

OFFICE OF CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) serves as a voice within the government for the needs of crime victims in Washington State. Established in 1990, OCVA serves the state on many levels by:

- Advocating on behalf of crime victims in obtaining needed services and resources;
- Administering grant funds for community programs working with crime victims; Assisting communities in planning and implementing services for crime victims; and
- Advising local and state government agencies of practices, policies, and priorities which impact crime victims.

“It is the mission of the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy to identify the opportunities and resources victims need in order to recover and to facilitate the availability of those resources and opportunities in communities statewide.”

Call to Get Help
1.866.751.7119

Program of

Lutheran Community Services

210 W. Sprague Ave.
Spokane, WA 99201
Tel: 866.751.7119 (24 Hours)
Fax: 509.747.0690

Your Resource for Information and Assistance

Spokane Crime Victim Service Center
1.866.751.7119

Lutheran Community Services
509.624.7273
(24 Hour Crisis Center)

Spokane County Victim/Witness
1.509.477.3646
(Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)



Protecting the rights of crime victims



SPOKANE CRIME VICTIM SERVICE CENTER

Your Resource for Information and Assistance

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT





WHAT IS A VICTIM IMPACT?

A victim impact statement (VIS) is written or oral information given to a judge about the impact of the crime on the victim and the victim's family at the time of the offender's sentencing.

Victim impact statements are most commonly used at sentencing. The statements provide a way for the victim to participate in the criminal justice process, and for the court to see the human impact of the crime.

The right to make an impact statement generally is extended beyond the direct victim to homicide survivors, the parent or guardian of a minor victim, and the guardian or representative of an incompetent or incapacitated victim.

Victims can tell the judge about the physical, emotional, financial, and social impact of the crime in a number of ways:

- **Verbally**—by appearing at the sentencing hearing and speaking directly to the judge
- **Written statement**
- **Video taped statement**
- **Audio statement**
- **Telephonically**—by special request

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How Is It Used?

Victim impact statements help Judges during sentencing to understand aspects of the crime that they would not otherwise know about. Giving a victim impact statement is voluntary and only you can decide if this is a process you feel comfortable participating in.

The VIS also provides a vehicle for you, as the victim, to relate to the court the harm that you have suffered as the result of the crime. No two victims experience crime in the same ways. It is important to describe for the judge the ways that this crime has affected you and your relationships.

You may find it difficult to begin preparing your statement. For some, it helps to write a rough draft first—adding to it and changing it as necessary over a period of days or weeks. If you need assistance in the completion of your statement or are confused about what to include, you can contact the Spokane Crime Victim Service Center, Lutheran Community Services, or the Prosecuting Attorney's Victim Witness.

If you need special accommodations to complete or present your statement, the court must be ADA compliant and seek to meet your needs. Please contact Spokane Crime Victim Service Center, Lutheran Community Center or the Prosecutor's Victim Witness and let them know of your needs and how they can be met.

Who Will See My Victim Impact Statement?

In most jurisdictions, if you have submitted a written or taped victim impact statement, the judge, prosecuting attorney, defendant and their attorney will each be able to review your statement before the sentencing. If you have concerns about your safety and being identified, consult with the prosecuting attorney's office for help.

After the offender is sentenced your victim impact statement will remain permanently with the offender's file. It can also become important to be considered at later times.

These can include:

- For classification of the offender within the prison system
- To set the Community Notification Level on certain sex offenses
- If the offender were to request a pardon or clemency from the Governor
- To set certain releases and supervision conditions when the offender is released from prison