

**VICTIM  
ASSISTANCE  
INFORMATION**



**PHIL SANDLIN  
Constable**

**Harris County Precinct 8  
16602 Diana Ln.  
Houston, Texas 77062  
24 Hour Dispatch (281) 488-4040  
Fax (281) 488-8380**

**Precinct 8 Case #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Officer Name/Unit #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DA Case #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prosecutor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VINE Pin #:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **What is Texas VINE?**

- Free service for crime victims and other concerned citizens
- Provides basic information on jailed offenders and scheduled court events
- Notifies registered users of changes in offender jail status and court events
- Available 24 hours a day 7 days a week in English or Spanish

**Toll Free 1- 877-TX4-VINE (1-877-894-8463)**

## **Victims of family violence will be pre-registered with Texas VINE**

When the offender has been booked into the custody of the Harris County Jail you will be pre-registered with the Texas VINE system.

You have been pre-assigned a PIN number. It is the last four digits of the phone number you provided to the officer at the time of the incident.

The VINE system will notify you every 2 hours for a 24 hour period when the offender's case or jail status changes.

To stop the calls during that 24 hours period, you will be asked to enter your PIN number during the phone notification,

Please change your PIN number to a number that is private to you and easy to remember.

You may also visit the Texas VINE website at:

[www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com)

# **CRIME VICTIM COMPENSATION ACT**

## **What is the Crime Victims' Compensation (CVC) Program?**

- The CVC Program may provide financial assistance to victims of violent crime for related expenses that cannot be reimbursed by insurance or other sources.
- The Program is administered by the Office of the Attorney General and is committed to assisting victims and claimants who qualify. The information provided is meant to be generally informative, and the statutory requirements of the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Act (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 56) and the rules set forth in Title 1 of the Texas Administrative Code, Part III, Chapter 61, govern the Program.
- Money in the Victims of Crime Compensation Fund comes from fees paid by those convicted of a crime.

## **What are the basic eligibility requirements for Crime Victims' Compensation Program benefits?**

- The victim must be a resident of Texas, a United States resident who is victimized while in Texas or a Texas resident victimized in another state or country that does not have a crime victim compensation fund.
- The victim or claimant must report the crime to the appropriate state or local public safety or law enforcement agency within a reasonable period of time.
- The victim or claimant must cooperate with law enforcement officials in the investigation and prosecution of the case.
- All other available third party resources (for example, Medicare, Medicaid, personal health insurance, worker's compensation and settlements) must meet their legal obligation to pay claims before CVC pays crime-related compensation benefits.
- The Crime Victims' Compensation Program must be notified when a civil lawsuit is filed in relation to the crime or if restitution is ordered.

## **Who may be *eligible* for Crime Victims' Compensation Program benefits?**

- Victims of violent crime who suffer physical or emotional harm as a direct result of the crime.
- A victim's dependents and/or family or household members who qualify as claimants.
- Someone who legally or voluntarily assumes financial responsibility for a victim's medical or burial expenses.

## **Who is *not eligible* for Crime Victims' Compensation Program benefits?**

- The offender, an accomplice or any person who may unjustly benefit from an award to a victim or claimant.
- Anyone injured as a result of a motor vehicle accident, except under certain circumstances provided by law.
- Benefits may be denied or reduced if the victim's or claimant's own behavior contributed to the crime.
- Anyone incarcerated when the crime occurred.
- Any victim or claimant who intentionally provides false or forged information to the Crime Victims' Compensation Program.

## **What expenses *may be covered* with Crime Victims' Compensation Program benefits?**

- Reasonable and necessary medical and funeral expenses.
- Travel for medical, court and funeral events if more than 20 miles one-way.
- Loss of earnings as a result of the death of the victim (funeral/bereavement).
- Loss of earnings for crime-related disabilities and court or medical appointments.
- Loss of support to dependents of victims, if the victim was employed at the time of the crime.

- Counseling for victim and immediate family members of the victim.
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures or prosthetic devices, if damaged or needed as a result of the crime.
- Crime scene clean-up.
- Replacement of property seized as evidence.
- New expenses for child or adult dependent care as a result of the crime.
- One time rent and relocation expenses for victims of family violence or sexual assault who were assaulted in their residence.
- Reasonable attorney fees for assistance in filing the Crime Victims' Compensation Program application and obtaining benefits.

**What expenses are *not covered* by Crime Victims' Compensation Program benefits?**

- Damage, repair or loss to property or vehicle.
- Pain, suffering or emotional distress damages.
- Any expense which is not the direct result of the crime.

**Payment for Cost of Forensic Sexual Assault Examinations** - A forensic sexual assault examination is a medical examination of the victim of the alleged assault for use in the investigation or prosecution of the offense. Either a law enforcement agency or the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) pays for the costs of forensic sexual assault examinations. CVC does not pay for the cost of forensic sexual assault examinations but reimburses law enforcement agencies and DPS directly for the costs they incur for the exams. Therefore, a victim of sexual assault who receives a forensic sexual assault examination is not required to submit a CVC application for reimbursement of the cost of the examination.

- If a victim of sexual assault reports the alleged crime to a law enforcement agency, the law enforcement agency will request a forensic sexual assault examination and pay all costs of the examination. If a victim of sexual assault reports the assault to the law enforcement agency and requires medical treatment for crime related injury, the victim may submit an application to CVC for reimbursement of costs other than the forensic sexual assault examination.
- If a victim receives a forensic sexual assault examination and chooses not to report the alleged crime to a law enforcement agency, the Texas Department of Public Safety pays all costs of the examination. CVC may only pay for other crime related expenses if a victim reports the crime to law enforcement.

**CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS**  
**Art. 56.02. CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS**

A victim of a violent crime is someone who (1) has suffered bodily injury or death or who has been the victim of sexual assault, kidnapping, or aggravated robbery, (2) the close relative (spouse, parent, or adult brother, sister or child) of a deceased victim, or (3) the guardian of a victim. The following rights are from Chapter 56, Article 56.02 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.

- A. A victim, guardian of a victim, or close relative of a deceased victim is entitled to the following rights within the criminal justice system:
1. the right to receive from law enforcement agencies adequate protection from harm and threats of harm arising from cooperation with prosecution efforts;
  2. the right to have the magistrate take the safety of the victim or his family into consideration as an element in fixing the amount of bail for the accused;
  3. the right, if requested, to be informed:
    - a. by the attorney representing the state of relevant court proceedings, including appellate proceedings, and to be informed if those proceedings have been canceled or rescheduled prior to the event; and
    - b. by an appellate court of decisions of the court, after the decisions are entered but before the decisions are made public;
  4. the right to be informed, when requested, by a peace officer concerning the defendant's right to bail and the procedures in criminal investigations and by the district attorney's office concerning the general procedures in the criminal justice system, including general procedures in the criminal justice system, including general procedures in guilty plea negotiations and arrangements, restitution, and the appeals and parole process;
  5. the right to provide pertinent information to a probation department conducting a pre-sentencing investigation concerning the impact of the offense on the victim and his family by testimony, written statement, or any other manner prior to any sentencing of the offender.
  6. the right to receive information regarding compensation to victims of crime as provided by subchapter B including information related to the costs that may be compensated under that subchapter and the amount of compensation, eligibility for compensation and procedures for application for compensation under that subchapter, the payment for a medical examination under Article 56.06 for a victim of a sexual assault, and when requested, to referral to available social service agencies that may offer additional assistance;
  7. the right to be informed, upon request, of parole procedures, to participate in the parole process, to be notified, if requested, of parole proceedings concerning the defendant in the victim's case, to provide to the Board of Pardons and Paroles for inclusion in the defendant's file information to be considered by the board prior to the parole of any defendant convicted of any crime subject to this subchapter, and to be notified, if requested, of the defendant's release;
  8. the right to be provided with a waiting area, separate or secure from other witnesses, including the offender and relatives of the offender, before testifying in any proceeding concerning the offender; if a separate waiting area is not available, other safeguards should be taken to minimize the victim's contact with the offender and the offender's relatives and witnesses, before and during court proceedings;
  9. the right to prompt return of any property of the victim that is held by a law enforcement agency or the attorney for the state as evidence when the property is no longer required for that purpose; and
  10. the right to have the attorney for the state notify the employer of the victim, if requested, of the necessity of the victim's cooperation and testimony in a proceeding that may necessitate the absence of the victim from work for good cause;
  11. the right to counseling, on request, regarding acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and testing for acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, antibodies to HIV, or infection with any other probable causative agent of

AIDS, if the offense is an offense under Section 21.11(a)(1), 22.01, or 22.021, Penal Code.

12. the right to request victim offender mediation coordinated by the Victim Services Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice; and
  13. the right to be informed of the uses of a Victim Impact Statement and the statement's purpose in the Criminal Justice System, to complete the Victim Impact Statement, and to have the Victim Impact Statement considered:
    - a. by the attorney representing the State and judge before sentencing or before a plea bargain agreement is accepted; and
    - b. by the Board of Pardons and Paroles before an offender is released on parole.
- B. A victim, guardian of a victim, or close relative of a deceased victim is entitled to the right to be present at all public court proceedings related to the offense, subject to the approval of the judge in the case.
- C. The office of the attorney representing the state, and the sheriff, police, and other law enforcement agencies shall ensure to the extent practicable that a victim, guardian of a victim, or close relative of a deceased victim is afforded the rights granted by Subsection (a) of this article and, on request, an explanation of those rights.
- D. A judge, attorney for the state, peace officer, or law enforcement agency is not liable for a failure or inability to provide a right enumerated in this article. The failure or inability of any person to provide a right or service enumerated in this article may not be used by a defendant in a criminal case as a ground for appeal, a ground to set aside the conviction or sentence, or a ground in a habeas corpus petition. A victim, guardian of a victim, or close relative of a deceased victim does not have standing to participate as a party in a criminal proceeding or to contest the disposition of any charge.

# **VICTIM SERVICES**

## **Dial 911 for emergencies**

### **Crisis Services – 24 hours**

Child Protective Services	(713)626-5701
Crisis Hotline	(713)228-1505
Domestic Violence Hotline	(800)799-SAFE
Crime Victims Compensation	(800)983-9933
AIDS Hotline	(800)-342-2437

### **Shelters**

The Bridge over Troubled Waters	(713)473-2801
Bay Area Turning Point	(281)338-7600

### **Hospitals**

Clear Lake Regional	(281)332-2511
Ben Taub	(713)793-2000
Memorial Hermann Southeast	(281)929-6100
Bayshore Medical Center	(713)359-2000

### **Legal Assistance**

Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse	(713)224-9911
Gulf Coast Legal Foundation	(713)652-0077
Houston Volunteer Lawyers	(713)228-0732
DA Victim/Witness Office	(713)755-6655

### **Inmate Information**

Harris County Sheriff Public Info	(713)755-5300
<a href="http://www.hcso.hctx.net/inmateinfo">www.hcso.hctx.net/inmateinfo</a>	

### **Information Regarding Family Violence Incidents and/or Protective Orders**

HCSO Family Violence Unit	(713)967-5743
HCSO Victim Assistance	(713)967-5800
DA Family Criminal Law Division	(713)755-5888