



CAN I APPLY FOR CONNECTICUT'S VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND?

A FACTSHEET FOR SEX WORKERS WHO ARE VICTIMS OF CRIMES*



SEX WORKERS & ALLIES NETWORK

YALE GLOBAL HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

If you have been the victim of a crime that took place in Connecticut, you might be eligible to receive compensation for expenses you suffered as a result of the crime from CT's Victim Compensation Fund. This includes crimes by the police, such as **police sexual violence**: coerced sex, unnecessary touching, etc.

You may also be eligible for compensation if you are a relative or carer of someone who was harmed by a crime or if you paid for some expenses.¹

The Office of Victim Services (OVS) manages the fund. Their website contains useful information and resources. Use the QR code to access the website.



WHAT CAN I GET COMPENSATION FOR?

- The Fund **may cover some of the expenses you suffered from as a result of the crime.**¹
- **Keep all bills and receipts to be able to get compensation.** The Fund **will not provide money in advance**, but may reimburse expenses you already paid for or bills you owe but haven't paid yet. You can submit an application and update it later with bills and receipts when you have them.
- The Fund **only covers specific types of expenses**, including medical and mental health expenses, travel to court proceedings, crime scene clean-up, etc.² It **does not cover**, for example, property damage, transport to appointments, attorneys' fees, or basic needs such as housing or food. Income lost due to the crime, for example as you recover, will only be reimbursed if it legal and taxable.¹
- The Fund **only covers expenses not covered by insurance or sources like government agencies or a lawsuit.**¹ Submit bills to these sources first, if you have them. Otherwise, apply directly to the Fund.²

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION?

When a person applies for compensation for expenses, **OVS makes decisions that a person is eligible (or not) for compensation case-by-case, based on a short list of eligibility criteria.**

- **Can I apply if I have a criminal record? Yes.** OVS will only look at the circumstances in which the crime happened, not at your past history.
- **Can I apply if I was the victim of a crime while doing sex work? Yes.** OVS has reported that you cannot be denied compensation because you were doing sex work. For example, if you were assaulted by a client during a date, you may be eligible.
- **Can I apply if I was doing some other criminalized activity at the time the crime happened (e.g., buying or using drugs)? It depends.** Generally, you must not have caused the crime.¹ For example, if you were using drugs when you were assaulted, you are likely to be eligible for compensation. However, if you were assaulted by the person you were buying drugs from, you might be denied compensation.
- **Can I apply if I'm under 18? Yes,** but the application must be filed by a parent or guardian for you.³
- **Can I apply if I'm not a US citizen? Yes.** OVS reports that you do not have to be a citizen as long as the crime happened in Connecticut.¹ However, it is unclear if undocumented persons have access or have protections. Before considering applying or contacting OVS, seek out legal advice.

DO I HAVE TO REPORT TO POLICE TO GET COMPENSATION?

- **If you are applying for compensation for expenses related to sexual assault, domestic violence or human trafficking, you are not required to report the crime to police.** You have other options to be eligible, and are not required to meet the ordinary time limit.¹

You may still be eligible in this case if you have (before applying):

- told a certified sexual assault or domestic violence counselor, an employee of a child advocacy center or the Department of Children and Families, or certain medical or mental health providers or certain school personnel; or
- had a sexual assault exam and evidence collection done at a health care facility within 120 hours of the assault; or
- got a restraining order or a civil protection order.¹

The **Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence** can assist with this. Contact information is on the next page.

STATEWIDE HOTLINE

Victims of sexual assault can report the crime and be connected to services and support by calling Connecticut's 24/7 statewide hotline:

1-888-999-5545 for English

1-888-568-8332 para Español

- However, generally, **for all other crimes, you must report the crime to the police within five days** of it happening, or **within five days of when a report could reasonably be made**, in order to be eligible to apply to the Victim Compensation Fund. If you miss this deadline, you can apply for a waiver to remain eligible. This form is available on the OVS website.¹
- **You must also cooperate with the police investigation of the crime reported** in order to be eligible.¹ If you have concerns about this requirement, particularly if the person who committed the crime against you was a police officer, it might be a good idea to seek legal advice from a lawyer first.

HOW CAN I APPLY FOR COMPENSATION?

- **A service provider can help you with your application.** They can help you work out which forms to submit, and can also provide more general support. See contact information for some relevant service providers on the next page, and QR codes to access their websites.
- **There are two types of applications:** physical injury application and emotional injury.

EMOTIONAL INJURY

Complete this application if you have experienced emotional or mental harm as a result of the crime, with no physical injury.

PHYSICAL INJURY

Complete this application if you experienced both physical and emotional harm as a result of the crime.

Complete this application if you have been a victim of sexual assault.

- Use the QR code on the first page of this document to access the website and download the form.
- **Once completed**, the emotional or physical injury application and supporting documents can be emailed to OVSCompensation@jud.ct.gov, faxed to 860-263-2780, or mailed to Office of Victim Services, Victim Compensation Unit, 225 Spring Street, 4th Floor, Wethersfield, CT 06109.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION?

- **This process usually takes approximately 4 months.** OVS might ask for more information and documentation from you, the police, health providers, and/or insurance companies.⁴
- **Once they have made a decision, OVS will send you a letter** explaining whether you are eligible for compensation. If the answer is yes, you have 45 days to accept the compensation. If the answer is no, you have 30 days to request another review. It could take 1-2 months for that review to be held.⁴

WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION?

Scan the QR codes with your camera app to access organizations' websites and resources. The CT Alliance QR code will take you to a list of member centers so you can find the center in your area.

- If you have questions about the application or need help with the claim process, you can call the **Victim Compensation Program** at 1-888-286-7347 or email OVSCompensation@jud.ct.gov and someone will be able to answer your questions and help you fill the application.
- The **Sex Workers and Allies Network** (SWAN) is an outreach program of the Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance. Call them at 203-935-5701.
- The **Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants** (CIRI) provides legal, economic, linguistic, and social services to immigrants, refugees, survivors of human trafficking and torture, and unaccompanied minors throughout Connecticut. Call them at 203-336-0141 or email at info@cirict.org
- You can also access resources like Red Cards, which you can keep on you and which describe the constitutional rights that you have even if you are not a US citizen, from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC).

IF THE CRIME WAS A SEXUAL ASSAULT:

- You can call **Connecticut's 24/7 statewide hotline** to get immediate support, safety planning and space to talk. This can be anonymous. If you want to file an application for compensation, they can also help you do that: 1-888-999-5545 for English, 1-888-568-8332 para Español.
- You can also contact a member organization of the **Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence** to request that a sexual assault victim advocate assist you with the application. Telling an advocate about the assault means that a police report is not required for compensation eligibility. Call the Alliance at 860-282-9881, or email at info@endsexualviolencect.org

CT Alliance advocates can also, depending on what you want to do:

- Provide support over the phone or Zoom. This can be anonymous;
- Provide support in-person;
- Accompany you to receive medical care, and advocate for you throughout the process of receiving care;
- Accompany you to complete a Sexual Assault Kit. This can be anonymous (using an ID number instead of your name). You can choose which parts of the kit you are comfortable doing, or to not do a kit at all. You do not have to pay for the kit to be done, and you can be reimbursed for medication like PEP (HIV prevention) and ella emergency contraception;
- Accompany you to report to police. This can include working with you how to report if you were harmed by a police officer. You do not have to report if you do not want to.



* This factsheet is not, and is not intended to be, legal counsel or advice. It summarizes available information on the Victim Compensation Fund.

1. Victim Compensation Program. Connecticut Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services. <https://www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim/compensation.htm>

2. Victim Compensation Program Benefits. Connecticut Office of Victim Services. <https://www.jud.ct.gov/webforms/forms/VS047.pdf>

3. C.G.S 54-204. https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_968.htm#sec_54-204

4. Frequently Asked Questions: Victim Compensation Process. Connecticut Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services. https://www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim/comp_FAQ.pdf