

Victims of Crime Part 2: The Rights of Victims of Crime

Maryland law defines a victim of crime as someone who suffers physical, emotional, or financial harm as a result of a crime. This tip sheet includes information on your legal rights, hiring representation, receiving information about the court case, financial compensation, the rights of sexual assault victims, and resources for victims. For information on the role of victims in criminal cases, see Tip Sheet 72 Victims of Crime Part 1.

Watch the Video



Legal Rights and Representation

- You have the right to submit to the court a **victim impact statement** that must be considered by the judge. The statement can detail the emotional, physical, and financial impact you suffered due to the crime.
- You have the right to hire a private lawyer. Your lawyer can help you seek money for your financial losses, protect your privacy, or submit an appeal if your rights are denied.
- The **Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center** may be able to assist you. Visit mdcrimevictims.org for more information.
- For survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, you can also contact organizations that may be able to provide resources specific to your situation.
 - **House of Ruth Maryland** provides free lawyers for victims of intimate partner violence and hosts information for victims of crime online. Visit hruth.org or call 410-889-7884.
 - The **Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI)** provides legal services for survivors of sexual assault.

For a list of organizations and resources for victims of crime, see the Resources section below.

Receiving Information

- If the criminal case is in a circuit court, you have the right to be notified about court proceedings. The State's Attorney will send you a document called the **Crime Victim Notification Request and Demand for Rights** form. Fill it out and return it to the State's Attorney's Office. If you submit this form, you will be notified of:
 - each court proceeding in the case,
 - the terms of any plea agreement,
 - your right to submit a victim impact statement,
 - post-trial court dates,
 - appeals, and
 - sentence reviews.



Maryland Court Help

Free. Online. In Person. By Phone.

- If your case is in the District Court or you do not receive the notification request form, contact the State's Attorney's Office to let them know you want to receive notifications about your case.
- You can also use **Victim Information and Notification Everyday**, or VINE, to receive notifications on court hearings and the offender's custody, parole, and probation status. Visit vinelink.com or call 1-866-634-8463 to register.

Financial Compensation

- If you had a financial loss due to the crime, you may be able to seek compensation through:
 - restitution,
 - a civil case, or
 - an application to the Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Financial losses may include, for example, medical costs, damaged property, or loss of earnings.

- **Restitution** is a financial compensation payment made by the person who committed the crime, called the defendant in the criminal case. Restitution requires a court order. The court may order the defendant to pay you or your insurance company. You or the State's Attorney may ask the court to order restitution.
- You may also file a **civil court case** to seek an order that the person who committed the crime should pay you money. Remember, if you file a civil case, you are a party to the case and responsible for preparing court documents, following court procedure and rules, and going to court. Talk to a lawyer about your options. You can speak to a lawyer for free at the Maryland Court Help Center at 410-260-1392.
- If you will not receive restitution or compensation through insurance, you may submit an application to the **Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Board**. The Board reviews requests for compensation due to a crime. Awards cannot cover property damage or property loss. Learn more about this process at goccp.maryland.gov/victim-services/cicb.

Resources

- The **Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center** can provide some legal support and advocacy for victims of crime. Visit mdcrimevictims.org or call 301-952-0063.
- The **State's Attorney's Office** has resources for victims of crime. Contact your local State's Attorney's Office.
- The **Maryland State Board of Victim Services** offers brochures and forms on the rights of crime victims in Maryland. Visit goccp.maryland.gov/victim-services/rights-resources/brochures-forms/.
- You can also find lawyers by using the **Lawyer Referral Information** by county. Visit msba.org/for-the-public/lawyer-referral-information/.
- The **Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault Sexual Assault Legal Institute** (SALI) provides legal services for survivors of sexual violence across the state. Call 301-565-2277 or 877-496-SALI, or visit mcasa.org/survivors/sali.
- **House of Ruth** provides free lawyers for victims of intimate partner violence and hosts information for victims of crime online. Visit hruth.org or call 410-889-7884.
- For questions about civil cases, you can contact the **Maryland Court Help Center**. Find more information at mdcourts.gov/helpcenter. Call 410-260-1392 to speak to a lawyer for free. Help Center lawyers can only assist if you do not currently have an attorney for the civil case.



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