

**COUNTY OF MONROE
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
Rochester, New York**

General Order Multi-Bureau	Date of Issue December 8, 2023	Effective Date December 8, 2023	No. 052-23
Subject: General Order Victim/Witness Assistance Program		Distribution All Personnel	Amends
Reference: NYSLEAP 18.1, 29.4, 29.5, 43.7			Rescinds 052-23

Purpose: To define the procedures of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Victim/Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) and to set forth the duties and responsibilities of personnel who encounter the victim of a crime or other serious incident.

Policy: VWAP personnel are responsible for assisting victims and witnesses during the initial crisis of a crime or other serious incident and providing necessary support throughout subsequent criminal proceedings. All personnel will be responsible for having a working knowledge of the New York State Victim's Bill of Rights.

I. General Procedures and Responsibilities

A. Responding Deputy

1. Will determine, upon investigation, whether the victim needs immediate assistance from a Zone VWAP Specialist.
2. When a Crime Victim Specialist is needed but not on duty, he/she will contact the field supervisor/command officer who will initiate the request for victim assistance, when appropriate.
3. If it is determined that the victim does not require immediate assistance, he/she will provide the NYS OVS Card as per NYS Executive Law (L.206, ch 173, Article 22, Sect. 625b) indicating the telephone number of the appropriate VWAP specialist in the space provided. In addition, he/she will provide the victim with the date of the incident, name and IBM# of the responding deputy, the CR#, and a telephone number to call regarding additional information that the victim may want to document. The deputy will instruct the victim/witness to call 911 in the event that a suspect or related person attempts to threaten or intimidate the victim/witness.

Note: Deputies may refer a victim to the Zone VWAP Specialist whenever they feel that the victim would benefit from such referral. This may be done either by phone or by forwarding a copy of the report to the Specialist

B. Field Supervisor/Command Officer

- * Supervisors may refer victims who are not necessarily the victims of a crime, but rather of an extremely traumatic event to VWAP, when they believe a VWAP specialist may be able to offer services to assist either at the scene or follow-up. Supervisors should specify what that apparent need may be. Extremely traumatic

events include, but are not limited to, death investigations such as suicide, SIDS, fatal MVA, etc.

C. Sergeant Assigned to Zone CIS

1. When reviewing daily cases, will refer reports to the VWAP Specialist. Reports to be referred include murders, homicides, rape, sexual assault, robberies, burglaries, assaults, kidnapping, child abuse, fatal or serious injury MVA involving criminal charges and bias-related crimes.
2. If necessary, make a VWAP Specialist available to a victim/witness during a follow-up investigation.
3. Any crime where the victim is disabled, handicapped or sixty years of age or older will be referred to a VWAP Specialist regardless of the crime type.
4. All family offense-related reports will be referred to the VWAP Specialist.

II. Structure

The VWAP Unit will consist of a CIS Lieutenant, Police Planner and three Advocates. The Lieutenant will be assigned to the Criminal Investigation Section, Police Planner will be assigned to Police Bureau and one Specialist each will be assigned to each of the three zone substations.

III. Specific Duties and Responsibilities

A. Crime Victim Specialist

1. Responsible for assessing the needs and providing assistance to victim/witnesses who were recently involved with a crime and provides referral services.
2. Perform crisis intervention at crime scenes and assess victims/witnesses immediate needs.
3. Provide appropriate assistance to victims regarding the criminal justice system with regard to case status, orders of protection and property recovery. Professional judgment will be used when deciding whether or not to terminate cases or when referring victims and witnesses to more appropriate human service agencies.
4. Inform victims/witnesses of their rights and of the criminal justice process and accompany them to any appropriate legal proceeding.
5. Assist victims in attempts to recover financial losses by preparing and submitting compensation claim forms and affidavits to the New York State Office of Victim Services.
6. Refer victims to social agencies for counseling or other assistance, as appropriate.
7. Upon the request of competent authority, respond to any situation requiring crisis intervention.
8. Conduct personal contacts at victim's home or hospital, when appropriate.

9. Review reports related to particular cases and make determinations regarding services or compensation victims are eligible for.
10. Takes notes and maintain logs of all contacts and phone calls to victim/witnesses and complete monthly statistical reports.
11. Act as a liaison for victims with the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office, community service agencies, court personnel, and other police agencies.
12. Maintain a file on local courts and provide information to victims/ witnesses regarding the appropriate court to attend depending on the crime, as well as locations, hours and schedules for those courts.
13. Initiate contact with the family of the suspect, when appropriate, to determine if a referral and/or support are needed. Cases appropriate for this service may include high profile cases and/or serious felonies.
14. Assisting the victims/witnesses at line-ups, interviews or other required appearances, if appropriate.
15. Assist in speaking to community and support groups regarding services provided to victims and victims' rights.
16. Report to the Zone CIS Sergeant.

B. Police Planner

1. Prepare and manage the NYS Office of Victim Services Grant.
2. Prepare quarterly Fiscal Cost Reports and any amendments to the grant budget and contract.
3. Prepare monthly objective reports and quarterly program reports.
4. Assist in the preparation of the annual report, needs assessment, and strategic plan.
5. Monitor local and state victim/witness legislation.

C. Lieutenant Assigned to the Criminal Investigation Section

1. Responsible for the overall administrative oversight of the program, ensuring the agency's commitment to the highest quality of victim and witness assistance, including dealings with NYS Office of Victim Services.
2. Assist Zone CIS Sergeants in staff development by ensuring staff attendance at state and local seminars dealing with victims' rights, victim sensitization, crisis intervention, etc..
3. Ensure that services made available to the public are also provided to any employee in the event that such assistance becomes necessary.
4. Perform other duties as requested by the Captain of CIS

5. Responsible for the confidentiality of victim/witnesses and their role in case development applicable with the law.

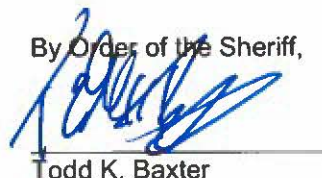
D. Zone CIS Sergeants

1. Provide direct supervision to the Crime Victim Specialist.
2. Advocate for victims' rights.
3. Promote staff development by ensuring staff attendance at state and local seminars dealing with victims' rights, crisis intervention, victim sensitization, etc.
4. Ensure that services made available to the public are also provided to any employee in the event that such assistance becomes necessary.

IV. Services Available to Agency Personnel who are Victims/Witnesses

- A. The Bureau Chief and Officer Wellness Unit will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate services are provided to employees and their families following serious injuries or line of duty deaths. These services may originate through the agency or community resources (such as EAP) or a contracted service. **(Reference: MBGO-081 Funeral Detail Protocols and MBGO-092 Line of Duty Death Protocols)**
- B. The services provided will include, but not be limited to: notification of family of injured/dead staff in a timely, personal manner; assistance at the hospital; support at funeral and burial; assistance with legal and benefits matters; referral to counseling; support during criminal proceedings; and maintenance of contact with family to stay informed of family needs. **(Reference: MBGO-081 Funeral Detail Protocols)**

By Order of the Sheriff,



Todd K. Baxter

* Indicates changes from the original and previous versions of this General Order.