



# Law Enforcement- Based Victim Specialist

Presented by Sgt. Russ Clark - Blaine Police Department



# FY 2019 Federal grant for Law-Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist

- ▶ Grant is offered by U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).
- ▶ 3 year grant
- ▶ Offering 80 grants nationwide
- ▶ Maximum grant is up to \$92,000 per year with a maximum award of up to \$276,000. (does not require a match of funds)
- ▶ Deadline for grant is July 25, 2019

# What is a Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist?



- ▶ A full-time City of Blaine employee dedicated to Blaine Police Department (non-sworn)
- ▶ Work under the supervision of the Special Operations Division of Blaine Police Department
- ▶ Better support crime victims through the criminal justice process
- ▶ Connect victims with community-based direct victim service programs to more quickly and effectively serve them
- ▶ Immediate needs are often referrals to victim assistance and compensation programs
- ▶ Inform victims of their rights as crime victims

# Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist vs. Anoka County Attorney's Office Victim/Witness



- ▶ Anoka County Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Specialists provide services and referrals to victims when their case is being prosecuted
- ▶ Blaine City Prosecutor's Office also has a Victim/Witness employee
- ▶ Help with criminal justice proceedings i.e. court preparation for victims and witnesses going to court
- ▶ Notification of court hearings and how the victim would like to participate in court and notify them of appearances and outcomes
- ▶ Ensure victim's interests are represented to the prosecutor and their rights are upheld

# Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist vs. Anoka County Attorney's Office Victim Specialist - Cont'd



- ▶ Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist deals with crime victims before a case is charged by a prosecutor or if there is no suspect
- ▶ Example- Robbery, assault, homicide, criminal vehicular homicide/operation victims where the suspect's identity is not known (cases may take days, weeks or months to solve or case could go unsolved)
- ▶ Example - Burglary and theft victims where there is no suspect
- ▶ These cases are not sent to the Anoka County Attorney's Office because there is no suspect, therefore their Victim/Witness Specialists are not involved

# Part I and Part II crime statistics for 2018



- ▶ In 2018 Blaine Police Department had 1,786 Part I crimes reported (Robbery, rape, assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft etc.) and 2,264 Part II crimes reported (Stolen property, forgery, embezzlement, prostitution, fraud etc.)
- ▶ Total Part I and Part II crimes reported in 2018 is 4,050
- ▶ Of the 4,050 Part I and Part II crimes reported, 1,571 were cleared by arrest/charged
- ▶ These crime reports are initially handled by Patrol Officers and they have initial contact with victims
- ▶ In many cases the Patrol Officer's initial contact with a victim is the only contact with Police for cases where there is no suspect information, no evidence and the case is not assigned to a detective

# Detective Statistics



- ▶ In 2018 Blaine Police Department Special Operations Division were assigned 1,019 cases
- ▶ Of the 1,019 cases assigned to a detective, 599 were cleared by arrest/charged
- ▶ Cases assigned often have detectives follow up with victims if there is or is not a suspect

# Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist



- ▶ There is a large gap between crimes reported and suspects charged.
- ▶ These are the victims the Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist will be able to assist
- ▶ Victim Specialist can follow up with victims of general crimes where their only contact with police is the initial report taken by Patrol Officers
- ▶ Detectives have to prioritize their case load (suspect needed to be charged in-custody and time constraints, person crimes vs. property crimes)
- ▶ Cases that have a lower priority, Victim Specialist can make initial contact with victim and assist detectives



# How can this position be utilized in Blaine?



- ▶ Ensure all victims of crimes are treated with fairness and respect
- ▶ Victims are notified of their rights and provided updates on their cases
- ▶ Give information and referrals they need to address traumatic events
- ▶ Provide services and referrals in the immediate aftermath of a crime
- ▶ These services can lead to valuable partnerships with community-based programs to serve the needs of crime victims and connect them to vital resources earlier and soon after a crime is reported

# How can this position be utilized in Blaine? Cont'd



- ▶ Victim Specialist will work with under served populations such as homeless, vulnerable adults and child crime victims
- ▶ Some victims may be hesitant to follow through with criminal charges out of fear, retaliation, past dealings with law enforcement, deportation etc.
- ▶ This position can work as a good conduit between victims and Police Officers in these situations

# Wages



- ▶ Anoka County Attorney's Office Victim/Witness - \$25.18/hour after 6 months
- ▶ Wright County Sheriff's Office Victim Assistance - \$24.22 - \$33.91/ hour
- ▶ Shakopee Police Department Victim & Community Services - \$26.69 - \$33.35/hour
- ▶ \$50,000-70,000/ year
- ▶ Start up costs would include a laptop, cell phone, office supplies, training etc. These start up costs would be requested in the grant
- ▶ Most of Victim Specialist job is in the office, but they would have access to a shared department vehicle
- ▶ Have an office in Blaine Police Department in Special Operations area

# Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist



- ▶ Looking for City Council support to apply for this Federal grant
- ▶ To support the Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist beyond the three year grant
- ▶ Questions?