

Our community is fortunate to have a network of Victim Assistance Programs. The Gaston County Police Department will work with other agencies in a spirit of cooperation, communication and coordination.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Gaston County Police (24hrs) 704-866-3320

Crisis intervention, information, support and advocacy for victims of felony crimes and domestic violence.

Hope United Survivor Network 704-862-6783

A community collaborative working in one location to provide victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault and elder abuse a safe and secure place to get the help they need.

Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center – A Domestic Violence Shelter (24hrs) 704-852-6000

A safe residence and resource center for survivors of domestic violence and their children.

District Attorney’s Victim/Witness Program 704-852-3113

Information and assistance with criminal justice procedures, case status and court appearances.

Legal Aid of North Carolina 704-865-2357

Domestic Violence Court Advocate – Gaston County Sheriff’s Office 704-869-6800

Educate, support and guide victims and their families through the court process.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

Clerk of Court 704-852-3100 or 704-852-3190

Magistrate 704-852-3192

Jail 704-869-6880

Mediation Center 704-868-9576

Probation and Parole 704-853-5350

IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS

This information is important and should be kept with you.

Defendant _____

Date of Crime _____

Case Number (OCA) _____

Court Record (CR) Number _____

Police Officer at the Scene _____

Victim Advocate _____

IF YOU NEED PROTECTION

If you are being threatened or intimidated by the offender, contact the police officer or investigator assigned to your case, the District Attorney’s office or the Victim Assistance Program.

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CRIME, contact the police officer or investigator assigned to your case or the Victim Assistance Program.

IF THE DEFENDANT’S ATTORNEY CONTACTS YOU, you have the right to decide whether or not to talk with them. You have the right to have the District Attorney present during any meetings with the defendant’s attorney. Contact the District Attorney if anyone contacts you on behalf of the defendant.

IN AN EMERGENCY – Dial 911

Non-Emergency Numbers

Gaston County Police Department 704-866-3320

Gaston County Communications 704-866-3300

VICTIM COMPENSATION

The Rape Victim Assistance Program: This program provides free forensic medical examination for victims of rape or sex offenses as defined by NC General Statute 14-27. Payment is made directly to the provider.

www.ncdps.gov/DPS-Services/Victim-Services

NC Crime Victim’s Compensation Fund: Since 1987, this fund has provided assistance to innocent victims of violent crime with a diversity of needs. North Carolina is a payer of last resort for losses not covered by other sources; i.e. personal insurance, Medicaid, Workers Compensation or restitution. In North Carolina, call 1-800-826-6200 or visit www.ncdps.gov/DPS-Services/Victim-Services.

Civil Suits: You can hire an attorney and file a personal injury suit in civil court. You may either sue the person who committed the crime against you or seek to recover damages from a third party whose negligence may have contributed to the crime. You can sue for damages caused by the crime, including physical and psychological injuries, loss of income and property damage. A civil case is different from a criminal prosecution and usually takes much longer.

Restitution: If the person who committed the crime against you is found guilty, the judge may order him/her to pay medical bills or other damages as part of the sentence. Payment will be made directly to you or through the court. You will need to keep receipts/records of any expenses you incurred as a result of the crime, as well as detailed information about any other losses. The District Attorney’s Office can discuss the possibility of restitution with you.

**Gaston County Police Department
Victim Assistance Program
P.O. Box 1578
420 West Franklin Blvd
Gastonia, NC 28053-1578
704-866-3320**

Victim Assistance Program



The Mission of the Gaston County Police Department is to enhance safety and security through police services, which reflect our compassion and concern for the quality of life of all citizens.

**Chief of Police
Gaston County Police Department**



190th Agency Accredited

Revised 02/2022

The Facts

Crime knows no boundaries. It affects the young, the old, the rich, the poor...we are all potential victims. Overall, violent crime continues to increase in Gaston County.

THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Gaston County Police Department recognizes the psychological, physical and financial problems that crime victimization creates for victims and their families. The staff of the Gaston County Police Department are genuinely concerned about how the crime has affected your life. We are committed to providing assistance and support by listening to your concerns and responding fully to your needs for information, explanation, service and referrals.

As a victim of crime, you are likely to experience feelings of shock, fear, anger, helplessness and confusion. These reactions are a normal response to crime, whether it is a personal injury or a property crime. When these emotions are most intense, you may find yourself having to deal with a complex maze of people and procedures. Without previous experience or exposure to the agencies involved in handling your case, you may find the situation confusing, frightening or frustrating. The staff of the Victim Assistance Program can answer your questions, provide you with appropriate referrals and offer continuing support and guidance as you navigate the criminal justice system.

Referrals

- Crisis Intervention and short-term counseling.
- Assistance with emergency food, clothing, shelter and transportation needs.
- Counseling and support group referrals.
- Referrals to social service and criminal justice agencies for needed information and services.

Services

- Information on the status of the investigation.
- Explanation of the criminal justice system and the victim's role in that system.
- Accompaniment, information and emotional support during medical, law enforcement and court procedures.
- Orientation to the courtroom setting.
- Assistance in securing victim compensation benefits when applicable.
- Assistance with preparation of a Victim Impact Statement describing the physical, psychological and economic harm sustained as a result of the crime.
- Property return assistance.
- Employer intervention to explain time missed from work due to cooperation with law enforcement investigative procedures.
- Assistance if you are intimidated, harassed or threatened.
- Personal safety and crime prevention information.

Who is the Victim Assistance Program designed to help? The Victim Assistance Program offers support, services and referrals to victims of sexual assault, robbery, kidnapping, aggravated assault, etc. Family members who have suffered the loss of a loved one as a result of homicide will be offered emotional support and assistance. If you are a victim of a crime which has been reported to Gaston County Police Department, the Victim Assistance Program is available to help you.

How do I receive support and services? The Reporting Officer or Investigator can answer many of your questions. You may also contact the department's Victim Witness Coordinator by calling 704-866-3320.

Referrals are also accepted from law enforcement, social services and criminal justice personnel. The program also screens police reports and contacts victims by letter or telephone to offer the services of the program.

IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF CRIME

You are not alone.

Trying to carry the burden alone may be difficult. There are people who care about you and what happens to you. Report the crime to the police so they can assist you. Contact a friend or relative to be with you as you cope with the initial shock. The Reporting Officer or Investigator from the Gaston County Police Department can provide referrals during this time if you wish. Seek the support you deserve.

Why Me?

In searching for a reason for the crime, you may relive the experience and say to yourself, "If only I had..." Try not to blame yourself. Remember, you are innocent and did not deserve to be hurt. You are not responsible for the crime committed against you—the criminal is!

This Can't Be Happening.

Immediately after the crime, you may experience a sense of shock and disbelief. Feelings of confusion and disorientation are normal at this time. Strong emotions may surface in the days, weeks and months that follow. Feelings of fear, anger and depression can cause you pain and personal distress. Talk with someone who cares and understands, whether it is a close friend, relative, minister or professional counselor.

A Word About Professional Counseling

Talking with someone about your experience and your feelings about it can be helpful. It is a way of taking care of yourself and respecting yourself. Seeking counseling does not mean "something is wrong with you." It means that you have had a life-disrupting experience and you are taking positive steps to deal with it. The Victim Assistance Program may make referrals to counseling professionals and support groups based upon your needs.

"It was a great relief to have someone to talk to, who would in no way pass onto others what I thought, felt or did at that confusing time."

- A Victim

YOUR RIGHTS

The criminal justice system had traditionally ignored the needs of victims while focusing on protecting the rights of the accused. But that has changed.

North Carolina provides for Fair Treatment for Certain Victims and Witnesses under NC General Statutes 15A-824 thru 839. Specifically, that a victim of crime shall be treated with dignity and respect; that they have the right, upon request, to be notified of and to be present at court proceedings; and to receive information about the conviction or final disposition and sentence of the accused.

AS A VICTIM OF CRIME, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

To Be Protected from Further Harm

- To receive immediate medical treatment when needed and not be detained for an unreasonable length of time before receiving care.
- To receive protection from harm, or threats of harm, arising out of cooperation with criminal justice personnel; and to be free from intimidation during the court process.
- To have stolen or other personal property returned as soon as such property is no longer needed as evidence.
- To full protection of your job and credit rating to the extent that these may be adversely affected by the crime.
- To receive on a timely basis any restitution collected from offender(s).

To Be Informed

- To receive an explanation of the criminal justice system as it affects your case, as well as information about your role in this process.
- To be notified of all critical stages of the legal process, including bail hearings, final disposition and parole hearings.
- To be advised of any financial, psychological, legal or other assistance that may be available to you.
- To be advised to seek counsel in order to determine whether to seek civil remedies.

To Be Heard

- To be present and to speak at all critical stages of the prosecution process.