

## **SERVICES OFFERED BY PROSECUTION-BASED VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Each judicial circuit and county in Georgia is unique in population, services and resources. Many of the services for victims in Prosecutor's offices are legislatively mandated by Georgia law (versus optional certification requirements) through the Crime Victim's Bill of Rights, and are mandated for all crime victims regardless of their victimization type. The services provided in Prosecutor offices to victims may include, but are *not limited to*:

### Stabilizing Lives:

1. Coordinate crime scene clean-up services.
2. Provide information and assistance with property return.
3. Provide referrals to and coordinate services with agencies that provide food, shelter, support groups, medical care, and crisis/emergency intervention and long-term therapy/counseling.
4. Provide assistance with information, application, and document collection for Crime Victim Compensation.
5. Provide assistance with information, application, and document collection for restitution.
6. Provide assistance with other applications (TANF, Immigration, leases, etc.) and/or other paperwork relating to acquiring services as a direct result of the crime.
7. May assist victims requesting assistance in working with bill collectors, where the expense was a direct result of the crime or due to loss of wages as a result of the crime.
8. May assist victims with employers and/or school administrators when victims lose wages, employment, or time as a direct result of the crime or to their cooperation with the prosecution.
9. Provide victims with referrals to legal counsel with respect to custody, divorce or immigration matters.
10. Provide assistance for and coordination with attorneys or Board of Immigration Appeals certified advocates for filing T or U Visa paperwork, or a VAWA self-petition.

### Meeting Emotional/Physical Needs:

11. Provide Advocate availability, up to 24/7, for victims and law enforcement, insuring information about options for crime victims immediately following the crime and offer the very first emotional support & crisis intervention (*homicide, aggravated assault and domestic/family violence cases, and crisis response*).
12. Assist with death notifications for families of victims.
13. Provide assistance with preparation of Victim Impact Statements.
14. Provide assistance with letters, victim impact statements, registration for Georgia Victim Impact Panel, facilitation of/accompaniment to Visitor's Day, clemency hearings and executions, etc.
15. Provide follow-up services to victims at hospital facilities, coroner's offices, and/or funeral homes.
16. Provide personnel availability during interviews to help victims feel more comfortable.
17. Provide emotional support to the victim and family, throughout the judicial process.
18. Provide practical assistance to insure necessary court appearances of victims (e.g. services for the disabled victims and translators).
19. Provide appropriate post-sentence referrals and intervention if needed.
20. Provide services and literature in Spanish and other languages.

### Meeting Safety & Security Needs:

21. Assist victims with safety planning.
22. Coordinate communication with necessary professionals with on-going activities of the defendant that is putting the victim in fear and/or physical jeopardy.
23. Prompt the necessary actions within the system to expedite a stage of the case for victim protection (i.e., make the prosecutor aware that a case was dismissed in Magistrate Court in order to initiate the

- indictment/bond process for protection of the victim, or, initiate the process for probation revocation if defendant is violating the terms and jeopardizing the safety of the victim).
24. Provide information and advocacy regarding Temporary Protective Orders (TPO).
  25. Assist victims with contacting an offender's probation or parole officer, particularly with regard to TPO violations.
  26. Assist victims with advocating for no contact constraints or stay away bond conditions.
  27. Assist victims with notification requests to the county jail/Department of Corrections regarding the defendant's release from jail.
  28. Provide a comfortable waiting area apart from defendant's family and acquaintances.

#### Assisting with the Criminal Justice System:

29. Assist the victim and family members with understanding the process and what to expect at each stage of the case in the system.
30. Assist the victim and family members with understanding all the legal terminology and strategy during the processing of the case.
31. Advocate for restitution at time of sentencing (this can become part of the sentence and if payment is not rendered, it is a probation violation).
32. Coordinate victim needs for transportation and travel that may include; air, train, bus, auto, accommodations, and meals.
33. Assist victims with the warrant application process and attend related pre-warrant court hearings.
34. Serve as liaison between victims and investigators, solicitor-generals, assistant district attorneys, and court personnel.
35. Provide assistance to investigators and prosecutors with victims for initial and ongoing contact (e.g. interviews and scheduling of these interviews).
36. Making sure contact information and the physical location of the victim is maintained and accurate for continuation of services.
37. Provide courtroom orientation and pre-trial preparation to victims testifying.
38. Escort victims to court and related hearings.
39. Provide ongoing communication and information regarding status of the case, bond hearings, grand jury decisions, disposition options, appellate decisions, etc.
40. Attend any hearings with victim, or on behalf of victim, in which they are not required to be present.
41. Assist victims with making contact with the Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Department of Corrections to request notification on the criminal being sent into the prison system and offering avenues for opinions on early parole release.
42. Serve as VWAP in cases outside of their jurisdiction when a prosecutor's office is conflicted out of the case.

#### Education/Collaboration:

43. May serve on community activist committees, board of directors, and task forces; acting as liaison to the prosecutor's office and/or judicial system (i.e., shelters, rape crisis centers, etc.).
44. Represent the office on various victims service bodies including; child fatality review, domestic violence fatality review, elder abuse task force, domestic violence task force, various multi-disciplinary teams, etc.
45. May serve on Victim Impact Panel as member or coordinator, holding monthly meetings, recruiting, training and maintaining victim panel members and speakers.
46. Provide trainings to community, law enforcement, educational facilities and other professionals on victim assistance and victim related issues including, *but not limited to* family violence, identity theft, sexual assault, child abuse, teen dating violence, elder abuse, the criminal and civil justice process, stalking, and crime prevention.
47. Provide ongoing information and literature to educate victims about the Victim Assistance Program, crime, and other relevant issues through pamphlets, handouts, presentations, referrals, internet, etc.

Prosecutorial Assistance:

48. As needed, assist investigators and prosecutors with obtaining reports from DFACS, child advocacy and assessment centers, and other agencies.
49. As needed, assist investigators and prosecutors with completing referral forms and setting up forensic interview at child advocacy and assessment centers.
50. As needed and upon request from investigators, prosecutors, or child advocacy and assessment center personnel, will attend forensic interviews and multidisciplinary team meetings (MDT).
51. As needed, assist investigators and prosecutors with documentation in domestic and family violence cases (pictures of victim's injuries, statements, etc.).