



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Courts Launch Outreach Campaign to Help Stop Abuse

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania courts today launched a “stop abuse” outreach campaign in English and Spanish to educate victims of abuse that protection orders are an option to help stop their abuse.

“Courts play an important role in helping to keep a victim, and the victim’s family, safe from future abuse through protective orders,” said Tom Darr, Court Administrator of Pennsylvania. “Protective orders are free and more importantly, the court order signed by a judge outlines rules for the defendant.”

Protection orders may tell the defendant he or she cannot have any contact with the victim – and may also prohibit other contact through texting, calling, emailing and social media. If the defendant violates the rules in the protection order, he or she may be arrested.

The goal of the outreach campaign is to help victims more easily navigate the process of filing protection orders. The campaign includes digital ads running on Facebook, Instagram and Google, pointing users to detailed [step-by-step videos](#) available in both English and Spanish on how to file protection orders. The outreach campaign is funded by the federal STOP Grant program (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors Violence Against Women) administered through the U.S Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women.

Produced by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, the videos prepare victims for what to expect when they file a protection order by offering a detailed description of each step involved in the filing process:

1. Fill out a petition
2. Review petition with a judge
3. Judge grants/denies temporary order
4. Attend final hearing to obtain final order

Court staff can help people who have trouble speaking, hearing or understanding English, and many [bilingual forms](#) are available.

Domestic violence is a crime that typically occurs within a family or an intimate relationship as a way for one person to control another and may include physical abuse such as hitting, kicking,

choking, shoving, not allowing someone to leave home or using objects like knives and guns to cause injury. It also includes harming someone emotionally by threats, name-calling and put-downs.

Many victims of abuse either are not aware that protection orders exist as an option to help end their abuse, or they are intimidated by the process. By educating the public, the courts hope that victims of abuse gain the knowledge and confidence to seek the help they need.

To view the stop abuse campaign, visit the PA courts [Facebook page](#), or visit pacourts.us/learn.

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Editor's note:

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), part of the United States Department of Justice, administers the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and ensuing legislation to provide national leadership on issues of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. The STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program is a federal program administered through OVW that provides grant money to states and territories. The Office of Victims' Services (OVS) within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) administers the STOP grant. The focus of the program is to assist local communities develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women and develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women.