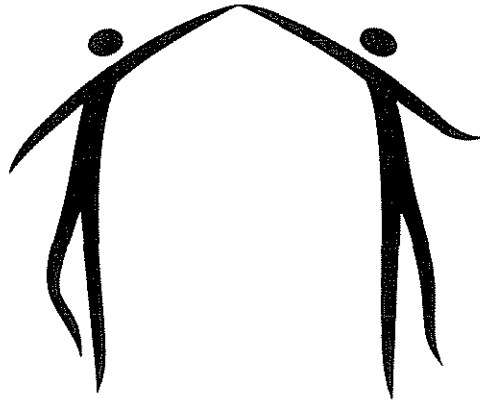


SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Domestic Violence Victim Support Team Program



Program Description

The Seattle Police Department Domestic Violence Victim Support Team Program is a unique partnership between community and police to address and prevent domestic violence. Community volunteers with the DV Victim Support Teams (VST) provide crisis intervention and support to domestic violence victims at secured crime scenes, a critical time following domestic violence incidents.

The program is designed to address the gap in services to domestic violence victims between the time patrol officers respond to a call to the time advocates, detectives and prosecutors make contact with the victim for follow up. The Victim Support Team response has two parts:

- 1) ***Community volunteers provide on-scene crisis intervention to domestic violence victims in the time immediately following the domestic violence incident.*** The first hours after a domestic violence incident can be critical for victims of domestic violence. Volunteers with the Victim Support Teams (VST) provide on-scene crisis intervention and support to victims of domestic violence in the time immediately following a domestic violence incident. VST helps locate crisis needs such as shelter, food and clothing, gives information about community resources, explains next steps in the Criminal Justice System, and helps victims make a safety plan for the rest of the weekend hours.

Patrol officers can call out the VST to assist on any domestic violence call where the officer is making a police incident report, once the scene has been secured. (Safety precautions are assessed concerning scene safety for VST.) Volunteers work with a partner and are supported by an on-call supervisor. Teams are equipped with an unmarked police car, cell phone, pager, and police radio for communication with patrol officers in the field.

The volunteer teams operate in the North, South, West and East Precincts during weekend hours. This is the time when domestic violence calls are the greatest, when emergency resources can be most difficult to access, and when the gap in time and services between the officer response and a Victim Advocate taking the case is the greatest. Bridging this gap in the Criminal Justice System, community volunteers enhance the CJS response and provide critical support to victims of domestic violence.

- 2) ***A JustServe AmeriCorps volunteer provides follow up services, then transitions the case to a Criminal Justice System legal advocate.*** After the weekend hours, the JustServe AmeriCorps

Volunteer Training

VST volunteers attend a 50 hour training academy, as well as completing a patrol officer ride along and SPD Communications Section 911 plug in. VST Academy topics include an orientation to the Seattle Police Department and the Criminal Justice System, volunteer safety procedures, use of police radio, city geography, and domestic violence crisis intervention procedures.

Monthly crisis intervention training topics include: crisis intervention to children, chemical dependency, suicide intervention, assisting victims from diverse cultural backgrounds, elder abuse, stalking, conflict de-escalation and self defense.

Volunteer Commitment and Requirements

Community volunteers serve one 8 1/2 hour Victim Support Team shift each month, and attend a monthly meeting (our form of roll call) and training. Volunteers must have a valid Washington State Driver's License, be 21 years of age or older and pass a Seattle Police Department background check. Other desired qualities are:

- Commitment to volunteerism and serving with the Victim Support Team Program
- Strong listening and problem solving skills
- Ability to work with people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence or related crisis intervention (chemical dependency, sexual assault, mental health, working with children, etc.)
- Suggested one year of relevant volunteer, work or personal experience which prepares the volunteer to assist domestic violence victims in crisis

The VST Program is recruiting volunteers now for the next VST Academy! For more information about volunteering please contact the Volunteer Supervisor at 615-0892.

For more information about the Victim Support Team Program, please contact Victim Support Team Volunteer Supervisor Megan Bruneau at (206) 615-0892 or Megan.Bruneau@seattle.gov

Please send written inquiries to:

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