

State of Minnesota

*Office of
Crime Victims
Ombudsman*



**WHAT IS THE CRIME VICTIMS
OMBUDSMAN**

The Office of Crime Victims Ombudsman (OCVO) was established in 1986 by Minn. Stat. § 611A.72-74. The Office is an independent agency responsible for reviewing criminal justice agencies and crime victim service providers in an effort to ensure that their practices are fair, reasonable and appropriate.

In addition to serving as a source of information and referral for crime victims, the OCVO aids crime victims/witnesses who believe their rights have been violated or they have been mistreated by the criminal justice system. Often these problems can be resolved informally by working with the appropriate agencies. When this is not possible, the OCVO may choose to conduct a more thorough investigation. After an investigation is complete, the OCVO reports the findings and makes recommendations to correct the problem.

Anyone wishing further information, or those crime victims who feel that they have been mistreated or their rights have been violated, should contact the Office of Crime Victims Ombudsman.

OFFICE OF CRIME VICTIMS OMBUDSMAN
Metro: 651-642-0550
Greater Minnesota: 1-800-247-0390

VICTIM/WITNESS RIGHTS

RIGHT to be notified of:

Your rights as a crime victim
Plea bargain agreements
Any changes in court schedules
Final disposition of criminal case
Transfer of offender
The offender's release
Escape and apprehension of offender

RIGHT to participate in prosecution by:

Informing court of impact of crime at sentencing
Providing input in pre-trial diversion program
Objecting to a plea bargain
Requesting a speedy trial
Bringing a supportive person to court with you
Attending sentencing
Providing written objections to sentence

RIGHT to protection from:

Witness tampering
Release of public data
Insecure waiting areas during court
Employers when called to testify
Unknown sexually transmitted diseases by requesting that a convicted sex offender be tested

RIGHT to apply for financial assistance:

Victims of violent crime may be eligible for financial assistance if they have suffered economic loss
Victims may request the court to order restitution

**SERVICES OFFERED BY THE
CRIME VICTIMS OMBUDSMAN**

**Referral Service 24 hours/day,
7 days/week to:**

- ▶ crisis lines
- ▶ crime victim advocates
- ▶ advocates/counselors for victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault
- ▶ crime victim financial assistance
- ▶ other social service agencies

Information & Assistance

- ▶ information about procedures and practices of all aspects of the criminal justice system
- ▶ explanation of the roles of law enforcement, prosecutors, judges and others
- ▶ information on criminal statutes and victim rights

Investigations

- ▶ investigations of crime victim rights violations and mistreatment
- ▶ if complaints are justified, advocacy on behalf of the victims
- ▶ if complaints are not justified, explanations of agency actions and other possible solutions

**THINGS TO TRY BEFORE
CALLING THE OMBUDSMAN**

A difference in opinion or misunderstanding is often resolved by simply taking the time to talk and listen. Here are some basic steps in trying to resolve the issue yourself before contacting the Ombudsman's Office.

- ☐ *Be Prepared* - have relevant information available before you call.
- ☐ *Be Pleasant* - treat others as you would like to be treated. Getting angry or rude will not resolve the problem and may confuse the real issue.
- ☐ *Keep Records* - take notes, ask for names and titles of those you speak to and keep all correspondence.
- ☐ *Ask Questions* - ask why the agency or program did what they did. Ask for the relevant rules, policies or laws.
- ☐ *Read Everything Sent To You* - many agency decisions may be appealed but there are deadlines and procedures to follow.

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Greater Minnesota: 1-800-247-0390

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