

# Lincoln County Victim/Witness Program

The Lincoln County Victim/Witness Program (LCV/WP) started in October 1997 and is under the Lincoln County Attorney's Office. The program helps people involved in a crime as a victim or witness. The LCV/WP works with victims/witnesses of any crimes being prosecuted in Lincoln County by providing criminal justice advocacy and support. The purpose of the LCV/WP is to reduce the trauma or re-victimization suffered because of a violent crime. The program provides assistance by helping victims/witnesses understand and navigate the legal system, providing strong advocacy to victims/witnesses of crimes, and support throughout the criminal justice process. If a victim or witness is charged with a violent offense, the LCV/WP can no longer provide services. As part of the County Attorney's Office, the LCV/WP is prohibited from speaking with a defendant in a case. The LCV/WP is funded by a grant from the Federal Government and is monitored and overseen by the Montana Board of Crime Control. Victims and Witnesses of crimes have rights that are protected by law. A victim/witness advocate works as a link between the victim/witness and the Criminal Justice System.

## A Victim/Witness Advocate can help you in many ways:

- Listen and advocate on behalf of the victim.
- Offer confidential services.
- Provide crisis counseling, emotional support, and guidance.
- Explain how the court process works.
- Find out what is happening in the victim's court case.
- Assist with application for an Order of Protection if a victim of physical or sexual assault and/or stalking.
- Help prepare for an Order of Protection hearing.
- Talk to victims about the Crime Victim Compensation Fund.
- Provide information about the Crime Victim Compensation Program and help you fill out the forms.
- Explain how the court system works.
- Provide information about what is happening in your court case, including dates and times.
- Advise you of any changes in court scheduling and appearances.
- Provide you with a safe waiting area if you need to testify.
- Attend court proceedings with you.
- Assist you with victim impact statements at sentencing hearings.
- Notify you of parole hearings, appeals and other post-conviction hearings.
- Advocate for the rights of victims on the local, state, and national level.

## Volunteering Information

We are looking for people who want to help victims and witnesses during the criminal justice process. Confidentiality, compassion, organizational skills, and willingness to learn are great attributes of a volunteer. Possessing a genuine concern and empathy for victims of crime, survivors of homicide, and the ability to advocate for victims/survivors regardless of the circumstances is necessary.

### Volunteers will:

- Help with victims and witnesses at trial to make sure they have a safe and comfortable place to wait prior to testifying.
- Assist with any needs during the trial.
- Document newspaper and social media accounts of a case by printing articles or screenshots.
- Provide education and awareness of victim's rights to the community.
- Attend civil hearings on Orders of Protection.
- Notify victims/witnesses of court dates.
- Conduct court tours for victims prior to hearings.
- Assist with filling out Crime Victim Compensation forms.
- Monitor the resource area to keep materials organized, supplied, and current.
- Send out resource information to citizens as requested.
- Work with Advocate as needed in the office.
- Provide information and referrals to appropriate county and/or state agencies.
- Assist in setting up meetings.
- Commit to weekly hours, on call, trials, and or events.

Contact the Lincoln County Victim/Witness Program at 406-283-2415 or [advocate@libby.org](mailto:advocate@libby.org) for more information.

