



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 10, 2009

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C.H. Huckelberry", is written over the printed name and title.

Re: Attached Letter and Fact Sheet from the County Attorney Regarding Funding Reductions to Victim Witness and 88-Crime by the City of Tucson

At present the Victim Witness Program budget of \$1.8 million is funded by a relatively small contribution from the City of Tucson (\$32,440); federal and state grants (totaling \$734,165); and General Fund support in the amount of \$1,030,238.

In addition, the 88-Crime operating budget of \$235,003 is funded entirely by the General Fund support of the County. Any City of Tucson contribution amounts are deposited to an outside bank account used to fund rewards. Monies for rewards arise from fund raising efforts.

As can be seen, both of these non-mandated programs are funded significantly by the County General Fund through appropriations made to the County Attorney by the Board. While the contributions from the City of Tucson are not significant in terms of total program funding, any reductions by the City will not be offset by any corresponding increase in County appropriated general funds. Hence, the programs will have to be appropriately reduced proportionate to the funding lost.

CHH/jj

Attachment

c: The Honorable Barbara LaWall, Pima County Attorney
Amelia Cramer, Chief Deputy County Attorney
Thomas House, Budget Manager, Finance and Risk Management
David Smutzer, Legal Administrator, County Attorney's Office



Barbara LaWall
Pima County Attorney

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May 27, 2009

Via Hand Delivery

Bob Walkup, Mayor
City of Tucson Council Members
255 West Alameda Street
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Dear Mayor and Council:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding possible cuts to the City of Tucson's funding for two of my office's programs: the *Victim Witness Program* and *88-CRIME*. These programs have been mis-categorized by being lumped together with community-based, non-governmental agencies. These programs are governmental agencies providing critical and necessary criminal justice services to the residents of our community. These services will suffer if the City reduces its current funding levels.

Pima County is one of the few jurisdictions in Arizona that has centralized its crisis intervention services and crime-stopper hotlines. Both Victim Witness and 88-CRIME are governmental agencies that serve all areas of Pima County, eliminating the need for each jurisdiction to provide these services. In other counties these programs are local governmental, and decentralized, resulting in higher administrative and overhead costs to the municipal governments. For example, in Maricopa County, the following cities each run their own independent victim crisis response programs through their police or fire departments: Chandler, Glendale, Mesa, Phoenix, Peoria, and Scottsdale.

It is in the best interests of both the City of Tucson and Pima County to continue to provide these services jointly. The majority of the costs are borne by the County, with the City providing limited, but important, financial support for each program. I urge you to maintain the City's prior levels of inter-governmental funding support for both Victim Witness (\$32,450) and 88-CRIME (\$16,580).

The Victim Witness Program provides both on-scene crisis intervention services as well as court advocacy to crime victims. Approximately 65% of the victims served are Tucson city residents. The City's annual contribution of \$32,450 represents less than 2% of Victim Witness' annual budget of \$1.8 million. Victim Witness makes efficient use of outside resources. Nearly 40% of its budget comes from federal and state grants, and the program's 120 active volunteers donate more than 12,000 hours of service annually, representing a cost savings of more than \$225,000 each year.

Bob Walkup, Mayor
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The 88-CRIME program enhances the safety of our community not only by helping to solve crimes, but also by helping to prevent crimes as people anonymously report concerns and threats. The 88-CRIME Program received more than 2300 tips in 2008, resulting in 130 arrests and the recovery of more than \$1.4 million in cash, property, and goods. Approximately 35% of all calls received by 88-CRIME were referred to the Tucson Police Department for investigation. The 88-CRIME Program also makes efficient use of outside resources; all of the reward monies come through the fundraising efforts of 88-CRIME's nonprofit board.

The benefits that these programs provide to Tucson are a great return on the city's investment. I hope we can continue to count on your support.

Best regards,



Barbara LaWall
Pima County Attorney

cc: Kent Burbank, Director, Victim Witness Program
Susie Slagle Dupnik, Director, 88-CRIME

Services Provided to the City of Tucson by the Pima County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Program

Summary

The Pima County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Program provides critical services to victims of crime throughout Pima County. *Approximately 65% of the victims we serve are Tucson city residents.* This means that, on average, Victim Witness provides advocacy services to roughly 1,800 city residents each year. In exchange for these services to Tucson city residents, the City of Tucson has historically provided Pima County with funds to help offset a small fraction of these costs. *The City's annual contribution of approximately \$32,400 represents less than 2% of the Victim Witness Program's \$1.8 million annual budget.*

The Victim Witness Program assists Tucson city residents in two ways: first, at the scene of the crime by providing crisis intervention services at the request of law enforcement agencies like the Tucson Police Department, which is the largest referral source for our services; second, Victim Witness provides court advocacy for city residents in all felony cases being tried in Superior Court. Both services are critical components of the criminal justice system's response to victims of crime that are vital to not only the well-being of our residents, but also the efficient functioning of the criminal justice system from arrest through prosecution. Victim Witness has established a trusted relationship with law enforcement, built upon Victim Witness's understanding of the criminal justice system and the best ways to support victims without interfering with the investigation or prosecution of the case. Victim Witness' services augment and support the work of other nonprofit victim service agencies.

On-Scene Crisis Intervention Services. Victim Witness is the only program in the City of Tucson and Pima County that provides on-scene crisis intervention services to victims of crime. Victim Witness provides on-scene crisis intervention services to roughly 1,500 victims of more than 1,200 crimes each year, of which *approximately 65% are Tucson city residents (about 975 city victims) referred for support by the Tucson Police Department (TPD).*¹ Reduced funding for Victim Witness may mean that fewer victims receive services they need, resulting in greater possibility of long-term trauma effects. This, in turn, would mean higher costs to society including medical expenses, counseling expenses, and loss of worker productivity.

Victim Witness is the only agency in Tucson providing on-scene crisis intervention services to victims of all types of crime, including domestic violence, assault, robbery, home invasion, DUI, and homicide. Crisis Advocates typically respond to about 100 calls each month, and by working with multiple victims at each call, usually assist more than 125 people a month, *the majority of whom are Tucson City Residents.*

Victim Witness Advocates are typically dispatched by law enforcement officers (e.g., Tucson Police Department) to work with victims. Victim Witness fulfills an important component of the services that law enforcement agencies must offer to the citizens of Pima County, including their statutory obligation to inform victims of their rights. Additionally, Victim Witness relieves some of the stress and demands on officers by providing other invaluable services, such as crisis intervention and community referrals. Without advocates, officers would have to divert their time and energy away from their other duties to try to meet these victim needs. In many cases,

officers would have nowhere else to refer certain victims. Research shows that crisis intervention services make a lasting difference in the lives and well-being of victims and can help ameliorate lasting, long-term effects of such trauma, thus reducing costs to society such as medical expenses, counseling costs, and loss of worker productivity.

Court Advocacy Services. Victim Witness is the only program in the City of Tucson and Pima County that provides complete court accompaniment for victims in a wide array of felony cases. Victim Witness provides court advocacy in approximately 750 felony cases involving more than 1,200 victims annually. Of all of the felony cases involving victims handled by the Pima County Attorney's Office, *approximately 65% involve crimes committed within the city of Tucson against city residents.* Thus, Victim Witness provides court advocacy to approximately 850 Tucson city residents each year.² Reduced funding for Victim Witness will negatively affect victim participation in prosecution, potentially resulting in greater difficulty in convicting criminals and thus, make our county less safe. Funding cuts will potentially create a barrier to victims' ability to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed victims' rights.

Victim Witness is the only program in the City of Tucson and Pima County that provides court advocacy for victims in a wide range of felony cases. The criminal justice system can be overwhelming and confusing for victims who have been traumatized and are experiencing a loss. These victims need an advocate to provide not only emotional support, but also critical information about the legal system and process in a layperson's terminology. This advocacy is vital to the successful prosecution of the case. Victims who are not included in the process are much less likely to be active participants in the prosecution, which, in many cases makes the difference between a conviction and an acquittal.

Victim Witness is the only program whose primary mission is to ensure that crime victims in Tucson and Pima County are afforded their rights under the Arizona state constitution and statutes. Victims navigating through the criminal justice system often have difficulty understanding and asserting their rights. Victim Advocates are the only people in the criminal justice system whose sole purpose and focus is on the victims and ensuring that their viewpoints are represented and their rights are respected. The reduction in victim advocacy would potentially undermine and erode the constitutional protections afforded to crime victims.

Victim Witness Efficiencies and Cost Saving Strategies. Victim Witness generates a dollar-for-dollar match to the City and County funds invested in the program by utilizing community volunteers to provide on-scene crisis intervention and courtroom advocacy services, and by securing grants that account for a large percentage of its operating budget. *The City's annual contribution of approximately \$32,400 represents less than 2% of Victim Witness' \$1.8 million annual budget.* Given that approximately 65% of our services are to Tucson city residents, the benefit to the City of Tucson is readily evident.

If Victim Witness did not provide these services, the City of Tucson would likely be compelled to provide them, as other municipalities do, by having paid advocates within either the Tucson Police Department or Tucson Fire Department. The costs of running a separate victim advocacy program would be substantial. By leveraging other resources, Victim Witness is able to provide the residents of Tucson and Pima County with outstanding services at a fraction of the cost.

Victim Witness saves the City and the County hundreds of thousands of dollars every year by securing grants to cover some of its operating budget and by using a large pool of volunteers to help provide services to victims.

There are few other local governmental programs that make such an effective use of external resources as does Victim Witness. Victim Witness receives more than \$750,000 in funds from grants and other state and federal government contracts. Thus, more than 40% of Victim Witness' entire cash operating budget of \$1.8 million comes from external sources. Victim Witness has more than 120 active volunteers who donate more than 12,000 hours of service annually to the community. These volunteers respond after-hours to crime scenes to provide crisis intervention services; they attend Initial Appearances with victims; and they help provide court assistance to victims. These volunteers reduce the need for paid staff, resulting in a substantial savings for taxpayers. These volunteers save our community nearly \$225,000 every year.

¹ Crisis response statistics were averaged using 2007 and 2008 data. Specifically: In 2008, Victim Witness was called out by law enforcement to assist at 1,194 crime scenes, many of which involved multiple victims (about 1,500 victims). Of these cases, 760 (64%) were calls from Tucson Police Department for assistance to approximately 950 Tucson city residents. In 2007, Victim Witness was called out by law enforcement to assist at 1,180 crimes scenes, many of which involved multiple victims (about 1,500 victims). Of these cases, 853 (72%) were calls from Tucson Police Department for assistance to Tucson city residents (1,065).

² Court advocacy statistics were average using 2007 and 2008 data. Specifically: In 2008, Victim Witness provided advocacy services to more than 1,537 people involved in 730 cases, of which approximately 63% were city residents (around 968 people). In 2007, Victim Witness provided advocacy services to more than 1,236 people involved in 763 cases, of which approximately 66% were city residents (around 816 people).