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**From:** Ashley Butler <ashleyb@180nj.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 20, 2021 9:50 AM  
**To:** Comments Mailbox  
**Subject:** [External]Future Court Operations (Virtual & In-person) - Comments  
**Attachments:** Future of Court Operations.pdf

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Good Morning,

My name is Ashley Butler, Program Coordinator of the Monmouth County Family Justice Center, part of 180 Turning Lives Around. I have attached below the comments on behalf of 180 Turning Lives Around in regard to future court operations post COVID-19. If you have any questions or concerns the email address to contact me is [ashleyb@180nj.org](mailto:ashleyb@180nj.org).

Thank you!

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July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021



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180 Turning Lives Around supports the idea of continuing virtual hearings, in addition to in-person hearings. Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault may face various barriers to attend in-person court. Some of these barriers may include lack of transportation, missing work, loss of earnings, and lack of childcare. The ability to have virtual hearings would break many of these barriers that victims face when attempting to obtain a restraining order or protective order. Many times, victims of domestic and sexual violence face financial burdens after their victimization. With that being said, victims are sometimes using their last dollar to pay for an attorney for their final restraining order or protective order hearing. Having virtual hearings lessens the costs of attorney fees. There are also victims of domestic and sexual violence who may no longer feel safe going into public spaces post COVID-19. Many individuals are still fearing for their health. In closing, 180 Turning Lives Around feels strongly that continuing virtual hearings post COVID-19 will benefit many victims of domestic and sexual violence seeking restraining orders and protection orders.