

PRESS ADVISORY:

***Pilot Program for Indigent Parties in Family Restraining Order Hearings
to Begin on July 1, 2018, in the Waterbury Judicial District***

The Connecticut Judicial Branch on July 1 will begin a one-year pilot program in the Waterbury Judicial District in which indigent applicants and respondents in family restraining order cases may obtain, at no cost to them, legal counsel to represent them at the court hearing.

This pilot, the first of its kind in Connecticut, is the result of one of the recommendations of the [*Task Force to Improve Access to Legal Counsel in Civil Matters*](#), which the General Assembly created in 2016. As part of the task force's final report, it recommended establishing a statutory right to legal counsel in cases involving family restraining orders under Connecticut General Statutes § 46b-15. Subsequently, the Legislature established the pilot program in 2017.

For the duration of the pilot program, the Judicial Branch has contracted with Connecticut Legal Services Inc. to provide legal counsel to qualified applicants who have filed an application for relief from abuse in the Waterbury Judicial District. In addition, the Division of Public Defender Services will provide legal counsel to any qualified respondent.

To qualify, the applicant or respondent must demonstrate that he or she has an annual gross income at or below: (1) \$23,760 for an applicant or respondent with no dependents, (2) \$32,040 for an applicant or respondent with one dependent, (3) \$40,320 for an applicant or respondent with two dependents, and (4) \$48,600 for an applicant or respondent with three dependents. If an applicant or respondent has more than three dependents, for each additional dependent the sum of \$8,320 shall be added to \$48,600.

Once the pilot program is completed, the Chief Court Administrator must submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the status and results of the program and whether a permanent program should be established.

For further information, please contact the External Affairs Division at 860-757-2270.

**The following municipalities are in the Waterbury Judicial District: Middlebury, Naugatuck, Prospect, Southbury, Waterbury, Watertown, Wolcott and Woodbury. The Waterbury Judicial District Courthouse is located at 300 Grand St. in Waterbury.*