

**BIRMINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
VICTIM LIAISON COORDINATOR**

Robbie J. Priest
205-297-8449

Providing compassionate and caring assistance to victims of violent crimes

The Victim Liaison for the Birmingham Police Department is dedicated to improving the treatment of crime victims and survivors of victims of homicide by providing meaningful assistance and compassionate treatment and improving the quality of life for the citizens of Birmingham by assisting victims, survivors, family members, and businesses experiencing violent crime or trauma.

Being a victim of crime is frightening and unsettling. It is our mission to provide all victims of violent crime with the information, resources and emotional support to combat the trauma and devastation of loss and victimization. Our goal is to help victims obtain justice and to begin the process of healing.

The Victim Liaison can assist victims and/or their families and will provide referrals based on the specific needs of each situation. The Victim Liaison works closely with the detectives and various legal and social service agencies within the city of Birmingham, Jefferson County, and the State of Alabama, and is familiar with a variety of available resources.

Services Provided by the Victim Liaison Coordinator:

- Inform victims of their rights.
- Notify and assist in filing for Alabama Crime Victims' Compensation.
- Provide information and referrals to local, state, and federal crime victim service providers
- Provide information about criminal justice process
- Assist with property return
- Make follow-up contact with victims of crime who file a report with the Birmingham Police Department
- Provide victim advocacy and liaison with the detectives assigned to the case.
- Conduct community awareness and presentations.

Contact Information:

Robbie J. Priest
Victim Liaison Coordinator
Birmingham Police Department
1710 1st Avenue North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203
Phone: 205-297-8449
Fax: 205-254-1707 fax
E-mail: Robbie.Priest@birminghamal.gov

NOTE: Any e-mails sent to Victim Liaison Coordinator is considered confidential.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A VICTIM

If you are a victim of crime in the State of Alabama, you are granted certain rights by law. After filing a police report, you should be provided with the following by the agency that took the report:

- A list of local emergency and crisis services available;
- The name and phone number of the agency and officer handling your report;
- The name and phone number of the prosecuting attorney;
- A listing of your rights as a victim, including a form to invoke your rights;
- The availability of victims' compensation benefits;
- The existence and eligibility requirements of restitution and compensation;
- The procedural steps in a criminal prosecution; and
- A recommended procedure if you are subject to threats or intimidation as a victim.

If you are not notified of an arrest in your case within 60 days, you may call the telephone number of the law enforcement agency handling your case for the status of the case.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT OR MAY REQUEST THE RIGHT TO:

- Be notified of all criminal proceedings and charges filed against the defendant, with the exception of initial appearance, and the right to be present at all proceedings
- Designate a representative if you are physically or emotionally unable to assert your rights;
- Confer with the prosecuting attorney before final disposition of the case, and before commencement of a trial, but not to direct the prosecution;
- Be provided a waiting area separate from the defendant, his or her relatives, and defense witnesses if available; and be aware that information about the victim shall not be public record;
- Refuse an interview or other communication by the defendant, his/her attorney, or anyone acting on his/her behalf;
- Be notified of, or have reasonable attempts made to notify you, of a plea agreement and to be present at plea proceeding;
- Be allowed to present evidence, impact statement, or information concerning the criminal offense or sentencing at pre-sentencing, sentencing, or restitution proceeding;
- Be notified about sentencing, post-conviction, appellate proceedings, post conviction release information;
- Be notified of the defendant's end of sentence release date, release on bond, prison escape, re-arrest, or death;
- Be told about how to have any property taken from you returned to you;
- Be notified of an end of sentence release date or notice of death of the defendant;
- Be allowed to submit a statement to be entered into prisoner's Dept. of Corrections record and to be notified by the Board of Pardons and Paroles when parole or pardon is to be considered;
- The right to access any opinion by the Alabama Dept. of Mental Health and Mental Retardation or other facility with custody of the defendant;
- Respond to a subpoena to testify in criminal proceedings against the defendant in your case without loss of employment or threatened loss of employment;
- Receive restitution as ordered under any judgment, decree, or order of the court; and
- Have the Attorney General or District Attorney assert any right to which you are entitled

Note: Failure to provide a right, privilege, or notice to a victim shall not be grounds for the defendant to have the conviction or sentence set aside.

VICTIM RESOURCES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Alabama Attorney General's Victim Assistance Unit - State level victim services unit. 1-800-626-7676. www.ago.state.al.us.

Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission - Alabama's compensation law covers a variety of expenses for which compensation is paid. The ACVCC provides the only substantial financial compensation to victims for expenses for personal injuries including medical, funeral, and counseling bills. 1-800-541-9388 (for victims only); 1-334-290-4420. www.acvcc.alabama.gov

Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence - The ACADV serves domestic violence victims throughout the state through its shelter programs and 24-hour crisis line for domestic violence. 1-800-650-6522.

Alabama Coalition Against Rape - ACAR is a statewide non-profit organization working to prevent sexual violence in the State of Alabama and is comprised of 15 member rape crisis centers. 1-334-264-0123.

Compassionate Friends (708) 990-0010

Crisis Center of Birmingham - The Crisis Center provides a 24-hour hotline for those in emotional crisis. Other services include confidential counseling for teens, kids, victims of rape, and the elderly; suicide intervention and bereavement counseling for suicide survivors; and community education and training. Crisis Hotline 205-323-7777; Rape Crisis Line 205-323-7273.

Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama - HICA is a social service organization that seeks to improve the quality of life for Latinos in Alabama. Services include coordination of community resources, provision of translational services, and advocacy. Phone 205-942-5505 or 1-866-265-HICA (4422).

Mothers Against Drunk Driving - MADD offers direct victim services to victims/survivors of impaired driving crashes, emotional support, guidance through the justice systems, and information and referrals. 1-800-635-0722, or (334) 277-8080.

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children - Provides nationwide support services for families and professionals in the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of abducted, endangered, and sexually exploited children. 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678). To report sexually exploited children on the CyberTipline. www.cybertipline.com/.

National Center for Victims of Crime - Provides information on local and national victim rights issues. Website has supportive information for victims and victim advocates on a wide variety of topics and crime victim issues. 1-800-FYI-CALL (394-2255). www.ncvc.org

National Coalition of Homicide Survivors, Inc. - 1-520-740-5729. www.mivictims.org/NCHS.

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

National Organization for Victim Assistance - A victim's rights advocacy and emergency counseling organization which provides information on crime, safety, and psychological trauma, and links to many related pages. Information and referrals 1-800-TRY-NOVA (1-800-879-6682).

National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673).

Office for Victims of Crime - The OVC was established by the 1984 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to oversee diverse programs that benefit victims of crime. A clearinghouse of information for crime victims and victim advocates with useful court-related topics and a directory of victim resources. 1-202-307-5983.

Parents of Murdered Children - Originally organized to support parents grieving the loss of a murdered child, the organization provides assistance to anyone grieving the loss of a loved one due to violence. 1-888-818-POMC (7662). www.pomc.com

United Way of Central Alabama – An extensive resource of service providers for Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Blount and Walker counties. Information and referrals 205-323-0000.

Victims of Crime and Leniency (V.O.C.A.L.) - VOCAL provides assistance to families of homicide victims. Services include individual and group counseling, community information and referrals, criminal justice support, assistance with compensation, and training. Crisis Helpline 1-800-239-2319. www.vocalonline.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How can the Victim Liaison Coordinator (VLC) help crime victims and/or their families?

A. The Victim Liaison Coordinator can assist victims and/or their families by telephone, appointment or walk-in and will provide assistance and referrals based on the specific needs of each situation. He/she can assist the victim and his/her family in applying for Alabama Crime Victim's Compensation Commission and can provide advocacy and support while victim is in the criminal justice system.

Q. What is Alabama Crime Victims' Compensation Commission (ACVCC)?

A. Alabama Crime Victims' Compensation Commission is a financial assistance program that helps eligible victims with certain expenses related to the violent crime.

Q. What must a person do to be eligible for Alabama Crime Victims' Compensation?

A.

1. Report the crime to a law enforcement agency within 72 hours of occurrence and cooperate with the investigation.
2. The victim or claimant suffered serious personal injury or death as a result of the criminal act.
3. The victim must not have provoked, incited, caused or contributed to the injury or death in any way.
4. The victim or claimant must not have contributed to the offense or have been involved in any illegal activity at the time of the offense.
4. The application must be filed within one (1) year of the date of the incident.
5. The victim or claimant must cooperate fully with law enforcement, the court system and the Commission.
6. Be a United States resident with the crime occurring in Alabama; be in the United States legally at the time the crime occurred (citizenship not required).

Q. What type of financial assistance is available through the Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission?

A. The Commission pays only those expenses which are not covered by another source such as insurance, workman's compensation, etc. Stolen property, checks or cash will not be covered by the Commission. The Commission may cover the following out of pocket expenses:

- Medical Care
- Counseling
- Work loss due to the crime
- Funeral or burial expenses
- Rehabilitation of the victim
- Moving expenses

Q. What crimes are covered by the Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission?

A. Types of crimes covered include:

- Assault/aggravated Assault
- Aggravated Robbery
- Homicide
- Family/Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Manslaughter
- Other crimes where the victim suffered physical or emotional harm or death

Q. Who can apply?

A. Any person who is an innocent victim of criminally injurious conduct and who has sustained personal injuries as a result, or any immediate family members (surviving spouse, children, siblings, step children, parents, grandparents) may apply.

Q. What if I have additional questions?

A. For more information, please contact the Victim Liaison Coordinator at 205-297-8449 or call the Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission at 1-800-541-9388 or visit their website at www.acvcc.state.al.us You may also call the Alabama Attorney General's Victim Assistance Unit at 1-800-626-7676 or visit their website at www.ago.state.al.us/victims/cvc
[www.http://www.ago.state.al.us/victims/cvc.shtml](http://www.ago.state.al.us/victims/cvc.shtml).

UNDERSTANDING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

Misdemeanor/Municipal Ordinance Violations

Birmingham Municipal Court has jurisdiction over prosecutions for violations of municipal ordinances and State misdemeanor offenses occurring within Birmingham city limits and police jurisdiction.

1. Crime occurs and is reported to police.

2. Accused is arrested or victim files complaint with Birmingham Magistrate. A complaint is a written statement made under oath before a magistrate giving essential facts of the offense and alleging that the defendant committed the offense. The Magistrate may then issue a warrant for the arrest of the person charged and subpoena witnesses.

3. Following an arrest the accused may be released on bond under conditions imposed to assure appearance at trial or minimize the risk of harm to others.

4. Initial Appearance. Defendant enters a plea of "Guilty" or "Not Guilty". If "Guilty" plea is entered, the case proceeds directly to the Sentencing Phase. If "Not Guilty" plea is entered the case will proceed to Trial Phase.

5. Sentencing Phase: Defendant appears before the court for imposition of punishment.

6. Trial Phase. Victims/witnesses may be required to testify. If the defendant is found guilty, he/she will be sentenced by the judge to: Jail, Fine, Restitution, and/or Probation. The victim of a crime does not need his/her own lawyer; the City Prosecutor is responsible for prosecuting cases in municipal court.

7. Appeals Phase. If the case is appealed by the convicted offender, the City Prosecutor will work to uphold and defend the conviction.

City Prosecutor ---205-254-2369

Birmingham Magistrate--- 205-254-6512 or 205-254-6514

Victim Liaison Coordinator Robbie Priest --- 205-297-8449

Criminal Felony Procedure

1. Crime occurs and is reported to police.

2. The Evidence is presented. A formal complaint is signed. Depending on the evidence, the case could proceed directly to the grand jury prior to the arrest of accused.

3. The Accused is arrested.

4. The Preliminary Hearing is held. Depending on the evidence, this step could be skipped with the case proceeding directly to the grand jury prior to the arrest of accused.

5. Evidence is presented to a Grand Jury.

6. If Case is “True Billed” by a Grand Jury, proceed to Arraignment.

If Case is “No Billed”, end of Prosecution.

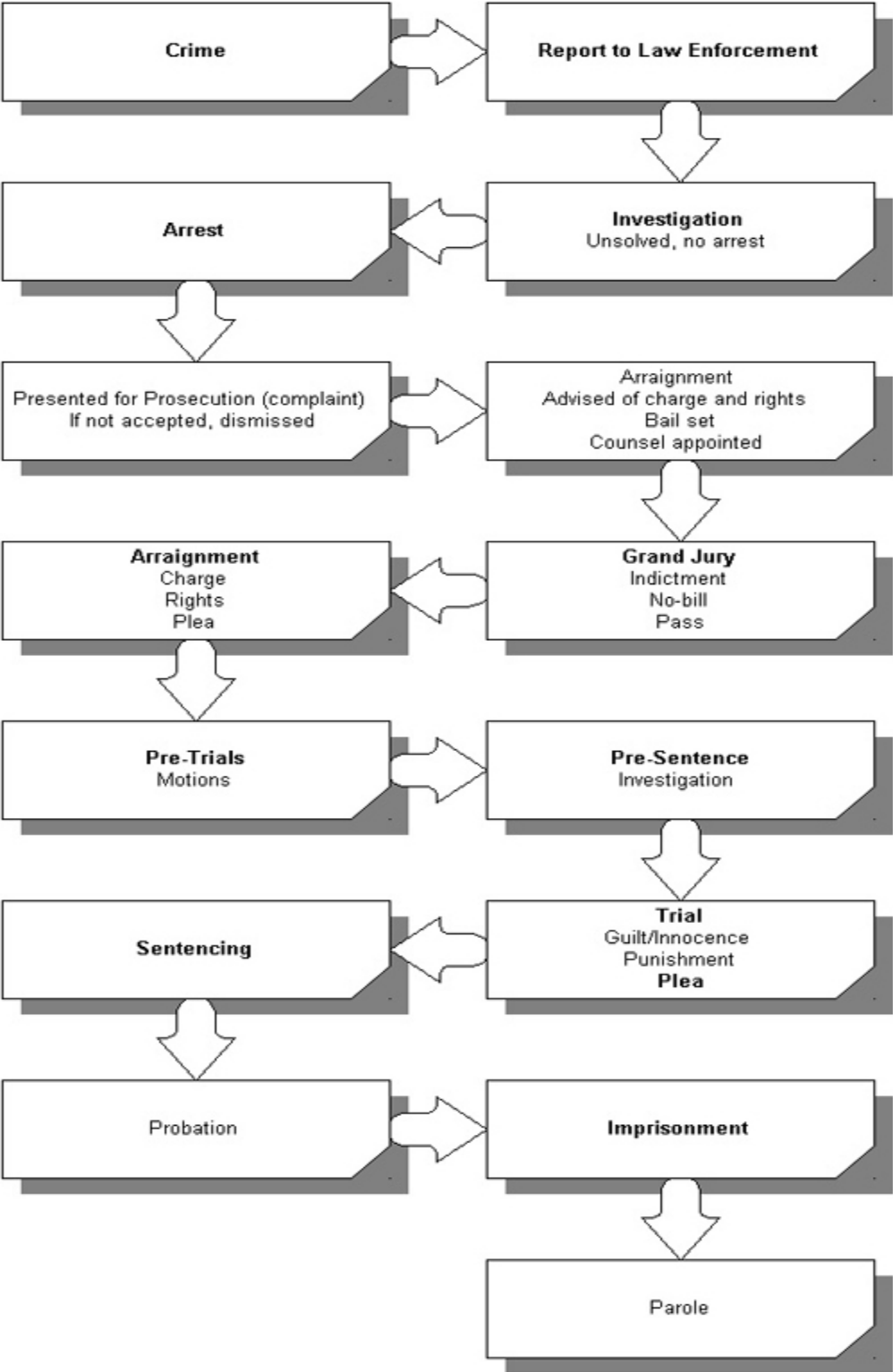
7. The Arraignment. The defendant enters plea of “Guilty” or “Not Guilty”.
If a “Guilty” plea is entered, the case will proceed directly to the Sentencing Phase.
If a “Not Guilty” plea entered, then the case will proceed to the Trial Phase.

8. The Trial Phase. If the defendant is found guilty, he/she will be sentenced by the trial judge to one or more of the following: Prison, Fine, Restitution, Probation.

9. The Appeals Phase. If the case is appealed by the convicted offender to the Appellate Courts, an attorney from the Alabama Attorney General’s Office will be assigned to work to uphold and defend the conviction on behalf of the State of Alabama.

**Jefferson County District Attorney
David Barber
205-325-5252**

Investigation and Prosecution



Compensation and Restitution

COMPENSATION

Any person, who is an innocent victim of criminally injurious conduct and who has sustained personal injuries as a result, or a surviving spouse or child of a victim who died as a result of criminally injurious conduct, may be eligible for compensation. Compensation may be provided for medical expenses due to personal injuries or for funeral and counseling services. Expenses covered by another source cannot be paid. You may be eligible for compensation if you meet the following criteria:

- You have been a victim of a personal injury as the result of criminally injurious conduct or if you are the dependent of such a victim;
- You did not cause or contribute to the injury and were not involved in illegal activity at the time of the offense;
- The incident was reported to law enforcement within 72 hours, or good cause shown;
- You fully cooperated with law enforcement officials; and
- An application is filed within one year of the incident, or good cause shown.

**For additional information contact:
Alabama Crime Victims
Compensation Commission
P.O. Box 1548
Montgomery, Alabama 36102-1548
Phone (334) 290-4420
Toll-free 1-800-541-9388
Fax (334) 290-4455**

(link to) [Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission Website](#)

RESTITUTION

In any case in which a defendant is convicted of criminal activity resulting in pecuniary damages or loss to a victim, the court is required to conduct a restitution hearing and order the defendant to "make restitution or otherwise compensate such victim for any pecuniary damages." Section 15-18-67, *Code of Alabama* 1975. Restitution may be ordered after a hearing at sentencing in an amount set by the judge. Restitution expenses will also be considered in a case where an offer of settlement is made. To assist the court in ordering restitution, keep your receipts, estimates, or bills for damages or injuries suffered in connection with the crime and submit them as soon as possible to the agency prosecuting your case.

The following expenses can be considered in determining restitution:

- Medical Expenses including costs of treatment by all care providers, ambulance service, lab fees, prescriptions (submit copies of bills);
- Lost Income due to medical reasons as a result of this crime;
- Property Damage for house, car, etc. Repair estimates or bills should be submitted, along with insurance information (deductible, amount received, claim pending);
- Miscellaneous Expenses not covered by insurance which you feel you may be entitled to;
- Stolen and/or Recovered Property
 - Replacement value of stolen property
 - Damage/repair/replacement value of recovered property

Birmingham Regional Crime Stoppers



Birmingham Regional Crime Stoppers is an ongoing program involving members of the Birmingham Area community, in partnership with the media and law enforcement, to provide crime-solving assistance to law enforcement. Cash rewards are offered to anonymous persons who telephone the Crime Stoppers hot line at 205-254-7777 or **SUBMIT AN ONLINE TIP** with information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for felony offenses.

Callers with information about unsolved cases are eligible for reward money from Birmingham Regional Crime Stoppers.

No calls to the program are traced or recorded. In more than 20 years of operation in central Alabama, NOT ONCE has the identity of a tipster been compromised. Those leaving tips earn reward money up to \$2000, and NEVER have to reveal their names in order to cash in.

*Crime Stoppers is a partnership between local law enforcement, the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce and ABC 33/40. Our goal is to clear unsolved cases and make Central Alabama a safer place to live and work.