

Primary Prevention programs are designed to help communities change the culture that supports sexual violence. These goals are accomplished by providing funding and technical assistance to sexual assault programs including nonprofits, governmental entities, local sexual assault centers and the state association.

TEXAS VINE

The Texas Legislature allocated resources to the Office of the Attorney General to facilitate the implementation of a statewide automatic victim notification system. In response, the OAG certified a technology company to work directly with Texas counties to implement and maintain the system, known as Texas VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday).

Texas VINE provides victims and concerned members of the community with up-to-date information about offenders’ county jail custody and/or court status, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. Information is transferred from participating county databases to the national VINE Communications Center.

Users register with the VINE service by calling (877) TX4-VINE/(877) 894-8463 or by logging on to www.VINELink.com. Registered users are then contacted automatically by phone or e-mail. Trained operators are available at all times, and users can also check on status anytime by phone or by logging on to the Web site.

To find out if Texas VINE is available in your county, contact your county sheriff or district/county attorney’s office. VINE is meant to be used as a notification tool and not as a guarantee. Crime victims should always contact local law enforcement and advocates for emergency assistance and safety plans. The Victim Services Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice also provides information to crime victims on the status of state prison inmates via the TDCJ toll free number: (800) 848-4284.

OUR mission

To assist in the compassionate and effective delivery of crime victim services by offering information, resources and financial assistance to crime victims and the organizations assisting them.

CRIME VICTIM services division

The Crime Victim Services Division consists of the Crime Victims’ Compensation Program; Policy Planning and Program Development; the Address Confidentiality Program; the Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services Program; and Texas VINE.

Crime Victim Services Division
P.O. Box 12548, MC 011
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

(800) 983-9933 Statewide
(512) 936-1200 in Austin
www.texasattorneygeneral.gov

CRIME VICTIMS’ compensation program

If you are a victim, you may be eligible for reimbursement of certain out-of-pocket expenses related to the crime. Please visit our Web site or call for information and an application form.

Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 12198, MC 011
Austin, Texas 78711-2198

(800) 983-9933 Statewide
(512) 936-1200 in Austin
www.texasattorneygeneral.gov

CRIME VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION



CRIME VICTIM crime victim SERVICES services DIVISION division

Rebuilding lives damaged by the emotional, physical and financial aftermath of violence takes courage and determination. Victims, families and communities can receive assistance in this effort from programs in the Crime Victim Services Division of the Office of the Attorney General:

- Crime Victims' Compensation Program
- Planning, Policy and Program Development
- Address Confidentiality Program
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services Program
- Texas VINE (Statewide Automated Notification System)

The Texas Legislature passed the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Act in 1979 with the intent of encouraging greater public cooperation by assisting innocent victims who have no other means of dealing with the financial losses associated with crime. The Act creates the Compensation to Victims of Crime Fund with revenue that comes primarily from criminal court convictions. The Fund represents public policy at its best, from criminal fines and fees – funds are made available for victims of violence most in need.

The Act also establishes the Crime Victims' Compensation Program within the Office of the Attorney General and authorizes the Office of the Attorney General to use appropriations from the Fund for grants and contracts supporting victim-related assistance. (The Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Act/Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 56, Subchapter B.)

CRIME VICTIMS' compensation program (CVC)

The Crime Victims' Compensation Program assists eligible applicants by reimbursing costs incurred as a result of violent crime, including medical services, mental health counseling, funeral expenses and lost earnings.

Collateral sources such as health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, auto insurance or Texas Workers' Compensation must be first be utilized.

Who is eligible? To be eligible for compensation, an individual must:

- Be a United States resident with the crime occurring in Texas or a Texas resident who becomes a victim in a state or country without a compensation program.
- Report the crime to a law enforcement agency within a reasonable period of time, but not so late as to interfere with or hamper the investigation and prosecution of the crime; and
- File the application within three years of the date of the crime.

Who will qualify? Victims of crime who suffer substantial threat of physical and/or emotional harm or death qualify. Dependents of victims, authorized individuals acting on behalf of a victim, or persons legally authorized, or who voluntarily pay certain expenses on a victims' behalf are also eligible.

Immediate family or household members related by blood or marriage who require counseling may apply. An intervenor who goes to the aid of a victim or a police officer is eligible, as is a peace officer, fire fighter or individual who has a duty to protect the public and is injured in a crime.

Benefits may be reduced or denied if the victim: participated in the crime; engaged in illegal activity; was incarcerated at the time of the crime; knowingly or intentionally submitted false information; or did not cooperate with appropriate law enforcement agencies.

What crimes are covered? Crimes covered are those in which the victim suffers substantial threat of physical or emotional harm or death. These crimes may include sexual assault, homicide and other violent crimes. Some

crimes involving vehicles are also covered including DWI and failure to stop and render aid.

Applications & Questions Every law enforcement agency and prosecutor's office in Texas is mandated to provide victims with information about the Crime Victims' Compensation Program. Hospitals and medical centers may also provide applications.

Applications can be obtained directly from the Crime Victims' Compensation Program by calling **(800) 983-9933**. Staff is available to answer questions and to provide assistance in completing the application. Applications and information are also available on our Web site at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov.

Note: A victim of sexual assault who receives a forensic sexual assault examination is not required to submit a Crime Victims' Compensation Application for reimbursement of forensic sexual exam costs. TCCP, Ch. 56, Art. 56.06 requires a law enforcement agency to pay for the forensic sexual assault examination.

PLANNING, POLICY and Program Development

The Planning, Policy, and Program Development function provides support and assistance to the OAG and its many divisions in carrying out the agency's mission and fulfilling legislative mandates. The OAG administers \$34 million per year in grants and contracts as authorized by the Texas Legislature. Programmatic expertise supports the eight victim assistance programs authorized by the Texas Legislature and other legislative mandates by:

- Providing content and practical experience
- Conducting research and evaluation to provide a basis for cost-benefit analysis and setting direction on victim and grant related issues
- Facilitating coordinated support for programs
- Enhancing statewide planning, policy and program development

ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY Program (ACP)

With increased public access to personal information, there is a rising need for address confidentiality for victims of family violence, stalking and sexual assault. The Texas Address Confidentiality Program provides a substitute

address and mail forwarding service for these victims and members of their household. ACP is a safety tool and a portion of an overall safety plan. It is not a witness protection program or a guarantee of safety. By law, applicants are required to meet with a local domestic violence shelter, sexual assault center, law enforcement or prosecution staff member to discuss a safety plan and to enroll in the program. To get contact information for local shelters, please access the Texas Council on Family Violence Web site at www.tcfv.org or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE. To contact local centers, access the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault Web site at www.taasa.org or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at (800) 656-HOPE. To learn more about the program, go to www.texasattorneygeneral.gov or call (888) 832-2322 (statewide) or (512) 936-1750.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION & Crisis Services (SAPCS) Program

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services program provides assistance in establishing Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) in communities, training and certification of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs), the development of initiatives for sexual assault primary prevention in communities, Advocate Certification for sexual assault programs funded by the OAG as well as consultation and collaboration with sexual assault programs.

Communities can establish a SART program by creating a collaborative partnership among key partners to create a local protocol for providing victim-centered response and care for sexual assault victims. These partners primarily include the local sexual assault program, the healthcare facility, law enforcement agencies and the prosecutor's office.

SANEs are registered nurses who receive extensive training in providing medical/forensic exams for sexual assault survivors. With 24-hour availability, SANEs respond promptly and offer comprehensive, compassionate care to sexual assault survivors. They are trained in collecting medical/forensic evidence and may be called as expert witnesses in court. SANEs are certified in Texas through the OAG.