

YOUR LEGAL OPTIONS

It is usually best to check with an attorney when you have legal questions. Some of the options you may want to talk about are:

Finding Temporary Shelter

Many areas now have shelters to provide a refuge for battered persons and their children. Safe, legal housing (food, shelter and clothing) is provided at little or no cost.

Domestic Violence Petition

This is a protective order that can be granted to you in West Virginia effective for 90 to 180 days. The temporary petition can be filed in Magistrate Court with a final hearing to be held in front of the Family Court Judge within 10 days. The purpose of the protective order is to prevent abuse within a family unit.

Divorce

If you decide you are ready to end your marriage, see your attorney to determine how to start divorce proceedings or contact West Virginia Legal Services.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer

Volunteers can provide many services at Branches. Volunteers serve as hotline workers, child care workers, client advocates, board members and consultants. All volunteers will be screened and trained by Branches staff.

Contribute

Many victims of domestic violence flee their homes without securing the basic items necessary for survival outside the home. Branches attempts to provide these items, and contributions are tax deductible.

Support Legislation

Help support local, state and federal efforts to fund domestic violence programs.

Promote Community Awareness

Help spread the word within the community of the important work being done at Branches and urge those you know who are victims of domestic violence to seek help from Branches.



United Way

This program is funded in part under an agreement with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, the Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections, the United Way of the River Cities, Foundations and private contributions.

BRANCHES



A Safe Place for a Change

Branches Domestic Violence Shelter

P. O. Box 403
Huntington, West Virginia 25708

24 HOUR HOTLINE

529-2382

BRANCHES is an agency to help victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is deliberate physical, emotional or sexual abuse between family members or between unmarried couples who are dating or cohabiting. Domestic violence also refers to the destruction of pets or property.

- Physical abuse includes slapping, kicking, pushing, punching, beating, choking, stabbing, shooting, and other physical abuse or assault.
- Emotional abuse includes belittling, accusing, threatening, or mentally harassing with or without a weapon or object.
- Sexual abuse is being forced into sexual activity. Sexual abuse does include forced sexual activity within a marriage.

If you are a battered person and there is a chance you may need to leave your home to protect yourself, plan for these things.

- Have money for phone calls, a taxi, food and other expenses.
- Stash some personal belongings, money, medications, one or two favorite toys and other basic needs at the home of a friend or relative.
- If you want to have permanent custody of your children, take them with you when you leave. Leaving them at home could be construed as abandonment and used against you in court.
- Have your children's and your own birth certificates, immunization records and social security cards.
- LEAVE if your life is in danger.
- Call BRANCHES at 529-2382.

BRANCHES can help you if you are a victim of domestic violence. The people at Branches believe that everyone has the right to live without fear of violence.

While staying at the shelter, residents will have the chance to rest and heal in a safe environment. They will be helped by professional staff and trained volunteers to assess their situations, examine alternatives, and establish plans for action designed to deal most effectively with the violent, abusive relationships from which they have fled.

Client confidentiality is strictly maintained at Branches.

BRANCHES does not discriminate in regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex or financial status.

Any victim of domestic violence regardless of status is eligible for service. Referrals can be made through any social service agency or directly to the shelter by contacting the staff at:

Phone: (304) 529-2382 • Fax: (304) 529-2398
or by writing:
P. O. Box 403
Huntington, West Virginia 25708

Services Locally

- 24-hour Telephone Hotline 529-2382
- Emergency Shelter
- Food and Clothing
- Individual Counseling
- Adult and Child Support Group
- Adults and Children's Counseling
- Advocacy Services
- Referral Services
- Community Education and Training
- Safe Visitation Exchange Centers

Many of these services may be available weekdays by calling:

In Lincoln County
Office: (304) 824-2600
Fax: (304) 824-2601

In Mason County
Office: (304) 675-4968
(304) 675-8169

In Putnam County
Office: (304) 586-3865
Fax: (304) 586-3866

In Wayne County
Office: (304) 272-9035
(304) 272-9896

CALL TOLL FREE 1-888-538-9838