



Tips For Participating In Remote Hearings

Due to the courthouse closures, Coast to Coast Legal Aid offers these tips for participating remotely in your upcoming hearing:



What if I don't have access or know how to access?

If you don't have a phone or access to the Internet, let the court know as soon as you can. The court may be able to help you find a way to participate. It is important to be prepared for your virtual hearing. If participating in the hearing by video, download the video conference platform (such as Zoom in Broward County) before your scheduled hearing date and time and set up the app to show your full name when participating.



What features are in the video conference?

Video conference platforms have features that allow you or a host to show or hide video feeds, mute or un-mute microphones, have chat conversations, and use other features such as waiting rooms. Leaving a meeting is generally done by selecting that option. Practice before the hearing to become more familiar with the platform.



What to DO during the hearing:

(1) Dress appropriately, like you would if actually going to the courthouse; (2) Limit distractions during your hearing (pets & people, etc.). Find a quiet place to participate in the hearing; (3) Keep your device on mute when not speaking, including muting your mobile phone, computer, etc., to limit background noise; (4) blur your background and limit identifying items that show on video; (5) Call the court in advance if you want to present evidence (such as documents or witnesses) and label it as the court requires.



What NOT to do during the hearing:

(1) Ignore the notice to attend a virtual hearing. If you cannot make the hearing or have a conflict, notify the court; (2) Talk over others. It makes it hard for the judge and others to hear. Wait until the judge asks you to speak; (3) Do other things while on the call. You must pay attention to make sure you don't miss something important that is said, or something the judge asks you to do.



Tips for a Successful Hearing

The hearing probably won't start the moment you join, but you will likely be in a virtual "waiting room." The judge will bring you into the hearing from there, so be patient. Even though you are participating in the hearing from home, it is still a court proceeding. You should act appropriately as if you were in the courtroom in person as the rules and standards still apply via video conference.