

West's Vermont Statutes Annotated  
Title Twenty-Eight. Public Institutions and Corrections  
Chapter 1. Purposes, Construction, and General Definitions

28 V.S.A. § 2a

§ 2a. Restorative justice

Currentness

(a) State policy. It is the policy of this State that principles of restorative justice be included in shaping how the criminal justice system responds to persons charged with or convicted of criminal offenses, and how the State responds to persons who are in contempt of child support orders. The policy goal is a community response to a person's wrongdoing at its earliest onset, and a type and intensity of sanction tailored to each instance of wrongdoing. Policy objectives are to:

- (1) Resolve conflicts and disputes by means of a nonadversarial community process.
- (2) Repair damage caused by criminal acts to communities in which they occur, and to address wrongs inflicted on individual victims.
- (3) Reduce the risk of an offender committing a more serious crime in the future, that would require a more intensive and more costly sanction, such as incarceration.

(b) Implementation. It is the intent of the General Assembly that law enforcement officials develop and employ restorative justice approaches whenever feasible and responsive to specific criminal acts, pursuant to 3 V.S.A. §§ 163 and 164, concerning court diversion; 13 V.S.A. chapter 221, concerning sentencing; and the provisions of this title, concerning persons in the custody of the Commissioner of Corrections. It is the further intent of the General Assembly that such restorative justice programs be designed to encourage participation by local community members, including victims, when they so choose, as well as public officials, in holding offenders accountable for damage caused to communities and victims, and in restoring offenders to the law-abiding community, through activities:

- (1) That require offenders to:
  - (A) acknowledge wrongdoing and apologize to victims;
  - (B) make restitution for damage to the victims, consistent with provisions of 13 V.S.A. chapter 221 and of this title;
  - (C) make reparation for damage to the community by fulfilling a community service; and
  - (D) when relevant, successfully complete treatment addressing the offense or other underlying problematic behavior, or undertake academic or vocational training or other self-improving activity.

(2) That aid in the recovery of victims, recognizing that victims, particularly of violent crime, often suffer lifelong effects and, accordingly, must feel safe and involved in any program offered to assist them.

(3) That help in identifying the causes of crime and ways community members and municipal and State government can reduce or prevent crime in the future.

**Credits**

1999, Adj. Sess., No. 148, § 62; 2011, Adj. Sess., No. 119, § 8, eff. July 1, 2012.

28 V.S.A. § 2a, VT ST T. 28 § 2a

The statutes are current through Acts of the Regular Session of the 2023-2024 Vermont General Assembly (2023) effective as of March 29, 2023. Some sections might be more current; see effective date in individual sections.

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