

## Frequently Asked Questions About Connecting Victims with Compensation

### 1. Why do compensation offices need police reports?

**The compensation office cannot determine victim eligibility on a claim without a police report.**

They may use the report to

- a. Confirm the crime was reported and when it was reported
- b. Verify the name(s) of the victim(s) and any individuals who may have witnessed the crime
- c. Determine the type of crime
- d. Understand the extent of any injuries or damage to medical devices, e.g. damaged teeth or eye glasses
- e. Determine what role, if any, the victim had in the crime
- f. Verify name(s) of alleged suspect(s), to follow the criminal case if charges are filed for restitution purposes

### 2. Do compensation offices keep police reports confidential?

Yes. However, confidentiality procedures and protocols vary by program.

### 3. What if I think the victim bears some responsibility for the crime?

This is a determination the compensation program will make based on the facts of the case. Law enforcement reports should be fact based and detailed to ensure the compensation office has a clear, unbiased, and accurate understanding of the crime. This includes details about harm to the victim and clothing taken as evidence. Your thoughts about the victim bearing some responsibility for the crime should not be part of the report.

### 4. What can law enforcement do when they are unable to release a report to the compensation agency right away?

If an investigation is complex in nature and officers are unable to provide the report to the compensation program in a timely manner, please contact your state or county compensation office to explain the situation. They will work with you to find a solution.

### 5. What is an [Enhanced Law Enforcement Response to Victims](#)?

An Enhanced Law Enforcement Response to Victims (ELERV) is a strategy designed to create greater opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness through expanded knowledge of and access to victim services and support, greater willingness by victims to participate in investigation(s), potential for increased clearance rates, better perception of community safety

and increased confidence and trust in law enforcement, potential for improved crime reporting, and improved morale and job satisfaction.

This includes the following:

- a. Treating all victims and their families with empathy, compassion, and respect in such a way as to maximize their feelings of safety and security
- b. Providing victims with access to information about their rights and referrals to a victim advocate for assistance
- c. Informing victims about what to expect as their case(s) move forward
- d. Avoiding victim blaming
- e. Helping victims to identify risk factors that could lead to re-victimization

For more information on this approach, visit [IACP's ELERV website](#).

## **6. How does connecting victims with an advocate and your state or county's crime victim compensation program enhance law enforcement's response?**

**When law enforcement connects a victim with a victim advocate, they are connecting them with a professional who can help victims understand their rights and options, navigate the criminal justice system, and access resources.** Advocates can help victims understand what crime victim compensation is—and how to apply for it. Victim advocates can also help victims understand the law enforcement investigative process and prepare the victim for what questions an officer might ask. By referring a victim to an advocate, law enforcement demonstrates care and concern about their well-being, which increases their trust in law enforcement.

## **7. How can law enforcement connect victims with an advocate?**

Depending on the type of victimization, you can contact a victim advocate directly or provide the victim with contact information for a victim advocate in one of the following:

- Your agency (many law enforcement agencies have a victim advocate or liaison)
- Local prosecutor's office
- Local domestic violence and sexual assault crisis centers
- Community-based agencies such as homeless shelters, faith-based organizations, children's advocacy centers, homicide survivor programs, general crime victim agencies, human trafficking agencies, family justice centers, hospital-based violence intervention programs, and community health workers

If you need help finding a referral, check

- Local resources through your court or criminal justice state (or county) administrators or private non-profit victim agencies (online directories or domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions)
- National level [VictimConnect Resource Center](#)