

Victims' Rights

Victims of all crimes under federal investigation are entitled to services under the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act, including notification of court events. For further details, please refer to Title 42 United States Code, Section 10607, or the [Investigative Agency brochure](#) posted on The U.S. Department of Justice [Victim Notification System](#) site.

After charges have been filed in federal court, victims of the charges filed are entitled to the following rights, according to the [Crime Victims' Rights Act](#) (18 U.S.C. § 3771):

1. The right to be reasonably protected from the accused.
2. The right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public court proceeding, or any parole proceeding, involving the crime or of any release or escape of the accused.
3. The right not to be excluded from any such public court proceeding, unless the court, after receiving clear and convincing evidence, determines that testimony by the victim would be materially altered if the victim heard other testimony at that proceeding.
4. The right to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding in the district court involving the release, plea, sentencing, or any parole proceeding.
5. The reasonable right to confer with the attorney for the Government in the case.
6. The right to full and timely restitution as provided in law.
7. The right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay, and
8. The right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy.
9. The right to be informed in a timely manner of any plea bargain or deferred prosecution agreement.
10. The right to be informed of the rights under this section and the services described in section 503(c) of the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 10607(c)) and provided contact information for the Office of the Victims' Rights Ombudsman of the Department of Justice.

*Under the CVRA, “the term ‘crime victim’ means a person directly and proximately harmed as a result of the commission of a federal offense or an offense in the District of Columbia. In the case of a crime victim who is under 18 years of age, incompetent, incapacitated, or deceased, the legal guardians of the crime victim or the representatives of the crime victim’s estate, family members, or any other persons appointed as suitable by the court, may assume the crime victim’s rights under this chapter, but in no event shall the defendant be named as such guardian or representative.” See 18 U.S.C. § 3771(e).

Please understand that these rights apply only to victims of the counts charged in federal court, and thus some victims may not be able to exercise all of these rights if the crime of which they are a victim was not charged. We will make our best efforts to ensure victims are provided the rights and services to which they are entitled. While our office cannot act as a victim’s attorney or provide a victim with legal advice, a victim can seek the advice of an attorney with respect to the rights above or other related legal matters.

Services to Crime Victims

CVRA Right No. 10, listed above, refers to services under the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 10607 ("VRRRA"). The VRRRA directs designated federal officials—referred to as "responsible officials"—to provide specified services to victims.** During investigations, victim responsibilities are generally carried out by victim specialists within federal law enforcement agencies; and once charges have been filed, victim specialists within U.S. Attorney's Offices are generally responsible for victim services. Following are the services that are to be provided:

Victim Notification

After the defendant is charged with a federal crime, victims are entitled to be notified of public court proceedings. In most instances, victims will receive an initial letter from the U.S. Attorney's Office and subsequent letters as case events warrant. Occasionally, in cases involving large numbers of victims, alternative notification procedures may be used.

In addition to receiving notifications from the U.S. Attorney's Office, victims may:

- Call the Victim Notification System (VNS) Center at 1-866-365-4968 for recorded information about the status of a case, using the Victim Identification Number (VIN) and Personal Identification Number (PIN) provided in our initial letter.
- Visit VNS's Website (www.notify.usdoj.gov) to check the status of a case, using the VIN and PIN provided in our initial letter.
- If a defendant is incarcerated in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, further information may be obtained from the Bureau of Prisons web site at www.bop.gov. Click the "Inmate Locator" button, then search by the defendant's name.

Victim and Witness Services

- After charges are filed in a federal criminal case, Victim-Witness Coordinators provide certain services to victims and witnesses.
- Notify victims about public court proceedings such as arraignments, trial dates, plea hearings, trial outcomes and sentencing hearings.
- Provide information to victims about the Victim Notification System (VNS) Call Center and Website.
- Refer victims to the Louisiana Crime Victims Compensation Board.
- Provide restitution information to victims.
- Provide information about federal court procedures.
- Notify subpoenaed witnesses of changes in court dates or times.
- Make travel and lodging arrangements for court appearances by subpoenaed non-local witnesses.
- Submit vouchers for witness court attendance fees and reimbursement of allowable expenses.

Upon request, Victim-Witness Coordinators may also:

- Accompany victims to court proceedings.
- Refer victims to social service programs and other community resources.
- Notify employers and creditors of a victim's or witness's role in a criminal prosecution.
- Arrange court-related assistance for child witnesses.

Victim Impact Statements

If a defendant pleads guilty or is convicted, victims of the charges filed may submit Victim Impact Statements explaining the physical, emotional, and/or financial effects of the crime. Victim Impact Statements are submitted to the Court and may be used to help the Court decide what sentence the defendant should receive and whether restitution should be ordered. Victims of the charges filed also have the right to speak at the sentencing hearing.

Restitution

If victims suffered financial loss as a result of the crime, the Court may order the defendant to repay them as part of the sentence. While there is no guarantee that payment will be made, it is important that victims keep detailed records of all crime-related losses and expenses.

Louisiana Crime Victim Reparations

The purpose of this program is to assist innocent victims of crimes and their families. The program is intended to assist victims in paying the financial cost of crime when they have no other means of paying. The fund is administered by the Crime Victims Reparations Board under the jurisdiction of the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement. The funds to operate the program come from fines paid by people who break the law. In order to be eligible for consideration, the crime must occur in Louisiana or must involve a Louisiana resident who becomes a victim in another state that does not have a crime victim compensation program. It is to help defray the costs of medical services, loss of earnings, burial costs, and other financial losses incurred as a direct result of personal injuries sustained by a criminal offense. Eligible crimes generally include, but are not limited to, those involving the use of force or the threat of the use of force and result in personal injury, death or catastrophic property loss, and those victims of human trafficking. You can find their website here: [Louisiana Crime Victims Reparations Board](#).

Threats and Intimidation

It is a federal offense to threaten, intimidate, or harass a victim or witness in a criminal proceeding. Victims or witnesses who are threatened or feel harassed because of their involvement in a case should notify the investigating agency or, in an emergency, call 911.