

# LGBTQ+ LEGAL NEEDS

## DURING COVID-19



### Do you need to access a court for a sealed name change, a protection order, or an emergency family law dispute?

- Courts are only accepting filings for emergencies; if a judge decides that your issue is an emergency, you will have a hearing.
- These hearings will be done on the phone unless the judge says otherwise.
- Non-emergent cases will be postponed until at least 6/01/2020. This date has changed several times and may change again.

If you are not sure how to handle your situation or would like assistance filling out any of the forms discussed below, you can make an appointment with our free LGBTQ+ Legal Clinic by visiting [www.qlawfoundation.org](http://www qlawfoundation.org) or by calling 206-235-7235.

#### Name Changes:

- You can start a name change process online in Pierce County District Court at <https://linxonline.co.pierce.wa.us/linxweb/Kiosk/main.cfm>
  - No other District Courts are accepting name change petitions at this time
- A judge will only review emergency petitions for sealed name changes (related to domestic violence or other emergency safety concerns) – you file for these in Superior Court.
- The judge will then decide if the hearing will be done on the phone.
- If it is not an emergency, it won't be reviewed till after 6/30/2020.

#### Emergency Protective Orders:

- King, Snohomish, Pierce, Spokane counties are all accepting emergency protection orders.
- Hearings are on the phone, and documents may be downloaded online and submitted by email.
- In King County:
  - Forms and information on the different types of protection orders and remote filing are available at [www.protectionorder.org](http://www.protectionorder.org).
  - Additional information on all King County Superior Court filing procedures related to protection orders, domestic violence, and family law may be found here: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/courts/superior-court/docs/COVID-19/COVID19-Self-Represented-SCourt-Info.ashx?la=en>
- In Spokane County:
  - Select and complete a Petition for a Temporary Protection Order from <https://www.spokanecounty.org/2789/civil-protection-orders>.
  - After you're done, save the form and send it as an attachment to [civilprotectionorder@spokanecounty.org](mailto:civilprotectionorder@spokanecounty.org).
  - The court will notify you about what to do next after a judge reviews your Petition.

#### Family Law motions:

- All non-emergent motions will be postponed until after 6/1/2020 (or later – these dates have changed several times).
- In King County Superior Court:
  - Only "mission critical" cases will proceed with phone hearings, unless they may only appear in person.

- For "non mission critical cases" the court insists that the parties to strike hearings or submit an agreed order continuing the hearing to a date after 06/01/2020 (or later).
- Additional information on all King County Superior Court filing procedures related to protection orders, domestic violence, and family law may be found here:  
<https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/courts/superior-court/docs/COVID-19/COVID19-Self-Represented-SCourt-Info.ashx?la=en>
- In Spokane County
  - All non-emergency hearings have been cancelled.
  - If a judge decides that your issue is an emergency, the court will send you an Order with a hearing date.
    - You have to confirm your hearing by 4 p.m. 2 days before the hearing date. Call the court at 509-477-5702 x 0 or email the court at [FamilyLaw@spokanecounty.org](mailto:FamilyLaw@spokanecounty.org).
    - If you get notice of your hearing date less than 2 days from the date, confirm the hearing immediately and explain that you just received the notice.
  - The day before the hearing, the court should give you or your lawyer with the phone number to call into your hearing and the time you're supposed to call by calling you or emailing you.

*This document is for information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. If you would like legal advice, you may make an appointment with an attorney at our free LGBTQ+ Legal Clinic by visiting [www.qlawfoundation.org](http://www.qlawfoundation.org) or by calling 206-235-7235.*