

## IF AN AGREEMENT IS NOT REACHED

Occasionally people are not able to agree on a satisfactory settlement in a meeting. If this happens, your case will be returned to the referring agency with an explanation of the efforts. There are several possible results.

VORP is usually an alternative to some other sanction or method of seeing that restitution is paid. If the agreement cannot be reached, the alternative sanction may be imposed. In some situations, the referring agency will decide a case should be prosecuted in court where a judge may order that restitution be paid, based in part on the victim's estimate of the damages. The victim may also choose to file a suit in small claims court.

**We realize that facing a victim may not be an easy thing for you to do, but it has been helpful to many victims and offenders in getting over an offense. VORP presents you with that opportunity and the opportunity to turn this offense into a growing experience.**

**Volunteer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please call the VORP staff if you have further questions or if a problem arises.**

### **Victim Offender Reconciliation Program**

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### **VICTIM OFFENDER RECONCILIATION PROGRAM**

**The Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP)** is a non-profit, community based program which seeks to address needs of victims and offenders that are not met by the traditional justice system.

VORP facilitates a meeting between you (the offender), your parents, and the victim to provide you with the opportunity to:

- **Take responsibility for your actions and involvement in the Offense.**
- **Work out a written agreement for the restitution that is due.**
- **Get over the offense by “Making it right” with the victim directly.**

Participation in VORP requires the consent of all parties. The meetings are organized and led by a neutral, trained community volunteer, who is present to facilitate communication, not make a decision or impose a settlement.

Your case has been referred to us by your probation officer who has determined that this case is of the type that can be facilitated well through the VORP process.

We realize that this may not be an easy thing to do, but we encourage you to participate, as many people involved in similar offenses have found the VORP process helpful in putting the offense behind them.

## WHO ARE WE?

VORP was first started in Kitchener, Ontario and later in Elkhart, Indiana by Mennonite Central Committee. Fresno VORP was begun by a local group of concerned citizens and now operates as a community based non-profit corporation dedicated to providing a constructive process for restoring both victims and offenders. Program policy is overseen by a Board of Directors representing a broad cross-section of the local community. Similar programs are now operating across the United States, Canada and Europe.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

VORP arranges and facilitates meetings between victims and offenders, assists in finding answers to problems arising from offense and in developing written restitution contracts. When restitution is paid over a period of time, VORP accepts those payment and forwards them to the victim.

**However, VORP does not do the following:**

- **Supervise the offenders. Supervision remains the responsibility of the probation department.**
- **Enforce restitution agreements. While we accept payments and forward them to victims, enforcement of restitution agreements remains with the court and probation department. VORP does follow your case and keeps probation informed of your progress. VORP is available to help out where we can if problems arise in paying restitution.**
- **Guarantee agreements or fulfillment of agreements. We will do our best on both parties' willingness to make it work.**

## PREPARING FOR A VORP MEETING

You have a choice of whether or not to participate in the VORP process. If you choose not to participate, we will return the case to the referring agency who will then decide what alternatives would be appropriate for the offender(s). Should you choose to participate, you can help make this a constructive process by doing the following:

- **Think about the offense, what happened, what has it meant to you, and how you feel about it now.**
- **Be prepared to tell the victim what happened, to share your feelings and answer their questions about the offense, and to listen to what the offense has meant to them.**
- **Be prepared to present a plan for payment if you will not be able to pay the entire amount at the meeting.**
- **Be sure that you know the time and place of the meeting. It is VERY IMPORTANT that everyone be at the meeting place at the agreed time. If you cannot attend, let the volunteer know as soon as possible.**
- **Contact the volunteer or our office if you have further questions or if any difficulties arise in fulfilling the restitution agreement.**

## IF AN AGREEMENT IS REACHED

When you agree to and sign a written restitution contract, probation will receive a copy for reference and approval. Once approved, fulfilling its terms becomes a condition of your probation.