



You Are Not Alone

By Angie McCown, Director TDCJ Victim Services Division

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

I hope everyone's 2025 is off to a great start. We are in the midst of many changes, and it can sometimes be hard to chart a course in such choppy, and often turbulent waters. We seem to be living in a time of polarization, which moves us away from empathy and understanding, and can leave us feeling hopeless and alone. However, with change comes opportunity for introspection, growth, and new commitments. It is important to remember Margaret Mead's quote and to know that although as individuals we may not be able to change the world, our individual actions can contribute to community change.

As many of you know the Texas Legislature convened the 89th Legislative Session on January 14, 2025, and the regular session will end on June 2, 2025. During this time many victims and victims' advocates will engage members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to discuss public policy to expand victims' rights and enhance services to crime victims, with the goal of victim empowerment in the criminal justice system. Participating in the legislative process is one way to contribute to the community by supporting victims' strength and resilience while furthering their ability to seek the justice they deserve. The Texas Legislature Online website www.legis.state.tx.us is a tool that anyone can use to follow bills that are filed and to receive alerts about bills that may impact victims.

In April we will once again commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW). This year's theme "Kinship: Connecting and Healing" offers each of us the opportunity to examine what we as Texas citizens and criminal justice professionals are doing to connect with crime victims and create healing pathways, while helping them to seek justice. I encourage each of you to think creatively about how you might engage your community to better connect with victims, and to join your community in commemorating NCVRW April 6-12, 2025. I also hope you will discover ways in which you might contribute to the legislative change process to expand victims' rights, enhance services to crime victims, and advocate for a better Texas for all Texans. Lastly, I would ask that as you engage in the change process, standing firm in your beliefs, that you do so from a position of empathy, making space for dialogue and understanding. Be the change while extending grace to others, it makes us all better humans and it fosters kinship.

"Empathy is simply listening, holding space, withholding judgement, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of you're not alone."

Brene Brown

- 1 [You Are Not Alone](#)
- 2 [Celebrating Kinship: NCVRW 2025](#)
- 3 [The Parole Board Welcomes New Presiding Officer](#)

- 4 [2024 Crime Victim Institute Conference](#)
- 7 [TDCJ Restitution and Restorative Justice](#)
- 10 [TxCVC Training Opportunities](#)
- 11 [National Awareness Months](#)

Celebrating Kinship: National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2025

By Sydney Zuiker,

Victim Services Committee Chair, Texas Board of Criminal Justice



This year we recognize National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) from April 6th-12th and the theme, Kinship, deeply resonates with me. **Kinship** is about connection, shared humanity, and the bonds that unite us in the face of adversity.

For victims of crime,

kinship can be a lifeline, offering solace, solidarity, and strength.

What Does Kinship Mean?

At its core, kinship embodies relationships built on empathy, care, and mutual understanding. While the term traditionally refers to familial bonds, it extends to the meaningful connections we cultivate within our communities. Kinship reminds us that we are not isolated beings but instead that we are interconnected and interdependent.

For victims of crime, this concept takes on heightened significance. In the aftermath of trauma, feelings of isolation and vulnerability can be overwhelming. Kinship—whether from family, friends, or community support systems—can help victims rebuild their lives, reclaim their voices, and rediscover their strength.

Victims of crime have multifaceted needs—justice, safety, emotional support, and the tools to navigate a new normal. These needs are not met in isolation but through networks of care and compassion. Kinship fosters **collective action**. When communities come together to advocate for victims' rights, we amplify their voices and ensure that justice systems prioritize the needs of those impacted by crime.

Perhaps most importantly, kinship provides emotional sanctuary. Victims often carry unseen burdens—grief, fear, anger, and confusion. A network of supportive relationships can validate their experiences, encourage resilience, and offer much needed hope.

Leading and Serving Through Humanity

For me, victim services has always been about valuing the humanity in every person. Crime robs individuals of their sense of safety and control, leaving scars that can last a lifetime. In my roles, I am reminded daily of the importance of listening to victims with empathy, advocating with passion, and supporting them with unwavering commitment.

I believe that humanity is our greatest strength as leaders and advocates. It compels us to see victims not as case files but as people with stories, struggles, and dreams. Humanity drives us to walk alongside them on their journeys of healing and empowers us to find solutions tailored to their needs.

The Role of Kinship in Advocacy and Action

As we celebrate National Crime Victims' Rights Week, let's reflect on how kinship shapes our approach to advocacy and action. Advocacy efforts are most effective when they are collaborative. By fostering partnerships between organizations, law enforcement, schools, and communities, we can create a safety net for victims that meets their needs holistically.

Kinship begins with listening. Victims deserve to have their stories heard and validated. By creating platforms where they can share their experiences without judgment, we affirm their worth and inspire others to take action. This National Crime Victims' Rights Week, I encourage everyone to embrace the spirit of kinship. Whether you're a policy maker, community leader, educator, or neighbor, you have a role to play in supporting victims and fostering a culture of care.

Kinship is not just a theme; it is a call to action, a reminder of our shared humanity, and a blueprint for building a more compassionate world. Through kinship, we can ensure that victims of crime are not forgotten, overlooked, or left to navigate their paths alone. Together, we can create a future where every individual feels seen, valued, and supported.

This National Crime Victims' Rights Week, let's lead with humanity, serve with compassion, and celebrate the resilience of those who inspire us to be better.

Parole Board Welcomes New Presiding Officer

By Libby Hamilton

Victim Liaison Program, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles



In September 2024 Governor Greg Abbott appointed Marsha Moberley as the new Chair of the Texas Board of Pardons & Paroles. The Board's responsibilities include making parole decisions for Texas prison inmates, determining conditions for parole and mandatory supervision, determine revocation of parole or mandatory supervision, and making recommendations on clemency matters to the Governor.

Ms. Moberley initially joined the Board in 2010, serving as a Parole Commissioner in the Amarillo office. She then transferred to the Austin Board office before being appointed as the Board Member in our Angleton Board office in 2022. Altogether she brings over 27 years of experience in the field of probation and parole.

Ms. Moberley's predecessor, Chairman David Gutiérrez, created the Board's Victim Liaison Program, which I've been blessed to lead since early 2017. Lucky for us, and the victims of crime we serve, our new Chair also cares deeply about survivors impacted by violence in Texas.

She has spent the last 15 years meeting with victims who requested to provide input during an offender's parole review, hearing first-hand about the impact of the crimes committed against them. Ms. Moberley also recently joined me at the Travis County Tree of Angels to show support for those grieving during the holiday season. If you've never attended one of these beautiful ceremonies sponsored by People Against Violent Crime, I highly encourage you to do so. They provide a space, at the beautiful historic Central Christian Church in downtown Austin, where homicide survivors can come together to honor their loved ones.

Chair Moberley has also traveled with me to provide training to other entities who have the ability to impact a victim's experience with the criminal justice system. We have accepted invitations to meet with District Attorneys and their Victim Assistance Coordinators around the state to discuss topics such as the effects plea bargains can have on parole, what victim interviews are like with the Board, and how officials can submit protest material. In turn, we have built strong relationships with stakeholders that will benefit victims and survivors whose offenders are housed in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. On a personal note, I have an immense amount of respect for this woman, and am thrilled to be working closely with her in the coming years.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions about the Board or our Victim Liaison Program: libby.hamilton@tdcj.texas.gov.



**Marsha Moberley, Chair of the
Texas Board of Pardons and
Paroles**



The 2024 Crime Victims' Institute Conference

By Sarah Corbett-Imeny

Training and Development Specialist IV, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse

The Crime Victims' Institute (CVI) was created in 1995 by the Texas Legislature. In May 2003, Governor Rick Perry signed Senate Bill 1245, which directed moving the Institute from the Office of the Attorney General to Sam Houston State University (SHSU). SHSU continues the legislative mission and directives set forth for the Institute by conducting research on the impact of crime on victims and providing training on victimization-related issues. Their work has established several relationships with relevant community, criminal justice, and victim service organizations throughout the state and region which helps to promote a better understanding of victimization, assist victims, and inform victim-related policy making. The CVI has a long-standing reputation for advancing and providing public access to research on victimization issues in Texas and recently expanded their impact by hosting their inaugural conference where I was fortunate to be one of the roughly 50 attendees from several Texas counties to attend.

The first annual conference was in October 2024 at the SHSU George J. Beto Criminal Justice Center with the theme of *Championing Advocacy, Policy, and Research for Victims and Survivors through a Broader Lens*. Dr. Mary Breaux, the CVI Director, said the conference came forth, "from a growing need for a platform where individuals could exchange ideas, share experiences, and collaborate to bridge the gap between victimization research and field challenges and trends." There was a strong push from the community and the CVI staff to further discuss victimization topics with practitioners and researchers and the conference provided just that platform.

The focal points of the conference centered around mass violence incidents (MVI), victimization-related policies and procedures, and restorative justice. The CVI hoped a conference centered around these topics would allow attendees to gain a deeper understanding of the many facets of victimization, including its forms, impacts, and contributing social factors; and to learn practical strategies for providing support to victims, advocating for systematic change, and fostering healing and resilience. Attendees were encouraged to do so by discussing models in which victims and

communities can heal and move forward, analyzing the dynamics of mass violence from prevention to intervention, examining current victimization-related legislative policies and procedures, and networking with other attendees to build connections and explore collaborations to strengthen collective efforts against victimization.

The conference began with an evening mixer welcoming attendees to enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres and meet with Dr. Breaux and the CVI team. I had the opportunity to meet with various CVI Advisory Board members, the National Director of Victim Services with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Director of the Victim Liaison Program with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, and the Director of Client Support Services and Education from Family Ties Family Resource Services, a non-profit organization located in Waller, Texas which was a new resource to me. I enjoyed the mixer as an icebreaker to the conference, since it allowed me the chance to learn more about CVI and the other organizations and agencies in attendance.



CVI Conference evening mixer

The first full day of the conference began with a great breakfast with the other attendees allowing opportunities for continued networking. Afterward, Mark Odom, Victim Offender Mediation Dialogue (VOMD) Supervisor with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services



Mark Odom facilitating the VOMD Restorative Justice Workshop

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Division, spoke about victim-centered restorative justice. Mr. Odom explained the history and purpose of VOMD; sharing how the victim-initiated process gives victims back some control they may have lost during and after their victimization and how the experience is for the victim and the offender. After a brief break, we were divided into two smaller groups. I do not know how other participants felt about moving from larger to smaller groups, but I thought it made the workshops more personable and encouraged more engagement with the speaker and group participants during the sessions.

While at the conference, I attended two MVI workshops. The first workshop, titled *Active Leadership to Prevent Active Attacks*, was presented by Dr. Matthew Fuller, SHSU Professor and Director of the Center for Assessment, Research and Educational Safety (CARES). Dr. Fuller discussed the importance of building a culture of acceptance within schools



Dr. Matthew Fuller facilitating the *Active Leadership to Prevent Active Attacks Workshop*

so that all students feel welcomed. He exclaimed, "It's not all bad!". Because of what is known about school shootings that have occurred, prevention can happen when administrators, teachers, parents, and students promote their school's culture to ensure a safe and secure environment for everyone. Dr. Fuller also shared various handouts, but "The Safe School Culture Framework" piqued my interest as I am coming back from teaching middle school for two years, and hearing about school shootings led me to think it could happen to any school.



Melissa Stroop facilitating the *FBI Mass Violence Response Workshop*

The second MVI Workshop titled, *The FBI's Victim Services' Response to MVI*, was presented by Melissa Stroop, LCSW, FBI Victim Specialist of Dallas. Ms. Stroop spoke

about the FBI's Victim Services Response Team's experience when they were deployed to a MVI. She shared her personal experiences with responding to past MVI and the lessons learned in the hopes that her insight into providing victims with assistance during such critical incidents can assist fellow victim service professionals in their respective fields. One detail from Ms. Stroop's workshop that stood out to me was regarding donations received after an MVI and what needs to be done with them. So many people want to help or send means of support, but I had never thought about the influx of donations that come because of that (i.e. food, clothing, toiletries for dispersed persons, etc.). MVI responders will have to consider how to receive them, what to do with them, and how to distribute them, and that was something I had never thought of previously.



Rose Luna facilitating one of the *Policy Work and Crime Victims Workshop*

The day concluded with the first of two Policies and Procedures workshops, titled *Texas Policy Work and Crime Victims: A Focus on Sexual Assault*, presented by Rose Luna, CEO of the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA). Ms. Luna spoke about the victim-centered laws supported by TAASA regarding the rights and services for sexual assault survivors and what we can look forward to in the 89th Texas Legislative Session in 2025.

On the final day of the conference, we resumed our small groups and attended the second Policies and Procedures workshop titled, *Uvalde, Texas: Lessons for Criminal Justice in the Aftermath of Mass Violence*, presented by Dr. Monica Muñoz-Martinez, Associate Professor of History at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin); and Dr. Noel Busch-Armendariz, University Presidential Professor and Associate Dean for Global Engagement at UT Austin. Both presenters shared their study and methodology using UT Austin's trauma-informed, multi-disciplinary research teams to collect data following the school shooting in Uvalde. They discussed the physical and mental well-being of those impacted by Uvalde and the educational, economic, and criminal justice impacts of the MVI. The presenters also discussed some of the community-driven recommendations for assisting the community. Two key recommendations for responding to MVI that stood out to me were

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the importance of the responders to build trust within the community they're assisting and having continued trauma-informed leadership present in the community following the MVI, since recovery is a process not just a singular event. After this session, I met an attendee from Uvalde who talked about her experience being there in the community during the time of that mass shooting and her thoughts on the research findings discussed. I found myself in awe being able to once again hear from someone who had been in Uvalde willing to share their experiences of working in a community that was so deeply impacted.

The closing keynote speaker was Hillary England, Deputy Director for Victim Services and Prevention Programs in the Office of the Governor. Ms. England shared her expertise in having oversight of the Governor's Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF), the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team, and the Public Safety Office's Victim Services programs. She also showed a video created by 1in6, a national nonprofit organization that provides information and services for male survivors of sexual abuse or assault, their loved ones, and service providers. The video titled, *Survivors of Sexual Trauma Reveal an Important Truth*, revealed important truths about male sexual abuse or assault survivors that were new to me, which was a valuable educational experience.



Hillary England delivering a keynote speech on the response to sexual abuse and sexual assault survivors in Texas

Often, conferences can have a lot of moving parts and the constant



Dr. Miltonette Craig facilitating the CVI conference breakout session

coming and going of attendees, faculty, and support staff combined with hearing about difficult or heavy topics can feel overwhelming at times. In recognizing this, CVI designated a place for attendees to sit for 15 minutes with their thoughts and hold space for their feelings at any moment during the conference. Attendees had another time to reflect on the conference in a breakout session with Dr. Miltonette Craig, Research Coordinator with CVI and Assistant Professor at the SHSU College of Criminal Justice. Dr. Craig's session and the CVI providing attendees with a designated quiet reflection room during all conference breaks provides a thoughtful recognition of attendees and reiterates the CVI's design to keep people well given the topics addressed during the conference.

As an attendee, I was eager to engage in the workshops and insightful panel discussions, while the networking sessions sparked new connections and collaborations with professionals in the field that I otherwise may not have. Dr. Breaux shared that the feedback overwhelmingly highlighted the conference as both inspiring and valuable for those in attendance. Encouraged by this experience, the CVI is looking forward to making the next conference even better. Well done on the inaugural conference, CVI! I look forward to the next one!

In addition to planning and delivering a wonderful exceptional conference, the CVI also shares an abundance of state and national resources to crime victims and the agencies that serve them. The CVI publishes a one-page fact sheet and a monthly translational research paper that covers a wide range of victim services and criminal justice related topics. If you are interested in learning more about the CVI, their shared resources, or viewing any of their previous and future publications, please visit their website at <http://www.crimevictimsinstitute.org/>.



Restitution and Restorative Justice

By Tequilla Lloyd

Parole Officer IV, Restitution and Fees Oversight, TDCJ Specialized Programs

Restorative justice, as defined by Oxford is a system of criminal justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims and the community at large.

Restorative justice has several key components including a focus on identifying needs and repairing harm, active accountability, centering relationships, community, and voluntary participation. Restitution encompasses several of these key components.

What is Restitution? Why is it important?

Restitution involves the court, as part of a sentence in a criminal case, ordering a defendant to compensate the victim for losses suffered as a result of the crime. For instance, if an individual commits burglary at a tire and rims shop, the victim—whether a private individual or a corporate entity—may be entitled to financial restitution if the stolen items cannot be recovered. This process is crucial as it ensures that the defendant is held accountable for their actions while also assisting the victim in recovering financially.

Restitution is often ordered as a result of a sentence in cases involving theft or fraud. The court can then instruct the defendant to reimburse the stolen amount. Additionally, restitution may be ordered when a victim experiences injury or loss due to a criminal act. It is important to note that the court imposes restitution when it is deemed necessary for the defendant's rehabilitation, to assist the victim in feeling "whole," and when the victim's financial losses are directly tied to the defendant's actions.

What Expenses Does Restitution Cover?

Restitution may be mandated to compensate a victim for a range of expenses incurred as a result of a crime. The following expenses are typically considered when determining restitution amounts:

Funeral expenses. In cases that result in loss of life, it is deemed appropriate for defendants to be held financially accountable for all expenses related to the funeral. Surviving family members are recognized as indirect victims in these circumstances.

Lost wages. If a victim is unable to work due to injuries sustained from a crime, they may seek compensation for their lost wages. Furthermore, self-employed individuals may experience a more

significant financial impact as a result of the crime.

Medical and counseling expenses. Victims may incur expenses related to hospital services, physical rehabilitation, and psychological counseling.

Lost or damaged property. Courts have the ability to order compensation for the replacement or repair of stolen items that cannot be returned, as well as for any damage done to property.

Other direct out-of-pocket expenses. Victims can be reimbursed for any extra expenses they have faced, like higher insurance premiums after a burglary or costs related to fixing their credit following identity theft.

The judge has the ultimate authority to determine the amount of restitution the defendant is required to pay, regardless of the defendant's ability to pay.

Restitution within the TDCJ Parole Division

Offenders on parole are required to begin making restitution payments upon their release from prison. Before an offender's release date, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), Review and Release Processing staff assess all Judgments and Sentences related to current offenses that have been mandated by the court for restitution payments. If it is found that an offender is obligated to pay restitution, the Board of Pardons and Paroles will impose Special Condition R: Restitution on that individual.

Parole officers are tasked with ensuring that offenders understand their obligation to pay restitution, in addition to fulfilling all other imposed conditions. Offenders are required to sign a formal document known as an "advisement form," which specifies that they must pay 10% of their net income towards restitution. Payments should be made exclusively in the form of a money order or cashier's check, and all funds will be directed solely to restitution to prevent any confusion with other parole fee obligations. Once payments are received by the Parole Division, the Accounting and Business Services Department transmits the payment to the clerk of the court of conviction. The county clerk will subsequently forward the payment to the victim. This process ensures that there is no direct contact between the victim and the offender.

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The mission of the Parole Division is to promote public safety and positive offender change through effective supervision, programs, and services.

The Parole Division designates the month of August as “Advisement Form Anniversary Month” for offenders who owe restitution. During this time, all offenders who have Special Condition R imposed are required to sign an advisement form outlining their commitment to pay a specified amount toward restitution.

Payment Amounts and Accuracy

Offenders who are responsible for restitution are required to submit verification of their monthly income. The offender’s gross and net income will be entered into our automated system to determine 10% of their net income. For instance, if an offender has a verified net income of \$2,000 per month, they will be required to pay \$200 a month, at minimum toward restitution. Should the offender’s income change, updated proof of income must be provided, and a new payment amount will be calculated accordingly. The offender is then required to sign a new advisement form with instructions to pay the adjusted amount.

Unemployed Offenders

Unemployment does not exempt an offender from their obligation to pay restitution. Many unemployed offenders may be receiving Social Security Income or Veteran’s Affairs benefits. This income is also subject to monitoring and verification, with a requirement to allocate 10% of that income towards restitution payments. In cases where an offender is neither employed nor receiving benefits, parole reserves the right to defer supervision fee payments in favor of restitution payments. When supervision fees are deferred towards restitution, offenders are required to make a minimum monthly payment of \$10 to their victims. While this amount may seem insignificant, it reinforces the offender’s accountability to meet their restitution obligations. However, it is recognized that this arrangement does not facilitate a swift financial recovery for victims. The Parole Division actively encourages offenders to pursue employment, as it is a critical component of their successful reintegration into society and often times a condition of their release. To assist unemployed offenders in their job search, the Parole Division offers a range of resources, including referrals to

the Texas Workforce Commission, participation in job fairs, weekly employment classes, and access to employment computers at designated parole offices. Additionally, employed offenders are also subject to deferring their supervision fees, highlighting the importance of prioritizing their restitution payments.

Finalized Payments and Discharging Parole

Offenders are obligated to continue making payments toward their restitution until the full amount is settled. While under supervision, payment transactions and their corresponding amounts are monitored by three distinct restitution teams within TDCJ, all working towards a common goal of ensuring victim reimbursement. Upon receipt of the final payment, our restitution department will verify the information with the court of conviction, and it will be documented in the offender’s file. At this stage, Special Condition R can then be satisfied. When offenders reach their parole discharge date, they are still obligated to fulfill their restitution payments if there is an outstanding balance. Offenders are instructed to send payments via mail directly to Accounting and Business Services at the following address: P.O. Box 4015, Huntsville, Texas 77342.

Why Restitution Matters

Restitution plays a crucial role in restorative justice as it emphasizes the accountability of offenders, under appropriate supervision. It serves as a way for offenders to do right by those they have harmed. It is important to recognize that victims do not choose to be victims.

American psychologist Dr. Albert Eglash introduced the concept of creative restitution during his work with youth and adult offenders. He identified significant deficiencies in the compassion and efficacy of the criminal justice system, in contrast to creative restitution, which emphasizes prevention and rehabilitation. Restitution is essential as it aims to promote healing and facilitate the rebuilding of relationships among offenders, victims, and the community.

“Restorative justice is a powerful tool for healing communities and rebuilding trust. It offers a way forward that is based on empathy, accountability, and understanding, rather than division and punishment. It is a testament to the power of human connection and the potential for positive change.” - Jennifer Thompson

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While it is acknowledged that restorative justice begins within the criminal justice system, it is important to emphasize the significance of restitution and reimbursement. Restitution seeks to restore victims back to where they were before they became victims. It is essential to note that restitution is not a form of punishment; rather, it serves to hold the offender accountable for their actions and supports their rehabilitation process. Restitution and its collection procedures are vital components of rehabilitation, serving as one of the key factors to making things right. Supervision is a privilege, not a right, and an essential part of this privilege includes the responsibility of compensating one's victims.

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TDCJ Victim Services Division Resources

The TDCJ Victim Services Division provides services to victims, criminal justice and victim services professionals, and the public, including resources, publications, and information and referral services.

Brochures

All Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse (TxCVC) brochures are available for free to download from the Integrated Victim Services System (IVSS) portal by visiting <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/publication-list/>. You may also use the "Request Publication Hardcopy" to place an order to be mailed to you. You must be signed into your portal account to place an order.

IVSS Links Library

The TDCJ VSD maintains a Links Library on the IVSS website to provide links to helpful tools, information, brochures, and help lines for victims of crime covering topics ranging from Crime Victims' Compensation and safety planning to suicide and self-harm prevention. The Links Library is accessible through the IVSS portal under the Resources tab, you may click the following link as well: <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/links-library/>.

Texas Victim Services Resource Directory

The Texas Victim Resource Directory is also located on the IVSS portal at <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/resource-search/>. This directory features a searchable database with over 1,100 service providers from governmental agencies and non-profit organizations that provide services to victims free of charge.

Informational Video Library

The Informational Video Library connects victims of crime to information they may need to navigate the criminal justice system, exercise their rights, and access support and assistance. The library also serves as a resource for victim services and criminal justice professionals who wish to receive training and information on specific subjects related to serving victims of crime. To access the library, click the following link: <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/video>.

Crime Victims' Rights

Victims of crime are guaranteed rights and participation in the criminal justice system under Texas law. In order to exercise your rights as a crime victim it is necessary to contact crime victim service providers to discuss and request, if applicable, your rights and available services. [Crime Victims' Rights](#) are detailed on the TDCJ Victim Services Division website, and if you have any questions regarding these rights and how to exercise them, please contact the TDCJ Victim Services Division at (800) 848-4284 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Training Opportunities

The TxCVC provides training statewide for our partners in the criminal justice and victim assistance fields.

Texas Victim Assistance Training Online

The Texas Victim Assistance Training (TVAT) Online is designed to provide a foundational-level training for new victim services professionals who routinely work with victims of crime. Topics include: crime victims' rights, ethics in victim services, stress management, compassion fatigue, crime victims' assistance standards, effective communication skills for working with victims of crime, and guiding principles and practices of the victim services field. For more information, please visit the TVAT Online web page https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/tvat_online.html.

Resiliency Module

Working as a victim service professional can be incredibly fulfilling and rewarding. However, assisting people who have endured horrible criminal acts and continued exposure to all the malicious things people do to each other can lead to burnout. Information, preparation, and positive self-care practices can help victim service professionals moderate any adverse effects they may experience. The TVAT Online Resiliency Module explores strategies that can help you recognize, reduce, and transform those effects that may come from working with people who have suffered extreme trauma, grief, and loss. This module teaches coping practices, skills, and techniques that can help you build a resiliency program and prevent or mitigate vicarious trauma. To register for the Resiliency Module, please go to [TVAT Online Resiliency Module](#) event registration page.

Webinars

The TxCVC hosts a webinar series designed to provide training on a wide range of topics for criminal justice and victim services professionals. Information regarding webinars and other victim services related trainings and events scheduled in Texas are provided through the search tool found here <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/search-training-event/>. The database includes trainings, conferences, memorial/remembrance events, webinar recordings, and other relevant events hosted in the state of Texas. To keep abreast on all upcoming TxCVC webinars, please refer to the Upcoming Webinars page on

the TDCJ VSD website: <https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/webinars.html>.

If you would like to share ideas for future webinars or would be interested in presenting in our webinar series, please email the TxCVC with your contact information at tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov.

Other Trainings Available

The TxCVC can provide training to your agency or coalition. Training content and topics can be developed and integrated to meet your specific training needs and can vary in length. The TxCVC is committed to providing training to meet the individualized needs of communities working to enhance services provided to victims. Trainings provided by TxCVC staff are free of charge. If you would like the TxCVC to present a training event for your organization, please go to the Event/Training Request page found here <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/training-request/>.

Victim Impact Panel

The TDCJ VSD facilitates victim impact panels for criminal justice and victim services agencies and organizations. The attendees of the panels are usually either groups of criminal justice/victim services professionals or groups of offenders. Panelists are typically victims of crime who are also TDCJ volunteers. Volunteer panelists can indicate if they prefer to speak at panels with only criminal justice and victim services professionals, panels with only offenders, or both. Anyone interested in serving as a panelist may contact the VSD office at (800) 848-4284 and ask to speak with the Victim Offender Mediation Dialogue Administrative Assistant. Crime victims who wish to volunteer as panelists will need to apply to be a TDCJ approved volunteer. For more information, please visit https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/faq/victim_impact_panel.html. To request a Victim Impact Panel go to [IVSS Victim Impact Panel Request](#).

National Victim Awareness Dates

April 2025

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW)

NCVRW will be observed April 6-12, 2025. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has challenged the nation to confront and remove barriers to achieving justice for all victims of crime since its inception in 1981. This year's theme:

[Connecting < KINSHIP > Healing](#)

For more information on NCVRW, please visit the [Office for Victims of Crime](#) website.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month (NCAPM)

NCAPM recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect and promotes the social and emotional well-being of children and families. The Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) is committed to ensuring the support and protection of children from further harm when they have been impacted by abuse and crime. For more information regarding CACTX's efforts and resources, visit <https://cactx.org/>.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

April is SAAM when organizations across the country host events and programs to educate the public about sexual assault and provide outreach to survivors of sexual and interpersonal violence. The Office of the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Survivor's Task Force (SASTF) has created the [Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors](#), a searchable service provider directory for survivors across the state of Texas.

May 2025

National Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week

National Peace Officers Memorial Day is observed every May 15th and pays as a tribute to local, state, and federal law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice or have been injured in the line of duty. The observance takes place during National Police Week.

National Police Week is a collaborative effort of many organizations dedicated to honoring America's law enforcement community. National Police Week pays special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others.

[The National Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial Fund](#)

[The Texas Peace Officers' Memorial](#)

Information About *The Victim's Informer*

The Victim's Informer e-newsletter is published quarterly. Articles and other submissions should be e-mailed to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov. If you would like to submit materials or events, please email the TxCVC or call us at (512) 406-5931.

Please Note: You may access the publication on the TDCJ VSD website by going to https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/publications/victim_informer_newsletter.html. If you wish, we will notify you via email each time *The Victim's Informer* becomes available on the TDCJ VSD website and provide a link to *The Victim's Informer*.

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