

Start Here by Situation

A calm first-step guide for Maine readers who need the next doorway faster than they need a full political pitch.

JT for ME - Maine children and families public-use guide

If safety is the problem right now

- Use the safety lane first. Start with the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence or 211 Maine before reading further into the site.
- Keep the next step concrete: a safe place to stay, a hotline call, a protective-order question, or the safest person to contact next.
- Do not force yourself to organize every document before getting to a safer doorway.

If a court date or hearing is coming up

- Use the Family Hub court-help lane and the family-court prep checklist first.
- Pull out your notice, any existing orders, the date and time, and a short list of the questions you need answered.
- Write down what the next event is called so you can ask better follow-up questions.

If the paperwork is the problem

- Sort what you have into three piles: notices and orders, support or housing papers, and your own timeline notes.
- Use the plain-English terms guide when the vocabulary itself is blocking the next step.
- Use the family call-notes template before calling a clerk, clinic, or lawyer referral line.

If housing pressure is making everything worse

- Use the housing-stability guide, then return to the Family Hub so the family-court lane and the housing lane stay connected.
- Keep rent notices, lease papers, utility shutoff notices, and court papers in the same folder so the pressure can be explained clearly.
- Use the family practical pack when the problem is no longer one agency or one form.

If you need legal help or child-support help

- Use the legal-help and child-support lanes in the Family Hub, not just the general public pages.
- Have names, dates, order numbers, and the shortest accurate timeline you can manage before you call.
- Ask what the next official doorway is, what papers matter most, and what to bring to the next interaction.

If you need the bigger public record

- Families under pressure should start with practical help first. After that, use the dashboard, evidence center, and briefs to see the broader public record.

- Reporters, officials, and skeptical readers should generally use the dashboard first, then sources and packets.
- The initiative lane is protected. Use it when you specifically need the bill materials, not as the first stop for a family in immediate strain.

This guide is for orientation and organization. It is not legal advice and should not replace urgent safety planning or case-specific legal counsel.