



# Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

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## **NEW ONLINE AZPOINT SYSTEM POISED TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY**

### ***AZPOINT – The Arizona Protective Order Initiation and Notification Tool***

**Phoenix, AZ, Thursday, January 2, 2020** – Today, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) in partnership with the Arizona Supreme Court, the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family, and the Arizona Department of Public Safety unveiled Arizona’s new online Order of Protection system. The Arizona Protective Order Initiation and Notification Tool (AZPOINT) was established to increase public safety by enhancing access and efficiency for the Order of Protection and Injunctions Against Harassment process for the public, law enforcement and the judicial system.

Chief Justice Robert Brutinel states, “Domestic violence is a tragic problem that harms individuals, families, and communities. Providing victims of domestic violence the assistance they need in the most efficient manner was the legislature’s goal in adopting House Bill 2249. Implementing this bill has required months of planning, programming, and training thousands of law enforcement and court professionals. The new AZPOINT system allows victims of domestic violence to prepare protective order petition documents online and then go to any court in Arizona to complete the process, file their documents, and establish a safety plan before leaving the courthouse. Until now, the person who petitioned for the order had to arrange service on the defendant. Under this new system, the defendant will now be served by law enforcement, making the process safer, more convenient, and faster. This is a new way of doing business for the public, the courts, and law enforcement and we anticipate that AZPOINT will be an effective tool for dealing with domestic violence in our communities.”

Prior to 2020, under Arizona’s old system, Courts were issuing over 42,000 Orders of Protection/Injunctions Against Harassment (OP/IAH) on average per year, but only approximately 50% were actually being served. Additionally, it was taking up to 13 days to serve an Order of Protection and nearly 10 days for the Order to be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to be enforceable. There were a number of issues that caused these delays including an outdated statute, existing statewide system that was paper-based, as well as the plaintiff being responsible for initiating the service of the Protective Orders. With these delays in the system, victims could be left in a volatile situation.

“The first role of government is to keep our citizens safe,” stated Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Chairwoman Sheila Polk. “With this in mind, we worked to streamline the process using technology to obtain an Order of Protection or an Injunction Against Harassment. The new system allows those seeking protection to fill out their request online in the privacy of their home and visit any court in the state for the application to be processed. It also removes the burden of serving the Order from the party seeking protection and gives petitioners real-time information on their case. Overall, this new system will create a safer environment for everyone.”

In an effort to address the issues facing our victims of domestic violence, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission acquired a grant to perform a statewide assessment on the Protection Order/Injunction Against Harassment process where we held focus groups with over 300 court personnel, victim advocates, prosecutors, law enforcement and constables in all 15 counties. From these focus groups ACJC developed best practices and developed legislative proposals. In 2018, the Arizona Legislature passed HB 2249, which allowed all of partnering agencies to:

- To implement an electronic Order of Protection/injunction Against Harassment system that allows petitioners to complete a petition remotely (AZPOINT);
- Allowing the Court to automatically initiate service to the servicing agency;
- Make the Court the holder of the Protective Order Record;
- Allow for a victim notification system that can give petitioners real-time information on their case;
- Keep Plaintiff address and contact information confidential by default;
- Servicing Agency has 72 hours to file an affidavit, declaration, acceptance or return of service with the court (Prior 7 days).

It should be noted that individuals who do not have internet access or who are uncomfortable with technology will still be able to complete and file paper documents with the courts.

“The new AZPOINT system is a game-changer for Arizona’s citizens who are seeking protection from an abusive partner or harassing neighbor,” said ACJC’s Executive Director Andrew LeFevre. “The dedicated cross-agency team made up of state, county and local agencies, and organizations deserve a huge thank you for their two years of hard work to bring this system to life – a system that will help to save lives in Arizona.”

Visit <https://azpoint.azcourts.gov/>

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*Created in 1982, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) is a statutorily authorized entity mandated to carry out various coordinating, monitoring and reporting functions regarding the administration and management of criminal justice programs in Arizona. The ACJC serves as a resource and service organization for Arizona’s criminal justice community on a myriad of issues ranging from drugs, gangs and victim assistance to criminal history and crime laboratory enhancements.*