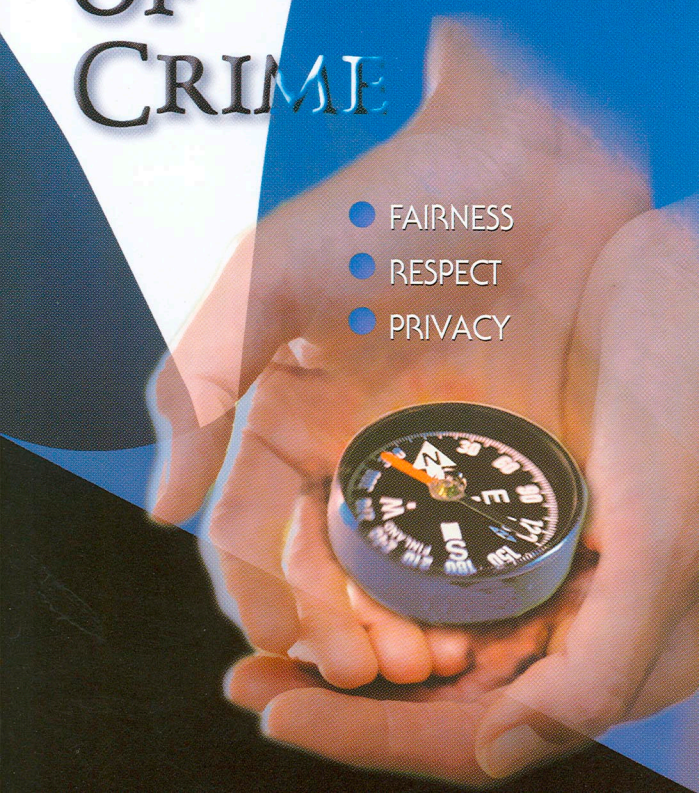
Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation

HELP *for* VICTIMS OF CRIME

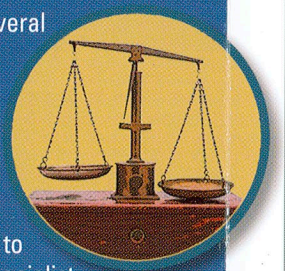
- FAIRNESS
- RESPECT
- PRIVACY



Introduction

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is responsible for investigating a wide range of Federal crimes. Part of the FBI's work involves providing information and assistance to victims of those crimes. Crime can have a devastating effect on victims and their families who may need help coping with the impact of victimization. FBI Victim Specialists are highly trained professionals who can assist you and coordinate with other agencies in providing you with the support, information, and resources that can effectively meet your needs. Victim Specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A Federal investigation can be both complex and lengthy. It may involve several agencies, some Federal and some local. This brochure provides information to help you deal with the needs and questions that often arise during an investigation. It describes your rights under Federal law and the types of services that may be available to you. Please contact your FBI Victim Specialist if you have any questions. The Specialist's name and number can be found at the end of this brochure.



Help for Victims of Crime

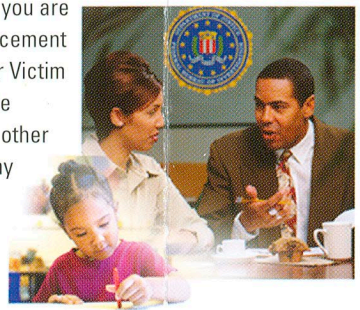
AS A CRIME VICTIM, YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS under 18 United States Code, Section 3771:

- The right to be reasonably protected from the accused;
- The right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public court proceeding, or any parole proceeding, involving the crime or of any release or escape of the accused;
- The right not to be excluded from any such public court proceeding, unless the court, after reviewing clear and convincing evidence, determines that testimony by the victim would be materially altered if the victim heard other testimony at that proceeding;
- The right to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding in the district court involving the release, plea, sentencing, or any parole proceeding;
- The right to confer with the attorney for the Government in the case;
- The right to full and timely restitution as provided in law;
- The right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay;
- The right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy.

We will make our best efforts to ensure you are afforded the rights described. Most of these rights pertain to events occurring after the indictment of an individual for the crime, and it will be the responsibility of the prosecuting United States Attorney's Office to ensure you are afforded those rights. You may also seek the advice of a private attorney with respect to these rights.

IF YOU ARE THREATENED OR HARASSED

Your safety is paramount. If anyone threatens you or you feel that you are being harassed because of your cooperation with this investigation, there are available remedies. If you are in immediate danger, contact your local law enforcement agency mmediately. Also, you should contact your Victim Specialist or the Case Agent and inform them of the situation. There are penalties for harassment and other threats; therefore, it is important that you report any incident as soon as possible.



IF YOU NEED FINANCIAL HELP OR SUPPORT SERVICES

All states have crime victims compensation programs that help cover some expenses resulting from violent crimes. Your state program may pay for medical and mental health care costs, lost wages and support, and funeral and burial expenses not covered by insurance or other benefits. Your FBI Victim Specialist may be able to help intercede on your behalf with employers and creditors, when appropriate. In addition, your Victim Specialist can refer you to other types of programs and services, such as emergency housing, counseling, support groups, and credit counseling. If the offender is convicted or pleads guilty, the court may order payment by the offender, called restitution, which may help cover expenses and losses caused by your victimization.

IF YOUR PROPERTY WAS STOLEN OR HELD AS EVIDENCE

If your property was stolen, we hope to recover it as part of our investigation and return it as soon as possible. If your property is held as evidence, we will notify you, maintain it in good condition, and make every effort to see that it is returned to you as quickly as possible when it is no longer needed as evidence.
Please understand that some property we receive as evidence has been damaged during the course of the crime.

IF AN ARREST IS MADE

Every effort will be made to notify you if a suspect is apprehended. If criminal charges are filed, you will be contacted by the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) assigned to handle your case.
Each USAO has a Victim Witness Coordinator to help answer your questions and deal with your concerns during the prosecution of the case.

VICTIM NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (VNS)

VNS is a free service that provides victims of Federal crime with information and notification regarding the status of the case and the offender's custody status, to include dates of court hearings, sentencing, parole and release. Information is provided in English or Spanish.

To access this system, your Victim Specialist will provide you with a Victim Identification Number (VIN) and a Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you have chosen to participate in VNS, but have not received these numbers, please contact the Victim Specialist at your local FBI field office.

You will receive letters, as updates to your case are available. You may also call the VNS Call Center at 1-866-365-4968 or access VNS on-line at http://www.Notify.USDOJ.gov for current case, court or custody information. You will be prompted to provide both your VIN and PIN when contacting the VNS Call Center. The Call Center and VNS is available on the internet during the following hours (Eastern Standard Time):

Monday - Friday	6:00 a.m. - 3:00 a.m.
Saturday	6:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.
Sunday	8:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

LIMITED CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

As your Victim Specialist, I certainly am here to assist you as you go through the criminal justice process. However, you should know that I work as part of a team with the FBI Agent and personnel from the United States Attorney's Office. Discussions that you have with me may not be considered completely confidential. As part of the team, there are times when I may need to share information you provide with the other team members. This is especially important if you share information regarding your safety, a medical emergency, when the information relates to child abuse and/or when the nondisclosure of the information could interfere with the investigation or prosecution of the case.

If you have any questions about limited confidentiality, you may contact me for clarification.

Remember, your interests are important to us. Many victims have questions and we are here to help provide you with answers and practical assistance.

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

FBI Victim Specialist:

_____
Name

_____
Phone

FBI Special Agent:

_____
Name

_____
Phone

INFORMATION CARD

_____
Victim Identification Number (VIN)

_____
Personal Identification Number (PIN)

_____
Investigation/Court Case Number