

CLIENT TIP SHEET

Plan

- ▶ Work with your attorney or advocate to make sure that you have **access to a working device** (laptop is preferred, or smartphone) with a camera, adequate minutes and data, and a stable Internet connection.
 - Download the **videoconference platform** well before the hearing.
 - Find a time to do a **practice video call**. If you find the videoconference platform difficult to navigate, have a friend or family member assist you and be there to help you set up on the day of the hearing.
 - Have a **back-up device** if possible.
 - **Fully charge any devices** you plan to use for the hearing. Keep your laptop on the charger, if possible. Restart all your devices before the hearing to make sure any required updates are complete.
 - Ensure that your **name is properly listed** on the platform. This is also a good place to list your pronouns if you would like.
 - Learn how to operate the **mute** and **unmute buttons** on your videoconferencing platform.
 - Talk to your attorney about **what will happen if you drop off** the hearing. Should you call their phone or wait for them to call you?
- ▶ Prepare your space for the hearing:
 - **Natural light is best.** Make sure that you can be seen clearly during a video call.
 - **Find a neutral background** (blank wall) without any identifiable information (family photographs, identifiable art, street view from the window, etc.).
 - Try to **find a quiet room** with a door that can shut. If necessary, try to obtain childcare as you would for an in-person court hearing. Take time to properly secure your pets and close windows to prevent loud noises.
 - Make sure **you are alone** in the room/space.

continued

Communicate

- ▶ Tell your attorney as early as possible if you need an **interpreter** or **live captioning** at the hearing. Sometimes it can take several days or longer to set up. Talk to your attorney about how virtual interpretation and/or live captioning will work.
- ▶ Remember that everything you see and hear on the videoconferencing platform may be recorded and **is not private**.
- ▶ Talk to your attorney about how you will **communicate privately** during the hearing. Have a plan in place for how to get your attorney's attention if an emergency or an urgent issue arises during the hearing.
- ▶ Keep your **microphone muted** except when you are speaking to the Court. Do not interrupt the Judge or the other party. Give your attorney time to respond when asked a question by the Judge.
- ▶ Talk to your family and/or household members about **being present** or **staying out of the room**, according to the plan with your attorney.
- ▶ Communicate with your attorney about any **concerns** or **questions** you have.

During the hearing

- ▶ Dress as you would if you were **attending court in-person**. The Judge and attorneys will likely wear suits.
- ▶ If using a laptop, you can place a Post-it Note over the **opposing party's image** if it makes you uncomfortable to see them. You can mute yourself and turn off your video while waiting for the Judge to take the bench.
- ▶ **Do not record the proceedings**. Most courts have strict rules about recording. Talk to your attorney ahead of time to discuss this issue if you have questions.
- ▶ Treat the hearing as you would if you were physically in the courthouse. Always **be respectful** to the Judge, the attorneys, and any witnesses.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2017-TA-AX-K020 awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this program are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.



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