

9 Things Your Clients Will Be Asked When Filing a PFA Petition in Allegheny County

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In Allegheny County, clients can either file a petition for a temporary [protection from abuse](#) (PFA) order themselves, along with the assistance of a domestic violence advocate (available at the court house), or by hiring a private attorney to assist them with filing the petition for a temporary PFA.

Here is a list of nine things that your clients may be asked to include in their petitions for temporary PFAs in Allegheny County.

1. Information about Them

This includes their name, address, phone number, and date of birth. They do not need to list their address or phone number if they are confidential. This may apply if the client has moved to an undisclosed location or has changed their phone number.

2. Information about the Defendant

Your client will be asked to list the defendant's name, address, and date of birth. Your client does not have to list an address for the defendant, if he or she does not know the defendant's whereabouts. This, however, will make service of the petition and temporary PFA order difficult. If your client does not know the defendant's date of birth, this information does not need to be provided either.

Your client will also be asked their relationship to the defendant. Some common examples of relationships are:

- Spouse or former spouse;
- Current or former sexual or intimate partner;
- Current or former cohabitant;
- Family member related by blood, such as a sister, brother, etc.;
- Family member related by marriage or affinity;
- Parent of a child with the defendant;
- Child of plaintiff; or
- Child of the defendant.

Multiple categories of relationship could be checked in a petition. For example, a spouse could also fall into the category of cohabitant or sexual partner.

Your client will be asked to provide the defendant's Social Security Number (if known). If your client does not know it, he or she can leave this part of the petition blank.

3. Who Is Your Client Filing the Petition For?

Your client will be asked to list on behalf of whom he or she is filing the Petition for Protection From Abuse. This can either be on behalf of themselves, or on behalf of someone else (such as a minor child or an incompetent adult). If your client is filing the petition for someone else, they will need to list their relationship to the other person. This relationship could be that of a parent, guardian, adult household member, or court appointed guardian.

4. Information about Your Client's Minor Children or Other Minors Residing in Your Client's Residence (If Applicable)

Your client will need to provide the names and dates of birth of the minor children. If the client and the defendant are the parents of any minor children, he or she will be asked whether there is a current [custody](#) order, where the order was entered, and whether they are asking to change the terms of the current custody order.

5. Information about Your Client's Residence

Your client will be asked whether they have ever lived with the defendant. Your client will also be asked information about the residence from which they are seeking to evict the defendant, such as the ownership of the residence or who rents the residence.

6. Information about Any Abuse by the Defendant

Your client will be asked to provide facts about the most recent incident of abuse. Your client will also be asked to provide facts about any prior incidents of abuse. This includes details of physical or sexual abuse, threats, injury, stalking, and use or threatened use of weapons. This also includes any medical treatment sought or any calls made to the police.

7. Weapons Information (If Applicable)

If the defendant has any weapons or firearms, your client will be asked whether they are requesting that the defendant relinquish them. Your client will also be asked to provide information about the defendant's weapons. This will be detailed in a weapons supplement to the petition. Your client will also be asked about any specific weapons or firearms that the defendant has and their locations (if known). If the defendant has a weapon that your client wishes to have relinquished, he or she will also be asked to provide information about whether the defendant is required to carry a firearm for employment purposes.

8. Danger of Future Abuse by the Defendant

Your client will be asked whether there is an immediate and present danger of future abuse by the defendant. This is a statutory requirement of having a Petition for a PFA granted.

9. Economic Losses from the Abuse

Lastly, your client will be asked whether they have suffered any economic losses as a result of the abuse. This could include medical bills, property damage, etc.

Knowing what to expect can alleviate the stress associated with filing a petition for protection from abuse. This list provides a general idea of what is asked in a PFA Petition in Allegheny County, but is not intended to provide legal advice or to establish an attorney-client relationship. Please read my [Disclaimer](#) for more information. To speak with a Pittsburgh PFA Attorney, please call Ms. Gaffen at (412) 540-2400 or contact her [online](#).