VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION

How is the Victim Impact Statement Used in the Criminal Justice Process?

PROSECUTION

The Prosecutor's Office sends the VIS to the victim. It is the responsibility of the Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) to send the VIS and, upon request, assist the victim with completing the VIS.

The victim completes and returns VIS to VAC.

The defendant is acquitted/charges are dropped.

If the defendant is acquitted by reason of insanity the court clerk will notify victims if the defendant is discharged or released on outpatient care.

If submitted, the VIS must be considered by the Prosecutor and the Judge before sentence imposed in a trial or before entering into a plea agreement.*

POST-CONVICTION

The defendant is sentenced to County Jail.

The District Attorney or the County Attorney's Office keeps the VIS.

The defendant is sentenced to Prison.

The VIS is sent to the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division.

The VIS is forwarded to the TDCJ Victim Services Division and victim information is entered into the Integrated Victim Services System, if requested on the VIS. The victim will be notified of any change in the status of the offender.

When the offender enters the parole review process, the VIS is included with the items reviewed by the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) when making release decisions.

The defendant is sentenced to Community Supervision (Probation).

The Prosecutor's Office forwards the VIS to the appropriate community supervision department.

If probation is revoked and the defendant is sentenced to the TDCJ, the VIS should follow the offender into the TDCJ system. Refer to the path described under sentenced to Prison in the center of this diagram.

** The Confidential Victim Contact Information page is not included in the court file or documents available to the defense.*

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION

8712 Shoal Creek Blvd.
Suite 265
Austin, Texas 78757-6899

Toll-Free Hotline:
800-848-4284

E-mail:
victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov

Website:
www.tdcj.texas.gov

Integrated Victim Services System (IVSS) Victim Portal:
https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov

The mission of the Victim Services Division is to provide a central mechanism for crime victims to participate in the Criminal Justice System.

02/2026

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION

IT'S YOUR VOICE

Information Regarding the Victim Impact Statement

VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION



What is the Victim Impact Statement?

The Victim Impact Statement (VIS) is designed to perform three purposes:

1. Provide information about your rights as a victim of a crime;
2. Provide an opportunity to explain how you and your family have been affected by this crime; and
3. Collect contact information so that victim service and criminal justice professionals can provide you with notifications regarding the case, including information about court proceedings, probation, parole, offender release or discharge.

By submitting a VIS, the victim provides a perspective no one else can. This extends to minor victims of crime as well; please inquire about our VIS options. If the VIS is part of the prosecutor's file, key decision makers (i.e., the prosecutor, judge, probation, and the Board of Pardons and Paroles [BPP]) in the system will be able to hear from the people most affected by this crime: victims, guardians of the victims, and close relatives of deceased victims.

What the VIS is Not

The written VIS is not the same as an allocution. An allocution refers to the right to make an oral statement to the court, after the sentence has been pronounced. Victims who want to exercise this right should contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) who will notify the prosecutor handling the case.

How is the Victim Impact Statement Used in the Criminal Justice Process?

Prosecution

The VIS will be sent to you, the victim, parent or guardian of the victim or close relative of a deceased victim, by the VAC in the prosecutor's office after the defendant has been charged by information or indictment. You may also request the VAC's assistance in completing the VIS. After completing the VIS, you should return it to the VAC, who will then submit the VIS to the prosecutor.

Some cases go to trial but others are resolved through a plea agreement. If you have submitted a VIS, the prosecutor must consider your VIS before entering into a plea agreement. The prosecutor may also use information from your VIS to determine how much restitution to request as part of a sentence.

Prior to the imposition of a sentence in a trial or prior to accepting a plea agreement, the judge must ask if a VIS has been submitted. If submitted, your VIS must be considered before imposing a sentence in a trial.

Your VIS will become part of the prosecutor's file. If approved by the court, the VIS, excluding the Confidential Victim Contact Information page, may be seen by the defendant and defense attorney (who may then introduce evidence or testimony in regard to its accuracy).

Post-Conviction

Community Supervision (Probation): If the defendant is sentenced to community supervision, the community supervision officer will have access to the VIS to use for notification purposes.

Prison: If the defendant is sentenced to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Correctional Institutions Division (adult prison system), the court shall attach the VIS to the offender's commitment papers. Once your VIS is received by the TDCJ, it will be forwarded to the TDCJ Victim Services Division and your preferences regarding notifications and prohibited contact will be entered into the Integrated Victim Services System (IVSS).

(Please note: minors cannot receive notifications from the TDCJ Victim Services Division. If the victim is a minor, the adult parent or guardian will be added to IVSS, if that information is included on the VIS).

Parole: When the offender becomes eligible for parole consideration, your completed VIS is one of the items the BPP will consider prior to voting whether or not to release the offender.

You have the right to be informed of parole procedures, to participate in the parole review process, and to provide information to be considered by the BPP prior to the vote regarding the discretionary release of the offender. You also have the right to be notified about parole proceedings and to be notified when the offender is released.

One way to receive these notices from the TDCJ is to complete the VIS form and return it to your VAC. Victims do not have to return a completed VIS to receive the notices. You may simply return the Confidential Victim Contact Information page of the VIS. However, in not returning a completed VIS, the BPP will not automatically be informed of the impact of the crime.

Clemency: In cases where clemency applications are filed with BPP, your completed VIS contains information the BPP considers prior to them voting whether or not to recommend clemency to the governor. Due to the lengthy appeals process in death penalty cases, if applicable, your VIS will ensure your voice is heard by the BPP when the clemency application is reviewed.

You can also call the TDCJ Victim Services Division at 800-848-4284 to request notifications regarding the defendant after the defendant is sentenced to the TDCJ.

(Please note: For juvenile offenders, prosecution and post-conviction will be processed through the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) where a Juvenile VIS form can be submitted.)

For more information about the Victim Impact Statement, please contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator in your prosecutor's office or the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse at 800-848-4284 or by e-mail at tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov.

For more information about confidentiality, please see the Texas Government Code, Section 552.1325 and the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 56A.101.

TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE
TXCVC
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE