

**SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY  
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY VICINAGE**

Middlesex County Family Courthouse  
P.O. Box 2691  
New Brunswick, NJ 08903 - 2691

Gregory Edwards  
Trial Court Administrator  
732-519-3428

Luis M. Hernandez  
Ombudsman  
732-519-3344



**For immediate release:  
April 17, 2013**

**For further information contact:  
Luis Hernandez, Ombudsman  
732-519-3344**

**Safe House to Court Domestic Violence Safety Assistance  
Project Expands to Middlesex**

In an effort to help victims of domestic violence, Middlesex Vicinage has begun a program with Woman Aware in New Brunswick that helps domestic violence victims to apply for a temporary restraining order (TRO) at the safe house. Under the Safe House to Court Safety Assistance Project, victims can videoconference with a domestic violence hearing officer or judge to seek a TRO without traveling to the courthouse.

When a victim files for a restraining order from the safe house during court hours, a court professional conducts the initial interview and helps the victim complete the application for a restraining order using a phone or a videoconferencing system. If necessary, the court also will provide an interpreter. After the application is complete, the victim appears before a judge or hearing officer over the video network to discuss the case.

If the judge or hearing officer grants the TRO, court staff will fax it directly to the safe house for the victim's signature. After the hearing, the victim will receive additional information about the court process and other available resources. The victim will be given a date to appear in court to obtain a final restraining order.

The program provides important protection to victims of domestic violence. Social workers at the safe house will be able to support the victim through the process of obtaining the restraining order by videoconference with the court. The goal is to improve victim safety by allowing victims to have a TRO in place.

The Safe House to Court Safety Assistance Project and the Hospital to Court Safety Assistance Project were first introduced in the Passaic Vicinage and have expanded to include hospitals and safe houses in 14 counties.

The program is funded through a grant to the courts under the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

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If you require any accommodations as a result of a disability, please call 732-519-3207