



## FORMAL VICTIM RIGHTS COMPLAINTS Frequently Asked Questions

**1. What is the difference between the CVRB and the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ)?**

The DOJ and CVRB are different state bodies but it's easy to confuse them. DOJ houses the *informal* complaint process through the Victim Resource Center ("VRC") which advocates for victims and helps them through the process. The CVRB is the state's *formal* victim rights enforcement body and cannot advocate for individuals. It is an objective fact-finding body made of five decision-makers appointed by different state authorities. The CVRB is independent from the DOJ and by law DOJ provides staff to assist the CVRB with operations. Therefore, you might interact with DOJ staff assigned to the CVRB. They are acting on behalf of the CVRB, not DOJ.

**2. Can I skip the informal complaint process and file a formal complaint instead?**

The CVRB cannot accept a complaint from someone who has not first completed the informal complaint process. If you aren't sure if you've done that, you can contact the VRC by emailing [ocvs@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:ocvs@doj.state.wi.us). Keep in mind, there are benefits to the informal process. The VRC has different goals and a broader scope and can advocate and get information for victims in ways the CVRB cannot. In fact, most complaints are resolved through the informal process.

**3. Why am I being asked by the CVRB to provide information I provided during the VRC informal complaint process?**

The CVRB doesn't have access to VRC records and is not aware of what you may have provided to the VRC. The two processes are completely different and kept separate to maintain the integrity of both. You should assume the CVRB needs a full explanation regardless of what you shared during the informal process.

**4. Will the CVRB collect additional information or let me know if I should send something I didn't include in my complaint or in my answer to a complaint?**

No, not initially. At the beginning of the formal complaint process, the CVRB is not allowed to investigate the complaint. Parties should provide full complaints and full answers to complaints to ensure the CVRB can consider their interests and positions. Later in the process, if the Board finds probable cause, it may ask for specific information during an investigation or evidentiary hearing.

**5. What can the CVRB do if they find a violation occurred?**

If a violation is found, the CVRB has authority to issue reprimands, seek equitable relief on behalf of a victim, refer complaints about a judge to the Judicial Commission or assess a forfeiture for intentional violations (by law any money collected goes into a school fund, not to the complainant). It can also issue reports and recommendations concerning rights. It cannot collect restitution or order monetary damages, force a charging decision, change the outcome of a case, suspend or fire public officials, investigate the crime from which the alleged violation arose, or order an agency to investigate an alleged crime.