

RCW 7.105.250 Protection order advocates and support persons.

(1) Whether or not the petitioner has retained an attorney, a sexual assault or domestic violence advocate, as defined in RCW 5.60.060, shall be allowed to accompany the petitioner, or appear remotely with the petitioner, and confer with the petitioner during court proceedings. The sexual assault or domestic violence advocate shall not provide legal representation nor interpretation services. Court administrators shall allow sexual assault and domestic violence advocates to assist petitioners with their protection orders. Sexual assault and domestic violence advocates are not engaged in the unauthorized practice of law when providing assistance of the types specified in this section. Unless the sexual assault or domestic violence advocate seeks to speak directly to the court, advocates shall not be required to be identified on the record beyond stating their role as a sexual assault or domestic violence advocate and identifying the program for which they work or volunteer for. Communications between the petitioner and a sexual assault and domestic violence advocate are protected as provided by RCW 5.60.060.

(2) Whether or not the petitioner has retained an attorney, a protection order advocate must be allowed to accompany the petitioner to any legal proceeding including, but not limited to, sitting or standing next to the petitioner, appearing remotely with the petitioner, and conferring with the petitioner during court proceedings, or addressing the court when invited to do so.

(a) For purposes of this section, "protection order advocate" means any employee or volunteer from a program that provides, as some part of its services, information, advocacy, counseling, or support to persons seeking protection orders.

(b) The protection order advocate shall not provide legal representation nor interpretation services.

(c) Unless a protection order advocate seeks to speak directly to the court, protection order advocates shall not be required to be identified on the record beyond stating his or her role as a protection order advocate and identifying the program for which he or she works or volunteers.

(d) A protection order advocate who is not employed by, or under the direct supervision of, a law enforcement agency, a prosecutor's office, the child protective services section of the department of children, youth, and families as defined in RCW 26.44.020, or other governmental entity, has the same privileges, rights, and responsibilities as a sexual assault advocate and domestic violence advocate under RCW 5.60.060.

(3) Whether or not the petitioner has retained an attorney or has an advocate, the petitioner shall be allowed a support person to accompany the petitioner to any legal proceeding including, but not limited to, sitting or standing next to the petitioner, appearing remotely with the petitioner, and conferring with the petitioner during court proceedings. The support person may be any third party of the petitioner's choosing, provided that:

(a) The support person shall not provide legal representation nor interpretation services; and

(b) A support person who is not employed by, or under the direct supervision of, a law enforcement agency, a prosecutor's office, the child protective services section of the department of children, youth, and families as defined in RCW 26.44.020, or other government entity, may not, without the consent of the petitioner, be examined as

to any communication between the petitioner and the support person regarding the petition. [2022 c 268 s 14; 2021 c 215 s 34.]

Effective dates—2022 c 268: See note following RCW 7.105.010.

Effective date—2022 c 268; 2021 c 215: See note following RCW 7.105.900.