**Victims’ Rights Policy – Template**

**Victim-Centered and Trauma-Informed Practices**

Despite progress in establishing federal and state crime victims’ rights legislation, only a small percentage of victims and co-victims obtain the information and services they are entitled to receive. The criminal justice system has historically focused on apprehending, prosecuting, adjudicating, and punishing offenders – often leaving the critical needs of crime victims and co-victims unmet.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Victim-centered** – placing the crime victim’s priorities, needs, and interests at the center of the work with the victim; providing nonjudgmental assistance, with an emphasis on self-determination, where appropriate, and assisting victims in making informed choices; ensuring that restoring victims’ feelings of safety and security are a priority and safeguarding against policies and practices that may inadvertently re-traumatize victims; ensuring that victims’ rights, voices, and perspectives are incorporated when developing and implementing system- and community-based efforts that impact crime victims.

**Trauma-informed** – approaches delivered with an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma. A trauma-informed approach recognizes signs of trauma and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings.

\**Definitions used in OVC Model Standards*

Victims and co-victims may experience trauma from the crime itself, their injuries or losses, their involvement in the criminal justice process, and other forms of pre-existing trauma that may affect their experiences in the criminal justice process. Law enforcement agency personnel should follow a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to address victims’ and co-victims’ needs.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to expand victim-centered, trauma-informed practices to all contact points experienced by victims and co-victims. Victim response should be an agencywide priority and written policies should be developed to guide personnel actions.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Intention of Policy Template**

The intention of this document is to provide law enforcement agencies with sample language and content for use when establishing or revising written policies to guide agency actions to uphold victims’ rights access that include expectations for law enforcement-based victim services. Agency personnel should review and revise the *Victims’ Rights Policy – Template* to ensure consistency with federal and state statutes and agency policies, procedures, and practices.

**Contributing Agencies**

The *Victims’ Rights Policy – Template* was adapted through review of the following law enforcement agencies’ existing policies:

* Baltimore Police Department – Maryland
* Casper Police Department – Wyoming
* Charles County Sheriff’s Office – Maryland
* DeWitt Police Department – Iowa
* Gainesville Police Department – Florida
* Greeley Police Department – Colorado
* Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office – Virginia
* Louisville Metro Police Department – Kentucky
* Manor Police Department – Texas
* Montgomery County Police Department – Maryland
* Philadelphia Police Department – Pennsylvania
* Saginaw Police Department – Michigan
* Shakopee Police Department – Minnesota
* International Association of Chiefs of Police – Response to Victims of Crime

**Additional Resources**

The following resources may provide additional, but not exhaustive, information on the topics:

* [DOJ | The Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance 2022](https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2022/10/21/new_ag_guidlines_for_vwa.pdf)
* [OVC - IACP | Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims (ELERV)](https://www.theiacp.org/projects/enhancing-law-enforcement-response-to-victims-elerv)
* [OVC - IACP | Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services (LEV)](https://www.theiacp.org/projects/law-enforcement-based-victim-services-lev)
* [NCVLI | Rights by Jurisdiction](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)
* [NCVLI | Victim Law Library](https://ncvli.org/professional-resources/victim-law-library/)

**July 2025**

**Victims’ Rights Policy – Template**

*This template provides sample language and content to help law enforcement agencies develop a written policy to guide agency actions to uphold victims’ rights access. Agency personnel, including legal counsel and human resources staff, should review and revise this template to ensure consistency with federal and state statutes and agency’s policies, procedures, and practices.*

[Agency Letterhead]

**Victims’ Rights**

**PURPOSE**

Victims’ rights statutes influence how victims and co-victims are treated within the federal, state, and local criminal justice systems. Including crime victims’ rights in state constitutions increases the strength, permanence, and enforceability of victims’ rights.[[4]](#footnote-4) The [*agency name*] is committed to the fair and compassionate response to victims and co-victims by proactively and consistently ensuring access to victims’ rights throughout every stage of agency involvement. This commitment extends beyond the distribution of informational material and is embedded in expectations for agency personnel actions and decision-making processes.

**POLICY**

All [*agency name*] personnel whose responsibilities include contact with victims and co-victims, also share in the responsibility to uphold proactive and consistent access to victims’ rights. Some common rights during law enforcement contact include:[[5]](#footnote-5),[[6]](#footnote-6)

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

* Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect: A victim’s right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect is the right to justice and due process within the criminal justice process. The right requires consideration of victims’ interests throughout their involvement in this process.
* Right to Privacy: A victim’s right to privacy is the right to protective measures that limit or prevent access to a victim’s personal information, such as the victim’s identity, location, confidential or privileged records, sexual history or the intimate details of the crime committed against them.
* Right to Notice: A victim’s right to notice is the right to be advised, in a reasonable, accurate and timely manner, of any court proceedings or specific events in the criminal justice process implicating the victim’s rights or interests.
* Right to Confer: A victim’s right to confer is the right to gather information from and provide information to the prosecution regarding the victim’s rights or interests, significant stages of the criminal justice process and the disposition of a case.
* Right to Be Present: A victim’s right to be present is the right to choose to attend criminal justice proceedings related to an offender’s investigation, prosecution and incarceration, as well as other proceedings related to a victim’s rights or interests.
* Right to Be Heard: A victim’s right to be heard is the right to express their views to the court and other entities tasked with making decisions related to a criminal case and/or offender. The right to be heard authorizes victims to express these views at any court proceeding or stage of the justice process at which their rights or interests are implicated.
* Right to Protection: A victim’s right to protection is the right to be reasonably protected from the accused and those acting on behalf of the accused during and after the victim’s involvement with the criminal justice system. This right generally extends to victims’ physical safety, as well as their mental and emotional health.
* Right to Information: A victim’s right to information is the right to be told about investigative processes, criminal proceedings, and available resources. This right includes the provision of information regarding victims’ rights and services, the operation of the criminal justice system and the relevant details of a particular case.
* Right to Prompt Disposition: A victim’s right to a prompt disposition is the right to the final resolution of the case involving their victimization and includes both pre-and post-conviction processes without unreasonable delay.
* Right to Compensation: A victim’s right to compensation is the right to reimbursement from the government for certain financial losses that the victim incurred as a result of crime.
* Right to Prompt Return of Property: A victim’s right to the prompt return of property is the right, when a victim’s property is the possession of the government for investigative or prosecutorial purposes, to have such property returned to the victim as soon as it is no longer needed for an investigation or prosecution.

SAMPLE

* Right to Support Person Presence: A victim’s right to support person presence is the right to have a victim advocate and/or a person of the victim’s choosing accompany the victim to proceedings and other events in the criminal justice process at which their rights or interests are at stake.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

**DEFINITIONS**

**Critical Needs of Victims and Co-Victims** – law enforcement agencies play a significant role in ensuring that victims’ and co-victims’ needs are broadly understood and consistently addressed. While each victim and co-victim may have unique needs, common critical needs during law enforcement contact include:[[7]](#footnote-7)

* **Safety** – People who experience victimization, especially those impacted by violent crime, are generally at a higher risk of revictimization in the future. Physical, emotional, and psychological safety are all important for victims and co-victims in the aftermath of crime.
* **Support** – Opportunities to connect those who experience victimization with the help they need are often missed during law enforcement contact. Facilitating the presence of chosen support persons and connections with victim services personnel are vital for victims and co-victims.
* **Information** – Using multiple formats (e.g., conversations, written material, website) can help inform victims and co-victims about their rights and available resources. Providing guidance during multiple contacts (e.g., decision points, status updates) can help them access those rights and resources as they navigate the justice system.
* **Access** – Opportunities to participate in justice system processes through enhanced physical access to buildings, use of technology, and availability of information in multiple languages (e.g., spoken, sign, braille) is vital for victims and co-victims.
* **Continuity** – Collaboration with other justice system professionals and community organizations is essential to reinforce roles and responsibilities, share information, and facilitate smooth transitions for victims and co-victims as they navigate the justice system.
* **Voice** – Crime victimization and the response to crime involves actions and decisions by others. Victims and co-victims need opportunities to provide input and have that input considered.
* **Justice** – Many cases do not result in arrest, prosecution, and maximum sentencing of offenders. Procedural justice, which refers to the concept of fairness in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources, may be the only form of justice that some victims and co-victims receive.

**Victims’ Rights** – language included in constitutions, statutes, rules, and policies that vary by federal, state, or tribal jurisdiction and define legal responsibilities related to victims of crime, affording them independent, participatory status in the criminal justice system.[[8]](#footnote-8)

* [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*]
* **Co-victim** – individual who has lost a loved one to homicide, including family members, other relatives, and friends of the decedent.[[9]](#footnote-9)
* **Victim** – individual who is an independent participant in the criminal case under federal or state victims’ rights laws or tribal victims’ rights codes, denotes a person’s legal status (unavailable to the general public), and defines the level and extent of participation that the individual is entitled to in the criminal matter.[[10]](#footnote-10)
* **Witness** – individual who has personal knowledge of information or actions that are relative to the incident being investigated.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Witnesses who do not meet the statutory definition of crime victim do not have victims’ rights. Agency personnel should use available resources, without infringing on defendants’ constitutional rights, to assist witnesses during their interactions with the criminal justice system.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

SAMPLE

**Executive leadership** [*include agency titles*] – responsible for setting and enforcing expectations related to victims’ rights and associated responses.

Proactive and consistent access to victims’ rights is a gateway to effective response and services for victims and co-victims. [*Agency name – insert titles*] will ensure that victims’ rights are upheld through:

1. Internal Communication – conveying personnel expectations related to victims’ rights through written correspondence (e.g., email, memos, performance reviews), personal interactions, meeting discussions, policy implementation, and accountability standards.
2. External Communication – conveying agency practices related to victims’ rights through [*agency name*] website, media interactions, collaborative initiatives (e.g., multidisciplinary meetings, formal agreements, awareness events), and community dialogue.
3. Budgetary Support – ensuring funding to support availability of victims’ rights information, processes, and personnel training.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with Executive Leadership responsibilities include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Protection, and the Right to Information.

**Supervisors** [*include agency titles*] – sworn and professional supervisory personnel responsible for ensuring appropriate practices are followed and documented related to victims’ rights.

Sworn and professional supervisory personnel are vital to proactive and consistent access to victims’ rights. [*Agency name – insert titles*] will ensure that victims’ rights are upheld through:

1. Victims’ Rights Information – developing and reviewing information for distribution.

[*Agency name – insert titles*] shall ensure that information contained in [*victims’ rights pamphlet*] is reviewed for accuracy every 2 years, translated into languages commonly used in the community, posted to the [*agency name*] website, and available through the [*agency name*] online reporting process. Supervisors shall ensure that supplies of [*victims’ rights pamphlet*] are available at all [*agency name*] facilities.

1. Oversight of [*agency name*] sworn and professional personnel actions – adhering to policies, procedures, and practices that enhance access to all victims’ rights and specific rights that intersect with assigned responsibilities.

[*Agency name – insert titles*] shall ensure that written policies and procedures that intersect with victims’ rights are reviewed for accuracy every 2 years. Supervisors shall facilitate the delivery of relevant training to personnel, review personnel actions during routine meetings and performance appraisals, and provide guidance to personnel aimed at professional growth and accountability.

SAMPLE

1. External collaboration – maintaining professional relationships and connecting victims and co-victims to personnel and processes that enhance access to victims’ rights.

[*Agency name – insert titles*] shall ensure that personnel elevate victims’ rights during media relations activities (e.g., press releases, press conferences, social media posts, media interviews), during participation in collaborative initiatives (e.g., [*insert multidisciplinary meetings*], National Crime Victims’ Rights Week), and through connecting victims and co-victims to personnel and processes (e.g., victim services personnel, victim impact statements).

1. Documentation, information-sharing, and records management – describing decisions made and actions taken in [*agency Records Management System*] and [*agency victim services documentation system*], protecting the release of information when possible, and maintaining records according to [*citation(s) to* *state statutes*].

[*Agency name – insert titles*] shall ensure that sworn and professional personnel inform victims and co-victims of and take appropriate actions related to the intersections of victims’ rights with documentation and records management practices. This includes written/electronic information (e.g., evidence tracking systems), audio/video recordings (e.g., body-worn cameras, recorded interactions), information sharing and release practices (e.g., discovery, *Brady* disclosures, crime victim compensation, public records), options to protect information, and retention/destruction practices.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with Supervisor responsibilities include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Notice, the Right to Confer, the Right to Be Present, the Right to Be Heard, the Right to Protection, the Right to Information, the Right to Prompt Disposition, the Right to Compensation, the Right to Prompt Return of Property, and the Right to Support Person Presence.

**Sworn personnel** [*include agency titles*] – responsible for upholding access to victims’ rights and contact with victims and co-victims related to investigations of criminal incidents.

**Professional personnel** [*include agency titles*] – responsible for upholding access to victims’ rights and contact with victims and co-victims during agency practices related to investigations of criminal incidents.

**Victim Services personnel** – agency personnel (paid or unpaid) designated to provide law enforcement-based program oversight, crisis intervention, criminal justice support, community referrals, and advocacy on behalf of crime victims, co-victims, and witnesses.[[13]](#footnote-13) These personnel, upon request and when available, can provide:

* victims’ rights information and help with proactive and consistent access to those rights.
* safety planning and help with the protection of personally identifying information in [*agency name*] records, information on protection order processes, and identifying additional ways to increase safety and reduce risks of harm.
* support during death notifications, investigative interviews and actions, press conferences, records requests, property releases, media interviews with victims and co-victims, protection order processes, and court events.
* ongoing contact with victims, co-victims, and investigators to provide status updates on cases and factors affecting engagement with investigations of criminal incidents.

SAMPLE

* referrals and supportive handoffs to [*agency name*] personnel, external agencies and organizations, and victims’ rights attorneys that can further support access to victims’ rights.

**Initial Contact and Investigative Actions**

[*Agency name*] sworn and professional personnel are uniquely positioned to address the **critical needs of victims and co-victims**, and this starts with initial contact that can occur through:

* Field Responses – businesses, hospitals, incident locations, residences
* Alternative Reporting Options – online, phone, walk-in

This is also reinforced via investigative actions that can occur through:

* Personal Contact – digital/electronic, in person, phone, virtual
* Information Review – evidence (digital/electronic, forensic, physical), justice system records

[*Agency name*] sworn and professional personnel whose responsibilities include initial contact with victims and co-victims and investigative actions shall be familiar with victims’ rights. These personnel will:

1. enhance access to all victims’ rights [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*] – upon request and proactively,
2. enhance access to specific rights that intersect with assigned responsibilities [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*] – upon request and proactively,
3. enhance access to crime victim compensation,

SAMPLE

1. address immediate safety concerns,
2. provide information about processes associated with criminal investigations, and
3. provide information about and connection to available services.

Each victim and co-victim of [*crime categories*] will be provided with a [*victims’ rights pamphlet*] in person during field responses and walk-in reports, by mail within 24 hours following phone reports, or through a download option for online reports. [*Agency name*] phone number and associated incident number(s) will accompany each [*victims’ rights pamphlet*].

Sworn and professional personnel whose responsibilities include investigative actions shall confirm that each victim and co-victim has been provided with a [*victims’ rights pamphlet*].

Crisis Intervention, Safety Planning, and System Navigation

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide short-term help to victims and co-victims who have experienced events that produce distress. This includes actions that attend to physical and psychological comfort, reduce additional trauma, and address immediate needs.

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will collaborate with victims and co-victims to address immediate safety, identify ways to increase safety, provide information and resources that reduce safety risks, and provide guidance around actions to take for future safety concerns.

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide victims and co-victims with information about crime victim compensation, information about investigation and prosecution processes, and facilitate connections to support and services.

Serious Injury and Death Notifications

Serious injury and death notifications are important elements of investigations and delivery of this information can influence ongoing communication with victims and co-victims. [*Agency name – insert titles*] will enhance access to victims’ rights [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*] and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims by delivering serious injury and death notifications related to [*crime categories*] through a team approach, in person when possible, in a timely manner, using plain language, and with compassion. Refer to [*Death Notifications policy*] for further details.

[\**Note: In some jurisdictions, state statutes require the delivery of death notifications by coroner/medical examiner personnel.]*

Interviews and Investigative Participation

Thorough, objective, offender-focused investigations benefit from 1) interviews with victims and co-victims, witnesses, and suspects and 2) participation of victims and co-victims in investigative actions. [*Agency name – insert titles*] will enhance access to victims’ rights and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims when conducting all interviews.

1. Victim and Co-Victim – consider privacy during initial contacts, consider time and location preferences when scheduling interviews, and facilitate the inclusion of chosen support persons when possible [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].
2. Witness – address safety concerns of victims and co-victims and provide guidance around future communication of victims and co-victims with witnesses.
3. Suspect – address safety concerns of victims and co-victims, determine willingness and ability of victims and co-victims to participate in controlled communication, and provide guidance around future communication of victims and co-victims with suspects.

[\**Note: In some jurisdictions, state statutes related to consent for recording conversations prohibit the use of controlled communication as an investigative strategy.]*

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will enhance access to victims’ rights and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims when requesting victim and co-victim participation in investigative actions.

1. Composite Sketches – consider time preferences when scheduling and facilitate the inclusion of chosen support persons when possible [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].
2. Photo Arrays – consider time preferences when scheduling and facilitate the inclusion of chosen support persons when possible [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

Case Connectivity

Analyzing evidence and information from current and unsolved cases is a crucial element of investigations that can lead to the connection of multiple crimes to the same perpetrator(s). Delivery of this information can influence ongoing communication with victims and co-victims. [*Agency name – insert titles*] will enhance access to victims’ rights [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*] and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims by delivering notifications related to case connectivity through a team approach, in person when possible, in a timely manner, using plain language, and with compassion.

SAMPLE

Evidence and Property Management

Proper collection, processing, and management of evidence contribute to criminal investigations and prosecution. Items that are no longer needed for investigation and prosecution are the property of the rightful owners and shall be maintained until they can be returned or disposed of according to the rightful owners’ expressed desires. [*Agency name – insert titles*] will enhance access to victims’ rights and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims when managing evidence and property. Refer to [*Evidence and Property Management policy*] for further details.

1. Collection – consider privacy, provide information about collection options (e.g., photographs in lieu of physical items, scheduling of forensic exams), and facilitate the inclusion of chosen support persons when possible during interactions with victims and co-victims (e.g., injury documentation, forensic exams, gunshot residue tests, doll reenactments, DNA collection) [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].
2. Processing and Management – communicate with victims and co-victims related to evidence testing updates and access to evidence tracking systems [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].
3. Property Return – consult with prosecuting attorney’s office(s) to confirm item(s) are no longer needed for prosecution, determine rightful owner(s) of item(s), provide information to victims and co-victims about return and destruction options, consider preferences when scheduling property returns, coordinate removal of biological material and neutral packaging when possible, and facilitate the inclusion of chosen support persons when possible [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

SAMPLE

Victim Services Personnel Incorporation

All [*agency name*] personnel are expected to enhance access to victims’ rights and be responsive to victims’ and co-victims’ needs. [*Agency name*] victim services personnel will be incorporated during initial contact and investigative actions, when possible, to ensure specialized responses and services to victims and co-victims.

[*Agency name*] victim services personnel can be requested during initial contacts and investigative actions for [*crime categories*] and can assist victims and co-victims with crisis intervention, access to victims’ rights, access to crime victim compensation, justice system navigation, accompaniment during justice system and services connection processes, safe and appropriate transportation, short-term accompaniment of minors and vulnerable adults with clear transition plans to identified guardians, and referrals and supportive handoffs to support and services.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with initial contact and investigative actions include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Notice, the Right to Confer, the Right to Be Present, the Right to Be Heard, the Right to Protection, the Right to Information, the Right to Prompt Disposition, the Right to Compensation, the Right to Prompt Return of Property, and the Right to Support Person Presence.

**Communication Plans**

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will establish and maintain communication plans with victims and co-victims to enhance access to victims’ rights and address their unique needs. Communication plans occur through:

* Communication Methods – in-person, virtual, phone, electronic (e.g., text, email, social media); facilitating access to objective interpretation and translation when needed (oral, written, braille).
* Bi-Directional Updates – conveying victim and co-victim information and input to [*agency name*] personnel and [*agency name*] decisions and actions to victims and co-victims.

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will collaborate with victims and co-victims to develop communication plans that consider preferred communication methods, timeliness of information, and include the following milestones:

1. Key Investigative Actions – consider privacy, provide information, and facilitate the inclusion of chosen support persons when possible [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].
2. Charging Decisions and Warrants – address safety concerns and provide information related to arrest, charges, bonds, custody status, release conditions, and service of warrants [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].
3. Case Status and Disposition – address safety concerns and provide information related to transition of cases to prosecution, active/inactive status of cases, and case closure [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

SAMPLE

1. Personnel Changes – provide information when key contact personnel (e.g., lead investigator, victim services personnel) have promoted, transferred, or are no longer employed at [*agency name*] [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].
2. Victim and Co-Victim Updates – receive information about factors that affect the ability and desire of victims and co-victims to access their rights and participate in investigations from the point of initial report through appellate review [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

Through communication plans, [a*gency name – insert titles*] will answer questions, address concerns, and explain policies and processes while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of investigations.

Victim Services Personnel Incorporation

[*Agency name*] victim services personnel can enhance access to victims’ rights by facilitating communication plans and serving as key contact personnel for victims and co-victims.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with Status Updates and Communication Plans responsibilities include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Notice, the Right to Confer, the Right to Be Present, the Right to Be Heard, the Right to Protection, the Right to Information, the Right to Prompt Disposition, the Right to Compensation, the Right to Prompt Return of Property, and the Right to Support Person Presence.

**Documentation, Information Sharing, and Records Management**

All [*agency name*] sworn and professional personnel whose responsibilities include contact with victims and co-victims also share in the responsibility to uphold victims’ rights through:

1. Documentation – memorialization of personnel decisions and actions

[*Agency name – insert titles*] shall document information related to victims’ rights to include provision of [*victims’ right pamphlet*], options for victims and co-victims to protect personally identifying information, victims’ and co-victims’ input, and decisions and actions taken by [*agency name*] personnel in [*agency Records Management System*] and [*agency victim services documentation system*]. Supervisors shall ensure that documentation is reviewed and compliant with established standards [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

1. Information Sharing – release of records (written/electronic records, audio/video recordings)

[*Agency name – insert titles*] shall ensure that victims’ and co-victims’ personally identifying information is protected from release when possible and that victims and co-victims are notified of information shared when possible (e.g., *Brady* disclosures, public records requests, crime victim compensation, criminal justice agency requests). Supervisors shall ensure that records are released in compliance with established standards [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

SAMPLE

1. Records Management – identifying, classifying, storing, securing, retrieving, tracking, destruction, and permanent preservations

[*Agency name – insert titles*] shall ensure that written, electronic, audio, and video records generated and received by [*agency name*] related to victims’ right are appropriately managed. Supervisors shall ensure that records are managed in compliance with established standards [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

Victim Services Personnel Incorporation

[*Agency name*] victim services personnel can enhance access to victims’ rights by collaborating with agency personnel to

1. ensure accurate contact information for victims and co-victims is in [*agency name*] records,
2. ensure appropriate actions are taken to prevent disclosure of victims’ and co-victims’ personally identifying information,
3. review purpose of and access to [*agency name*] information and records,
4. inform victims and co-victims, in advance and when possible, that [*agency name*] will release information and records, and
5. inform victims and co-victims that [*agency name*] will destroy records and evidence.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with documentation, information sharing, and records management responsibilities include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Notice, the Right to Protection, the Right to Information, the Right to Prompt Disposition, and the Right to Compensation.

**Agency Practices**

[*Agency name*] sworn and professional personnel will enhance victims’ rights and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims when carrying out responsibilities through:

1. Crime Prevention – developing and implementing strategies to deter crime

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide information about options to address safety concerns (e.g., security surveys, enhanced field patrols) [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

1. Media Relations – establishing and maintaining effective relationships between [*agency name*] and media representatives

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide information to victims and co-victims, in advance when possible, when engaging with the media for key investigative actions (e.g., Crime Stoppers, press releases, social media/website posts) [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will consider privacy, address safety concerns, and facilitate the inclusion of chosen support persons when possible when coordinating press conferences and media requests for interviews with victims and co-victims [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide information about victims’ rights and available services during outreach and awareness efforts (e.g., National Crime Victims’ Rights Week) [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

1. Multidisciplinary Teams – establishing and maintaining effective relationships between [*agency name*] and professionals of various disciplines to solve problems, achieve shared goals, and enhance outcomes for those served.

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will develop formal agreements that include information-sharing practices, actions to obtain consent from victims and co-victims to share case-specific details. [*Agency name*] personnel will exchange information with other professionals that proactively and consistently enhances access to victims’ rights [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

SAMPLE

1. U and T Visa Certifications – confirmation of eligibility and willingness to help law enforcement agencies investigate and prosecute criminal activity for victims and co-victims of specific crimes

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will facilitate applications and review of certification requests for victims and co-victims. [*Agency name*] personnel will provide information about victims’ rights [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

1. Victim Compensation – financial assistance to victims and co-victims for eligible expenses related to eligible crimes

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide program information and facilitate application processes for victims and co-victims of eligible crimes [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*].

Victim Services Personnel Incorporation

All [*agency name*] personnel are expected to enhance access to victims’ rights and be responsive to victims’ and co-victims’ needs. [*Agency name*] victim services personnel will be incorporated during agency practices, when possible, to ensure specialized responses and services to victims and co-victims.

[*Agency name*] victim services personnel can be requested during agency practices and can assist victims and co-victims with crisis intervention, access to victims’ rights, access to crime victim compensation, justice system navigation, accompaniment during justice system and services connection processes, safe and appropriate transportation, short-term accompaniment of minors and vulnerable adults with clear transition plans to identified guardians, and referrals and supportive handoffs to support and services.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with Agency Practices responsibilities include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Notice, the Right to Protection, the Right to Information, the Right to Compensation, and the Right to Support Person Presence.

**Training**

Personnel training helps establish and maintain skills to enhance access to victims’ rights and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims. All [*agency name*] sworn and professional personnel whose responsibilities include contact with victims and co-victims will be trained on victims’ rights through:

1. Academy – [*agency name – insert titles*] will participate and content will include federal and state victims’ rights laws, [*agency name*] policies, and expectations according to assigned responsibilities.
2. Field Training Officer Program – [*agency name – insert titles*] will participate and specialized content and evaluation will include the ability to proactively and consistently ensure access to victims’ rights.
3. In-Service/Annual Training – [*agency name – insert titles*] will participate and content will include updates to federal and state victims’ rights laws, [*agency name*] policies, and expectations according to assigned responsibilities.

SAMPLE

1. Shift Briefings/Roll Calls – [*agency name – insert titles*] will participate and content will include skills and resources to enhance access to victims’ rights and the unique needs of victims and co-victims.
2. Division/Unit Meetings – [*agency name – insert titles*] will participate and content will include federal and state victims’ rights laws, [*agency name*] policies, and expectations according to assigned responsibilities.

Through consistent training [a*gency name*] sworn and professional personnel will develop and maintain knowledge of key concepts and skills needed to support access to victims’ rights.

Victim Services Personnel Incorporation

[*Agency name*] victim services personnel can enhance access to victims’ rights by providing information for the development of, participating in, and co-facilitating training opportunities for [*agency name*] personnel.

[*Agency name*] victim services personnel can conduct outreach education to external agencies and organizations, community members, and victims and co-victims.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with Training responsibilities include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Notice, the Right to Confer, the Right to Be Present, the Right to Be Heard, the Right to Protection, the Right to Information, the Right to Prompt Disposition, the Right to Compensation, the Right to Prompt Return of Property, and the Right to Support Person Presence.

**Resources and Connections**

[*Agency name*] sworn and professional personnel will enhance victims’ rights and address the unique needs of victims and co-victims through:

1. Resources – available materials, personnel, and processes

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide information about internal resources (e.g., policies, division/unit practices, written material, victim services personnel) and external resources (e.g., justice system agencies, community organizations).

1. Connections – approaches to link sources of information and support

[*Agency name – insert titles*] will provide information through referrals that enable victims and co-victims to take independent action and through supportive handoffs that involve the joint transfer of provider responsibility.

SAMPLE

Victim Services Personnel Incorporation

[*Agency name*] victim services personnel can collaborate with internal personnel and external agencies/organizations to

1. enhance access to all victims’ rights [*citation(s) to* *state constitution and statutes related to victims’ rights*] – upon request and proactively,
2. enhance access to objective translators and translated material to review victims’ rights,
3. enhance access to crime victim compensation,
4. help address immediate safety concerns,
5. provide information about processes associated with criminal investigations,
6. provide information about and connection to available services, and
7. provide connections to victims’ rights attorneys.

[\**Note: Agencies should review jurisdiction-specific information (*[*NCVLI | Victims' Rights by Jurisdiction*](https://ncvli.org/victim-law-library-rights-by-state/)*) to ensure accuracy of policy content.]*

Some common rights that intersect with Resources and Connections responsibilities include the Right to Be Treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect, the Right to Privacy, the Right to Notice, the Right to Confer, the Right to Be Present, the Right to Be Heard, the Right to Protection, the Right to Information, the Right to Prompt Disposition, the Right to Compensation, the Right to Prompt Return of Property, and the Right to Support Person Presence.

1. [IACP ELERV – Introduction to the ELERV Strategy (theiacp.org)](https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/ELERV/00.%20Intro%20to%20ELERV-%20ELERV%20Foundational%20Document%20%28links%20embedded%29.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [The Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance 2022 (justice.gov)](https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2022/10/21/new_ag_guidlines_for_vwa.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [KeyConsiderations.pdf (theiacp.org)](https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/LEV/Publications/KeyConsiderations.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [VictimLaw - About Victims' Rights](https://www.victimlaw.org/victimlaw/pages/victimsRight.jsp) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [10 Common Victims’ Rights (2023) – NCVLI](https://ncvli.org/10-common-victims-rights-2023/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [Victims’ Rights During Significant Stages of the Criminal Justice Process (2022) – NCVLI](https://ncvli.org/https-ncvli-org-wp-content-uploads-2022-09-victims-rights-during-significant-stages-of-the-criminal-justice-process-last-updated-2022-pdf/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [IACP | Training Bulletin- 7 Critical Needs](https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/ELERV/1.%20Training%20Bulletin-%207%20Critical%20Needs.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Definitions used in Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services publications, produced by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [The Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance 2022 (justice.gov)](https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2022/10/21/new_ag_guidlines_for_vwa.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)