



Marian T. Ryan  
Middlesex District Attorney

The Middlesex Victim Witness Services Bureau has advocates assigned to the courts and specialty units listed below. If you need assistance or have questions, please call the office where your case is assigned.

Ayer	(781) 897-8750
Cambridge	(781) 897-8550
Concord	(781) 897-8775
Framingham*	(781) 897-8800
Lowell	(781) 897-8900
Malden	(781) 897-8675
Marlborough	(781) 897-6775
Newton	(781) 897-8625
Somerville	(781) 897-8575
Waltham	(781) 897-8650
Woburn	(781) 897-8725
Superior Court	(781) 897-8490
Post-Conviction	(781) 897-8532
Family Protection**	(781) 897-8400

\*Natick District Court is located within Framingham District Court.

\*\* The Family Protection Bureau includes the Child Protection Unit and the Elder and Disabled Protection Unit.



**As a victim or witness of a crime,  
you have the right**

**To Be Informed, To Be Present,  
To Be Heard**

**A Guide for Victims and Witnesses  
in Middlesex County**



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## THE MIDDLESEX DISTRICT COURTS

Middlesex County has twelve District Courts. A case begins in the District Court when the Clerk Magistrate issues a criminal complaint in response to an application for a complaint filed by a police officer or private citizen, or when a police officer makes an arrest. The defendant may choose to have the case heard either by a judge or a jury of six people.

## GRAND JURY

Before a case can enter the Superior Court, the Grand Jury must hear evidence of the crime and vote to issue an indictment against the defendant. The Grand Jury is made up of twenty-three citizens, randomly selected to serve jury duty.

## THE MIDDLESEX SUPERIOR COURT

Middlesex County has two Superior Courts located in Lowell and Woburn. The Superior Court usually handles major felony cases. A case begins in the Superior Court after the Grand Jury has returned an indictment. If the case goes to trial, the defendant may choose to have the case heard either by a judge or a jury of twelve people.

## JUVENILE COURTS

If a person under the age of 18 is charged with a crime, he or she is a juvenile and is prosecuted in the Juvenile Court.

## APPELLATE COURTS

A defendant may appeal to the Massachusetts Appeals Court for review of the procedures or interpretations of law by a trial judge. Some cases are appealed directly to the Supreme Judicial Court. These appeals are not new trials. No witnesses testify and no new evidence is presented. Only issues of law are reviewed at this level.

**“Never be afraid to raise your voice for  
honesty and truth ...”**

*William Faulkner, a 20th Century Nobel prize  
winning novelist and short-story writer.*



The Middlesex District Attorney's Office is charged with protecting and serving the people who work, live and raise their families in Middlesex County. We are committed to creating proactive and innovative solutions that seek to prevent crime or address incidents before they reach the courtroom, while staying true to our core mission of prosecuting serious cases and fighting for victims. Achieving this goal requires that we are providing resources to victims that recognize the unique challenges faced by those impacted by crime.

Our Victim Witness Advocates are an integral part of our prosecution team, trained to guide victims and survivors through the criminal justice system and ensure that they are aware of their rights. Our advocates partner with victims and witnesses to help them understand and access what is often a complicated, lengthy and sometimes frustrating process.

In this, as is so much of our work, collaboration helps to create a safer and healthier Middlesex County.

*Marian T. Ryan*

## THE MIDDLESEX VICTIM WITNESS SERVICES BUREAU

We understand that this may be your first experience with the criminal justice system. The Middlesex District Attorney's Victim Witness Services Bureau is available to help you every step of the way, explaining your rights under Massachusetts General Laws c. 258B, the Victim Bill of Rights. Mass. G.L. c. 258B ensures that a victim or witness of crime have the right to: (1) be informed, (2) be present and (3) be heard.

Some of your rights as a crime victim are listed below. Your Victim Witness Advocate can provide you with a complete copy of your rights under Mass. G.L. c. 258B.

- You have the right to an explanation about the court system, what your role is in the process and what will be expected of you, as a victim or witness of crime.
- You and your family members have the right to be present at all court proceedings unless you are required to testify and the judge determines that your testimony may be influenced by your presence.
- You have the right to receive specific information about the criminal case involving you. You have the right to be updated on significant developments in the case. You have the right to be notified in a timely manner of any changes in schedule of the court proceedings.
- You have the right to confer with the prosecutor before the start of the case,

before a case is dismissed and before a sentence recommendation is made.

- You have the right to be informed of available assistance for social services, financial assistance and Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I.) certification to receive information about an offender.
- You have the right to request confidentiality for your personal information during the court proceedings. You have the right to certain protections by law enforcement from harm or threats of harm caused by your cooperation with the court process.
- You have the right to be provided with a safe and secure waiting area, which is separate from the defendants.
- You have the right to refuse or agree to participate in interviews with the defense team before trial, or to set reasonable conditions on the conduct of any such interview if you choose to be interviewed.
- If eligible, you have the right to apply for Victim Compensation for certain out-of-pocket expenses, such as medical, counseling or funeral costs, or lost wages incurred as a direct result of the crime.
- You have the right to request that the judge order the offender to pay restitution for your crime-related financial losses, and to receive a copy of the offender's schedule of restitution payments from the offender's supervising probation officer.

- If applicable, you have the right to consult a private attorney to initiate a civil lawsuit on your own for damages resulting from the crime.
- Upon request, you have the right to advance notification from the institution whenever the offender receives a temporary, provisional or final release from custody.
- You have the right to present a Victim Impact Statement to the court at sentencing about the physical, emotional and financial effects of the crime on you and about your opinion regarding the sentence to be imposed.

Our victim witness advocates are highly trained professionals who are committed to ensuring that these rights are protected.

## PROVIDING A VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

In all cases where there is a guilty finding, the Assistant District Attorney and Advocate will consider the victim's views and the impact of the crime in the sentence recommendation. An impact statement memorializes the physical, emotional and financial impact of the crime and the victim's input on sentencing. You will be allowed to present it to the Court prior to sentencing. Your statement may be presented verbally or in writing, whichever is more comfortable for you.