



**A Report of the PROGRAM TO PROVIDE LEGAL COUNSEL
TO INDIGENT PERSONS IN RESTRAINING ORDER CASES.**

Report to The Connecticut General Assembly

June 27, 2025

Submitted pursuant to Public Act No. 21-78 Sec. 15. Paragraph (5). *AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, REVISING STATUTES CONCERNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CHILD CUSTODY, FAMILY RELATIONS MATTER FILINGS AND BIGOTRY OR BIAS CRIMES AND CREATING A PROGRAM TO PROVIDE LEGAL COUNSEL TO INDIGENTS IN RESTRAINING ORDER CASES.*

Background

In its 2021 Regular Session, the Connecticut General Assembly further expanded its investment in providing increased access to legal counsel to individuals interested in pursuing a temporary restraining order in Public Act 21-78, later codified in section 46-15f of the Connecticut General Statutes. Section 15 of the act established an ongoing grant program to provide legal representation to indigent individuals who express an interest in applying for a temporary restraining order (TRO) under section 46b-15 of the Connecticut General Statutes, at no cost to the individual (“TRO Program”). The Act allows for grant awards (1) to provide services in the judicial districts of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford-Norwalk or Waterbury, and (2) in an amount not to exceed \$200,000, except that a grant to provide services in the judicial district with the highest average number of applications for restraining orders under section 46b-15 over the previous three fiscal years may receive a grant of not more than \$400,000. Connecticut Bar Foundation was designated as the program administrator and after issuing an annual RFP process, funded Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, and New Haven Legal Assistance Association as the legal aid organizations to provide these services in the designated judicial districts.

For each year that funding is provided for the program, the Connecticut Bar Foundation, who administers the program, shall either conduct, or partner with an academic institution or other qualified entity for the purpose of conducting, an analysis of the impact of the program, including, but not limited to, (1) the procedural outcomes for applications filed in association with services provided by grant recipients under the program, (2) the types and extent of legal services provided to individuals served pursuant to the program, including on matters ancillary to the restraining order application, and (3) the number of cases where legal services were provided before an application was filed but legal representation did not continue during the restraining order process and the reasons for such limited representations.

Executive Summary

The TRO Program is currently in its third year of operation, having launched on March 1, 2022. Initially, the program followed a March-to-February cycle. However, during this third year, the grant cycle has been extended to June 30, 2025, with the new grant cycle set to begin on July 1, 2025. This adjustment aligns the program’s timeline with the State of Connecticut’s fiscal year, ensuring that program data is consistent with Judicial Branch data related to TROs. This report will focus on available program data from March 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025. Data from the extended period, March 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025, will be included in a supplemental report, which will be available by September 30, 2025.

- **Race, Gender, and the Intersectionality of Domestic Violence:** The TRO Program served a predominantly female client base, the majority identifying as Latina or African American/Black. This data underscores the intersectional nature of domestic violence, revealing that women of color – often navigating specific systemic barriers related to race, language, immigration status, and economic insecurity – are disproportionately represented among those seeking protection.

- **Procedural Outcomes:** During the reporting period, the TRO Program delivered strong protective outcomes: 68% of represented applicants received final restraining orders after an evidentiary hearing (compared to national statistics of 32% for self-represented litigants). In addition to courtroom advocacy, the program provided legal education, legal counseling, and document assistance to more than 60% of clients, equipping survivors with tools to navigate the legal system.
- **Legal Representation through the TRO Program has significantly improved the safety, stability, and well-being of individuals seeking protection:** Qualitative data provided by the legal aid organizations indicates that through expert legal support, victims of domestic violence, harassment, and abuse have successfully obtained full restraining orders and ensured protection for themselves and their children. In several cases, attorneys not only secured restraining orders but also facilitated emergency custody arrangements, providing immediate relief for victims in highly dangerous situations.
- **Barriers & Challenges Facing Legal Service Providers that impact program administration:** Legal aid organizations providing services for the TRO program have faced staffing challenges that have impacted the outcomes for the program. These challenges include (1) difficulties in recruiting individuals for long-term, high-demand legal work involving domestic violence, (2) hiring attorneys in regions with high living costs and comparatively lower salaries, and (3) retaining staff due to migration toward higher-paying opportunities in the public and private sectors. Additionally, challenges with the infrastructure of the courthouses themselves – including location of available offices and connectivity issues – continue to present barriers to access.

2024 – 2025 Program Data¹

TRO Caseload Report for Program Year 2024-2025	
Providers by Judicial District (by Quarter)	
Connecticut Legal Services: Fairfield/Bridgeport JD, Stamford/Norwalk JD, Waterbury JD Greater Hartford Legal Aid: Hartford JD New Haven Legal Assistance Association: New Haven JD	
Reporting Period: March 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025	Totals
TRO Cases Opened during the Reporting Period	1,270
TRO Cases Closed during the Reporting Period	1,153
A) The procedural outcomes of restraining order applications filed,	
Ex parte relief granted	535
Ex parte relief denied	185
Application dismissed, Applicant did not appear	164
Negotiated settlement	51
Petitioner obtained assistance to understand legal documents	460
Orders entered after hearing	362
No Outcome Obtained	17
Application withdrawn prior to hearing	75
Petitioner obtained realistic case assessment and/or legal counseling	801
Application dismissed after hearing	121
Petitioner received information to assist with informed decision-making	798
Legal representation was provided to assist in preparing and filing a TRO application	607
B) The number of instances where legal counsel was provided prior to the filing of an application but not during the remainder of the restraining order process	
Counsel provided prior to filing TRO Application	956
Counsel provided after filing TRO Application	280
Reasons for limited representation:	
Applicant did not take steps directed for representation	174
Applicant Refused Services	13
Services of Process Failed	12
Applicant Over Income	64
Limited Attorney Resources	411
Applicant Withdrew Application	47
C) Information on any other legal representation provided to individuals pursuant to the program on matters that were ancillary to the circumstances that supported the application for a restraining order.	
Ancillary Cases	56

¹ Program data is from March 1, 2024-February 28, 2025. Data from March 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025, will be provided in a supplemental report no later than September 30, 2025.

2024-2025 Program Data by Organization

Providers by Judicial District (Totals for all separate districts)						
Connecticut Legal Services: Fairfield/Bridgeport JD, Stamford/Norwalk JD, Waterbury JD Greater Hartford Legal Aid: Hartford JD New Haven Legal Assistance Association: New Haven JD						
Reporting Period: March 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025	Totals	CLS-Fairfield	CLS-Stamford	CLS-Waterbury	GHLA-Hartford	NHLAA-New Haven
A) The procedural outcomes of restraining order applications filed,						
Ex parte relief granted	535	33	32	71	237	162
Ex parte relief denied	185	13	15	32	49	76
Application dismissed, Applicant did not appear	164	15	0	24	73	52
Negotiated settlement	51	1	3	15	3	29
Petitioner obtained assistance to understand legal documents	460	79	89	174	101	17
Orders entered after hearing	362	17	30	51	173	91
No Outcome Obtained	17	1	0	13	1	2
Application withdrawn prior to hearing	75	5	6	7	37	20
Petitioner obtained realistic case assessment and/or legal counseling	801	76	88	195	427	15
Application dismissed after hearing	121	7	16	15	38	45
Petitioner received information to assist with informed decision-making	798	74	106	184	420	14
Legal representation was provided to assist in preparing and filing a TRO application	607	50	45	76	250	186
B) The number of instances where legal counsel was provided prior to the filing of an application but not during the remainder of the restraining order process						
Counsel provided prior to filing TRO Application	956	74	63	178	377	264
Counsel provided after filing TRO Application	280	66	41	45	66	62
Reasons for limited representation:						
Applicant did not take steps directed for representation	174	4	1	3	40	126
Applicant Refused Services	13	0	0	3	9	1
Services of Process Failed	12	6	0	4	2	0
Applicant Over Income	64	9	24	8	9	14
Limited Attorney Resources	411	19	41	81	255	15
Applicant Withdrew Application	47	5	2	2	22	16
C) Information on any other legal representation provided to individuals pursuant to the program on matters that were ancillary to the circumstances that supported the application for a restraining order.						
Ancillary Cases	56	1	1	14	40	0

TRO Case Services and Outcomes

TRO cases have a variety of outcomes depending on the details of the case, the client's decision regarding how they will proceed, and the Court's response to the application. One case can have multiple outcomes and types of legal assistance provided. For example, a client that obtained realistic assessment/counseling may, as a result, decide to withdraw their application.

The following is an explanation for the above data elements reported by the providers:

(A) Outcomes

Ex parte relief granted – Application granted based solely on the applicant’s account without the respondent’s notification or presence.

Ex parte relief denied – Application denied based solely on the applicant’s account.

Negotiated settlement – Applicant and respondent meet with the family relations officer of the court to discuss an agreement to grant a level of relief. The agreement is then presented to the Court for approval or denial.

Orders entered after hearing – the restraining order was granted after a hearing and orders of protection entered.

Application dismissed; applicant did not appear – the application was denied for failure to prosecute because the applicant did not come to the hearing.

Application withdrawn prior to hearing - Applicant decided not to pursue the matter after filing application but before the hearing.

Application dismissed after hearing - After a hearing on the record, the court did not find sufficient evidence to grant the relief sought by the applicant.

(B) Services Provided

Petitioner obtained assistance to understand legal documents – Legal services were provided to review and explain legal documents.

Petitioner obtained realistic case assessment and/or legal counseling – Legal advice and legal counseling were provided regarding the restraining order application.

Petitioner received information to assist with informed decision-making – Legal advice and information was provided about a range of safety options and legal remedies, including information about potential benefits and risks in applying for a restraining order, and the availability of a range of safety options.

Legal representation was provided to assist in preparing and filing a TRO application – Legal services were provided regarding the 46b-15 restraining order application.

(C) Reasons Representation Limited

Services of process failed – Court papers were not properly served on the respondent. Ex-parte relief was granted, but either the applicant did not submit papers to the court marshal, or the marshal was not able to serve papers to the respondent.

Applicant over income – An income eligibility check was completed by the provider, as statutorily required. Applicant was determined to be over the program income limit, but staff provided advice as the situation was urgent. The intake is logged and counted as a program case because program staff

time and other resources were used to provide guidance.

(D) Ancillary Services

Legal service needs in addition to the client's interest in filing an application for a temporary restraining order were identified during the representation relating to filing the application.

Program Evaluation Findings

The TRO Program has played a critical role in addressing the complex and intersectional nature of domestic violence, particularly among women of color. Serving a predominantly female population, many of whom identify as Latina or African American/Black, the program highlights how systemic barriers related to race, language, immigration status, and economic hardship intersect to compound vulnerability. Despite these challenges, the TRO Program has achieved notably high success rates, with 68% of applicants securing final restraining orders—more than double the national average for self-represented litigants. Beyond courtroom representation, the program has provided holistic support through legal education, counseling, and document assistance.

Client Demographics and Intersectionality Analysis

The TRO Program served a diverse client population from March 1, 2024, through February 28, 2025. The demographic data collected during this period underscores critical patterns in client representation across gender, age, and race/ethnicity, while also revealing the complex, intersectional realities faced by those seeking protection from domestic violence.

Gender

Across all three programs, the vast majority of TRO clients identified as female:

- **CLS:** 76.4% female, 19.7% male, 1.2% transgender/nonbinary
- **GHLA:** 87.0% female, 12.8% male, 0% transgender/nonbinary
- **NHLAA:** 84.0% female, 16.0% male, 0% transgender/nonbinary

This gender imbalance is consistent with national and state-level data indicating that women are disproportionately impacted by domestic violence. The minimal representation of transgender and nonbinary clients, despite their heightened vulnerability, suggests potential barriers such as fear of discrimination, especially in light of recent federal policies surrounding LGBTQ+ civil rights.

Age

The majority of clients across all three programs were adults aged 18–59:

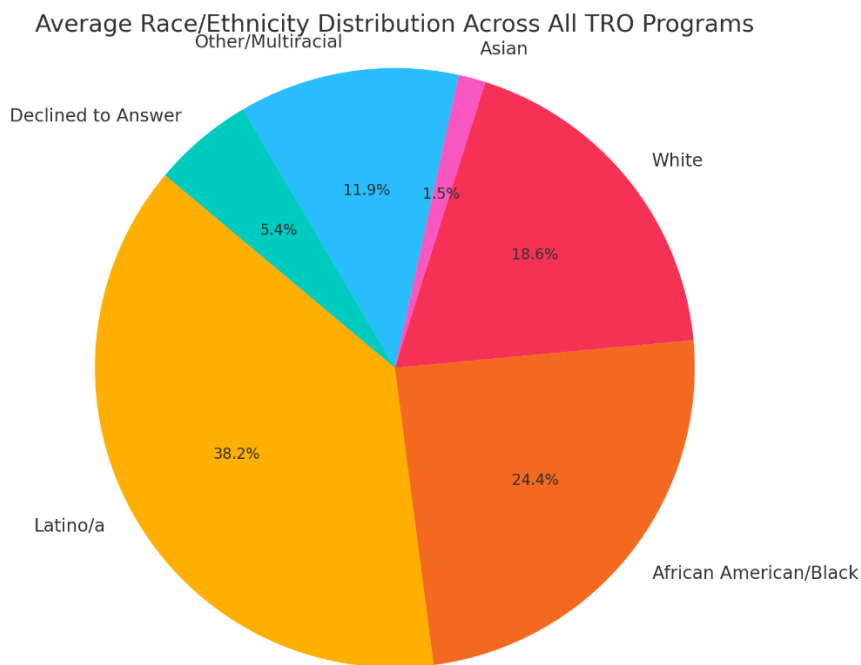
- **CLS:** 87.4% (18–59), 10.9% (60+), 1.7% (under 18)

- **GHLA:** 86.3% (18–59), 10.8% (60+), 2.8% (under 18)
- **NHLAA:** 82.3% (18–59), 10.1% (60+), 7.6% (under 18)

These figures highlight the prevalence of domestic violence among adults in their working and caregiving years but also suggest a notable need for support for minors and older adults, who often face unique vulnerabilities such as family dependency, isolation, elder abuse, or limited legal literacy.

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic breakdowns of clients demonstrate a strong representation of communities of color, with Latino/a and African American/Black individuals comprising the majority of clients:



These figures suggest that the TRO Program is successfully reaching many individuals in racially and ethnically marginalized communities, particularly women of color. The data also underscores the intersectional nature of domestic violence.

Intersectionality: Race, Gender, and Domestic Violence

The demographic data from the TRO Program strongly illustrates the intersectional nature of domestic violence, where overlapping identities compound barriers – such as economic hardship, immigration-related fears, cultural stigma, and historical mistrust of legal institutions – and converge to shape both the risk of victimization and access to justice. Understanding these intersections is critical to crafting responsive and equitable services.

Structural Inequities and the Risk of Victimization

Women of color—particularly Latina and African American women—are statistically more likely to experience domestic violence than their White counterparts². This increased prevalence reflects broader structural inequities that disproportionately place these women at risk.

- **Economic vulnerability** plays a significant role. Many women of color, especially immigrants and single mothers, are overrepresented in low-wage sectors and underrepresented in stable, high-paying employment. Financial dependency on an abuser can make leaving a violent relationship not only emotionally difficult, but materially dangerous.

Economic vulnerability can exacerbate the challenges faced by women of color in abusive relationships and make it much harder for them to escape. Abusers often maintain control not only through emotional and physical violence but also through financial manipulation. Financial dependency on the abuser traps women in dangerous relationships and is more pronounced for women from marginalized communities because of limited economic opportunities. Without financial resources to support themselves and their children independently, leaving the relationship can be an impossibility and can make it difficult to afford an attorney or gain access to the justice system.

- **Housing insecurity** and lack of access to childcare or health insurance can further entrench dependency, forcing many survivors to remain in abusive environments. For Latina survivors, the risk is often heightened by concerns about family separation and, in mixed-status households, deportation.
- **Intergenerational trauma and systemic racism** contributes to the belief that legal systems of protection are futile or even harmful, rather than empowering or protective. African American women may encounter patterns of institutional distrust passed down through family and community experiences of historical discriminatory practices within governmental systems. These patterns discourage these women from seeking help and can make the legal system feel inaccessible or punitive. Hence, having a trained legal aid attorney who is trauma-informed and culturally responsive is critical to ensuring access to a fair legal system.

The Compounded Impact of Gender and Race

What emerges from this analysis is a clear understanding that **the challenges these women face are not additive but multiplicative**. For example, a low-income Latina survivor who is undocumented, has limited English proficiency, and is financially dependent on her abuser is not simply dealing with “several issues”—she is facing a deeply interwoven matrix of oppression that limits her legal options, endangers her physical safety, and undermines her autonomy.

² Petrosky E, Blair JM, Betz CJ, Fowler KA, Jack SP, Lyons BH. Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence – United States, 2003-2014. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2017; 66:741-746. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6628a1>

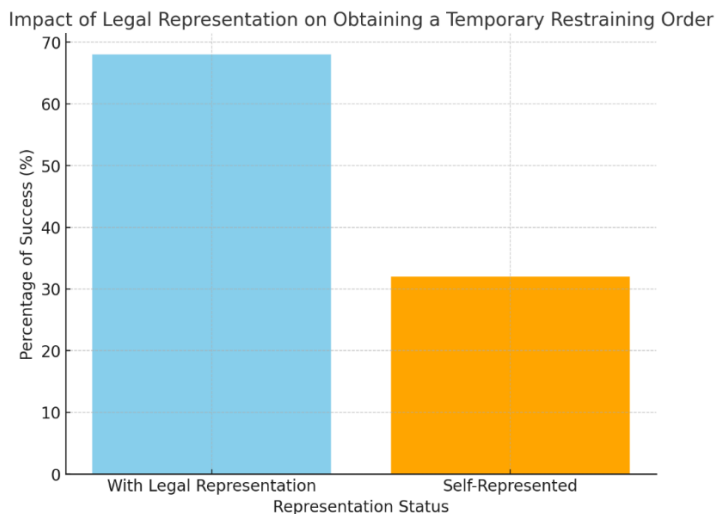
Access is not just about *availability*, but about *usability*. Individuals facing domestic violence must feel safe, understood, and empowered in order to take that first step toward survivorship. The TRO Program, which includes culturally competent services, has proven to be an excellent tool to ensure that individuals from our most marginalized communities feel this way and have access to legal services to ensure that they, and their children, can be safe and free from family violence.

Detailed Analysis of Procedural Outcomes

The TRO Program continues to serve as a critical legal intervention for victims and survivors of domestic violence, offering not only legal advocacy but also empowerment through information, counseling, and representation. This section analyzes the procedural outcomes during the reporting period, highlighting the program's efficacy.

Outcomes of TRO Applications

Of the **1,270 TRO cases** handled by legal service providers during the reporting period, the program delivered **strong and life-saving protective outcomes**. Offering immediate protection in over **42%** of cases, **535 ex-parte orders** were granted, while an additional **362 final restraining orders** were issued after full hearings—meaning that **68% of applicants who reached this stage secured long-term legal protection**. In stark contrast, national studies show that **only 32% of self-represented litigants** obtain final relief in similar proceedings³, highlighting just how pivotal legal representation is in achieving these outcomes. This data reinforces the TRO Program's effectiveness not only in securing court orders but in significantly enhancing survivor safety. In some cases, attorneys helped resolve matters outside the courtroom entirely, with **51 negotiated settlements** reflecting a critical alternative pathway to protection. These early, attorney-led interventions can de-escalate volatile situations and help survivors avoid the trauma and risk of adversarial litigation—further demonstrating the comprehensive value of the program.



³ “Supporting Survivors: The Economic Benefits of Providing Civil Legal Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence” Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University School of Law, Jennifer S. Rosenberg and Denise A. Grab, July 2015

The Value of Legal Advocacy

The data makes clear that the TRO Program is not only achieving legal outcomes in court but also delivering critical support that empowers survivors long before they ever reach a courtroom. In **63% of cases**, petitioners received **realistic legal assessments and early legal counseling**, helping them understand the strengths and limitations of their situation from the outset. In **62% of cases**, survivors were provided with **essential legal information to support informed decision-making**, allowing them to better advocate for themselves and remain engaged in the legal process. Even when full legal representation wasn't available, these services built **legal literacy, confidence, and agency**, equipping survivors with the knowledge and clarity needed to pursue protection. This layered support underscores the TRO Program's role as a vital legal lifeline—one that demonstrates not just legal outcomes, but empowerment.

Legal Representation through the TRO Program has significantly improved the safety, stability, and well-being of individuals seeking protection

The TRO program has proven to be a crucial tool in safeguarding victims of domestic violence, harassment, and abuse in Connecticut. Legal representation provided by attorneys from GHLA, CLS, and NHLAA has demonstrated a clear positive impact on the outcomes of these cases. Qualitative data provided by these legal aid organizations indicate the following:

Enhanced Protection and Stability

Victims of abuse, such as B.B., I.I., and C.C., saw immediate and long-term protection through full restraining orders that were obtained with the assistance of legal services attorneys. In several cases, the attorneys ensured that the orders extended protections not just for the victims but also for their children, who were also at risk. For example, B.B.'s case involved a restraining order that not only prohibited her husband from contacting her but also included her children in the protection order, significantly enhancing their safety.

Effective Legal Advocacy

Attorneys played a pivotal role in preparing clients for hearings, providing emotional support, and representing them during contested proceedings. For instance, in the case of D.D., the attorney was able to facilitate the return of her child through legal intervention, which led to an agreement granting her full custody and protection. Similarly, legal services attorneys helped clients such as G.G., who was facing immigration-related threats, secure full restraining orders, and in other cases negotiated partial orders when the victims were open to reconciliation.

Emergency Response and Custody Orders

In high-stakes situations, such as with D.D., where her children were being threatened with harm, legal representation expedited the process of obtaining an ex parte order of protection, including emergency custody arrangements. Swift legal action prevented further harm and ensured that the victims could regain control over their lives. E.E.'s case illustrated the importance of having legal support to extend the restraining order and maintain custody protections as the abuser continued to threaten her safety beyond the original term of the restraining order.

Increased Compliance and Enforcement

One of the recurring themes in these stories is the ability of legal aid attorneys to ensure that the abuser complies with court orders. For example, J.J.'s case involved the need to enforce an existing restraining order when the abuser refused to leave the home. With legal counsel, J.J. was able to file a Motion for Modification and Contempt, successfully holding the abuser accountable.

Emotional and Psychological Support

Beyond the legal victories, the emotional and psychological relief provided by attorneys cannot be overstated. Clients expressed gratitude for the support and guidance they received throughout the process. H.H., a victim of physical and psychological abuse, thanked her attorney for the healing and peace that resulted from the full restraining order granted by the court.

In conclusion, the TRO program's legal services significantly improve outcomes for victims by offering a comprehensive and effective response to immediate threats of harm. Through expert legal intervention, individuals gain not only legal protection but also a sense of empowerment, which helps them reclaim their lives and rebuild after experiencing abuse or harassment. The success stories presented in this report underscore the critical importance of legal representation in ensuring the safety and dignity of vulnerable individuals across Connecticut who would otherwise not be able to afford or access the critical services of an attorney.

Barriers & Challenges Facing Legal Service Providers that Impact Program Administration

The overall outcomes of the TRO program have been affected by ongoing staffing and retention challenges faced by the legal aid organizations providing these critical services. These challenges, along with issues related to courthouse infrastructure, have had a direct impact on the program's data outcomes over the past year.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

Legal aid organizations have struggled to recruit and retain qualified attorneys who are committed to the emotionally taxing nature of representing individuals in TRO cases. The complexity of the work and the emotional toll it takes on attorneys has made it difficult to build a stable, long-term workforce. Many of the attorneys hired by these organizations leave after relatively short periods, which affects program capacity.

High-Cost of Living in Certain Areas

Another significant barrier to the recruitment and retention of legal aid attorneys has been the high cost of living in certain regions where these services are most needed. In particular, areas with higher housing costs and general living expenses make it difficult for legal aid organizations to offer competitive salaries, which are crucial to attracting and retaining skilled professionals. This disparity between living costs and salaries has contributed to a workforce turnover rate higher than anticipated.

Competition from the Public and Private Sectors

Many attorneys initially drawn to the legal aid field are later enticed by higher-paying positions in the state government or private law firms after gaining experience. These sectors offer significantly better compensation packages and benefits, leading to a drain of experienced attorneys from the legal aid sector. This cyclical turnover exacerbates the challenge of maintaining a skilled and knowledgeable workforce within the TRO program. As in other sectors, this migration not only results in reduced capacity but often leaves the most high-need constituents to be served by the least experienced professionals. The ability of the legal service providers to offer competitive compensation and ongoing training is vital to the program's success.

Infrastructure Challenges in Courthouses

Continued issues with the infrastructure of courthouses have also created significant barriers to access for both legal aid attorneys and individuals seeking TROs. The location of available office space in some courthouses is far from the Court Service Centers, the clerk's office, and the Family Violence Victim Advocate office, making it difficult for potential clients to find. Additionally, there are ongoing IT/connectivity issues in certain courthouses, including poor internet access and outdated technological infrastructure, which makes it difficult for attorneys to file paperwork electronically, communicate efficiently with clients, or access necessary online resources. These physical and technological barriers further impede the smooth delivery of services and can contribute to delays in case processing.

The combined effects of staffing challenges and infrastructure issues have had a measurable impact on the outcomes of the TRO program. These difficulties have led to reduced capacity to handle cases. As a result, the outcomes for the program are not as robust as originally anticipated.

Summary and Looking Ahead

The TRO Program continues to serve as a critical lifeline for victims and survivors of domestic violence across Connecticut. Through the dedicated efforts of Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, and New Haven Legal Assistance Association, the program has not only delivered immediate legal protection but also empowered individuals with knowledge, advocacy, and a pathway to long-term safety.

During the reporting period, legal service providers opened 1,270 TRO cases and achieved strong protective outcomes. Over 70% of applicants received some form of restraining order protection, whether through ex parte relief or final orders issued after a hearing. In contrast to national trends showing dismal success rates for self-represented litigants, this program's outcomes underscore the vital role of legal representation in securing safety and stability for survivors.

Yet the TRO Program's impact extends well beyond courtroom victories. Legal service providers delivered critical services that enabled survivors to understand legal processes, weigh their options, and act from a place of clarity and confidence. In more than 60% of cases, clients received realistic case assessments, legal counseling, and assistance with legal documents – helping to build legal literacy and autonomy even when full representation was not possible. These support services are essential, especially for survivors navigating trauma, poverty, language barriers, and systemic discrimination.

The demographic data collected this grant year reveals a program that is reaching deeply into Connecticut's most vulnerable communities. The majority of TRO clients were women, with particularly high representation among women of color, including Black and Latina survivors. While this reflects national patterns, it also highlights how structural inequities like economic instability, immigration status, housing insecurity, and historical mistrust of legal systems intersect to shape the experiences of survivors. The TRO Program has demonstrated a responsive, culturally competent approach.

These outcomes, however, have not come without strain. Legal service providers continue to face persistent recruitment and retention challenges, driven by the emotional demands of the work, high cost of living in key regions, and nonprofit salaries that are not competitive with public and private sector roles. These staffing shortages reduce the program's overall capacity and limit how many survivors can receive full legal representation. At the same time, infrastructure challenges in courthouses – such as poor connectivity and difficult to access office locations – further hinder efficient service delivery and client access.

Despite these obstacles, the TRO Program remains a model of impactful, survivor-centered legal intervention. The stories of clients who secured not only protection orders but also custody, housing stability, and peace of mind reflect the profound difference that timely, skilled legal advocacy can make. Looking ahead, sustaining and strengthening this work will require targeted investment in staff recruitment and retention, technological modernization of courthouse infrastructure, and expanded outreach to underserved populations.

To meet the evolving needs of survivors in Connecticut, the TRO Program must be supported not only as a legal tool, but as a cornerstone of public safety, community resilience, and equity. With stable funding, policy support, and cross-sector collaboration, the program can continue to transform lives, one protection order at a time.