

Victims' Rights Education Project "Miranda Card"

Crime victims need to know about their rights at the earliest possible moment -- which often means at the scene of the crime. To meet this important need, many jurisdictions have adopted the same approach used to inform alleged offenders of their constitutional rights – the “Miranda Card.”

The victim version of these credit card-sized document lists in simple language the basic rights that crime victims are entitled to under law in their state. The cards are made available to law enforcement officers or others who are “first responders” to victims, who can hand them victims on the spot – just as they hand Miranda cards to arrested defendants.

The rights of victims and how they are summarized may vary considerably from state to state, but most can be found in each state's Victims' Bill of Rights or Victim Constitutional Amendment (if passed in the state). The model below includes a list of the core rights most common among all states. However, those choosing to develop their own Victims' Rights Card will want to consult with an expert in victim-related rights and laws in their state in order to adapt the model to the laws in their state.

The goal of the Crime Victims' Rights “Miranda Card” is to describe crime victims' basic rights in a manner that is easily adaptable to specific states and jurisdictions, and that can be published on a credit card-sized document for “first responders” to provide to victims at the scene of a crime.

Victims' Rights Card Model

We are sorry that you have become a victim of a crime. As a crime victim, you are entitled to specific rights. You have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Be notified of all critical proceedings and developments in your case.
- Be notified of the status of the alleged or convicted offender.
- Be present at all hearings at which the defendant is entitled to attend.
- Be heard at critical proceedings
- Restitution to be paid by the offender in cases that result in a conviction.
- Reasonable protection from the alleged or convicted offender before, during, and after the trial.
- Apply for victim compensation in cases involving violent crime (for more information call [list number for compensation information]).
- Information about and referrals to services and assistance.
- Right to pursue legal remedies if your rights are violated.