

Texas Community Victim Advocates Survey

Sponsored by:

**The Crime Victims' Institute
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX 77341-2180
Toll Free: 877-842-8463
FAX: 936-294-4296**

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 director of the responding service agency.

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 had 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 Community Victim Advocates 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. What is the service area population of your agency?

- 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

2. Does the mission statement of your agency explicitly address victim services?

- Yes No There is no mission statement

3. How long has your agency been in operation?

_____ Year(s) _____ Month(s)

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

	Female	Male
Staff	_____	_____
Intern	_____	_____
Volunteer	_____	_____

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

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian or Pacific Islander	Other
Staff	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Intern	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Volunteer	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

6. Estimate the total number of volunteer hours accrued for your agency during fiscal year 2005.

_____ Hours

7. In your opinion does your agency 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

8. In your opinion does your agency 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

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

- _____ Staff
- _____ Intern
- _____ Volunteer

10. On average, how many hours of **in-service** training per year are required for the following categories of personnel?

- _____ Staff
- _____ Intern
- _____ Volunteer

11. The following questions pertain to changes in your program's 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

12. What are the top 3 funding sources for your agency?
 (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) _____

SERVICE INFORMATION

13. Under the **Services Provided** column please check the kind of services your agency 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.

Services Provided Services Not Provided
(Directly by your agency) (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"/>

(question continued on next page)

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"/> |

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

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

16. How often does your agency 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

17. 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

18. Estimate the average number of victims served per month by your agency.

_____ /Month

19. Estimate the percentage of the male and female victims your agency has served during the last year.

Male _____ %
Female _____ %

20. Estimate the percentage of victims served who come from the following economic groups.

Low income (less than \$15,000) _____ %
Moderate income (\$15,000 - \$20,000) _____ %
High income (more than \$20,000) _____ %

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

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

22. Among all the victims your agency has served during the past year, what percentage actually reported their victimization to the police?

_____ %

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

23. 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

23-1. 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**

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

- Never Once Twice Three Times More than Three Times

25. Check the referral source from which your agency received the most clients during 2005. Please check one.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement Agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> District/County Attorneys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Medical Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement
(public announcements) | <input type="checkbox"/> Courts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Service Organizations
(e.g. Youth Services) | <input type="checkbox"/> Walk-Ins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Churches |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> School Districts |

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

Court

- Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

Police/Liaison

- Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

Prosecutor/Victim Assistance Coordinator

- Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

Community Supervision and Corrections Department

- Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

Other Community Victim Service Providers

- Poor Acceptable Excellent Not Applicable

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

Never Rarely Occasionally Often Always

28. In your opinion, to what extent do the following criminal justice agencies in your community make victim healing and restoration a priority? (Circle a number on a scale of 1=Low Priority to 5=High Priority).

Court

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

Police

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

Prosecutor

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

Community Supervision and Corrections

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

Please indicate on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) whether you agree/disagree with the following statements (29 - 40).

29. 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**

30. 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**

31. 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**

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

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

33. 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**

34. A victim should be allowed to participate in plea bargaining decisions.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
35. Victims should be allowed to give testimony during the sentencing phase of a case.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
36. A victim impact statement should be allowed for both property and violent crime victims.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
37. 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**
38. 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**
39. There are many victims who do not take advantage of services available to them even though our agency makes a concerted effort to “get the word out”.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**
40. 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**
41. 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)

42. In your professional opinion, what are the barriers, if any, to providing sufficient services to victims?

43. 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

44. How long have you been serving in your agency?

_____ Years _____ Months

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

_____ Years _____ Months

46. Are you?

- Male Female

47. Are you?

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

48. 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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