

Crime Victims' Compensation

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SURVIVORS AND
SERVICE PROVIDERS



HOPE • SAFETY • DIGNITY • EMPOWERMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lead authors: Sarah Bendtsen Diédhiou, J.D. and Sarah Roberts, J.D., LL.M.

The development of this guide was informed in substantial part by the expertise, perspectives, and experiences of:

- **Shared Hope's CVC Working Group:** A working group composed of legal practitioners and subject-matter experts, including individuals with lived experience of trafficking and the crime victims' compensation (CVC) process. Their perspectives helped shape the guide's purpose, content, and practical relevance for survivors and those who support them. We especially thank Michelle Brewer for drafting the "Safety and Wellness Plan" section of this guide.
- **State CVC Administrators:** Outreach to CVC administrators and staff across all 50 states provided state-specific insights into CVC policies, practices, application processes, and challenges experienced by trafficking survivors seeking compensation. Their contributions helped inform the guide's discussion of how CVC programs operate in practice and the importance of connecting survivors and advocates with their state CVC program.
- **Shared Hope's JuST Response Council:** A group of more than 30 experts from across the country who collaborate to improve responses to juvenile sex trafficking victims, drawing on their collective research, knowledge, and experience in services, law, and policy. Their insights helped ensure that this resource reflects diverse experiences and expertise and advances the shared goal of ensuring that trafficking survivors have access to the tools and support needed to achieve healing and holistic wellbeing.
- **Law Fellows:** We also extend special appreciation to Destiny Fernandes and Leandro "Gio" Lopez, our 2026 Summer Law Fellows, for their research support and thoughtful review of the guide.

We are deeply grateful to these and other individuals and organizations whose contributions helped ensure that this resource has practical value for trafficking survivors and those who support them.

About This Guide

This guide is for trafficking survivors and the advocates, case managers, attorneys, social workers, and other professionals and organizations who support them.

Understanding Crime Victims' Compensation

Crime victims' compensation (CVC) programs exist in every U.S. state and territory to help victims recover financially from the impact of crime.

Depending on the program, compensation may help cover expenses such as:

- Medical care
- Counseling
- Lost income
- Emergency relocation
- Other costs caused by or related to the crime

**Most crime victims—and often their family members—
can apply for compensation.**

Recognizing the Challenges

Seeking compensation can feel and be complicated. Each state administers its own CVC program and establishes its own eligibility requirements, covered expenses, application procedures, and deadlines. **You may encounter requirements or practical barriers that make the process difficult to understand or discourage you from applying.** These challenges can be particularly significant for trafficking survivors whose experiences may involve multiple forms of harm, multiple jurisdictions, and costs that are not always straightforward to document.

States are taking different and meaningful steps to address these challenges and improve victims' experiences with CVC programs. This guide recognizes that while the process can seem difficult, clear and concise guidance, combined with the support of a trusted individual, can significantly reduce concerns or challenges along the way. **Understanding what a CVC program may offer—and knowing where to turn for guidance—can make the process more manageable and help you make informed decisions about whether and how to apply.**



How to Use This Guide

This guide provides a general framework for:

- Understanding CVC
- Anticipating the application process
- Preparing for common challenges
- Identifying questions to raise with state CVC administration staff and advocates

It also addresses safety and self-care considerations, advocacy strategies for service providers, and common questions about CVC programs.

This guide helps bridge the gap between what CVC programs provide for in policy and what survivors may experience in practice.

This guide is not intended to provide a comprehensive legal analysis of each state's CVC laws or to substitute for legal advice. The "Before You Apply" section of this guide includes resources for understanding state-specific eligibility requirements and benefits, as well as CVC application materials and research, including Shared Hope's Policymaker's Guide research and the Human Trafficking Legal Center's survey of CVC programs. These resources can help you identify relevant state-specific information.

The goal is to make CVC more understandable and accessible. To survivors who may feel discouraged about seeking compensation, we hope this guide provides a practical starting point, identifies sources of support, and reinforces an important message:

You do not have to navigate the CVC process alone.

Table of Contents

Safety and Wellness Plan	2
Emotional Preparation	2
Circumventing Systemic Harm	2
Managing Expectations, Delays, or Denials	3
Applying for Compensation	4
Before You Apply	4
Questions to Ask Your State's CVC Administrator.....	7
The Application Process	8
Frequently Asked Questions	10
Advocacy Strategies for Service Providers.....	16
CVC Communication & Document Log	18



Safety and Wellness Plan

Authored by: Michelle Brewer

Applying for CVC is an important step toward accessing the resources you deserve. However, systems and paperwork are not always built with trauma in mind. The application process often requires recounting difficult events, gathering sensitive documents, and navigating bureaucratic delays. This guide is designed to help you protect your emotional well-being, anticipate potential hurdles, and stay grounded while navigating the CVC process.

Emotional Preparation

ACKNOWLEDGE THE WEIGHT

Gathering evidence, reading police reports, or answering intrusive application questions can be highly triggering. It is normal to feel overwhelmed or exhausted by this process.

SET THE ENVIRONMENT

Do not try to complete the application in one sitting if it feels like too much.[†] Choose a time and place where you feel physically safe, and set a time limit (e.g., 30–45 minutes) for working on the paperwork.

IDENTIFY YOUR ANCHOR

Before opening the application, decide what you will do immediately afterward to decompress. This could be going for a walk, watching a favorite show, or calling a trusted friend.

Circumventing Systemic Harm

USE AN ADVOCATE OR PROXY

You do not have to do this alone. If looking at the documents is too triggering, ask a trusted friend, local victim advocate, or legal representative to read through the requirements, fill out the physical forms, or act as a buffer for communication.

NAVIGATING “NON- EXISTENT” PROOF

CVC systems often demand rigid documentation, such as immediate police or hospital reports, which you may not have. A victim advocate can be invaluable in helping you identify alternative, creative forms of proof to validate your claim.

[†] Please note: Some states may require online applications to be completed and submitted in one sitting. For more information, see the FAQ, “Do I need to complete and submit the application in one sitting?”

If traditional records do not exist, an advocate can help you compile secondary evidence, such as:

- Statements or affidavits from counselors, social workers, or clergy members who supported you
- Dated journal entries, text messages, or emails that help establish a timeline or demonstrate emotional impact
- Employment or school records reflecting sudden leaves of absence, dropped classes, or shifts in performance
- Letters of support from friends or family members who witnessed the aftermath or changes in your daily life

PREPARE FOR CLINICAL LANGUAGE

CVC systems often use sterile, legal, or clinical language to describe deeply personal and painful experiences. Remind yourself that this paperwork is simply a transactional tool to get the funds you are owed—it does not define your experience or your healing.

KEEP YOUR OWN RECORDS

Systems can lose paperwork, which forces survivors to resubmit traumatic details. Take photos or make copies of everything you submit, and keep a simple log of dates and names of anyone you speak with on the phone.

Managing Expectations, Delays, or Denials

The waiting period

CVC applications can take months to process, and communication from the agency may be sparse. The silence is a flaw in the system, not a reflection of the validity of your claim.

Requests for more information

It is common for the agency to ask for additional documentation. Anticipating this in advance can help lessen the shock or frustration if a letter arrives asking for more proof.

Denied application or claim

- **Allow space before responding:** If you receive an unfavorable decision or denial, give yourself permission to put the letter away before taking action. Call your support anchor, step outside, or take time to decompress. You do not have to tackle the appeal the moment the letter arrives—address the administrative steps only when you feel emotionally steady.
- **A denial is not a verdict on your truth:** Receiving a denial letter can feel deeply invalidating and painful. It is crucial to remember that claims are frequently denied due to strict bureaucratic technicalities, rigid program limits, or missing paperwork—not because your experience was invalid or untruthful.
- **Understand and exercise your right to appeal:** A denial does not automatically mean the end of the road. Most CVC programs have a structured appeals process with specific timeframes. A victim advocate or legal aid representative can review the denial reason, identify what gaps need to be addressed, and help you file an appeal so you do not have to carry that administrative weight alone.

Applying for Compensation

Most victims of crime may apply for compensation. Understanding and carefully following the application procedures and rules is important for being successful in the process.

CVC requires completing a two-step process to receive compensation:

1. Filing a CVC application; and
2. If approved, submitting invoices or receipts related to the underlying out-of-pocket costs.

Be sure to review eligibility requirements, covered expenses, and award amounts as these can vary by both state and individual circumstances.

Applying for CVC does not guarantee that your initial application or submitted claim will be approved; conversely, even if you don't appear eligible on the surface, most states have taken significant steps, including by providing exceptions to outlined rules, to ensure access to compensation. For example, most states require applications to be filed within a certain period of time following the crime; however, many states provide a "good-cause" exception, and **state administrators are keen on working with you to satisfy this exception and seek approval for an award.**

Before You Apply

While every state has different requirements, the following steps may help you prepare for the application process:

1. IDENTIFY A SUPPORT PERSON

- Many community organizations and agencies, particularly those serving survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking, have victim advocates on staff who can help you understand the process, organize documentation, communicate with the CVC administration office, or provide support if the application process becomes overwhelming.
- Many CVC administrators maintain a list of vetted advocates; consider reaching out to your state's administration office[‡] to ask for a recommendation on who to contact.
- Lastly, we are here to help. If you need assistance connecting with a victim advocate in your community, please email policy@sharedhope.org, and we will do our best to make a connection.

2. REVIEW YOUR STATE'S REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility requirements, covered expenses, reporting requirements, and application deadlines vary by state. Reviewing your state's program information before applying can help you understand what information may be needed and identify potential issues early in the process.

‡ <https://nacvcb.org/contact-list/>

There are several key pieces to look for when reviewing your state's eligibility requirements, including, but not limited to:

- ☐ **Filing deadlines**
(i.e., the maximum length of time that an application must be filed after the crime occurred)
- ☐ **Type of crime you experienced**
- ☐ **Location of the crime victimization**
- ☐ **Personal criminal history, record, or pending charges**
- ☐ **Filing of a police report and/or cooperation in an investigation**
- ☐ **Contributory conduct**
(i.e., whether any action on your part contributed to the underlying crime; for example: a passenger in a DUI-related car accident may be unsuccessful in their application if they purchased or provided alcohol to the driver)

DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR STATE AND CASE.

The following resources may be a helpful starting point:

- 1** Shared Hope's (state-specific) Policymaker's Guides (Policy Goal 4.7)



reportcards.sharedhope.org/policymakers-guide

- 2** Human Trafficking Legal Center's multi-state survey of CVC programs



htlegalcenter.org

3. GATHER AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION

Consider creating a binder or folder just for your CVC paperwork so it can be easily located and referenced if and when needed. You do not need to gather every document before starting the application process, but it may be helpful to collect records that relate to the crime you experienced, services you received, or expenses you incurred.

Depending on your circumstances, you may need to gather:

- ☐ Police reports
- ☐ Medical or counseling records
- ☐ Bills, invoices, or receipts
- ☐ Child protection or child welfare reports
- ☐ Employment or public benefit records documenting lost income
- ☐ Relocation or housing-related expenses
- ☐ Verification letters from service providers, advocates, or an attorney

4. CONTACT YOUR STATE'S CVC ADMINISTRATION OFFICE WITH QUESTIONS

If you are unsure whether you qualify, are missing required documentation, or have concerns about reporting requirements, deadlines, confidentiality, or other issues, you can contact your state's CVC administration office. Program staff can explain available options, walk you through the process, and identify state-specific exceptions that could apply to your circumstances.

You can find the contact information for each state's CVC administration office through the National Association of Crime Victims Compensation Boards, which can be found at nacvcb.org/contact-list.



nacvcb.org/contact-list

Every state has different rules and exceptions to the outlined eligibility criteria. If you're unsure whether you qualify, ask before deciding not to apply.

Questions to Ask Your State's CVC Administrator

1. Who is eligible to apply in my case?

In some cases, dependent children who witnessed certain crimes, including intimate partner violence or human trafficking, may also be eligible to receive compensation.

2. What deadlines apply to my claim?

3. What expenses are eligible and what expenses are not eligible for compensation?

4. What if I have been a victim of multiple crimes? Can I submit a claim for each individual crime?

You may have experienced multiple crimes, perhaps as part of the same incident or as part of different incidences over the course of your life. You may be eligible for compensation for each crime you experienced, which can expand the amount and types of available resources.

5. Can I apply even if I don't have any current out-of-pocket expenses but might in the future?

6. What documentation is immediately required and what documentation can be submitted at a later time?

7. What options are available if I am missing documentation?

8. Are any exceptions or accommodations available based on my circumstances?

9. Are emergency or interim payments available?

Applying for compensation may require discussing difficult experiences, gathering sensitive records, or communicating with multiple people or agencies.

Consider reviewing the "Safety and Wellness Plan" section above before beginning the application process or contacting the state CVC administration office.

The Application Process

SURVIVOR ACTIONS



STEP 1

Check Eligibility

- ✓ Confirm you are a victim of a qualifying crime
- ✓ Review trafficking-specific considerations

STEP 2

Gather Documentation

- ✓ Police report or law enforcement verification (if available)
- ✓ Medical records, counseling receipts, lost wages, housing/transportation bills
- ✓ Any letters or forms from advocates or service providers
- ✓ Other documentation you may have related to your claim



STEP 3

Complete the Application

- ✓ Fill out the CVC application form (online or paper)
- ✓ Attach all supporting documents
- ✓ Include advocacy letters (if applicable)
- ✓ Review for completeness

STEP 4

Submit the Application

- ✓ Submit via official CVC link or by mail
- ✓ Request confirmation of receipt
- ✓ Ensure confidentiality and privacy protections are noted



CVC ACTIONS



STEP 5

CVC Review

- ✓ Caseworker reviews application and may request additional documents or clarification
- ✓ Processing timelines vary

STEP 6

Decision

- ✓ *Approved:* CVC issues award for eligible expenses
- ✓ *Denied:* Reasons provided, options for appeal explained
- ✓ *Partial award:* Some costs covered, others denied



OPTIONAL ADVOCACY OR APPEAL



STEP 7

Appeal or Resubmit (if needed)

- ✓ Follow instructions for appealing a denial
- ✓ Seek assistance from a trained advocate
- ✓ Provide additional documentation or clarification

POST-APPLICATION

Additional Information Requests

You may receive a request to provide additional information or documentation. If you receive such a request, this does not indicate whether your application will be approved or denied. You can help avoid delays in a determination decision by responding promptly and maintaining copies of all submitted materials.

Approval

An approval determination simply means you are eligible for compensation. As noted above, you must still submit required receipts, invoices, or treatment records, or have a service provider submit such information, in order to have your approved costs covered or reimbursed.

Be sure to thoroughly review any deadlines, documentation requirements, or award limitations that may apply.

Denial or Partial Denial

If your claim is denied or only partially approved, you may still have options to seek reconsideration or appeal the decision. Many states provide formal review processes with specific deadlines.

Review all determination letters carefully and contact your state's CVC administration office as soon as possible if you have questions.

Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ provides general information about CVC programs and is not legal advice. It is intended to address some of the perceived and actual barriers to seeking CVC and is a starting point for understanding the compensation process.

1. How does CVC differ from other forms of financial assistance?

CVC differs from other forms of financial assistance in a few important ways:

- It is tied to a specific crime and the harm caused by that crime.
- It is not based on income or financial need, though some states may consider other payments or benefits you receive.
- It often requires documentation of victimization and related expenses.
- It typically reimburses specific costs or pays providers directly.
- It may require other sources of payment, such as insurance or restitution, to be used first.

Because of this structure, CVC often works in coordination with other supports rather than replacing them and may involve more documentation and processing steps than other forms of assistance.

2. How do I know if I qualify for a CVC award?

If you were a victim of a crime or are a family member of a crime victim, you may qualify for CVC. Eligibility factors vary significantly by state but are generally based on what, when, and where the crime occurred, if the crime resulted in a direct or indirect injury (physical, emotional, financial) to you, and your actions during and following the crime (e.g., whether you reported the crime to law enforcement or contributed to the crime).

Importantly, many states have created exceptions or accommodations for trafficking survivors and other crime victims who may have typically been disqualified, including for failing to report to law enforcement or participate in the criminal justice process.

TO DO If you are unsure whether you qualify for compensation, contact your state's CVC administration office or a victim advocate before deciding not to apply.

3. What if I'm not sure I'm a victim of a crime or which crime I'm a victim of?

Your experiences related to commercial sex may rise to victimization under one or more state crimes, including human trafficking, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, kidnapping, etc. Particularly if you experienced commercial sexual exploitation (i.e., the exchange of a sexual act for something of value) before you turned 18 years old, you meet the definition of a human trafficking victim in every state and D.C.; in most states, that is the case even if you didn't have a trafficker.

TO DO

If you are unsure whether the crime you experienced is eligible for compensation, or what offense(s) you may be eligible to seek compensation for, you can contact your state CVC administration office and ask for guidance about what offense(s) should be listed in your application.

4. What if my trafficking happened years ago?

Do not assume you are ineligible. Application deadlines vary by state, and many programs allow exceptions or extensions for crime victims who experienced human trafficking, were under 18 years of age when the crime occurred, or faced barriers to reporting or applying, such as not recognizing or understanding their own victimization or safety concerns about reporting the crime to law enforcement.

TO DO

If your trafficking occurred years ago, contact your state's CVC administration office to discuss your eligibility. You can also review the resources listed above in the "Before You Apply" section to determine what reporting requirements apply and whether any exceptions may be available.

5. What if my trafficker was never arrested or prosecuted?

In many states, you may be eligible for compensation even if the offender was never involved in the criminal justice system for the underlying offense. CVC programs focus on whether a qualifying crime occurred rather than whether a criminal offender, including a trafficker, was investigated, arrested, charged, or convicted. You may still need to provide documentation supporting your victimization, but compensation is often available even when no criminal case exists.

Relatedly, if there is a pending criminal case, some states require applicants to cooperate with law enforcement or the criminal justice process. However, these requirements vary, and some states provide exceptions for survivors of trafficking who are unable to cooperate due to safety concerns or the impact of coercion, trauma, or other circumstances.

6. Did I need to report the crime to law enforcement?

Not necessarily. Most states require some form of reporting to law enforcement; however, many have eliminated this requirement for certain crime victims, including human trafficking survivors. Some states accept reports made to victim advocates, mental health providers, or professionals other than law enforcement, and others provide exceptions for victims who can demonstrate good reasons for not reporting (e.g., safety concerns, coercion, trauma, or fear of retaliation).

TO DO

Review the resources listed above in the "Before You Apply" section and/or contact your state's CVC administration office to determine what reporting requirements apply and whether any exceptions may be available.

7. What if I have a criminal record related or unrelated to my trafficking experience? Will that disqualify me?

Not necessarily. Some states consider criminal history when determining eligibility, including preventing individuals with felony records from receiving an award. However, many have eliminated such restrictions and do not factor in previous arrests, convictions, or even pending criminal or civil cases in making a determination. This is important as trafficking survivors often have criminal records due to their exploitation. Some states provide specific exceptions or other considerations to certain crime victims, including trafficking survivors.

TO DO If you are concerned that a criminal record may affect your eligibility, consider discussing your situation with a victim advocate, attorney, or your state's CVC administrator before applying. You can also review the discussion of eligibility requirements outlined in the resources listed above in the "Before You Apply" section.

8. What if I have immigration concerns?

Eligibility rules related to immigration status vary by state. However, a growing number of state CVC administration offices have taken steps to ensure immigration status is not requested or considered as part of the application process. In many states, CVC applications and decisions are confidential and are not considered public records. Further, most states' data privacy laws prohibit disclosure of such information to other individuals or entities, including state or federal agencies, unless disclosure is authorized by law or ordered by a court. As a result, information provided through a CVC application may have protections against disclosure to immigration authorities, although the scope of those protections varies by state.

TO DO If you have concerns about sharing personal information or potential immigration consequences, consider speaking with an immigration attorney, legal services provider, or advocate who is familiar with immigration issues. You can ask about your options before sharing any personal information.

9. I believe I qualify for an award; where do I apply? I live in one state, but the crime(s) committed against me occurred in another state or in multiple states. How do I know which state to file an application in?

Generally, you can apply for compensation in the state(s) where the crime(s) occurred and/or in your state of residence. Most CVC applications do not ask whether you have sought compensation in another state. However, CVC administrators or boards may ask whether the out-of-pocket expenses have already been paid, or are eligible to be paid or reimbursed, by another source, such as an insurance company or another CVC program. In that case, you would need to disclose a pending CVC application or approved award from another state.

Applying for or receiving CVC in one state does not necessarily prevent you from receiving compensation in another state, particularly when the first state did not cover your full eligible expenses or when certain expenses are not eligible for compensation in the first state. For example, if State A reimburses 50% of an eligible medical expense, you may be eligible to seek compensation from State B for some or all of the remaining amount, depending on the applicable CVC programs' rules.

TO DO

If trafficking occurred in more than one state, start by contacting the CVC administration office in each state where the trafficking occurred. A victim advocate or attorney can also help you identify the most appropriate CVC program(s) and determine whether you may be eligible to seek compensation in more than one state. Do not assume that you are ineligible for CVC simply because the trafficking crossed state lines.

10. How do I contact my state's CVC administration office?

Every state and U.S. territory administers its own CVC program.

TO DO

To find current contact information for your state's CVC administrator, visit the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards' contact list.



nacvcb.org/contact-list

11. Do I need to hire a lawyer to apply for an award on my behalf?

No, you may file an application with or without help from an advocate, lawyer, or other support person. However, you do not need to go through the process alone. Connecting with a victim advocate, trauma-informed lawyer, or other trusted person can provide valuable emotional and logistical support, particularly in mapping out the process in your state, collecting the required documentation, communicating with the CVC administration office (as necessary), or helping answer questions along the way.

12. Do I need to complete and submit the application in one sitting?

If your state accepts paper applications, whether submitted by mail, scanned, or through another e-submission method, you do not need to complete the application in one sitting. Consider taking your time and building in breaks to rest and use self-care practices that feel right to you.

TO DO

If your state requires online submission, check whether the application portal allows you to save your progress and return later. Some states allow applicants to begin an application, save their responses, and return to complete it at a later time, while others require the application to be completed and submitted in one sitting to prevent your responses from being unintentionally deleted.

13. What if I do not have the required documentation?

Do not assume you are ineligible. Documentation requirements vary by state, and some CVC programs accept alternative forms of documentation.

TO DO

If you are missing requested or required records, contact your state's CVC administration office before deciding that you cannot meet the documentation requirements. Keep copies of any documents you submit and maintain a record of any communications related to your application.

14. How is compensation for lost wages calculated?

There is no single formula that all states use to calculate lost wages. Generally, states will examine previous actual earnings (as documented in pay stubs, W-2s, or other tax records) to determine what the victim would have received if not for the crime. However, in cases in which a victim was self-employed or unemployed at the time of the offense, the state may determine lost wages by calculating the minimum wage at the time of the crime by the average work hours per week by the length of time the crime victim was out of work due to the offense. For example, if someone experienced labor trafficking in California in 2020, the state administration office would multiple \$13 x 40 (hours) x 15 (weeks) = \$7,800.

15. Are CVC awards considered a form of taxable income? Does an award impact eligibility for or interact with other forms of supports (e.g., state or federal public benefits, victim assistance programs, immigration-related support, insurance, housing, medical and mental health services, etc.)?

CVC is generally not considered income and, therefore, does not need to be reported to state and federal tax authorities. Because it is not subject to state or federal income tax, awards do not impact a recipient's qualifications for or amount of public benefits (e.g., SNAP, TANF).

However, state crime victims' compensation programs generally operate as the "payer of last resort." As such, if you receive certain public benefits, you may be required to first seek assistance or compensation through the public benefit provider before turning to crime victims' compensation to offset certain costs. For example, if you are enrolled in your state's Medicaid program, you may be required to seek pre-approval from, or bill your Medicaid provider for, mental health therapy before applying for or receiving a CVC award to cover the associated costs. However, because Medicaid programs often have a narrow list of in-network providers, you may benefit from pursuing an award.

Importantly, CVC can be used alongside other programs to address a range of needs:

- **Victim assistance programs** – provide advocacy, case management, and safety planning support
- **Housing and emergency services** – offer temporary shelter, relocation assistance, or basic necessities
- **Medical and mental health care** – provide treatment for physical injuries, counseling, or therapy
- **Insurance and other payers** – health insurance or Medicaid/Medicare may cover certain expenses before or alongside CVC, depending on state rules
- **Immigration-related and legal support** – assist with visas, work authorization, or other legal issues
- **Restitution and civil remedies** – may provide additional financial recovery through a criminal case or civil legal action

Assistance from other sources may affect a CVC award. Depending on state rules, certain types of financial support—such as insurance payments, restitution, or crowdfunding—may be considered when determining eligibility or the final award amount.

16. How are successful CVC claims paid?

Depending on the type of expense and the terms of your approved claim, CVC may reimburse you directly, provide income support, or pay a service provider directly. For example, if you have an outstanding bill with a physical therapy practice for the cost of therapy sessions, the CVC program may pay the practice directly on your behalf. If, however, you have already paid for your physical therapy sessions, you may be reimbursed directly. If you were approved for lost wages, a CVC program will typically make a direct payment to you.

17. Does my application become a public record?

No, CVC applications and determinations are not considered public records and are not accessible through a public records request. Most CVC programs maintain strict confidentiality protections for application materials and supporting records. However, certain information may be accessible under specific circumstances, including by court order or permitted disclosure to law enforcement or prosecutors.

TO DO

If privacy is a concern, ask your state's CVC administration office about their confidentiality protections and information-sharing practices.

18. If I cannot pay for services upfront, how do I find providers that are willing to participate in a CVC reimbursement process?

Many providers who regularly serve crime victims are familiar with CVC programs and may be willing to accept payment directly from a CVC program or delay payment while an application is pending.

TO DO

You may wish to:

- **Ask your state's CVC administration office for provider referrals.**
- **Contact local victim service organizations.**
- **Ask providers directly whether they accept or would be willing to accept CVC reimbursement.**

Because policies vary, it is important to discuss billing expectations before beginning services whenever possible.

19. Can my CVC award be garnished or seized?

The treatment of CVC awards varies by state. Some states provide protections that limit garnishment or seizure of compensation benefits, while others may allow a portion or all of the claim to be garnished under specific circumstances.

TO DO

If you are concerned about creditors, child support obligations, restitution orders, bankruptcy proceedings, or other financial issues, consult an attorney or ask your state's CVC administration office about applicable protections.

Advocacy Strategies for Service Providers

Applying for CVC can be emotionally difficult and administratively challenging. Advocates play a critical role in helping survivors access compensation while supporting survivor autonomy, safety, and informed decision-making.

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS BEFORE THE APPLICATION

- ☐ Explain what CVC can and cannot cover.
- ☐ Review eligibility requirements.
- ☐ Identify documentation needs and potential gaps early.
- ☐ Discuss expected timelines and next steps.
- ☐ Identify potential emotional triggers and plan supportive strategies.
- ☐ Avoid unnecessarily asking survivors to retell their traumatic experience(s).
- ☐ Ensure there is a clear communication plan, timeline, and alternative point-of-contact, if necessary.

Avoid assuming a survivor is ineligible because of delayed reporting, criminal history, lack of documentation, cooperation issues, or the passage of time.

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH CVC ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

- ☐ Contact CVC staff early to clarify requirements based on the survivor's specific circumstances, including eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, and key procedural timelines.
- ☐ Ask targeted, case-specific questions about missing documentation, reasons for denial, and available options for reconsideration or appeal.
- ☐ Maintain organized written records of all communications, including dates, staff contacts, guidance provided, and submitted materials.

- ❑ Submit clear, complete, and well-organized documentation to reduce back-and-forth and processing delays.
- ❑ Follow up to track status, respond to requests, and ensure deadlines are met.
- ❑ Build and maintain collaborative relationships with CVC administrators.

PREPARING VERIFICATION AND SUPPORT LETTERS

- ❑ Clearly describe your role and relationship to the survivor.
- ❑ Explain trafficking dynamics relevant to the survivor's circumstances (e.g., coercion, control, fear of retaliation, isolation, or other barriers affecting eligibility, reporting, or documentation).
- ❑ Clearly connect requested expenses to the harm caused by the victimization and to the survivor's safety, recovery, and stability.
- ❑ Identify any applicable statutory exceptions, accommodations, or good-cause provisions that may support the survivor's claim.
- ❑ Include supporting documentation when appropriate.

SURVIVORS SHOULD

Retain full control over how much information they share and when they engage with the process.

ADVOCATES SHOULD

Emphasize that applying for compensation is voluntary and support survivors in making informed decisions at their own pace.

CVC Communication & Document Log

A Practical Tool for Survivors Navigating the Application Process

HOW TO USE THIS LOG:

Navigating the CVC process often involves multiple conversations and sending various documents. Use this tracker to keep a record of who you spoke with, what you submitted, and what you need to do next. Keeping everything in one place can help you stay organized and protect your peace of mind.

Tips:

- If you mail physical documents, write down the tracking number in the "Notes" section.
- If you are told someone will call you back, write down the date you should follow up.
- Take a photo of this log on your phone occasionally, just in case the physical copy gets misplaced.

Date & Time	Agency & Contact Person	Method <i>(phone, email, mail)</i>	Reason for Contact/ Documents Sent	Outcome, Next Steps, & Notes



1016 16TH ST NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

SHAREDHOPE.ORG