

## Statewide Victim Resources

Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance  
Victim and Witness Assistance Board  
(617) 586-1340

Victim Compensation and Assistance Division  
Office of the Attorney General  
(617) 727-2200 ext.2160

U.S. Attorney's Office  
Victim and Witness Assistance Program  
(617) 748-3100

Department of Criminal Justice Information Services  
(DCJIS) Victim Services Unit  
(617) 660-4690 or (617) 660-4606 (TTY)

Massachusetts Department of Correction  
Victim Services Unit  
(978) 369-3618  
Toll free (866) 6VICTIM (866-684-2846)

Massachusetts Parole Board  
Victim Services Unit  
(508) 650-4500 or (888) 298-6272

Sex Offender Registry Board  
Victim Services Unit  
(978) 740-6440  
Toll free (800) 93MEGAN (800-936-3426)

Department of Youth Services (DYS)  
Victim Services Unit  
(617) 727-7575

Massachusetts Probation Service  
Victim Services Unit  
(617) 727-5300

Massachusetts Office For Victim Assistance

# MOVA

Victim & Witness Assistance Board

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) is to empower all crime victims and witnesses in the Commonwealth. MOVA strives to ensure access to equitable services, across the Commonwealth, which meet the unique needs of those impacted by crime through survivor-informed policy development, fund administration, training, and individual assistance.

Massachusetts Office for  
Victim Assistance  
Victim and Witness Assistance Board

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[www.mass.gov/mova](http://www.mass.gov/mova)

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## Victim Witness Assistance Programs

The District Attorney's Office for each county in Massachusetts and the Attorney General's Office have Victim Witness Assistance Programs to help crime victims during the prosecution of a case. For information and assistance about a crime in which you were a victim, call the Victim Witness Assistance Program in the county where the crime occurred.

**Attorney General's  
Criminal Bureau** (617) 727-2200

**Berkshire County** (413) 443-5951

**Bristol County** (508) 997-0711

**Cape & Islands  
Barnstable, Dukes  
& Nantucket Counties** (508) 362-8113

**Essex County** (978) 745-6610

**Hampden County** (413) 747-1000

**Middlesex County** (781) 897-8300

**Norfolk County** (781) 830-4800

**Northwestern  
Franklin County** (413) 774-3186

**Hampshire County** (413) 586-9225

**Plymouth County** (508) 584-8120

**Suffolk County** (617) 619-4000

**Worcester County** (508) 755-8601

# MASSACHUSETTS VICTIM BILL OF RIGHTS

Understanding Your Rights  
as a Crime Victim

Massachusetts Office For Victim Assistance

# MOVA

Victim & Witness Assistance Board

# MASSACHUSETTS VICTIM BILL OF RIGHTS

The Victim Bill of Rights\* exists to ensure crime victims and witnesses are informed, present, and heard at important stages in the criminal matter involving them.

These basic and fundamental rights seek to provide victims and survivors with a meaningful role in the criminal justice system. *It is essential that you update the prosecutor or victim advocate assigned to you with your contact information so they can ensure you benefit from the rights available to you.*

*\*For a complete listing of your rights, please refer to the Victim Bill of Rights (M.G.L. c.258B.)*

## Victim rights and services in the criminal justice system

### You have the right to...

- » Be informed about how a criminal case moves through the system, what your role is in the process, and what will be expected of you and why.
- » Be informed of rights and services available to victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system.
- » Be informed about how to access social services, community supports, and financial assistance that may be available to you.

## Specific information about the criminal case involving you

### You have the right to...

- » Be updated on significant developments in the case.
- » Be informed in a timely manner of any changes in schedule of court appearances for which you have been ordered to appear.
- » Speak with the prosecutor before the start of the case, before the case is dismissed, before trial, and before a sentence recommendation is made.
- » Speak with the prosecutor whenever a defense attorney asks the court to get access to your psychiatric records or other confidential information.
- » Be informed about how to become certified to receive information about an offender.

## When attending court proceedings

### You have the right to...

- » Be present at all proceedings along, with your family, unless you have to testify and the judge decides that your testimony could be impacted by being in the courtroom.
- » A safe waiting area or room provided by the court which is separate from the defendant and defendant's family and friends.
- » Help from the prosecutor's office with your employers or creditors if the crime or your involvement in the court process causes problems in meeting work or payment obligations. Witnesses subpoenaed to testify in court that notify their employers in advance may not be discharged or penalized by their employer on the basis of their absence from work while in court responding to the subpoena.
- » Bring an 8 x 10 or smaller picture of your loved one who was a victim of homicide into the courtroom as long as the jury doesn't see it.

## Before a defendant is sentenced by the court

### You have the right to...

- » Speak with the prosecutor about their proposed sentence recommendation to the court.
- » Speak with the probation officer about how the crime affected you before the officer files a full pre-sentence report on the offender with the court.
- » Give a victim impact statement to the court at sentencing about the physical, emotional, and financial effects of the crime on you and about your opinion about the sentence to be given.
- » Ask that the judge order the offender to pay restitution for your crime-related financial losses, and to get a copy of the offender's schedule of restitution payments from the offender's supervising probation officer.

## Sentencing, restitution, and offender's release or status in custody

### You have the right to...

- » Be informed of the final outcome of the case, including an explanation of the type of sentence given and a copy of the conditions of probation, if any.
- » Be informed by the offender's supervising probation officer whenever that offender asks to change a restitution order and be heard at any related hearing.
- » Have your property that was taken as evidence be given back to you as soon as possible when law enforcement doesn't need it anymore.
- » If eligible, obtain additional information about the offender, such as a criminal record or the offender's compliance with the terms of a sentence.
- » Ask that your impact statement be forwarded to the Parole Board for their records.

## Sentencing, restitution, and offender's release continued....

### You have the right to...

- » Be informed by the Parole Board of the offender's parole eligibility.
- » Be notified before an offender is moved to a less secure correctional facility.
- » Be notified before an offender receives a temporary, provisional, or final release or escapes from custody.

## Sentencing, restitution, and offender's release or status in custody

### You have the right to...

- » Apply for Victim of Violent Crime Compensation, to see if you're eligible to be reimbursed for certain out-of-pocket expenses, such as medical, counselling or funeral costs, or lost wages due to a disability caused by crime.
- » Ask that during the court proceedings your personal information and information about family members' home address, telephone number, school and place of employment not be made public.
- » Certain protections by law enforcement from harm or threats of harm caused by your cooperation with the court process.
- » A prompt disposition of the criminal case involving you.
- » Submit or decline to participate in interviews with the defense team before trial, or to set reasonable conditions on the conduct of any such interview if you choose to be interviewed.
- » If applicable, consult a private attorney to start a civil lawsuit on your own for damages because of the crime.