

MEDIA ADVISORY

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e-filing process for restraining orders begins immediately

New process allows domestic violence survivors to file for restraining orders despite Governor Evers' safer-at-home order

MILWAUKEE, March 23, 2020 – To safeguard against the spread of COVID-19, people seeking temporary restraining orders (TRO) must file electronically, effective immediately. Assistance is available to help with the new filing process.

For assistance filing a restraining order, call Sojourner at (414) 278-5079. Leave a message that includes your full name and a safe call-back number. An Advocate will return your call between 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday - Friday to assist with filing a temporary restraining order online.

For people who already have filed a restraining order and have an upcoming hearing date, plan to appear at the Milwaukee County Courthouse, Room 712 on the 7th Floor, at the time indicated on the temporary restraining order paperwork received upon filing. Advocates will attend hearings by phone. Failure to appear to the hearing will result in a dismissal of the order.

A restraining order is a court order against someone who has abused or harassed another person. The person is ordered either not to abuse or not to have contact with the petitioner. A restraining order does not guarantee safety.

“For many people, initiating a court order can be a complex, confusing process,” said Carmen Pitre, President and CEO of Sojourner. “Filing a restraining order can be especially challenging for survivors of domestic violence who may feel intimidated or frightened for their safety. It’s important that survivors connect with us so we can help them understand unfamiliar terminology, navigate the legal process and discuss safety planning.”

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Sojourner began helping survivors of domestic violence with restraining orders in 1985.

“Our Advocates help with the filing process and discuss other strategies and options for staying safe,” said Pitre. “If needed, our Advocates can help prepare to present a case to the court and offer moral support. We also can participate in hearings by phone, if needed. We’re constantly seeking ways to meet survivors’ needs – especially as we work through challenges related to COVID-19.”

In 2019, Sojourner staff helped 4,380 people seeking restraining orders with advocacy and support. Advocates are not lawyers and cannot speak on a survivor’s behalf. For more information about restraining orders and how Sojourner can help, visit <https://familypeacecenter.org/resources/legal-resources/> or call (414) 278-5079.

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About Sojourner

The mission of Sojourner is to transform lives impacted by domestic violence. Sojourner provides crisis housing, system advocacy and individual support. Sojourner is the largest provider of domestic violence prevention and intervention services in Wisconsin, serving more than 11,800 clients annually. Our primary goals are to ensure the safety of victims of family violence and to provide a pathway out of violence for victims and abusers through opportunities to make positive and lasting changes for themselves and their children. Sojourner is committed to creating communities where people live peacefully. For more information, visit www.familypeacecenter.org. Sojourner 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline: (414) 933-2722.