

PENAL CODE - PEN**PART 4. PREVENTION OF CRIMES AND APPREHENSION OF CRIMINALS [11006 - 14315]***(Part 4 added by Stats. 1953, Ch. 1385.)***TITLE 6. CALIFORNIA COUNCIL ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE [13800 - 13899.1]***(Title 6 repealed and added by Stats. 1973, Ch. 1047.)***CHAPTER 4. Criminal Justice Planning Committee for State Judicial System [13830 - 13838]***(Chapter 4 added by Stats. 1973, Ch. 1047.)***ARTICLE 2. Local Assistance Centers for Victims and Witnesses [13835 - 13835.10]***(Article 2 repealed and added by Stats. 1983, Ch. 1312, Sec. 2.)***13835.**

The Legislature finds and declares as follows:

- (a) That there is a need to develop methods to reduce the trauma and insensitive treatment that victims and witnesses may experience in the wake of a crime, since all too often citizens who become involved with the criminal justice system, either as victims or witnesses to crime, are further victimized by that system.
- (b) That when a crime is committed, the chief concern of criminal justice agencies has been apprehending and dealing with the criminal, and that after police leave the scene of the crime, the victim is frequently forgotten.
- (c) That victims often become isolated and receive little practical advice or necessary care.
- (d) That witnesses must make arrangements to appear in court regardless of their own schedules, child care responsibilities, or transportation problems, and that they often find long waits, crowded courthouse hallways, confusing circumstances and, after testifying, receive no information as to the disposition of the case.
- (e) That a large number of victims and witnesses are unaware of both their rights and obligations.
- (f) That although the State of California has a fund for needy victims of violent crimes, and compensation is available for medical expenses, lost income or wages, and rehabilitation costs, the application process may be difficult, complex, and time-consuming, and victims may not be aware that the compensation provisions exist.

It is, therefore, the intent of the Legislature to provide services to meet the needs of both victims and witnesses of crime through the funding of local comprehensive centers for victim and witness assistance.

*(Repealed and added by Stats. 1983, Ch. 1312, Sec. 2.)***13835.2.**

(a) Funds appropriated from the Victim-Witness Assistance Fund shall be made available through the Office of Emergency Services to any public or private nonprofit agency for the assistance of victims and witnesses that meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) It provides comprehensive services to victims and witnesses of all types of crime. It is the intent of the Legislature to make funds available only to programs that do not restrict services to victims and witnesses of a particular type of crime, and do not restrict services to victims of crime in which there is a suspect in the case.
- (2) It is recognized by the board of supervisors as the major provider of comprehensive services to victims and witnesses in the county.
- (3) It is selected by the board of supervisors as the agency to receive funds pursuant to this article.

(4) It assists victims of crime in the preparation, verification, and presentation of their claims to the California Victim Compensation Board for indemnification pursuant to Article 1 (commencing with Section 13959) of Part 4 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(5) It cooperates with the California Victim Compensation Board in verifying the data required by Article 1 (commencing with Section 13959) of Part 4 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(b) The Office of Emergency Services shall consider the following factors, together with any other circumstances it deems appropriate, in awarding funds to public or private nonprofit agencies designated as victim and witness assistance centers:

(1) The capability of the agency to provide comprehensive services as defined in this article.

(2) The stated goals and objectives of the center.

(3) The number of people to be served and the needs of the community.

(4) Evidence of community support.

(5) The organizational structure of the agency that will operate the center.

(6) The capability of the agency to provide confidentiality of records.

(Amended by Stats. 2016, Ch. 31, Sec. 258. (SB 836) Effective June 27, 2016.)

13835.4.

In order to ensure the effective delivery of comprehensive services to victims and witnesses, a center established by an agency receiving funds pursuant to this article shall carry out all of the following activities in connection with both primary and optional services:

(a) Translation services for non-English-speaking victims and witnesses or the deaf or hard of hearing.

(b) Follow-up contact to determine whether the client received the necessary assistance.

(c) Field visits to a client's home, place of business, or other location, whenever necessary to provide services.

(d) Service to victims and witnesses of all types of crime.

(e) Volunteer participation to encourage community involvement.

(f) Services for elderly victims of crime, appropriate to their special needs.

(Amended by Stats. 2017, Ch. 561, Sec. 199. (AB 1516) Effective January 1, 2018.)

13835.5.

(a) Comprehensive services shall include all of the following primary services:

(1) Crisis intervention, providing timely and comprehensive responses to the individual needs of victims.

(2) Emergency assistance, directly or indirectly providing food, housing, clothing, and, when necessary, cash.

(3) Resource and referral counseling to agencies within the community which are appropriate to meet the victim's needs.

(4) Direct counseling of the victim on problems resulting from the crime.

(5) Assistance in the processing, filing, and verifying of claims filed by victims of crime pursuant to Article 1 (commencing with Section 13959) of Part 4 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(6) Assistance in obtaining the return of a victim's property held as evidence by law enforcement agencies, if requested.

(7) Orientation to the criminal justice system.

(8) Court escort.

- (9) Presentations to and training of criminal justice system agencies.
- (10) Public presentations and publicity.
- (11) Monitoring appropriate court cases to keep victims and witnesses apprised of the progress and outcome of their case.
- (12) Notification to friends, relatives, and employers of the occurrence of the crime and the victim's condition, upon request of the victim.
- (13) Notification to the employer of the victim or witness, if requested by the victim or witness, informing the employer that the employee was a victim of or witness to a crime and asking the employer to minimize any loss of pay or other benefits which may result because of the crime or the employee's participation in the criminal justice system.
- (14) Upon request of the victim, assisting in obtaining restitution for the victim, in ascertaining the victim's economic loss, and in providing the probation department, district attorney, and court with information relevant to his or her losses prior to the imposition of sentence.
- (b) Comprehensive services may include the following optional services, if their provision does not preclude the efficient provision of primary services:
 - (1) Employer intervention.
 - (2) Creditor intervention.
 - (3) Child care.
 - (4) Notification to witnesses of any change in the court calendar.
 - (5) Funeral arrangements.
 - (6) Crime prevention information.
 - (7) Witness protection, including arranging for law enforcement protection or relocating witnesses in new residences.
 - (8) Assistance in obtaining temporary restraining orders.
 - (9) Transportation.
 - (10) Provision of a waiting area during court proceedings separate from defendants and families and friends of defendants.

(Amended by Stats. 1996, Ch. 629, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 1997.)

13835.6.

- (a) The Office of Emergency Services, in cooperation with representatives from local victim and witness assistance centers, shall develop standards defining the activities and services enumerated in this article.
- (b) The Office of Emergency Services, in cooperation with representatives from local victim and witness assistance centers, shall develop a method of evaluating the activities and performance of centers established pursuant to this article.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 352, Sec. 446. (AB 1317) Effective September 26, 2013. Operative July 1, 2013, by Sec. 543 of Ch. 352.)

13835.7.

There is in the State Treasury the Victim-Witness Assistance Fund. Funds appropriated thereto shall be dispensed to the Office of Emergency Services exclusively for the purposes specified in this article, for any other purpose that supports victims, and for the support of the centers specified in Section 13837.

(Amended by Stats. 2014, Ch. 28, Sec. 74. (SB 854) Effective June 20, 2014.)

13835.10.

(a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) That the provision of quality services for victims of crime is of high priority.

(2) That existing victim service programs do not have sufficient financial resources to consistently recruit and employ fully trained personnel.

(3) That there is no consistency in the training provided to the various agencies serving victims.

(4) That comprehensive training for victim service agencies is geographically limited or unavailable.

(5) That there is currently no statewide comprehensive training system in place for the state to ensure that all service providers receive adequate training to provide quality services to victims of crime.

(6) It is the intention of the Legislature to establish a statewide training program within the Office of Emergency Services to provide comprehensive standardized training to victim service providers.

(b) The Office of Emergency Services shall establish a statewide victim-assistance training program, the purpose of which is to develop minimum training and selection standards, certify training courses, and provide funding to enable local victim service providers to acquire the required training.

(c)(1) For the purpose of raising the level of competence of local victim service providers, the Office of Emergency Services shall adopt guidelines establishing minimum standards of training for employees of victim-witness and sexual assault programs funded by the office to provide services to victims of crime. The Office of Emergency Services shall establish an advisory committee composed of recognized statewide victim service organizations, representatives of local victim service programs, and others selected at the discretion of the executive director to consult on the research and development of the training, selection, and equivalency standards.

(2) Any local unit of government, community-based organization, or any other public or private nonprofit entity funded by the Office of Emergency Services as a victim-witness or sexual assault program to provide services to victims of crime shall adhere to the training and selection standards established by the Office of Emergency Services. The standards for sexual assault victim service programs developed by the advisory committee established pursuant to Section 13836 shall be the standards for purposes of this section. With the exception of the sexual assault standards, the Office of Emergency Services shall conduct or contract with an appropriate firm or entity for research on validated standards pursuant to this section in consultation with the advisory committee established pursuant to paragraph (1). The Office of Emergency Services may defer the adoption of the selection standards until the necessary research is completed. Until the standards are adopted, affected victim service programs may receive state funding from the Office of Emergency Services upon certification of their willingness to adhere to the training standards adopted by the Office of Emergency Services.

(3) Minimum training and selection standards may include, but shall not be limited to, basic entry, continuation, supervisory, management, specialized curricula, and confidentiality.

(4) Training and selection standards shall apply to all victim service and management personnel of the victim-witness and sexual assault agencies funded by the Office of Emergency Services to provide services to victims of crime. Exemptions from this requirement may be made by the Office of Emergency Services. A victim service agency which, despite good faith efforts, is unable to meet the standards established pursuant to this section, may apply to the Office of Emergency Services for an exemption. For the purpose of exemptions, the Office of Emergency Services may establish procedures that allow for partial adherence. The Office of Emergency Services may develop equivalency standards which recognize professional experience, education, training, or a combination of the above, for personnel hired before July 1, 1987.

(5) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a victim service agency, funded by the Office of Emergency Services to provide services to victims of crime, from establishing training and selection standards which exceed the minimum standards established by the Office of Emergency Services pursuant to this section.

(d) For purposes of implementing this section, the Office of Emergency Services has all of the following powers:

- (1) To approve or certify, or both, training courses selected by the agency.
- (2) To make those inquiries which may be necessary to determine whether every local unit of government, community-based organization, or any other public or private entity receiving state aid from the Office of Emergency Services as a victim-witness or sexual assault program for the provision of services to victims of crime, is adhering to the standards for training and selection established pursuant to this section.
- (3) To adopt those guidelines which are necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.
- (4) To develop or present, or both, training courses for victim service providers, or to contract with coalitions, councils, or other designated entities, to develop or present, or both, those training courses.
- (5) To perform other activities and studies necessary to carry out the intent of this section.

(e) (1) The Office of Emergency Services may utilize any funds that may become available from the Victim-Witness Assistance Fund to fund the cost of training staff of victim service agencies which are funded by the Office of Emergency Services from the fund. The Office of Emergency Services may utilize federal or other state funds that may become available to fund the cost of training staff of victim service agencies which are not eligible for funding from the Victim-Witness Assistance Fund.

(2) Peace officer personnel whose jurisdictions are eligible for training subvention pursuant to Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 13500) of Title 4 of this part and correctional or probation personnel whose jurisdictions are eligible for state aid pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 6035) of Chapter 5 of Title 7 of Part 3 are not eligible to receive training reimbursements under this section unless the person receiving the training is assigned to provide victim services in accordance with a grant award agreement with the Office of Emergency Services and is attending training to meet the established standards.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 352, Sec. 448. (AB 1317) Effective September 26, 2013. Operative July 1, 2013, by Sec. 543 of Ch. 352.)