

## **Ramona's Story**

Ramona came to ELAP after she was assaulted by her live-in boyfriend. Ramona speaks Spanish and her English is limited. She and her boyfriend have a daughter together and she was concerned for the safety of her daughter, Sasha. Sasha was present when Ramona was assaulted. The assault led to criminal charges against the boyfriend and a No Contact Order was put in place by the criminal court. The No Contact Order from the criminal case only protected Ramona and not her child.

Initially, Ramona wanted ELAP to help her establish child support and custody under a parentage action. She was referred to ELAP by Eastside Domestic Violence Program. Fortunately, Ramona was meeting with ELAP's DV Staff attorney when opposing counsel attempted to take Sasha from her via an Ex Parte hearing for a Restraining Order that day.

The ELAP team (Brandy Andersson ELAP's DV Staff Attorney, a Rule 9 law student, and ELAP's in-house Spanish interpreter) were able to prepare for and attend the hearing with Ramona that same day. Without this assistance, it is likely the abuser's requested order would have been granted and Sasha taken from Ramona. While at the hearing, ELAP sought a temporary protection order for Ramona, which was granted. As is standard practice, the full hearing on the Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) was scheduled 14 days later, which Brandy attended with Ramona.

Five days after the temporary DVPO was entered, counsel for the boyfriend returned to court and again sought an ex parte restraining order against Ramona without notice to ELAP or Ramona, and in violation of court procedures. Unfortunately, a Temporary Restraining Order was granted this time because the court was not aware of the other proceedings. When Brandy found out about the order, she immediately responded with a motion to vacate, which was ultimately granted by the court. For the return hearing for the DVPO, ELAP was able to obtain a permanent Order for Ramona, and Sasha continued to remain with her and has limited supervised visits with the boyfriend.

The criminal case is still pending against the boyfriend for the assault on Ramona. Thankfully, ELAP was able to step in when Ramona's needs were at their most critical and provide her services when there was nowhere else for her to turn.