



Post-Conviction Victim Services: The Facts

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What Are Post-Conviction Victim Services?

In 1985, victims' rights became part of Texas law. The Crime Victim Bill of Rights was added to our state constitution in 1989, including the right To Be Protected, Informed, Heard, & to Request Mediation.[1] However, most people see a conviction as the "finish line" or end goal and fail to acknowledge the need for services and support beyond the conviction, including parole, claims of factual innocence, and exonerations. In February 2017, a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant was awarded to the Texas Board of Pardons & Parole and the Victim Liaison Program was launched. The two main goals of the program are to provide training to Board employees who interact with survivors and direct services to victims throughout the entire post-conviction/parole review process.[2]

Have You Heard?

- For many crime victims/survivors, the physical, financial and emotional harm caused by crime continues, long beyond an offender's arrest, conviction and sentence.[3]
- Oftentimes, victims are the last to know what is happening in their case and feel they have nowhere to turn to get their questions answered or needs met. [4]

What Are the Consequences?

Victims and survivors who are unaware of their rights to receive support and services beyond a conviction may be more likely to feel alone and unheard. Once a conviction is secured, victims typically experience decreased access to resources and services to predict and prepare for short- and long-term impacts of trauma and the entangling criminal justice processes.[3] For example, victims have the right to protest their offender's release by explaining how the offense has impacted them/their family and express any specific fears or concerns about an inmate's release.[5] However, if survivors are unaware of this right, they will not be able to exercise it and/or make their voices heard, which could result in negative emotional or psychological consequences, such as fear, anxiety, anger, depression, PTSD, among others.[2]

How to Support Survivors

It is important for victim service providers and allied professionals to recognize the need for and benefits of providing victim-centered and trauma-informed notification and support beyond and throughout the post-conviction phase. A case is not "over" after a conviction occurs– victims/survivors must be reminded that they continue to have rights post-conviction, during the offenders' confinement, and release. Informing survivors of their post-conviction rights not only conforms with the law but can also help alleviate stress and provide a sense of control, both of which reduce feelings of re-traumatization and re-victimization.[6] Service providers, policy makers, and researchers must learn how post-conviction responses to crime can improve to better address victims' concerns and provide opportunities for offender change and helpful participation.

Resources

Texas

- **TDCJ Victim Services Division -- 1-800-848-4284**
- **Texas Board of Pardons & Paroles Victim Liaison Program -- 512-406-5833**

National

- **Healing Justice -- <https://healingjusticeproject.org/>**
- **Post-conviction Survivor Resources -- <https://www.survivorservices.org/>**
- **The National Association of Victim Assistance in Corrections -- <https://www.navac.website/>**

References

- [1]Office of the Attorney General of Texas. (2024). The Rights of Crime Victims In Texas. https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/crime-victims/victim_rights15.pdf
- [2]Hamilton, L., & Odom, M. (2024). *Post-Conviction Services for Victims & Survivors*. Conference on Crimes Against Women Presentation. May 2024.
- [3]The National Association of Victim Assistance in Corrections. (2021). *National Gap Assessment Report: Prison/Parole Based Post-Conviction Victim Services*. https://www.navac.website/uploads/7/3/2/2/73224507/navac_pcvs_gap_assessment_report_executive_summary_handout.pdf
- [4]Post-conviction Survivor Resources. (2024). Resources for Media and Public. <https://www.survivorservices.org/media-and-public/>
- [5]TDCJ Victim Services Division. (2024). Victim Notification and Participation. https://tdcj.texas.gov/faq/victim_notification.html#:~:text=How%20can%20I%20protest%20an%20inmate%E2%80%99s%20release%20and%20what%20do
- [6]Thompson, J., & Aguirre, N. (2022). Victims and Survivors: Post-Conviction Support. *Family & Intimate Partner Violence Quarterly*, 15(2).

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Resources

- Aging and Disability Resource Center 855-937-2372
- Cyber Civil Rights Initiative 844-878-2274
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving 877-623-3435
- National Child Abuse Hotline 800-422-4453
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233
- National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888
- National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-4673
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988
- Texas Abuse Hotline 800-252-5400
- Texas Council on Family Violence <https://tcfv.org/survivor-resources/>
- Texas Association Against Sexual Assault <https://taasa.org/get-help/>
- Victim Connect Resource Center 855-484-2846