

Communities can establish SANE programs by working with the Office of the Attorney General to establish a Sexual Assault Response Team. Four key partners are asked to participate in the process: the prosecutor's office, local law enforcement agencies, the medical facility, and the local sexual assault program.

TEXAS VINE victim information and notification everyday

The Texas Legislature allocated resources to the Office of the Attorney General to facilitate the implementation of a statewide automated 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 1-877-TX4-VINE/1-877-894-8463 or by logging on to www.VINELink.com. Registered users are then contacted automatically by phone or email. Trained operators are available at all times and users can also check on status anytime by phone or logging on to the website. 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 provides information to crime victims on the status of state prison inmates via the TDCJ toll-free number, 1-800-848-4284.

OUR mission

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



GREG ABBOTT
Attorney General
of Texas

CRIME VICTIM services division

The Crime Victim Services Division consists of the Crime Victims' Compensation Program, the Grants and Contracts Management 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.oag.state.tx.us

CRIME VICTIMS' compensation

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

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

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(512) 936-1200 in Austin
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CRIME VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION



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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 four programs in the Crime Victim Services Division of the Office of the Attorney General:

- Crime Victims' Compensation Program
- Grants & Contracts Management 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 created 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

The Texas 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.

The program is designated by law as the "payer of last resort," and collateral sources such as health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, auto insurance, or Texas Workers' Compensation must 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 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 the 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 an inmate 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 and 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 **1-800-983-9933**. Staff is available to answer questions and to provide assistance in completing the application. Applications and information are also available on our website at www.oag.state.tx.us.

GRANTS & CONTRACTS management

Victims need more than financial assistance to rebuild their lives. As authorized by the Texas Legislature, the Office of the Attorney General provides vital support to victims of crime through grants and contracts awarded to community and statewide victim assistance programs. By working in partnership with government agencies and non-profit organizations, the Crime Victim Services Division cultivates a compassionate network where the needs of victims are identified and effectively met. Crisis intervention, counseling, victim hotlines, emergency shelters, accompaniment during sexual assault exams, and advocacy through court proceedings are examples of the services made possible by these partnerships. The program contracts with Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Texas Supreme Court (civil legal services), Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) and for the statewide automated victim notification system, Texas VINE. Additionally, the Grants and Contracts program directly administers the following grants as directed by the legislature:

Victim Coordinator/Liaison Grants: By law, prosecutors and law enforcement are required to designate victim assistance coordinators and victim liaisons for their agencies. Coordinators and liaisons fulfill statutory duties such as providing victims with written notice about the criminal justice system, crime victim compensation applications, and victim impact statements.

Other Victim Assistance Grants (OVAG) are established to help non-profit agencies and local units of government address the unmet needs of victims of violent crime. Primarily, OVAG supports direct victim services, training, counseling, public awareness, and emergency assistance. Please check the Grants and Contracts Management Program website for updates and funding announcements at oag.state.tx.us/victims/funding.shtml.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION and crisis services program

Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services (SAPCS) grants come from a combination of state and federal funds that support sexual assault prevention, education, and direct services. Specifically, the program gives awards to local programs and to the statewide Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, for the provision of services such as crisis intervention, 24-hour hotlines, medical/legal/and law enforcement accompaniment, public education, and professional advocate and volunteer training. The program also provides technical assistance and training for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) using a multidisciplinary, community approach. SANEs are registered nurses who receive extensive training in providing medical/forensic exams for sexual assault survivors. SANEs are certified in Texas through the Office of the Attorney General after completing a sixty-four (64) hour classroom course and acquiring ninety-six (96) hours of clinical experience. 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.