



LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

NUMBER: 1190
TOPIC: VICTIM ASSISTANCE
ISSUED BY: TERESA EWINS, CHIEF OF POLICE
DATE: 1-1-2023
SUPERSEDES: G.O. 1190, 2022
REFERENCE:

I. POLICY

The Lincoln Police Department seeks to uphold the rights of victims as stated in the Nebraska Crime Victim's Bill of Rights and is committed to victim assistance programs and activities. Employees shall treat victims with fairness, compassion, and dignity. (55.1.1)

II. PROCEDURE

A. Victim Assistance Unit

1. The Victim Assistance Unit is assigned to the Support Division, under the command of the assistant chief of support and provides victim services throughout Lancaster County.
2. The Victim Assistance Unit is comprised of the victim administrator and staff. The unit may also utilize volunteers and interns.
3. The victim administrator is responsible for the management and supervision of the unit, and all department support services for crime victims.

B. The Victim Assistance-Unit will complete an analysis of needs and available services at least every two years. The analysis shall include the following elements (55.1.2)

1. The extent and types of victimization within the service area;
2. An inventory of information and service needs for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assaults, abuse/neglect of children and persons over 60 years, human trafficking; homicide/suicide survivors and witnesses of homicides;
3. Victim assistance and related community services available;
4. Identification of all unfulfilled needs and the selection of those that are appropriate for the unit to meet.

C. Coordination of Services

1. Staff will maintain liaison with the Lancaster County Attorney's Office, the City Attorney's Office, Voices of Hope, Nebraska Crime Commission, Nebraska Coalition for Victims of Crime, The Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence and any other local, state or national agencies deemed appropriate for effective collaboration to serve the needs of victims. (55.1.1)

D. Goals and Objectives of the Victim Assistance Unit

1. Goals
 - a. To reduce the adverse impact of crime on the victims served by the Lincoln Police Department.
 - b. To assist victims and provide advocacy, including, but not limited to the objectives listed below. (55.2.3)
2. Objectives
 - a. To provide emotional support. (55.2.4)
 - b. To provide information relevant to each victim's individual situation, including, but not limited to victim reparations, protection orders, the criminal justice system and its processes, safety planning and victim rights as outlined in the Nebraska Crime Victim's Bill of Rights.
 - c. To facilitate return of evidence and property. (55.2.4)

- d. To assess individual needs and concerns with each victim, facilitate referrals and collaborate within the agency and with outside partners to advocate for victims as necessary.
- E. The investigating officer assigned to a crime is responsible for providing the following levels of assistance to victims:
- 1. Secure the crime scene to protect lives and ensure safety;
 - 2. Provide for emergency medical care, if needed;
 - 3. Refer or transport victims to a safe location, and advise the victim what to do if the suspect or suspect's companions or family threatens or otherwise intimidates them (55.2.3)
 - 4. Inform victims about case numbers, if known, and subsequent steps in the processing of the case.(55.2.3)
 - 5. Provide a telephone number that the victim may call to report additional information about the status of the case;
 - 6. Refer victims to appropriate agencies, i.e., counseling, medical attention, or victim advocacy, if needed. (55.2.3)
 - 7. Provide case status to the victim, unless doing so would impede successful investigation or prosecution of the case.
- F. Victim Assistance Unit Responsibilities
- 1. Advocacy services will be provided over the phone and in-person Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The office line (402-441-7181) will be monitored by advocates during the same designated hours to respond to incoming crisis calls and victim requests. (55.2.1, 55.2.2)
 - 2. The Victim Assistance Unit will review daily reports of the following types of incidents and will identify those appropriate for mail, phone and/or ongoing contact (55.2.4, 55.1.1)
 - a. Homicides/manslaughter, including motor vehicle homicide
 - b. Sexual assault
 - c. Robbery
 - d. Domestic violence
 - e. Protection order violations
 - f. Felony assault
 - g. Kidnapping
 - h. Child sexual and physical abuse
 - i. Burglary
 - j. False Imprisonment
 - k. Crimes with victims 60 years or over
 - 3. Advocates shall offer services to victims of human trafficking, as identified by investigators and referred to the unit.
 - 4. Letters will be automatically generated daily for victims of crimes coded as larceny or vandalism. Follow-up contact can be initiated by the victims or through officer requests.
 - 5. Advocates shall offer appropriate services to department personnel and their families following line-of-duty deaths or serious injury. Advocates will collaborate with chaplains to ensure that outreach is coordinated and consistent. (22.1.5)
 - 6. Advocates will connect victims with appropriate resources and coordinate with partner agencies. (55.1.1,55.2.1)
 - 7. Upon request, advocates will assist in scheduling line-ups, interviews, and similar follow-up investigation procedures at the convenience of the victim. (55.2.4)
 - 8. Advocates may offer transportation to adult victims for authorized purposes and with supervisory approval.
 - 9. When feasible, advocates will contact victims of major crimes to provide notification of arrest, charges and custody status of the offender. (55.2.5)
 - 10. When feasible, advocates will offer to accompany victims to court or coordinate accompaniment with the appropriate agency. Accompaniment will only be for the purpose of providing emotional support and/or general information regarding criminal justice proceedings.