

Attorney General Raoul Awards \$9 Million In Grants For Crime Victim Services

September 16 2022 11:44 AM

CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced the award of more than \$9 million in grants to agencies across Illinois that provide services to survivors of violent crime.



Raoul's office awarded 252 Violent Crime Victim Assistance (VCVA) grants, with the average grant being about \$36,000. The funding goes to programs that offer support to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, gun violence, human trafficking, elder abuse, and other crimes. These programs offer a range of resources, including crisis intervention, courtroom assistance, legal services, counseling and other activities geared at addressing trauma, and violence prevention.

"It is incumbent on all of us to wrap our arms around survivors of violent crime in our communities," Raoul said. "My office remains committed to supporting survivors and doing all we can to prevent violent crime in Illinois. These programs help survivors access the tools they need to overcome the trauma they've endured and get their lives back on track."

The funding for this fiscal year marks an 18% increase in support for victim services over last fiscal year. The grants are funded by fees paid by convicted offenders of violent crimes and supplemental support from the state budget. In addition to the grants, Raoul's office awarded \$1.35 million in special project funding for investments in staff training, outreach and awareness campaigns and agency infrastructure.

Grant recipients include the Violence Prevention Center in Belleville, which provides a range of social services for domestic violence survivors, including counseling and access to a court advocate. Violence Prevention Center Executive Director Darlene Jones says that survivors tell center staff that the services provided help make them feel safe and supported, and allow them to overcome trauma and rebuild their lives.

"As a domestic violence service agency, The Violence Prevention Center of Southwestern Illinois is grateful for the funding from the VCVA. Providing these services allows families to break the cycle of generational violence and work towards healing generational trauma," Jones said. "As one example, the funding allows us to provide counseling to children who witness and experience domestic violence in their homes. These sessions focus on building self-esteem, healthy relationship skills, and coping skills to deal with the trauma of domestic violence. We have witnessed these sessions be transformational, time and time again."

VCVA funding allows Purpose Over Pain, a group of parents whose children's lives were taken by violence, to provide needed services such as financial assistance, emotional group support, referrals for needed services and personal support by accompanying parents to court proceedings.

"Survivors of violent crimes often face obstacles that include navigating the criminal justice system, financial hardship, and coping with trauma," said Pam Bosley, Violence Prevention Director of St. Sabina in Chicago and a co-founder of Purpose Over Pain. "It is our goal to have a 24-hour intervention hotline for parents in a crisis and seeking support, our goal is to help others."

In addition to VCVA grants, the Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division administers a host of programs and services to assist survivors of violent crime. The Crime Victims Compensation Program provides financial reimbursement to victims of violent crime who meet certain requirements. Eligible expenses under the program include costs associated with funeral and burial, lost wages, counseling and medical, hospital and dental costs and more.

Raoul initiated new, victim-centric changes to the law that regulates the program, as well as internal policy changes. As a result, the division is now resolving more claims and providing more in reimbursements. During the 2022 calendar year, the division has

already processed 87% more claims and recommended 117% more in compensation awards than 2021. Since the 2017 federal grant fiscal year, the average award has increased by 88%.

“I am so proud of the progress my Crime Victim Services Division has been able to make so far in my tenure, as we have committed to curbing and addressing violent crime throughout the state,” Raoul said. “There is always more work to do, and my goal is to continue to increase the amount of compensation given and the number of victims served. This can be achieved by continuing to shorten processing times and increasing our communication with victims.”

For additional information on services for crime victims, please call the Attorney General’s Crime Victims Assistance Line at 1-800-228-3368 or visit the [Attorney General’s website](#).