

## Chittenden County Bill of Values

The Mission of the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office is to do Justice;  
to exercise the immense power given to us by the people of this county with fairness, humility and respect;  
to serve our community by providing opportunity, intervention and support to victims, families and defendants;  
to hold individuals, ourselves and the criminal justice system accountable;  
to be unafraid to take risks and implement smart strategies and innovations that promote safe, healthy, and strong communities.

Our office seeks to fulfill this mission by holding firm to the following values:

- I. We recognize that systemic racism and other forms of discrimination are pervasive in many social institutions, including the legal system, and we pledge to identify these disparities when addressing criminal behavior.
- II. We only charge cases where we believe sufficient admissible evidence exists to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt.
- III. We protect the community by focusing on solving problems and meeting needs instead of obtaining convictions.
- IV. We divert cases pre-charge *and* post-charge, whenever treatment, healing, accountability, and safety for all involved parties can be accomplished outside of the court system.
- V. We help crime survivors heal by striving to meet their stated needs, even when we do not have sufficient evidence to pursue a case.
- VI. We safeguard the rights of community members by charging the least severe crime that adequately captures the seriousness of the offense, even when probable cause exists for the more severe crime.
- VII. We do not make recommendations for conditions of release, bail, or sentences, that will favor those with access to money and disadvantage those living in poverty.
- VIII. We do not punish community members for exercising their constitutional rights.
- IX. When making plea offers and sentencing recommendations, we consider what will help the survivor heal and seek to understand the individual and systemic factors that contributed to the crime.
- X. Regardless of a person's prior contact with the system, we make plea offers and sentencing recommendations based on the provable facts of the current case, a survivor's needs, accountability, community safety, and a recognition that people change.
- XI. We do not make plea offers and sentencing recommendations based solely on punitiveness or vengeance.
- XII. We engage in good faith discussions with defense counsel. This includes being transparent with open file discovery, the strength of the case, plea offers, trial, and sentencing recommendations.
- XIII. We respect the dignity of all people by using people-centered language.
- XIV. We make every effort to keep children (21 years or younger) out of the justice system, and do not treat children as adults.
- XV. We strive to correct any prior case that does not align with our current values.