

# Victim Assistance Resource Guide

For those impacted by crashes involving a serious bodily injury



Palm Beach County  
Board of County Commissioners



**I.D.E.A.**  
Palm Beach County  
**Impaired Driving Death  
Enhanced Assistance Taskforce**



A message from  
Palm Beach County  
Victim Services Director  
**Nicole Bishop**

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Palm Beach County Division of Victim Services (PBCVS) developed this resource guide in partnership with Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and members of the IDEA (Impaired Driving Death Enhancement Assistance) Taskforce as a part of the ***FY2016 Vision 21: Multidisciplinary Responses to Families and Communities in Complex Homicide*** grant program. Victim service providers know that traffic crashes causing serious bodily injury can take an emotional, physical and financial toll on victims and their family members. This guide is one tool available to you, but you will also be assigned a victim advocate to provide direct services such

as crisis counseling, emergency monetary aid, information/referrals to victim compensation, intercession with employers and landlords, transportation services, translator services, supportive counseling and attendance at court hearings. Therapists are also available free of charge to help you process trauma.

I hope that Palm Beach County Victim Services can be of assistance to you in the upcoming days, weeks and months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Bishop".

Nicole Bishop, M.S.W., Director  
Palm Beach County Victim Services

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## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Law enforcement agency

Investigator's name, ID #

Investigator's phone #

Law enforcement case #

Responding victim advocate's name

Responding victim advocate's phone #

Assigned victim advocate's name

Assigned victim advocate's phone #

Hospital

Treating doctors

Victim Compensation contact #

**800-226-6667**

Claim number

Analyst's name

Assistant State Attorney's name

Assistant State Attorney's phone #

Assistant State Attorney's  
victim witness coordinator

Assistant State Attorney's  
victim witness coordinator phone #

## What to expect over the next 24–48 hours:

- ▶ **A victim advocate will be contacting you** to provide information, emotional support, and assistance as needed.
- ▶ **Your advocate can assist you in applying for Crime Victim's Compensation**, which may be able to assist with reimbursement of wage loss, medical expenses, and therapy. The treating hospital will bill the presented health insurance available for services provided. It is important you collect all medical bills, receipts, and any other out-of-pocket expenses as these will be needed when applying for Crime Victim's Compensation.
- ▶ **The law enforcement officer assigned will continue to work the investigation**, gathering evidence. The officer will follow up with you once they have additional information to provide. You may contact the officer directly or through your victim advocate.
- ▶ **Belongings collected by law enforcement will be returned to you** as long as the items are not needed for evidence. Should the items be needed, they will be released once the case is closed. As difficult as this will be, please be aware that personal belongings will be returned to you in the condition they were retrieved. It may be helpful to have a friend or family member receive the items prior to you viewing them.

## If an arrest is made:

- › If an arrest is made, the assigned officer and/or State Attorney's Office will contact you and advise you of the initial court hearing information.
- › Your victim advocate will explain the initial court hearing and discuss what to expect. The victim advocate will accompany you to the hearing upon your request. Should you not wish to attend, advise your victim advocate and request an update of the outcome of the hearing.
- › Your victim advocate or a victim witness coordinator with the State Attorney's Office will contact you to advise you of all court dates and hearings.

- › Your advocate will accompany you to any hearing upon your request. Please keep in mind that it can often take years for a case to progress through the criminal justice system.

## VINE System:

- › If an arrest is made, you may register through the VINE system (Victim Information Notification Everyday) to be able to track the offender throughout the jail system.
- › This system will notify you when the offender is released from jail or moves between facilities. You may register by calling **1-877-VINE-4-FL** or online at **www.vinelink.com**. You will be prompted to create a PIN.

[ See page 6 for more information about the criminal justice process. ]

### CASE INFORMATION FOR PURPOSES OF THE VINE SYSTEM

Asst. State Atty's case #

Offender's name

Offender's booking #

VINE PIN #



**1 ARREST** The detention and charging of a defendant with the alleged criminal act.

**2 BOOKING** The process of being registered into the county jail shortly after arrest.

**3 FIRST APPEARANCE** A hearing within 24 hours of arrest where a judge determines bond for the offense the defendant was arrested on.

**4 FORMAL CHARGES** An Information is filed by the Assistant State Attorney charging the defendant with a crime(s) stemming from the criminal act. These charges can vary from the charges at arrest.

**5 ARRAIGNMENT** A hearing where the defendant enters a plea of guilty or not guilty to the formal charges in the Information.

**6 DISCOVERY** The process where the Assistant State Attorney discloses the names of witnesses who may have knowledge or information about the crime as well as provide all documentation, including police reports, witness statements, photos, videos, etc., that relate to the criminal act, to the defendant's attorney.

**7 PRE-TRIAL HEARINGS** A hearing where the Assistant State Attorney and defense attorney notify the judge of the status of the case and the discovery process.

**8 EARLY RESOLUTION** Early resolution may happen prior to depositions as a way to resolve the case early on through a plea deal.

**9 DEPOSITIONS** The questioning of a witness under oath by the attorneys for both sides.

**10 PLEA DEAL** A negotiated agreement between the State of Florida and the Defendant as to the sentence that will be imposed. This is done in lieu of a trial.

**11 TRIAL** The presentation of the witnesses and evidence by the state to a jury to prove the criminal allegation beyond a reasonable doubt. The defense attorney has the opportunity to cross-examine all witnesses and put on evidence if they choose but are not required to do so. The burden of proof in a trial rests solely with the State of Florida.

**12 SENTENCING** A hearing where the judge imposes sentence on the defendant after either a guilty verdict at trial or a plea to the court. At this hearing, the court hears from both sides and any witnesses they wish to call.

# Victims' Rights

as outlined in *Florida Statutes* chapter 960

## What are your rights as a victim of a crime?

- 1.** To be informed of the availability of the Crimes Compensation Fund. A fund for victims of violent crimes in which physical injury has resulted in a serious financial hardship to the victim or in which a death has resulted in a serious financial hardship to the victim's family.
- 2.** To be informed regarding crises intervention services, counseling, therapy, and community-based victim treatment programs.
- 3.** To be informed on the role of a victim/witness in the criminal justice system and information on crucial stages of criminal proceedings.
- 4.** To be informed of the crucial stages of the judicial system and the manner in which information about these stages can be obtained.
- 5.** To be informed, present, and heard at all crucial stages of the proceedings to the extent that this right does not interfere with the constitutional rights of the accused.
- 6.** To be informed that if incarcerated, victims have the right to submit written statements at all crucial stages of the criminal proceedings and parole proceedings.
- 7.** To a prompt and timely disposition of the case, to the extent that this right does not interfere with the constitutional rights of the accused.
- 8.** To be free of intimidation and harassment, to be informed of steps available to law enforcement and prosecutors to protect against intimidation and harassment, and to be informed about the address confidentiality program in domestic violence cases.
- 9.** To advance notice of the arrest of the accused, if possible or prudent in light of an ongoing investigation.
- 10.** To advance notice of the release of the accused.





## Victims' Rights, continued

11. To advance notice of scheduling changes, if the agency has the current address of the victim.
12. To advance notice of judicial proceedings such as arrest, release, proceedings in prosecution or petition for dependency.
13. To consultation with the prosecutor's office, if the victim of a felony, regarding release of accused, plea agreements, pretrial diversion programs, and the sentencing of the accused (and to receive a copy of the non-confidential portions of the pre-sentence investigation report if prepared prior to sentencing).
14. To have property that was seized as evidence returned, unless there is a compelling evidentiary reason to keep it.
15. To request and receive restitution and information about enforcing restitution judgments.
16. To assistance in notifying the victim's employer and creditors of the victimization.
17. To submit an oral or written impact statement prior to sentencing.
18. To general assistance such as transportation, separate waiting rooms, and translators, if available.
19. To be notified of escape of accused.
20. To have victim advocate attend deposition with the victim.
21. To receive HIV test results of accused if criminal offense involved the transmission of bodily fluids.
22. When the victim is a minor, these rights may be asserted by their parent or legal guardian.
23. When a victim is deceased in a homicide case, these rights may be asserted by their next of kin.
24. To grant the prosecutor standing to assert these rights on behalf of the victim.

For more information on your rights as a crime victim, speak with your victim advocate or visit the website [www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com).

# Office of the Attorney General – Bureau of Victim Compensation

The Victim Compensation program offers assistance for economic losses incurred such as wage loss (for victims who missed work as a result of physical crime injuries, and parents who missed work to bring their minor child to medical treatment for physical injuries), disability (if a permanent impairment was suffered), or loss of support (for applicants of victims who were gainfully employed at the time of death); treatment costs such as medical, mental health or grief counseling (not covered by any other collateral source); and/or funeral/burial costs.

Your victim advocate will assist you with applying for Victim Compensation.

## **DOCUMENTATION NEEDED:**

- › **A completed, signed and dated application**
- › **Proof of crime-related expenses, such as itemized bills**
- › **Proof of third-party payments such as insurance, if applicable**
  
- › **Wage loss, disability, and loss of support benefits require additional documentation from the victim's employer and treating physician, if applicable.**

## **QUALIFICATIONS:**

Crimes must be reported to law enforcement within 120 hours. Victims must suffer personal physical injury or death as the result of a crime. Some exceptions and limited benefits may apply for victims who sustained psychiatric or psychological injury from certain crimes. Applications must be filed within one year of the crime date. Victims must fully cooperate with law enforcement, the State Attorney's Office, and the Attorney General's Office. Victims must not have been engaged in an unlawful activity at the time of the crime. Victims' conduct must not have contributed to the situation that brought about his or her own injuries. Victims/applicants must not have been confined or in custody in a county or municipal facility; a state or federal correctional facility; or a juvenile detention, commitment, or assessment facility; adjudicated as a habitual felony offender, habitual violent offender, violent career criminal; or adjudicated guilty of a forcible felony offense.



## Complicated feelings and reactions in adults following the crash:

- › Crime victims of all types of crime may experience physical, emotional, and mental trauma.
- › Physical reactions may include sleep disturbances, startle responses, and changes in appetite.
- › Emotional reactions may include anxiety, numbness, denial, disbelief, and anger. You may experience fear and anxiety about your injuries. Your moods may change rapidly from day to day.
- › Mental reactions may include nightmares, memory problems, confusion, and inability to concentrate, sudden and intrusive thoughts.

## Traumatic grief and injury in adults:

As a victim of a serious bodily injury crash, you may experience grief. Grief is a normal part of the healing process. Common reactions of traumatic grief include:

- › **Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness**
- › **Inability to remember**
- › **The desire to talk about the crash over and over again**
- › **Irritability**
- › **Anger**
- › **Emotional detachment**
- › **Avoiding activities or places that produce memories of the crash**



## Trauma Support Groups in Palm Beach County

We encourage you to speak to your victim advocate about local support groups in your area. Listed below are some of the groups offered in Palm Beach County:

**Palm Beach County Victim Services  
& Certified Rape Crisis Center  
Therapy Services  
561-355-2418**

Individual and group sessions are available for free to crime victims.

**Coalition of Independent Living  
Options (CILO) therapy and  
support groups  
561-966-4288**

# Resources for Adult Survivors

**Coalition of Independent Living Options (CILO)**  
**561-966-4288 | [www.cilo.org](http://www.cilo.org)**

An advocacy organization for children and adults with disabilities.

**National Center for Victims of Crime**  
**855-4-VICTIM (855-484-2846)**  
**[www.victimsofcrime.org](http://www.victimsofcrime.org)**

A non-profit organization dedicated to providing information, resources, and advocacy for victims of all crime types.

**Office for Victims of Crime**  
**[www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov)**

Nationwide database for services related to all types of crime.

**Bureau of Victim Compensation**  
**1-800-226-6667**  
**[www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com)**

Information on Crime Victims' Compensation.

**Mothers Against Drunk Driving**  
**1-800-438-6233 | [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)**

MADD provides emotional support and assistance following a drunk or drugged driving crash.

**The National Crime Victim Bar Association**  
**202-467-8753 | [www.victimbar.org](http://www.victimbar.org)**

Information on civil justice for victims of crime.

**Option B**  
**[www.optionb.org](http://www.optionb.org)**

Resources on facing adversity, building resilience, and finding joy.

**Clinics Can Help (CCH)**  
**561-640-2995**

**[www.clinicscanhelp.org](http://www.clinicscanhelp.org)**  
Redistributes surplus medical equipment and supplies to children and adults who may not otherwise be able to afford such equipment and supplies for their physical recovery. CCH provides the following and more: traditional and motorized wheelchairs, home hospital beds, medical air mattresses, walkers, nebulizers, shower chairs, bedside commodes, wound care supplies, etc.

**Legal Aid Society**  
**561-655-8944**  
**[www.legalaidpbc.org/onlineintake](http://www.legalaidpbc.org/onlineintake)**

Provides free civil legal services to financially eligible individuals and families.





## Resources for Child Survivors

### AGE-RELATED REACTIONS TO A TRAUMATIC EVENT

**Preschool and young school-age children** exposed to a traumatic event may experience a feeling of helplessness, uncertainty about whether there is continued danger, a general fear that extends beyond the traumatic event and into other aspects of their lives, and difficulty describing in words what is bothering them or what they are experiencing emotionally. This feeling of helplessness and anxiety is often expressed as a loss of previously acquired developmental skills. Children who experience traumatic events might not be able to fall asleep on their own or might not be able to separate from parents at school. Children who might have ventured out to play in the yard prior to a traumatic event now might not be willing to play in the absence of a family member. Often, children lose some speech and toileting skills, or their sleep is disturbed by nightmares, night terrors, or fear of going to sleep. In many cases, children may engage in traumatic play—a repetitive and less imaginative form of play that may represent children’s continued focus on the traumatic event or an attempt

## Resources for Child Survivors, continued

to change a negative outcome of a traumatic event.

**For school-age children**, a traumatic experience may elicit feelings of persistent concern over their own safety and the safety of others in their school or family. These children may be preoccupied with their own actions during the event. Often they experience guilt or shame over what they did or did not do during a traumatic event. School-age children might engage in constant retelling of the traumatic event, or they may describe being overwhelmed by their feelings of fear or sadness. A traumatic experience may compromise the developmental tasks of school-age children as well. Children of this age may display sleep disturbances, which might include difficulty falling asleep, fear of sleeping alone, or frequent nightmares. Teachers often comment that these children are having greater difficulties concentrating and learning at school. Children of this age, follow-

ing a traumatic event, may complain of headaches and stomach aches without obvious cause, and some children engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behavior.

**Adolescents** exposed to a traumatic event feel self-conscious about their emotional responses to the event. Feelings of fear, vulnerability, and concern over being labeled “abnormal” or different from their peers may cause adolescents to withdraw from family and friends. Adolescents often experience feelings of shame and guilt about the traumatic event and may express fantasies about revenge and retribution. A traumatic event for adolescents may foster a radical shift in the way these children think about the world. Some adolescents engage in self-destructive or accident-prone behaviors.

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Source: *Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event*, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)

## Resources for Child Survivors, continued

### WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS

- › Help your child feel safe and provide reassurance.
  - › Maintain routines as much as possible.
  - › Encourage play.
  - › Share information about what happened. It's always best to learn the details of a traumatic event from a safe, trusted adult. Be brief and honest, and allow children to ask questions.
  - › Prevent or limit exposure to news coverage of the crash, on the television or social media.
  - › Understand that children cope in different ways.
  - › Listen well. Let kids know it is okay to tell you how they are feeling at any time.
  - › Help children relax with breathing exercises.
  - › Acknowledge what your child is feeling.
- › Know that it's okay to answer, "I don't know." What children need most is someone whom they trust to listen to their questions, accept their feelings, and be there for them. Don't worry about knowing exactly the right thing to say — after all, there is no answer that will make everything okay.

### Additional Resources for Children

**Coalition of Independent Living Options (CILO)**  
**561-966-4288 | [www.cilo.org](http://www.cilo.org)**  
An advocacy organization for children and adults with disabilities.

**The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)**  
**[www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)**  
Created to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for children and families who experience or witness traumatic events.

**Child Mind Institute**  
**[www.Childmind.org](http://www.Childmind.org)**  
Online resource for children's mental health information.



# Important Contacts

## **Palm Beach County Victim Services**

Phone: 561-355-2383  
205 N. Dixie Highway  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

## **State Attorney's Office**

Phone: 561-355-7100  
401 N. Dixie Highway  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

## **St. Mary's Medical Center**

Level I Trauma Center for northern Palm Beach County  
Main phone: 561-844-6300  
901 45th Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33407

## **Delray Medical Center**

Level I Trauma Center for southern Palm Beach County  
Main phone: 561-498-4440  
Emergency Department: 561-495-3115  
5352 Linton Boulevard  
Delray Beach, FL 33484

## **Clinics Can Help**

Phone: 561-640-2995  
2560 Westgate Avenue  
West Palm Beach, FL 33409







**Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners  
Public Safety Department  
Victim Services Division**

[www.pbcgov.com/publicsafety/victimservices](http://www.pbcgov.com/publicsafety/victimservices)

**24/7 SEXUAL ASSAULT VIOLENT CRIME HELPLINE**

HELPLINE: (561) 833-7273

TOLL FREE: (866) 891-7273

**PALM BEACH COUNTY VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION LOCATIONS**

**MAIN COURTHOUSE**

205 North Dixie Hwy., Suite 5.1100  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
(561) 355-2418 option 3  
TTY: (561) 233-2595

**NORTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

3188 PGA Blvd., Suite 1436  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410  
(561) 355-2418 option 3  
TTY: (561) 624-6643

**WEST COUNTY-GLADES  
COURTHOUSE**

2976 State Road 15, 2nd Floor  
Belle Glade, FL 33430  
(561) 996-4871  
TTY: (561) 992-1113

**VICTIM SERVICES SART CENTER**

4210 North Australian Ave.  
West Palm Beach, FL 33407  
(561) 625-2568 option 1  
TTY: (561) 624-6520

**SOUTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

200 West Atlantic Ave., Suite 1E-301  
Delray Beach, FL 33444  
(561) 274-1500  
TTY: (561) 274-1015

This Serious Bodily Injury Victim Assistance Resource Guide was produced by Palm Beach County Victim Services under grant number 2016-XV-GX-K018 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this Serious Bodily Injury Victim Assistance Resource Guide are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.