

Victims' Rights and Agency Response

Victims and co-victims often describe mixed experiences with receiving information about and assistance with their statutory rights. Some victims and co-victims describe agency personnel as readily available to assist them with specific actions they request. Others describe challenges when trying to exercise their rights or only receiving information about their rights when cases reach prosecution. One of the frequent comments heard from victims and co-victims, especially those in underserved communities, is that they were never made aware of victim compensation.

Incorporating victim services personnel into victims' rights and agency response can enhance victims' and co-victims' abilities to exercise those rights at every phase of investigation – initial contact, interviews, evidence review, case status updates, property return, and case disposition. It can also enhance engagement during investigations and police-community relationships.

Promising Agency Practices

- ✓ **Provide victims' rights information in languages spoken within the community.**
- ✓ **Ensure around the clock field response by victim services personnel to initiate discussions of victims' rights when Victim Services Unit structure and staffing levels are appropriate.**
- ✓ **Ensure victims and co-victims receive copies of law enforcement reports.**
- ✓ **Add information to the agency website about victims' rights, resources, and routes to connect with victim services personnel.**
- ✓ **Use victim-centered, trauma-informed language in written and spoken communication for contact and case updates.**
- ✓ **Revise policies to include the role of victim services personnel during the provision of victims' rights information and support to exercise rights.**

Helpful Resources

- [Practitioners' Toolkit – Victim Rights Toolkit & Enforcement | NCVLI](#)
- [Victims' Rights During Significant Stages of the Criminal Justice Process | NCVLI](#)
- [Victim Law Library - Rights by State | NCVLI](#)
- [Communication with Victims | IACP](#)