



# HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

## Victim Services

<b>Distribution:</b>	<b>All Employees</b>		<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>OPS 1210</b>
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	<b>Criminal Investigations Division</b>		<b>Rescinds:</b>	<i>OPS 1210 dated 08/21/21</i>
<b>Original Issued Date:</b>	<b>06/21/22</b>	<b>Revision #:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Latest Revision Date:</b> <b>05/12/25</b>
<b>Latest Required Review was Completed:</b>		<b>05/12/25</b>	<b>Next Review Due:</b>	<b>05/31/28</b>

### 1. Purpose

To provide members of the Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) with victim assistance guidelines.

### 2. Policy

The HCSO will ensure that the rights of victims and witnesses are protected and that they are treated with fairness, compassion, and dignity.

### 3. Definitions

**CRISIS INTERVENTION:** refers to methods used to offer immediate, short term help to victims of crime who experience an event that produces emotional, mental, or physical problems.

**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY INDIVIDUALS:** those persons, who cannot speak, read, write, or understand English well enough to interact effectively with government agencies, to include the HCSO.

**VICTIM:** for the purposes of this policy, a person who has suffered direct physical abuse, emotional distress, or monetary loss as a result of any Part I crime.

**VICTIM SURVIVOR:** the family members of a deceased victim.

**WITNESS:** a person who has information or evidence concerning a crime and provides such information or evidence to the HCSO. When the witness is a minor, the term "witness" includes an appropriate family member or legal guardian. The term "witness" does not include defense witnesses or those who are suspects in the crime.

### 4. References

Maryland "Crime Victims and Witnesses: Your Rights and Services" booklet  
 Maryland Code Annotated Criminal Procedure Article §11-104(c)  
 Maryland Code Annotated Criminal Procedure Article §11-801 to §11-819

### 5. Procedures

#### A. Function

1. Treat victims with respect and provide them with assistance, to benefit victims and help the HCSO

build better relationships and better cases.

2. Ensure victims are identified, notified of the rights to which they are entitled, and provided with assistance to help them cope with the impact of crime.
  3. Ensure victim(s) needs have been assessed and triaged.
  4. Ensure the confidentiality of victims and their role in case development to the extent consistent with applicable Maryland law.
- B. The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) will provide Agency members with appropriate materials regarding victim assistance and referral information.
- C. CID will provide information to the survivor victim(s) on how to obtain a copy of the report when an autopsy is completed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) for an HCSO handled death investigation.
- D. If a victim of a crime requires immediate assistance at the scene of a crime, contact should be made with:
1. The Harford County Mobile Crisis Team (MCT); and
  2. HCSO Chaplain(s).
- E. Patrol
1. The patrol deputy having first contact with the victim of a crime will be responsible for addressing the initial needs of the victim.
  2. Every victim, regardless of severity of the crime, will receive a copy of the Maryland "Crime Victims and Witnesses: Your Rights and Services" booklet as mandated by law (Criminal Procedure Article § 11-104 (b)) which provides that all victims of crime are:
    - a. Apprised of basic criminal justice procedures;
    - b. **Directed to useful resources, to include referring victims to CID;**
    - c. Given financial compensation options; and
    - d. Given information pertaining to obtaining DNA information of a suspect, as mandated by law **(Maryland Code Annotated Criminal Procedure Article §11-104(c)).**
- F. During the follow-up portion of the investigation the investigating deputy will conduct the following services as needed:
1. Assist with explaining the criminal justice process and all available services;
  2. Assist with the return of victim's property in accordance with Agency policy; and
  3. Provide necessary mental health information and referrals.

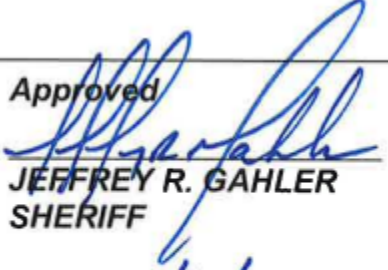
G. Assistance for Limited English Proficiency

1. Every effort will be made to ensure that those individuals with limited English proficiency have access to victim services.
2. Agency personnel who can translate and interpret will be utilized whenever possible.
3. Available translation and interpretation services will be utilized to assist these victims when no Agency personnel are available.
4. The State of Maryland Judiciary maintains a current Court Interpreter Release List which will be maintained in the VSU office. The list may be accessed at:  
<https://secure.scheduleinterpreter.com/marylandcourts/cgi-bin/reports.cgi?action=publicListing>.

6. **Summary of Changes**

A. On 05/12/25 this policy was revised resulting in the following:

1. Substantial edits and revisions throughout Section 5. Procedures.
2. Under Section 4. References and Section 5.E. Patrol, added reference to Maryland Code Annotated Criminal Procedure Article §11-104(c).
3. Under Section 5.E. Patrol, added language at 2.b. which provides that all victims of crime are directed to useful resources, to include referring victims to CID.

Approved  
  
JEFFREY R. GAHLER  
SHERIFF  
DATE 5/16/25