



Maine Probate Judge Assembly



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Maine Probate Courts

Probate Courts in Maine are established under Title 4 Chapter 7 of the Maine Revised Statutes. A Probate Judge and a Register of Probate are elected in each county for four-year terms pursuant to Article 6, Section 6 of the Maine Constitution. Probate Courts have existed since Maine became a State in 1820 and existed prior to that when Maine was part of Massachusetts. The Probate Courts operate under the newly enacted Uniform Probate Code MRSA 18-C.

Probate Courts have jurisdiction over wills and the administration of estates of deceased persons. Some estates involve multiple legal issues with complex litigation requiring many trial days and detailed Court Orders prepared by the Judge. No probate courts in Maine have legal assistants; the judges do all of their own research and drafting.

Probate Courts also appoint guardians of minor children and incapacitated adults and appoint conservators to manage their property. Probate Courts handle adoptions of minors and of adults. The Courts also have jurisdiction over legal changes of name.

The Probate Courts in Maine are open and accessible to the public. Probate Judges are on call (including evenings and weekends) to issue orders in the event of an emergency especially for the protection of minor children or incapacitated adults. Many of the petitioners and litigants in the Probate Court are pro se. The counties provide attorneys for indigent participants in disputed cases.

Many of the cases in the Probate Courts involve difficult family situations. These include the death of a parent, child or loved one or the need to appoint a guardian for minor children whose parents are unable to care for their children due to drug addiction or mental health issues. Other situations may involve families struggling with the incapacity of an adult family member due to dementia or other mental health issues.

Probate Courts are funded in the county budgets. Judges, Registers and Probate Court staff are county employees.

Probate Courts have attempted to meet the challenges of Covid-19 with the use of ZOOM or GOOGLE MEET hearings so that there is no backlog of cases. All rules of evidence, all statutory requirements, and all rules of civil procedure must be met when conducting hearings. Probate decisions are subject to appeal to the Law Court.

COUNTY	JUDGE
Androscoggin	Michael Dubois
Aroostook	James Dunleavy
Cumberland	Paul Aranson
Franklin	Margot Joly
Hancock	William Blaisdell
Kennebec	Elizabeth Mitchell
Knox	Carol Emery
Lincoln	William Avantaggio
Oxford	Jarrod Crockett
Penobscot	Amy Faircloth
Piscataquis	Benjamin Cabot
Sagadahoc	David Paris
Somerset	Robert Washburn
Waldo	Sean Ociepka
Washington	Lyman Holmes
York	Scott Houde