



Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services: 28 Years Supporting Vermont Crime Victims

What is VCCVS? “The Center” was established by the Legislature in 1991 to:

- Strengthen and coordinate programs serving crime victims
- Promote the rights and needs of crime victims statewide
- Administer federal and state funds for crime victim services
- Serve as a clearinghouse for information regarding crime victims

The Center is administered by the Victims Compensation Board, appointed by the Governor, and is led by Executive Director, Chris Fenno.

We serve all Vermont crime victims, survivors, and their families, regardless of the type of crime. Our goal is to ensure that all Vermont crime victims have access to the support and services they need. The Center advocates for a criminal justice system that affords victims their statutory rights, reduces recidivism through evidence-based measures, holds offenders accountable, and puts victim and community safety first.

Meaningful criminal justice reform must take the whole picture into account.

- **Basics First.** Criminal offenders need access to housing, substance abuse and mental health treatment, jobs, and childcare. Without the ability to meet basic needs or access to community supports, offenders are far more likely to re-offend. Many victims share these needs. Reforming the system without addressing the basics first sets offenders up to fail and only further harms the community.
- **Risk Assessment.** Until we have a statewide system of mandated pre-trial risk assessment, judges and prosecutors cannot properly weigh the relative risks and benefits of alternative courts or criminal justice programs. The type of crime isn't a placeholder for offender needs or risk of re-offense.
- **Victim Engagement.** Although every crime victim is different, involving victims in the process when and where appropriate for their own recovery and safety can promote offender accountability and rehabilitation. Victim rights, including the right to financial restitution, need not be compromised to achieve reform goals.

What programs and services does VCCVS offer Vermonters?

- **Victim Service Grants:** The Center administers state and federal grants awarded to victim service providers and partner agencies across the state, including law enforcement, the Department of State's Attorneys, the Judiciary, domestic and sexual violence programs, legal service providers, and non-profits working with special populations. *Most of our budget passes on to our statewide partners.*
- **Victims Compensation Program:** The Center provides immediate assistance to eligible crime victims who experience financial losses resulting from physical or emotional harm caused by their victimization, such as medical bills or counseling expenses.
- **Sexual Assault Program:** The Center ensures that adults and children who experience sexual assault have access to sexual assault nurse examinations ("SANE," formerly known as "rape kit") to gather evidence while assessing and treating injuries, all at no cost to them, regardless of whether they choose to report the crime. This program also provides financial assistance for psychological counseling.
- **Restitution Unit:** The Center collects restitution from offenders on behalf of their victims and enforces outstanding orders through state tax returns or lottery winnings offsets and/or court process. The Restitution Special Fund also provides eligible non-business victims with limited advancements on restitution orders, rather than waiting for the offender to pay.
- **Training and Community Outreach:** The Center runs the annual Vermont Victim Assistance Academy for professionals from all disciplines to learn how to better serve crime victims they encounter in their work. The Center also provides training for victim service professionals and criminal justice partners on specialized topics in order to promote quality, victim-centered services and better prosecution outcomes.
- **Victim Assistance Program:** Vermont's longest-standing victim service program ensures that crime victims in every county in the state have access to a victim advocate who can help them navigate the criminal justice system and connect them with the resources they need to be safe and experience recovery.

How can I help connect Vermonters to CCVS Programs?

www.ccvs.vermont.gov
1-800-750-1213 (VT Only)
1-802-241-1250