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**Probate and Family Court Department Announces Family Law Workshops
for Mothers and Fathers Involved in Court Actions**

BOSTON, MA – The Administrative Office of the Probate and Family Court Department today announced a new program that will offer free family law workshops to mothers and fathers who are residents of Suffolk County and who are intending to file matters before the court as a way to help families better understand court procedures.

“This new workshop aims to help parents understand the legal process and better navigate the court system,” said Probate and Family Court Chief Justice Angela Ordoñez. “Our goal is to make the court more accessible to everyone by covering the basics of family law and individual assistance, such as how to file a case and prepare for court—and to determine whether hiring a lawyer may help facilitate a positive outcome for your particular case.”

Mothers and fathers will learn the basics of family law, including:

- How to prepare for court and present a case before a judge
- Legal options for filing for and responding to a divorce action and a motion for temporary orders
- Issues for unmarried parents: establishing paternity and filing a paternity action
- Custody agreements and parenting arrangements
- Identifying domestic violence and how to get help

The 90-minute workshops are divided by gender, with mothers attending separate workshops from fathers. One workshop for mothers and one for fathers is available every month from January to June, with the first workshop for mothers on January 16, and the first workshop for fathers on January 30.

The workshops will be held in Boston City Hall from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and are free to residents of Suffolk County, which include residents in the cities and towns of Boston, Revere, Chelsea and Winthrop. No sign-up or pre-registration is required. Child care will not be provided. Questions may be directed to Evelyn Patsos, Esq., at evelyn.patsos@jud.state.ma.us.

Information on lawyer referral services, including limited assistance representation, will be available to workshop participants not currently represented by counsel. Limited assistance representation lets individuals hire a lawyer for a particular issue or portion of their case based on a negotiated rate. Workshop attendees who do not have an attorney will have the opportunity to meet with a volunteer lawyer for a 15-minute consultation.

| Workshop dates for mothers: | Workshop dates for fathers: |
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| January 16 | January 30 |
| February 13 | February 27 |
| March 13 | March 27 |
| April 10 | April 17 |
| May 8 | May 22 |
| June 12 | June 26 |

The Suffolk County Family Court Workshop for Mothers and Fathers is a joint initiative and the result of the Probate and Family Court Department's collaboration with Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson, Volunteer Lawyers Project, Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc., Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts, New England Law | Boston, Suffolk University Law School, Northeastern University School of Law, Harvard Law School, Boston University School of Law, Greater Boston Legal Services, Boston Bar Association, Women's Bar Foundation, Mass. Association of Hispanic Attorneys, Mass. Black Lawyers Association, Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Revenue Child Support Enforcement.

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