



## FORT SILL LEGAL ASSISTANCE

### The Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) Program



#### **What is the Army SVC Program?**

The Army SVC Program provides a no-cost military attorney to victims of sexual assault who qualify for SVC services.

#### **What does a SVC do?**

A SVC is a licensed legal assistance attorney who can advise you on a range of legal and economic matters you may have as a victim of sexual assault. An SVC can be your legal guide, so you don't have to walk alone as you meet with investigators, prosecutors, and other people involved in the military justice process. An SVC's role is to zealously represent you. Based on your decisions, the SVC will represent your expressed interests even if it does not align with those of the government, or with those of the accused.

An SVC's primary duty is to you and no other person, organization, or entity.

#### **Who qualifies for SVC services?**

In general, if you are a victim of sexual assault, and fit into one of the following categories, you may qualify for SVC services through the Fort Sill Legal Assistance Office:

- Soldier (no matter whether the offender was a Soldier or not)
- Family Member of a Soldier (if you have a military ID)
- ROTC cadet on contract (if the offender was a Soldier or fellow cadet)
- Deployed or OCONUS DoD Civilian employee (if the offender was a Soldier)
- Foreign military personnel (if the offender was a Soldier)

If you are a Reserve or National Guard Soldier, you may qualify for services under your component's own SVC Program. However, if you are a Reservist or National Guard Soldier on active duty orders (Title 10 for Reservists, or Title 32 for National Guard) for more than 30 days, you may qualify for an Active Duty SVC. If you are an Army Family Member sexually assaulted by a member of another branch of the Armed Forces, you may qualify for SVC services through that other branch (e.g., Navy, Air Force). Other categories of individuals who are eligible for legal assistance may also qualify for SVC services.

#### **Will the things I say to a SVC be kept confidential?**

A SVC is an attorney and is bound by the strictest rules of confidentiality. Whatever you tell your SVC in confidence will be kept in confidence by the SVC, unless and until YOU decide that someone else should know. With limited exceptions, your SVC cannot share with anyone information you provide without your express permission.

#### **What if I did something illegal before, during, or after the sexual assault?**

Victims of sexual assault are people, too. This means that sometimes they mess up and do things that are unethical or illegal. This is called "collateral misconduct," which can take the form of underage drinking, drug use, or inappropriate relationships. Some people who have experienced sexual assault feel they don't have a right to report the assault because of their own collateral misconduct, or they may be worried about getting in trouble. A SVC can give you the confidential advice you need to make an informed decision on whether to report. If you have experienced sexual assault, you always have the right to report it, no matter what else you may have been doing at the time.

#### **How do I contact a SVC?**

Call the Fort Sill Legal Assistance Office at (580) 442-5058 to set up an appointment.

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This Information Paper provides basic information only and is not intended to serve as a substitute for personal consultation with a Legal Assistance Attorney. To schedule an appointment with a Legal Assistance Attorney, please contact the Legal Assistance Office at (580) 442-5058 or (580) 442-5059. The Fort Sill Legal Assistance Office is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Building 4700, Hartell Hall (Welcome Center) at 4700 Mow-Way Road.