

## **Creating a Victim Impact Statement**

The impact of crime is different for every victim. As a victim, you have the right to be heard. Your right to be heard is very important and deserves serious consideration. Typically, victims address the court prior to sentencing. You will be notified of other times in the process in which you may address the court. Not everyone is comfortable speaking in front of people about something personal, especially in front of the defendant. Travel, work, and time constraints may also make it difficult for you to come and make a statement to the court. You have the option of writing a Victim Impact Statement or letter. In most circumstances, this statement or letter will be provided to counsel for the defendant and will become part of the permanent record. While we cannot write the letter for you, we can assist and help answer questions

### **Questions to Consider**

- Has the crime affected your ability to work or to do other normal daily activities?
- Has the crime impacted your future, your relationships, your family, school or work performance?
- Are you or your loved ones experiencing symptoms of emotional stress? Nightmares? Are you under medical or professional care? If so, what kind of treatment and for how long?

### **Tips for Addressing the Court**

- Prepare what you want to say in advance. Remember you are addressing the Judge, not the defendant.
- A brief statement about your financial loss is helpful.
- Inform the courts of any concerns you may have about your safety.
- Bring a friend or family member for support.

## **Services**

The Victim Witness Assistance Program provides the following services to victims and witnesses to crime:

**INFORMATION** about the status of your court case.

**NOTIFICATION** of any court proceedings.

**EXPLANATION** of the criminal justice system.

**ORIENTATION** to the courtroom setting.

**ACCOMPANIMENT** to and from the courtroom.

**MORAL SUPPORT** in the courtroom.

**ADVOCACY** with any problems you may have as a result of the crime itself or court appearances.

**REFERRAL** to social service agencies, counselors, and others who can assist you.

**EMPLOYER INTERVENTION** to explain time missed from work due to required court appearances.

**PRIVATE WAITING AREA** prior to your court appearance.

**ASSISTANCE** in completing your Victim Impact Statement.

**PAROLE NOTIFICATION** so you can know when an inmate is expected to be released from prison if applicable.

This project is supported by a Federal VOCA Grant awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs and administered by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

## **Crime Victims' Compensation Program**

The Georgia Crime Victims' Compensation Program can assist victims of violent crime with crime related expenses. Assistance is available in the following categories:

- Medical bills and counseling expenses.
- Lost wages, loss of support.
- Funeral Expenses and crime scene clean up.

To review eligibility requirements and request an application, please contact 770-479-1488 and ask to speak with someone in the Victim Witness Assistance Program or visit—

<http://cjcc.georgia.gov/victims-compensation>

### **Cherokee County Area Resources**

Anna Crawford Children's Center 678-504-6388

Cherokee Family Violence Center 770-479-1804

YWCA of Northwest Georgia 770-427-2902

Department of Family & Children Services

770-720-3610

Health Department 770-345-7371

United Way Helpline 211

### **24 Hours Crisis Numbers**

Family Violence Hotline and

Emergency Shelter 770-479-1703

Sexual Assault Hotline 770-427-3390

MADD 888-833-6033

Suicide and Crisis Counseling 800-784-2433

## Office of the District Attorney Juvenile Court Division Cherokee County, Georgia



A guide for victims and witnesses of crime from your District Attorney—

# SHANNON WALLACE



90 North Street Suite 390 Canton, GA 30114

770-479-1488, office • 770-479-3105, fax



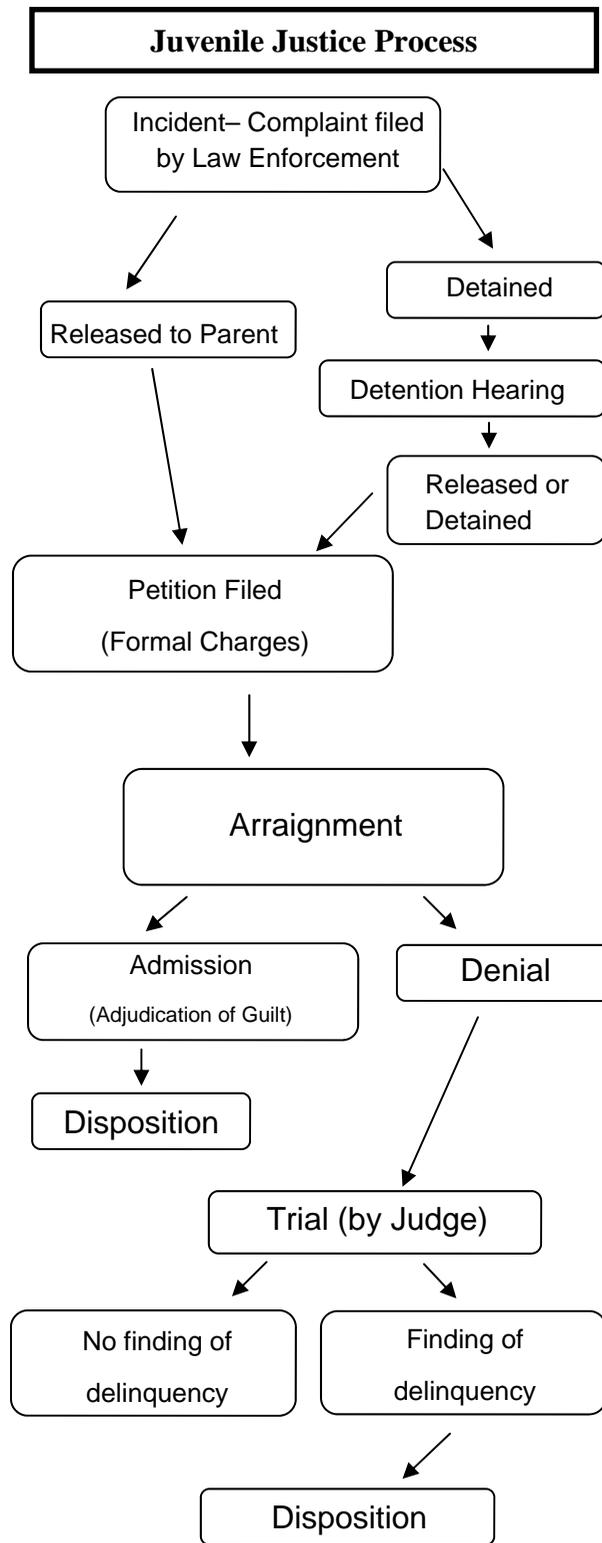
No one expects to be a victim of or a witness to crime, but it does happen. Every year many people are victimized by violent crimes. If you or someone you know is affected by crime, you may feel shocked, anger, disbelief, or shame, and may also experience feelings of helplessness or confusion.

The Victim Witness Assistance Program was established by the Office of the District Attorney to offer crime victims and witnesses support during the aftermath of a crime and guidance through the criminal justice system.

Your knowledge of a crime as a victim or witness is very important to the criminal justice system. No crime can be solved without the help of victims and witnesses. By your willingness to get involved, you are working with other citizens, members of law enforcement, and the courts to reduce crime and ensure the safety of the entire community.

Most importantly, your cooperation and assistance could prevent others from being victimized. We look forward to working with you to ensure justice is served.

**SHANNON WALLACE**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



**General Juvenile Court Terms:**

**Juvenile Complaint-** Taken by a law enforcement officer or a victim. The complaint is the criminal charge.

**Intake-** Law Enforcement initiates a complaint and forwards the complaint to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). DJJ then conducts a preliminary investigation and looks into the child's background. DJJ can determine if the complaint can be handled within their department or if charges need to go to the DA's Office for a petition to be filed.

**Petition-** A petition is filed in Juvenile Court. The petition sets forth the charges against the juvenile. There are time limitations for a petition to be filed, depending on whether the juvenile is detained or released.

**Detention Hearing-** A judge determines if the child should remain in custody or if the child can be released from custody with release conditions.

**Arraignment-** At arraignment, the charges against the juvenile are read aloud in court and the juvenile admits or denies the alleged offenses.

**Adjudication Hearing-** A hearing where a child either makes an admission of delinquency or the judge conducts a trial and determines if sufficient evidence exists to find the child delinquent

**Disposition Hearing:** Once a juvenile is adjudicated, a separate hearing is set to determine the type of treatment, rehabilitation, or supervision that is needed for the juvenile. Non-resident children are transferred to their home county for disposition after a finding of delinquency.

**Informal Adjustment-** A program that typically places the child under supervision of DJJ for a short period (three months) during which the child must satisfy special conditions. Upon successful completion, the charges are dismissed. The judge has discretion to extend the supervision for an additional three months as needed. The judge has discretion to adjudicate and place the child under probation if there are any violations during the informal adjustment period.

**Short-Term Treatment Program (STP)** – A program where the judge may, in addition to any other treatment or rehabilitation, order a child to serve up to 30 days in a youth development center.

**Crime Victims' Bill of Rights**

Victims of crime in Georgia have rights. Below are some of the rights you have as a crime victim. The entire listing can be located in O.C.G.A. 17-17-1 through 17-17-16 and in the Georgia Juvenile Practice and Procedure Section 9A:46-9A:52.

- Notification of legal procedures and of victims rights.
- Express opinion on disposition of accused's case.
- Have a separate victim's waiting area.
- Notice of the availability of victim compensation and community based victim service programs.
- Designate a family member to act in place of a physically disabled adult.

It is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to inform the Office of the District Attorney of any changes in your contact information. Please contact 770-479-1488 to provide updates.