

State Profile: Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Judicial Branch is committed to ensuring equal access to the court system for all members of the public, including self-represented litigants, those of limited or no English proficiency, and individuals with mental or physical disabilities. Towards that end, in June, 2009 the Chief Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court and the Trial Court established the Access to Justice Initiative.

The mission of the initiative is to guide and coordinate resources within the Trial Court to broaden access to civil justice for all litigants; to work with judicial leaders in the Trial Court to develop long and short range goals, statewide strategies, and best practices to increase access to justice throughout the Trial Court; and to work with organizations outside of the court to implement access to justice initiatives and protocols.

Since its inception in 2009, the initiative has worked on a number of projects, including the following:

- Developing a [language access plan](#) ;
- Increasing access for limited English proficient (LEP) members of the public by [translating court forms](#) and informational materials, available on the [language access portal](#);
- Providing [self-help information](#) including [videos](#);
- Developing [court service centers](#) to assist the public and self-represented litigants;
- Expanding lawyer for a day programs and [limited assistance representation](#);
- Creating computer-guided interviews for completing court forms;
- Piloting electronic filing of court documents;
- Securing grants to enhance court resources; and
- Standardizing [ADA compliance](#).

Access to Justice is a core value of the Massachusetts Judicial Branch, and is recognized as such by the [Trial Court Strategic Plan](#).

The Trial Court's access to justice initiative works closely with the Massachusetts Access to Justice Commission, thereby institutionalizing connections between the court system, the organized Bar, the civil legal services delivery system, and the Executive Branch.

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