

PROGRAM INFORMATION

last updated 09-11-08



Office of Victim & Survivor Rights & Services Juvenile Services Unit

The Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services (OVSRS), Juvenile Services Unit, provides services to victims of juvenile offenders housed in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The OVSRS works with victim/witness assistance agencies, probation departments, and courts to enhance services to victims.

The OVSRS services are based on the premise that the justice system is accountable to victims and has a responsibility to offer services and implement programs that address the impact of crime on victims.

Services to Victims

- Notification of offender status: Notification may include transfer, escape, release, or discharge.
- Notification of annual case reviews: Hearings are held annually to determine progress towards treatment goals.
- Notification of parole hearings: Hearings are held to consider release to parole supervision.
- Accompaniment to parole hearings: The OVSRS staff assists victims with the hearing process. Accompaniment is often helpful in a correctional environment.
- Restitution collection and disbursement: 50% of each deposit into a ward's trust account goes towards paying restitution. The OVSRS distributes that money to the rightful party. For this reason, it is essential to have the appropriate payee's name and accurate amount or balance listed on the court order.
- Assistance in preparing victim impact statements: The OVSRS provides direct assistance to victims who wish to make Victim Impact Statements in person or in writing at DJJ hearings.
- Referrals: OVSRS provides victims with information and resources for civil recovery, counseling, financial assistance, and restraining orders.

For OVSRS to best service victims, it is helpful to have the courts, probation, and victim/witness assistance agencies provide specific victim information, e.g., the victim's name and last known address, victim's next of kin contact information, victim's guardian contact information, and specific victim names for stay away/restraining orders, for OVSRS to best service victims.

Restitution Collection: The OVSRS reviews cases for victim restitution orders, Victims of Crime claims and fine assessments. These efforts are enhanced by a California Victim and Government Claims Board (VCGCB) interagency agreement, which has resulted in aggressive identification of offender restitution obligations, increased assessment, collection, and disbursement of money to victims and the VCGCB. The OVSRS works together with probation departments, courts, and county revenue collections units to clarify restitution orders and balances. Through aggressive collection efforts, interagency agreements, staff/offender training, system development, and legislation, restitution collection continues to increase.

Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services- Juvenile Services Unit

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Interagency Collaboration

- **Victims Reparation Project:** The OVSRS and VCGCB entered into an interagency agreement to permanently fund the Victims Reparation Project. The project ensures offenders are held accountable for the financial consequence of their criminal activity. Cases are monitored for restitution compliance and contact is made with the committing court to amend orders.
- **Direct Services Enhancement Project:** The Office of Emergency Services awarded Victims of Crime Act funding for the Direct Services Enhancement Project. The project provides services to victims of more serious and violent offenders committed to the CDCR DJJ, many of the victims/survivors having no previous contact with the OVSRS. Services include an update on the offender's status and current location, assistance in preparing victim impact statements, and accompaniment to hearings. The project also focuses on outreach to victims, translated victim assistance materials, and emergency travel funds to attend DJJ hearings.

Victim Focused Offender Programs: The CDCR DJJ authored the original *Impact of Crime on Victims (ICV)* program, which has been replicated locally and nationally. The curriculum covers specific crime topics and includes video clips and activities to reinforce learning. Whenever possible, victim speakers personalize the impact of crime by speaking face to face with juvenile offenders in a classroom setting. The OVSRS provides ICV training and resource support to the DJJ.

The OVSRS implemented and presents *Offender Restitution Training* to DJJ offenders. The objective is to educate offenders regarding restitution and its governing laws, and improve offender accountability and responsibility; thus, increasing the payment fines and victim restitution payments. The training includes an overview of laws and CDCR DJJ policies related to fines and victim restitution collection. In addition, video segments and scenarios are also included providing offenders an opportunity to understand how victims are financially impacted and how restitution assists them.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week: The OVSRS facilitates and participates in National Crime Victims' Rights Week through a variety of statewide and local site activities.

Agency Collaboration: The OVSRS has collaborative meetings or activities with the VCGCB, the Attorney General's Office and the California Victim/Witness Coordinating Council as well as many local non-profit victim-serving agencies.

Legislation: The OVSRS advocates on behalf of victims by proposing and monitoring legislation related to crime victims' rights, offender accountability, and public safety.

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