



THE CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION FUND HELPS VICTIMS

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

SURVIVORS OF VIOLENT CRIME never look at the world around them in quite the same way. Many crime victims develop a new perspective that recognizes the fragility and preciousness of life. Survivors of tragedy often discover that what is important in life is not only how we are challenged, but how we respond to those challenges.

For more than 25 years, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has been privileged to help crime victims find the courage to rebuild their lives.

Last year, our agency received more than 37,000 applications and awarded more than \$83 million in benefits from the **Crime Victims' Compensation Fund** on behalf of victims and their families. We also distributed nearly \$34 million in grants to nonprofit organizations and public entities that provide emergency shelter, crisis counseling, court accompaniment, and other assistance.

Behind the dollars and the numbers are real people with real issues – and real courage. Assistance from the OAG and crime victim advocacy groups helps ensure children feel safe enough to tell their stories; sexual assault

survivors face their accusers; and domestic violence victims break the cycle of violence.

The Texas Legislature established the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund to help victims and their families when they lack the means to pay for the financial cost of crime. The OAG administers the Fund, which receives its money from fees, court costs and restitution paid by those convicted of a felony or misdemeanor in a state court. When eligible victims and their families have exhausted all other means of financial support, the Fund helps them offset the expenses they incurred because of violent crime.

The Fund can ease the financial burden of funeral costs or money spent on child care. Other expenses covered by the Fund include out-of-pocket medical and psychiatric costs. Help with relocation expenses is also available to those who have been sexually assaulted in their homes.

An individual is disqualified for benefits if he or she knowingly or willingly participated in the crime, is the offender or was an offender's accomplice. Individuals may also be

disqualified if they were incarcerated in a criminal justice institution at the time of the crime, or knowingly submitted false or forged information to the Attorney General.

Every law enforcement agency in Texas is required to provide victims of crime with information about the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund and an application form. Applications may also be available at local hospitals and medical centers. Victims and survivors can also contact the OAG directly for an application.

Violent crime is often accompanied by extraordinary physical, emotional, and financial pain. Yet, countless crime victims do not let these senseless acts of violence define their lives. It is a testimony to the resilience of the human spirit that they are able to find a new outlook on life, step forward, and meet those who reach out to help them.

Together with crime victim advocates, law enforcement officers and communities across Texas, the Office of the Attorney General is proud to help victims of violent crime become survivors.

POINTS TO REMEMBER



CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION FUND

CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICES DIVISION

Office of the Attorney General

Monday - Friday

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Toll Free: (800) 983-9933

crimevictims@oag.state.tx.us

TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

(512) 794-1133

www.tcfv.org

TEXAS ASSOCIATION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

(512) 474-7190

www.taasa.org

CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS OF TEXAS

(800) 255-2574

www.cactx.org

Information on this and other topics is available on the Attorney General's

Web site: www.oag.state.tx.us



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
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