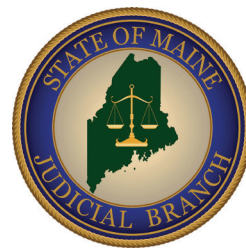


Whether you file your adoption, guardianship, or name change proceeding involving a minor child in a Maine District Court or a county Probate Court will depend on the facts of your case. This pamphlet does not contain legal advice; it contains general information to help you decide where to file your case.



### Judicial Branch Legal Publications and Info

The Judicial Branch offers many guides, pamphlets, videos, and other information to help you learn about the court process and available resources. Visit: [www.courts.maine.gov/help](http://www.courts.maine.gov/help)



To learn more about Adoption, Guardianship & Name Changes visit: [www.courts.maine.gov/courts/family](http://www.courts.maine.gov/courts/family)

## ADOPTIONS, GUARDIANSHIPS, OR NAME CHANGES INVOLVING A MINOR CHILD

### SHOULD I FILE IN DISTRICT COURT OR PROBATE COURT?



Maine Judicial Branch  
Administrative Office of the Courts



## If you answer “YES” to any of the following questions, you likely need to file your case in a **Maine District Court**.

Is there already an open Maine District Court case (filed by you or someone else) that involves the same minor child and one or more of these issues or case types?

- Adoption of the minor child;
- Child protection;
- Divorce;
- Grandparents' visitation;
- Guardianship of the minor child;
- Juvenile;
- Parental rights and responsibilities;
- Parentage; or
- Termination of parental rights in a family matter.

Has a Probate Court in Maine ever transferred a case involving custody or parental rights of the minor child to a Maine District Court? Cases might include:

- Adoption of the minor child;
- Guardianship of the minor child;
- Name change of the minor child; or
- Any other matter involving custody or parental rights of the minor child.

Has a Maine District Court ever issued one of these orders about the minor child?

- Adoption of the minor child;
- Appointment of guardian for the minor child (including a permanency guardian, emergency guardian or interim guardian, but not a guardian ad litem);
- Award of parental rights to a third party (such as a de facto parent); or
- Termination of parental rights.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you file in a Maine District Court, a judge will review your case and decide if it was filed in the correct court. If the judge decides the case needs to go to Probate Court, the District Court will let you know.



### Maine Probate Courts

Every Maine county has its own Probate Court administered at the county government level. Probate Courts handle the estates of deceased and missing persons, trusts, guardianships of incapacitated persons, adult name changes, and, as explained in this pamphlet, some guardianships, adoptions, and name changes of minor children.

The Probate Court website, forms, and contact information for Registers of Probate can be found at:  
[www.maineprobate.net/welcome](http://www.maineprobate.net/welcome)