



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Remote Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program Expands to Harrison County

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CLARKSBURG, W.Va. – Harrison County is the latest county to offer a way for domestic violence and sexual assault victims to seek justice without having to be in the same room with those they allege caused or threatened them harm.

The media and the public are invited to attend an event explaining the Harrison County Remote Victim Outreach Program at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 15, in the courtroom of Eighteenth Family Court Circuit (Doddridge and Harrison Counties) Judge Lori B. Jackson in the Harrison County Courthouse, 306 Washington Ave., in Clarksburg.

Previously, victims of domestic violence and sexual assault had to go in person to magistrate court to file petitions for domestic violence protective orders or personal safety orders, and they had to attend follow-up hearings in magistrate court and family court in person. The new program gives them the option of filing petitions and participating in court hearings remotely from HOPE, Inc.

HOPE, Inc., will host remote court sessions from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays and can be contacted during those hours at (304) 624-9835. At other times, the agency has a 24-hour hotline: (304) 367-1100.

Employees of HOPE, Inc., will appear remotely at the Aug. 15 event to demonstrate how the program will work.

The addition of Harrison County brings the total number of counties participating in the Remote Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Outreach Program to nine. The other active counties are Cabell, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Mason, Ohio, Wayne, and Wood.

A person who used the program in another county shared her thoughts: “When I found out about the option provided at the Sexual Assault Help Center where I could participate virtually, my anxiety was significantly reduced, and I finally felt like I can do this, and things will get better. I’m very appreciative that this virtual option is available for individuals facing the unthinkable.”

Petitions can still be filed during weekdays, after hours, and on weekends through each county’s magistrate court by calling 911. Magistrates are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week in every West Virginia county.

“This program allows us to make our court system more accessible by allowing victims to seek the protection of the courts in a safe and less intimidating setting. At the same time, those accused of domestic violence will still have the right to face their accusers through remote technology,” said Supreme Court Chief Justice Tim Armstead.

“We will continue to look for opportunities to expand this service throughout West Virginia,” Chief Justice Armstead said.

The Remote Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Outreach Program is made possible by grant funding through West Virginia’s Division of Justice and Community Services and the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services.

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