

Benefits for Victims of Child Abuse, Sexual Assault, Family Violence



By **Greg Abbott**
Attorney General of Texas

As we observe Crime Victims' Rights Week, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and Child Abuse Prevention Month – all in

April – we cannot help but note the diversity of suffering caused by crime in our society. We can also be encouraged by the tireless efforts of advocates who work to meet the specific needs of child victims, victims of sexual assault, victims of family violence, and others whose special circumstances deserve our attention and respect.

My office, in administering the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund, strives to deliver specialized services and benefits for various kinds of victims. To help children who are victims of child abuse and child sexual assault, we have helped fund child advocacy centers in a number of cities throughout Texas.

These facilities exist to provide a centralized, child-friendly environment where the necessary interviews and examinations can take place with reduced trauma to the child. Too often

in the past, a child was re-traumatized and re-victimized by repeated questioning and cross-examination. Effective prosecution is critical, if we are going to protect our children from those who abuse and prey upon them. But at the same time, we must protect our children in the criminal justice process.

Another special kind of victim is the victim of sexual assault. My office works closely with local rape crisis and sexual assault service providers to promote sensitive treatment. With training and awareness, we can provide compassionate and respectful services while at the same time effectively investigating and prosecuting sexual assault cases.

Special benefits available to victims of sexual assault include relocation expenses for victims who are assaulted in their homes. The Compensation Fund can help with deposits for rent and utilities, and with moving expenses. Moving away from the scene of a traumatic assault can be critical to a victim's ability to move ahead and rebuild a life shattered by crime.

In recent years, the Legislature has enacted new provisions to help victims of family violence. These victims may qualify for relocation expenses and rent. Discretionary grants have helped

provide safe havens in communities, where victims of family violence can make the critical leap from a dangerous environment to safety and freedom.

In addition to money for relocation, survivors of family violence who have dependent children may qualify for loss of support payments on behalf of their dependent children. These funds can, on a temporary basis, help make up for the income lost by leaving a partner or spouse. Victims can also receive help with expenses such as crime-related medical and counseling bills.

Nothing we do can entirely heal the damage that violent crime wreaks in the lives of all it touches. The least we can do is raise our own awareness of the suffering. We can treat victims with respect and sensitivity, and we can work to make every possible benefit available to them.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

CRIME VICTIMS

Office of the Attorney General
Crime Victims' Compensation
(800) 983-9933 for applications

Report Child Abuse
Texas Department of Protective and
Regulatory Services
1-800-252-5400

National Domestic
Violence Hotline
(800) 799-SAFE (7233)
TTY for deaf or hard of hearing
(800) 787-3224

Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)
U.S. Department of Justice
(800) 331-0075
TTY for deaf or hard of hearing
(800) 833-6885

Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse
Texas Department of
Criminal Justice
(800) 848-4284

Rape, Abuse, and Incest
National Network (RAINN)
(800) 656-HOPE (4673)



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