

VICTIMS COMPENSATION RESTITUTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What is the Victims Compensation Program?

The Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program eases the financial burden faced by victims of violent crimes by covering expenses that are incurred as a result of the crime. The program can pay up to \$25,000 per victimization for medical expenses (up to \$15k), lost wages (up to \$10k), loss of support (up to \$10k), funeral expenses (up to \$6k), counseling (up to \$3k) and crime scene sanitization (up to \$1,500). The Program is funded by the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund.

What is the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund (GCVEF)?

The Crime Victims Emergency Fund is a constitutional fund that supports the Program. The fund is comprised of four revenue sources that yield varying annual revenue amounts. The sources are DUI Fines, Parole Fees, Probation Fees, and the VOCA Compensation Grant.

How does restitution correlate with the Victims Compensation Program?

In accordance with O.C.G.A. §17-15-13 (a), compensation paid by the Program creates a debt to the state by the offender, subject to be recouped by way of ordered restitution.

If the program receives federal funds? Why does the program need to pursue restitution?

The Victims Compensation Program is funded primarily through state funds (probation and parole fines and fees) supplemented with an annual federal VOCA formula grant. Currently, Program payouts exceed approximately \$21 million per year to help thousands of crime victims and their families and increase slightly each year. Annual revenues, on the other hand, have steadily declined since the pandemic due to court closures and subsequently due to legislation relieving probationers and parolees from active supervision earlier than previously sentenced. Therefore, revenues via state and federal funds are much less than expenditures. Seeking restitution is not only a statutory obligation of the program but also a necessity to ensure long-term sustainability.

Will the pursuit of restitution by our office make that much of a difference?

Yes. Currently, the Program recovers less than 1% of our annual payouts. It is anticipated that an increase in requests presented to judges and more education will significantly affect annual recoveries among all jurisdictions.

Aren't the same offenders making payments to the Program via probation fines and fees?

If the offender is on active supervised probation, they are responsible for paying \$9 a month to the Program, which amounts to \$108 per year. In most cases, the Program pays thousands (up to \$25,000) in compensation to the victim as they await a resolution of the criminal proceedings. The vast difference in probation funds collected and the amount of compensation paid creates a deficit in the fund and threatens Program sustainability.

As a VWAP advocate, how do I know when payment has been made on a claim?

Once payment has been made, a restitution request form (RRF) will be automatically generated and sent to the Victims Witness Assistance Program in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred. The receipt of the RRF indicates that, should a restitution hearing be presented, there should also be consideration of restitution on behalf of the Crime Victims Emergency Fund. You can also check the Victims Comp Portal to verify the amount paid to the victim before the court hearing.

What is the Restitution Request Form (RRF)?

The RRF is a document the Victims Compensation Program generates to notify the VWAP that compensation has been paid on a claim. It is our way of asking that restitution be requested on behalf of the Crime Victims Emergency Fund.

Will the VWAP advocate receive an RRF for all claims within their jurisdiction?

No. An RRF will only be generated when there is a payment made on an open claim AND an offender is known (entered into the claims management system).

I have received an RRF on a claim already. Why am I receiving another one?

An RRF is generated for each payment processed by the Victims Compensation Program.

The case is closed, why I am still receiving RRFs?

In order to stop RRFs from generating on closed cases, the case must be changed to a closed status in the restitution portion of the claim on the Victims Comp Portal.

Can restitution information be obtained/submitted on the Victims Comp Portal?

Yes. We highly recommend using the Victims Comp Portal to obtain the most up-to-date information (including the amount paid) on active claims. In addition, information can be entered on the offender, case status, and the amount ordered in real-time.

As a VWAP Advocate, what is my role in requesting restitution on behalf of the GCVEF?

- Updating offender information into a claim when identified later in the investigation. The information can be entered directly into the Victims Comp Portal or by contacting the Victims Compensation staff by phone or e-mail.
- Ensuring that prosecutors on a case have the most up-to-date information on payouts by the Victims Compensation Program when a restitution hearing is scheduled.
- Utilizing the Victims Compensation Portal to enter case status, restitution amounts requested and ordered, and any reasons why restitution was not ordered on a particular claim.
- Utilize reports provided to ensure there are no missed opportunities to recover restitution before a case is closed.
- Provide feedback as to how we can improve the restitution recovery process.

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How can I get access to the Victims Comp Portal?

You can register for access online at crimevictimscomp@cjcc.ga.gov. If you have specific questions regarding the Portal, please contact (404) 657-2222.

If you have additional questions, please contact our Restitution Recovery Advocate, Kyilla Jones, at 470-877-8951 or by email at Kyilla.Jones@cjcc.ga.gov.