



Victim Impact Statement Resource Guide

Crime victims have the right under law to submit a victim impact statement to the criminal court at the time of sentencing. The right to submit a victim impact statement is available to persons who were directly victimized by a crime, are a family member of a homicide victim, or are the parent, guardian, or sibling of a victim who is under the age of 18.

As a crime victim, you have the opportunity to use this victim impact statement to describe how the crime affected you and others close to you. Your victim impact statement gives you the opportunity to

- Describe the crime and its physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual effects on you and your loved ones.
- Discuss any concerns you may have for your safety and security.
- Address any changes in your life that you may have experienced since the crime occurred.
- Offer suggestions for a resolution that is fair and just, and provide information that will give the offender the opportunity to take responsibility for actions that have caused you harm and loss.
- Request further information and/or notification about the status of your case and offender.

Your impact statement will help the Judge understand how this crime has affected you and those close to you. It is a document that is useful to the court in determining not only sentencing, but also strategies for offender management, measures for victim protection, and outcomes that increase your satisfaction with the overall justice program.

Completing This Statement is Voluntary

You do not have to complete a victim impact statement. However, it may be helpful to the judge when he or she decides what sentence the defendant should receive, any money the defendant may have to reimburse you for expenses you have paid or owe because of this crime, and conditions of the offender's sentence and supervision. If the judge orders the defendant to pay you restitution, there is no guarantee that the defendant will be able to pay the entire amount. However, a court order for the full amount of your losses is an important component for victims to pursue civil remedies for all of the financial losses associated with this crime. Also it is always helpful to document your feelings, concerns and losses in a written victim impact statement that will also become an official part of the court record.

Whether or not you choose to submit a victim impact statement is a decision made by you and your family. It is a voluntary right that you have as a victim of crime.

Suggestions for Completing Your Victim Impact Statement

The following suggestions and the attached victim impact statement form are offered only as guidelines. Please answer as many questions as you wish. If you need more space, you can use additional pages and simply attach them to the form when you return it.

Only you know how to best describe the effects this crime has had on you and those close to you. We realize it may be difficult to describe in words how this crime has affected you, your family and friends. However, your input is vital to determine a sentence that is fair and just, and to hold the offender accountable for the harm he or she caused you. The bullet points that follow are designed to help you and your family complete this important process.



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Some victims have found it helpful to write a rough draft of their statement before completing the final statement. If you need any assistance in completing your victim impact statement, please feel free to contact Jessica Eason, the Victim Assistance Coordinator, at 765-659-6351 or email jeason@clintonco.com.

If you would like to tell the court about the **emotional impact** of this crime, you may wish to consider:

- How this crime has affected your lifestyle or those close to you.
- How your feelings about yourself or your life have changed since the crime.
- How your ability to relate to others has changed.
- How your ability to cope with other possible crises in your life has been affected.
- How your feelings of safety and security for yourself and your loved ones have been affected.
- Any counseling or other support you have obtained (or anticipate obtaining) to help you cope.

If you or your family members were injured, you may wish to tell the court about the **physical impact** of this crime. You may wish to describe:

- The specific physical injuries you or members of your family suffered.
- How long your injuries lasted or how long they are expected to last.
- Any medical treatment you have received or expect to receive in the future.
- How your physical injuries have affected your lifestyle, i.e. ability to work, enjoy relationships, enjoy recreational activities, etc.

If the crime has had any **spiritual impact** on you and your loved ones, please describe them.

If the crime has had any **financial impact** on you and your loved ones, you can describe how this has affected your family in two ways:

- 1) Provide the amount of monetary losses you incurred on the Restitution Form enclosed. It is very important for the court to understand how this crime has affected your ability to earn a living and how it has affected you financially. If you have paid or owe any money for bills because of this crime, please fill out the Restitution Form enclosed. It is important to be as accurate and complete as possible when listing your financial losses, because this information will be used by the prosecutor, probation officer, and judge to help them determine what restitution the defendant must pay to you. Restitution is the possible payment by the defendant to you for any financial losses you may have suffered as a result of this crime. We have also included a separate worksheet to help you describe and document the types of financial losses you may have endured, or will be faced with in the future. (See Documenting Losses for Victim Restitution)
- 2) You can also state in your victim impact statement how these financial losses have affected you and your family in other ways. For example:
 - If the losses resulted in financial difficulties, what were they and how did you and your family cope?
 - How has the financial loss affected other aspects of your lives