



ROLES AND OPPORTUNITIES—EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

All law enforcement personnel have a role in building trust and mutual respect with the communities they serve. External partnerships can help law enforcement enhance response to victims in their communities.

CRIME VICTIMS, SURVIVORS, WITNESSES, AND CO-VICTIMS

Crime victims, survivors, witnesses, and co-victims are individuals who are directly impacted by crimes and may access law enforcement services. They can give valuable feedback about these services and partner with law enforcement to enhance victim response. They can

- ▶ Share their expectations of law enforcement and the criminal justice system
- ▶ Offer feedback on the effectiveness of victim response and outreach efforts
- ▶ Help identify gaps in services and provide practical recommendations for addressing these gaps
- ▶ Co-facilitate or participate on a panel during victim response training for agency personnel*
- ▶ Give input on victim response policies and procedures

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Community members can be valuable allies for law enforcement. Cultivating these relationships is critical. Community members include individuals who live in or near an agency's service area. They may have varying exposure to law enforcement. They may be crime victims who have chosen to report incidents to law enforcement, or those who have chosen not to report. They may be individuals who have not had any law enforcement contact. Community members can

- ▶ Advocate for adequate victim response resources (e.g., funding, equipment)
- ▶ Participate in problem-solving with law enforcement around crime prevention and community safety
- ▶ Participate in Citizen's Police Academies to learn about law enforcement and the criminal justice system
- ▶ Volunteer to participate in law enforcement-led community initiatives
- ▶ Serve as liaisons between law enforcement and the community (e.g., with faith communities, schools, community organizations, neighborhood programs)

**There are several important considerations when inviting victims, survivors, witnesses, and co-victims to participate or provide feedback. All criminal cases and appeals in their cases should be resolved before invitations are extended. Agencies must consider the length of time since the victimization, whether the person has received support services, and the person's assessment of their readiness to talk openly about their experiences. Victims, survivors, witnesses, and co-victims should be prepared in advance for the expectations of their participation. Support should be available before, during, and after their participation. If victims, survivors, witnesses, and co-victims participate as co-facilitators during trainings, they should be given all relevant information in advance (e.g., arrival/entry instructions, building/room/equipment orientation, audience attendance).*



COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM SERVICES AGENCIES

Community-based victim services personnel work externally to the law enforcement agency. These organizations are private, autonomous, often nonprofit agencies in the community, including faith-based organizations. They can

- ▶ Offer direct financial, psychological, and emotional support and services to victims
- ▶ Support crime victims during and beyond the criminal justice case
- ▶ Identify underserved victim groups
- ▶ Educate law enforcement on community-based victim services personnel's legal obligations around confidentiality
- ▶ Participate in ride-alongs, where available, and facilitate sit-alongs in their agencies
- ▶ Collaborate with law enforcement partners to train on victim-related topics

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING VICTIM INTERESTS

National, state, and local victim advocacy organizations champion legislative and policy initiatives that reinforce victims' rights. These organizations can

- ▶ Provide legal and other services to victims
- ▶ Help ensure adequate resources from public and private sources exist to meet victims' needs
- ▶ Collaborate with law enforcement on legislative, policy, and funding initiatives
- ▶ Keep policy makers informed about pressing needs, new research, and innovative developments in the victim services field

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

Criminal justice agencies (e.g., prosecutors' offices, pre-trial services, probation and parole, correctional institutions) provide important information to victims as their cases progress. These agencies are responsible for prosecuting, sentencing, and supervising offenders. These agencies can

- ▶ Provide timely system- and case-related information and services to victims
- ▶ Partner with law enforcement to ensure victims' rights are accessible and upheld
- ▶ Give regular updates on case status
- ▶ Give regular updates on the custody status of accused or convicted offenders
- ▶ Help develop consistent approaches to meeting victims' needs in each phase of the criminal justice process (e.g., investigation, prosecution, post-conviction).
- ▶ Monitor the effectiveness of victim services and support in the criminal justice system

HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH CARE AGENCIES

Emergency medical personnel and other health care professionals (e.g., behavioral/mental health specialists, substance abuse counselors) play a vital role in victim response. Some victims may already receive services from these agencies. Others may need these services as a result of their victimization. These agencies can

- ▶ Provide direct health care services to victims
- ▶ Help develop interagency coordinated response protocols
- ▶ Participate in crime victims' rights and trauma-informed response training



CHILD/ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS) are state and/or local social services programs that serve children, seniors, and vulnerable adults. CPS and APS workers investigate cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of these vulnerable populations. They assess individual needs, develop service plans, and advocate on the victims' behalf. These agencies can

- ▶ Investigate all reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in children, seniors, and vulnerable adults
- ▶ Report suspected criminal conduct to law enforcement
- ▶ Help develop interagency coordinated response protocols
- ▶ Assess victims' needs and develop service plans to meet those needs
- ▶ Provide law enforcement with current agency contacts and updates on services, accessibility, and eligibility criteria
- ▶ Educate law enforcement on mandatory reporting requirements

SCHOOL SYSTEMS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES

School systems, colleges, and universities have relationships with children, young adults, their parents, staff, and other community residents. When necessary, they may intervene in high-risk situations before they escalate. School resource officers (SROs), campus student conduct offices (Title IX Offices¹), enforcement of state and local laws and campus policies, and youth programs can be effective in preventing crime. School systems, colleges, and universities can

- ▶ Work with federal, state, local, campus, and tribal law enforcement to develop crime prevention initiatives in schools, campuses, and communities
- ▶ Maintain clear lines of communication between law enforcement, schools, school resource officers (SRO) and their supervisors, school boards, campus judicial systems, and victim support services
- ▶ Ensure a continuum of care for school and campus crime victims
- ▶ Under the Clery Act, report crimes that occur on college and university campuses
- ▶ Make timely notification of crimes and keep a current crime log publicly available
- ▶ Publish yearly crime statistics reports and information about safety programs to all campus community members²
- ▶ Collaborate with government officials, landlords, and civic groups to improve the quality of life in areas near campuses

1 Department of Justice, "[Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#)," updated August 2015.

2 Clery Center, [Summary of the Jeanne Clery Act: A Compliance and Reporting Overview](#) (2019).; Title IX and the Clery Act are applicable to college and university school systems within the United States.



RESEARCH PARTNERS

Research partners can help examine agency culture, policies, and practices. They can also obtain feedback from key stakeholders. Agencies may benefit from researchers' expertise and objectivity in data collection. A research partner can also help incorporate a variety of voices into agency decision-making processes. Research partnerships may be developed through local colleges and universities or research organizations. Institutions of higher education frequently define themselves as a "community resource" in their mission statements. Faculty members from multiple disciplines (e.g., criminal justice, sociology, political science, social work, psychology) may be available to assist with data collection and research. Some faculty members include community research or service-learning in their classes. There may be interns and research assistants available to assist with research. Finally, universities may have students in advanced degree programs who could partner with law enforcement when completing a thesis or dissertation. Research partners can

- ▶ Collect crime victimization data and share results with law enforcement and other stakeholders
- ▶ Assist in developing and disseminating crime victim, community member, community partner, and internal agency personnel surveys
- ▶ Conduct focus groups and co-facilitate community forums with law enforcement to assess the effectiveness of victim response efforts
- ▶ Monitor the progress and impact of victim response initiatives
- ▶ Train law enforcement and other stakeholders on how to review and interpret collected data

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayors, city and county commissioners or councilors, and legislators craft laws and make budget decisions that impact victim response efforts. Law enforcement agencies must be familiar with and abide by the established protocols for engaging with local officials and legislators. When possible, elected officials should be invited to functions that highlight the relationships among law enforcement, communities, and community partners. Elected officials can

- ▶ Work with law enforcement executives to determine the impact of policy and budget decisions on victim response
- ▶ Keep abreast of law enforcement's proven and promising practices in victim response
- ▶ Help agencies obtain adequate resources for effective victim response
- ▶ Partner with law enforcement and community-based victim services personnel to publicly support victim-centered initiatives
- ▶ Participate in training on victims' rights and effective victim response in the criminal justice system

BUSINESSES

Community involvement is important to most businesses. They are often in positions to convey valuable information to a larger audience within the community. Additionally, businesses may receive law enforcement services following criminal events. They can also make helpful information available to their employees who have experienced personal victimization. Businesses can

- ▶ Offer programs to support employees who have experienced victimization in or outside the workplace (e.g., safety and emergency procedures, counseling, benefits packages, leave and disability policies)



- ▶ Inform law enforcement about services available to employees
- ▶ Partner with law enforcement to implement crime prevention and awareness initiatives
- ▶ Employ crime prevention personnel (e.g., private security firms, off-duty officers)

FAITH COMMUNITIES

Faith communities can be a powerful force and valuable resource for crime victims. They can provide comfort, spiritual, and material assistance. In many communities, congregational leaders volunteer to work as chaplains. In this role, they may support law enforcement personnel, crime victims, and others affected by criminal activity. Many victims turn to their faith communities for support. Faith communities can

- ▶ Inform law enforcement about services and support available for crime victims
- ▶ Mobilize communities to help support victims and their families
- ▶ Collaborate in crime prevention activities
- ▶ Support victims' well-being and encourage their participation with law enforcement and courts
- ▶ Serve as community organizers and trust builders
- ▶ Share information and support law enforcement-led victim response initiatives

MEDIA

Media can include television, print, and online/ social media outlets. Agencies that foster positive relationships with media professionals may benefit from balanced coverage of their successes and challenges. Transparency and accuracy in media relations can also serve a larger purpose. These partnerships can help educate the community about victimization and criminal justice system practices. Effective media relationships are often critical to upholding the victims' rights and ensuring access to services. Media representatives can

- ▶ Show sensitivity to crime victims and their families
- ▶ Highlight community resources for crime victims
- ▶ Inform the public about crime prevention and safety initiatives
- ▶ Objectively cover successes and challenges of local law enforcement agencies
- ▶ Attend training on victims' rights and the criminal justice process