



CODE of PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
for VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Victims of crime and the criminal justice system expect every Victim Witness Assistance Provider, paid or volunteer to act with integrity, to treat all victims and survivors of crime with dignity and compassion, and to uphold principles of justice for the accused and accuser alike. To these ends, this Code of Professional Ethics will govern the conduct of Victim Witness Assistance Providers:

- I. *In relationships with every person served, the Victim Witness Assistance Provider shall:*
 1. Accurately represent his or her professional title, qualifications, and/or credentials in relationships with persons served.
 2. Maintain a high standard of professional conduct.
 3. Achieve and maintain a high level of professional competence.
 4. Refrain from behaviors that communicate victim blame, suspicion regarding victim accounts of the crime, condemnation for past behavior, or other judgmental, anti-victim sentiments.
 5. Recognize the interests of the person served as a primary responsibility.
 6. Respect and protect the civil and legal rights of the person served while using the utmost care not to provide legal advice.
 7. Respect the rights to privacy and confidentiality of the person served, subject only to laws or regulations requiring disclosure of information to appropriate other sources.
 8. Respond compassionately to each person served with personalized services.
 9. Accept the statement of events as it is told by the person served, withholding opinion or judgment.
 10. Provide services to every person served without attributing blame.
 11. Foster maximum self-determination on the part of the person served.
 12. Serve as a victim advocate when requested and, in that capacity, act on behalf of the stated needs of the person served without regard to personal convictions and within the rules of the prosecutor's office.
 13. Should the needs of one person served conflict with another's, act with regard to one person served only after promptly referring the other to another qualified Victim Witness Assistance Provider.
 14. Not engage in personal, physical, and emotional relationships with person served

which exploit professional trust or could impair your objectivity and professional judgment.

15. Make referrals to other resources or services only in the best interest of the person served, avoiding any conflict of interest in the process.
16. Should a colleague or allied professional express a need for assistance, notify and seek guidance from an immediate supervisor and/or your elected prosecutor.
17. Not reveal the name or other identifying information about a person served or a case to the public without clear permission from the person served or legal requirements to do so.

II. *In relationships with colleagues, other professionals, and the public*, the Victim Witness Assistance Provider shall:

1. Conduct relationships in such a way as to promote mutual respect, confidence, and improvement of services.
2. Serve the public interest by contributing to the improvement of systems that impact victims of crime.
3. Share knowledge and encourage proficiency and excellence in victim assistance among colleagues and allied professionals, paid and volunteer.
4. Seek to ensure that volunteers in victim assistance have access to the training, supervision, resources, and support required in their efforts to assist persons served.
5. Act to promote crime and violence prevention as a public service and an adjunct to victim assistance.

III. *In her or his professional conduct*, the Victim Witness Assistance Provider shall:

1. Understand his or her legal responsibilities, limitations, and the implications of his or her actions within the service delivery setting, and perform duties in accord with laws, regulations, policies, and legislated rights of persons served.
2. Maintain high personal and professional standards in the capacity of a service provider and advocate for persons served.
3. Seek and maintain a proficiency in the delivery of services to persons served.
4. Not discriminate or engage in retaliation against any victim, employee, colleague, allied professional, or member of the public on the basis of age, sex/gender, color, (dis)ability, race/ethnicity, social class, economic status, education, marital status, residency, national origin, religious affiliation, political affiliation, sexual orientation, genetic information or health status.
5. Not make public statements representing one's personal views or those positions adopted by the agency for which she or he works or is a member.
6. Not solicit, accept, or agree to accept gifts, loans, gratuities, hospitality, services, special privileges or advantages.
7. Report to appropriate authorities the conduct of any colleague or allied professional (including self) that constitutes mistreatment of a person served or that brings the profession into disrepute.

8. Report to appropriate authorities any conflict of interest that prevents oneself or a colleague from being able to provide competent services to a person served, or to work cooperatively with colleagues or allied professionals, or to be impartial in the treatment of any person served.

IV. *In her or his responsibility to any other profession*, the Victim Witness Assistance Provider will be bound by the ethical standards of the allied profession of which she or he is a member.

I, the undersigned applicant, hereby certify that I have read and agree to follow the *Code of Professional Ethics for Victim Witness Assistance Providers*.

Print Applicant Name: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____