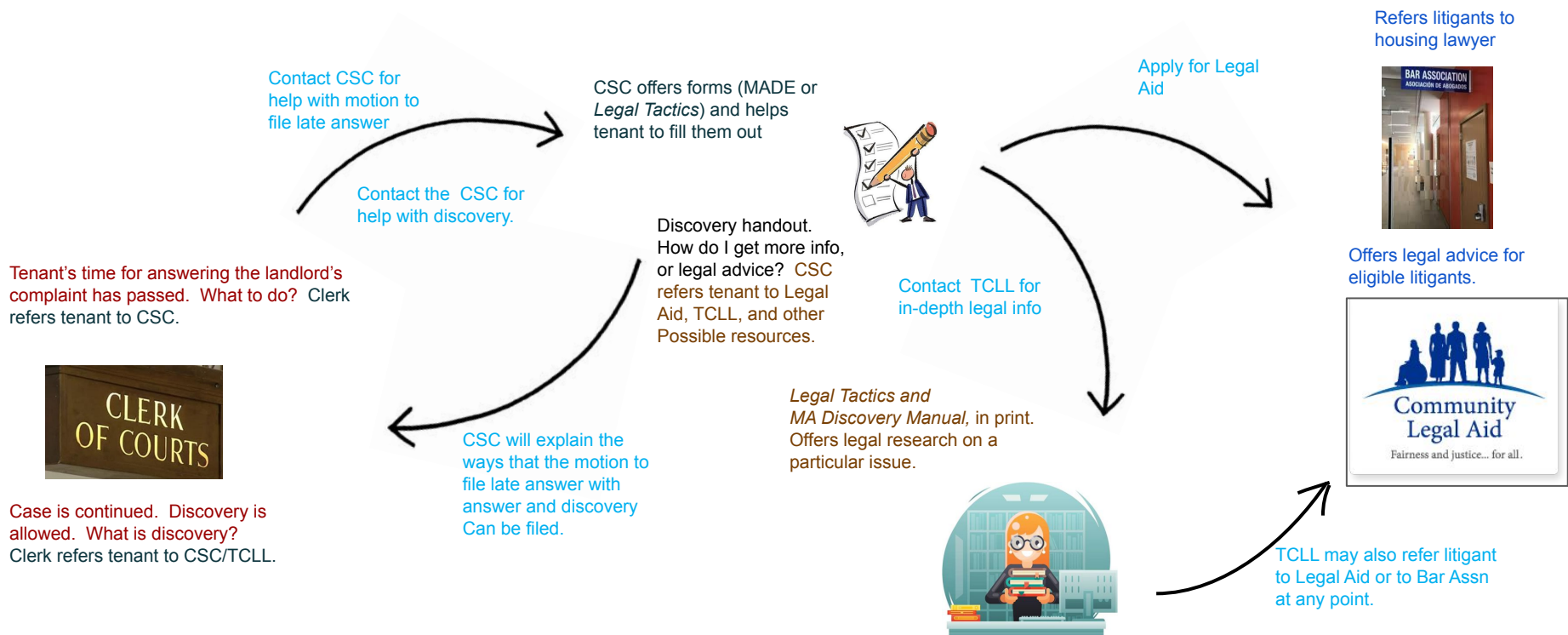
To contact the TPP, please call: (413) 734-5376. Berkshire County: (413) 443-7138 ext.218

You can find an electronic version of this form at:  
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/housing-court-resources>

date.



# How do TCLLs & CSCs work together on a housing law case?



# How TCLLs provide housing law information

## Housing Law

### LEGAL RESEARCH, SAMPLES:



- “Law About” web pages

We describe how to use pages such as *Law About Landlord and Tenant*, *Law About Eviction*, *Law About Public Housing*, *Law about COVID-19 - Housing and utilities resources*

- Print resources

We point to relevant materials such as *Legal Tactics*, *Property Management Manual*, *Residential Landlord-Tenant Benchbook* for discussions of the law and samples; and provide the Massachusetts Regulations - Sanitary Code checklist

- Electronic resources such as Westlaw and Lexis

We perform research and/or teach how to find legal standards and similar landlord and tenant law cases

Verify how to provide completed forms before going to the courthouse



Go to court with completed forms



Ability to decide how to proceed or whether to file a case



Cared for with personal service & Empowered by in-depth legal information



**Court Service Centers & Law Libraries**  
work together to provide  
access to justice



Referrals to court resources such as lawyer-for-the-day or another State or Federal court library



Bar associations, Legal assistance programs, and/or materials on self-representation

Referrals to community resources or social service agencies for further assistance

# Resources

## Family, housing, and other legal issues

- Massachusetts 211 [mass211.org](https://mass211.org) Call 2-1-1
- MassLegalHelp [MassLegalHelp.org](https://MassLegalHelp.org)
- MA Trial Court Remote/Virtual services <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/remotevirtual-court-services>
- Massachusetts Legal Resource Finder [MassLRF.org](https://MassLRF.org)
- Massachusetts Free Legal Answers [MassLAO.org](https://MassLAO.org)
- Massachusetts Trial Court Electronic Case Access [MassCourts.org](https://MassCourts.org)

## Specific to housing issues

- Massachusetts Defense for Eviction (MADE) <https://gbis.org/MADE> 800-323-3205
- Covid Housing Assistance Programs  
<https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-getting-help-with-housing-costs>
- “RAFT” <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-assistance-to-keep-your-family-housed>
- Housing Court Resources - <https://www.mass.gov/guides/housing-court-resources>
- Covid Eviction Legal Help Project (CELHP) <https://evictionlegalhelp.org>
- Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP)  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/tenancy-preservation-program> 833-912-6878
- Volunteer Lawyers Project (assisting small landlords) <https://vlpnet.org> 617-603-1700
- Webinar “Handling Patrons’ Landlord Tenant Questions” <https://vimeo.com/497733635>

# Reach out to us/refer patrons to us



## **Trial Court Law Libraries**

**Available 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon-Fri,  
when the courts are open.**

**Legal information:** [mass.gov/lawlib](https://mass.gov/lawlib)

**Reference services:** [mass.gov/ask-a-law-librarian](https://mass.gov/ask-a-law-librarian)

## **Court Service Centers**

**Available 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Mon-Fri,  
when the courts are open.**

**Via videoconference:** [zoomgov.com/j/1615261140](https://zoomgov.com/j/1615261140)

**Via phone:** (646) 828-7666 (Meeting ID 1615261140)

Thank you to the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners and Social Law Library  
for producing this webinar.