

## Ministry of the Attorney General Victim Witness Assistance Program

*“Our mandate is to provide information, assistance and support to victims and witnesses of crimes throughout the criminal court process in order to increase their understanding of, and participation in, the criminal court process.”*

<b>Address:</b>	51 Zina Street Orangeville, ON L9W 1E5
<b>Area served:</b>	County of Dufferin and Town of Caledon
<b>Accessibility:</b>	Walk-in service provided. Wheelchair accessible.
<b>Hours:</b>	Business hours: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm M-F
<b>Telephone:</b>	(519) 941-7132 and toll-free 1-888-600-3769

### Services

The Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) will provide the following:

1. Voluntary and free service to victims/witnesses of domestic violence, after criminal charges have been laid.
2. Services include:
  - Information about the court process and the criminal justice system (CJS).
  - Specific case information, court updates and copies of court documents.
  - Court preparation.
  - Emotional support, including crisis intervention, advocacy and debriefing.
  - Needs assessment and referrals to community agencies.
  - Information about Victim Impact Statements, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB), Priority Assessment Letters, etc.
  - Referral to the Victim Support Line.

### VWAP will provide the following accountability measures:

As a program of the Ministry of the Attorney General, VWAP works closely with the Crown Attorney and acts as liaison between the prosecution process and victim. The Victim Witness Assistance Program:

1. Advises victims of their rights according to the Victims Bill of Rights, including the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and advocates for their rights.
2. Assists victims to increase their knowledge of the criminal justice system in general and the specific progress of their case in the system.

3. Advocates for victims within the criminal justice process.
4. Refers to appropriate resources in the community if ongoing counselling or other services are required.

### Confidentiality

1. VWAP informs the victim of their confidentiality policies and disclosure obligations.
2. VWAP does not discuss evidence with victim/witnesses.
3. VWAP requires, in accordance with Section 72.3 of the Child and Family Services Act, that all Staff, volunteers and students (the latter two in consultation with their Supervisor), directly report any child in need of protection to the Children's Aid Society in the area in which the child normally resides.
4. Upon receipt of a Victim Impact Statement, VWAP forwards it to the Crown for sentencing purposes.

### Complaints Resolution

Concerns regarding the quality or nature of service can be directed to the Manager of VWAP. The Manager is accountable to the Regional Manager of Central West Region, Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, Ministry of the Attorney General.

## **Responsibilities Re: DART Agencies**

VWAP has the responsibility to:

- Explain to the victim VWAP's role, disclosure obligations and confidentiality policy.
  - Provide information and referrals regarding safety planning and access to community services.
  - Communicate a victim/witness's concerns and input to the Crown, as necessary and as requested, throughout the process.
  - Arrange a tour of the courtroom.
  - Assist the victim through the criminal court process.
  - Inform the victim of court dates and their purpose.
  - Provide copies of public court documents such as bail or probation orders.
  - Provide information and support to prepare the victim for testifying.
  - Work closely with the Crown to review eligibility and referral into the Early Intervention Program in the Domestic Violence Court.
1. Advocate with the Crown Attorney on a case-by-case basis for an early Crown assignment where there are child victim/witnesses or significant safety risks to the victim.

2. Facilitate contact between the victim, Police and Crown to prepare for court.
3. Convey to the Crown the victim's safety concerns and any requirements for testifying.
4. Advise victims of their rights to legal counsel in relation to a request for third party records. Can also provide a listing of appropriate legal representatives.
5. Facilitate a Crown meeting prior to the trial.
6. Debrief with the victim upon request.
7. At the request of the Crown or the victim, arrange for the victim to meet with the Crown after completion of the case.
8. Attempt to notify the victim of the outcome of the case and provide copies of pertinent documents at her request.
9. Provide information about the Victim Impact Statement and assistance to complete it, if requested.
10. Provide information to the victim about CICB.
11. Provide information on the Provincial and National Parole Boards.
12. Advise the victim of the Victim Support Line.
13. If made aware of an appeal, advise the victim, explain the process and facilitate a referral to the Court of Appeals VWAP Office.

**We are committed to collaboration within the  
Domestic Assault Review Team.**