

## **Full Faith and Credit for Protection Orders: An Overview, Part I**

Monica N. Player, Attorney Advisor

Full Faith and Credit (FFC) is a concept that allows one jurisdiction to recognize the acts, judgments and documents of another jurisdiction. This concept was extended to protection orders through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994. The FFC provision of VAWA, 18 U.S.C. § 2265, mandates that states, tribes and territories recognize and enforce protection orders issued by other jurisdictions. This means a protection order issued in one jurisdiction is enforceable in all other states, tribal lands, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam.

VAWA defines a protection order as "any injunction, restraining order or any other order issued by a civil or criminal court for the purpose of preventing violent or threatening acts, harassment, sexual violence, contact or communication with or physical proximity to, another person..." This definition also includes "any support, child custody or visitation provisions, orders, remedies or relief issued as part of a protection order..." 18 U.S.C. § 2265(5). In other words, FFC extends to all civil and criminal orders regardless of the relationship of the parties.

The FFC statute does not specify enforcement procedures that jurisdictions must follow in order to comply with the mandate. Consequently, states, tribes and territories are left to establish their own procedures for implementation. At present, all states and many tribes and territories, have enabling legislation or enforcement protocols, to facilitate enforcement of protection orders from other jurisdictions. If you are interested in obtaining enabling legislation or protocols for your jurisdiction, NCPOFFC maintains a matrix with this information. To view this matrix, visit <http://www.fullfaithandcredit.org/files/bwjp/files/State%20and%20Territorial%20Full%20Faith%20and%20Credit%20Statutes%20June%202013.pdf>.

Our next newsletter will continue our overview of FFC and discuss how to facilitate inter-jurisdictional enforcement of protection orders.

NCPOFFC promotes and facilitates implementation of the FFC provision of VAWA by raising public awareness of the statutes requirements and by providing training, technical assistance and support to individuals and jurisdictions. In furtherance of this goal, NCPOFFC develops tools and resources to facilitate uniform responses and clear direction on how to implement all FFC issues for protection orders. Discipline specific guides on how to implement FFC and enforce orders across inter-jurisdictional lines for advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors and survivors are some of the resources available.

For technical assistance and additional resources, please call NCPOFFC at (800) 903-0111, prompt 2, email [ncffc@bwjp.org](mailto:ncffc@bwjp.org) or visit our website, [www.fullfaithandcredit.org](http://www.fullfaithandcredit.org).