

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program



How do I contact the program?

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program is offered by the Ministry of the Attorney General in all 54 court districts.

To find the office nearest you,
call the

Victim Support Line

toll free at 1-888-579-2888 or at
416-314-2447 in the Greater Toronto Area
or visit

www.ontario.ca/victimservices

The program cannot:

- receive or discuss your evidence
- withdraw charges
- provide or arrange for childcare
- provide transportation to and from court





What is the Victim/Witness Assistance Program?

If you are a victim or witness of a violent crime, it is likely that you will need to go to court.

This can be a difficult and confusing experience. You may have a lot of questions about the criminal court system, and what will be expected of you.

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program is here to help. We will talk to you and provide assistance based on your specific case and needs.

Our services begin once police have laid charges and will continue until the court case is over.

Who can receive help?

Services are provided on a priority basis to vulnerable victims and witnesses of violent crimes, such as domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, elder abuse, homicide and hate crimes.

In addition, we offer help to:

- victims with special needs
- families of victims of homicide
- families of victims of traffic fatalities resulting in criminal charges.

Age-appropriate information and services are available for children.



How do I get help?

After charges have been laid, the police or Crown attorney refers victims and witnesses to the program for help. If you are a victim of violent crime, you can also call to access the program on your own or have someone in the community call on your behalf. Staff will try to contact you as soon as possible to offer support and to respond to any safety concerns.

How much does it cost?

The services are free across Ontario.

What kind of help is available?

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program can:

- Answer your questions about the criminal justice system, courtroom procedures and your role in court
- Help you understand what to expect at each court date, and help you prepare for your appearance in court
- Provide you with copies of court papers, such as bail conditions and probation orders
- Contact the Crown attorney or the police officer in charge of your case on your behalf
- Offer ongoing emotional support throughout the court process
- Refer you to community agencies for other services you may need, such as counselling and safety planning
- Arrange for language interpreters in domestic violence cases and/or accommodate any special needs
- Help you understand and complete a Victim Impact Statement.