

## SOCIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

### **Citizen's Information Center– Office of the Secretary of State**

**(617) 727-7030 or 1-800-382-6090**

**E-mail: [cis@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:cis@sec.state.ma.us)**

A Citizen's Guide to MA State Services. The guide contains information about state services, agencies, and contact points, as well as information on consumer affairs, employment, environment, legislation, taxes, how to reach elected officials, start a small business, or obtain a license.

### **Age Strong Boston Commission**

**(617) 635-4366**

**E-mail: [aging@boston.gov](mailto:aging@boston.gov)**

Services for Boston residents aged 55 and over include assistance in applying for government benefits and community-based services, discount programs, housing advice, transportation options, advocacy, volunteer programs, information, and referrals.

### **Executive Office of Elder Affairs – SHINE Program**

**(800) AGE-INFO 800-243-4636 or TTY (800) 872-0166**

**[www.800ageinfo.com](http://www.800ageinfo.com)** Free health insurance information, assistance, and counseling to Medicare beneficiaries of any age. Help compare costs and benefits of various health plans, explain benefits of Medicare and additional insurance options, including Medigap, HMOs, MassHealth & prescription drug options, and assist with claims, billing, or denial of care issue.

### **Health and Human Services Catalog**

**[www.mass.gov/eohhs/utility/catalog-of-services.html](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/utility/catalog-of-services.html)**

Use the Catalog of Services to learn about health and social services available in Massachusetts. The catalog provides general information about who is eligible for services and how to apply.

### **MASS 2-1-1**

**Dial 211 or 1-877-211-MASS (6277)**

Mass 211 provides information about critical health and human services available in the community. It serves as a resource for finding government benefits and services, nonprofit organizations, support groups, volunteer opportunities, donation programs, and other local resources. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **MASSCAP**

**[www.masscap.org](http://www.masscap.org)**

MASSCAP is the association of the 24 MA Community Action Agencies, which are private, nonprofit human service and advocacy organizations. These community-based agencies provide programming and training for low-income people in workforce development and education, asset

development, small business creation, Head Start and daycare programs, WIC nutrition, senior services and youth programs, emergency food assistance, health services, homelessness prevention, affordable housing creation, home heating assistance, and weatherization assistance.

### **Mass Options**

**1-844-422-62-77 (1-844-422-MASS)**

**www.MassOptions.org**

Mass Options, a service of the Office of Health and Human Services, connects elders, individuals with disabilities and their caregivers with agencies and organizations that can best meet their needs.

### **Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)**

**www.maps-inc.org**

#### **NOTES:**

- Somerville, MA – The MAPS office at 92 Union Square closed in late August 2023 due to the ending of our lease by the City of Somerville, which is evaluating other plans for the building. MAPS has just rented a new office space at 362 Somerville Avenue that is being renovated and is expected to open later this fall. Meanwhile, please call our Cambridge Office at 617-864-7600 for any questions and to access services at other locations.
- Everett, MA – MAPS has purchased a 3-story building at 792 Broadway in Everett. Renovations will commence soon, and a new first-floor MAPS office will open there in 2024.
- Keep updated at <https://maps-inc.org> or on our social media pages.

**1046 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02139**

**(617) 864-7600 • Fax (617) 864-7621**

**697 Cambridge Street, Suite 203, Brighton, MA 02135**

**(617) 787-0557 • 1-800-232-7725**

**One Stoughton Street, Dorchester, MA 02125**

**(617) 825-5897 • Fax (617) 825-4167**

**490 Central Street, Lowell, MA 01852**

**(978) 970-1250 • Fax (978) 970-0843**

**24 Union Ave., Suite 8 &10, Framingham, MA 01702**

**(508) 872-2652 • Fax (508) 872-2658**

Provides services to the Portuguese-speaking community, including Immigrant Integration Services; Citizenship Assistance; Elder Services; Family-Based Services (FBS) and In Home Therapy for children and families; Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services; Intimate Partner Abuse Education; HIV/STI Prevention & Screening; Non-Medical Case Management; Impaired Driving Program; Notary Public and Translation Services.

**COVID-19 Mental Health Services** – Short-term, virtual counseling with Portuguese-speaking professionals around COVID-related stress, anxiety, and other pandemic impacts.

Call 617-864-7600, Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm

For more information visit: [MAPS Launches COVID-19 Mental Health Initiative – Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers \(maps-inc.org\)](#)

**COVID-19 Vaccines and Information** – Call Bilingual Hotline at 888-509-7788 or 617-864-7600

### **Somali Development Center**

**10 Malcolm X Blvd 2nd Floor Roxbury, MA 02119**

**www.sdcboston.org**

**Phones: 617-522-0700 • 617-522-6969**

**Language Capacity:** Somali, Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo

Provides community services to all Somalis and other African communities in Boston, regardless of immigration status. These services include:

- Post-resettlement community services such as housing search assistance, advocacy, interpretation, and translation
- Basic adult literacy program, ESOL classes, and citizenship assistance
- Youth employment, crime prevention and general youth adjustment issues
- Elder care services
- Newcomer orientation & acculturation related issues
- Employment services including job readiness training and job search
- Legal assistance in the areas of immigration, welfare, housing, domestic violence, and advocacy in the courts
- Maternal-child health issues, health education and health care access in general
- Mental health counseling and crisis intervention
- Access to resources and information provided in constituents' native language

### **Identity Affirmation Project (IAP)**

**Services:** Program through New England Law School where nonbinary and transgender individuals receive assistance changing their names and gender markers on their license, social security cards, passports, as well as changing their name through the court. Those seeking services should refer to the following link and follow the instructions: [Identity Affirmation Project Inquiry Form \(office.com\)](https://www.nesl.edu/identity-affirmation-project-inquiry-form).

For more information, please visit their website: [Identity Affirmation Project - NEL \(nesl.edu\)](https://www.nesl.edu/identity-affirmation-project).

### **Intimate Partner Abuse Prevention Helpline**

**Services:** Now Open to all MA residents

Thanks to COVID-19 relief funds from the CARES ACT, Massachusetts now has a Helpline that people can call for help rather than harming their partner. Open to any resident, the helpline is the first in the nation of its kind. This initiative is designed to prevent intimate partner violence by fostering accountability and change in people who harm or may harm their intimate partner. You can find more information at [10to10helpline.org](https://www.10to10helpline.org) or by calling (877) 898-3411.

### **Resolution Massachusetts: Where People Build Common Ground**

**Services:** You can find Resolution Massachusetts Centers providing free day of trial mediation services where they are approved in seventy-nine court divisions across the state ranging from small claims, summary process, juvenile delinquency, harassment prevention orders to probate and family issues. In addition, they provide the following services more broadly in each of their communities outside the courts:

- **Mediation**
- **Conflict Coaching**
- **Deliberate Dialogue**

- **Re-Entry**
- **Restorative Practices**
- **Facilitation**
- **Training**
- **Youth Programs**

To find the center serving your area, [please visit their website](#).

## **COURT SERVICE CENTERS**

[Virtual Court Service Centers | Mass.gov](#) – Refer Here for Information  
[Learn about Court Service Centers | Mass.gov](#) – Refer Here for Locations

**How to connect with the Court Service Centers:** Contact the Virtual Court Service Center (intake line) Monday – Friday from 9 am to 12 pm.

By using internet browser or Zoom app: [Launch Meeting - Zoom \(zoomgov.com\)](#)  
 By phone: Dial (646) 828-7666. Enter the Meeting ID number **1615261140** and then press # #

\*\*Emergencies after 12 pm should contact their local clerk or Registry’s office.

**Eligibility and Cost:** No income or immigration status eligibility requirements. CSC services are free (except for filing fees or fees associated with the case).

**Service Area:** All of Massachusetts

**Intake Hours:** Monday-Friday 9 am to 12 pm

**Case Types Handled:** Family Matters (Divorce, custody, child support, parenting time), Guardianships of Minors or Adults, Name Changes or Corrections of Vital Records, Voluntary Administrations, Landlord/Tenant Matters, Abuse Prevention/Restraining Orders/Harassment Orders, Civil Commitments/Section 35, Small Claims.

**Will Not Handle:** Formal/Informal Probates of Estate, Adoptions, Appeals, Immigration, Joint Petitions for Divorce, Joint Modifications, Most matters in Juvenile Court

**Program Description:** The Court Service Centers give free one-on-one help filling out court forms; general information about court rules, procedures, and practices; access to interpreter services; contact information about community resources and legal services; and user-friendly self-help materials.

The centers **do not give legal advice and cannot provide representation**. They may not speak to people already represented by a lawyer.

**How are Services Provided:** Court Service Centers are operating a hybrid service model that includes in-person and remote services generally by appointment.

Court Service Center locations provide in-person services on Tuesdays and Thursdays (8:30 am-1 pm; 2 pm-4:30 pm) with priority given to emergency cases and appointments, and remote services on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (8:30 am – 4:30 pm). The Virtual Court Service Center (intake line) will continue to be available Monday through Friday via Zoom video conferencing software for both emergency, and non-emergency matters.

**\*Although limited in-person services are offered at some locations, people are strongly encouraged to connect with the CSCs through the Virtual Court Service Center for both emergency and non-emergency matters. \***

## **OMBUDSMEN AND AGENCY CONTACTS**

### **Boston Housing Authority Grievance Panel Coordinator**

(617) 988-4579, TTY: (800) 545-1833 ext. 420

appeals@bostonhousing.org

The Department of Grievances and Appeals conducts administrative hearings when requested by Boston Housing Authority (BHA) applicants and residents to review certain BHA actions. A resident who has any questions regarding the appeal process may contact the Grievance Panel Coordinator.

### **Department of Children and Families Ombudsperson**

(617) 748-2444

### **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Resource Line (800) 955-2232**

For questions or complaints about HUD rental programs, including Housing Choice (Section 8) Vouchers, HUD has a central resource line from which an operator will direct the client to the appropriate office based on their case information.

### **Department of Public Utilities Consumer Hotline**

One South Station, Boston, MA 02110

(617) 737-2836 or (877) 886-5066

### **Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Ombudsperson**

DTA Central Ombudsperson

600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111 Ombudsperson Line: (617) 348-5354 sara.craven@state.ma.us

Assistance Line: (877) 382-2363

The DTA Ombudsperson can be contacted as an avenue for advocates to report repeated issues they have noticed among their cases. Clients themselves should not contact the DTA Ombudsperson phone number or email. Clients should instead call the DTA Assistance Line.

### **Department of Public Health – Division of Healthcare Quality Advocacy Office and Complaint Unit**

99 Chauncy Street, Boston, MA 02111 (617) 753-8150 or (800) 462-5540

Clients may call to make a complaint about health care facilities. The division also investigates complaints of patient abuse and neglect in long-term care facilities and discrimination in treatment based on being a Medicare beneficiary.

### **Health and Human Services**

(800) 462-5540 or (617) 753-8150

To file a complaint about a hospital, clinical staff, nurse, or physician, call the 24-hour consumer complaint line or file a complaint online at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/>.

### **Inspectional Services Department – Boston**

1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02118

(617) 635-5300 OMBUDSMEN AND AGENCY CONTACTS

Refer Boston tenants to this number for information or to make complaints about conditions.

**Massachusetts Division of Insurance**

1000 Washington St, Suite 810, Boston, MA 02118  
(877) 563-4467

For specific questions about insurance coverage, to register a complaint or make suggestions, contact the toll-free consumer information line. The toll-free number connects to all the Division's units.

**Mass Health Connector Ombudsperson**

Members can contact the Ombudsman Office through the "Contact" section of the Health Connector's website, MAhealthconnector.org, or by mail at PO Box 960484, Boston, MA 02109

**MA Long-Term Care/Nursing Home Ombudsperson Office**

Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs  
Ombudsman Office

1 Ashburton Place, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 727-7750 or 1-800-AGE-INFO (1 (800) 243-4636)

**Mass Rehab Commission Ombudsperson**

MRC Ombudsperson Customer Relations Department  
600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111

(617) 204-3600 (central office) or 1 (800) 245-6543 voice or TTY

Clients can be directed from central office or call the office nearest them.

Clients may contact the Ombudsperson about issues such as delays in service, their legal rights within the system, or provision of specialized services. The Ombudsperson also helps Social Security claimants and to beneficiaries of SSI and SSDI.

**One Care Ombudsman**

11 Dartmouth Street, Suite 301, Malden, MA 02148  
(855) 781-9898 or Mass Relay dial 711

One Care is a new health care insurance option for some adults with disabilities living in Massachusetts who are eligible to receive both Medicare and MassHealth services.

**Unemployment Insurance Ombudsperson (Problem Resolution Unit)**

Problem Resolution

19 Staniford Street, second floor, Boston, MA 02114  
(617) 626-6800 or Relay Operator: 1 (800) 439-0183

## WEBSITES FOR LEGAL INFORMATION

The Civil Legal Aid for Victims of Crime Initiative (CLAVC) - <https://massclavc.org>

CLAVC helps victims of crime throughout Massachusetts with their related civil legal problems — including family law, housing, immigration, disability rights, child welfare, education, consumer, identity theft, employment rights and public benefits.

Six regional CLAVC funded legal aid programs offer a wide variety of civil legal services to victims of crime who live in that program's geographic service area. Services include housing, public benefits, family law, immigration, consumer law, health law, disability law, education, elder law, veterans' rights, employment rights and much more.

Three statewide CLAVC funded legal aid program offer specialized civil legal services to victims of crime statewide in the areas of children's rights, disability rights and rape and sexual assault.

### **To get help from a CLAVC lawyer, Applicant must:**

1. be a victim or a survivor of a crime.
2. have a civil (non-criminal) legal problem that is a result of that crime; and
3. live in Massachusetts, or the legal problem must be in Massachusetts.

The crime does not need to have been reported to the police or prosecuted.

Information about finding legal help can be found at <https://massclavc.org>

<https://cleanslateclearinghouse.org>

The Council of State Governments Justice has many features including: (1) summarizing record clearing law for each state, to assist new advocates and laypeople; (2) providing advocates with legal and other resources; and (3) identifying organizations at which people with records can seek advice and representation

<https://www.cms.gov/>

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. This website provides information on the quality and costs of health care as well as connects patients to service providers.

<http://www.cominghomedirectory.org>

Coming Home Directory provides extensive information on social and legal services available to ex-offenders returning to or living in communities in Greater Boston.

<https://www.disabilityinfo.org/resources/mnip>

The Massachusetts Network of Information Providers for People with Disabilities (MNIP), coordinated by INDEX, is a collaborative effort of over 130 agencies in Massachusetts. Network members disseminate disability-specific information and make referrals to the public for free.



<http://www.efilema.com>

This website allows self-represented litigants to open court cases and e-file documents to participating courts at any time. It also has information regarding an e-filing clinic for self-represented litigants seeking to file an application for further appellate review.

<http://glad.org/rights>

Free information about LGBTQ/HIV legal rights and a connection to a free, confidential hotline to ask questions and obtain information and referrals to attorneys and legal services.

<http://identitytheft.gov>

One-stop website offers array of new tools for ID theft victims; free recovery plans will assist consumers in alerting police, credit agencies, and IRS.

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/case-legal-res/law-lib/>

This is the state trial court law libraries website. It has information on numerous legal issues and a section where client can ask a librarian.

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp/>

This website provides information on how the Massachusetts Court System operates, how to find a lawyer, and how to locate other court-related services.

<http://www.masslrf.org>

Screens applicants and provides contact information for legal aid programs, non-profits, government agencies and court-based programs that may be able to help with legal issues. Provides links to legal information and self-help materials.

<http://www.masslao.org>

Mass Legal Answers Online is a website where low-income Massachusetts residents can post their civil (non-criminal) legal question. Volunteer attorneys will answer the question through the same website.

<http://www.masslegalservices.org>

Statewide legal services advocates website. More information if you log in with legal services username.

<http://www.masslegalhelp.org>

Information and mailings on various legal issues, using language geared towards clients.

<http://www.mass211.org>

Website where clients can access social services agency phone numbers throughout the state.

<http://www.mass.gov>

Website for the commonwealth of Massachusetts. Clients can access information about all three branches of state government.

<http://www.medicare.gov>

Medicare website connects those receiving Medicare to service providers, general online resources, and information regarding their rights.

<http://www.medicareadvocacy.org>

This national non-profit's website provides online literature, self-help materials and Medicare advocacy for elders and people with disabilities.

<http://www.nlgmass.org>

National Lawyers Guild has an online Lawyer Directory that functions as a legal resource to those in need.

<http://www.nlrc.aoa.gov>

General information on a national level about numerous legal issues that impact elders.

<http://www.nclc.org>

National Consumer Law Center works with nonprofit and legal services organizations, private attorneys, policymakers, and federal and state governments and courts to stop exploitative practices, help financially stressed families build and retain wealth, and advance economic fairness. The website work covers a broad range of issues, including consumer protection, unfair and deceptive acts and practices, privacy rights, civil rights, and employment.

<https://www.publiccounsel.net/pc/sorb/>

Private Counsel Division's website provides information, resources, FAQs, and the regulations pertaining to the Sex Offender Registry Board statute.

<http://www.ssa.gov>

Social Security Administration website provides online resources for advocates, those receiving benefits through SSA and those who are seeking to apply for benefits.

<http://www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org>

The National Consumer Law Center's Student Loan Borrower Assistance Project is a resource for borrowers, their families, and advocates representing student loan borrowers. The website features a wide range of questions and answers about student debt.