

Family Law

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Related Services

Family Law
Alimony
Alimony Modification
Child Custody & Visitation
Child Support
Child Support Modification
Divorce
Domestic Violence & Restraining Orders
Prenuptial Agreements

Overview

Family law matters cut to the core of daily life: where your children sleep, how your finances are structured, and whether you feel safe in your own home. These decisions carry consequences that extend well beyond the courtroom, shaping routines, relationships, and financial stability for years. The emotional weight is real. But the legal process rewards clarity and preparation, not reaction.

Cohen Cleary represents individuals and families across Massachusetts and Rhode Island in divorce, custody, child support, alimony, domestic violence protection, and prenuptial planning. Our family law attorneys bring focused experience to each matter, pairing strategic advocacy with the kind of direct, responsive communication that keeps clients grounded when the path forward feels uncertain. Whether the issue is a contested divorce, an urgent protective order, or a complex custody arrangement, we guide families through turbulent times with the discipline and care these cases demand.

Our Family Law Services

Cohen Cleary's family law practice covers the full range of issues that arise when families are in transition. Our attorneys handle:

- **Divorce**, including contested and uncontested proceedings, equitable division of assets, and temporary orders during the pendency of the case
- **Child Custody, Visitation, and Modification**, addressing both legal and physical custody, parenting plans, relocation disputes, and post-judgment modifications when circumstances change
- **Child Support and Paternity**, establishing support obligations and parental rights for married and unmarried parents
- **Child Support Modification**, adjusting existing orders when material changes in income, employment, or family structure warrant court review
- **Alimony**, representing clients seeking or defending against spousal support under the Alimony Reform Act of 2011
- **Alimony Modification**, pursuing or opposing changes to existing alimony orders based on changed circumstances, retirement, or cohabitation
- **Domestic Violence and Restraining Orders**, helping victims obtain Chapter 209A abuse prevention orders and develop safety plans
- **Prenuptial Agreements**, drafting and negotiating agreements that protect assets and set clear expectations before marriage

How Our Family Law Attorneys Help

Family law cases in Massachusetts are governed by the Probate and Family Court, a forum with its own procedural expectations, scheduling realities, and judicial temperament. Our attorneys practice regularly in Bristol, Plymouth, and Norfolk County Probate and Family Courts, and that familiarity shapes how we prepare every case.

We tell our clients that family court judges see hundreds of cases. What distinguishes yours is not volume of paperwork or emotional intensity. It is an organized presentation, credible proposals, and a demonstrated willingness to prioritize the interests of any children involved. We prepare cases with that audience in mind.

For divorce matters, we evaluate the full financial picture early, including assets, debts, income, and future earning capacity, so that settlement discussions and litigation strategy are built on complete information rather than assumptions. In custody disputes, we focus on developing parenting proposals that reflect the child's actual routine and needs, because courts in Massachusetts apply the "best interests of the child" standard, not a presumption of equal time. For clients who need a child support lawyer or an alimony attorney, we ensure that financial claims are grounded in accurate data and positioned within the framework the court applies. For clients facing domestic violence, we move quickly to secure protective orders while coordinating with the broader legal strategy for any related custody, support, or criminal proceedings.

We also handle enforcement and contempt actions when court orders are violated. A family court order is only as effective as the willingness to enforce it, and we ensure that clients who have fought for fair terms can rely on them.

Why Families Choose Cohen Cleary

At Cohen Cleary, our practice teams combine deep subject-matter experience with disciplined execution and responsive client service. We do not take a one-size-fits-all approach. Every matter is handled with careful preparation, clear communication, and a strategy tailored to the client's goals and the realities of the forum.

Clients choose Cohen Cleary because we deliver:

Practice-Focused Legal Experience

Our attorneys work in defined practice areas, allowing us to develop practical insight into the legal, procedural, and regulatory nuances that matter most in each case. This focus allows us to anticipate issues, avoid unnecessary delays, and position matters for efficient resolution.

Clear Guidance and Proactive Communication

We prioritize clarity at every stage. Clients receive straightforward explanations of their options, timely updates on developments, and practical advice grounded in real-world outcomes.

Strategic Advocacy with Trial Readiness

Whether a matter calls for negotiation, mediation, or litigation, our attorneys prepare every case with discipline and foresight. We pursue efficient resolution when possible and are fully prepared to advocate aggressively when necessary to protect our clients' interests.

Regional Knowledge and Local Presence

With offices throughout Massachusetts and experience across New England courts and agencies, we bring local insight and regional reach to every matter.

Client-Centered Service

We treat every matter with urgency and respect. Our clients rely on us for responsive service, sound judgment, and steady counsel through complex legal challenges.

In our family law work, this approach helps clients navigate custody disputes, divorce proceedings, and support matters with clarity, efficiency, and confidence.

Our Approach to Family Law

Pursuing full custody to “win” the divorce often backfires. Massachusetts courts favor stability for the child, and aggressive positioning can signal to a judge that you are not prioritizing co-parenting. We counsel clients to build a strategy around what the court values, not around what feels emotionally satisfying.

That principle applies across all family law matters. We prepare every case for trial but pursue resolution when it serves the client’s long-term interests. Not every case belongs in a courtroom, and not every settlement is a compromise. The goal is a durable outcome that holds up under real-world conditions, not just one that looks favorable on paper.

Serving Families Across Massachusetts and Rhode Island

Cohen Cleary maintains offices in [Taunton](#) and [Plymouth](#), providing convenient access for clients across southeastern Massachusetts and the greater Boston area. As a family lawyer with offices in [Taunton](#) and [Plymouth](#), we serve clients who need a divorce attorney in Massachusetts or a custody lawyer close to home. Our family law attorneys appear regularly in Bristol County, Plymouth County, and Norfolk County Probate and Family Courts, as well as Rhode Island family courts. Because family law is state-specific, our attorneys maintain deep familiarity with the procedural rules, judicial preferences, and local practices that shape outcomes in these forums. This regional presence allows us to serve clients throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island with the local knowledge that matters in family court proceedings.

Schedule a Consultation With a Massachusetts Family Law Attorney

Family law matters require both legal skill and sound judgment. If you are facing a divorce, custody dispute, support issue, or need for a protective order, [contact Cohen Cleary](#) to schedule a consultation. We will review your situation, explain your options, and help you develop a clear strategy for moving forward.

Frequently Asked Questions About Family Law

How long does a divorce take in Massachusetts?

Timelines vary significantly depending on whether the divorce is contested or uncontested. An

uncontested divorce filed as a Joint Petition (1A) can be resolved in a matter of months. Contested divorces (1B) take longer, sometimes a year or more, depending on the complexity of financial issues, custody disputes, and court scheduling in the specific county. Your divorce attorney can provide a realistic timeline after reviewing the facts of your case.

Do Massachusetts courts favor mothers in custody cases?

No. Massachusetts law does not presume that either parent is a better custodian based on gender. Courts apply the “best interests of the child” standard, evaluating factors including each parent’s relationship with the child, living arrangements, stability, and willingness to support the child’s relationship with the other parent. The outcome depends on the specific facts, not assumptions about gender. A custody attorney can help you understand how these factors apply to your situation.

Is everything split 50/50 in a Massachusetts divorce?

Massachusetts follows equitable distribution, not equal distribution. The court considers a range of factors, including the length of the marriage, each spouse’s income and employability, contributions to the marriage (including homemaking), and the needs of any children. The result is a division the court considers fair, which may or may not be a 50/50 split.

What is the difference between legal custody and physical custody?

Legal custody refers to decision-making authority over major aspects of a child’s life, including education, medical care, and religious upbringing. Physical custody refers to where the child lives. Parents can share legal custody while one parent has primary physical custody with a defined parenting schedule for the other. These are separate determinations, and the court addresses each based on the child’s best interests.

Can a family court order be changed after it is finalized?

Yes, under certain circumstances. Custody, child support, and alimony orders can be modified when there has been a material change in circumstances since the original order. Common triggers include significant changes in income, relocation, a child’s changing needs, or cohabitation by a former spouse. The party seeking modification must file a complaint with the court and demonstrate that the change justifies a new order.