

**FOREST COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**



**VICTIM ASSISTANCE
PROCEDURAL MANUAL
(SAMPLE)**

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Purpose for Developing the Victim Assistance Procedural Manual

SOVA designed the victim assistance procedural manual to assist and aid victim advocates, coordinators and directors of victim service programs in providing the best quality of services to crime victims. Also, due to a number of requests from advocates across the state, it became apparent advocates were seeking guidance in developing their victim assistance programs and establishing policies and procedures.

The manual was also designed to empower victim advocates and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to ensure that direct victim services is provided in a timely manner to crime victims in their assigned territory.

It is not the intent of this sample manual to capture all of the areas in providing direct victim services or that may apply to your organization or the services you provide to crime victims; however, it is to be used as a guide. It is a sample of what you may want your procedural manual to reflect. Please feel free to adopt all or portions of the manual as you feel appropriate to assist you in developing your own document that will meet your needs and the needs of your organization.

Should you request technical assistance and support in developing your procedural manual, please do not hesitate to contact Ethel Douglas Ford, CPM at 803.734.1704.

WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE?

(Note): Please list your purpose in designing such booklet for all new advocates in your department and updating it annually for current victim advocate staff.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND OR AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(Note): List your agency's mission statement AND OR YOUR VICTIM, goals and objectives and especially those of your victim assistance program

VICTIM ADVOCATE JOB DESCRIPTION

- Serve as full time victim advocate for Forest County Sheriff's Department providing direct victim services to crime victims
- Provide crisis intervention to crime victims
- Provide case management of crime victims' files
- Provide status updates and information to crime victims about their case and their rights
- Assist crime victims with filing crime victims' compensation applications and submission
- Assist crime victims with filing Victim Impact Statements
- Assist crime victims in magistrate, municipal and or general sessions court
- Provide courtroom orientation
- Etc....
- Etc....

(Note): Please list what your duties are as a victim advocate within your agency. Be as detailed as you possibly can be and update annually. Make sure that the job description listed in the procedural manual is also on file with your human resource office as well. If you are a county victim advocate and have contracts with municipalities, you must list those municipalities in your job description and the services you as an advocate provide to that municipality.

South Carolina Crime Victims' Rights



South Carolina Crime Victims' Constitutional Rights

"To preserve and protect victims' rights to justice and due process regardless of race, sex, age, religion, economic, status, victims of crime have the right to:"

- be treated with fairness, respect and dignity;
- be free from intimidation or harm throughout the criminal and juvenile justice process;
- be informed about victims' rights;
- be reasonably informed about criminal proceedings;
- be informed if the accused is arrested, released, or escapes;
- confer with the prosecution before the case is heard in court;
- be present at criminal proceedings where the accused has the right to be present;
- be heard at proceedings affecting bond, bail, release, pleas or sentencing;
- have reasonable access to documents relating to the crime before trial;
- receive restitution from the adult or juvenile offenders;
- a reasonable, prompt and final conclusion of the case;

The penalty for violating the *Victims' Bill of Rights* is:

- *Writ of mandamus*, issued by Supreme Court or circuit court to require compliance
- A willful failure to comply with a *writ of mandamus* is punishable as contempt

**Excerpted from the Constitution of South Carolina, Article I, Section 24
(This is a condensed reference and is not intended to substitute for the law.)**

What Can You Do To Help Crime Victims Understand Their Rights

- Network with various organizations
- Collaborate with your peers and co-workers
- Coordinate services
- Be informed of new legislation affecting crime victims and services available to them
- Get training to be the best advocate you can be
- Provide follow – up in a timely manner with organizations, victims etc.
- Serve as a resource for other advocates and professionals
- Know about victim resources
- Provide handout material to crime victims when you meet with them

(Note): Please add anything to this section that you may do in your office to help crime victims understand their rights and the criminal justice process and procedure.

Victim Services Statutes

For Additional Information Online:
www.scstatehouse.gov/code/statmast.htm

- **Roles of Law Enforcement: Section 16-3-1520 through 1545**
- **Roles of Jails, etc.: Sections 16-3-1525 (H) through 1560**
- **Roles of Prosecutors: Sections 16-3-1515 – 1555**
- **Roles of Courts: Sections 16-3-1525 (H) through 1555**
- **Roles of State Agencies: Sections 16-3-1530 - 1540**
- **Role of the Attorney General: Sections 16-3-1560(B)**
- **Legislative Intent: Sections 16-3-1505**
- **Roles and Responsibilities of Victims: Section 16-3-1515**

CODE OF ETHICS

(Note): List your agency's code of ethics. You may also download the victims' rights code of ethics as well for this section. Ensure that all advocates follow all code of ethics established.

TYPES OF CRIME VICTIMS THAT MAY NEED ASSISTANCE (NOTATE SERVICES PROVIDED/PROCESS)

- **Criminal Sexual Conduct** – list process and procedure
- **Homicide** – list process and procedure
- **Criminal Domestic Violence** – list process and procedure
- **Abuse of a Minor** – list process and procedure
- **Simple Assault** – list process and procedure
- **Assault and Battery** – list process and procedure
- **Strong Armed Robbery** – list process and procedure
- **Stalking** – list process and procedure
- **Harassing Phone Calls** – list process and procedure
- **Courtroom Accompaniment** – list process and procedure
- **Assistance with filing Crime Victims' Compensation** – list process and procedure
- **Assistance with filing Victim Impact Statement** – list process and procedure
- **Transporting crime victims to shelters** – list process and procedure

(Note): List types of crime victims in which you provide direct victim services to and the type of services you provide to each victim.

Afterwards, list a procedural process that you have implemented for providing the services to crime victims. Be very detailed since this outlines your internal process and procedure for assisting various types of victims and notates the different types of services. It should also indicate how you provide those services.

CASE MANAGEMENT OF FILES

(Note): Outline how you provide case management of victims' files within your organization

Request to Use Victim Assistance Fines, Fees And Assessment Fund For Purchases

(All must be related to providing direct victim services to crime victims and in accordance to Approved Guidelines)

- Prepare written letter outlining your reason(s) for making the request for funds
- Do your research and have some knowledge as to the estimated cost for the item(s) being requested and attach to your request
- Establish a chain of command as to who you will provide copies of the request to for signature approval. then forwarded to the finance office and distribute to appropriate staff
- Make a copy of the request and keep a copy on file
- Develop an organized filing system to maintain all requests
- Develop a process and procedure for the receipt of requested item(s). How do you document that you've received it, how long did it take from approval time to receipt of the item. The County Finance personnel and or Municipal Town Administrator handling finance must be final person to approve all requests.
- Track all items purchased – what do you have in place to track requested items
- Ensure procedure in place for all items requested and that they are in accordance to approved guidelines
- Ensure a procedure is in place that all items purchased are for victim advocate's use ONLY

(Note): Please list whatever your process is for requesting funds. If you do not have a process in place, develop one. It is important to remember that your request for funds must be in accordance with the approved guidelines. The approved guidelines are listed on the following pages.



**SOUTH CAROLINA
Victim Service Coordinating Council**

**Approved Guide for Expenditures of Monies Collected for Crime Victim
Service in Municipalities and Counties
Effective December / 2013**

The following is a list of approved expenditures of crime victims' funds retained by county and municipal governments pursuant to Sections 14-1-206, 14-1-207, 14-1-208, and 14-1-211 exclusively for the purpose of providing victim services; including but not limited to:

1. Personnel, salaries/ benefits, performing direct services to crime victims (Victim Advocates within law enforcement and solicitor offices, notifiers for detention centers and the summary courts);
2. Automobiles shall be used solely by the Victim Service Provider (VSP) for providing direct victim services for the life of the automobile.
3. Expenses for a victim may be reimbursed to the Victim Service Provider (VSP) only while providing direct victims services at the rate of per diem for meals and transportation
4. Computers, computer software, internet connection, website for personnel providing direct crime victim services;
5. Automated victim information and notification systems;
6. Training and conference registration, hotel accommodations for personnel providing direct crime victim services;
7. Office space, furniture, equipment (telephone, telephone lines, 800 numbers, fax, copier) and equipment maintenance for personnel providing direct crime victim services;
8. Postage, copying and printing cost for programs as relating to notification services and correspondence relating to direct victim services as carried out by the Victim Service Provider
9. Brochures for crime victims describing the crime victim services available through the entities and contact information. Reference materials.
10. Telephone charges relating directly to crime victim services;
11. Pager, cell phone expenses for personnel providing direct crime victim services;

12. Volunteer personnel and training expenses directly providing services to crime victims;
13. Office supplies for personnel directly involved in providing services for crime victims;
14. Camera, film, video tape, VCR recording equipment to support evidence documentation for domestic violence and sexual assault cases and viewing of educational materials for victims;
15. Recording or translation services directly related to crime victim services;
16. Funding for Women and Children shelters/ treatment center for crime within the county or municipality;
17. Funding for Rape Crisis Centers
18. Funding for other local organizations providing direct services for crime victims (Mental Health, etc.);
19. Matching funds for grant programs providing direct services to crime victims (CDV grants, dedicated court grants for CDV, etc.); Emergency funding to be paid to service providers for crime victims: day care for children of crime victims required to be in court, limited rent, utilities for transitional housing for CDV victims, limited groceries, transportation, etc.); Funding for child friendly interview rooms, separate waiting rooms for crime victims;

REPORTS

- **Reports are very important and vital to the program**
- **Put a process in place for the types of reports you need**
- **Make sure to indicate who you need reports from and or who you need to prepare reports for if a contract is involved. Then establish time frames for getting them back and or submitting them.**
- **Prepare reports that track your victims monthly, quarterly and yearly**
- **Provide immediate supervisor(s) with reports so they will know what's going on within your department and for accountability purposes in the event the information is need later.**
- **Track the following: types of victims assisted and the number, types of services provided, and how many agencies did you network with during the month etc. whatever additional stats you think is pertinent to your program**

(Note): List anything in this section that you feel relates to the tracking of crime victims you are assisting on an ongoing basis in your areas (contract or no contract). Full time victim advocates are not required to use the Time and Activity Forms; however, it's a great way to continue to track services you are providing as an advocate and types of victims assisted etc. Choose your own reporting system to track the above information and any other information you would like to capture. Reports are vital and can be used as a tool to help measure your performance and as stated for accountability purposes.

NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

(Note): List any partnerships that you have within your area and how you network with them on an ongoing basis. What a wonderful way to help your victims through partnering with others with the same mission and goal in mind! Assisting crime victims through the criminal justice system can be difficult. Partnering with other organizations and working together can help make a smooth transition for the victim during a very difficult time as the victim goes from one agency to the next. No one agency can do it alone! So, don't be afraid to help each other and work together as one for the betterment of the victim.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

(Note): Training is vital as a victim advocate. As a victim advocate, you must meet the 15 hour basic core training within the first year of your employment. Please contact the Office of Victim Services Education and Certification (OVSEC) for a Victim Service Provider (VSP) number and listing of various training events across the state. You may reach them at 803.734.0357.

You must maintain 12 hours each year thereafter of victim training. A process should be in place regarding how you select victim service training and how you track the victim service training yearly etc.

Remember, it is important to have your legislative mandated Victim Service Provider certification and equip yourself with as much knowledge as you can about the criminal justice system, process, victim advocacy, and resources available for crime victims etc. You will feel better about the services you provide to crime victims!

RESOURCES

(Note): List local resources in which you use to assist crime victims and any procedure you must follow in order to use those resources. Remember, knowing your resources is very important. You must know who to refer a victim to and when, how etc. So, establish procedures for doing this in advance.

PUBLICATIONS

(Note): It is important to have various brochures and flyers developed with agency logo and contact information for your victim assistance program (this includes cell phones if your victim program purchased the cell phone). Victims need to know how to reach you during and after business hours.

Having something tangible for victims to hold on to that they can read later is a MUST! Victims don't always remember what advocates tell them and advocates may have to tell them the same thing a number of times due to the number of agencies that may be assisting the victim and the information overload that they may be getting. We all know this is due to their victimization and the trauma they are experiencing. So, a brochure and or flyer for them to take with them after meeting with you are a must!

So, develop brochures and flyers and establish a procedure for ordering these items and keeping them on hand and distributing the item(s) to crime victims.

LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER!



Sample Victim Assistance Manual Developed by SOVA - Updated January 2017