



**CITY OF AKRON, OHIO**  
**POLICE DIVISION**  
**KENNETH R. BALL II, CHIEF OF POLICE**

<b>NUMBER</b> P-2020-042	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> February 7, 2020	<b>RESCINDS</b> P-09-042 Issued 12-31-09
<b>SUBJECT</b> Victim Assistance Program Procedure		<b>ISSUING AUTHORITY</b> Chief Kenneth R. Ball II

**I. POLICY**

This policy is intended to provide officers and detectives with instructions on how and when to connect victims of crime and trauma with a Victim Advocate from the Victim Assistance Program. Linking victims to a Victim Advocate immediately following a traumatic event greatly reduces the long-term impact one's victimization may have on their physical, financial, and psychological wellbeing.

**A. SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Immediate crisis intervention and support with the intention of ensuring a victim's basic human needs (safety, shelter, food, clothing) are met for the next 24-48 hours. Follow up support will be provided until services are no longer required or until the victim declines such services.

1. Debriefings in the immediate aftermath of traumatic incidents.
2. Counseling, long and short-term, for individuals, families, and groups.
3. Assistance with victim reparation: information, application forms and follow-up.
  - a. Victims of crime or dependents of victims who were injured or died as a result of a violent crime or OVI offense may seek compensation from the State of Ohio for physical injuries or death.
  - b. Police officers may be eligible for some out-of-pocket medical expense and time off work including secondary employment.
4. Assistance with civil protection orders, anti-stalking civil orders, and temporary protection orders.
5. Assistance with insurance forms, credit card and ID replacement, emergency food, minimal emergency financial assistance, repairs, clothes, and homicide cleanup where indicated.
6. Referral to pertinent community services.
7. Victim and witness assistance throughout judicial process.

8. Extends service to anyone affected by a crime or a traumatic event.

## **B. TYPES OF CRIMES AND NON-CRIME RELATED TRAUMAS**

1. Victim Assistance Program advocates provide free services to all Summit County victims of crimes including, but not limited to: assault, burglary, robbery, rape, domestic violence involving hospitalization or serious injury, child abuse, elder abuse, kidnapping, human trafficking, homicide, identity theft, arson, etc.
2. Victim Assistance Program advocates provide free services to all Summit County individuals impacted by non-crime related traumas including, but not limited to: missing persons, suicide, overdose, traffic fatality, infant death, unexpected death, natural disaster, etc.
3. Victim Assistance Program does not provide services to individuals who are victimized while engaged in criminal activity; however, services may be offered to the individual's family.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Victim Assistance Program – Provides free 24/7 crisis intervention, advocacy, and education services to victims of crime and trauma and to the professionals who serve this population.
- B. Victim Advocate – A trained professional who assists victims of crime and trauma with emotional, financial, psychological, legal, and the physiological aftermath of a traumatic event. There are advocates always on call.
- C. Crisis intervention – An evidence-based process led by a trained professional that allows victims to regain a sense of immediate control after they have experienced a traumatic event.

## **III. PROCEDURE**

### **A. OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Officers can request the assistance of a Victim Advocate through the Detective Bureau Desk, Safety Communications, or Victim Assistance Program's hotline (330-376-0040). They are strongly encouraged to do so for appropriate types of crime and noncrime related traumas.
2. Death notifications
  - a. Notification of the next of kin of the death of a family member is a difficult task even for experienced officers.
  - b. All death notifications that are the responsibility of this agency shall be delivered in person unless the exigency of circumstance demands telephone notification. Death notifications that are the responsibility of the Akron Police Department include homicides and/or questionable deaths.

- c. Notifications should be done as soon as information on the next of kin is gathered and officers have familiarized themselves with the essential details concerning the deceased (accuracy of address and primary person to be notified) and other pertinent information.
  - d. When practicable, the detective or officer required to advise a family of a death notification shall take a Victim Assistance advocate along to assist in the notification.
  - e. Whenever possible, two officers should be assigned to a death notification.
  - f. Every reasonable effort shall be made to make the death notification in the privacy of the survivor's home or in another location away from public scrutiny.
  - g. Officers should address the survivor in a straightforward manner and use easy to understand language to briefly explain the circumstances of the incident and the fact that the individual is dead.
  - h. Officers should remain alert to the possible need for medical assistance.
  - i. Officers shall not leave until reasonably assured that the survivor has adequate personal control and/or family, close friend or clergy join the victim for emotional support or arrange for transportation of the victim to other appropriate support.
3. Information and referral – It is important that officers take the steps necessary to meet the victim's needs for appropriate information. This can include providing a brief overview of what actions will be taken, answering questions, and providing telephone numbers. Officers shall not leave without offering information on the services of Victim Assistance and the victim service agencies available in the community. Officers should encourage the victim to report any additional information about the incident.
  4. Officers assigned the task of continuing an investigation involving a crime against a person should provide Victim Assistance Program staff with any information that the officer feels may be helpful to them when contacting the victim.
    - a. Officers will ensure that victim advocates do not interfere with the law enforcement process.
    - b. Officers should be aware that advocates are strictly bound by confidentiality with regards to all departmental activity and information.
  5. If a Victim Assistance advocate responds to the scene, officers are required to stand by in order to ensure the safe arrival and departure of the Victim Assistance advocate, unless relieved by the advocate.
  6. Lack of information about case status is one of the greatest sources of dissatisfaction among victims of crime and crime survivors. Investigators/officers should leave names and numbers where the victim can reach the case investigator.

By Order Of,

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Kenneth R. Ball II  
Chief of Police

Date \_\_\_\_\_