

Victim Impact Statement/Offender Release Information

Victim Impact Statement

As the victim of a crime in the state of Pennsylvania, you have a right to submit comment to the court prior to the sentencing via a Victim Impact Statement. This statement is your opportunity to explain to the court how this crime has affected you physically, psychologically, emotionally, and economically. The statement shall be considered by the judge when determining the defendant's sentence. The Victim Impact Statement will be sent to you after the defendant's preliminary hearing and should be returned as soon as possible to the Victim/Witness Coordinator. If you need help in filling out the form or have questions concerning the statement, please contact the Victim/Witness Coordinator.

Offender Release

Victim/Witness Services subscribes to the free PA-SAVIN automated notification service, which lets you know if a particular offender is in jail and gives you other important custody information. Once you sign up, it will call you at a phone number or send a text or e-mail to let you know when the offender is released, is transferred, or has escaped. Anyone may sign up for notification. To register, call 1-866-9PA-SAVIN toll free or go to www.pacrimevictims.state.pa.us. Additionally, once an offender is sentenced to state prison, victims and their families have the opportunity to participate in the after-sentencing process. They may provide oral or written comments for the state parole board to consider. The Office of the Victim Advocate provides those services and can be reached at 800-322-4472.

Other Notices

Code of Ethics

The Lycoming County Victim/Witness Services Program staff is guided by the principles of the commitment to service, the dignity and worth of the person; integrity, competence, social justice, confidentiality, self-determination and respect for the importance of human relationships.

We are committed to ensuring that persons victimized by the actions of an offender be afforded the right to choose their level of participation in the criminal justice system, to the extent possible.

Confidentiality Policy

The Lycoming County Victim/Witness Services Program staff shall protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except when disclosure is necessary by policy of the Office of District Attorney and/or to prevent serious and imminent harm to a victim or witness or other identifiable person or when laws require disclosure without a victim's or witness's consent.

Crime Victim Grievance

If a victim feels that unlawful or inappropriate action has occurred, he or she may contact the Victim/Witness Coordinator and request a complaint form, which may be completed and returned to the Coordinator. The Victim/Witness Coordinator will make every attempt to resolve the complaint. If the Victim/Witness complaint remains unresolved to the satisfaction of the victim, the victim has a right to contact the Office of the Victim Advocate, 1101 S. Front St., Suite 5200, Harrisburg, PA 17104; call (800) 563-6399 or visit www.o.va.pa.gov.

Lycoming County Office of District Attorney Victim/Witness Pamphlet



Victim/Witness Coordinators

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Mission Statement



This office shall embrace the pursuit of justice with wisdom, humility, and accountability to all victims of crime.

A Note To Victims

"We know the criminal justice system can be confusing and frustrating. Having you be an active part of the process may help eliminate some of that frustration. We hope that you will exercise the rights and take advantage of the services described in this brochure. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the court process or your case in particular."

Troy D. Sellers, Victim/Witness Coordinator

"We believe that every person experiences the impact of a crime or tragedy in a unique way and that each individual deserves a safe, supportive and non-judgmental environment to share these experiences. We are committed to assisting you in every step of the way."

Laura L. Weeks, Victim/Witness Coordinator

VICTIMS RIGHTS

BASIC BILL OF RIGHTS FOR VICTIMS

Victims of crime have the following rights:

- To get basic information on all available services to help you. To be notified of certain significant actions within the criminal and juvenile justice systems pertaining to your case;
- To be accompanied by a family member, victim advocate, or other support to all public criminal and juvenile proceedings;
- To write a victim impact statement that a judge can consider when sentencing the person who committed the crime;
- To be restored, to the extent possible, to the pre-crime economic status through the provision of restitution and to receive assistance with applying for Crime Victims' Compensation;
- To receive immediate notice of the release of an adult offender on bail who is incarcerated in a local prison for a violation of a Protection From Abuse order (PFA) or for a personal injury crime committed against the victim protected by the PFA;
- To have property returned that was seized as evidence but is no longer needed for prosecution; and
- To have notice and to provide prior comment on the sentencing decision regarding an adult offender or the disposition of a delinquent child.

RESTITUTION/CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION

Restitution

As part of the defendant's sentence, the judge may order restitution to be paid to the victim for losses occurring because of a crime. You may wish to submit medical or property losses to your insurance company. If possible, you should pay any outstanding bills to avoid collection agencies or damaging your credit rating. A restitution form will be provided to you and should be returned to the Victim/Witness Coordinator as soon as possible. The restitution form and supporting documentation must be returned by the due date on the form and before the defendant is sentenced.

Please note, the District Attorney's Office does not collect restitution, but can advocate on your behalf in the event of non-payment.

One-half of the defendant's payments are typically applied to restitution to the victim until all restitution has been paid. If the defendant does not comply with the order of the court and explain the lack of compliance with the court order, they may face additional sanctions. If at any time you have questions about restitution, please contact the Victim/Witness Coordinator.

Crime Victim's Compensation

The Crime Victims' Compensation fund is available to provide reimbursement for expenses accrued due to the actions of the defendant. These include medical expenses, counseling, lost wages, or funeral and burial expenses. To be eligible you must have reported the crime and cooperated fully within 72 hours, have filed the claim within two years after the crime or the death of the victim, not have provoked the incident or engaged in illegal activity and must have a minimum of \$100 in outstanding medical expenses or missed two weeks of work.