

Rights Of Crime Victims

Criminal Law & Procedure: Sentencing: Restitution

Being a victim of a crime is a frightening experience. Until fairly recently, crime victims had no rights and did not have access to any federal, state, or local services to help them through the experience. In most states, there are now many services and resources that are available to crime victims.

Most states guarantee certain rights for crime victims. These rights include the right to be notified of all court proceedings related to the offense, the right to be protected from an offender, the right to make a statement at the offender's sentencing, the right to restitution from the offender, and the right to information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, and release of the offender. These rights also include the right to be notified of the aforementioned rights and the right to enforce these rights.

Crimes victims may obtain information about their rights from victim and witness assistance programs, which programs are usually located in city, county, state, and federal prosecutors' offices.

There are several private nonprofit and charitable organizations that provide services to crime victims. These organizations generally provide two types of services. These services include compensation and assistance. The compensation programs reimburse crime victims for their expenses that are related to the crimes. The crimes that are covered are normally violent crimes, such as homicide, rape, drunk driving, domestic violence, and sexual abuse or neglect of children. The expenses include medical costs, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, and lost wages or lost support.

The Office for Victims of Crime is an agency of the United States Department of Justice, which administers the Crime Victims Fund. The Crime Victims Fund provides financial support to crime victims. The Crime Victims Fund receives money from criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, and penalties that are collected by the United States Attorneys' Offices, federal courts, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The money is collected from offenders who are convicted of federal crimes.

Services that are also available to crime victims include assistance programs, such as counseling, hotlines, and support groups.