

CRIME VICTIMS RESOURCE GUIDE

Provided by Crime Stoppers of Houston








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VICTIMIZATION 101

Being a victim of a crime is a frightening and life-changing experience for the millions of Americans who experience it each year. The Crime Stoppers of Houston's Victim Services and Advocacy Program seeks to transform victimization into a vehicle for ensuring that victims of crime receive justice, meaningful assistance and compassionate treatment by:

- **Advocating for crime victims through all stages of victimization.**
- **Assisting crime victims and survivors in efforts to rebuild their lives.**
- **Assisting in collaboration between law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, probation and parole departments, juvenile justice systems and social services.**
- **Accompanying crime victims and survivors to Court and Parole Board hearings.**
- **Guiding crime victims and survivors through media inquiries and speaking engagements.**
- **Referring crime victims and survivors to local, statewide, and national victim assistance organizations.**
- **Working toward legislative improvements to enhance victims' rights and public safety.**



We hope you will use this Crime Victims Resource Guide to assist you through your own process of recovery, justice, and healing. In this resource, you will find helpful phone numbers and contacts, a detailed description of your rights as a victim of crime, and additional valuable information.

For more information on Crime Stoppers' Victim Services,

contact Andy Kahan at akahan@crime-stoppers.org

As a victim of a violent crime, your initial contact should be a victim advocate with a local law enforcement agency:

HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT (HPD)

(713) 308-0080

HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (HCSO)

(713) 274-9369

PASADENA POLICE DEPARTMENT

(713) 475-4814

BAYTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

(281) 425-1051

BELLAIRE POLICE DEPARTMENT

(713) 662-2898

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

(713) 274-0250

CRIME STOPPERS OF HOUSTON TIP LINE

The Crime Stoppers of Houston Tip Line Program offers cash rewards to anonymous individuals who provide tips that solve crimes and locate wanted fugitives in the Greater Houston Area. Crime Stoppers may pay a cash reward of up to \$5,000 on felony crimes that happen in the Greater Houston Area and Harris County. To be eligible for a cash reward, you must report your tip directly to Crime Stoppers by calling **(713) 222-TIPS (8477)**, going online to **crime-stoppers.org**, or by using the Crime Stoppers mobile app.





WHAT HAPPENS AFTER ARREST?

The point of arrest for a defendant in a criminal case is only the beginning of the criminal justice proceedings. Here are a few things that could happen after a defendant is arrested in relation to the victimization you have experienced:

Probable Cause Hearing

This is where the District Attorney's Office decides if there is enough evidence in a case to proceed with prosecution of the case.

Bond Hearing

This is where a judge decides what bond is appropriate in the case presented. Bond rulings could range from PR bond (a zero-dollar bond) to a specific dollar amount, OR no bond could be awarded in certain violent offenses.

Plea Deal

If the District Attorney decides to proceed with prosecution of the case, they may attempt to make a plea deal with the defendant. If the parties cannot agree to a plea deal, the case may move to trial.

If the case goes to trial

The first phase of the trial will be held to determine whether the defendant is guilty or innocent. In this stage, you may attend the trial as the victim but will likely not have an opportunity to testify or give a statement.

If the defendant is found guilty in the first phase of the trial, the second phase of the trial known as the sentencing phase will proceed. It is usually in this phase of the trial that you as the victim are able to give testimony.

REGISTERING FOR VICTIM INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION EVERYDAY (VINE)

VINE is the Nation's leading victim notification network. It allows victims of crime to access timely and reliable information about offenders or criminal cases in U.S. jails and prisons. You can register to receive automated notifications via email, text, or phone call, or check custody status information online at any time.

Texas VINE will automatically notify registered persons via a toll-free number and website of suspect/offender status and court event changes. Texas VINE automatically notifies registered users in English or Spanish whenever one of the following situations occurs:

- The suspect/offender is released or transferred
- A court event has been set or changed
- There is a change in custody status, such as death or escape

Note: VINE will not notify you following a conviction. Check regularly for updates regarding your case.





WAYS TO ACCESS VINE

VINE Online

VINELink.com is the online portal for VINE and can be accessed anytime. It provides the most reliable information for custody status changes and criminal case information.

VINELink Mobile App

The VINELink Mobile App is the on-the-go version of VINE that lets you access vital information right from your mobile device. The VINELink Mobile App is available for iOS and Android devices and is completely free for users.

Toll-Free Number - +1 (866) 277-7477

Toll-free phone support from the Appriss Customer First Center is available 24/7 every day for callers who need help locating an offender, registering for notifications, or accessing victim services in their area. Over 200 languages are available via live operator support.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS

As defined in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 56, Subchapter A, Crime Victims' Rights, a victim of a violent crime is someone who: (1) has suffered bodily injury or death as a result of criminally injurious conduct, or who has been the victim of a crime involving sexual assault, kidnapping, or aggravated robbery; (2) is the close relative (spouse, parent, brother, sister, or adult child) or (3) is the guardian of a victim. As a victim of violent crime, you have the right to:

- **Receive adequate protection from harm and threats of harm arising from cooperation with prosecution efforts.**
- **Have their safety considered by the magistrate when setting bail.**
- **Be informed of relevant court proceedings and of those court proceedings that have been canceled or rescheduled and to be informed of appellate proceedings prior to that information becoming public.**
- **Information on procedures in the criminal investigation of your case by law enforcement officials and about general procedures in the criminal justice system including plea bargaining, restitution, appeals, and parole from the prosecutor's office.**
- **Receive information about the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation fund that provides financial assistance to victims of violent crimes and, if you so request, referral to available social service agencies that may provide additional help.**

- Provide pertinent information concerning the impact of the crime to the probation department prior to sentencing.
- Have a medical health provider pay for medical examinations and medical expenses for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence and on request, the right to counseling regarding AIDS and HIV infection and testing for sexual assault victims.
- Be notified of parole proceedings by the Victim Services Section of the Pardons and Paroles Division; to participate in the parole process by submitting extra information or a Victim Impact Statement detailing the emotional, physical, and financial impact the crime has had on you and your family for consideration by the judge prior to sentencing and/or entry of a plea bargain and by the parole board prior to taking any parole action; to be notified of the inmate's release.
- Be present at all public court proceedings if the presiding judge permits.
- A separate or secure waiting area available before and during court proceedings.
- Prompt return of any property that is no longer required as evidence.
- Have the prosecutor notify your employer that the need for your testimony may involve your absence from work.
- Request victim-offender mediation coordinated by the Victim Services Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- The right of a tenant who is a victim of family violence to vacate a dwelling and terminate a residential lease.

INFORMATION ON VICTIMS' COMPENSATION ACT (CVC)

The Crime Victims' Compensation (CVC) Program helps crime victims and their immediate families with the financial costs of crime. CVC covers crime-related costs such as counseling, medical treatment, funerals, and loss of income not paid by other sources.

There are two types of compensation: (1) Crime Victims' Compensation and (2) Emergency Medical Care Compensation - Sexual Assault Exam. You can apply as a victim or a claimant for either compensation using the same application. You must be 18 years of age or older to apply to CVC. If the victim is under the age of 18 or deceased, an individual authorized to act on their behalf such as a parent or legal guardian must apply as a claimant.

How the CVC Program Works:

- Victims of violent crime, their families, or others who have taken on crime-related costs on behalf of a victim, apply for compensation.
- CVC staff review the application and other information to ensure it meets eligibility criteria.
- CVC verifies a crime occurred and the crime was reported to law enforcement.
- CVC asks applicants to provide information about crime-related costs.
- CVC staff review information to see what crime-related costs can be paid according to program rules.

Eligibility Requirements

You may apply for compensation for all eligible crime-related costs, including payment of medical costs from a sexual assault exam. To receive compensation for these costs, you must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- The crime must occur in Texas to a U.S. resident; or the victim is a Texas resident and the crime occurred in a country that does not offer crime victims' compensation.
- The crime must be reported to an appropriate law enforcement agency.
- The victim or claimant must cooperate with the law enforcement investigation.
- You must apply within three (3) years from the date of the crime unless good cause is shown e.g., age of the victim, mental or physical capacity of the victim, etc.
- You are either a victim or a claimant.
- You did/were not:
 - Participate in the crime.
 - Commit illegal activity at the time of the crime. Does not apply to a person who seeks compensation if the illegal activity the person engaged in was the result of human trafficking.
 - Share responsibility for the crime due to your behavior
 - Give false information to the program
 - Incarcerated at the time of the crime.

Covered Crimes

- Assault
- Child Abuse
- Driving While Intoxicated (DWI)
- Elder Abuse
- Family Violence
- Hit and Run
- Homicide
- Human Trafficking
- Kidnapping
- Robbery
- Sexual Assault
- Stalking

How To Apply

Online

cvs.texasattorneygeneral.gov/portal/login

Phone

1 (800) 983-9933

RESOURCES based on victimization type:

HOMICIDE

HPD Homicide Division:

(713) 308-3600

HSCO Homicide Division:

(713) 274-9100

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

HPD Major Assaults & Family Violence Division:

(713) 308-8800

HCSO Violent Crimes Unit:

(713) 274-9210

AGGRAVATED ROBBERY

HPD Robbery Division:

(713) 308-0700

HSCO Burglary, Theft, Financial Crime:

(713) 274-9200

VEHICULAR CRIMES

HPD Vehicular Crimes Division:

(713) 247-4072

HSCO Vehicular Crimes Division:

(713) 274-7400

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC):

(713) 528-2121

Aid To Victims Of Domestic Abuse (AVDA):

(713) 224-9911

Daya:

(713) 981-7645

National Domestic Violence Hotline:

(800) 799-7233

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

National Human Trafficking Hotline:
(888) 373-7888

United Against Human Trafficking:
(713) 874-0290

National Center On Sexual Exploitation :
(202) 298-8788

MISSING PERSONS

Texas Equusearch:
(281) 309-9500

Texas Center for the Missing:
(281) 309-9500

SEXUAL ASSAULT/CHILD ABUSE CRIMES

RAINN:
(800) 656-4673

National Sexual Assault Hotline:
(800) 656-4673

Children's Assessment Center:

(713) 599-5687

Department of Family and Protective Services:
(800) 252-5400

OTHER RESOURCES

Join Crime Stoppers for our annual events honoring victims of violent crime and lost loved ones:

- National Night of Remembrance:
Every September
- Holiday Memorial Remembrance Tree Ceremony:
Every December

The Houston Chapter of Parents of Murdered Children and Surviving Family Member of Homicide (POMC) holds its monthly meetings at the Dave Ward Crime Stoppers of Houston building **every 2nd Tuesday from 7:00-9:00pm.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Web: pomc.org/chapters/houston-chapter
Email: houstonpomc@gmail.com
Phone: **(713) 522-9045**

POST CONVICTION ADVOCACY

While you may feel a sense of relief after the offender in your case is convicted, there is still a vast need for victim services post-conviction.

Crime Stoppers of Houston has created a program for victims like you to record **Victim Impact Statement Videos** that can be submitted to the Texas Board of Pardons and Parole to be heard at all parole hearings for the offender in your case.

This project allows your story to be preserved forever. For more information about the program, please contact akahan@crime-stoppers.org.

To continue receiving updates regarding your offender, you must register with the Integrated Victim Services System (IVSS) operated by the TDCJ Victim Services Division. For more information, visit www.ivss.tdcj.texas.gov



RECORD OFFENDER/CASE INFORMATION HERE:

SUSPECT/OFFENDER NAME

Last

First

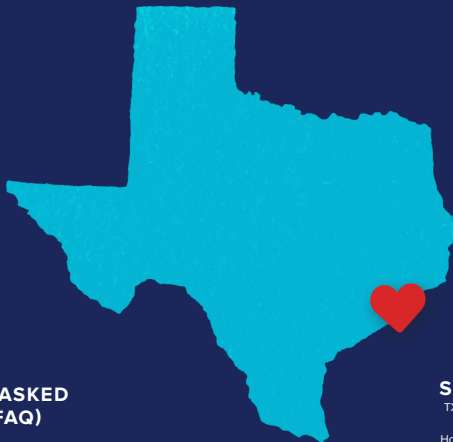
Middle Initial

CASE INFO

Court Case Number

Booking Number

4-Digit PIN



**SCAN TO SEE
FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

SOURCES:

TX Attorney General
Vinelink.com
Houston Police Dept.