

Restitution:

In felony cases (and some misdemeanor cases) the court must order a convicted criminal to pay victims for their losses. This is called **restitution**.

The court will ask if you want to explain how the crime has impacted you. It is a chance for you to:

- List your financial losses related to the crime, and
- Ask for restitution.

The court will read your statement before it decides on the punishment.

You have the right to:

- Be in court when the criminal is sentenced.
- Tell the court how the crime impacted you.
- Say what punishment you believe would be best, including restitution (money to pay you for your losses related to the crime.)

To learn more about your right to restitution and sentencing, contact us at **1-800-842-8467**.

You can speak at the prisoner's parole hearing

For very serious crimes, the prisoner cannot be let free without a parole hearing. You have the right to speak at that hearing. You can tell the Parole Board your opinion about when the prisoner should be let free.

Note: If the criminal was under 18, special rules apply. Contact the Juvenile Parole Board at **1-916-683-7460**.

To learn more about parole hearings, contact the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services at: www.cdcr.ca.gov/Victim_Services/ or by calling **1-877-256-6877**.

Other programs to help you

There are many special support programs and advocacy groups that help victims and their families, including victims of rape, domestic violence, and child abuse. Contact us for help finding a program or organization.

About Us

The Victims of Crime Resource Center is located on the Pacific McGeorge School of Law campus in Sacramento, California. Our services are **free**. Our expert staff know the latest information in the field. We educate victims and their families, victim service providers, and other victim advocates on:

- Victims' legal rights,
- Victims' compensation,
- Restitution,
- Civil suits, and
- Additional rights of all crime victims (including elders, children, and people with disabilities).

We also offer:

- Technical assistance and legal research to victim service providers.
- Free "Know Your Rights" presentations to community groups.

We operate **1-800-VICTIMS** – the statewide toll-free hotline that gives confidential information and referrals to victims, their families, victim service providers, and victim advocates. The hotline is staffed by McGeorge law students and supervised by lawyers.



Victims of Crime
Resource Center
1-800-VICTIMS (842-8467)
TTY: 1-916-739-7083
www.1800VICTIMS.org
Email: 1800VICTIMS@pacific.edu

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Support for Crime Victims in California



A General Overview

Victims of Crime Resource Center

1-800-VICTIMS (842-8467)

TTY: 916-739-7083

www.1800VICTIMS.org

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Rights of Crime Victims in California

If you are a victim of a crime, you may need support to recover from the crime. The crime may have caused you financial, legal, health, or psychological problems. This brochure explains your rights, and services and support available to you and your family.

You have the right to:

Money. The court can order the criminal to pay for your losses related to the crime, including money to pay for:

- Counseling,
- Lost wages,
- Medical bills for your injuries, and
- Funeral and burial costs.

Tell the court about your losses. Before the court decides on the criminal's punishment, you can tell the court how the crime impacted your life.

Safety and protection. If you, your family, or any witnesses are afraid of the criminal, you can ask the court for a protective order.

Sue in small claims court. If you are not suing for more than \$10,000, you can sue in small claims court. You don't need a lawyer in that court. And each court has small claims advisors to help people with their cases.

To learn more, go to:

www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-smallclaims.htm

A special law, called the Victims' Bill of Rights (or Marsy's Law), supports crime victims and their families.

It's a good idea to read this law to better understand all your rights. You can print the law and get a list of resources at: www.oag.ca.gov/victimservices/marsy

Sue in civil court. You can file a lawsuit against the criminal to ask for money, or legal fees. If property owners or government entities share blame for the crime, you can sue them, too.

Important! There are very strict deadlines for starting a case, and court rules can be complicated. If you want to sue, talk to a lawyer soon. To find a lawyer, call:

State Bar of California's lawyer referral service:
1-866-442-2529.



Help to Get Money and Support

Several programs and processes help victims get money, support, and guidance, including:

- California Victim Compensation Board (CalVCB)
- Victim/Witness Assistance Centers (each county has one)
- Restitution
- Other programs and organizations

California Victim Compensation Board

This program can reimburse up to **\$70,000** to each victim for expenses as a result of the crime. You can ask for assistance with expenses not fully covered by your insurance, judgment, or other programs, including:

- Counseling, medical, and dental services or equipment
- Lost wages, support for dependents, or childcare if the provider was disabled or killed because of the crime
- Funeral and burial costs
- Job training or retraining

- Home security system or changes to your home or car that you need because the crime caused a disability
- Crime scene clean-up and moving costs
- Insurance co-payments

Important! This program does not cover *property* loss.

Who Can Get Compensation

You can ask for compensation if you did not help cause the crime, are willing to report the crime, cooperate with law enforcement, and you are:

- injured because of a qualifying crime,
- a dependent of the victim,
- the caregiver of a victim who is under 18,
- paying the bills for someone who died because of a crime, or
- a relative or member of the victim's household and you need medical care or counseling, or you had financial losses related to the crime.

How to Get Compensation

Apply within **3 years** of the crime unless there is a good reason for applying late. This time frame may be extended for child victims. To apply, contact the California Victim Compensation Board:

- Call: **1-800-777-9229**
- Visit: www.victims.ca.gov

Other Ways to Get Compensation

Many other programs give financial help to victims, including:

- Workers' compensation
- Unemployment insurance
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Federal and state disability programs
- Medi-Cal
- Your home or car insurance



Victim/Witness Assistance Centers

In each county, Victim/Witness Assistance Centers help victims with the problems caused by the crime, and can help you at all stages of the criminal justice process.

Your Center will help you:

- Apply to the Victim Compensation Board
- Get ready for court, including telling the court how the crime impacted you, and asking the court to order the criminal to pay you restitution
- Get referrals to other programs to help you
- Arrange transportation and childcare when you go to court
- Get emergency food, shelter and clothes
- Get court orders to protect you and your family
- Explain what happened to your employer, doctors and creditors

How to find your Victim/Witness Assistance Center

To find your local Victim/Witness Assistance Center:

- Call us: **1-800-VICTIMS (842-8467)**
- TTY: **1-916-739-7083**
- Visit us: www.1800VICTIMS.org