



**Victim
Impact
Statements**



The mission of the Victim Services Division is to provide a central mechanism for crime victims to participate in the criminal justice system.



Overview

- Post-Conviction Rights
- What is a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) and why is it important?
- What does the VIS look like?
- How is the VIS used?
- What is the current state of the VIS and what are we doing about it?
- How can I help?
- Question and Answer



Victims' Rights: Post Conviction

Texas Constitution – Bill of Rights

- to information about....the release of the accused

Art. 56.02, Code of Criminal Procedure

- to information regarding the parole process
- to be informed of parole proceedings
- to be notified of parole proceedings
- to provide information to the TxBPP
- to be notified of the defendant's release
- to be informed on the uses of the a victim impact statement and the statement's purpose
- to complete and have the victim impact statement considered by the TxBPP before an inmate is released on parole



Victims' Rights: Post Conviction

Sec. 508.117, Government Code

- Victim Notification "before a parole panel considers for release on parole"
- Victim Notification "before an inmate is released from the institutional division on parole or mandatory supervision"
- Confidentiality of victim's name and address

Sec. 508.153, Government Code

- The parole panel...shall allow the victim and a victims' representative to provide a written statement to the panel
- The parole panel...shall allow a victim to appear in person before the panel to present a statement of the person's views about the offense; the inmate; and the effect of the offense on the victim



Victims' Rights: Post Conviction

Sec. 508.313, Government Code

- All information obtained and maintained, including a victim protest letter or other correspondence, a victim impact statement...is confidential and privileged...

Sec. 508.190, Government Code

- Avoiding Victim of Stalking Offense Parole Condition

Sec. 508.191, Government Code

- No Contact with Victim Parole Condition



What is a Victim Impact Statement?

A written detailed account of the emotional, physical, and financial effects the crime has had on the victim/family.

7



Purpose of VIS

- Provide contact information to criminal justice professionals for notification purposes
 - County & District Attorney's Offices
 - CSCD
 - TDCJ
- Provide a detailed description of the impact of the crime directly from the victim
 - Prosecutors & judges are required to consider the VIS prior to sentencing
 - If the VIS is received by TDCJ, the Board of Pardons & Paroles is required to consider the VIS



Why is the VIS so important?

- Provides a perspective no one else can.
- If VIS is not returned, decision-makers will not have heard from the people most affected by the crime.
- Provides greater opportunity to participate in the criminal justice system.
- **Key to maintaining a victim's right to participate and be informed throughout the entire process.**



Updates to the VIS

- Inclusion of new Crime Victims' Rights
- Revisions based on committee feedback
- Updated the "It's Your Voice" Brochure
- Located on our website

Email:
tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.state.tx.us

Website:
http://tdcj.state.tx.us/publications/pubs_victim_impact_statement.html



Confidential Victim Contact Information Sheet

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT
CONFIDENTIAL
VICTIM CONTACT INFORMATION
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION SHEET

This Confidential Information Sheet will be securely stored and not be disclosed to control you throughout the process. This includes holding you and your personal information confidential and will not be shared with the defendant or his/her attorney. For more information on this page, go to [http://tdcj.state.tx.us](#)

*ATTENTION: If you require assistance in providing a victim program, please see your account manager or contact us at 800-844-4284.

SECTION 1 - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP	PHONE	DATE

SECTION 2 - TO BE COMPLETED BY VICTIM PARENT/GUARDIAN OR CLOSE RELATIVE

VICTIM'S INFORMATION

Do you wish to be notified about relevant court proceedings? YES NO

Do you wish to be notified if the defendant is placed on community supervision (probation)? YES NO

If the defendant is sent to prison (Texas Department of Criminal Justice), do you want to be notified when he or she is being considered for parole or release? YES NO

If the defendant is sent to prison, do you want the defendant to be prohibited from contacting you? YES NO

IMPORTANT!

IF YOU MOVE OR CHANGE ANY OF YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION, CALL YOUR VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR OR THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION AT 800-844-4284.



Notification Preferences

SECTIONS 1 & 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY VICTIM PARENT/GUARDIAN OR CLOSE RELATIVE

SECTION 1 - NOTIFICATION

Do you want to be notified about relevant court proceedings? YES NO

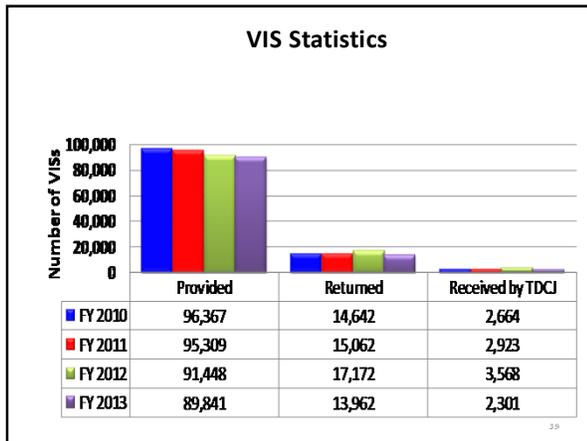
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Current Challenges

- A small percentage of the VISs distributed are being completed and returned by victims.
- Victims are not registered on VNS, therefore they are not notified.
- Only a small percentage of the VISs returned by victims are being included in pen packets.



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TxCVC VIS Responsibilities

- Revise VIS after each legislative session
- Develop VIS Recommendations
- Collect VIS Statistics
- Provide VIS Training



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VIS Recommended Processing Procedures

- Developed by the TxCVC in consultation with the Board of Pardons and Paroles, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and other participants in the criminal justice system.
- Goal is to ensure that completed VISs are submitted to the TDCJ and to provide sample policies and procedures for local communities.
- Can be implemented in whole or in part.

22



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It's Never Too Late To Submit A VIS!!!!

23



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Victim Notification



PRISONER FREED - VICTIM NOT TOLD



How can TxCVC help?

- Free Publications
www.tdcj.state.tx.us/publications
 - Updated Brochures
 - Quarterly Informer Newsletter
 - Monthly VAC Bulletin
 - Revised VIS
 - Resource Directory
 - Website
- Regional Victim Service Coordinators
- Technical Assistance
- Training
 - Round Table
 - Webinars
 - Local Training
 - Texas Victim Assistance Training (TVAT) Online



How can I help?

- System – Based Professionals
 - Inform victims of their right to complete a VIS and what doing so means for them
 - Collaborate with others in your jurisdiction to create VIS protocols
 - Do your part to ensure that the VIS ends up in the right place
 - Host a VIS training for your community
- Community – Based Professionals
 - Remind victims of their right to complete a VIS
 - Explain the importance of returning the VIS
 - Provide assistance completing the VIS
 - Host a VIS training for your community



Questions?

Comments!

800-848-4284 (Toll-Free)

512-406-5900 (Austin)

victim.svc@tdcj.state.tx.us
