



Hello,

This letter should answer questions about our review process and make it easier for you to work with us while we look at your case. You can learn more about our review process [here](#).<sup>1</sup>

### **What do you need to decide to take my case?**

We need to look at your intake form and documents from your case. Usually the trial court clerk, who's in the court where your case took place, can give you copies of your documents. If you can't get them, please let us know. Also, after we start looking at your case, we may need more documents from you. If so, we'll let you know.

### **How do you look at my case?**

We have at least two attorneys review your documents to see if we can represent you. The law makes it hard to win an appeal, so even if a trial judge did something wrong, an appeal may not help. We're a small organization, so it can take us a month or more to let you know if we can represent you.

### **Are you my lawyer?**

No, while we look at your case, FVAP is not your lawyer. We can't give you legal advice, like telling you what you should do in your case. Once we're done with looking at your case, we'll let you know if we can represent you and be your lawyer.

### **Are there Deadlines I need to know about?**

Yes, appeals have strict deadlines. The first deadline is for filing a form called the [Notice of Appeal](#).<sup>2</sup> The Notice of Appeal is a form that tells the trial court you're appealing the order. ***If you miss the deadline to file your Notice of Appeal, you will lose the right to appeal the order. You need to know your deadline and file your Notice of***

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fvaplaw.org/working-with-fvap-what-to-expect/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/app002.pdf>

**Appeal by your deadline.** FVAP's website has a tipsheet [here](#)<sup>3</sup> to help you figure out your deadline. We can't promise we'll be able to tell you if we can represent you before your deadline to file your Notice of Appeal.

### **Are you Keeping Track of My Deadlines?**

No, while we look at your case, we won't track your deadlines, or fill out or file any forms for you. If you're waiting to hear from us by your Notice of Appeal deadline, you'll have to file the Notice of Appeal yourself. Our website has a tipsheet [here](#)<sup>4</sup> that may help you with the form. The resources listed below may also help.

### **Where do I get more information about the Appeals Process?**

The [Court of Appeal's Self-help website](#)<sup>5</sup> has information about appeals in California. The information they have includes a [timeline](#) showing the usual steps in an appeal, and helpful videos including "[Judicial Branch Overview](#)" and "[To Appeal or Not to Appeal.](#)"

### **Can I get Referrals for Additional Support?**

We can give you referrals to domestic violence agencies in your area. Please let us know if you would like these referrals. Also, the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)<sup>6</sup> can give you information, emotional support, and referrals. You can reach them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 1-800-799-7233.

Thank you for trusting us to look at your case. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Family Violence Appellate Project

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<sup>3</sup><https://fvaplaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Calculating-Your-Deadline-to-Appeal-a-California-Family-Law-Order-FINAL-12-19-2019.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://fvaplaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Notice-of-Appeal-Tipsheet-Final.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://selfhelp.appellate.courts.ca.gov/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thehotline.org/>