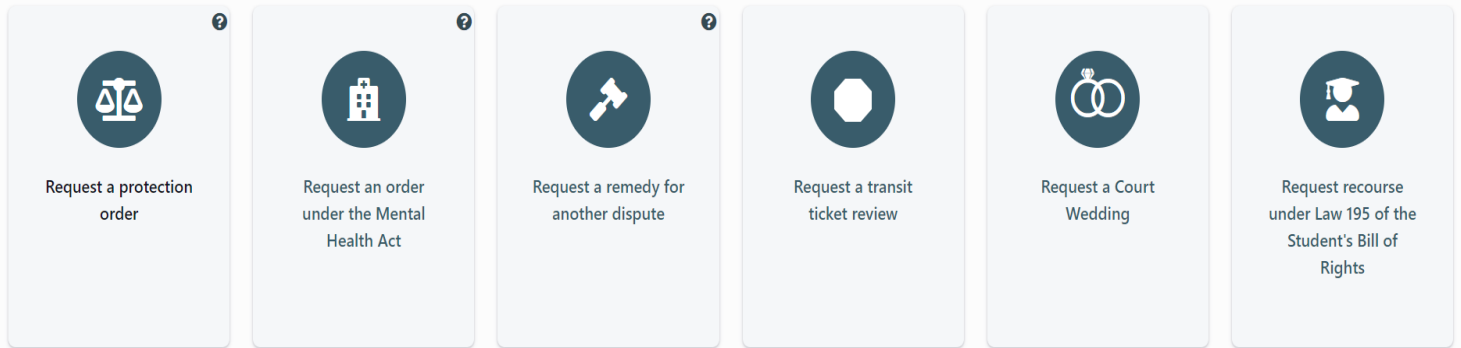


Description of the Electronic Court Web-based Application

Choose the type of application you want to submit.



The Judicial Branch Electronic Court Application

The Electronic Court translates the paper-based judicial and administrative procedures into an electronic software application. In general terms, the development entails the graphic design and automatization of all work components, including the programming to allow for the creation of a user account (personal or institutional), and the automatization of six interactive judicial forms. The first automatized court form was the protection order. The user has the option of filling a protection order under any of the following five legislations:

1. Domestic Abuse Prevention and Intervention Act, Law No. 54 of 1989,
2. Protection of Victims of Sexual Assault Violence Act, Law No. 148 of 2015,
3. Act Against Stalking in Puerto Rico, Law No. 284 of 1999,
4. The Child Safety, Well-being, and Protection Act, Law No. 246 of 2011, and
5. Public Policy of the Government in Favor of the Elderly, Law No. 121 of 2019.

After creating a user account, the person or institution will answer some general questions about the petitioner. Then, the user will select the type of restraining order needed. The application will redirect the user to the screens with the specific questions regarding the circumstances and reasons why a restraining order should be issued. To the extent possible, the electronic forms were drafted with numerous multiple selection questions to facilitate and expedite the filling process.

The Electronic Court also entails the automatization of other Municipal Court level forms, which are currently at different stages of development:

1. Involuntary admission, temporary detention, compulsory treatment, change of status from voluntary admission to involuntary admission, and electroconvulsive therapy under the Mental Health Code of Puerto Rico, Law No. 408-2000,
2. Traffic fines review under the Puerto Rico Vehicle and Traffic Law No. 22 of 2000 and municipal ordinances,
3. Students' Bill of Rights, Law No. 35 of 2015,
4. Controversies and Provisional Legal Status Act, Law No. 140 of 1974, and
5. Solicitation to celebrate the wedding in the courthouse.

The Electronic Court Interconnected Modules

The application will consist of two modules designed for different populations and purposes. **The External Users' Module** will enhance access to self-represented litigants or institutions needing to request a protection order, an involuntary admission, temporary detention, compulsory treatment, change of status from voluntary admission to involuntary admission, and electroconvulsive therapy, or any other municipal level judicial resource. The potential external users could include employers in need of a restraining orders to guarantee the safety of the domestic violence or stalk victim and his/her workforce companions. Examples of institutional users are prosecutors working on behalf of the Department of Justice, private or public medical service providers, victim's service organizations, or the central government Mental Health Service and Anti-Addiction Administration.

The Judicial Branch Internal Module will automate the Municipal Court case management workflow. This will help streamline the work process and expedite the Court Clerks and judges handling of the case. In a labor market of personnel shortage, the electronic application will also help address this concern. The court personnel will be granted access according to their responsibility and role, such as, municipal judges, marshals, court clerks, superior administrative judges, court auxiliary coordinators, and OCA's administrative personnel. This module will interconnect with the Unified Case Management and Administration System application for civil and criminal matters at the Municipal court instance.

The Electronic Court Application Unnegotiable Objectives

The Puerto Rico Judicial Branch embark in this effort with a clear set of objectives. The attainment of the objectives requires frequent interactions between the committee members and the continuous review and editing of the work accomplished. The objectives are:

1. **Access to Justice for all**, with special emphasis for those population sectors who experience challenges that hinder their access to services. A designated Judicial Branch employee has the responsibility of reviewing and guaranteeing that accessibility standards are met, in this situation, the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards. To meet this objective the Courts, have a collaborative agreement with the Assistive Technology Program of the University of Puerto Rico. The application development process entails the user testing exercise, which was also conducted with populations with special needs to identify those application features that need further improvements to enhance access. To further enhance access the Electronic Court content will be translated into English. This will make it plausible to reach the English-speaking population living in Puerto Rico and the potential 5.83 million (2019) Puerto Ricans living in the United States.
2. **Easy-to-understand information requirements** – It would be accomplished by using layman's language and graphic images to enhance the comprehension of the form's instructions and information requirements.
3. **Intuitive application navigation process** – It would be accomplished by using multiple resources such as the application graphic design, technical features (Chatbot and Virtual Assistant), and by user testing exercises. EDUCO would organize the user testing exercises, including focus groups, to identify the features that needed further improvements and obtain precise recommendations

of what those improvements should be. The committee members, other court staff, community residents, and special needs populations participated in such exercises.

4. **Minimizing the time needed to file the petition**, by streamlining the court forms' information requirements, by determining, which was the minimum legally required information, avoiding duplication, and providing for the infill of the same information in other sections of the electronic forms.

The Electronic Court application capabilities are:

- Access through multiple devices, web-based application will be accessed through a computer, a tablet, or a smartphone.
- The creation of a user account, which allows the self-represented litigant or institution to retrieve, download, or print court filed information at any time or place, and when most convenient.
- Panic Button - To be place in all the screen pages to immediately close the application. Once closed, the application will automatically redirect to the Google introductory page. The information entered will be recorded and the user will be able to resume work when feasible.
- Automatic backup of the information entered.
- Is a depository of the user information and case file evidential documents and court motions.
- Automatic notification through email and the option of receiving notifications through text message.
- The capacity to upload documents, in PDF format, videos, sound, images or photographs.
- Data collection about:
 - users' sociodemographic characteristics,
 - courtroom work process's, procedural data related to the type of court remedy requested, by which population sector, the hour of more demand for service, and the time required by the court to provide a judicial, and
 - the application provides for the interconnection with diverse statistical software, that will allow to aggregated data and produce dashboards for planning purposes and the allocation of resources.

The Electronic Court technical features to enhance user access and accessibility

- **Speech to text**- To facilitate the completion of the electronic forms the speech-to-text feature was programed. The self-represented litigant has two options: to write the events or narrate them. In such case of narration, the application will translate the oral information into text. The user can edit the written information and hear the information dictated.
- **The Virtual Assistant Feature** – Throughout the entire electronic application, the virtual assistant will read the instructions that must be followed to complete the court forms. The instructions are also available in writing. This sound device can be activated or deactivated, to safeguard the person's confidentiality and security.

I am **Information Officer of the Judiciary**. I'll be helping you with the process of creating a new request, viewing your existing requests, or continuing any of your saved requests.



- **Chatbot** – The chatbot will provide general information about each specific legislation and the emergency remedies such law provides. This feature was programmed according to predetermined questions and their answers.
- **Live Chat** – Once the application is deployed, the self-represented litigant will have the option of communicating with a court employee. The employee will help the person understand the court judicial procedures, the information that is required to complete the form, provide information about organization that provide legal counseling or social services, among others. The court employee will not provide legal counseling nor advice. The specific service hours are to be determined.
- **Screen Reader Software** – The application is programmed to interact with visually impaired person accessibility software. Therefore, the software could read the application content.
- **Language** – The application will be available in English and Spanish.