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The Birmingham Police Department Launches the Victim Services Unit

The Birmingham Police Department (BPD) is excited to announce the launch of the BPD Victim Services Unit (VSU).

Background

In **Fall 2023**, BPD was awarded the Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services (LEV) grant funded by the International Chiefs of Police Association. The grant has provided **\$300,000** to BPD that will fund victim-based services.

VSU advocates will assist domestic violence and sexual assault victims along with family members of homicide victims by providing the following services:

- **Emotional support while dealing with the effects of trauma**
- **Liaison Services with detectives such as updates on a criminal case**
- **Referrals to community partners**
- **Assistance with obtaining protection from abuse orders**
- **Education on crime victims' rights**
- **Education on criminal justice system procedures**
- **Development of a safety plan**

Advocates

Currently, BPD has two advocates. Both joined VSU as veteran City of Birmingham employees.



Shanta Bolden is a graduate of Fairfield High School. She went on to obtain her Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice from Virginia College.

She joined the Birmingham 911 Communications Division in September 2003 as a Public Safety Dispatcher II. She was promoted to Public Safety III in 2011 becoming the youngest dispatcher to hold a supervisory position.

Throughout her years as a dispatcher, she has received numerous training certificates from local, state, federal, and international organizations.

Shanta loves cooking, baking, traveling, and has taken up crafting.

One of her favorite memories with the City of Birmingham is assisting Mrs. Yolanda Adams during the 2022 World Games held in Birmingham, Alabama.

Reason for joining VSU:

"I joined the Victim Services Unit because I have a passion for helping people and being a part of this unit will allow me to make a difference in someone's life. I am following the path God has chosen for me."



Sharlene Hall has served with the Birmingham Police Department for over 22 years.

She began her career as a Property Control Clerk from November 2001 until April 2004. In 2004, she was promoted to Data Entry Supervisor. In her leadership role, she has served with compassion, fairness, firmness, and consistency.

In 2016, she was promoted to Records Supervisor. In this capacity, she served the citizens of Birmingham, police officers, detectives, and military personnel, along with a host of other government agencies. The Records Division received numerous awards and is a staple for the Birmingham Police Department.

Sharlene's zeal for being a public servant coupled with her ongoing professional development training, including the prestigious FBI LEEDA Trilogy program, has made this position a great fit for her.

Her faith in God has brought her through some of the grief and personal challenges she has faced. She loves her children Joshua and Gabriele Hall; they keep her grounded. She loves reading in her spare time, traveling, enjoying food, and spending time with family. She also loves researching health topics to apply a more holistic approach to health and wellness.

Sharlene is committed to providing quality service to our citizens and building a strong relationship between the community and the Birmingham Police Department because "we are one."

Our advocates will attend training at The National Crime Victim Law Institute's Conference held in Portland, Oregon.

In addition to core practices and policies, victim services advocates must also receive discipline-specific training to stay current in the field and establish as well as maintain a consistent set of skills and knowledge.

We will provide updates soon on the Victim Services Unit intake process.