



## **Domestic Violence assistance during the COVID-19 emergency**

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**If you would like assistance, Neighborhood Legal Services is here to help you. Call 1-888-869-6576.**

Are you or your loved ones currently experiencing verbal, emotional, or physical domestic violence while being told to stay home during PAUSE NY? Help is still available and New York State is trying to make help more accessible during these trying times.

If you need help right away, call or text 911.

**You can text or call a counselor if you just want to chat.**

New York State has also created a new text program and confidential online service to make it easier for individuals experiencing domestic violence to contact an expert at the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and get the help they need. New Yorkers seeking help can text (844) 997-2121, or call (800) 942-6906, or chat with a professional on the confidential website at [www.opdv.ny.gov](http://www.opdv.ny.gov). The text, online, and telephone services are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with OPDV staff who are experts in the area of domestic violence. There is no charge for this service.

### **What if I need an Order of Protection?**

Are you seeking an Order of Protection from the court? New York State Supreme and Family Courts are currently physically closed to the public for “non-essential” matters. If you or your family members are currently facing violence in the home, you may still file a petition with the court for an order of protection. The courts are still accepting emergency family offence petitions and requests for emergency orders of protection. The Court will determine if the petition qualifies as an essential or emergency matter. If so, it will issue a *Temporary* Order of Protection. Otherwise, it will hold it until the Courts reopen or return it to you with instructions to refile. There is no charge for filing a petition with the Family Court.

If you need assistance in drafting your petition to request an order of protection, there are resources in your county that you may contact:

<p><b>Erie County</b></p> <p>Family Justice Center (716) 558-SAFE (7233)</p> <p>Haven House (716) 884-6000</p>	<p><b>Niagara County</b></p> <p>Family Justice Center (716) 558-SAFE (7233)</p> <p>YWCA of Niagara County (716) 433-6716</p>	<p><b>Genesee County</b></p> <p>YWCA of Genesee County (585) 343-5808</p>
<p><b>Orleans County</b></p> <p>Orleans County Department of Social Services Domestic Violence Unit (585)-589-7000</p>	<p><b>Wyoming County</b></p> <p>RESTORE of Wyoming County (585) 786-5450</p>	

These agencies will review your situation and advise you on how best to address the domestic violence in your home. Please be advised that your advocate may advise you that your petition might not be accepted by the court at this time – this does not mean that your situation is any less serious and you should continue to document the situation. You may be able to file later on with additional supporting information.

If you wish to seek assistance directly from the courts, you may call your local family court directly for instructions on how to file your petition:

<p><b>Erie County Family Court</b></p> <p>(716) 845-7400</p>	<p><b>Niagara County Family Court</b></p> <p>Niagara Falls: (716) 371-4050 Lockport: (716) 280-6500</p>	<p><b>Genesee County Family Court</b></p> <p>(585) 201-5717</p>
<p><b>Orleans County Family Court</b></p> <p>(585) 283-6622</p>	<p><b>Wyoming County Family Court</b></p> <p>(585) 228-3200</p>	

Once your petition has been accepted by the court for processing, your proceedings will be handled remotely, either by video conference or by telephone conference, depending on technical capabilities.

### **What if I already have an Order of Protection?**

If you already have a temporary order of protection against your abuser that was scheduled to expire on or after March 19, 2020, the State has automatically extended your order of protection under the same terms and conditions until the date your court proceedings are rescheduled, unless the judge who issued the order issues a new order that specifically terminates or modifies the order sooner. Otherwise, your order is automatically extended without you having to do anything.

### **What if my spouse, partner, or family member is violating my Order of Protection?**

To report a violation of the order of protection, either temporary or final, contact local law enforcement or, for emergencies, call or text 911. You may also file a petition for violation with the Court.