

Crime Response Program Summary

Crime Response Program (CRP) within the Victim Witness Unit in the Dane County District Attorney's Office was established in 1992 to provide trauma services to crime victims in major cases and primarily during the criminal jury trial process. By 1997, CRP began expanding their services to all criminal cases and offering support as early as at the point of victimization. Now, CRP is the only fully staffed 24/7/365 crisis response team in the state of Wisconsin. CRP consists of daytime staff during normal business hours, 24/7 on call staff during weekends, holidays and after hours, as well as clinical mental health providers available to offer trauma-based crisis counseling on a fee for service basis.

Through partnership and collaboration with local law enforcement and community agencies, CRP provides on-scene crisis intervention services. These services often include providing emergency housing for victims who remain in danger or whose homes are crime scenes. CRP can assist with relocation, costs associated with securing the crime scene which rendered their home unsafe, or hotel stays until safety in the home can be restored. Scout (home security) alarms, security cameras and panic buttons can be supplied by CRP and provided by Law Enforcement to offer victims a measure of safety and security – both in their home and on their person. In the process of equipping victims, law enforcement collects critical victim and officer safety information to provide to 911 communications. Additionally, CRP often assists with repairs to vehicles damaged in instances of direct and indirect victimization. Like housing security, these vehicle damages are pivotal in restoring immediate safety and reliable transportation which are fundamental to the functioning of families. In conjunction with safety planning, CRP can provide gift cards to address essentials for daily life such as food, clothing, and gas.

Crime Response partners and collaborates with a host of community partners. In no instance is the collaboration more important than in cases of Spanish speaking victims including recent immigrants. Fear and distrust of the criminal justice system is heightened due to barriers of language, culture, and immigration status. The resource needs of these individuals and families requires a multi system cooperation. Incidents suggesting concern for both labor and sex trafficking in the Spanish speaking community have increased in the past year. Spanish speaking walk-ins are frequent. Being received by someone who can communicate in your language goes a long way to enhancing trust in the system.

All these services are afforded to victims of crime in Dane County regardless of if the case is referred to the District Attorney Office for charges. If charges are referred to the District Attorney's Office, CRP is exclusively responsible for the in and out of custody intake process. Due to the changes brought about by the passage of the WI crime victims constitutional amendment commonly referred to

as Marsy's Law, CRP provides information to victims regarding constitutional and statutory victim rights and the criminal justice system procedures; confer about charging decision and bail recommendations as well as accompany victims to initial appearance court. Once the case has been formally charged, the case will move on to a Victim Witness Case Manager in the Victim Witness Unit who will assist with any ongoing court-based services as the case progresses.

CRP has taken on a pivotal role in reducing unnecessary jail stays for individuals who engage in criminal behavior precipitated by acute and chronic mental health episodes. Finally, Crime Response has been instrumental in assembling a team of community crisis responders to assemble in response quickly and effectively to county incidences of mass violence. CRP works with DCEM and DCSO to regularly train and engage the team. We work side by side with the newly hired DCEM Crisis Team Coordinator to enhance our readiness and improve communication with all are partners. We are in regular communication with the Dane County Chiefs of Police Association to inform them of the availability of the team and the importance of a victim centered response and recovery.