



Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

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NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK *"Honoring Our Past...Creating Hope for the Future"*

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Provides Resources for Victims' of Crime

Phoenix, AZ, Tuesday, April 9, 2019 – Today, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) commemorates National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 7–13, 2019 and this year's theme of "Honoring our Past...Creating Hope for the Future." The statewide event will be held on Wednesday, April 10th at the El Zaribah Shrine where participants will hear from keynote speaker former US Senator Jon Kyl and honor those victim services workers all across the state that work daily on behalf of crime victims.

As one of Arizona's largest funders of victims' services each year, ACJC places great focus on seeking legislative changes that advocate for victims' rights, provide additional resources, and improves accessibility to victims' services and programs.

"Our goal at the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) is to continue to fight alongside our partners to raise awareness of the needs of victims, find ways to improve access to the current system, provide greater resources, and increase protections for all victims," stated Sheila Polk, Yavapai County Attorney and Commission Chairwoman.

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission oversees and administers two key programs to assist victims: Arizona's Crime Victim Compensation and Crime Victim Assistance programs. The Crime Victim Assistance program provides grants to private non-profit or government agencies that deliver direct services to crime victims. The Crime Victim Compensation program provides financial assistance to victims who may have experienced a financial loss as a direct result of a crime. In FY2018, the Victim Compensation Program provided program assistance to 1,794 victims and 2,540 individuals (relatives and/or associated individuals). For FY2019, the program has been allocated approximately \$4.5M from both state and federal funds to assist victims statewide.

Over the past five years, ACJC has spearheaded the following legislative and programmatic changes that benefit victims of crime in Arizona:

- 2015 – Passed Senate Bill 1295, which closed a gap in missing fingerprints by those who committed a crime to ensure that an accurate criminal history is created in the state system (increased protections for sensitive populations in Arizona that require a criminal history background check for workers)

Our mission is to continuously address, improve, sustain and enhance public safety in the State of Arizona through the coordination, cohesiveness, and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

- 2017 – Passed House Bill 2375, which created a stay of debt collection process for individuals participating in the victim compensation program and required health care providers who accepted payment as payment in full for their services (added significant financial protections for crime victims).
- 2018 – Passed House Bill 2249, which oversaw the first comprehensive re-write of Arizona’s orders of protection/injunction against harassment process in over 25 years (modernizes and provides easier access to individuals seeking protection from the courts and increases the likelihood that orders and injunctions will be served and enforceable).
- 2019 – Working with State Senators Victoria Steele (D) and Eddie Farnsworth (R) to pass Senate Bill 1250 that will close a significant gap in the injunctions against harassment process for victims of sexual assault who, under the current statute, must be victimized more than once before being able to seek relief from the court.

“These are just a few efforts ACJC is undertaking on behalf of crime victims, but we know can do better!” said Andrew T. LeFevre, Executive Director of ACJC. “As we honor victims and their rights this week, let us remember these victims year round and continue to fight the good fight everyday.”

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Created in 1982, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) is a statutorily authorized entity mandated to carry out various coordinating, monitoring and reporting functions regarding the administration and management of criminal justice programs in Arizona. The ACJC serves as a resource and service organization for Arizona’s criminal justice community on a myriad of issues ranging from drugs, gangs and victim assistance to criminal history and crime laboratory enhancements.