

**MESSAGE FROM NASSAU COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY MADELINE SINGAS**

If you have been the victim of crime, or were a witness to a crime, your help is essential to our prosecution of the case.

I know it is often difficult for a victim or witness to relive and recall the circumstances and events surrounding a crime. The experience is sometimes made even more painful by retelling it to strangers in the formal surroundings of the criminal justice system.

This information is designed to let you know what happens in bringing a case to trial, and to advise you of the services and people we have available to assist you.

You will be working with an Assistant District Attorney while the defendant is being prosecuted. You may contact this Assistant at any time if you have questions. You will also have a Crime Victim Advocate from our Victims Services Unit available to you, to provide you with emotional support and additional services.

It is also important that we keep you informed about the case, so if you move or change your telephone number, please let us know. Call the Assistant District Attorney, or the Victims Services Unit at 516-571-3800.

We are here to help you.



If You Are a Victim

The Victims Services Unit is here to offer you emotional support and services throughout your involvement in the criminal justice system. If you are experiencing emotional or physical trauma, or financial difficulties as a result of your victimization, please contact the VSU office so we may help you.

If You Are a Witness

Please understand that your cooperation is important to the prosecution of criminal cases. If you have any questions about the status of a case and your involvement in it, please contact the Victim Services Unit so we may assist you.

Under New York law, the District Attorney's Office must give your name and "adequate contact information" to the defense.

The defendant's lawyer or a defense investigator may try to speak to you if you are a victim or a witness in a case. They must represent the interests of the defendant. You may ask for identification from the person who wishes to speak to you. You can decide if you want to speak with the defense lawyer or investigator. You do not have to speak with them if you choose not to.


Please inform the Assistant District Attorney or Crime Victim Advocate assigned to your case whether or not you want to be contacted, and how you want to be contacted by the defense.


OFFICE OF
THE NASSAU COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY





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516-571-3800



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VICTIMS SERVICES UNIT

Under the Office of CORE Services, the Victims Services Unit (VSU) provides assistance and information to crime victims and witnesses in Nassau County. The Nassau County District Attorney's Office (NCDA) recognizes that crime victims and their families, and witnesses to crimes, need support and information at every stage of a criminal proceeding. VSU is staffed by Crime Victim Advocates and Legal Interpreters, who are assigned to various Bureaus throughout the office. VSU assists victims, witnesses and their families, in navigating the criminal justice system and the process of a criminal case being prosecuted by the NCDA. All services offered by VSU are free of charge and available in multiple languages.

VSU Services Include:

Information About the Criminal Justice System and Case Information

Crime Victim Advocates can provide general information about the criminal justice system and answer any questions you may have about the process. They will also provide information about the status of a case in which you are the victim or a witness.

They will provide you with information about an offender's custody or release status, and help you register for VINE or jail notifications of an inmate's release from custody, if you wish.

They will also ensure that you receive copies of any court orders of protection that have been issued on your behalf, if you are a victim or a witness on a case.

Advocacy

Crime Victim Advocates offer emotional support and can accompany you to a meeting with an Assistant District Attorney or Investigator, or when called to testify in court.

They can assist you with safety planning and crisis intervention.

They can also assist you in preparing a Victim Impact Statement for the court if you or your family member have been the victim of a crime.

Crime Victim Advocates can contact your employer or school to advocate on your behalf if you have to take time off to appear in court or meet with the Assistant District Attorney.

Crime Victim Advocates can also help victims of domestic violence and sexual assault complete the application process for the NYS Address Confidentiality Program.

Transportation

VSU may arrange for transportation to and from court for victims and witnesses who have trouble getting here on their own.

Property Release

Crime Victim Advocates can help you with the return of personal property being held as evidence.

Referral Services

VSU can provide referrals to County agencies and other providers in the community for a wide array of services, such as counseling, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment and housing, to meet the needs of crime victims and their families. Emergency food, shelter and clothing assistance may also be provided by VSU.

OVS Compensation

Victims also have rights, and VSU ensures that crime victims are informed of their rights and that these rights are protected. As a crime victim, you may be eligible to receive compensation through the NYS Office of Victim Services (OVS). VSU staff assist eligible applicants in filing a claim for victim compensation with NYS OVS.

OVS provides financial relief to victims of crime and their families by paying unreimbursed crime-related expenses, including but not limited to: medical and funeral expenses, loss of earnings or support, counseling costs, crime scene clean-up expenses, the cost to repair or replace items of essential personal property, reasonable and necessary court transportation expenses, and the cost of living at or using services of a domestic violence shelter. Funding for crime victim compensation comes entirely from fines, fees and surcharges paid by certain offenders convicted in state and federal courts, not taxpayer dollars.