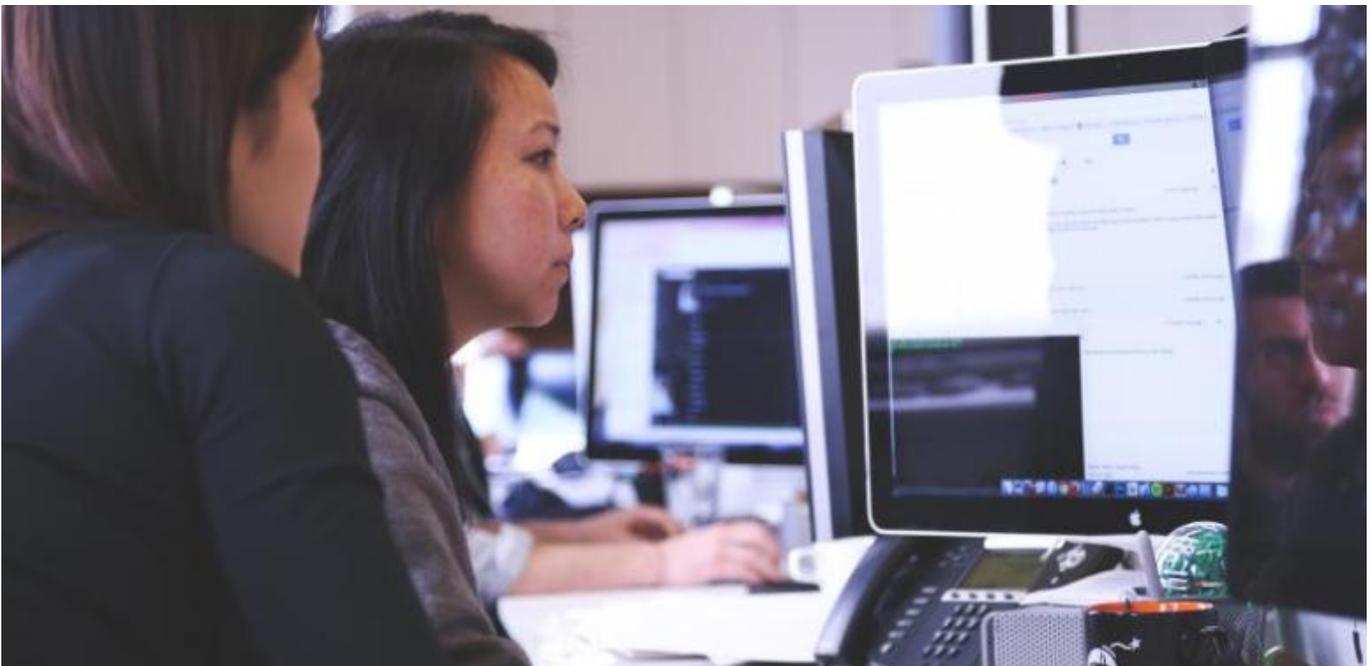


News: New York Combines Technology, Partners and Re-Engineering Reducing Court Time for DV Victims to Less Than an Hour and Saving Clerks 30 Minutes per File (New York 2015)



With the most recent statistics reporting that 1 in 3 women experience domestic violence, hundreds of thousands of protection orders are filed in New York State Courts each year. The Advocate Family Offense Petition Program offers providers

across the state a groundbreaking way to counsel victims while greatly reducing the access barriers they often face seeking protection from abuse. Led by [New York State Court's Access to Justice Program \(nycourts.gov\)](http://nycourts.gov) and [in partnership with ProBonoNet's LHI document assembly system \(probono.net\)](http://probono.net), the statewide initiative provides domestic violence advocates with access to an online document assembly interview to help litigants complete petitions. The petition information is then electronically transferred into the Family Court's Universal Case Management System (UCMS). The innovation saves family court clerks an average of thirty minutes of data entry per case while victims seeking protection can save a tremendous amount of time, walking out of court with a protection order in some cases in under an hour.

The Advocate Family Offense Petition Program was first piloted in the Bronx Family Court and thanks to its success there, went statewide in early 2014. The Program pairs important counseling required in domestic violence scenarios with easy-to-access assistance in helping selfrepresented litigants complete the Family Offense Petition and Address Confidentiality Affidavit if needed. The innovative document assembly program is available to any domestic violence advocacy group that has been trained and approved by New York State court system personnel. The program is not available for self-help to ensure that domestic violence victims get the support they need.

During an award ceremony this summer honoring the program with Innovative Use of Technology in a Pro Bono Project from Legaltech News, Judge Fern Fisher, director of New York State Court's Access to Justice Program said: "I hope in my lifetime, the statistic I started out with, that it will be decreased by at least two-thirds before I retire...that every woman and every man that suffers from domestic violence has a way of addressing this problem." Mark O'Brien, executive director of Pro Bono Net, added: "The project demonstrates how technology can increase access to justice, streamline court processes, and create a better experience for litigants."

The numbers highlighting the impact Advocate Family Offense Petition Program prove its incredible success. Over 29 domestic violence agencies throughout the state have been trained in the Program. 45 of New York's 62 counties electronically filed Family Offense Petitions with Family Courts by the end of last year. Over 7,500 petitions were filed and docketed since the project began in late 2013, with 5,091 filed last year alone.

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