



NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES

Because Justice is for All

The court has continued all “final” PFA hearings due to the current Covid-19 pandemic. NLS attorneys and our PFA law students are helping each PFA petitioner prepare their petition over the telephone for presentation to the Court. Anyone granted a Temporary Order of Protection is either assigned to NLS, the Women’s Center and Shelter, or private counsel. Because the final hearings are not being scheduled on a date certain, we have chosen to keep the cases as opposed to trying to assign them to pro bono attorneys who may or may not be able to handle the case on the date they ultimately get scheduled by the court. We cannot be certain that any case assigned to a pro bono attorney will ultimately be handled by the same attorney given the uncertainty. This can put victims in the position of telling their story to multiple attorneys. We certainly do not want to create this kind of confusion and additional stress for these victims. However, we are still going to need help once all the existing PFA’s get scheduled for the final hearings. We expect that the court will want to move these cases quickly and that there will be numerous cases scheduled on any given day.

The help we are requesting of you in the month or so after the Court reopens comes in the form of helping us negotiate and/or continue the cases should service still be an issue. If you can sign up to take a morning to come up and help our attorneys, we would email you one or two client Petitions and Temporary Orders before the date of the final hearing. You do not need to talk to nor interview the client prior to the day of the hearing. If you can negotiate a settlement or continue the matter that morning, your work is done. If a hearing is required, NLS staff will take the case back. Your triage, analysis, and negotiation skills will help to process cases in an efficient manner benefiting both the court, the litigants, and the NLS attorneys! If you are willing to help us in this manner, please contact Mary Ann Troper Malley at troperma@nlsa.us or call her at (412) 586-6134 so she can get you on the calendar for a date or dates in the month of June – at least we “think” this will be when hearings start getting set up. If the court’s order gets extended, we would simply ask you to choose another date.

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