

## **Working in Cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General**

The Attorney General Office (AGO) provides grants to a statewide network of nineteen Local Consumer Programs, including ours in Hampshire and Franklin Counties. These nonprofit programs handle many consumer complaints in their own regions of the state where their local knowledge and community involvement enable them to provide effective assistance to consumers, allowing the Attorney General's Office to focus on statewide patterns of deceptive and unfair trade practices and on more complex complaints.

The Local Consumer Programs (LCP) provide information to callers concerning state and federal consumer protection laws. In addition, they offer free voluntary phone-based mediation services to consumers who have filed complaints concerning problems they may have encountered with businesses. They have received over 10,000 written complaints each year. They report a successful resolution in seventy to eighty percent of their cases.

For more information, visit:

**[NorthwesternDA.org](http://NorthwesternDA.org)**



Janice Garrett - Director of Consumer Protection Division and Case Coordinator  
Caroline Smith talking to a consumer at  
Forbes Library in Northampton.

If you would like information about your rights and responsibilities before you make a purchase or if you're not able to resolve a problem that you have with a company, please call the Consumer Protection Unit at:

**Hampshire County (413) 586-9225**

or

**Franklin County (413) 774-3186**

or

**[NorthwesternDA.org](http://NorthwesternDA.org)**

## **Consumer Protection Division**

**Office of Northwestern  
District Attorney  
David E. Sullivan**



**13 Conway Street  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
413-774-3186**

**One Gleason Plaza  
Northampton, MA 01060  
413-586-9225**

**[NorthwesternDA.org](http://NorthwesternDA.org)**

## Consumer Protection Laws What Are They?

The Consumer Protection Laws are designed to ensure fair trade competition and the free flow of truthful information in the marketplace. These laws are designed to prevent businesses that engage in unfair practices from gaining an advantage over competitors. Consumer Protection Laws are a form of government regulations which aim to protect the rights of the consumers.

## Consumer Protection Division

The Consumer Protection Division is one of nineteen local consumer programs throughout the Commonwealth, working in cooperation with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.

Consumer protection staff are trained to mediate complaints through an informal process involving letters and telephone calls from the consumer and the business, in an effort to reach a mutually agreeable settlement.

If consumer protection staff are unable to resolve your complaint, staff members will discuss the option of redress through small claims court, face-to-face mediation or a private attorney.

## Understand Your Rights

Consumer protection staff will assist consumers with consumer issues in the following areas:

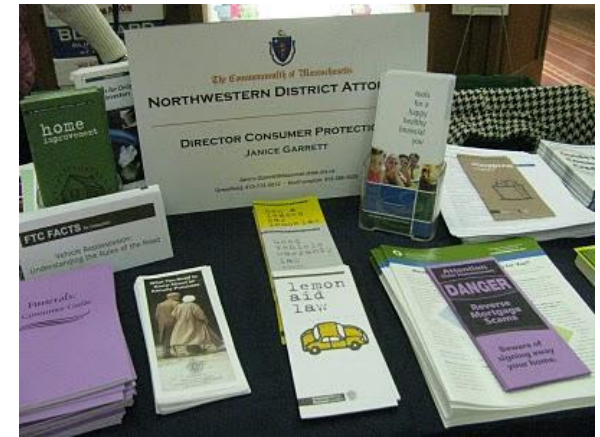
- New and Used Automobiles Purchases
- Home Improvement
- Shopping Rights
- Credit and Debt Issues
- Landlord/Tenant Rights
- Identity Theft
- Auto Repair
- Internet Sales
- Telemarketing
- Scams
- Fake Cashier Checks

## To File a Complaint

1. File a complaint on line at [NorthwesternDA.org](http://NorthwesternDA.org)
2. Call our office in Hampshire County at 413-586-9225 and in Franklin County at 413-774-3186
3. Please include your complete address and a telephone number where you can be reached during the day
4. Be sure to attach copies of any documentation that may be relevant to evaluating your complaints

## What Else Should I Know?

If your complaint is suitable for mediation, the mediator will contact both you and the business or individuals with whom you are having a dispute and attempt to mediate your problem.



## Outreach and Education

The Consumer Protection Division is available to speak to your group about consumer rights. We can present consumer information to assist consumers in resolving their own consumer-business problem.

**We'll fight for your  
consumer rights!**