

YOU CAN WORK FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Progress in improving the treatment of crime victims is due largely to the efforts of thousands of individuals who have turned their victimization into a force for positive change. Victims and survivors of victims of homicide, rape, child abuse, domestic violence, and other serious offenses have transformed their experiences into a vehicle for ensuring that victims of similar types of crime receive true justice, meaningful assistance, and compassionate treatment before the law. Many victims and survivors volunteer their time and resources to create and staff programs such as shelters and crisis hotlines, conduct legislative advocacy, and speak on victim impact panels. Almost every community has opportunities for helping victims. Your work for positive change helps ensure that the progress made to date is not lost and that new ground is broken to gain greater justice and healing for all victims of crime. Please visit OVC's Web site for information about national, state, and local organizations that rely on volunteers to carry out their missions.

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YOU HAVE RIGHTS

Most states have amended their constitutions to guarantee certain fundamental rights for crime victims. Typically, these include the following:

- ▶ The right to be notified of all court proceedings related to the offense.
- ▶ The right to be reasonably protected from the accused offender.
- ▶ The right to have input at sentencing (e.g., in the form of a victim impact statement).
- ▶ The right to information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, and release of the offender.
- ▶ The right to an order of restitution from the convicted offender.
- ▶ The right to be notified of these rights.

If you are a victim of a crime, these rights apply to you. You may obtain information about your rights through a local victim/witness assistance program (usually located in the prosecutor's office), the state Attorney General's Office, or the U.S. Attorney's Office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Office for Victims of Crime, please contact

Office for Victims of Crime
U.S. Department of Justice
810 Seventh Street NW, Eighth Floor
Washington, DC 20531
202-307-5983
Fax: 202-514-6383
www.ovc.gov

For copies of this brochure and other OVC publications or information on additional victim-related resources, please contact

Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
1-800-851-3420 or 301-519-5500
(TTY 1-877-712-9279)
Ask OVC: <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/askovc>
www.ncjrs.gov

For information on training and technical assistance available from OVC, please contact

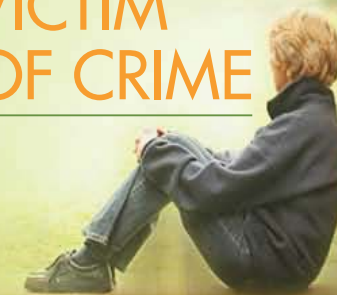
Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031-6050
1-866-OVC-TTAC (1-866-682-8822)
(TTY 1-866-682-8880)
Fax: 703-225-2338
E-mail: TTAC@ovcttac.org
www.ovcttac.org



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Office for Victims of Crime



WHAT YOU CAN DO
IF YOU ARE A
VICTIM
OF CRIME



"It was so good to get my questions answered and know recovery is possible. I was having a really hard time with what happened to me, and I am still unable to verbalize it. They helped a lot. I'm starting the road to recovery."

—User, Hotline for Victims of Sexual Assault

Being a victim of crime is frightening and unsettling for the millions of Americans who experience it each year. Because of funding authorized under the 1984 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), as amended [42 U.S.C. § 10601 et seq.], and the dedicated efforts of advocates, lawmakers, and crime victims, an extensive range of services and resources is available to help victims heal and obtain justice. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), a federal agency within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, wants you to know that if you or someone you love is a victim of crime—

You have rights.

You can get help.

You can work for positive change.



YOU CAN GET HELP

Thousands of programs provide services and sanctuary to crime victims throughout the United States. They are part of state government agencies, and private nonprofit, faith-based, and charitable organizations. The programs provide two general types of services—compensation and assistance—for victims of crimes such as homicide, rape, drunk driving, domestic violence, human trafficking, and child abuse and neglect. Compensation programs reimburse victims, including victims of federal crimes, for expenses. Expenses covered are medical costs, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, and lost wages or loss of support. Crime victim assistance programs provide a range of services, including crisis intervention, counseling, emergency shelter, criminal justice advocacy, and emergency transportation. Although compensation and assistance are provided most often to individuals, in certain instances, entire

communities may be eligible for assistance in cases of multiple victimizations. You can obtain information about compensation and assistance through your local prosecutor's office. You also may receive it from your local law enforcement agency when you report an offense.

Another important tool that can help victims and service providers find a program in a specific jurisdiction is OVC's online Directory of Crime Victim Services. The directory lists service providers who address various victim needs. Launched in 2003, the directory offers a centralized, searchable database of victim assistance programs nationwide. OVC scrutinizes new programs and continually updates the database with those it finds appropriate for the site. To view the directory, visit <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices>.



The Crime Victims Fund

Financial support for many of these programs is provided through the Crime Victims Fund (the Fund), which is administered by OVC. Established by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), the Fund supports victim services and training for advocates and professionals throughout the country. Millions of dollars are deposited into the Fund each year from criminal fines, forfeited bail, penalties, and special assessments collected by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, U.S. Federal Courts, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. All Fund dollars have typically come from offenders convicted of federal crimes, not from taxpayers. However, the 2001 Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required To Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA PATRIOT Act) expanded the possible sources in 2002 by authorizing the deposit of gifts, bequests, or donations from private entities into the Fund. In response to continued fluctuations in the Fund's deposits, Congress has set caps on its annual expenditures. This has created a "rainy-day" balance to draw on whenever deposits fall below the cap.

NATIONAL VICTIM ORGANIZATIONS STAND READY TO ASSIST YOU

If you are a crime victim and want information or referrals regarding victims' rights and services and criminal justice resources, the following organizations may help you:

Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-422-4453
www.childhelp.org

Child Welfare Information Gateway
1-800-394-3366
www.childwelfare.gov

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
1-877-623-3435
www.madd.org

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
1-800-843-5678
www.missingkids.com

National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC)
1-800-394-2255
www.ncvc.org

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
1-800-729-6686
<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)
1-800-851-3420
www.ncjrs.gov

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233
www.ndvh.org

National Fraud Information Hotline
202-835-3323
www.fraud.org

National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC)
1-888-3737-888
<http://nhtrc.polarisproject.org>

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1-800-879-6682
www.trynova.org

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
1-800-537-2238
www.nrcdv.org

National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C)
1-800-221-4424
www.nw3c.org

Parents of Murdered Children (POMC)
1-888-818-7662
www.pomc.org

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
1-800-656-4673
www.rainn.org

For a current list of state compensation and assistance programs in the United States and U.S. territories, please visit www.ovc.gov/help/links.htm.