

Texas Crime Victim Liaison Survey

Sponsored by:

**The Crime Victims' Institute
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www.crimevictimsinstitute.org



Sam Houston
STATE UNIVERSITY
A Member of The Texas State University System

Purpose and Instruction

Please Note: This survey is to be completed by the lead victim liaison officer in case the responding department has more than one victim liaison officer.

The Crime Victims' Institute at Sam Houston State University is requesting your assistance in examining:

- Services available to victims of crime
- Communication and cooperation among service agencies
- Perceptions of victim service providers in the state of Texas.

Your candid responses will help insure that our findings accurately portray what is occurring in the state of Texas with respect to victim issues and the assistance available to them. This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in this research study at any time. However, your views and experiences are very important to the success of this effort. Based on the responses we receive, we will report our findings and make suggestions for improving victim services in our state to policymakers.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at Sam Houston State University. Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to:

Glen Kercher, Ph.D., Chair
Protection of Human Subjects Committee
Sam Houston State University
(936) 294-1642

This survey is being distributed both through a mailed survey and via e-mail. If you have already completed this survey through e-mail, please ignore this mailing. If you have not received the e-mail survey but still prefer the electronic format, please visit our website: www.crimevictimsinstitute.org and click "Texas Crime Victim Liaison Survey." Alternatively, you may complete the enclosed survey and return it in the self-addressed envelope.

Your answers to the survey will not be traceable to you or your agency. All responses will be kept confidential. The results of this study will only be published in the aggregate.

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions. Completing this survey will signify your consent to participate.

Thank you for your assistance.

AGENCY INFORMATION

1. Which of the following best describes the type of department in which you work?

- Municipal Police Department
- County Sheriff's Department
- State Police Department
- Independent School District Police Department
- University Police Department
- Constable
- Other _____

2. How large a population does your department serve?

- Less than 15,000
- 15,000 – 49,999
- 50,000 – 99,999
- 100,000 – 199,999
- 200,000 – 999,999
- 1,000,000 or more

3. Does the mission statement of your department explicitly address victim services?

- Yes No There is no mission statement

4. How long has your department had a designated Crime Victim Liaison Officer?

_____ Year(s) _____ Month(s)

5. What priority is given to assisting crime victims in your job description?

- It is my highest priority
- It is my primary priority but I have other duties in the office
- It is a low priority due to my other duties.

6. How many people, including yourself, occupy positions within the following categories in your department?

| | Female | Male | Sworn Officer | Non-Sworn Officer |
|----------------------|--------|-------|---------------|-------------------|
| Crime Victim Liaison | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Staff | _____ | _____ | | |
| Intern | _____ | _____ | | |
| Volunteer | _____ | _____ | | |

7. How many people, including yourself, occupy positions within the following categories in your department?

| | Caucasian | African American | Hispanic or Latino | Asian or Pacific Islander | Other |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| Crime Victim | | | | | |
| Liaison | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Staff | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Intern | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Volunteer | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

8. In your opinion does your department have enough staff to adequately serve the number of victims who require your assistance?

- Staffing is more than adequate for demands
- Staffing is adequate for demands
- Staffing is slightly inadequate for demands
- Staffing is very inadequate for demands

9. In your opinion does your department have enough bilingual staff to adequately serve the number of victims who require such assistance?

- Bilingual staffing is more than adequate for demands
- Bilingual staffing is adequate for demands
- Bilingual staffing is slightly inadequate for demands
- Bilingual staffing is very inadequate for demands

10. How many hours of **pre-service** training are required for the following categories of personnel?

- _____ Crime Victim Liaison
- _____ Staff
- _____ Intern
- _____ Volunteer

11. How many hours of **in-service** training per year are required for the following categories of personnel?

- _____ Crime Victim Liaison
- _____ Staff
- _____ Intern
- _____ Volunteer

12. What are the top 3 funding sources for your department?
(Please put 1, 2, or 3 next to the first, second, and third largest funding sources)

_____ Federal _____ Private Donations/Foundations
_____ State _____ Fund Raising Activities
_____ County/City _____ No Funding
Other (specify) _____

13. The following questions pertain to changes in your departments services to victims over the past 3 years (**September 2002—August 2005**).

Has your victim services staff changed in the last 3 years?

Increased Decreased Same

Has the number of victims served changed in the last 3 years?

Increased Decreased Same

Has the amount of training or education available to you and your staff changed?

Increased Decreased Same

14. How often do you speak directly with the Chief or Sheriff in your department about victim services?

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

15. On a scale of 1 (low priority) to 5 (high priority), what priority is given to victim services in your department? Please circle your selection.

Low Priority 1 2 3 4 5 **High Priority**

SERVICE INFORMATION

16. Under the **Services Provided** column please check the kind of services your department directly provides to crime victims. If there are any kinds of services that are sometimes requested by victims but which are not available in your community, please check those under the **Services Not Provided** column.

(question continued on next page)

Services Provided Services Not Provided
(Directly by your department) (In your community)

EMERGENCY SERVICES

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Medical Care | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Security Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Direct Financial Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| On-scene Comfort | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

COUNSELING

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 24 hour hot-line | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Crisis Intervention | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Follow-up Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mediation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Personal Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employer Intervention | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Property Return | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intimidation Protection | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Paralegal/Legal Counsel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Referral | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Information on VINE | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Explanation of Criminal Justice Process | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistance with Medical Appointments | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

COURT-RELATED SERVICES

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Witness Reception Area | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Court Orientation-Adult | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Court Orientation-Child | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Notification | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Witness Alert | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Child Care | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Escort to Court | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Victim Impact Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

CLAIMS ASSISTANCE

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Insurance Claims Aid | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restitution Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Compensation Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SYSTEM-WIDE SERVICES

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Public Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Legislative Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Training | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

17. If there are services that your department provides that are not listed above, please list them below.

18. If there are other services that victims have requested but are not available through your department, please list them.

19. How frequently do you use the following methods when communicating with victims?

Written Correspondence

Very Frequently Frequently Rarely Very Rarely Never

In-Person Conversation

Very Frequently Frequently Rarely Very Rarely Never

Telephone Conversation

Very Frequently Frequently Rarely Very Rarely Never

E-mail

Very Frequently Frequently Rarely Very Rarely Never

20. It is said that a sizable number of victims do not use the victim services that are available to them. Based on your experience, what do you think are the **two** primary reasons that these services are not utilized?

- They get assistance from families or friends
- They have other resources to cope with victimization (e.g. insurance, savings)
- They were not told or made aware of available services
- They think it is not worth the trouble to seek out services
- They do not need assistance
- Other (specify) _____

CLIENT INFORMATION

21. Estimate the average number of victims served per month by your department.

_____ /Month

22. Estimate the percentage of the male and female victims your office has served during the last year.

Male _____ %
Female _____ %

23. Estimate the percentage of victims served by your department who come from the following economic groups.

Low income (less than \$15,000) _____ %
Moderate income (\$15,000 - \$60,000) _____ %
High income (more than \$60,000) _____ %

24. Estimate the percentage of victims your department has served in each of the following racial/ethnic categories.

Caucasian _____ %
African American _____ %
Hispanic or Latino _____ %
Asian or Pacific Islander _____ %
Other _____ %

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

25. Is there any committee or taskforce in your community made up of representatives from the programs and agencies that provide services to crime victims in your community?

Yes No

25-1. If yes, on a scale of 1 (not active) to 5 (very active), how active is the committee/taskforce in facilitating communication among the victim service agencies in you community?

Not Active 1 2 3 4 5 **Very Active**

26. How often have you personally received interagency/multi-disciplinary training with regard to victim services?

Never Once Twice Three Times More than Three Times

27. Evaluate the level of communication and cooperation between your program and the following agencies in assisting victims in your community.

Prosecutor/Victim Assistance Coordinator

Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

Court

Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

Community Supervision and Corrections Department

Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

Community Victim Service Providers

Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

28. How often do you think law enforcement officers in your department provide victims services information to crime victims?

Always Often Occasionally Rarely Never

29. In your experience, to what extent do you think community victim service providers (e.g. family violence shelters) give crime victims realistic expectations about what will be accomplished through the criminal justice process?

Realistic Somewhat Unrealistic Somewhat Realistic Unrealistic

Please indicate on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) whether you agree/disagree with the following statements (30 - 41).

30. A crime should be considered first as an offense committed against the state, and second as an offense against individual victims.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**

31. The criminal justice system is overburdened. Therefore, efficient processing should be considered more important than victims' participation in criminal justice decision making processes.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**

32. The primary purpose of victim services is to facilitate the victim's role as a witness.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**

33. When conflict arises between victims' rights and defendants' rights, victims' rights should come first.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**

34. Sentencing should be proportional to the seriousness of the criminal act, rather than to the degree of victim harm.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**

35. A victim should be allowed to participate in plea bargaining decisions.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
36. Victims should be allowed to give testimony during the sentencing phase of a case.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
37. A victim impact statement should be allowed for both property and violent crime victims.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
38. The judge(s) in our community almost always consider Victim Impact Statements in making sentencing decisions.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
39. The prosecutor(s) in our community almost always consider Victim Impact Statements in making decisions about a case.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
40. There are many victims who do not take advantage of services available to them even though our department makes a concerted effort to “get the word out”.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
41. Texas law allows victims and survivors to make an oral statement to the court after the sentence has been pronounced. I think the law should allow victims to make an oral statement before the sentence.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
42. How would you **personally** rank order the following goals of the criminal justice system in terms of their importance? Write 1 next to the most important, 4 the least important.
- ___ Retribution/Punishment
 - ___ Victim Restoration
 - ___ Offender Rehabilitation
 - ___ Protection of the Community (including Deterrence and Incapacitation)
43. In your professional opinion, what are the barriers, if any, to providing sufficient services to victims?

44. On a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 10 (Very Satisfied), how satisfied are you with your job?

(Very Dissatisfied) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very Satisfied)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

45. How long have you been the Crime Victim Liaison officer in your department?

_____ Years _____ Months

46. How long have you worked with crime victims in any capacity and for any agency?

_____ Years _____ Months

47. Did you work for your department in another capacity prior to becoming a Crime Victim Liaison?

Yes No

47-1. If yes, what was your former job title?

48. Are you?

Male Female

49. Are you?

- White (Not Hispanic or Latino)
- African-American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian
- Other

50. Which of the following best describes your education?

- High school graduate/GED
- Some college but no degree
- Associate of Arts degree (2yr.)
- Bachelor of Art or Sciences (4yr.)
- Some graduate school
- Advanced degree

Thank you for your time and assistance with this very important survey.

Your confidential responses are beneficial to the improvement and evaluation of current victim services.

Please return this survey in the self addressed postage paid envelope provided.

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