

**Chris Gaal, Prosecuting Attorney**

MONROE COUNTY

# Victim's Assistance Program



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# Victim's Assistance Program

**The Office of the Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney offers services to crime victims through our Victim's Assistance Program. This program seeks to empower crime victims by providing information to help you understand the workings of the criminal justice system and the current status of your individual case. Our staff will help explain your rights, answer your questions, and keep**

**you informed as your case progresses through the court system. We will also seek to obtain restitution for lost or damaged property, medical bills and counseling services as provided by law. We provide referrals to helpful social services in the community and we can assist you with an application to the Indiana Violent Crime Compensation Fund.**

## Victim's Assistance Program

Office of the Monroe County  
Prosecuting Attorney  
301 N. College Avenue, Room 211  
Bloomington, IN 47404

(812) 349-2893 (Victim's Assistance Program)  
(812) 349-2670 (Main Office)  
Email: [vap@co.monroe.in.us](mailto:vap@co.monroe.in.us)



Link to our office from the county's website at [www.co.monroe.in.us](http://www.co.monroe.in.us)

## A message from your Prosecutor

The first duty of our office is to seek justice, and that includes defending the rights of crime victims and treating them with fairness, dignity and respect. We care about you not only because we sympathize with your experience as a crime victim, but also because without your cooperation criminals would go unpunished. We want you to understand how the criminal

justice system works, to know your legal rights, and to keep you informed about the status of your case and any court dates that are scheduled. Our Victim's Assistance Program is here to help. As public safety professionals we believe in the important work we do and we recognize that your participation is essential to our success and is an important part of keeping our community a safe place to live.

Chris Gaal  
Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney

## Victim's Assistance Program

### As a crime victim you have the right:

- To be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.
- To meet with your victim's assistant, be informed of the status of your case, and notified of court dates.
- Upon request, to be informed when a person who is accused or convicted of committing a crime perpetrated directly against you is released from custody or escapes.
- To have your safety considered in determining the release from custody of a person accused of committing a crime against you.
- To request that the court issue a "No Contact Order" requiring the defendant to have no contact with you in person, by phone or letter, through friends or family, or in any other way. You may contact the Prosecutor's Office to make this request.
- To request restitution for lost or damaged property, medical bills and/or counseling services as provided by law.
- To confer with the deputy prosecutor assigned to your case.
- To make a statement at sentencing or submit a written statement about the impact of the crime on your life.

### How Our Criminal Justice System Works — A Basic Overview

When a crime occurs and the police are called, they conduct an investigation to obtain statements from witnesses and gather any physical evidence that may be available. If the police determine that there is probable cause that a crime has occurred they will send a report to the Prosecutor's Office. At this point the suspect may or may not be arrested. If the Prosecutor determines that there is evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a criminal offense has occurred, and that it is in the public safety interest of the community to do so, criminal charges will be filed in court. If the suspect has not yet been arrested, the Prosecutor may request an arrest warrant be issued or ask the court to issue a summons for the defendant to appear in court.

**Bond** – A defendant has a constitutional right for a bail bond to be set in all cases except murder. If a defendant posts bail they may be released from jail and remain free until their case is resolved. In Monroe County, bail is automatically set according to a standard bond schedule adopted by the local Board of Judges. The amount of bail may be reviewed and changed by a judge at a bond hearing. Bail may be set as a cash bond, surety bond through a bondsman, or in some cases a defendant may be released on their own recognizance based on their promise to appear in court.

**No Contact Order** – An order signed by a Judge that requires the defendant to have no contact with the victim in person, by phone or letter, through friends or family or in any other way. If the defendant violates the No Contact Order, they may be charged with a separate crime of Invasion of Privacy. Report any violation of a No Contact Order to the police immediately.

*Once a criminal charge is filed, the following important court dates may be set:*

**Initial Hearing** – Defendant is given a copy of the charges and informed of their legal rights.

**Pre-Trial Conference** – An opportunity for the prosecutor and defense to review the evidence, exchange lists of witnesses and exhibits, ask the judge to resolve any pre-trial legal issues, and discuss plea negotiations.

At this point a case may be set for a further Pre-Trial Conference, a Change of Plea hearing where the defendant will plead guilty based on a negotiated plea agreement, or set for Trial. If the defendant pleads guilty they may be sentenced at that time, or the case may be set

### Contact Us

Please remember that in order for our office to ensure these rights, victims must fully cooperate and respond to reasonable requests for information. For more detailed information, please visit our website, contact our office by phone, or make an appointment with us in person.

for a sentencing hearing. Upon conviction at trial, the case is typically set for a sentencing hearing.

**Sentencing** – The victim is given an opportunity to make a written or verbal victim impact statement to the judge, and the judge sentences the defendant according to the terms of any agreement, or within a range of possible penalties established by the legislature.

### Preparing To Be A Witness In Court

What should you expect if you are called upon to answer questions under oath in a deposition, or to testify as a witness in court? You can read "Tips to Remember When Testifying In Court" by visiting our website, or watch an online video presentation by Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney Chris Gaal entitled "Preparing To Be A Witness In Court." Click on Victim's Assistance and follow the links.

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