

Legal Advocacy Services

Court Accompaniment

Legal advocates provide free, confidential assistance to survivors (plaintiffs) in the restraining order process and referrals for resources, including victim compensation and other SAFE in Hunterdon services. They also accompany survivors to family court for other legal proceedings as requested by appointment. All legal advocacy services are also provided to Spanish-speaking clients.

Legal Representation

The legal advocates screen for eligibility for further legal services such as:

Counsel for Victim Services—is the SAFE in Hunterdon's attorney who can represent plaintiffs for free at FRO hearings and other family matters.

Legal Services of North West New Jersey—is a non-profit agency with a Hunterdon County office that may provide an attorney to represent plaintiffs at FRO hearings and other family matters. Financial eligibility restrictions apply.

SAFE's Legal HAVEN—a program through which attorneys in private practice choose to represent plaintiffs at FRO hearings. A sliding scale fee may be used.

Who is a domestic violence victim ?

A person protected by the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act includes any person:

- A.** who is 18 years of age or older, or who is an emancipated minor, and who has been subjected to domestic violence by a:
- spouse
 - former spouse
 - any other person who is a present or former household member, or
- B.** who, regardless of age, has been subjected to domestic violence by a person:
- with whom the victim has a child in common, or
 - with whom the victim anticipates having a child in common, if one of the parties is pregnant, or
- C.** who, regardless of age, has been subjected to domestic violence by a person with whom the victim has had a dating relationship.

These services are funded in part by a grant awarded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Victim Assistance Grant (VAG), and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).



Legal Advocacy



Legal information, representation, referrals, and support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and dating violence.

24 hour Hotline Numbers

Local Hotline: 908-788-4044

Toll-free Hotline: 1-888-988-4033

Texting Hotline: 908-455-2927

Main office: (908) 788-7666

Fax: (908) 806-4725

www.safeinhunterdon.org
agency@safeinhunterdon.org

What is domestic violence?

Although a restraining order can only be granted by a judge after hearing each individual situation, SAFE in Hunterdon recognizes that domestic violence is any behavior or action that makes one feel threatened, controlled, or unsafe. These behaviors can include:

- Physical or sexual violence
- Intimidation and coercion
- Isolation from friends and family
- Verbal abuse or harassment
- Threats against you or loved ones
- Creating disturbances at work or school
- Economic control
- Harassing telephone calls/text messages
- Spying/stalking
- Using social media against you
- Child abuse
- Destruction of property or pets
- Extreme jealousy

What is sexual violence?

SAFE in Hunterdon also identifies sexual violence as being manipulated, coerced, threatened, quitted or forced into engaging in any unwanted sexual activity. These behaviors can include:

- Sexual harassment
- Unwanted touching
- Someone slips something into your drink and sexually assaults you
- Child sexual abuse
- Sexual assault

What is a temporary restraining order (TRO)?

If you feel that you are a victim of domestic violence and your incident of abuse occurred outside normal business hours, call 911 or your local police immediately.

Request instructions on obtaining a TRO. If your incident of abuse occurred during normal business hours, go to the Hunterdon County Justice Center (court house). Once there, go to the Family Division located on the first floor. Here, you will meet with a representative of the court who will take your information. You will meet with either a judge or hearing officer to explain what happened. He/she will determine whether to grant you a TRO.

-The TRO process involves only the plaintiff testifying.

-A judge or hearing officer is the only person who can determine if you will be granted a TRO.

-A TRO offers temporary protection. You will be given a court return date for the final hearing.

For court accompaniment by a legal advocate from our agency, please call 908-788-7666.

What is a final restraining order (FRO)?

In the State of New Jersey, a FRO offers lifetime protection, unless the plaintiff dismisses it.

At a FRO hearing, both parties will have a chance to testify before a judge, which means the person you seek a FRO from will be present.

The judge, and only the judge, will determine whether or not a FRO is granted.

Provisions can be requested in a FRO, such as possession of the house, temporary custody of children, ongoing financial support, emergency expenses, retrieval of belongings, parenting time, psychological/substance abuse evaluations, batterers intervention program, and risk assessments.

Carry your restraining order with you at all times. Keep a copy at your home, place of employment, frequently visited locations, local police department, and children's school.

In order for a restraining order to be enforced, you must call the police.