



St. Louis Circuit Attorney's

VICTIM  SERVICES

MISSION:

Victim Services is dedicated to assisting crime victims with the aftermath of violent crimes and acts as a liaison between victims and the criminal justice system.

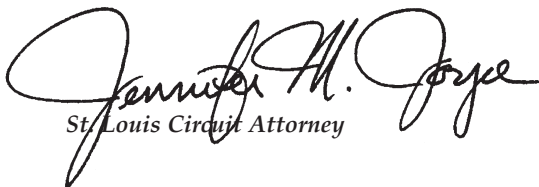
MESSAGE FROM THE CIRCUIT ATTORNEY

All too often being a victim or witness of a crime causes many hardships. Sadly, one of the hardships can be struggling to understand and cope with the criminal justice system.

You are doing the right thing by working with the system. It is my hope that we can work as a team to effectively prosecute those who have broken the law. My office and I are committed to seeing that you are treated with fairness, dignity and respect, and that you understand the process and your rights as a victim.

It is my pledge to the citizens of this City that the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office will vigorously prosecute those who are charged with committing crimes, while being responsive to the needs of the victims of those crimes. Thank you for your help. We couldn't do our job without you. It is my hope that together we can help make our community a safer place in which to live, work or visit.

Jennifer M. Joyce



Jennifer M. Joyce
St. Louis Circuit Attorney

MISSOURI CONSTITUTIONAL VICTIM RIGHTS

These rights are granted automatically to all victims of dangerous felony crimes. If you were a victim of a non-dangerous felony crime, or a victim of any misdemeanor crime, you must request in writing that your rights be observed. Mail your requests to: Victim Services, 1114 Market, Room 401, St. Louis, MO 63101.

You Have the Right:

1. To receive information about the crime and decision regarding the filing of charges.
2. To be informed about Missouri Crime Victim Compensation, receive claim forms and apply for compensation; be informed about financial, emergency and crisis intervention services in the St. Louis Community.
3. To be present and heard at all criminal justice proceedings at which the defendant has such a right.
4. To be informed in a timely manner of court dates, continuances and final outcomes of all court hearings.
5. To be provided with a secure waiting area during court proceedings.
6. To reasonable protection from harm and/or threats.
7. To participate in criminal justice proceedings without being discharged or disciplined by an employer.
8. To be informed of procedures to apply for and receive any witness fees.
9. To have property returned once there is a final outcome of a case, and to have a reasonable explanation if it cannot be returned.
10. To appear at sentencing and make an oral and/or written statement.
11. To be notified if the defendant escapes, is released or dies.
12. To be informed about restitution and to ask the defendant to pay restitution.

If you feel any of these rights have been violated, you may contact Victim Services, (314) 622-4373, or the Missouri Victim Assistance Network (800) 698-9199.

ABOUT VICTIM SERVICES

Victim Services was established in the City of St. Louis in 1979. We are a not-for-profit agency dedicated to the assistance of all victims of crime within our jurisdictional boundaries. We are a unit within the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office, thereby offering a unique and compassionate place for a victim of crime to receive support, assistance and answers to questions.

Our office provides all services FREE of charge. This is made possible through city funds, grants and donations made by private citizens. All of these funding resources enable us to continue our mission.

4 Ways to Help

Memorial & Tribute Fund

This is a special way to recognize a deceased or family member during a special occasion, such as a birthday, retirement or anniversary of a death.

Volunteer/Intern Program (VIP)

This program is designed to allow concerned citizens to take part in actually assisting victims of crime. The volunteer or intern will be evaluated, trained and supervised by experienced staff.

Educate Your Community

Through our Community Education Program we can help you, help your community, your business and your schools with issues relating to victimization.

For more information about any of these ways to help, contact Victim Services by phone (314) 622-4373, or by fax (314) 622-4900.

Gateway Community Crisis Response Team

Through the coordinated efforts of numerous agencies in the St. Louis Metro area, group crisis intervention sessions are available to any community experiencing the impact of violent crime. Contact the Victim Services Director at 622-4373 to arrange for this assistance.

PROGRAMS

Case Management Program

This program is designed to assist a victim of crime to understand the many complexities of the criminal justice system, while providing emotional support and advocacy during the time the criminal case is open in the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office. An Advocate Caseworker will automatically be assigned to a victim. This Advocate Caseworker will contact the victim frequently, notifying the victim about hearings. The Advocate Caseworker will also assist the victim with Crime Victim Compensation application, locating resources in the community, making any travel arrangements for trial, assisting with financial reimbursement programs and escorting the victim to hearings. This program was designed to prepare the victim for the emotional stress that is common when involved in the criminal justice process.

Crisis Counseling Program

This program is designed to provide free short term counseling to victims and their families. We provide individual, group and family counseling that focuses on the emotional and educational healing of the client. Often our clients suffer from nightmares, flashbacks, difficulties concentrating and even suicidal thoughts. Our licensed counselor can help the client sort out the emotional impact, and how that impact can affect themselves, their families, and their job. We provide a taxi cab service for those clients who do not have transportation. Counseling hours are available during the day and in the evening.

Witness Relocation Program

This program is designed to assist victims/witnesses who find themselves in dangerous situations as a result of participation in the criminal justice system. Only those victims or witnesses who find themselves in life threatening situations are considered for this program upon completion of an extensive verification process.

Evening & Weekend Program

This program is designed to offer all of our normal services during the evening hours (5-7 p.m.), and on Saturdays (9 a.m.-1 p.m.). Through this program, we are able to assist victims who work during normal business hours. All programs and services are available during these extended hours of operation.

Volunteer Program (VIP)

This program is designed to train graduate and undergraduate interns from local universities about prosecution-based victim services. Interested interns are encouraged to contact our Volunteer Coordinator for more details, interviews and training schedules. A limited number of interns are accepted each semester.

Community volunteer opportunities are also available to interested individuals who are not currently enrolled in an approved university program. Volunteers are involved in case management, research, evaluation, fund-raising and clerical functions in the office. For more information, contact our Volunteer Coordinator.

Community Education Program

This program is designed to provide training, awareness and education about Victim Services and issues relating to crime victims. We provide presentations to professionals, civic and community organizations, and volunteers from other organizations. All community education is free of charge. For more information about our Community Education Program, contact the Executive Director.

COURT PROCESS

A crime committed against a person violates state laws so it is considered a crime against the state of Missouri, not an individual. Therefore, a victim of a crime cannot dismiss a case; it must be the decision of the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office.

There Are Two Types of Crimes — a Misdemeanor and a Felony

Misdemeanor — Punishable by probation up to a maximum one-year prison term;

Felony — A serious crime punishable by more than a one-year prison term.

Once a Formation Charge Has Been Filed, Reasonable Cause Must be Determined in One of Two Ways:

Preliminary Hearing — A “mini-trial” where evidence is heard and a judge determines if there is enough evidence to hold the defendant for trial.

or

Grand Jury — A panel of twelve private citizens selected to determine if there is enough evidence to prosecute the accused.

Once reasonable cause is determined, the accused is formally charged. The judge determines the status of bond. A bond is a monetary amount of money that is paid in good faith to the court, to assure the court that the accused will return to all required hearings. If the accused can pay the bond, the accused can be released from jail, but must appear at ALL hearings. A victim can determine whether a bond has been paid by calling either office seven days a week:

- Pre-Trial Release (314) 622-3340
- Sheriff's Department (314) 622-4766

An arraignment is the next step in the system. This is a court hearing where the formal charges are read to the accused, and the accused has an opportunity to respond either guilty or not guilty to the charges.

After the arraignment there is a very long wait for the trial date to be set.

There could be depositions, trial continuances (postponement of a scheduled trial date), and further investigation by the defense and the Circuit Attorney.

A plea is an agreement to forego trial, and the accused pleads guilty to the formal charges. The victim has a right to be present and to be heard at that hearing.

The trial is the formal hearing of all evidence for the state and the defense. The victim will be required, in most cases, to testify about the crime in an open courtroom.

The state has the burden to prove guilt. If the accused is found guilty, a sentencing date is set. If the accused is found not guilty, the accused is set free and cannot be retried on the same charges.

The sentencing is when a judge imposes on the accused the punishment for the crime. The accused may be imprisoned, placed on probation, fined, or any combination of the three. Restitution may also be ordered. The victim has a right to be present and to be heard through a Victim Impact Statement.

If the accused is imprisoned, the Board of Probation and Parole decides when the prisoner may be eligible for parole. Victims and families may attend the parole hearing and can tell the Board how this crime has affected their life. If you move before the accused is released from prison, it is wise to notify the Missouri Department of Corrections with your new address. It is your right to be notified when an inmate is released, is transferred, escapes, or even dies. Below are some helpful numbers to assist you in this process:

- Missouri Department of Corrections, Victims Services Unit (573) 526-6516
- Attorney General’s Office (573) 751-3321
- Probation & Parole — St. Louis City (314) 340-7240
- Probation & Parole — St. Louis County (314) 997-6460

Circuit Attorney’s Office

Victim Services Advocate Caseworker —

1114 Market — Room 401
St. Louis, MO 63101

Phone: (314) 622-4373
Fax: (314) 622-4900

Attorney/Investigator —

1114 Market — Room 401
St. Louis, MO 63101

Phone: (314) 622-4941
Fax: (314) 622-3369

Circuit Attorney Website —

Please visit the St. Louis Circuit Attorney’s Website for additional information and links to state and local resources. Criminal Case information and the Sex Offender Registry may be reviewed at www.circuitattorney.org.

MOVANS

While the defendant is in the custody of the City of St. Louis Justice Center and awaiting trial, you may contact the Missouri Victim Automated Notification System (MOVANS) for status of inmate release at 1-866-566-8267. This service is provided by the Missouri Crime Victim Services Unit, MO Department of Public Safety, www.dps.mo.gov.

Case.net

The Office of State Court Administrators has made available to the public access to court records of all judicial circuits in the State of Missouri via the internet. Their website is www.courts.mo.gov/casenet

You will be able to check court dates and other court information on this website. Incidents that occur in the City of St. Louis are heard in the 22nd Judicial Circuit. *Please be sure to confirm all hearing dates with the Assistant Circuit Attorney assigned to the case or with your Victim Services Advocate Caseworker before appearing in court.*

Court Date

Date of trial _____ Courtroom/Division _____

Where Do I Report?

You should report to 1114 Market Street, Victim Services, Room 401. You will wait in a comfortable and private waiting room until it is time for your testimony. Your attorney and investigator will meet you in Victim Services.

Where Do I Park?

Parking is available at Scottrade Center Parking Kiel Garage (1400 Clark). Bring this parking ticket to Victim Services for validation.

Special Transportation Concerns?

If you do not have transportation to the courthouse, you must call your attorney, investigator or Advocate Caseworker to arrange for transportation.

What If the Media Is in the Court Room?

If the media confronts you about the case in which you are involved, we would encourage you to save all your comments to the media until the end of the court case. Your comments could have a negative impact on the trial if a jury misunderstands your comment. You are NOT required to ever talk to the media.

Special Assistance Needed Due to Disability?

If you require assistance due to a disability, please notify your Advocate Caseworker. We can arrange for transportation or access/exit to the Carnahan Courts Building.

Interpreter Services?

If you or a member of your family requires an interpreter for language or hearing needs, you must contact your Advocate Caseworker at least 24 hours in advance for an interpreter to be present during a trial or court hearing.

Child Care Services?

The courthouse is not an appropriate place for small children. It is encouraged that small children be left at home with appropriate child care providers. Victim Services can supplement the cost of your child care provider. Contact your Advocate Caseworker for details.

Wage Reimbursement Services?

If your employer will NOT pay you for time away from work for the trial, Victim Services may be able to assist you with loss of wages. You must talk to your Advocate Caseworker for more details. We can provide you with verification of your appearance in the court case for school or work missed due to testifying in a trial.

Court House Hours?

Court hours are from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. In some instances, the judge can order court personnel and juries to remain in session beyond those normally scheduled hours or even through weekends or holidays. Be prepared for long days.

COMPENSATION FOR LOSSES

Missouri Crime Victim Compensation Program

In Missouri, it is possible for a crime victim to be reimbursed for certain expenses incurred as a result of the crime. Missouri Crime Victim Compensation Program will reimburse a crime victim a maximum of \$25,000.

The Following Expenses Could Be Considered:

- Hospital or doctor bills
- Counseling or therapy bills \$2,500
- Funeral/burial bills \$5,000
- Loss of wages due to injury or death \$200/week

To Be Eligible for this Program, the Victim Should:

- File a police report about the incident within 48 hours of crime.
- Cooperate with the police and Circuit Attorney's Office.
- NOT be involved in any type of criminal activity at the time of the incident.
- NOT be convicted of two felony convictions in the past ten years.
- File their claim within two years of the date of incident.
- Only file a claim in this program if the crime occurred in Missouri.

For more information visit www.dps.mo.gov or to receive an application, please contact Victim Services (314) 622-4373, or Missouri Crime Victim Compensation Program, P.O. Box 1589, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (800) 347-6881. If you have questions about your pending application, you must contact Crime Victim Compensation Program (800) 347-6881.

Private Insurance

Your private insurance may provide coverage for personal injury or property loss due to a crime. Check with your insurance company for more information about losses to property or physical injuries.

Restitution

If the reporting of a crime results in the offender being placed on probation, the court may order the offender to pay restitution or to pay for the cost of your injuries, damage or losses. This does NOT guarantee that restitution can or will be made by the defendant. If you are having problems in collecting your restitution, contact the Circuit Clerk's Office (314) 613-7250.

Civil Lawsuits

In some instances you may also be able to file a civil lawsuit, which is separate and very different from the criminal case. Often, other parties besides the offender could be held responsible for a crime that was committed. These third parties and the offender could be sued and ordered by the judge to pay for some or all of your financial, and in some cases emotional, costs associated with the crime. To file a civil lawsuit you must hire your own attorney. Victim Services can assist you with finding an attorney for your civil case.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

What Is a Victim Impact Statement?

A Victim Impact Statement is the method by which victims of crime can communicate their feelings to the court. This is most often done in the form of a letter written to the sentencing judge, which expresses how a particular crime has affected the victim or family member. The law also provides the victim of a dangerous felony crime with the opportunity to appear in person on the sentencing day and speak to the judge directly.

What Is the Purpose?

The overall purpose of an impact statement is to give the sentencing judge an opportunity to understand clearly the effects of the crime from the victim's perspective. The impact statement can also be a beneficial therapeutic tool for the victim, to voice his/her concerns directly to the court and be heard by the offender or to simply put his/her thoughts about the crime on paper.

Who Can Make a Victim Impact Statement?

All dangerous felony crime victims or immediate family members have a constitutional right to submit a written or verbal impact statement. Other family members or friends can submit a written statement, but in some instances, may not be allowed to address the judge in an open courtroom.

What Should Be Included in the Victim Impact Statement?

1. Victim's name
2. Identify any physical injuries and long-term physical suffering
3. Identify any emotional injuries and long-term suffering
4. Total cost of any financial losses incurred (example: hospital, property, emotional, loss of wages, etc.)
5. Describe any changes within family, job or relationships resulting from the crime
6. Describe what sentence you believe is fair to impose on the person who committed the crime

When Should the Victim Impact Statement Be Written?

The victim may write a victim impact statement at any time during the criminal justice process. Consult with your Advocate Caseworker about when the statement should become part of the court record.

Who Can Help Me With My Victim Impact Statement?

Your Advocate Caseworker can assist you in writing the statement. Contact Victim Services (314) 622-4373, for assistance in preparing your impact statement.

TIPS FOR THE COURTROOM

1. Dress neatly, appropriately attired, yet comfortably.
2. Bring a book, games for older children, or something to occupy your waiting time.
3. Be prepared to wait for extended time periods.
4. Enlist the help of a friend who can support you on the day of trial. Do not bring people that will not be able to emotionally support you (example: small children, people who make you uncomfortable or uneasy).
5. Stay calm. The object is to tell only what you know, and to tell it truthfully.
6. Try to keep yourself from becoming angry with the defense attorney.
7. It's okay to cry if you become emotional. If you need a break, ask the judge.
8. Be courteous to the judge, the Assistant Circuit Attorney and the defense attorney.
9. Look at the jury. They must be able to hear you and understand what you say.
10. Listen carefully to questions.
11. If you do not understand a question, ask that the question be repeated.
12. Take your time, and think carefully before answering questions.
13. Speak clearly and loudly so everyone in the courtroom can hear your answer.
14. Answer all questions directly, but only answer the question that is asked.
15. Do not volunteer extra answers or use profanity.
16. Always give a verbal answer. Avoid nodding your head to indicate "yes" or "no".
17. Never guess. If you do not know the answer or do not remember, say "I don't know," or "I don't remember."
18. Tell the truth!

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314.622.4900 (fax)