



Surviving Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Cyber Harassment: Know Your Legal Rights Under VASPA

A Manual By:



TRANSFORMING
LIVES THROUGH
JUSTICE



Jewish Family Service
of MetroWest New Jersey

Rachel
COALITION
RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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The information in this manual is published as a public education service to help explain laws in New Jersey. It does not constitute legal advice, which can only be given by an attorney.

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WHY THIS BOOKLET WAS CREATED

Sexual violence, stalking, and cyber-harassment affects millions of people across the world and anyone can be a victim. Many victims keep it a secret, sometimes feeling that the abuse is their fault or something they must handle on their own. Often victims of sexual violence live alone in a world of isolation and shame. These feelings are common to victims who live in the city, the suburbs, or the country, to victims who are rich, poor, or middle class, to victims who are employed, at home, or retired, to victims who are teenage, middle age, or elderly, to victims who attend a church, a synagogue, a mosque, a temple, or have no religious affiliation.

Within each community, there are special questions and concerns that a victim may face when considering taking steps to end the abuse. Will people condemn the victim who reveals what happened? Will the victim be believed? What will the court process be like? What will be gained and what will be lost? Will the victim be safe? Can anybody help?

In January 2024, the Victim's Assistance and Survivors Protection Act (VASPA) was expanded to protect more people from their harm-doers. We seek to make the law and its protections more broadly known so that more victims can use the law to find safety from their abusers.

Partners is a non-profit organization founded in 2002 in Montclair, New Jersey. Its mission is to empower limited-income survivors of domestic and sexual violence to build safe and secure futures for themselves and their children by providing equal access to justice. Partners offers quality legal assistance in domestic and sexual violence and related family law matters

Rachel Coalition is a division of Jewish Family Service of MetroWest that provides counseling and legal services and support programs for victims of domestic violence. Rachel Coalition is comprised of a team of attorneys who provide legal representation in final restraining order hearings and other family law matters; social workers who provide individual and group counseling for victims and their children; and advocates who provide advocacy and support in court, as well as referrals for shelters and other support services. Since 1997, Rachel Coalition has enabled victims to create futures free of violence and fear.

This booklet is an effort to provide information to help victims of sexual violence, stalking and cyber-harassment. In this booklet, we explain the laws that offer protection and the steps you can take to make the laws work for you. An extensive list of useful resources can be found in the last pages of this booklet.

Remember, you are not the only one and you are not alone. People are here to help!

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW JERSEY VICTIM'S ASSISTANCE AND SURVIVOR PROTECTION ACT (VASPA)

To be legally protected under the New Jersey Victim's Assistance and Survivor Protection Act (VASPA), you must meet three conditions.

CONDITION #1:

Your relationship with the abuser must NOT be covered under the NJ Prevention of Domestic Violence Act.

If your relationship is covered under the New Jersey Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, you must file for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) and NOT a Temporary Protection Order (TPO) under VASPA.

Relationships covered under the New Jersey Prevention of Domestic Violence Act:

- current or former household member AND **you** are 18 years of age or older or emancipated*
- current or former spouse
- you and the abuser have a child in common or are expecting a baby
- current or former dating relationship

If you are a minor and the abuser is your parent, guardian, or caretaker, you may not file under VASPA. You may report the incident to the NJ State Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P, formerly DYFS) (1-877-652-2873).

You may only file under VASPA if the abuser is 18 years or older or emancipated.* If the abuser is an unemancipated minor, you may seek a protective order under the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice. THERE IS NO MINIMUM AGE FOR THE VICTIM.

If the victim is less than 18 years of age or has a developmental disability or mental disease that makes it so the victim does not understand the nature of the conduct, the parents or guardian MAY file on their behalf.

**A person is emancipated when declared so by the Court, has joined the military service, has married, has become a parent, or is pregnant.*

CONDITION #2:

Under VASPA, you may file for a Protective Order if you have experienced any of the following:

Nonconsensual sexual penetration - rape or unwanted penetration, including vaginal, anal, or oral sex, or penetration with a finger or any other object either by the abuser or on the abuser's instruction.

Nonconsensual sexual contact - unwanted sexual touching by either the victim or the abuser, either directly or through clothing, of the victim's or abuser's intimate parts for the purpose of degrading or humiliating the victim or sexually arousing or gratifying the abuser.

Nonconsensual lewdness - exposure of intimate parts for the purpose of arousing or gratifying the sexual desire of the abuser or of any other person.

Attempt – an attempt at any of the above acts is also grounds for seeking a TPO.

Stalking – on two or more occasions, watching you, following you, observing you, communicating with you, threatening you, harassing you, or interfering with your property. Stalking makes you reasonably fear for your safety or the safety of someone else, or suffer other emotional distress.

Cyber-harassment – communicating online, through a social networking site, or through an electronic device and with the purpose to harass you, that involves:

- threatening physical harm to you or your property,
- knowingly sending, posting, or proposing any lewd, indecent, or obscene material to or about you with the intent to emotionally harm you or place you in fear of physical or emotional harm or threatening to commit any crime against you or your property.

CONDITION #3:

To grant a Final Protective Order (FPO), the Court must find a possibility of future risk to your safety or well-being.

The Court shall not deny the FPO due to:

- You didn't report the incident to the police;

- You were drunk or using drugs;
- You didn't leave the place where the incident occurred;
- You had no signs of physical injury.

STARTING THE PROCESS TO GET A PROTECTIVE ORDER FROM THE COURT

HOW CAN THE LAW HELP TO PROTECT ME IF I HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF CYBER-HARASSMENT, STALKING, NONCONSENSUAL LEWDNESS, NONCONSENSUAL SEXUAL CONTACT, OR NONCONSENSUAL SEXUAL PENETRATION?

In New Jersey, victims of the VASPA crimes have a right to pursue civil remedies, such as a Protective Order, or criminal penalties, or both.

WHAT IS A PROTECTIVE ORDER?

A Protective Order is a legally enforceable document that prevents the abuser from contacting you in any way, and requires that person to stay away from you, your home, your school, and your workplace

A Protective Order does not result in the abuser having a criminal record but it can provide greater safety for you. However, if the abuser violates a Protective Order, that is a crime.

GETTING A PROTECTIVE ORDER IS A TWO-STEP PROCESS:

1. First, you apply for a Temporary Protective Order (TPO) either at Family Court or through the Court's Judicial Electronic Document System (JEDS), which can be found at: <https://www.njcourts.gov/self-help/jeds>. The abuser is not present when you apply for a TPO. After you are issued a TPO, the police or sheriff's officers (and not you) will attempt to serve the abuser with a copy of the TPO.
2. Within approximately 10 days, you will be scheduled to appear in Family Court at a hearing to determine whether your TPO will be made final and converted to a Final Protective Order (FPO).

HOW CAN I GET A TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER (TPO)?

To File Electronically: You can file electronically through JEDS, which can be found at: <https://www.njcourts.gov/self-help/jeds>. In JEDS, select the county where you would like to file your application. You

may file in the county where the abuse happened, where the abuser lives, or where you live or are sheltered.

The electronic application can be found at: https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/13133%20vaspa_combined_kit.pdf.

If you submit the application through JEDS during the normal court business hours, the Family Division staff will contact you at the telephone number or email address that you provided in your application to inform you of the time of the hearing, which normally will be the same day that you submitted your application.

To File In Person: You may also file in the county Family Court where the abuse happened, where you live, where the abuser lives, or where you are sheltered.

Between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, you can go to your county's Family Court and tell a court employee that you are there to request a TPO. A Family Court intake employee will give you papers to fill out and ask you to describe what happened. You will need to testify before a judge or hearing officer and show that a TPO is necessary to protect your safety and well-being.

When the Family Court Domestic Violence Unit intake is closed, you should file electronically through JEDS. The court staff will contact you on the next business day to inform you of the time of the hearing.

WHAT CAN I ASK THE JUDGE FOR AT THE HEARING FOR A TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER?

If you are granted a TPO, the judge will order any or all of the following temporary relief:

- The abuser is prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any future act of nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual penetration, lewdness, stalking, or cyber-harassment against you.
- The abuser is prohibited from:
 - having any contact with you, including oral, written, personal, electronic or any other form of contact either directly or through someone else.
 - following or threatening to harm, stalk or follow you.
 - committing or attempting to commit an act of harassment against you.

- The abuser must stay away from you, your home, your school and workplaces.

You may also ask the judge to require the abuser to stay 500 to 1000 feet away from you; other people that you request; and other locations you are concerned about, such as your children's school or day care.

- The abuser must also stay away from the home, school and workplaces of your family or people who live in your home. The abuser is prohibited from having any contact with other people that the judge adds to the TPO, including oral, written, personal, electronic or any other form of contact either directly or through someone else.

WHAT DO I PUT IN THE COMPLAINT FOR A TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER?

You must list all the facts of the incident that happened that made you file the for protection. For example, the details of any unwanted sexual contact, including any physical assault that occurred during the incident such as punching or pulling hair. Also include facts such as: threatening to kill you; following you to work, home, school, or a store; or harassing behavior online, if they happened. If the abuser used a weapon to hurt or attempt to hurt you, include this in the complaint. If you needed medical treatment for your injuries, this information should also be added.

Even if you have never filed a complaint or reported an incident before, you should include in the complaint any previous incidents of sexual violence, stalking or cyber-harassment against you by the abuser.

It is important to read the typed complaint carefully before signing it to make sure you do not miss anything and that the information is accurate.

HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE A JUDGE OR HEARING OFFICER?

There is no way to tell how long it will take for you to see a judge or hearing officer on any particular day. Go to the courthouse as early as possible. You may have to spend an entire workday at the courthouse, so notify your employer beforehand. Be prepared in the event your wait is a long one. Arrange for a safe place for your children to stay while you are in court.

CAN I GET A TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER (TPO) IF I AM SICK AND CONFINED TO BED OR IF I HAVE A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY?

Yes. A TPO can be issued upon sworn testimony or the complaint of a representative of a victim who is physically or mentally incapable of filing.

WHAT IF I AM NOT A U.S. CITIZEN?

You are entitled to obtain a Protective Order even if you are not a U.S. citizen and even if you do not have legal status to be in the U.S. The law in New Jersey was written for the protection of all victims. You may want to seek legal advice from a lawyer who specializes in immigration law (see resource list in the back of the booklet).

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I RECEIVE A TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER (TPO)?

A TPO is a legal document that contains the orders of the judge. You will receive a copy that you should keep in your possession at all times. The police department and the court receive a copy. You should not contact the abuser or give them the TPO. Law enforcement is responsible for serving the abuser with the TPO, along with the date for the final hearing. The abuser must be served with the papers in order to know to stay away from you and anyone else protected by the TPO.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PROTECTIVE ORDER FINAL

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO) HEARING?

Usually within 10 days of the date of the Temporary Protective Order (TPO), you will have to appear in Family Court for the final hearing. You will have the opportunity to tell the judge all of the things that happened that caused you to get the TPO. The abuser will probably be in court at this time and have an opportunity to testify. There will be protection for you in the courtroom and in the courthouse. If you are fearful because the abuser is there, tell the court officer. If you need an escort to accompany you out of the courthouse because you are afraid, ask the court officer to provide one for you.

If your abuser does not appear in court at the final hearing, the judge may still grant the FPO after hearing your testimony, as long as

there is proof that the abuser has been served notice of the hearing. If there is no proof that the abuser has been served, then the judge may issue an Indefinite TPO. An Indefinite TPO continues the protection of the TPO until the abuser is served. If the abuser is ever served with the TPO, the court will notify you to appear for an FPO hearing and you must go to court.

If you change your address, it is very important that you notify the Domestic Violence Unit at the Family Court so that you can be contacted.

If you do not appear in court at the final hearing, the judge may reschedule a second hearing or may dismiss the case. If there is a reason you cannot attend the hearing, contact the judge's chambers or the Domestic Violence Unit to inform them of the reason. If you do not appear a second time, the judge may dismiss the case.

DO I NEED A LAWYER AT THE FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO) HEARING?

You do not need a lawyer (sometimes called "attorney" or "counsel") for an FPO hearing, but it is always helpful to have one with you or to get legal advice before you go to court. If your abuser has a lawyer, or if it is a complicated case, it is advisable to bring a lawyer with you. If you appear in court without a lawyer, you may ask the judge to adjourn your case to give you time to get a lawyer.

WHAT MUST I BE PREPARED TO TELL THE JUDGE AT THE FPO HEARING?

Be prepared to tell the judge **in detail**:

- What the abuser did that caused you to file for a TPO. This may include any of the acts or attempted acts listed on pages 5–6.
- Any physical injuries, if applicable, such as bruises, swelling, redness, pain, hair loss.
- Any emotional effect of the incidents and any future risk to your safety or well-being.

To support your claims of abuse, it is helpful if you can bring any evidence such as:

- Witnesses to the incident (not a letter from the witness).
- Medical reports.

- Police reports.
- Voicemails or audio/video recordings.
- Printouts of texts, e-mails, or phone logs.
- Printouts of any other evidence of stalking and/or cyber-harassment
- Photographs of injuries, printed out if possible.

WHAT CAN I ASK THE JUDGE FOR IN THE FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO)?

If the judge decides that you are entitled to an FPO, the judge will order the following:

- The abuser is prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any future act of nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual penetration, lewdness, stalking, or cyber-harassment against you.
- The abuser is prohibited from:
 - having any contact with you, including oral, written, personal, electronic or any other form of contact either directly or through someone else.
 - following or threatening to harm, stalk or follow you.
 - committing or attempting to commit an act of harassment against you.

- The abuser must stay away from you, your home, your school and workplaces.

You may also ask the judge to require the abuser to stay 500 to 1000 feet away from you; other people that you request; and other locations you are concerned about, such as your children's school or day care, or family members' homes.

- The abuser must also stay away from the home, school and workplaces of your family or people who live in your home. The abuser is prohibited from having any contact with other people that the judge adds to the TPO, including oral, written, personal, electronic or any other form of contact either directly or through someone else.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER I RECEIVE A FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO)?

You will receive a copy of the FPO after the hearing. The FPO is enforceable throughout the United States.

It is important that you consider doing the following:

- Review the order BEFORE you leave the courtroom. If something is wrong or missing, ask the court clerk to correct the FPO before you leave.
- Keep a copy of the FPO with you at all times.
- Make several copies of the FPO to leave in safe places in case you need it. Keep a copy at your job, one at your home, and one in your car.
- Consider giving a copy to the security guard where you live and/or work and to a trusted neighbor and/or friend.
- Give a copy to friends or relatives who are named and protected in the FPO.

Make sure your local police have a copy of the FPO.

Also see the Safety Planning section on page 20.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CHANGE MY FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO)?

If circumstances have changed in any way since the court issued the FPO, you may request to modify it. Examples of reasons to modify include changes in:

- Issues that were not addressed at the original FPO hearing.
- Locations from which abuser should be barred.
- Persons that needed to be added to the FPO.

HOW DO I MODIFY MY FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO)?

In order to modify your FPO, you may file an Application for Modification. The form can be found here: https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/13142_vaspa_only_mod_kit.pdf. You can either submit this form via JEDS at <https://www.njcourts.gov/self-help/jeds> OR you can bring it to the Domestic Violence Unit of the Family Court that issued your FPO.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO) AND THE ABUSER DOES NOT LEAVE ME ALONE?

A violation of the stay away and no contact provisions of the FPO is a crime. If the abuser contacts you or tries to contact you in any way or commits a new act prohibited under VASPA, call the police immediately. The abuser must be arrested. You can also file an Application to Enforce, which can be found here: https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/13142_vaspa_only_mod_kit.pdf. You can either submit this form via JEDS at <https://www.njcourts.gov/self-help/jeds> OR you can bring it to the Domestic Violence Unit of the Family Court that issued your FPO.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND AND WANT TO DROP THE FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER (FPO)?

In New Jersey, FPOs do not expire. If you want to dismiss the FPO, you must go back to court specifically to request a dismissal. Because the court system wants to make sure that you are making this decision of your own free will and are not doing it because you are being coerced or threatened in any way, the court will arrange for you to speak privately with a trained advocate. The advocate will explore with you your decision to request dismissal of the FPO. You will need to show a photo ID. You will then appear in front of a judge who may ask you questions to ensure that you have not been coerced.

DO NOT agree to dismiss your FPO unless you have been provided with the opportunity to speak to a trained advocate who can help you determine if this is the course of action you truly want to take.

OTHER TYPES OF PROTECTION

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A VASPA PROTECTIVE ORDER AND A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDER?

VASPA Protective Orders (POs) are similar to DV Restraining Orders (ROs), but there are some key differences:

1. The lack of a domestic relationship. To qualify for a VASPA PO, you must **not** have a relationship that is covered by the domestic violence laws. See page 5 for a full list of relationships. If you have a qualifying relationship with the abuser, then you cannot seek a VASPA PO, and instead can apply for a DV RO.

2. VASPA provides protection for child victims. There is no minimum age for a victim to obtain a TPO. If the victim is a child, the victim's parent or guardian can apply for the order on behalf of the victim.
3. VASPA TPOs must be applied for through the county Family Court. Unlike DV ROs, you cannot get a TPO at the police station.
4. A judge can order much more relief on a DV FRO as compared to a VASPA FPO. For example, VASPA FPOs do not restrict the abuser's gun ownership/use, do not require abusers to be fingerprinted, and do not impose a civil penalty on abuser.

WHAT IS A CRIMINAL NO CONTACT ORDER?

A Criminal No Contact Order can be issued by the criminal court judge when an abuser has been arrested and is then released from jail while the criminal case is going on.

You cannot directly ask for this protection because it can only be requested by the Prosecutor's Office handling the criminal case. Unlike a FPO, which can stay in place forever, the Criminal No Contact Order will only be in effect until the criminal trial is over, so it is temporary protection.

WHAT IS A SEXUAL OFFENSE RESTRAINING ORDER (SORO) UNDER NICOLE'S LAW?

Nicole's Law provides for a type of restraining order that can be issued by a criminal court judge. The Sexual Offense Restraining Order (SORO) covers more acts than VASPA does, including not only Sexual Assault and Criminal Sexual Contact, but also Endangering the Welfare of a Child, Luring or Enticing, Kidnapping, Criminal Restraint, False Imprisonment, and Promoting Child Prostitution.

You cannot directly ask for this protection because it can only be requested by the Prosecutor's Office handling the criminal case. Also, you will only have the protection so long as the abuser is arrested or convicted for one of the listed acts. If the Prosecutor dismisses the charges or downgrades the charges to an act not listed above, the SORO will not be in effect. Often, these decisions about the criminal charges are made even if the victim doesn't agree with them.

ABUSE AND THE CRIMINAL COURT

Separate from the Final Protective Order process, you or the police may also file criminal charges against the abuser because acts under

VASPA are also criminal acts. The purpose of a Final Protective Order is for the safety of the victim. The purpose of criminal charges is to punish and hold the abuser criminally accountable for the acts.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PROTECTIVE ORDER AND A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT?

Protective Order: When you apply for a Temporary Protective Order, you are asking the court for protection from the abuser. The issuance of a Temporary or Final Protective Order does not give the abuser a criminal record and does not cause the abuser to go to jail unless the abuser violates the order. If the abuser violates the no-contact portion of the Temporary or Final Protective Order, the abuser may be immediately arrested and brought to court.

Criminal Complaint: A criminal complaint accuses the abuser of committing a crime. If the abuser is convicted, the court may punish them by putting them in jail, placing them on probation, issuing a fine, or ordering them to perform community service.

WILL FILING CRIMINAL CHARGES PROTECT ME?

After criminal charges have been filed, the abuser may be released from custody or may be held in jail until the criminal trial. If released, the abuser may be prohibited from having any contact with you. While this criminal no-contact order is enforceable, once the criminal case is resolved, the criminal no-contact order will dissolve. The criminal no-contact order is designed to only be in effect until the charges are resolved.

IF CRIMINAL CHARGES ARE FILED, WHAT KIND OF NOTICE CAN I EXPECT TO RECEIVE?

You will receive a notice in the mail about the location of the criminal court and the time and date you are to appear. Because you may receive mail from both the Family Court and the Criminal Court, make sure you read the notice carefully so that you know which court to attend on which date. For more information, contact the prosecutor handling the criminal charge.

WILL I NEED A LAWYER TO HANDLE THESE PROCEDURES?

You do not need your own lawyer in Criminal Court if you are the victim. You can contact the prosecutor if you have any questions. However, if a criminal complaint has also been filed against you, then you may need or want to have your own lawyer.

CREATING A SAFETY PLAN

A safety plan is a tool to help you identify possible ways to protect yourself and your children and family members. The measures you take to increase your safety are the most important things you can do.

It is possible that the abuser may become more dangerous when realizing that you have filed for a TPO or criminal charges. You should be well prepared with a safety plan.

Take time to develop your own plan using strategies that are useful to you. Call a sexual assault agency or a domestic violence agency for help. See pages 26–30.

DEVELOP A SAFETY PLAN IN ADVANCE

1. Plan how you will leave your home in an emergency. Practice how to get out quickly. Decide which doors, windows, stairwell, or fire escape you will need to use.
2. Plan where you will stay if you need to leave in a hurry. Make arrangements beforehand such as to stay with a friend or family member. Set aside money for a hotel or have the telephone number for a shelter.
3. Obtain a cell phone. If you cannot afford cell phone service, most police departments, sexual assault agencies, and domestic violence programs can provide a free cell phone programmed only for emergency calls. Keep your cell phone charged.
4. Keep the number(s) for the nearest sexual assault hotline on hand near the telephones in your home, in your purse and car, and programmed into your cell phone. The hotline numbers can be found at the end of this booklet.
5. Gather and store clothing for yourself and your children in a hidden area in the house or at a friend's or relative's home.
6. Gather important papers and other necessities and store copies of them in a secret place away from your home.

SAFETY PLAN CHECKLIST

Identification Papers

- ☐ Birth Certificates
- ☐ Social Security Cards
- ☐ Green Cards/Visas
- ☐ Passports
- ☐ School Records
- ☐ Driver's License, Car Registration, Insurance Card

Legal Information

- ☐ Police Reports
- ☐ Copy of Protective Orders

Financial Information

- ☐ Money/Credit Cards
- ☐ Income Tax Returns
- ☐ Wage/Income Information
- ☐ Bank Account Information

Medical Information

- ☐ Vaccination Records
- ☐ Medical Insurance Cards
- ☐ Medications/Medical Records
- ☐ Prescriptions

Other

- ☐ Set of House Keys/Car Keys
- ☐ Cell Phone Charger
- ☐ Suitcase with Clothes

Leave copies of the original documents with a friend or relative.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY TIPS

1. Change all your phone numbers and add a call-screening service to your phone.
2. Change your email address as well as your online passwords, security questions, and PIN codes.
3. Limit your use of social media and make sure your privacy settings on your social networking pages are up-to-date.
4. Get a new computer, if possible. If you cannot get a new computer, take steps to delete spyware on your computer.
5. Inform neighbors/landlord that they should contact the police if they see the abuser near your home.
6. After getting a Temporary or Final Protective Order, keep it with you at all times. Keep copies at work, at the children's schools, with a family member or friend.
7. Make safety arrangements at work, such as being walked to and from the parking lot, having your calls screened, and notifying the security guards about the potential for danger.
8. Where possible, avoid familiar locations (such as stores and restaurants) where the abuser will be likely to look for you.

VICTIM SERVICES

There are many services available for VASPA victims throughout New Jersey, including emergency assistance, shelters, counseling, advocacy programs, and financial and legal assistance. These types of services are described below. Contact information for specific organizations can be found in the last few pages of this booklet.

1. EMERGENCY PROGRAMS:

- **Sexual Assault Hotlines** provide emergency information and support for victims 24/7.
- **Shelter Services** offer emergency housing and support for victims 24/7.

2. COUNSELING SERVICES:

There are specialized counseling programs throughout New Jersey. Should you seek counseling at mental health centers, be sure to ask if the counselor has special training or experience in working with those affected by VASPA crimes because not all therapists are familiar with the dynamics of abuse, harassment, or stalking.

3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO): VCCO may provide money to crime victims for such needs as:

- Moving expenses
- Medical expenses
- Counseling expenses
- Lost wages of a certain amount per week for a period of time
- Attorney fees

To qualify for this assistance, you will need to show that you have filed a criminal report on the abuse incident and you will be asked to fill out an application for VCCO's review. Visit <https://vcco3.lps.nj.gov/> to apply online or call toll free 877-658-2221 or (973) 648-2107.

4. LEGAL ASSISTANCE:

When seeking legal assistance, it is important to ask if the lawyer has had experience and/or training regarding VASPA. There are a few legal services and nonprofit organizations that provide free representation and/or legal advice for individuals who are low income and qualify for these services.

5. ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM (ACP):

New Jersey has established a statewide program for victims whereby they can use as their address a post office box that is maintained by the state. To apply, contact the Address Confidentiality Office. The ACP will review the application and issue an ACP authorization card. For more information, please contact the ACP at 1-877-218-9133.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT VASPA:

Office of the Attorney General:

https://www.nj.gov/oag/viva/docs/2024-0404_VIVA_VASPA.pdf

Legal Services of NJ Law (LSNJLAW):

<https://www.lsnjlaw.org/legal-topics/family-relationships/>

SPARC (Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center):

<https://www.stalkingawareness.org/about-sparc/>

NJ Coalition Against Sexual Assault:

<https://njcasa.org/find-help/vaspa/#:~:text=In%20effect%20as%20of%202024,person%20who%20caused%20them%20harm.>

<https://njcasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/SAVBOR.pdf>

Office of Justice Programs:

https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/pubs/helpseries/HelpBrochure_Stalking.html

VICTIMS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BY COUNTY

Each county in New Jersey has primary domestic and sexual violence agencies that provides a 24-hour hotline, a shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, and other services. The national domestic violence hotline will connect you to your local provider. Hearing impaired victims may dial 711 to connect to any domestic violence program.

NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE

Toll free: 800-656-HOPE (4673)

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

Toll free: 800-799-SAFE (7233)

Hearing Impaired: 800-787-3224

ATLANTIC COUNTY RESOURCES:

The Women's Center of Atlantic County:

800-286-4184

Women's Health Resources:

<https://www.atlanticcountynj.gov/government/county-departments/departments-of-human-services/division-of-public-health/health-topics/women-s-health-resources>

Avanzar:

800-286-4184

<https://avanzarnow.org/>

BERGEN COUNTY RESOURCES:

healingSPACE: 201-487-2227

<https://www.ywcannj.org>

Center for Hope and Safety:

(201) 498-9247

Administrative Office: (201) 498-9247

Shelter Program Office: (201) 836-1075

BURLINGTON COUNTY RESOURCES:

CONTACT of Burlington County

856-600-4800

<https://www.contactburlco.org>

Providence House:

<https://www.catholiccharitiestrenton.org/>
or call (877) 871-7551 or (609) 871-7551

Camden County Resources:**Services Empowering Rights of Victims (SERV), Center for Family Services**

866-295-7378

<https://www.centerffs.org/serv>

Camden County Domestic Violence Center:

call 856-227-1243

Cape May County Resources:**C.A.R.A.**

877-294-2272

cara-cmc.org

Cumberland County Resources:**Center for Family Services: Services Empowering Rights of Victims (SERV): 1-866-295-7378****Essex County Resources:****SAVE of Essex County:**

<https://www.familyserviceleague.org/save-of-essex>

Essex County Rape Care Center hotline:

877-733-2273

Essex County FJC:

<https://www.essexcountyfjc.org/>

Essex County Safe House (DV Shelter Hotline):

call 973-759-2154

Gloucester County Resources:**Services Empowering Rights of Victims (SERV):**

<https://www.centerffs.org/serv/domestic-violence-services>

or call hotline at 866-295-7378

Hudson County Resources:

Hudson SPEAKS

201-795-5757

<https://www.hudsonspeaks.com/>

Women Rising:

<https://www.womenrising.org/about-us>

or call at 201-333-5700

Hunterdon County Resources:

Safe in Hunterdon:

<https://safeinhunterdon.org/>

or call at 908-788-4044

Mercer County Resources:

Younity (formerly Womanspace):

<https://younitynj.org/>

or call crisis line at 609.394.9000

Middlesex County Resources:

Middlesex County Center for Empowerment:

hotline: 1-877-665-7273

Women Aware:

<https://womenaware.net/>

or hotline calls at 732-249-4504

Monmouth County Resources:

180 Turning Lives Around:

<https://180nj.org/get-help/emergency-hotline-shelter/>

DV Hotline: (888) 843-9262

SV Hotline: (888) 264-7273

Morris County Resources:

Morris County Sexual Assault Center

973-829-0587

<https://www.atlantichealth.org>

Morris County FJC:

<https://morrisfjc.org/contact-us/>

JBWS:

<https://jbws.org/>

or call at 973-267-7520

Ocean County Resources:**St. Francis Counseling Service**

609-494-1090

<https://www.stfranciscenterlbi.org>

Passaic County Resources:**Passaic County Domestic and Sexual Violence Services**

973.881.1450

<https://www.passaiccountywomenscenter.org>

Salem County Resources:**Salem County Women's Services:**

<https://salemcountywomensservices.org/>

or hotline at (856) 935-6655

Somerset County Resources:**Safe+Sound:**

<https://safe-sound.org/>

Call or text helpline at: 866-685-1122

Sussex County Resources:**Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Intervention (DASI) Services:**

<https://www.dasi.org/what-we-do.php>

or call helpline at 973-875-1211

Union County Resources:**Union County Rape Crisis Center**

908.233.7273

https://unioncountyrapecrisiscenter.blogspot.com/p/services_13.html

Union County FJC:

(908) 355-4357

<https://unioncountyfjc.org/>

Warren County Resources:

Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Warren County:

<https://www.tricountyresourcenet.org/search/domestic-abuse-sexual-assault-crisis-center-of-warren-county/>

or call at (908) 453-4181

STATE OF NEW JERSEY RESOURCES

NEW JERSEY STATE SV HOTLINE

800-601-7200

NEW JERSEY STATE DV HOTLINE

800-572-SAFE (7233)

Legal Services and Consultations

Partners

973-233-0111

Rachel Coalition

973-740-1233

Legal Services of New Jersey DV Representation Project

888-576-5529

New Jersey State Bar Association

732-249-5000

Immigration Legal Services and Consultations

American Friends Immigration Rights Program

973-643-1924

Catholic Charities Immigration Services

973-733-3516

Legal Services of New Jersey Immigration Rights Program

888-576-5529

Statewide Services

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJ CASA)

800-601-7200

Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO)
877-658-2221

New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence
609-584-8107

Project Sarah (Orthodox Jewish Community)
973-777-7638

Manavi (South Asian Community)
732-435-1414

Division of Women, Prevention of Violence
609-888-7164

Division of Child Protection and Permanency
800-792-8610

Adult Protection Services (Elderly)
800-222-3737

National Sexual Assault Hotline
800-656-4673

Mental Health Association of New Jersey
800-367-0636

VICTIM WEBSITE RESOURCES

Rachel Coalition
www.rachelcoalition.org

Partners
www.partnersnj.org

NJ Coalition Against Sexual Assault
www.njcasa.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.ncadv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
www.ndvh.org

National Center on Elder Abuse

<https://ncea.acl.gov>

American Bar Association

www.abanet.org/domviol

New Jersey State Bar Foundation

www.njsbf.org

New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence

www.njcedv.org

Violence Against Women Library

www.vawnet.org

Womens Law

<https://www.womenslaw.org/>

If you do not own your own computer or have access to one, go to your public library.

Safety Alert: Computer use can be monitored. If you are afraid that your home computer might be monitored, please use a safer computer, such as one at a library, or call your local hotline.

PARTNERS SERVICES

Legal Services

- Legal Advice/Representation Domestic and Sexual Violence, including DV Restraining Orders and VASPA Protective Orders
- Legal Advice/Representation Custody, Visitation, Support
- Workshops/Clinics in Family Law and Domestic Violence
- Pro Bono Lawyer Training

Community Services

- Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy
- Women's Issues Advocacy

For more information, call 973-233-0111



TRANSFORMING
LIVES THROUGH
JUSTICE

RACHEL COALITION SERVICES

Legal Services

- Legal Consultation and Representation
- Court Advocacy
- Legal Referrals

Counseling/Evaluation

- Individual
- Family
- Group

Community Services

- Volunteer Training
- Community Education Programs

Crisis Intervention

- 24-hour Response
- Case Management
- Shelter Referrals

For more information, call 973-746-2131



Jewish Family Service
of MetroWest New Jersey

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COALITION
RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



TRANSFORMING
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Surviving Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Cyber Harassment: Know Your Legal Rights Under VASPA

To download free copies, visit Partners' website at www.partnersnj.org or the Rachel Coalition's website at www.rachelcoalition.org.