

# PROTECTION FROM ABUSE IN PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

**If someone is abusing you or someone in your household, this brochure can help you understand how to seek protection from abuse in Philadelphia Family Court.**

## WHAT IS ABUSE?

State law defines abuse as:

- Attempting or causing physical injury
- Placing another in fear of bodily injury
- Sexual assault
- False Imprisonment
- Stalking

## WHAT PROTECTION DOES THE LAW OFFER?

The law permits a court to issue a **Protection From Abuse Order (PFA)** directing the defendant to:

- Not abuse, threaten, harass or stalk
- Stay away from the victim's residence, even if it also the abuser's residence
- Stay away from the victim, including at school or work
- Turn over weapons to the police

The order can also include:

- Temporary child custody
- Temporary child support
- Payments to the victim for losses
- Plaintiff's counsel fees

## HOW LONG DOES A PFA LAST?

A PFA can be issued for up to 36 months. The PFA can sometimes be extended for additional time after a petition is filed and a hearing held as described above (for example, if there has been additional abuse after the order was entered).

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A PFA ORDER?

A PFA Order is available to anyone abused by a:

- Current or former spouse
- Parent
- Child
- Current or former sexual or intimate partner, including same sex partners, such as a boyfriend/girlfriend or father/mother of your children
- Others related by blood or marriage

## WHERE DOES ONE FILE FOR A PFA ORDER?

Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., a petition for a PFA can be filed free of charge in the Domestic Violence Intake Unit in Room 242 of the Family Court at 34 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia.

The Unit will provide assistance in preparing and filing the necessary papers to those who do not have legal representation. Language interpretation services are available at the filing unit and at the hearing. To request an interpreter for your hearing, fill out the Interpreter Request Form at the filing unit.

You should go as early as possible and be prepared to wait your turn. Information is available by telephone 24 hours a day at 215-686-3511.

## IS HELP AVAILABLE AT NIGHT, ON WEEKENDS OR HOLIDAYS?

In an emergency, when the Family Court is closed, a request for an emergency PFA order can be made at the Criminal Justice Center, Room B-03 at 1301 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, PA (215-683-7280).

No fee is required to file. If the petition is approved, a master will issue an emergency order which will last only until 5 p.m. on the next day that Family Court is open, at which time the Family Court may issue a temporary order.

Anyone who receives an emergency PFA order when Family Court is closed should call Family Court on the next business day at 215-686-3512 to receive instructions for obtaining a copy of the temporary order if one has been issued. If you are denied an emergency order, you may go to the Domestic Violence Intake Unit in Room 242 of Family Court at 34 S. 11th Street Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. for assistance.

## WHO MAY FILE IN PHILADELPHIA?

A PFA action may be filed in Philadelphia County if it is the county in which:

- the plaintiff lives or is employed, or
- the defendant may be served, or
- the abuse occurred.

If possession of the residence to the exclusion of the defendant is requested, the action must be filed in the county where the residence is located.

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## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PETITION FOR A PFA IS FILED?

Soon after the petition is filed, a judge will review it and determine whether a temporary order should be issued. A hearing will be held within 10 days to determine whether to grant a final PFA.

The Temporary Order, Petition, and Notice to Appear must be served on the defendant. The petitioner may serve it or have a responsible adult serve it, including the police. We suggest you ask the police to serve it for you. **Go to the hearing even if the defendant has not been served with the papers.**

## WHAT HAPPENS AT THE COURT HEARING?

The judge will listen to both parties and decide whether to issue a final order. The parties will also be given an opportunity to reach an agreement on the order.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE HEARING?

- You can hire an attorney to represent you.
- A domestic violence counselor may assist you.
- You will be expected to testify about the facts in your petition.
- You can bring written evidence, such as medical records or photos of injuries.
- You can bring eyewitnesses to alleged incidents of abuse to testify.
- Witnesses must present a subpoena to be admitted to the court. Ask any domestic violence counselor or court employee at 34 S. 11th Street where to get a subpoena. Give your witness the subpoena before the date of the hearing and tell him or her to show it to the security guard upon entering the courthouse. You may want to prepare and bring with you a list of questions to ask your witnesses.

**This brochure is meant to give you general information and not legal advice.**

## HOW IS THE PFA ENFORCED?

It is a crime to violate a PFA. The police should be called immediately. The District Attorney is responsible for prosecuting anyone who is arrested for violating a PFA. You may also file a petition for contempt in Room 242 of the Family Court located at 34 S. 11th Street. After the petition is filed, a hearing will be scheduled within ten days. If a judge finds the defendant guilty of violating the PFA, the defendant can be sentenced to prison for up to 6 months and/or fined up to \$1000.

## IS HELP AVAILABLE?

**PHILADELPHIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE**  
**1-866-SAFE 014      1-866-723-3014**

**Legal representation may be available from:**  
**WOMEN AGAINST ABUSE LEGAL CENTER**  
215-686-7082

**PHILADELPHIA LEGAL ASSISTANCE**  
215-981-3800

**SENIORLAW CENTER**  
215-988-1244

**CENTER FOR LESBIAN AND GAY CIVIL RIGHTS**  
215-731-1447

**LEGAL CLINIC FOR THE DISABLED**  
215-587-3350

**PHILADELPHIA BAR ASSOCIATION LAWYER REFERRAL AND INFORMATION SERVICE**  
215-238-6333

**Other Important Numbers:**  
**WOMEN IN TRANSITION**  
215-426-8610 Counseling

**LUTHERAN SETTLEMENT HOUSE**  
215-739-9999

**CONGRESO DE LATINOS UNIDOS**  
215-291-8742; 1-800-575-0028

**SEWAA** (for women from Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India) 215-627-3922

**KOREAN WOMEN'S CENTER**  
215-869-5703

**WOMEN'S LAW PROJECT**  
215-928-9801 Telephone Counseling

**IF YOU ARE IN DANGER, CALL 911**

# PROTECTION FROM ABUSE RESOURCE LIST

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## COURT ASSISTANCE

### **Protection from Abuse**

FAMILY COURT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT

34 South 11th Street, Room 242

**215-686-3511, 3512 and 3513**

*Opens at 8:00 AM - 5 PM Monday through Friday  
[first come first served]*

### **Emergency Protection From Abuse Site**

Criminal Justice Center, Room B-03

1301 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, PA.

**215-683-7280**

*Open when Family Court is closed: Evenings, Weekends & Holidays*

### **D.A.'s Office, Private Criminal Complaints**

34 South 11th Street, 6th Floor

**215 686-9863, 9864 and 9865**

*Opens at 9:00 AM - Monday through Friday*

### **Office of Parole and Probation**

County Office - **215 683-1000**

State Office - **215 560-2453**

*Have abuser's correct name, birth date, address [and police photo number]*

### **Complaints against abusive adolescents (Ages 10-17):**

Criminal Complaint Unit

1801 Vine Street, Room 233

**215-686-8370** [voicemail]

*Walk-ins between 1:30 PM and 3:30 PM ONLY!*

*Must have alleged offender's correct name, address and age*

### **Custody and Visitation**

34 South 11th Street, Room M-6

**215-686-9100**

**Small Claims Court**--To file for recovery of personal property.

34 S. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Room 500

**(215) 687-7987**

## HOTLINES

### **Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline**

24-hour hotline offering bilingual services to victims of domestic violence, including crisis intervention and referrals.

**866-723-3014**

### **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

24-hour hotline offering advocacy, crisis intervention and referrals.

**1-800-799-7233, TTY 1-800-878-3224**

### **Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR)**

100 N. 17th Street

Counseling and information about sexual assault.

**215-985-3333**

### **Childline**

To report child abuse or neglect

**800-932-0313**

## EMERGENCY SHELTERS

### **Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline**

Call for shelter with confidential address for abused women & their children. Call also for information on shelters outside of Philadelphia.

**866-723-3014**

### **Intake & Social Services for Women, Families & Couples**

Salvation Army - Eliza Shirley House

1320 Arch Street

**215-568-5113**

### **Intake and Social Services for Men**

24-hour reception

1360 Ridge Avenue

**215-236-0909**

### **Intake & Social Services for Women, Families & Couples**

Office of Services to the Homeless and Adults

141 N. Juniper Street

**215-686-7150/52** (Weekdays 8 am – 4 pm)

Office of Emergency Shelter and Services

**215-686-7190**

## **DISTRICT ATTORNEY SERVICES**

### **Family Violence and Sexual Assault Unit**

Answers questions about specific criminal cases when provided with the MC number and the defendant's name.

1421 Arch St.  
**(215) 686-8096**

### **Private Criminal Complaint Unit**

To open a private criminal case against another party. M-F 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

34 S. 11<sup>th</sup> St., 6<sup>th</sup> floor

**(215) 686-9863**

*Complainant MUST have accused's full name and address (home or work.)*

## **DEFENDER SERVICES**

### **Defender Association of Philadelphia**

Defends low income clients in criminal cases.

1441 Sansom Street

**(215) 568-3190**

### **National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women**

Legal advocacy and advice for battered women accused of crimes

**215-351-0010**

**800-903-0111 ext. 3**

## **LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

### **Women Against Abuse Legal Center**

Legal assistance and representation, or court accompaniment for domestic violence, child support and child custody

Land Title Building, 100 S. Broad St., 5th Floor

**215-686-7082**

### **Philadelphia Legal Assistance**

Legal assistance and representation for domestic violence, child support, child custody, divorce, unemployment, bankruptcy & public benefits

42 S. 15th St., Suite 500

**215-981-3800**

### **Community Legal Services**

Legal assistance and representation for DHS involved family law, housing, utilities, mortgages, loans and consumer scams, employment and public benefits

1424 Chestnut Street 215-981-3700

3638 N. Broad Street 215-227-2400

### **Temple Legal Aid**

1719 North Broad St., Suite 101

**215-204-1800** (various legal services)

### **Women's Law Project**

Legal information on domestic violence, custody, support & divorce (Telephone consultation only, NO REPRESENTATION)

**215-928-9801**

### **Lawyer Referral & Information Service**

(not a free service)

**215-238-6333**

## **Specialized Legal Resources**

### **Equality Advocates**

215-731-1447 ext. 15; 866-LGBT-LAW

### **HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia**

2100 Arch Street, 3rd Floor

**215-832-0900**

### **Homeless Advocacy Project**

Civil legal services to homeless families and individuals

42 South 15<sup>th</sup> Street

**215-523-9595**

### **Legal Clinic for the Disabled, Inc.**

1513 Race Street

215-587-3350; TTY 215-587-352

### **Nationalities Service Center**

1216 Arch St., 4th Floor

**215 893-8400**

### **Senior Law Center (formerly Judicare)**

Free for Philadelphia residents 60 & over  
Representation for PFA's/economic abuse

100 S. Broad St., Ste. 1810

215 988-1244

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES**

### **Community Behavioral Health/ Office of Behavioral Health**

Provides access to adult, child, and adolescent mental health and substance abuse services for all Philadelphians on Medical Assistance (MA), including access to Crisis Response Centers  
**1-888-545-2600** (24 hours/day, 7 days/week)

**Alcoholics Anonymous**  
**215-923-7900**

**Narcotics Anonymous**  
**215-440-8400**

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

**Lutheran Settlement House  
Bilingual Domestic Violence Program**  
Individual counseling & support groups for English- and Spanish-speaking women and men  
**215-426-8610**

**Congreso de Latinos Unidos  
Latina Domestic Violence Program**  
Counseling and support for English- and Spanish-speaking women and children  
**215-763-8870**

**Women In Transition**  
Domestic violence and/or substance abuse counseling for women.  
**215-751-1111**

**Children's Crisis Treatment Center**  
Evaluations and ongoing therapy for children  
1823 Callowhill Street  
**215-496-0707**

**Anti-Violence Partnership**  
Therapy for children who have witnessed domestic violence  
**215-567-6776**

**Menergy**  
Counseling for abusive partners  
**215-242-2235** Men  
**215-439-1380** Women  
**267-625-6135** Spanish

**Men's Resource Center**  
Counseling for abusive partners  
**215-564-0488**

**Mazzoni Center**  
Domestic abuse counseling for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning individuals  
**215-563-0652**

**Transgender Health Action Coalition**  
Counseling for transgendered clients, 24 hour hotline, and referrals  
1201 Locust Street  
**24 hour hotline: 215-732-1207**

## **HOUSING**

**Philadelphia Housing Authority**  
To apply for Section 8 or Public Housing  
712 N. 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
**215-684-4452**

## **IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE**

### **Nationalities Service Center**

Adult education, job training, ESL classes, citizenship classes, health and social services and legal services.

1216 Arch St., 4th Floor

**215 893-8400**

### **Catholic Social Services**

222 N. 17th St., 4th Floor

Domestic violence, immigration, asylum, and citizenship

**215 587-3900**

**215 854-7019** Immigration and Refugee Services

### **HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia**

Legal services, adult education, job training, citizenship classes

1300 Spruce St.

**215-832-0900**

## **ELDERLY**

### **Philadelphia Corporation for Aging**

Report neglect, physical or financial abuse of elders

**215 765-9033**

**215 765-9041 (TDD)**

### **CARIE Line**

Free telephone and online consultation service providing information and resolving problems for older adults

9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

**215 545-5728**

**800-356-3606**

## **TEENAGERS**

### **Covenant House Crisis Shelter**

Emergency shelter for homeless and runaway youth

31-43 East Armat Street

Philadelphia, PA 19144

**215-951-5411**

24 Hour PA Hotline **1-888-829-1249**

### **Voyage House, Inc**

4820 Chester Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19143

Counseling for sexually abused girls

Food cupboard

**215-545-2910**

### **The Attic Youth Center**

255 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

Counseling for LGBT youth

**215-545-4331**

### **Youth Emergency Service**

Shelter and counseling

1526 Fairmount Ave.

**215 787-0633**