



County of Fairfax, Virginia

NEWS RELEASE

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I-CAN! Online System Helps Fairfax County Residents File for Family Abuse Protective Orders

The Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC) has developed Fairfax-specific information for the Web-based I-CAN! (Interactive Community Assistance Network) system. The system was developed by the Supreme Court of Virginia. I-CAN! helps residents file Family Abuse Protective Orders by taking filers through the process step-by-step. I-CAN! is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It can be accessed through any computer that has Internet access, and there is a link to I-CAN! from the JDRDC Web page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/jdr. The JDRDC serves residents of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the towns of Herndon, Vienna and Clifton.

“The I-CAN! system is the result of a collaborative effort to provide an essential service to those in Fairfax County affected by domestic violence, including children and families,” said JDRDC Judge Gayl Carr. “I-CAN! is another resource available to Fairfax County residents who are in need of services.” Judge Carr headed a group of representatives from the courts, county agencies, state and community legal organizations that developed Fairfax-specific information for the I-CAN! system. Group members made sure information about available services and Fairfax court practices was accurate and complete. The Fairfax-specific information can be accessed on the I-CAN! site under “Additional filing information for a Family Abuse Protective Order.”

The I-CAN! system provides easy and convenient information and assistance in one place. Through responses to a series of questions, I-CAN! creates properly formatted petitions for a Family Abuse Protective Order that can be brought ready for filing to Intake (the Domestic Relations Services of Fairfax County’s JDRDC). I-CAN! can be accessed anywhere there is Internet availability – at home, a local library, a domestic violence shelter, an attorney’s office. The I-CAN! program also is available in Spanish; however, the Fairfax County-specific information posted on the Virginia I-CAN! Web site is currently available only in English. The county information explains court practices, the law and the steps for users to pursue their matter. Practical information includes how to find the JDRDC; what to expect in court; what time the court reviews petitions for protective orders; and how to access county and community-based resources, such as supportive services and legal assistance.

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I-CAN! Online System Helps Fairfax County Residents File for Family Abuse Protective Orders (cont.)

A Family Abuse Protective Order issued by a JDRDC judge can direct an abusive person to stop the abuse. It can further direct that person not to contact the person protected by the order and any of his/her family/household members. In addition, the abusive person can be prohibited from going near the protected party's residence or place of employment. More detailed information about Family Abuse Protective Orders is available on the JDRDC Web page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/jdr/jdrFamilyViolence.htm.

The Fairfax JDRDC I-CAN! work group included representatives from the Fairfax County JDRDC; Department of Systems Management for Human Services' Countywide Domestic Violence Coordinator; Women's Shelter; Police Department; Sheriff's Office; and the Public Library. Other work group members represented the Magistrate's Office; Foundation for Appropriate and Immediate Temporary Help; Office of the Public Defender; Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney; Shelter House; Legal Service of Northern Virginia; MacDowell and Associates PC; and the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

I-CAN! was created by the Legal Aid Society of Southern California and adapted for use in Virginia by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia through a Virginia Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution (VSTOP) grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Services. The system is currently in use by several Virginia localities. During the next year, the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia will be convening similar work groups across the state to assist other localities in developing the same type of detailed information as Fairfax County.

In addition to the I-CAN! link on the JDRDC Web page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/jdr, I-CAN! also can be accessed directly at the Supreme Court of Virginia's Web site www.courts.state.va.us under "Programs and Services, Assistance with Family Abuse Protective Orders."

For free, confidential 24-hour victim assistance in Fairfax County, residents may call the Fairfax County Women's Shelter at 703-435-4940 (voice/TTY) or the Fairfax County Victim Assistance Network at 703-360-7273, TTY 703-799-8253. For domestic abuse treatment services, residents may contact ADAPT (Anger and Domestic Abuse Prevention and Treatment) at 703-968-4052 or 703-471-6096 (24-hour), TTY 703-968-4050.

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