

Knowledge is the #1 tool that can assist crime victims to successfully and effectively participate within the criminal justice system.

- Ask questions! Bring support, they can take notes or just be a second ear; a great form of support;
- Take advantage of the resources available to you;
- Stay positive and do not lose hope.
- Be patient.

CT is an "opt-in" system!

Victims must take certain steps to be included in the criminal justice system:

The OVA has a form intended for you to assert your rights as a Crime Victim. Visit www.ct.gov/ova

- Send the form to the State's Attorney of the Court;
- Send a copy to the Clerk of the Court ;
- Save a copy for your records.

What you need to know BEFORE an arrest is made and why there may be a delay:

- You are permitted to speak with the investigator/detective; understand that records or detailed information about the pending investigation may not be available to you at this time;
- Police may be consulting with the investigator or state's attorney during the investigation;
- Property may be seized as evidence as part of the investigation;
- Lab testing may need to be completed, this takes time; Inform investigator/detective that you want to be notified when an arrest occurs.

What you need to know AFTER an arrest is made:

At the Arraignment (first court date) the following can be discussed; Orders of protection, Bond consideration, and Conditions of Release. If you have safety concerns you have the right to be reasonably protected. This may be available to you through witness protection, no contact orders or orders of protection.

Restitution

Restitution is payment by the offender to the victim to cover some or all of the costs associated with a crime. It is ordered by a judge and usually paid through the Court Support Services Division of the Connecticut Judicial Branch. To request restitution in a criminal court case, contact the State's Attorney's Office located in the court where the criminal case will be prosecuted.

Court Based Victim Services Advocates: Available through The Office of Victim Services, for physical injury cases only; Some State's Attorney Investigators informally provide services to victims that do not otherwise qualify for the services of an advocate.

Notification: Judicial Branch Website www.jud.ct.gov

You can search for cases with the defendant's name.

SAVIN : Register on the judicial branch website under the pending case summary page to receive automated notifications regarding the pending criminal matter.

Victim Impact Statement

Your opportunity to be heard

Inform the court how you feel about any plea bargain being considered by the court. You can provide a verbal or written statement or both to inform the court of how the crime has impacted your life and/or the life of your family.

Available Resources

Child Abuse Care Line (24 hr.)

1-800-999-5545

CONNSACS- Sexual Assault (24 hr.)
1-888-999-5545/En Espanol 1-888-568-8332

CT Bar Association

1-860-223-4400

DOC Victim Services Unit (24 hr.)

1-888-869-7057

Domestic Violence – CCADV (24 hr.)

1-888-774-2900

Elder Abuse (24 hr.)

1-888-385-4225

**MADD Mothers Against Drunk Driving
(24 hr.)**

1-800-544-3690

Office of the Child Advocate

1-800-994-0939

Office of Victim Services (OVS)

1-800-822-8428

Safe at Home

Contact the Secretary of the State's Office

860-509-6200

Survivors of Homicide, Inc.

1-888-833-4764

Witness Protection Program

Contact the Office of the

Chief State's Attorney

860-258-5800

Are you a VICTIM?

NEED HELP?

A GUIDE FOR VICTIMS

What you need to know!

*Did you know you have rights
as a victim?*

*Have questions and don't
know where to turn?*



State of Connecticut
Office of the Victim Advocate

505 Hudson Street

Hartford, CT 06106

(860) 550-6632

Toll Free 1-888-771-3126

WWW.CT.GOV/OVA

► CRIME VICTIMS GUIDE

As a crime victim you have Legal Rights*

In Connecticut, our state constitution guarantees that crime victims and their families are entitled to:

- ✓ Be treated with fairness and respect throughout the criminal justice process;
 - ✓ Receive Financial Restitution;
 - ✓ Timely disposition of the case following arrest of the accused
 - ✓ Be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process;
 - ✓ Receive notification of court proceedings;
 - ✓ Attend the trial and all other court proceedings;
 - ✓ Communicate with the prosecution about the case;
 - ✓ Object to or support any plea agreement entered into by the accused and the prosecution and to make a statement to the court prior to the court accepting a plea of guilty or nolo contendere by the accused;
 - ✓ Make a statement to the court at sentencing;
 - ✓ Information about the arrest, conviction, sentence, imprisonment and release of the accused.
- Other Connecticut laws provide victims and their families with certain additional rights and protections, including:*
- ✓ Compensation for expenses incurred, including medical services, funeral expenses, and loss of earning power;
 - ✓ The right to receive financial restitution from the offender, as part of the disposition for out of pocket expenses incurred relating to the crime;
 - ✓ The return of personal property used to investigate the crime;
 - ✓ The right to access certain records and test results; Special rights and protections in family violence matters;
 - ✓ Protection from being fired, harassed or in any manner retaliated against at work for attending court proceedings or participating in a police investigation related to a crime.

WHAT TO EXPECT NOW AND WHEN AN ARREST IS MADE

Now that you have become a victim, there will be many things you may not understand or know. Did you know a pending criminal investigation can take 6 months to 1 year? Did you know that you should call the police department in the town the crime occurred? Did you know pending an investigation the police can implement a condition in a warrant?

OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES (OVS)

The Office of Victim Services is a Judicial Branch agency that offers crime victims compensation, court based victim advocates, automated court event notification through the CT SAVIN system,, notification of post-conviction changes in inmate status, counseling services and funeral assistance for families of homicide victims.

Crime Victim Compensation is a program administered by the Office of Victim Services. It is intended to assist eligible victims recover from the financial impact of the crime. An application for compensation must be filed. (*Filing an application with OVS does not guarantee that compensation will be awarded.*) Eligible Crimes: Assault, DUI, Hit and run, Murder, Robbery with injury and Sexual assault. For more information please visit the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim or call OVS Compensation staff at 888-286-7347 or 860-263-2761. or visit www.jud.ct.gov.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) is a statewide coalition of individual sexual assault crisis programs. A counselor/advocate is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to listen and offer support, as well as to provide you with information and resources to help you best decide what to do next. All services are free and confidential. Call the 24 Hour Toll Free Hotline at 1-888-999-5545 English and 1-888-568-8332 Español.

MADD - DRUNK DRIVING

If you or a loved one has been affected by a drunk or drugged driving crash, MADD is here to help. MADD offers trained victim advocates who can help bereaved families and injured victims/survivors by: providing emotional support, accompaniment to court, assist in preparing a victim impact statement, referral to appropriate resources for additional help, support groups, connecting victims/survivors who share similar experiences and more. Call MADD's Victim/Survivor Help Line at 1-877-MADD-HELP (877-623-3435) or visit their website at www.madd.org/local-offices/ct/

HOMICIDE

Survivors of Homicide, Inc. was founded in 1983 by a group of families who were trying to cope with the murder of a family member or someone else close to them. SOH has become outspoken advocates for all victims of violent crime, for fair compensation to victims, and for public policy and understanding that reduces the senseless violence sweeping our communities. SOH is based in Connecticut, but it is open to anyone who needs help. All services are offered free of charge. SOH has support groups, newsletters, and personal advocacy and support throughout the judicial process and beyond. Survivors of Homicide, (860) 257-7388, Toll Free: 1-888-833-4764. www.survivorsofhomicide.com.

CT COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (CCADV)

CCADV is an organization specifically for victims of domestic violence. They offer a variety of services including safety planning, 24hr hotline, support groups, shelter and safe home placement, counseling services and advocacy with in the courts. Call 1-888-774-2900 or visit their website at www.ctcadv.org.

NOTIFICATION

Before conviction: OVS provides victim notification of pending court proceedings. SAVIN registration is also available by registering at www.jud.ct.gov. Please see back panel for more information.

After a conviction: The Conviction Notification Program offers information about changes in the status of convicted inmates. Such as Parole hearings, Sentence review, Sentence modification, Discharge from a correctional institution, Parole release, Halfway house release and/or Transitional supervision release and Pardon hearings. Register with Department of Correction Victim Service Unit by calling

► THE OVA

The Office of the Victim Advocate works with and assists crime victims' as they journey through the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system is often experienced by crime victims as intimidating, confusing and sterile. One immediate step you can take to navigate the system is ask questions often and request answers in writing from participants of the criminal justice system.

Our state has laws in place to protect you as a crime victim including your right to be treated with fairness and respect.

*Please contact our office today with any questions or concerns you may have by calling
860-550-6632/ 1-888-771-3126.*