

## Victim/Witness Specialists

Much like the Alexandra House advocates, victim/witness specialists from the prosecutors' offices are available to assist you through the criminal justice system.

Victim/Witness services are available to you if you are a victim in a felony case handled by the County Attorney's Office. Some cities may offer these services for misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor cases.

The Victim/Witness staff will contact you after the defendant's first court appearance. We will explain who we are, what services we can provide, we'll explain the charges, we'll go over any conditions of release ordered by the court, and we'll discuss Intensive Domestic Assault Pre-trial Program (also known as IDAPP). Although we provide different services than Alexandra House advocates, our agencies work together to ensure you are safe and informed throughout the court process.

One important thing we'll go over are your rights as a crime victim. You always have the right to be present, to be updated on a case, and to make a statement at the time of sentencing. You have the right to request compensation for any out-of-pocket expenses related to the crime, or if you've suffered any loss due to the crime. You have the right to know about any plea agreement. And you have a right to be and feel safe. We'll talk to you about the various ways to ensure that safety.

We'll suggest that you sign up for VINELink.com. This is a notification system from the jail. The VINELink will automatically send out an alert if the defendant is released.

In high-risk cases, we'll try to schedule a meeting with you (the victim), the prosecutor and a victim/witness specialist from our office. The purpose of this meeting is not necessarily to go over the facts of the case, it's to build relationships and trust. We'll answer your questions, discuss your concerns, and go over any plea offers. We understand that you know the defendant better than any of us in the system. You may know of issues that could be addressed by the court or probation. You will also have the opportunity to meet with an advocate from Alexandra House.

It's not our job to tell you who you can be with, it's our job to help you navigate the criminal justice system. Victim/Witness specialists can connect you to resources you may need along the way, and we are your liaison to the charging attorney. We will keep you notified of court hearings and we'll help prepare you for testimony if the case goes to trial.

We are not advocates, as we work for the prosecuting attorney's office. Our focus is on public safety and holding the offender accountable. Our role is limited to the criminal justice process and timeline. We can provide: information on what to expect in the criminal justice system, support, go with you to court in most cases, and information on local resources you may need during this time.

***For more information on what was discussed in this video click on the links below.***