

## ABOUT THE OVA

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The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) was statutorily established in 1998 as an independent state agency charged with the promotion and protection of the constitutional and statutory rights of crime victims in Connecticut.

Among its many responsibilities, the OVA provides oversight of state and private agencies, and advocacy to crime victims when a violation of their rights is at issue.

In order to fulfill its mandate, the OVA receives and reviews complaints of persons concerning the actions of any state agency or other entity that provides services to crime victims. When appropriate, the OVA may also initiate formal investigations into the circumstances of a complaint so as to remedy the concern in a systemic manner.

As part of its enforcement abilities, the Victim Advocate is statutorily authorized to file a limited special appearance in any court proceeding for the purpose of advocating for a victim when their rights have been violated. In addition, as part of its advocacy efforts, the OVA conducts programs of public education on the rights of crime victims, undertakes legislative advocacy when necessary, and recommends systemic changes in state policies to ensure the proper treatment and protection of crime victims.

The Office of the Victim Advocate currently operates under the following statute when determining who is a "victim of crime" or "crime victim:"

C.G.S. Sec. 1-1k

*Except as otherwise provided by the general statutes, "victim of crime" or "crime victim" means an individual who suffers direct or threatened physical, emotional or financial harm as a result of a crime and includes immediate family members of a minor, incompetent individual or homicide victim and a person designated by a homicide victim in accordance with section 1-56r.*

## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

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### Child Abuse Care Line (24 hr.)

1-800-999-5545

### CONNSACS- Sexual Assault (24 hr.)

1-888-999-5545/En Espanol 1-888-568-8332

### CT Bar Association

1-860-223-4400

### DOC Victim Services Unit (24 hr.)

1-888-869-7057

### Domestic Violence – CCADV (24 hr.)

1-888-774-2900

### Elder Abuse (24 hr.)

1-888-385-4225

### INFO-Line (24 hour service) 211

### MADD Mothers Against Drunk Driving (24 hr.)

1-800-544-3690

### Office of the Child Advocate

1-800-994-0939

### Office of Victim Services (OVS)

1-800-822-8428

*(Court advocacy, counseling,  
notification and victim compensation)*

### Safe at Home

Contact the Secretary of the State's Office

860-509-6200

### Survivors of Homicide, Inc.

1-860-257-7388

### Witness Protection Program

Contact the Office of the Chief State's Attorney

860-258-5800

# YOUR RIGHTS AS A CRIME VICTIM IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT



OFFICE OF THE VICTIM ADVOCATE

505 HUDSON STREET

HARTFORD, CT 06106

(860) 550-6632

TOLL FREE 1-888-771-3126

WWW.CT.GOV/OVA

## CRIME VICTIMS HAVE IMPORTANT LEGAL RIGHTS\*

**In Connecticut, our state constitution guarantees that crime victims and their families are entitled to:**

- Be treated with fairness and respect throughout the criminal justice process;
- Receive Financial Restitution;
- Timely disposition of the case following arrest of the accused
- Be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process;
- Receive notification of court proceedings;
- Attend the trial and all other court proceedings;
- Communicate with the prosecution about the case;
- Object to or support any plea agreement entered into by the accused and the prosecution and to make a statement to the court prior to the court accepting a plea of guilty or nolo contendere by the accused;
- Make a statement to the court at sentencing;
- Information about the arrest, conviction, sentence, imprisonment and release of the accused.

**Other Connecticut laws provide victims and their families with certain additional rights and protections, including:**

- Compensation for expenses incurred, including medical services, funeral expenses, and loss of earning power;
- The right to receive financial restitution from the offender, as part of the disposition for out of pocket expenses incurred relating to the crime;
- The return of personal property used to investigate crime;
- The right to access certain records and test results;
- Special rights and protections in family violence matters;
- Protection from being fired, harassed or in any manner retaliated against at work for attending court proceedings or for serving as a criminal case.

*\* This summary of legal rights is subject to the full text of the statutes. Victims are entitled to rights as set forth in the statutes. If you don't understand your legal rights, you may wish to talk to an attorney or contact the OVA staff.*

## A NOTE FROM THE VICTIM ADVOCATE



*Garvin G. Ambrose, Esq.  
State Victim Advocate*

As your newest State Victim Advocate at the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA), I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the numerous individuals and families of Connecticut and am excited about the possibilities for positive change that lie ahead for crime victims.

While the State of Connecticut continues to make strides in recognizing the necessity of including crime victims in the criminal justice and legislative arenas, it is important that the voices of all victims be heard. To ensure this outcome, it is my intent, and the goal of the OVA, to properly serve all those who find themselves in the position of a crime victim. Should you, a family member, or someone you know find yourselves in that position, or are questioning whether you are a crime victim, please do not hesitate to immediately contact the OVA to discuss your concerns and to obtain a better understanding of your constitutional and statutory rights.

Through public education, collaboration with law enforcement and service providers, as well as court involvement and legislative advocacy, I believe that the constitutional and statutory rights of crime victims will become a priority in our state.

