

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Donald C. Hudson, Chief Judge

**Kane County Unveils A New Program to Assist Victims of
Domestic Violence**

Chief Judge, Donald C. Hudson, of the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit and Kane County Circuit Court Clerk, Deborah Seyller, are pleased to announce a new program to assist the victims of domestic violence. Kane County is the first county in the State of Illinois to develop and implement this program.

The program is an internet based electronic program by which victims of domestic violence can begin the process of obtaining an order of protection at a local domestic violence shelter by the use of an internet program (Wizard) developed by the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit that takes the user through a step by step process used to gather data for use in electronically drafting a Petition for Order of Protection. Once the information is provided by following the step by step electronic program, which data is then electronically forwarded to the clerk's record keeping system for use in completing the petition at the Kane County Courthouse by Prairie State Legal Service's staff, Kane County Law Clerks, or a State's Attorneys employee.

The following is a summary of the steps a petitioner will take in seeking an order of protection under the new internet based electronic system.

(1) A petitioner may (but is not required to) initiate the process of obtaining an Order of Protection at a local domestic violence shelter by use of an Internet program developed by the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit.

(2) The petitioner seeking the Order of Protection would then register at the Judicial Center and meet with an appropriate advocate.

(3) Data captured from the internet program (Wizard) is pulled into an electronic petition by the advocate.

(4) The electronic petition form may be updated and revised electronically based upon the interview with the petitioner. (An electronic form will be started without the prior use of the Wizard a self populating OP forms package is provided for drafting the documents).

(5) Once the interview and form are complete, the unsigned Petition is saved to the advocate's queue. The data is then pulled into the Findings and Order of Protection.

(6) The data in the suggested Findings and Order of Protection may be added to

or updated at any step in the process.

(7) When ready for the hearing, the advocate has the petitioner sign the Petition directly on the tablet or through a signature pad.

(8) Upon signature, the Petition prints in the appropriate courtroom. The suggested electronic Findings and Order of Protection are sent to the judge's queue.

(9) The judge may make changes to the forms or choose to send it back for revision. After the hearing, if the judge grants the petition, the judge signs the Findings and Order of Protection directly on his/her own tablet or via a signature pad if using a laptop or PC. A denial of the petition would also be a part of the same electronic OP forms package.

(10) Once the judge has signed the forms, the electronic document is sent through a series of steps. The form is locked from further alteration and flattened into an image, i.e. all open fields where editing is allowed are removed.

(11) The signed Petition, the Findings, the Order of Protection, and the Summons are immediately emailed directly to the Sheriff as an image. The documents are file stamped and certified, ready for printing and service.

(12) The clerk is able to print the petitioner a copy of the Findings and Order in the courtroom. Only the petitioner's copy and copies for other protected parties are printed in the courtroom. The original is printed at the Clerk's office. File stamped copies of the documents for Prairie State and the State's Attorney are also sent via email.

(13) Data extracted from the documents is saved into a file for future use by the advocates for the Interim or Plenary Orders of Protection.

(14) Data from the electronic forms will be updated directly into the clerk's record keeping system, complete with an image of the document.

Chief Judge Donald C. Hudson observed 'this new internet based program represents a quantum leap forward in terms of the application of technology to significant issues that affect the criminal justice system.