

## Getting Help: Advocacy and Resources

### National Domestic Violence Hotline

For assistance with legal advocacy and other services such as safety planning, shelter and support, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline to be connected to a family violence program in your area:

**1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**

Hearing advocates at the National Domestic Violence Hotline are on duty 24 hours

**1-800-787-3224 TTY or  
1-800-799-SAFE (7233) Voice**

### Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services

Video Phone Only for Deaf Callers:  
**(206) 787-3224**

<http://www.adwas.org/index.htm>

National Hotline-Deaf Advocates on duty

9am-5pm, Monday-Friday

IM: ADWASHotline

Email: ADWAS@ndvh.org

### Texas Advocacy Project

For assistance with legal advocacy and information, including your rights in court, please call the Texas Advocacy Project's Family Violence Legal Line:

**1-800-374-HOPE (4673)**

### TexasLawHelp.org

For assistance with free and low-cost civil legal assistance in Texas, visit:

<http://texaslawhelp.org/TX/index.cfm>



The Texas Council on Family Violence extends its gratitude to the Texas Bar Foundation for funding this publication.



*We the People...*  
*我々、一体感で前進*  
*Nosotros, el Pueblo...*  
*Nous, le peuple...*  
*Wir, das Volk...*  
*Noi, Popolo...*  
*Nós, o Povo ...*  
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## Limited English Proficiency:

### From Rights to Reality

Access to Texas Courts for Survivors of Family Violence with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)



## What Are My Rights?

Victims of family violence face many obstacles when it comes to leaving an abusive relationship and seeking safety. Accessing the criminal and civil court systems for help with protective orders, divorce, and child custody are often part of the process. Language access can be an additional barrier to getting the help you need. If you are experiencing family violence and have limited English proficiency, you have the right to equal and meaningful access to the courts.

Persons with limited English proficiency include individuals who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English, which includes individuals who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.

### These Rights Include:

- The right to personal safety and a life free of violence and abuse.
- The right to the issuance and enforcement of protective orders regardless of language ability or immigration status.
- The right to legal representation and full protection of all legal rights.
- The right to an interpreter in any court proceeding without cost as mandated by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

## What Federal Laws Protect My Right to Equal Access to the Courts?

Recipients of federal funds must comply with federal laws. Texas criminal courts receive federal funding and must offer LEP populations equal access to the justice system through interpretation, translation and auxiliary aids such as a TDD, or Telecommunication Device for the D/deaf.

### Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964-

Prohibits national origin discrimination by recipients of federal funds. Different treatment based on a person's inability to speak English may be a type of national origin discrimination.

### Americans with Disabilities Act-

State entities are required to provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters or auxiliary aids to ensure effective communication with D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

### Executive Order 13166 issued in 2000-

Further emphasizes that recipients of federal funding must provide meaningful access to LEP persons, such as the right to an interpreter, to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and developed tools for recipients to use to offer meaningful access to LEP persons.

## What Texas State Laws Protect My Right to Equal Access to the Courts?

The state of Texas has additional laws to ensure that individuals with LEP have meaningful access to the civil and criminal court systems.

### Chapter 21 of the Civil Practice and Remedies Code-

In Civil Courts an interpreter must be provided for people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing and the expenses of the interpreter are paid by the county's general fund.

### Section 21.02 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code-

Along with mandating interpreters for people who are D/deaf and hard of hearing, this code allows for the discretion of judges in certain border counties to employ Spanish speaking interpreters in civil court proceedings.

### Section 57.002 of the Government Code-

A court shall appoint a certified court interpreter or a licensed court interpreter if requested by a party or by a witness in a civil or criminal proceeding in the court.

### Section 81.002 of the Family Code-

An applicant may not be assessed fees in connection with the filing, servicing or entering of protective orders or "a fee for any other service related to a protective order", which includes interpretation fees.