

Berkshire District Attorney's Office

Victim Impact Statement

What is a Victim Impact Statement?

A victim impact statement (VIS) is a written or oral statement that is presented to the court at the sentencing of the defendant. Victim impact statements were created so the Judge has an opportunity to hear how this crime has affected you and the ones you love emotionally, physically and/or financially. This also gives you the opportunity to express to the Judge your views regarding the defendant's sentence.

How do I write a Victim Impact Statement?

As you prepare to write your VIS the questions below may help guide you through it. Writing about your feelings can be very painful, so be gentle with yourself and take as many breaks as you need throughout this process. If you are feeling overwhelmed and would like to speak to someone, please give us a call 413.443.5951 and we will help you through it.

- How did the crime affect you and your family?
- What was the emotional impact of the crime on you and your family?
- What was the financial impact on you and your family?
- Do you have any recommendations to the court about disposition (sentencing) of this case?

The above guidelines do not cover the totality of the impact of crime but may be used as a starting point. VIS are unique to you, and everyone has their own ways of expressing how crime has affected them. Please remember to pace yourself, and don't feel like you have to have it "perfect". If you would like help writing your VIS, please give our office a call and ask to speak with an advocate.

Your VIS should be limited to two pages, you can either use the lines that are provided below to write your statement, or you can type it out. Please make sure you date and sign your completed statement. There are two ways you can get your VIS back to us:

Mail:

Berkshire District Attorney's Office
7 North Street Floor #1, Pittsfield, MA 01201

E-mail:

Provided on your letter

A series of horizontal lines for writing.

Print: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____