



VISION STATEMENT

To deliver compassionate and comprehensive services to victims, survivors, families, and next-of kin.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Victims' Services Unit (VSU) is dedicated to serving, and empowering victims and survivors and their families, and connecting them with relevant and tailored resources.

OUR WORK

- Providing victim-centered and trauma-informed responses and services to victims, survivors, and their families.
- Recognizing that every victim, survivor, and their family deserves to be heard, believed, and supported through their journey navigating the criminal justice system.
- Connecting victims, survivors, and families with resources and services that meet their needs.

ABOUT US

VSU was created in 1999 to better serve victims, survivors, families, and next of kin in cases prosecuted by the California Department of Justice (DOJ). Victims have rights and DOJ is committed to ensuring those rights are protected. VSU offers support and information to victims and their families at every stage of the criminal process. The unit works in conjunction with victim service providers and frontline prosecutors all across the state to:

- Build rapport with the victim, survivor, family or next of kin.
- Provide information about the criminal justice process and victims' rights.
- Offer emotional support and court accompaniment.
- Arrange interpretation and translation services.
- Assist with victim impact statements.
- Help with the California Victim Compensation Board application.
- Supply referrals to emergency, short-term, and long-term services.
- Collaborate with the local government and non-government victim advocates.

WHAT IS AN APPEAL?

An appeal is a formal request submitted by the defendant to a higher court (court of appeal), to review and reconsider a decision made by lower court. It aims to have the original decision modified or overturned based on legal and procedural grounds. In California, any defendant convicted of a felony has the right to file an appeal. DOJ represents the People in all criminal appeals.

WHAT IS A CONFLICT CASE?

In a situation where a local District Attorney's office faces a conflict of interest that prevents the office from prosecuting the case, the office may refer to California DOJ for handling.



OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION

The criminal justice system can be challenging for victims, survivors, and families to navigate. In an effort to support crime victims and survivors, the Victims' Services Unit (VSU) is dedicated to carrying out outreach and collaboration with local government victim services agencies and community-based organizations by:

- Creating and distributing victim resource materials detailing VSU's role within the criminal justice system
- Educating government and non-government victim service providers on the services provided by VSU
- Participating in community outreach events to raise public awareness about VSU's services, especially to marginalized, underserved, at-risk, and underserved communities
- Collaborating with partner agencies to identify and address victims' short- and long-term needs
- Connecting with community-based direct service providers to identify and address service gaps, share best practices, identify victimization trends, and, most importantly, foster connections and networking among providers to ensure comprehensive victim support and response.
- Distributing Marsy's Rights cards in multiple languages to local law enforcement agencies, District Attorneys' Offices, and direct service providers throughout the state, ensuring victims are aware of their rights.

REFERRALS

VSU receives and responds to requests for assistance from crime victims throughout California. VSU Victim Advocates are dedicated to connecting victims to appropriate and relevant services at the local, state, and federal levels. Some of these agencies may include but are not limited to:

- Local District Attorney Victim/ Witness Assistance offices
- Local non-government victim services providers
- Sexual assault assistance centers
- Child abuse treatment centers
- Domestic violence assistance centers
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Office of Victims & Survivor Rights and Services (cdcr.ca.gov/victim-services/)
- California Victim Compensation Board (victims.ca.gov/for-victims/)
- Family Justice Centers

RESOURCES

VSU publications for victims and support agencies include:

- Help for Victims of Crime
- Capital Case Guide
- Appeals & Victim's Rights

These materials and more information about VSU are available in print and online at:

oag.ca.gov/victimservices

NEED MORE HELP?

California Department of Justice
Victims' Services Unit
1300 I Street
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 95814

(877) 433-9069 (Toll-free)

oag.ca.gov/victimservices/contact