

MARYLAND STATE

LGBTQ Domestic Violence Law

For Advocates, Attorneys, and Survivors

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This guide intends to provide introductory legal information about Maryland State laws impacting LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence and their families. Many LGBTQ people and their families have experienced discrimination, mistreatment and violence within the legal system or when seeking legal remedies. Based on these experiences, LGBTQ survivors often feel apprehension, mistrust, or even fear when interacting with law enforcement or the court system. These challenges, combined with a constantly shifting legal landscape for LGBTQ families and communities, require ongoing education and critical analysis among advocates in order to provide the most effective legal advocacy.

Laws impacting LGBTQ communities change frequently. In the back of this guide, you will find resources for additional information and up to date changes in this evolving area of the law.

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Tips for Advocates

Asking questions is one way that advocates can help clarify a survivor's legal questions and concerns. It can also help us direct survivors to the most relevant information, resources, and referrals. Staying mindful of the language we use is an important aspect of our advocacy skill-set when we ask questions about a survivor's relationships, values, and choices, and this is particularly true for LGBTQ survivors. Many LGBTQ people feel sensitive to being treated differently, or subjected to additional scrutiny than heterosexual survivors, so it will be helpful to clarify why we are asking these questions during the interview or assessment process. **The way we frame our questions and convey information often impacts how a survivor experiences our advocacy efforts.** Before asking questions, it can be helpful to explain why we are asking – as advocates, we are hoping to help identify the best information and resources and increase their self-determination. Sample advocacy questions are provided throughout this document as a jumping off point to support you in gathering information in a culturally meaningful and sensitive manner.

Gathering Documents

Gathering documentation is helpful to any legal process, including filing for a protection order, beginning the process of dissolution, making a parenting plan, or making a discrimination-related complaint. Gathering documentation is also a good way for anyone to prepare for visiting a legal clinic, meeting with an attorney, or safety planning to leave an abusive relationship.

Relevant documents may include:

- Certificates of marriage, domestic partnership, or civil union
- Legal documents established in a relationship (advanced directives, power of attorney, wills, etc.)
- Birth certificate(s) of child(ren), adoption paperwork, etc.
- Police reports, protection orders, etc.
- Court orders
- Relevant medical records
- Photos
- Journals detailing abuse or relationship changes
- Bills, bank statements, etc.

Relationship Status

The availability of legal protection from domestic violence in Maryland is not limited to married couples or couples that have some other form of legally recognized relationship status. Nevertheless, whether a person is in a legally recognized relationship with their alleged abuser is relevant to many issues in the context of intimate partner violence.

In Maryland, as of January 1, 2013, marriage is gender-neutral: both opposite-sex and same-sex couples can marry, and there is no legal distinction between opposite-sex and same-sex marriages. Because the gender of the spouses is now irrelevant to the validity of a marriage in Maryland, the marriages of transgender persons are also legally valid, regardless of either spouse's gender identity or sex assigned at birth.

Dissolution

People must go to court to legally dissolve a marriage. In Maryland, there are seven grounds for the dissolution of a marriage, including a one-year separation, desertion, adultery, cruelty of treatment, and excessively vicious conduct.¹ Maryland will dissolve both same-sex marriages entered into in Maryland and same-sex marriage entered into in another state, so long as the marriage is valid in the state where it was contracted. Other states may not allow same-sex couples to dissolve marriages performed in Maryland; be cognizant of this issue if you are planning to move out of state.

State-to-State Recognition

If a same-sex couple is legally married in another state or country, Maryland will recognize their marriage.

However, if a same-sex couple married in Maryland travels to another state or a foreign country, that state or country might or might not recognize the validity of their marriage. As of this writing, there are eighteen U.S. states, in addition to Maryland, that recognize marriage between same-sex couples as legally valid: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia.

Similarly, if a couple in which one or both members are transgender marries in Maryland and then the spouses travel to another state that does not recognize marriage equality for same-sex couples, it is possible that the other state may not recognize the validity of their marriage. In addition, if a couple in which one or both members are transgender was married in Maryland before January 1, 2013 or was married in a state that does not

¹ Md. Code Ann. Fam. Law §7-103

recognize marriage equality for same-sex couples, the validity of their marriage could be open to subsequent dispute if, at the time that they were married, the legally recognized genders of the spouses were the same. If a person or couple has concerns about whether a marriage will be recognized as valid, they may want to consult with an attorney regarding their particular situation.

Other Legal Relationships

Before Maryland updated its marriage laws to include same-sex couples, Maryland made a limited form of legal relationship recognition available to both same-sex and opposite-sex couples called “domestic partnership.” Domestic partnerships can still be established in Maryland, but the rights that a domestic partnership creates are very limited in comparison to marriage: they generally involve rights related to hospital visitation and medical caregiving,² decisionmaking authority regarding burial and other postmortem arrangements for a deceased partner,³ greater access to health insurance coverage in some cases,⁴ and access to some spousal tax benefits.⁵

Other states and jurisdictions have created other forms of legal recognition for same-sex couples, sometimes called “domestic partnerships,” “reciprocal beneficiary relationships,” or “civil unions.” The rights that these relationships create vary from state to state, from very limited sets of rights all the way to virtually all of the rights and responsibilities of marriage except for the title “marriage.” It is not yet clear what legal effect Maryland courts are required to give to non-marital legal relationships established in other states.

ADVOCACY QUESTIONS

- Are you currently in a legally recognized relationship with your partner?
- Do you have any questions or concerns about the legality of your marriage?
- Have you entered into any type of legally recognized relationship in the past (domestic partnership, civil union, marriage) in Maryland or in another state or country?
- Have you created any other types of legal paperwork with your partner (e.g. advance directives, wills, power of attorney, parenting documents)?
- Are you contemplating moving out of state?

² Md. Code, Health-Gen. §§ 6-101, 6-201, 6-202, 6-203, 10-807, 19-344; Md. Code, Crim. Law § 5-601(c)(3).

³ See Md. Code, Est. & Trusts § 4-507; Health-Gen. §§ 5-501, 5-509, 19-310; Health Occ. § 7-410; Real Prop. § 14-121.

⁴ See Md. Code, Ins. §§ 15-403.2, 17-209.

⁵ See Md. Code, Tax-Gen. § 7-203; Tax-Property §§ 12-101, 12-108, 13-207 & 13-403.

Parenting & Child Custody

When LGBTQ couples parent children together, it is important to determine whether both partners/spouses are legally recognized as parents. In Maryland, there are a number of ways to become legal parents of a child. Generally, a person who gives birth to a child is considered the child's legal parent, unless the person is acting as a surrogate, relinquishes parental rights through adoption, or has their parental rights terminated by the state.

Establishing Parental Rights

When a married couple has a child, the law presumes that the spouses are the parents of the child. Although this has not yet been tested in Maryland, that presumption should apply in same-sex marriages, even though one partner may not be biologically related to the child.

If a couple is not married, the non-biological parent can establish legal parentage through second parent adoption of a partner's biological child by the non-biological partner.⁶ Although not specifically authorized by law in Maryland, most jurisdictions permit same-sex second parent adoptions under the same legal standards governing stepparent adoptions. Even married same-sex partners may want to complete a second-parent adoption, however, because states that do not recognize same-sex marriage may also fail to recognize parental status that comes as a result of the marriage. The second parent adoption decree, however, is a court judgment that must be recognized in every state. If you are planning interstate travel in places that do not recognize same-sex marriage, a second-parent adoption provides protection in the event that your relationship to your child is questioned.

If a person is not legally recognized as a parent of his or her partner's child, the person generally will not be eligible to seek custody of or visitation with the child unless he or she demonstrates that his or her partner is an unfit parent or that there are other "exceptional circumstances" such that denying child custody or visitation to the person would have a negative impact on the child. Unlike some other states, Maryland does not recognize the concept of "de facto" parenthood.⁷

⁶ See generally MD. CODE ANN. FAM. LAW §§ 5-3b-01 et seq. (independent adoption).

⁷ See *Janice M. v. Margaret K.*, 404 Md. 661 (2008).

Establishing Custody

Maryland courts use the “best interests of the child” standard to determine which parent should be awarded custody if child custody is disputed. The court is required to consider a number of factors, including the fitness of the parents, the character and reputation of the parties, the desire of the child, the child’s age, health and sex, material opportunities affecting the child’s welfare, and the potential for maintaining natural family relations. Under Maryland law, a parent’s sexual orientation, standing alone, is not a valid reason to deny the parent custody.⁸ There is no court decision specifically holding that a person’s gender identity is not a valid consideration in deciding which parent will have custody of a child. Although Maryland’s public policy increasingly opposes discrimination on the basis of gender identity, many transgender persons may find themselves at a disadvantage in child custody disputes, especially if they are going through the process of gender transition at the time that custody is being disputed. Some judges may view a parent’s gender transition as evidence of a lack of stability, or may view exposure to a parent’s process of transition as potentially damaging to a child’s development. In addition, some judges may view the medical expenses associated with gender transition as illegitimate, placing a transgender parent at a disadvantage in determination of child support or alimony.

A court must consider evidence of intimate partner abuse in making a custody determination; if the court finds that a parent has committed an act of abuse, the court must make custody and visitation arrangements that best protect the abused parent and child.⁹

ADVOCACY QUESTIONS

- Do you and your partner have children?
- Do you have a legally established relationship to your children?
- Are you a biological parent?
- Were you in a registered domestic partnership or married when your children were born?
- How long have you lived with your children?
- Have you engaged in a formal adoption process?
- Are you interested in options to legally recognize your relationship with your children if you have not already done so?
- Does anyone else have legal rights to your children?

⁸ See *Boswell v. Boswell*, 721 A.2d 662 (Md. 1998).

⁹ MD. CODE ANN. FAM. LAW § 9-101.1

Peace & Protection Orders

LGBTQ survivors have the same legal rights to protection as heterosexual survivors and may file for a peace or protective order (also known as a restraining order or ex parte). Survivors may request a civil protective or peace order—which is not a criminal case—to request a range of protections and benefits such as access to housing and vehicles, financial support, and child custody and visitation, that can open new doors for survivors. Many survivors choose to seek relief and justice through the courts when other strategies are less effective or when they are ready to leave the relationship. Despite the potential benefits, using and cooperating with the criminal justice system to address abuse is emotionally challenging for many victims. Survivors should safety plan if they believe that taking action through the courts will cause their partner to escalate the abuse and increase the survivor’s danger.

In Maryland, LGBTQ survivors are eligible for protective and peace orders, depending upon the relationship the survivor has with their partner. **Protective orders** are available to same-sex partners who are married, share a child in common, or have lived together for 90 days over the past year.¹⁰ Those who are *not* related to their abusers in one of those ways (i.e., those in dating relationships) can petition for a **peace order**.¹¹ As of October 1, 2014, **protective and peace orders** both require that the petitioner prove that abuse (serious bodily harm, fear of imminent serious bodily harm, assault, sexual assault, false imprisonment, stalking) has occurred by the standard of the “preponderance of the evidence,” which means that they must prove that it is more likely than not that the abuse occurred.¹² In a **peace order** case, the petitioner must show not only that an act of abuse has occurred within the past 30 days, but that a prohibited act is likely to happen again.¹³ **Protective orders** can last for up to one year and provide a variety of forms of relief, including protection from further abuse; stay away orders from a person, home, school, or workplace; custody and visitation of children; use and possession of a family home or vehicle; emergency financial assistance; and removal of firearms.¹⁴ **Peace orders** last for up to six months with a possibility of a six month extension and provide more limited relief.^{15, 16}

See Appendix B for a flow chart of Peace and Protective Order processes.

¹⁰ MD. CODE ANN. FAM. LAW § 4-501

¹¹ MD. CODE ANN. CTS. & JUD. PROC. § 3-1503

¹² Until October 1, 2014, abuse must be proved by the “clear and convincing evidence” standard, which requires that abuse be proven to a higher degree of certainty. In practice, judges applying the “clear and convincing evidence” standard have often required documentation of injuries, or eyewitness testimony from someone other than the survivor of abuse, in order to grant a protective order or peace order. In 2014, the Maryland legislature enacted 2014 Md. Laws ch. 112, changing the standard of proof from “clear and convincing evidence” to the “preponderance of the evidence,” effective as of October 1, 2014.

¹³ MD. CODE ANN. CTS. & JUD. PROC. § 3-1503

¹⁴ MD. CODE ANN. FAM. LAW § 4-506

¹⁵ MD. CODE ANN. CTS. & JUD. PROC. § 3-1506

¹⁶ MD. CODE ANN. CTS. & JUD. PROC. §§ 3-1505 & 3-1506

It is not uncommon for abusive partners or spouses to file their own petitions for protective and peace orders with the court. This can make it more challenging for the survivor to file a petition. This is why it can be important for a survivor to be at the final peace or protective order hearing, so they can provide evidence and testimony to show that they are the victim. If the abusive partner has an order against the victim, it can also enable an abusive partner to isolate a survivor and prevent that survivor from accessing community services and spaces. To combat this isolation, see the Northwest Network's toolkit, *It Takes a Village, People* (available at nwnetwork.org).

ADVOCACY QUESTIONS

- Have you ever filed for a civil order of protection or peace order against your partner or spouse?
- Have you ever been the respondent of a civil order of protection or peace order (has your partner or spouse ever filed a protective order or peace order against you)?

Criminal Charges & Arrests

Many forms of domestic violence, such as assault, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, or malicious destruction of property, are criminal. Survivors or a bystander may call the police if a victim is in imminent danger, which can be lifesaving and may result in the arrest of an abusive partner. Not all police responses will result in an arrest or in criminal charges being filed. If a survivor wishes to initiate criminal charges against their partner on their own if the police do not file charges on their behalf, they may do so by going to the District Court commissioner's office.

Calling the police can also be a risk for survivors. LGBTQ survivors may face disbelief, harassment, and abuse by police and are much more likely to be arrested by police. Police and courts often mistakenly believe that violence in same-sex relationships is "mutual" or "equal." Advocates should note that an inappropriate response from police in the past may be a barrier to a survivor calling the police in the future.

Studies show that police are **up to 30 times** more likely to arrest both parties when responding to domestic violence incidents involving same-sex couples (see *Hirschel et al., USDOJ, 2007* at <https://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/218355.pdf>). A criminal charge can have significant consequences for child custody, access to housing, employment, and other issues. See the tip card in Appendix C for some talking points to use with survivors so they know their rights if they are arrested. If a survivor is arrested, they may contact the Office of the Public Defender or a private attorney to obtain legal representation.

ADVOCACY QUESTIONS

- Has your partner or spouse ever been arrested or convicted of a domestic violence-related crime, such as assault?
- Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a domestic violence-related crime, such as assault?

Housing & Property

In Maryland, a tenant who has been subjected to domestic violence or sexual assault has the right to terminate their lease by providing the landlord with 30 day written notice¹⁷ of their intent to vacate the property and a copy of the tenant's protective or peace order.¹⁸ After the notice is given, the tenant is only responsible for those 30 days of rent.¹⁹

If a survivor would like to remain in their rental unit but feels unsafe, the tenant may request that the landlord change the locks. The request must be in writing and a copy of the protective or peace order must be submitted. Once the landlord receives the request, the locks must be changed by close of the next business day.²⁰ If the landlord is not able to change the locks within that time period, the tenant may have the locks changed by a certified locksmith.²¹ The tenant is responsible for any reasonable fees associated with have the locks changed.²²

ADVOCACY QUESTIONS

- Do you have property in common with your partner or spouse?
- Are you on a shared lease or rental agreement with your partner or spouse?
- Has your partner or spouse acquired debt during your relationship?
- Have you tried to end your lease early or have your landlord change your locks?
- Has your landlord tried to evict you?

¹⁷ MD. CODE ANN., REAL PROPERTY § 8-5A-02

¹⁸ MD. CODE ANN., REAL PROPERTY § 8-5A-03; MD. CODE ANN., REAL PROPERTY § 8-5A-04

¹⁹ MD. CODE ANN., REAL PROPERTY § 8-5A-02(c)

²⁰ MD. CODE ANN., REAL PROPERTY § 8-5A-06

²¹ MD. CODE ANN., REAL PROPERTY § 8-5A-06(c)(2)

²² MD. CODE ANN., REAL PROPERTY § 8-5A-06 (d)

Immigration

Since the Supreme Court's decision in *United States v. Windsor*²³, the federal government may no longer discriminate against same-sex couples in the conferral of federal benefits, including federal immigration benefits. Legally married LGBTQ couples should be treated the same as legally married heterosexual couples for the purposes of federal immigration law.

U-Visa and VAWA Self-Petitions

Undocumented LGBTQ survivors may be eligible for a U-Visa to establish legal residency if they have been the victim of a crime, suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of being a victim of the crime, have information about the criminal activity, and are helpful in the criminal investigation or prosecution.²⁴ Undocumented LGBTQ survivors who are in legal marriages to United States citizens or lawful permanent residents should be able to file a VAWA self-petition to establish legal residency if they are abused by their spouses.²⁵ Survivors and advocates with immigration questions should consult an attorney, if possible. See the Legal Resources in Appendix A for options.

Secure Communities²⁶

The federal program Secure Communities was designed as a partnership between federal and local law enforcement to detain and remove undocumented individuals convicted of serious crimes. However, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents often ask local jails to hold all immigrants for deportation without regards to conviction. Often, small infractions such as a traffic violation have been used to hold immigrants in jail until ICE can deport them. The Secure Communities program has weakened relationships between immigrant communities and law enforcement. Many immigrants fear reporting crimes or coming forward as witnesses because of possible deportation or getting a family member deported. Currently, only the Frederick County Sheriff's Office participates formally in the Secure Communities program. However, the

²³ 133 U.S. 2675 (2013)

²⁴ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Victims of Criminal Activity: U Nonimmigrant Status. Available at: <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-human-trafficking-other-crimes/victims-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status/victims-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status>

²⁵ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Battered Spouse, Children & Parent. Available at : <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/battered-spouse-children-parents>

²⁶ The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 added Section 287(g), performance of immigration officer functions by state officers and employees, to the Immigration and Nationality Act. These agreements allow state and local law enforcement to perform immigration law enforcement functions. The federal program Secure Communities is also known as 287(g) Agreements.

extent to which local law enforcement agencies cooperates with these requests varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

When assisting immigrant survivors, it is important to consider the fear of law enforcement and deportation. Immigrant survivors may be concerned that they and/or their partner will be deported. Deportation is often used as a threat by an abuser. The abuser may also provide the survivor with a wealth of *misinformation* regarding the legal system and use language, literacy, and isolation against the survivor. The survivor may also have a fear of police from their home country and may not be familiar with their rights and law enforcement practices in the U.S. Finally, an immigrant survivor may have heard or known of other immigrants in their community that faced removal proceedings after seeking help from police. Advocates should become familiar with the practices and policies of their local law enforcement agencies and correct any misinformation that the survivor may have received about the criminal justice system so they can make an informed decision when considering criminal justice involvement.

ADVOCACY QUESTIONS

- Do you have any immigration related concerns regarding your relationship?
- Are you in a legally recognized relationship with a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident? (e.g. marriage, domestic partnership)?
- Are you interested in learning more about your options to file for a special visa to stay in the U.S. based on your experience as a survivor?
- Did you experience violence in your home country due to your gender identity or sexual orientation?

Note: U-visas generally require a survivor to provide information to authorities related to a criminal case.

NEXT STEPS IN ADVOCACY

Community-based advocates play an important role in supporting LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence who may be navigating the legal system. Advocates can offer support and information while being mindful to communicate the boundaries of our position.

Connecting Survivors to Resources

One of the most important tools advocates have is the ability to provide systems advocacy: We can share information with survivors and support them to understand how complex legal systems work, how to be prepared for court or meeting with an attorney, what documentation to gather, and more.

Many people assume they will be able to find a pro bono attorney who specializes in DV or LGBTQ issues, which may not be the case in many communities. Therefore, an advocate can also help clarify what resources may or may not be available in our service area. It is important to stay up to date about the resources available in your area, and to be realistic with survivors about what is available so that they can manage their expectations. Access to legal services and representation is a significant barrier for many survivors, particularly LGBTQ survivors who lack financial resources or who live in more rural areas.

Regardless of whether you see LGBTQ survivors once a day or once a year, it is important to continue to update advocacy referral lists, build and sustain relationships with attorneys and low-cost legal aid organizations, and stay connected to best practices in legal advocacy for LGBTQ survivors. You'll find helpful resources and information on the next pages to get you started!

Appendix A: Resource List

Maryland Legal Resources

Maryland Legal Aid Bureau

Areas of legal assistance: provides free legal assistance to low-income individuals in the following civil legal areas: Employment, Family Law, Access to Health Care, Housing, Individual Rights, Non-English Resources, Public Benefits, Veterans/Military, Will and Estates, Education, and Consumer Rights. In general, individual seeking service must be a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, unless the legal matter arises out of domestic violence or human trafficking.

Addresses and contacts:

- **Anne Arundel County:** 229 Hanover St., Annapolis, MD 21401; (410) 972-2700
- **Baltimore City:** 500 E. Lexington St., Baltimore MD 21202; (410) 951-7777
- **Cherry Hill Neighborhood Ctr.:** 606 Cherry Hill Rd., Baltimore, MD 21225 (410) 355-4223
- **Baltimore County:** 29 W. Susquehanna Ave., Suite 305, Towson MD 21204 (410) 427-1800, (877) 878-5920
- **Lower Eastern Shore** (Wicomico, Dorchester, Worcester, Somerset): 111 High St., Salisbury MD 21801
- (410) 546-5511, (800) 444-4099
- **Metropolitan Maryland** (Prince George's): 6811 Kenilworth Ave., Suite 500, Riverdale MD 20737; (301) 560-2100, (888) 215-5316
- **Metropolitan Maryland** (Montgomery): 600 Jefferson Street 600 Jefferson Plaza Suite 430 Rockville, MD 20852; (240) 314-0373, (888) 215-5316
- **Metropolitan Maryland** (Howard): 3451 Court House Dr., Ellicott City MD 21043; (410) 480-1057
- **Midwestern Maryland** (Frederick, Carroll & Washington): 22 S. Market St., Frederick MD 21701; (301) 694-7414, (800) 679-8813
- **Northeastern Maryland** (Harford, Cecil): 103 South Hickory Avenue, Bel Air MD 21014; (410) 836-8202 (Harford), (410) 879-3755 (Baltimore), (800) 444-9529
- **Southern Maryland** (Charles, St. Mary's & Calvert): 15364 Prince Frederick Rd., Hughesville MD 20637; (301) 932-6661, (877) 310-1810
- **Upper Eastern Shore** (Queen Anne's, Caroline, Kent & Talbot): Tred Avon Square, Suite 3, Easton MD 21601; (410) 763-9676, (800) 477-2543
- **Western Maryland** (Allegany & Garrett): 110 Greene St., Cumberland MD 21502; (301) 777-7474, (866) 389-5243

Website: <http://www.mdlab.org/>

Maryland Disability Law Center

Areas of legal assistance: free legal services are provided to individuals and families facing disability-related problems, especially in the areas of access and rights, abuse and neglect, education, community services, access to health care, assistive technology, community living, and employment.

Address: 1500 Union Avenue; Suite 2000, Baltimore, MD 21211

Contact: 410-727-6352 ext.0 or 1-800-233-7201

Website: <http://www.mdlclaw.org/>

Maryland Volunteers Lawyer Services

Areas of legal assistance: provides quality pro bono or reduced fee civil legal services to Marylanders of limited means in the following areas of law: Administration of Small Estates, Adult Guardianship, Bankruptcy (Chapter 7 only), Child Custody, Collections, Consumer Disputes, Criminal Record Expungement, Deed Changes, Denial of Public Benefits, Divorce, Foreclosure, Landlord/Tenant Conflicts, Living Wills, Name Changes, Power of Attorney, School Suspensions, Tax Disputes, and Wills.

Address: One North Charles Street, Suite 222, Baltimore, MD 21201
Website: <http://www.mvslaw.org/>

The Women's Law Center of Maryland

Areas of legal assistance:

Employment Law Hotline (ELH) (Statewide)

Volunteer attorneys answer questions about workplace rights such as discrimination in hiring, firing, promotions or other working conditions, discrimination based on pregnancy, sexual harassment, family or medical leave issues, unpaid wages, contract issues and more. The ELH may be reached at 1-877-422-9500

Family Law Hotline (Statewide)

The Hotline is a free service to people with basic family law questions such as "What the grounds are for divorce?" or "If I leave with the kids, can I still get child support?" The hotline is staffed by attorneys experienced in family law, and is operated in partnership with the Legal Aid Bureau, Inc. The Hotline operates at 1-800-845-8550.

Legal Forms Helpline (Statewide)

The Helpline is a free telephone service for people who are able to file their family law cases pro se, because their cases are uncomplicated and uncontested. Attorneys help callers understand the process or completing form pleadings. The Helpline operates at 1-800-818-9888. A Spanish-speaking attorney is available by calling 1-877-293-2507. Leave a message and an attorney will return your call. (Spanish only)

Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Project (Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Carroll County)

The Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Project represents victims of domestic violence at protection order hearings in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Carroll County Circuit Courts. The Project's attorneys represent people who have been abused by an intimate partner (current or past boyfriend/girlfriend, current or ex spouse) in proceedings to obtain protection orders, enforce protection orders through contempt, and modify existing protection orders. The project is open Monday through Friday and there is no charge. For more information, call 410-783-0377 in Baltimore City, 410-887-3162 in Baltimore County, and 410-386-2440 in Carroll County.

The Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence Project (MEDOVI) (Baltimore City)

MEDOVI offers assistance and legal representation to address the special needs of foreign-born victims of domestic violence in Maryland. Using provisions under the Violence Against Women Act [VAWA], MEDOVI staff work with people who have been abused by a spouse or intimate partner. MEDOVI services are confidential and can help you to attain legal immigration status without having to rely on the support of your abuser. For more information about the program, call 410-396-3294.

Judicare (Baltimore County)

Each year, the WLC screens cases and places 40 low-income clients involved in contested custody cases in Baltimore County with experienced attorneys who provide their services for free to clients. The attorneys involved in this project agree to be paid a significantly reduced fee by the WLC to represent clients and continue their service for the duration of the case, even if the payment cap is exceeded. For more information about this project, call 410-321-8761.

Address: 305 West Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201 Towson, MD 21204

Contact: (410) 321-8761

Website: <http://www.wlcmd.org/>

CASA, Inc. (Citizens Assisting and Sheltering the Abused)

Areas of legal assistance: Provides counseling and information concerning divorce, child custody and support, property settlement, protection from domestic violence and criminal prosecution.

Address: 116 W. Baltimore St. Hagerstown, MD 21740

Contact: (301) 739-4990

Website: <http://www.casainc.org/index.htm>

Community Legal Services of Prince George's County Pro Bono Project

Areas of legal assistance:

CLS Lawyer Referral Program: provides legal representation in cases involving: divorce, custody, child support, visitation, domestic violence, guardianship, foreclosure prevention, wills, landlord/tenant, unpaid wages, tort defense, bankruptcy, and other non-fee generating civil legal matters. An application fee (currently \$25 - \$35) will be charged for processing of the application to be referred to a volunteer lawyer. Staff members speak English and Spanish.

Contact: 240-391-6370 or 6395 MD Relay 800-735-2258 (TTY)

CLS Foreclosure Prevention Program: assists homeowners at risk of losing their homes due to foreclosure with an opportunity to retain their home. Volunteer lawyers will help eligible homeowners with loss mitigation, negotiations of repayment, forbearance, and/or loan modification plans. 240-391-6413

CLS Bankruptcy Program: provides legal representation in Chapter 7 Bankruptcy cases. 240-391-6370 or 6395 MD Relay 800-735-2258 (TTY)

CLS Family Law Clinic for Self Representation: provides brief advice to persons who are not represented by a lawyer. Legal matters handled include: family law, domestic violence, guardianship of disabled adults, small claims and tenant matters. Staff members speak English and Spanish. Courthouse, Upper Marlboro, 14735 Main Street, Room 2435M. Sign-in begins at 9:00 a.m. Monday – Thursday. Assist the first 18 persons who sign in. Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon only. Assist the first 9 persons who sign in.

CLS Family Law Clinic Latino Community Outreach: provides brief advice to persons who are not represented by a lawyer. Income eligible clients, including domestic violence victims, may be referred to a lawyer through this program. Staff members speak Spanish and English. 8011 New Hampshire Ave. Langley Park, MD 20783. First-come, first-served. Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. We assist the first 14 people who sign in.

CLS Workers' Rights Legal Clinic: provides brief legal advice in employment law matters and assistance in collecting unpaid wages. Staff members speak Spanish and English. 8011 New Hampshire Ave, Langley Park, MD 20783. First-come, first-served! Tuesday, doors open at 8:15 a.m. We assist the first 10 people.

CLS Suitland Law Clinic: Our Suitland Clinic operates by appointment only. Legal matters handled include: family law, domestic violence, guardianship of disabled adults, wills, power of attorney, name change, bankruptcy, small claims, and expungement. To make an appointment please call our main office at 240-391-6370, ext. 13

Address: P.O. Box 374 Riverdale, MD 20737

Contact: (240) 391-6370 or 6395

Website: <http://www.clspgc.org/>

HopeWorks of Howard County Legal Assistance Project

Areas of legal assistance: provides civil legal services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and child abuse. Services include brief advice, information and referrals, representation and consultation in peace and protective order matters, crime victims' rights, divorce, custody and other family law proceedings.

Address: 5457 Twin Knolls Road, Suite 310, Columbia, Maryland 21045

Contact: (410) 997-0304

Website: <http://www.wearehopeworks.org/legal-services/>

Heartly House Legal Advocacy Project

Areas of legal assistance: provides a variety of services for victims of domestic violence, family violence and rape/sexual assault:

- Attorney represents clients at Protective Order and Peace Order hearings in District and Circuit Court.
- Attorney also represents a limited number of clients in family law matters in Circuit Court (Income eligibility guidelines apply for family law representation).
- Victim Advocates provide accompaniment and support for civil and criminal proceedings.
- Advocates provide safety planning, advocacy, referrals, support, hospital accompaniments and information on courthouse protocol.

Address: P.O. Box 857 • Frederick, MD 21705-0857

Contact: (301) 662-8800

Website: <http://www.heartlyhouse.org/legal.htm>

Homeless Persons Representation Project

Areas of legal assistance: provides free legal services, including advice, counsel, education, representation and advocacy, for low-income persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Address: 201 N. Charles Street, Suite 1104, Baltimore, MD 21201

Contact: (410) 685-6589

Website: <http://www.hprplaw.org/>

House of Ruth Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

Areas of legal assistance: assists victims of domestic violence obtain protective orders, peace orders, divorce decrees, custody of their children and child support

Address: 2201 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, MD 21218

Contact: (410) 889-0840

Website: <http://www.hruth.org/legal-clinic.asp>

Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education

Areas of legal assistance: provides information, referrals, and representation in legal proceedings related to education matters. Services include: review records, offer advice, file administrative complaints, attend Individual Education Plan meetings, mediations, and/or due process hearings.

Address: 7484 Candlewood Road, Suite R, Hanover, MD 21076

Contact: (410) 859- 5400

Website: <http://www.mcie.org/index.php>

Public Justice Center

Areas of legal assistance:

Human Right to Housing: protects and expands tenants' rights to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing and to fair and equal treatment by Maryland's landlord-tenant laws, courts and agencies. Current actions in this project focus on two distinct groups of low-income tenants: those who face eviction in Baltimore City's rent court and those who face eviction because their landlord is in foreclosure.

Workplace Justice: works primarily with low-wage workers to enforce and expand their right to an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. We use a variety of strategies including: legislative, regulatory and other policy advocacy, litigation, and coalition development.

Education Stability: advocates to ensure that students who are highly mobile, including those who are homeless and in foster care, have the opportunity to remain and succeed in school.

Health and Benefits: seeks to protect and expand Medicaid and other public benefits that support people living in poverty. The project uses the range of legal strategies in its advocacy, including advocating before the state agencies that implement health and benefit programs, the legislators who set the law and budget, and the courts who enforce the law.

Immigrants' Rights: seeks to protect and expand the rights of low-wage and poverty-stricken immigrants in Maryland. Handles cases related to: wage theft, consumer law issues, housing abuses and want to ensure that immigrants have access to state courts, programs and agencies.

Address: 1 North Charles Street, Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21201

Contact: (410) 625-9409

Website: <http://www.publicjustice.org/index.cfm>

St. Ambrose Legal Services

Areas of legal assistance: provides pro bono legal services to lower income Maryland residents who are unable to afford legal representation. Assists with legal issues threatening an individual's homeownership or tenancy. These include representing homeowners at foreclosure mediations, defending against wrongful foreclosure or eviction activity, and resolving disputes with mortgage lenders and debt collectors. Also help facilitate the work of our Housing Counselors in pursuing loss mitigation options for struggling borrowers.

Address: 321 E. 25th Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

Contact: (410) 366-8550

Website: <http://www.stambros.org/pages/legalservices.html>

SARC Legal Department

Areas of legal assistance: provides direct legal services and advocacy for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence and stalking in the following areas: peace and protective orders, divorce, custody cases, and immigration cases

Address: 20 N Main St, Bel Air, MD 21014
Contact: (410) 836-8031
Website: sarc-maryland.org

Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI)

Areas of legal assistance: provides direct legal services for victims and survivors of sexual assault in the following areas: college administrative hearings, privacy issues, Peace and Protective Orders, family law matters, employment, housing, crime victim's compensation, referrals for tort cases, any other legal matter related to sexual assault or child sexual abuse.

Address: P.O. Box 8782, Silver Spring, MD 20907
Contact: (301) 565-2277 or 1-877-496-SALI
Website: <http://www.mcasa.org/law-public-policy/legal-services-sali/>

Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy

Areas of legal assistance: provides advocacy, legal assistance and information/referral to victims of domestic violence in the Southern Maryland region.

Addresses:
23918 Mervell Dean Rd, Hollywood, MD 20636
41605 Courthouse Dr., Leonardtown, MD 20650
175 Main Street, Prince Frederick, MD 20678
Contact: (301) 373-4141
Website: <http://www.smcfca.net/>

YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Legal Services

Areas of legal assistance: provides legal services to victims of domestic violence on a fee-scale basis including pro-bono services for those unable to provide payment. These services are focused on obtaining peace and protective orders for victims seeking respite from their abuser(s). These services are available by contacting the Legal Services Department at the YWCA or speaking with an advocate (no appointment required) at Annapolis District Court, Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County and Glen Burnie District Court. A YWCA office is located within each of these court houses.

Address: 1517 Ritchie Highway, Suite 201, Arnold, MD 21012
Contact: 410-626-7800 x300
Website: <http://www.annapolisywca.org/programs/>

Project Heal

Areas of legal assistance: Medical-legal partnership is a health care delivery model that improves the health and well-being of low-income and other vulnerable populations by addressing unmet legal needs and removing legal barriers that impede health.

Healthcare Partner Institutions: Kennedy Krieger Institute (Baltimore)
Legal Partner Institutions: Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Services (MVLS) (Baltimore)

Address: 707 North Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21205
Contact: Main Number:(443) 923-9200
Toll-Free Main Number:(800) 873-3377 Referral Line:(443) 923-9400
Website:
http://www.kennedykrieger.org/?utm_source=kennedykreiger.org&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=kki-redirect

Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services (Baltimore Archdiocese)

Areas of legal assistance:

- Represents individuals in removal proceedings, including asylum
- Represents detained and non-detained individuals
- Provides consultations to individuals detained on the Eastern Shore in Maryland
- Following written contact by persons in detention, provides phone or mail consultations to detainees in Dorchester and Worcester.

Address: 430 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231

Contact: (410) 534-8015

Website: <http://www.catholiccharities-md.org/immigrants/>

CASA of Maryland

Areas of legal assistance: seeks to improve the quality of life and legal justice for Latinos and low-income families through legal education, legal services, and advocacy projects. Offers legal consultations and representation for day laborers, domestic workers, and tenants. Also negotiates claims and bring lawsuits in state and federal courts for nonpayment of wages; minimum wage and overtime violations; unlawful wage deductions; discriminatory employment practices; retaliatory discharges; and involuntary servitude. Legal assistance to low-wage tenants and tenant associations on landlord/tenant issues is available.

Address: Legal Program, CASA de Maryland, Inc., 8151 15th Ave., Hyattsville, MD 20783

Contact: (301) 431-4185

Website: <http://www.casademaryland.org/programs-mainmenu-73/services-mainmenu-76?task=view>

Catholic Charities of Wilmington - Immigration and Refugee Services (Eastern Shore Office)

Areas of legal assistance: provides assistance with Adjustment of Status, Consular Processing, Employment authorization, Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship, Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

Addresses and contacts:

- Main Office: 2601 W Fourth Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19905, (302) 655-9624
- Kent Office: 2099 S DuPont Highway, Dover, Delaware 19901, (302) 674-1600
- Eastern Shore Office/Seton Center: 30632 Hampden Avenue, PO Box 401, Princess Anne, Maryland 21853, (410) 651-9608

Website: <http://www.cdow.org/immigration.html>

Foreign-Born Information and Referral Network, Inc.

Areas of legal assistance: provides assistance with Asylum applications, Consular Processing, Employment authorization, Family-based petitions, NACARA, Naturalization/Citizenship, Removal hearings, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), U visas, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions.

Addresses and contacts:

- **Columbia Office:** 5999 Harpers Farm Rd, Suite E-200, Columbia, MD 21044 (410) 992-1923
- **North Laurel/Savage Multi-Service Center:** 9900 Washington Boulevard (Route 1) Laurel, MD 20723 (410) 880-5917

Website: http://www.firnonline.org/?page_id=15

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Areas of legal assistance: helps children who have come to the United States without a parent or legal guardian, and are unable to find or afford an attorney to represent them in immigration proceedings.

Address: c/o Miles & Stockbridge PC, 10 Light St, Baltimore, MD 21202

Contact: (410) 209-2196

Website: <http://www.supportkind.org/en/>

Association of Vietnamese Americans

Areas of legal assistance: provides assistance with Adjustment of Status, Asylum applications, Employment authorization, Employment-based immigrant and non-immigrant petitions, Family-based petitions, Naturalization/Citizenship.

Address: 8121 Georgia Ave, Suite 503, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Contact: (301) 588-6862

Website: http://www.mdvietmutual.org/html_services/immigration.html

World Relief Baltimore Immigration Clinic

Areas of legal assistance: advises and represents immigrants and their family members in immigration matters such as: applying for permanent residence and work permits, petitioning for family members to remain or reunite with them in the U.S., and applying for naturalization.

Address: 7 E. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

Contact: (410) 244-0002

Website: <http://worldrelief.org/Page.aspx?pid=2896>

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law - Clinics

Areas of legal assistance:

Civil Rights of Persons with Disabilities Clinic: represents clients with disabilities in a variety of settings and work with organizations involved in broad impact litigation. The subject matter will likely include special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; access to public entities and public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act; post-secondary education and employment matters; as well as issues of consent and self-determination, statutory entitlements, and related public policy issues as individuals with disabilities seek inclusion and greater participation in society.

Consumer Protection Clinic: helps victims of fraud and other unfair or deceptive trade practices to enforce our consumer protection laws. Cases may involve home improvement contractor fraud, home foreclosure defense, auto repossession defense, debt collection defense or other matters faced by consumers in financial distress.

Drug Policy and Public Health Strategies Clinic: represents clients to ensure full access to addiction and mental health services.

Gender Violence Clinic: provides assistance with domestic violence protective or peace orders; divorce; custody; immigration relief, including Violence Against Women Act self-petitions or T or U visa applications; expungement of criminal records for victims of trafficking; sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination; and violence against prisoners.

General Practice Clinic: represents low- and moderate- income clients in a variety of practice areas: primarily immigration, but also including employment, consumer, family, wills and estates, and real estate law.

Health Care Delivery and HIV / AIDS: provides assistance to individuals with HIV/AIDS in employment discrimination or Family Medical Leave Act claims, CINA (child welfare) cases, custody/guardianship of children, etc.

Immigration Clinic: represents low- and moderate-income immigrants and/or their family members in matters relating to immigration status.

Address: 500 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-1786

Contact: (410) 706-7214

Website: http://www.law.umaryland.edu/programs/clinic/clinic_life.html

University of Baltimore School of Law - Clinics

Areas of legal assistance:

Civil Advocacy Clinic: represents low-income individuals and community organizations that could not otherwise afford legal representation. Caseloads are diverse, touching on many areas of civil practice, including housing, consumer, education, and public benefits law.

Criminal Practice Clinic: represents persons charged with crimes, such as assault, drug offenses, alcohol-related charges, disorderly conduct, theft and the like.

Disability Law Clinic: represents patients in involuntary civil commitment hearings at Sheppard Pratt Psychiatric Hospital.

Family Law Clinic: represents low-income clients seeking child custody, support, divorce, adoption, and civil remedies for domestic violence.

Immigrant Rights Clinic: represents Immigrants seeking asylum from gender based persecution, persecution on the basis of political opinion, and persecution on the basis of religion. Also assists battered immigrants seeking permanent residence and women who have been trafficked.

Address: 1401 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201

Contact: (410) 837-4468

Website: <http://law.ubalt.edu/clinics/index.cfm>

Esperanza Center- Catholic Charities

Areas of legal assistance:

Immigration Legal Services: provides consultation and represents Immigrants seeking family-based petitions, Adjustment of status, trafficking, crime victims, domestic-violence-based immigration applications, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) applications, fingerprinting, visa processing, naturalization and citizenship applications, inadmissibility waiver applications, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), cancellation of removal.

Address: 430 South Broadway, Baltimore, MD

Contact: (410) 534-8015, esperanzainfo@cc-md.org

Website: <http://www.catholiccharities-md.org/immigrants/immigration-legal-services/immigration-legal-services.html>

Other Maryland Resources

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

Areas of assistance: Advocacy, training and education, primarily for domestic violence victim service providers and allied professionals.

Address: 4601 Presidents Drive, Suite 370, Lanham, MD 20706

Contact: (410) 534-8015, esperanzainfo@cc-md.org

Website: mnadv.org

FreeState Legal Project

Areas of legal assistance: Pro bono legal services to low-income members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community in Maryland who are facing legal issues with a substantial connection to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The areas in which FreeState Legal provides assistance include family law; protection from domestic violence; discrimination in employment, housing, or places of public accommodation; wills & estates; changes of legal name and/or legal gender marker; and other matters.

Address: Chase-Brexton Health Center, 1111 North Charles Street, Fourth Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201

Contact: (410) 625-LGBT (5428)

Website: www.freestatelegal.org

Network for Public Health Law

Areas of assistance: Public health law technical assistance, on topics including injury prevention

Address: The University of Maryland School of Law, 500 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

Contact: 410.706.5993 www.networkforphl.org

Website: <http://www.catholiccharities-md.org/immigrants/immigration-legal-services/immigration-legal-services.html>

National Resources

Anti-Violence Project (NCAVP)

Areas of service: Crisis intervention, safety planning, bilingual (English/Spanish) hotline for LGBTQ survivors of violence

Address: 240 West 35th Street, Suite 200, New York, NY 10001

Contact: (212) 714-1141

Website: <http://www.avp.org>

FORGE

Areas of service: Self-help guides for **transgender** and non-gender conforming survivors; listserv for transgender and non-gender conforming survivors of intimate partner violence to connect with other survivors; referrals and information

Address: P.O. Box 1272 Milwaukee, WI 53201

Contact: (414) 559-2123

Website: forge-forward.org

GLBT National Help Center

Areas of service: Peer-support, community connections and resource information to people with questions regarding sexual orientation and/or gender identity; LGBTQ Adult and Youth Talklines

Address: 2261 Market Street, PMB #296, San Francisco, CA 94114

Contact: 1-888-843-4564; Youth Hotline: 1-800-246-7743; Administrative: 415-355-0003; help@GLBThotline.org

Website: www.glnh.org, glbtnationalhelpcenter.org

Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project 1-800-832-1901, gmdvp.org

Areas of service: 24-hour domestic violence hotline, emergency safe home, legal services, crisis intervention and safety planning, housing and employment advocacy, sexual assault case management, and ongoing supportive services.

Address: 955 Massachusetts Ave, PMB 131, Cambridge, MA 02139

Contact: DV Hotline: 1-800-832-1901; Sexual Assault Helpline: (617) 779-2127; Office: 617-354-6056

Website: www.glbtdvp.org

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Areas of service: 24-hour Hotline for domestic violence victims – provides resources and referrals, safety planning; LiveChat feature; email, videophone, and IM for Deaf victims

Address: P.O. Box 161810, Austin TX, 78716

Contact: 1-800-799-7233; TTY: 1-800-787-3224

For Deaf survivors- Videophone: 855-812-1001; IM: DeafHotline; email: deafhelp@thehotline.org

Website: www.thehotline.org

National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)

Areas of service: Advocacy, training, technical assistance for domestic violence providers

Address: 1400 16th St NW, Suite 330, Washington, DC 20036

Contact: (202) 543-5566

Website: nnedv.org

Northwest Network

Areas of service: Safety and support planning, referrals and resources

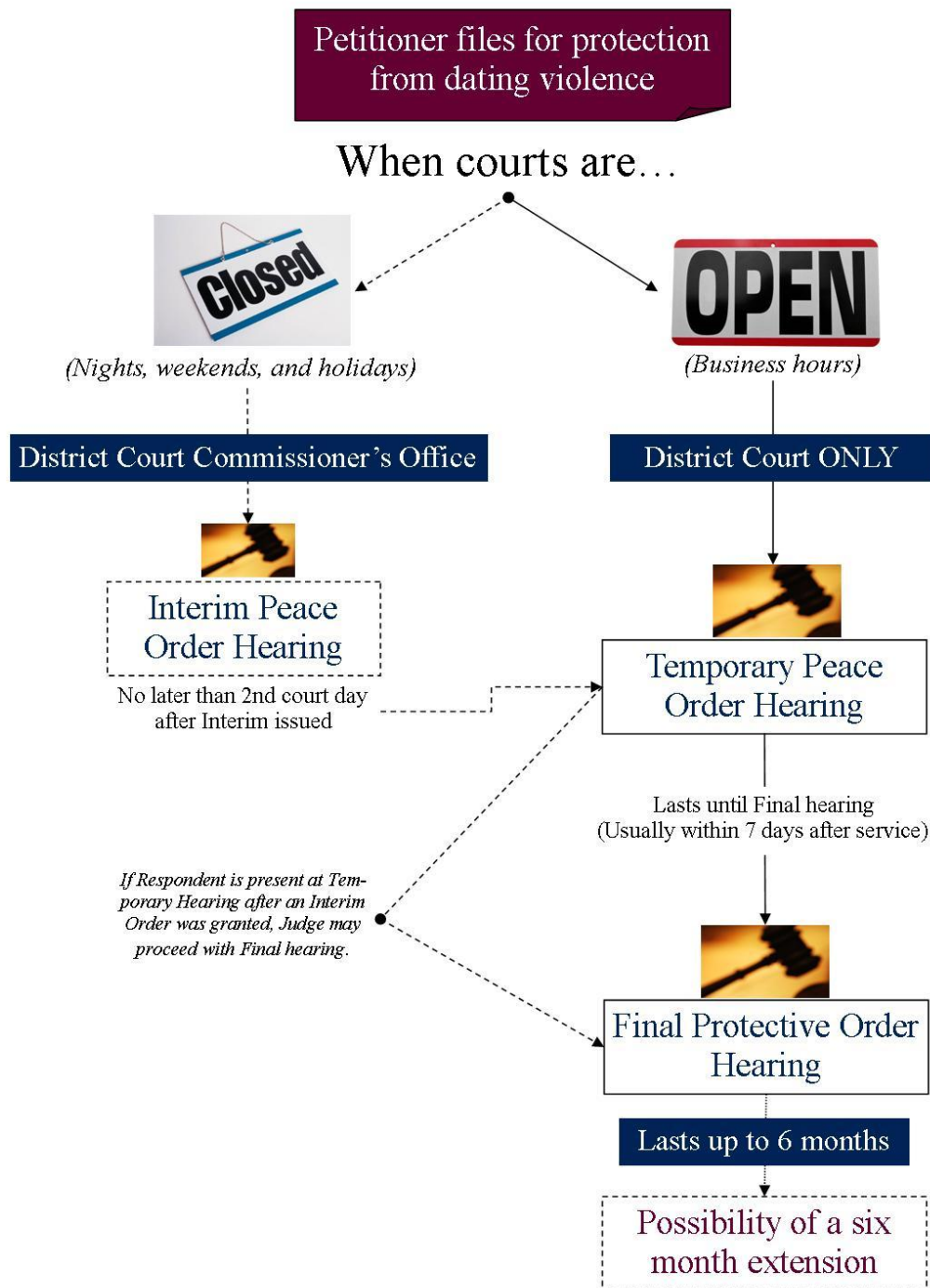
Address: P.O. Box 18436, Seattle, WA 98118

Contact: (206) 568-7777; TTY (206) 517-9670; info@nwnetwork.org

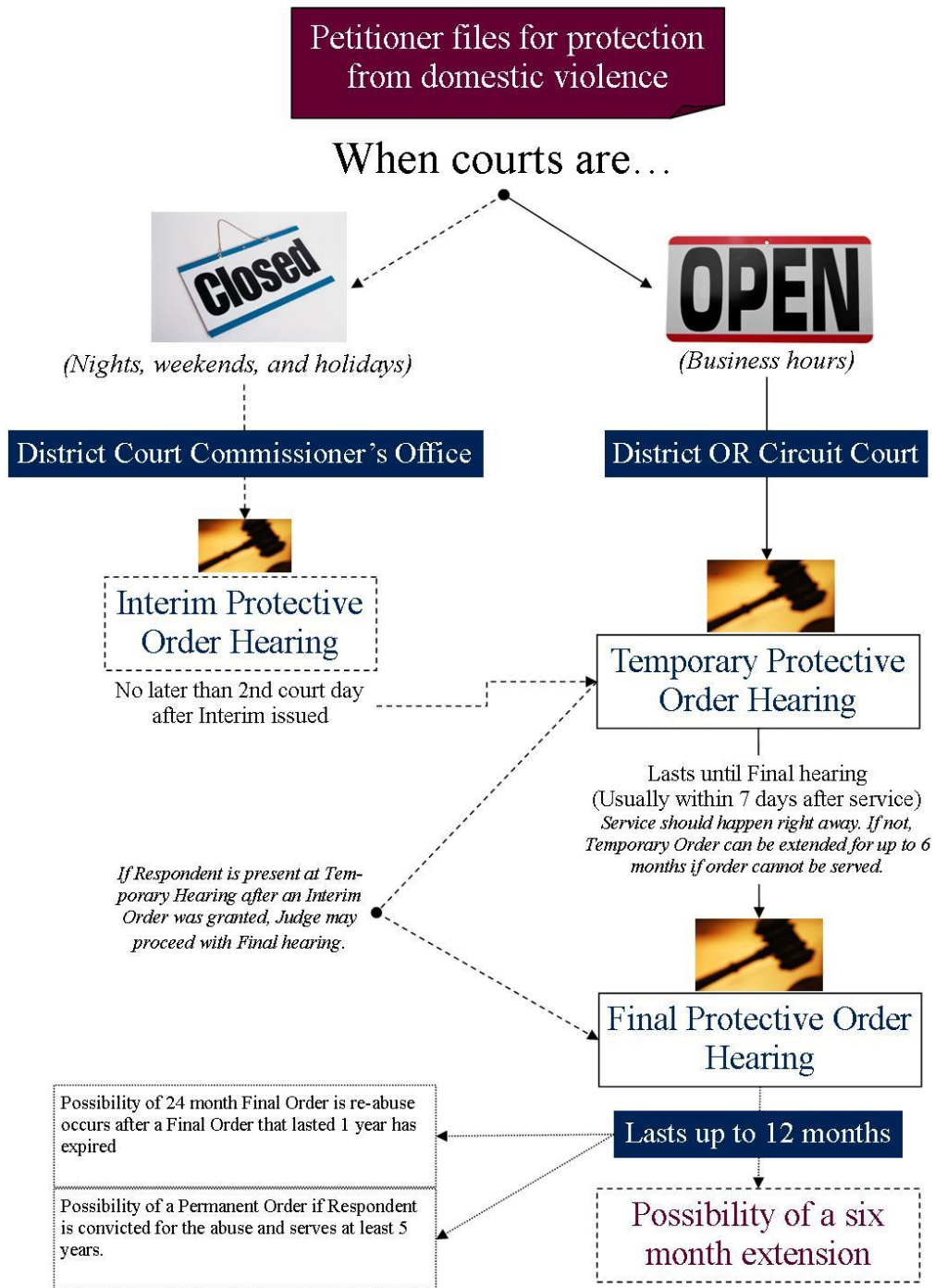
Website: nwnetwork.org

Appendix B: Peace and Protective Order Flow Chart

Flow Chart for Peace Orders



Flow Chart for Protective Orders



Appendix D: Tip Cards for Survivors

You may cut or copy these tip cards for LGBT survivors.

LGBT Survivor Tip Card
IF YOU ARE ARRESTED...

- You DO NOT need to reason with or explain yourself to the police. You may invoke your right to STAY SILENT.
- You can ASK FOR A LAWYER immediately. You do not have to talk to anyone in law enforcement until you have talked with a lawyer.
- You may try to DOCUMENT any injuries you might have or statements made by your partner. Even if you do not choose to take action now, this information may be useful in the future.

Domestic Violence 24 Hour Hotlines

In Maryland	Howard: 410-997-2272
Allegany: 301-759-9244	Montgomery Co.: 240-777-4673
Anne Arundel: 410-222-6800	Prince George's Co.: 301-731-1203
Baltimore City: 410-889-7884	St. Mary's: 301-863-6661
Balt. Co.: 410-828-6390	Somerset/Wicomico/Worcester
Calvert: 410-535-1121	410-749-4357
Carroll: 410-857-0077	Washington: 301-739-8975
Caroline/Kent/Dor./Q. Anne/Talbot	
800-927-4673	National LGBT-Specific DV Resources
Cecil: 410-996-0333	Northwest Network: 206-568-7777
Charles: 301-645-3336	Trevor Project (youth): 1-866-488-7386
Frederick: 301-622-8800	The Network La Red: 617-742-4911
Harford: 410-836-8430	Anti-Violence Project: 212-714-1141