



Judicial Council of California

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January 19, 2024

Subject Text

Meeting materials
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File #: 15-401, Version: 1

Title

Domestic Violence: Preparing for Restraining Order Court Hearing (Action Required)

Summary

Form DV-520-INFO, *Get Ready for the Court Hearing*, has been available for optional use by courts to provide information to litigants about preparing for a domestic violence restraining order hearing. While courts report finding the form helpful, they have also identified problems--for both courts and litigants--with the form. Accordingly, the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends revising the form so that it is clearer, is legally accurate, and as a result, accomplishes the original goal in approving this optional form: to inform litigants and assist in making these complex and important hearings run more smoothly.

Recommendation

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective January 1, 2016, revise form DV-520-INFO as follows:

1. Reformat the entire form so that it reflects best practices for providing legal information in plain language, demonstrates improved readability with more white space and graphics, and eliminates unnecessary or confusing language;
2. Change the name of the form to clarify that it provides information about restraining order hearings (*Get Ready for the Restraining Order Court Hearing* instead of *Get Ready for the Court Hearing*);
3. Provide examples of documents that can assist the court in making decisions about support and at the same time explain that the judge will make decisions about what documents may be considered so that litigants are less likely to assume that everything brought to court will be admissible;
4. Provide information about form DV-570, *Which Financial Form--FL-155 or FL-150?*, which can assist parties in determining whether they need to complete an Income and Expense Declaration or a Simplified Financial Statement;
5. Clarify that witnesses may come to court and write statements but may be required to testify if objections to the written declarations arise;
6. Inform parties that a local form may be available with which to request an interpreter;
7. Clarify that a restrained party might be served in the courtroom after a hearing;
8. Clarify that litigants may need to arrange for childcare if a children's waiting room isn't available and children are not permitted in the courtroom during the hearing;
9. Provide more information about what happens at and after the hearing; and
10. Make some technical changes to remove commas and correct a typo.