

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES OF CRIME



Lassen County Victim/ Witness Assistance Program

The Lassen County Victim/Witness Assistance Program can provide a range of services for individuals who are victims of crime in California.

Including the following:

- + Information Services - Information about the Victim Witness Program, services available, and the eligibility requirements for the services.
- + Counseling Services - Counseling services may include crisis counseling, counseling resource and referral services, and follow-up services.
- + Emergency Assistance - Assistance may include temporary shelter, food, transportation, and medical care, if applicable.
- + Claims Assistance - Assistance in completing and mailing of the required financial claims forms with the State of California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board.
- + Justice System Information Assistance - Assistance in understanding the criminal justice system, assistance and support during court appearances, and assistance in retrieving property held in evidence.
- + Notification Assistance - Assistance in the notifications of friends, relatives, and employer (as requested).
- + Restitution Assistance - Assistance in filing a claim for victim restitution, if applicable.

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY VICTIMS

Do I have to talk to a defense investigator or attorney?

No. A witness or victim has the right to talk to or refuse to talk to anyone they choose until and unless they are subpoenaed to court where a judge orders the witness to do so.

Will I have to testify at the preliminary hearing?

Not necessarily. Under certain circumstances the law allows for certain peace officers to testify about what a witness or victim told them. The prosecuting attorney handling the case will make the final decision as to whether or not your testimony will be needed at the preliminary hearing.

Can I recover for medical bills, lost wages, or property damage or loss?

Yes, with some exceptions. Contact the Victim Witness Program for details or go online to the California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board website, <http://www.vcpcb.ca.gov> or if the defendant is convicted of the crime against you, victim restitution may be ordered on your behalf.

What if I have other plans that conflict with my subpoena and the trial date?

You should immediately contact each party that sent you the subpoena and inform them of the conflict. You may have to change your other plans.

Does the District Attorney's Office represent the victim?

No. The District Attorney's Office represents the People of the State not the individual victim. The District Attorney must ensure that justice is done. Usually this means we are seeking the same outcome as the victim, but not always.

When can I get my stolen property back?

Usually 60-90 days after the defendant is sentenced. Sometimes, property can be photographed and returned to the victim prior to that time.

Can I attend court proceedings?

Yes. All court proceedings in adult court are public, meaning that anyone can attend unless the court specifically excludes a witness or victim from the courtroom during testimony of other witnesses. There are some limitations if the defendant is a minor.

Can I be notified of when the defendant is released from prison and jail?

Yes. The Victim Witness Program staff can help you with the process.

How much jail time will the defendant serve?

This depends on each case. The maximum amount is set forth by statute and determined by the crime charged.

What if I don't want to prosecute anymore?

The ultimate decision of going forward with the case is up to the District Attorney. Although a victim's feelings will be considered, the District Attorney does not represent the victim, but represents society's interests.

Can I simply submit an affidavit, declaration or sworn statement instead of testifying?

No. The U.S. and California Constitutions require that the Defendant be permitted to see the witnesses testify against him or her.

If I testify at the Preliminary Hearing do I also have to testify at a trial?

Yes. The two proceedings are separate.

What do I do if the defendant tries to pressure me to drop the charges?

Anyone who applies pressure to a victim or witness not to testify or proceed on charges may be guilty of a separate offense of dissuading a witness. Such conduct should immediately be reported to law enforcement. The District Attorney's Office has sole discretion to drop the charges not the defendant or the victim.

The Victim/ Witness staff encourage crime victims to talk about their needs and listens to their wishes with compassion and a commitment to help. They work to provide crime victims with information, resources and respect as they navigate the often-turbulent waters of the criminal justice process. Should you or someone you know be victimized, it is important to understand the rights afforded to victims in our state.

Lassen County Victim/Witness Assistance Program

Business Phone: (530) 251-8281

Business Fax: (530) 251-2692

Office Hours: 9 a.m. - 12Noon

1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Email: LCVictimWitness@co.lassen.ca.us

Note: Arrangements for alternative times may be possible upon request and availability of an advocate.

Victims Have Rights!

Please review Victims' Bill of Rights / Marsy's Law

"Justice cannot be for one side alone, but must be for both."

– Eleanor Roosevelt

RESOURCES IN LASSEN COUNTY

City of Susanville Police Department

Business Phone: (530) 257-5603

Dispatch Phone: (530) 257-2171

Lassen County Sheriff Department

Business Phone: (530) 251-8013

Dispatch Phone: (530) 257-6121

Jail Phone: (530) 251-5245 (JAIL)

California Highway Patrol

Business Phone: (530) 257-2191

Dispatch Phone: (530) 257-9605

Lassen County Family and Child Protective Services

Business Phone: (530) 251-8277

Emergency Phone: (530) 257-6121 <Dispatch>

Lassen County Adult Protective Services

Business Phone: (530) 251-8158

Lassen County Probation Department

Business Phone: (530) 251-8212

Lassen Family Services

Domestic Violence/ Sexual Assault/ 24 Hour Crisis Line

Office Phone: (530) 257-4599

Crisis Line: (530) 257-5004

Toll Free Line: 1-888-289-5004

Lassen County District Attorney's Office

Office Phone: (530) 251-8283

Lassen County Superior Court

2610 Riverside Drive

Susanville, CA 96130

Court Phone: (530) 251-8205