



Crime Victim Assistance

The effects of crime on individuals and families can be devastating and long-lasting. Victims can seek assistance and compensation through the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime.

Q: What is crime victim compensation?

Crime victim compensation provides benefits to individuals and surviving family members who have been the victims of crimes that may include domestic abuse, assault, sexual abuse, robbery, homicide, stalking, child abuse and impaired driving. Funding for benefits and victim assistance services is distributed to each state by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) at the Department of Justice. Crime-related expenses that are covered vary by state, but typically are defined as medical costs, counseling, funeral and burial fees, and lost wages or loss of support. Other compensable expenses may include the replacement of essential personal property (eyeglasses, cash, clothing), crime scene clean-up, limited day care or after school costs, transportation to necessary court appearances, moving expenses and temporary lodging.

Crime-specific help brochures outlining what to do if victimized and providing links to additional national resources can be found on the OVC

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/pubs/helpseries/index.html>.

Q: What are crime victim services?

These non-emergency programs are designed to further assist victims of crime by offering additional resources beyond direct compensation, including access to local support groups, legal and translation services, and emergency shelter. Advocates may also help individuals file compensation claims with state offices and accompany them to necessary court appearances. Crime victim services are provided by public agencies and private organizations that often receive funding through OVC grants.

A database of thousands of crime victim service programs can be searched and filtered by state, crime, and services on the OVC <https://ovc.ojp.gov/directory-crime-victim-services/search>.

Q: How can I apply for crime victim compensation?

Every state, along with the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, distributes funds for victim assistance and compensation programs.

You must apply for benefits in the state or territory where the crime occurred. Specific policies vary, including the timeframe in which the crime must be reported to police to be eligible for compensation. If you are the victim of a crime, immediately consult your state's eligibility requirements to make certain you don't miss reporting deadlines. Additionally, to be eligible for funding, individuals must cooperate with prosecution efforts.

A searchable directory of state OVC offices can be found on the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards <https://nacvcb.org/state-information/>. or by calling 703-780-3200.

Q: Will all my expenses be covered?

Compensation benefits are awarded after other resources, including health and insurance policies, and/or workers' compensation, have been exhausted. Caps on compensation awards differ by state, along with the specific crime-related expenses covered under state law.

Q: What if I am the victim of a crime while outside the U.S?

American citizens who become crime victims while abroad should contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/crime.html>) at the U.S. Department of State for help. Call 1-888-407-4747 (from the U.S. or Canada) or 202-501-4444 (from overseas,) or locate the nearest embassy or consulate (<https://www.usembassy.gov/>) where emergency assistance is available around-the-clock.

Additionally, the International Terrorism Victim Expense Program (<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/international-terrorism-victim-expense-reimbursement-program-itverp/about-itverp>) reimburses American citizens who suffer direct physical or emotional injury from acts of international terrorism. Qualifying expenses include medical treatments, counseling, temporary lodging, transportation, and funeral and burial costs. Some states may also compensate victims of violent crimes suffered in foreign countries.

Q: What is victim notification?

The Department of Justice's Victim Notification System alerts victims of federal crimes to scheduled court events and outcomes, and provides information about the offender's custody status and release. Victims receive electronic and written updates and, after receiving a PIN number, can also access automated status information by calling the VNS

Call Center at 1-866-365-4968 or visiting its website(<https://www.notify.usdoj.gov/index.jsp>).

Q: Is there specific help for senior citizens?

There are many national and local resources available to help individuals ages 60 and older who are the victims of crime. The National Elder Fraud Hotline(<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/stop-elder-fraud/providing-help-restoring-hope>) offers seniors free help reporting fraud, including email extortion, sweepstakes schemes, and scams in which unknown individuals pose as a grandchild in need of money. Caseworkers are assigned to each caller and can connect individuals with additional resources on a case-by-case basis. Contact the hotline Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST, at 1-833-372-8311.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program(<https://acl.gov/programs/Protecting-Rights-and-Preventing-Abuse/Long-term-Care-Ombudsman-Program>), overseen by the Administration for Community Living at the Department of Health and Human Services, advocates on behalf of residents living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other residential care homes. Potential abuses that may be reported to an ombudsman include physical, verbal, and mental abuse; poor quality of care; and inappropriate use of chemical or physical restraints. A database of state ombudsmen can be found via the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care website(https://theconsumervoice.org/get_help)

Adult Protective Services (APS) are social service agencies with legal authority to investigate reports of potential abuse affecting adults with significant physical and/or mental impairments. APS investigates reports of abuse in private homes in every state; in some states, APS also investigates reports of abuse in nursing home and assisted living facilities. A nationwide database of local offices is available at the National Adult Protective Services Association website(<http://www.napsa-now.org/get-help/help-in-your-area/>).

Q: Where can I find help and learn more about crime victim assistance?

For a comprehensive listing of national hotlines, and to learn more about available services and resources for victims of crime, consult the OVC’s Help for Victims: Helplines List(<https://ovc.ojp.gov/help-for-victims/toll-free-helplines.pdf>).

Sources: U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime, National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, U.S. Department of State’s Office of Overseas Citizens Services, National Elder Fraud Hotline, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Adult Protective Services.

Need to talk to someone?

Our Information Specialists are available to answer your questions.

Call toll-free 1-800-539-7309 Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm ET.

Or [schedule a call](#) or [ask a question online](#).

Resources for Crime Victim Assistance

Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/>

810 Seventh St. NW

Washington, DC 20531

Phone: 202-307-5983

OVC Resource Center: 800-851-3420

Crime Victims Fund

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/about/crime-victims-fund>

Grants & Funding

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/funding>

Brochure on Victims’ Rights

https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/media/document/whatucando_508.pdf

Long Term Care Ombudsmen Program

https://theconsumervoice.org/get_help

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

1025 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20036

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program advocates for residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, board and care homes, and similar adult care homes. Each state has an ombudsman as well as regional ombudsmen to whom abuse in facilities can be reported.

National Adult Protective Services Association

<http://www.napsa-now.org/get-help/help-in-your-area/>

1612 K St. NW

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202-370-6292

Most states host a 24 hour/day hotline to report abuse of an adult. Please see the map at the link above for services in your state.

National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards

<https://nacvcb.org/>

P.O. Box 16003

Alexandria, VA 22302

Phone: 703-780-3200

The mission of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards is to provide leadership, professional development, and collaborative opportunities to members to strengthen their capacity to improve services to crime victims and survivors.

National Center for Victims of Crime

<https://victimsofcrime.org/>

2000 M Street NW, Suite 480

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202-467-8700

Email: info@victimsofcrime.org

The National Center for Victims of Crime is a nonprofit organization that advocates for victims' rights, trains professionals who work with victims, and provides information on victims' issues.

National Crime Victim Law Institute

<https://ncvli.org/>

Lewis and Clark Law School

10015 SW Terwilliger Blvd.

Portland, OR 97219

Phone: 503-768-6819

Email: ncvli@lclark.edu

NCVLI is a national nonprofit legal education and advocacy organization whose mission is to promote balance and fairness in the justice system through crime victim centered legal advocacy, education, and resource sharing. NCVLI works to ensure that victims of crime are informed of their rights and can find resources to enforce their rights. (NCVLI does not, however, provide legal advice to victims, cannot conduct research on individual victim's cases, and cannot serve as an individual victim's attorney.)

National Elder Fraud Hotline

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/stop-elder-fraud/providing-help-restoring-hope>

Hotline: 833-FRAUD-11 or 833-372-8311

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)

<https://www.trynova.org/>

510 King St., Suite 424

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-535-6682

Toll-free: 800-879-6682

NOVA is a non-profit organization that provides information resources on victims' rights and compensation.

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