



Plymouth County TRIAD

A cooperative effort between
District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz and Sheriff Joseph D. McDonald, Jr.

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Resources

Grandparents you are not alone!

LEGAL

Filing for Custody of Your Grandchild

To file for custody, you will need to complete the proper paperwork which is located in the Clerk's Office of the Probate and Family Court that serves the jurisdiction in which your **grandchild** lives. "Legal Services" or an "Attorney of the Day" are located in each courthouse and are able to assist you with the filing process. To aid you with the filing process, please be sure to bring any and all documents that you may hold in your possession that pertain to your grandchild, such as a birth certificate, etc.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in-person business at the courts are limited, so please call ahead before visiting any MA Trial Court.

Locate an Attorney

Call the Senior Legal Helpline at 1-866-778-0939 or visit any of the following websites:

- **Mass Legal Help:** <https://www.masslegalhelp.org/>
- **Legal Assistance:** <https://www.mass.gov/legal-assistance>
- **Mass Legal Services:** <https://www.masslegalservices.org/findlegalaid>
- **DCF:** <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-children-families>



Guardianship vs. Adoption

Guardianship: Temporary Order- Guardianship is an avenue to secure legal custody. As a grandparent, you have the right and responsibility to inform the Court if the biological parent/s are unfit or unavailable to care for the child. A Judge can grant you legal custody, however this is never a permanent order. The custody order of the child will remain in the Court's discretion. If you wish to have a permanent custody order, you would have to proceed with the formal adoption process in court.

For more information regarding our state laws on guardianship, please contact your state representative or state senator. <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>

Adoption*: Permanent Order-Adoption is a process whereby a person assumes the parenting of another, usually a child, from that person's biological or legal parent or parents. Legal adoptions permanently transfer all rights and responsibilities, along with filiation, from the biological parent or parents. *Wikipedia definition

CHILD CARE, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Once guardianship is established, you can apply for assistance through:

- **DCF:** <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-children-families>
- **DTA** -Dept. of Transitional Assistance: <https://www.mass.gov/economic-assistance-cash-benefits> or 1-800 -445-6604
- **WIC**- Women, Infants & Children: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic> or 1-800-942-1007
- **Social Security:** www.ssa.gov or 1-800-772-1213
- Department of Early Education and Care : <https://www.mass.gov/guides/early-education-and-care-financial-assistance-for-families> or 617-988-6600

HEALTH CARE

In most cases your grandchild will be eligible for health insurance through Mass Health's ***Health Care for All:*** <https://www.hcfama.org/> or 1-800-272-4232.

Information contained in this document has been obtained from the COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN, www.massgrg.com

