

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT (CIS)

Your rights

Community members impacted by the crime have the *right* to submit a written impact statement at the sentencing hearing as authorized by Minn. Stat. § 611A.038.

What is a Community Impact Statement (CIS)?

A Community Impact Statement provides the opportunity for residents to speak out on individuals or businesses whose activities affected their sense of safety and well-being in their neighborhood. These are the information that cannot be found in police reports.

Community Impact Statement describes to the court (in your own words) that tells exactly how your life has been affected and changed as a result of a crime or crime pattern. It can describe any financial, physical, and important emotional effects (or all three) that a crime or crime pattern has had on you and your community where the offense(s) occurred.

This is your opportunity to become more involved and to have a voice in the criminal justice system.

Who can complete a Community Impact Statement?

1. Anyone who is impacted by the individual(s) can complete the Community Impact Statement, and the statement can be filled out for past or present cases.
2. It can either be a compilation of experiences and impacts of a number of people, signed by all, or individual statements prepared by several people.
3. If you are writing as a group, state who you are, a neighborhood association, a block of residents, residents sharing a corner, etc.

What information may be included in a Community Impact Statement (CIS)?

1. Full name of offender and address of offender, if known.
2. Court File and/or police report number, if known.
3. Date that the Impact Statement is being written
4. Name, address and telephone number of person(s) writing the CIS.
5. Brief summary of events/criminal activity that lead to the CIS.
6. Describe how this illegal activity has affected your normal way of living. The more specific you can be, the more helpful it is for the judge. Give specific examples, e.g., being constantly awakened at night by loud arguments, music, and horn honking; fearing to have the children in the household be out at night; or having neighbors or friends decline from visiting you in your home.)
7. It is okay to list multiple areas of impact but keep your statement concise and direct.
8. Statements should include **all** adverse social or economic effects the offense(s) has had on persons who reside in the neighborhood where the offense(s) was committed.

- a. Your feelings, thoughts, and comments about how this crime has affected you and your family
 - b. The ways in which your life has changed as a result.
 - c. The effect this crime has had on you emotionally, physically and financially, if appropriate.
 - d. The challenges or difficulties you face due to this crime.
9. You may tell a story (concisely) behind some **of your** statements. This serves two purposes:
First, it makes the victimization tangible for the judge.
Second, it allows the community to speak for individuals without requiring that the individual be present.
10. Your opinion regarding the plea agreement and/or consequences that you would like the judge to consider.
- a. Tell the judge what you need to return to your status before the crimes) were committed.
 - b. The goal is to give the judge information s/he can use when sentencing or ordering conditions of probation for the defendant. Be creative and try to avoid overly retributive suggestions. The judge will most likely respond to a suggestion that restores both the victim and the offender. Community service, restitution, no contact/trespass orders and chemical dependency evaluation are all tools accessible to the court. Let the judge know if any of these results would help restore you to your way of life before the crime was committed.

How is a Community Impact Statement provided to the court?

- Upon completion, please sign and mail or deliver this information to your district crime prevention coordinator and/or your community prosecutor c/o St. Paul City Attorney's Office, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd., Ste 500, St. Paul, MN 55102 (for misdemeanor/gross misdemeanor offenses) and to Ramsey County Attorney's Office, 15 West Kellogg Blvd., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55102 (for felony offenses and juvenile offender).
- A community member also has the right to have the letter read to the court by the prosecutor at the sentencing hearing.
- After a guilty plea or guilty verdict, the judge will schedule a sentencing hearing. A probation officer will be assigned to do a pre-sentence investigation report to the judge for the sentencing hearing. The probation officer's job is to gather information from the offender and other sources, including members of the community, and make a final sentencing recommendation to the judge.
- **Anonymous impact statements are inadmissible in court.** However, if a community member asks and the court agrees, their name can be protected as confidential information. This means that the defendant will not be given the name or names of the community members who submitted the Community Impact Statement.

SAMPLE FORMAT

Community Impact Statement

Date: _____

Offender's Name (if known): _____

Court File (if known): _____

Police Report Number (if known): _____

Please describe the individual's actions and how it affected you or your business:

Sample

Your Name: _____

Your Contact Phone Number: _____

Your Address: _____

Community Impact Statements

A Community Impact Statement is a description of how a crime or series of crimes have affected you and your community. This statement is submitted to the Court by prosecutors to provide information that can assist the Court in making sentencing decisions about offenders convicted of the crime(s). While the U.S. Attorney's Office can't guarantee what weight, if any, the court will give a community impact statement, information from the community has been helpful in the past in focusing the court on specific ways specific crimes impact particular neighborhoods. To make a community impact statement, you may use this form that will be given to the court at sentencing. You are encouraged to submit a single community impact statement on behalf of the entire community – speaking with one voice vastly increases the likelihood that your concerns will be heard loud and clear at sentencing. Victim Advocates are available at the U.S. Attorney's Office to assist in preparing your community impact statement and can be reached at (202) 514-7130. Likewise, Community Prosecutors and Community Outreach Specialists from the U.S. Attorney's Office are assigned to each police district and can work with you to identify appropriate cases in which to submit a community impact statement. Factors to consider in completing your statement:

- (1) How has this crime affected you and your community?
- (2) Has it had a negative effect on your community's attitudes about itself? (For example, has the crime given rise in the community to feelings of anger, rage, vulnerability, fear, paranoia, hopelessness, frustration, or loss of trust and faith in society?)
- (3) What is the social or economic impact of this crime on your neighborhood? (For example, are children kept indoors more, is it more difficult to safely use parks, are businesses less likely to stay or come to your neighborhood, have you spent more money or other resources as a result of being a crime victim?)
- (4) What is needed to return your neighborhood to the conditions that existed prior to the crime being committed.
- (5) What do you think is an appropriate sentence for this offense?

In order to allow time for your community impact statement to be submitted and fully considered by the sentencing judge, please return the completed community impact statements at least *10 days* prior to the sentencing date to the USAODC Community Prosecution Office in your police district.

When submitting a Community Impact Statement, please provide the name, number, and address of a contact person, but do not put this information on the Community Impact Statement.

Victim Impact Statements

One of the very important tools that the US Attorney's Office uses at sentencing is the victim impact statement. The purpose of the victim impact statement is multifold. First, the statement is designed to allow the court to hear from the victim about how being a victim of a crime has impacted or changed his or her life. The court cannot know the personal changes that occur in the lives of victims, unless victims make impact statements. Just as the court values hearing from victims for the reasons stated above, the government also is very concerned to know what sentence victims view as appropriate for defendants. This does not mean that the government will adopt that recommendation in all instances. However, it does mean that prosecutors will use that information, along with several other factors (e.g., the defendant's criminal history, the nature of the crime) in fashioning an appropriate sentencing recommendation.