



Court Observer

Background: Victims of domestic and sexual violence and stalking interact with courts in numerous ways to address the violence that is perpetrated against them and their children. Restraining order hearings and criminal trials may directly address it while in other procedures such as divorce or custody, violence may be central concerns for involved parties. In the past four decades, survivors and their advocates have fought to make legal systems more responsive to these particular crimes. Despite this, court procedures can be inadequate, inappropriate, traumatizing and not feel at all supportive to victim/survivors. There is much more to do.

Picture this: A woman is at court on the day that she has been dreading because she is going to have to face the person who has violated her and/or her children. But instead of being alone, there is a community of people there to support her. Having people on her side --just being there-- makes a difference.

Your Role: You can be one of these people. By being there not only are you supporting the survivor, you are letting the system know that we --interested community members-- are paying attention.

Position Description: Court Observer (COs) are community members who volunteer to bear witness to court proceedings involving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking at the request of the victim. Court Observers simply and powerfully sit on the victim's side of the court room during hearings to show support and solidarity for individual victims and everyone impacted by domestic and sexual violence. The presence of Court Observers also functions to bring accountability to judges and those involved in the decisions that impact and change the lives of victims and their children.

Process

- Attend hearings on Monday morning in White River Junction, VT. In addition, COs will be added to our email list and will receive an email every time there is a hearing where the survivor requests the presence of COs.
- Show up at least 5 minutes early to cases that you are able to attend.
- Submit an electronic or paper observation form to WISE.
- Attend quarterly meetings at WISE to discuss observations and the process.

Qualifications

- An interest in learning more about our court systems, supporting victim/survivors and being an agent for change.
- Submit a completed application/information form to WISE (Volunteers@wiseuv.org).
- Participate in a training/information session on the role of a CO and court processes at WISE.
- Agree to the position's requirements and limitations.
- Commit to attending quarterly meetings of COs.

Court Observer Application / Information Form

Name:

Date:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Are you over the age of 18?

Are you available on Monday mornings?

How did you hear about the Court Observers?

Why are you interested in becoming a Court Observer?



Program Center at 38 Bank St. Lebanon, NH 03766
every hour, every day 866-348-9473

www.WISEuv.org www.facebook.com/WISEuv