

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS

1. If you are served with a *Petition for an Order for Protection and Request for a Hearing* and an *Ex Parte Order for Protection*, you should promptly seek legal advice. If you have no attorney, the lawyer referral service of your local bar association may be helpful. The Clerk, the Court, and other court staff are prohibited from giving you legal advice.
2. Read the papers served on you very carefully. The *Ex Parte Order for Protection* will forbid you from doing certain things, and may order you to do certain other things. **If you disobey the court's orders, criminal charges may be filed against you.**
3. If you wish to oppose the Petition or Order, or want to request your own Order for Protection, or if you want the court to have a hearing on the Petition and Order, you must go in person to the Clerk of the court that issued these papers. If you want to oppose the Petition or Order, you must do that at a hearing—the judge must hear your side of the case. To request a hearing, get a form from the Clerk entitled, “Respondent’s Verified Request for a Hearing” and fill it out completely. You should not be charged a fee to file this form with the court. If you want to ask for your own Order for Protection, you will need to follow the “Instructions for Petitioners” and file a separate case.
4. If there is a hearing, you need to be there in person to allow the Judge to hear your side of the case. If you do not attend the hearing, the Judge can hear the case without you and issue orders in your absence. If you have any witnesses, they must attend the hearing in person in order to testify for your side.