General Order

Houston Police Department

ISSUE DATE:	NO.
February 13, 2024	600-33

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 600-33, September 20, 2017

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTANCE AND REFERRALS

POLICY

Each employee shall provide the appropriate referral information to any person in need of social services or assistance from the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Program. The Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Program provides financial assistance to eligible crime victims, along with those who suffer personal injury or death in the prevention of crime or the apprehension of criminals.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

Victim. For this General Order, as defined by Article 56A.001(7) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and/or the victim of any crime or attempted crime that causes physical injury or death and is listed by the Attorney General of Texas as being a covered crime by the Crime Victims' Compensation Program.

1 TEXAS CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM

For full details regarding the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Program, employees should refer to the Attorney General of Texas's website at https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/crime-victims/crime-victims-compensation-program.

Texas Crime Victim's Rights Card (Blue Card)

Any employee who regularly has contact with the general public shall have immediate access to adequate copies of the *Texas Crime Victim's Rights Card* (*Blue Card*), which contains written notice of the victim's legal rights, possible remedies, and the availability of social services and community resources.

Any employee having contact with a victim shall:

a. Provide a *Blue Card* to one of the following as soon as possible after an incident, as applicable:

   1. The victim.

   2. A dependent or guardian of the victim, as defined by Article 56A.001(5) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.

   3. A close relative of a deceased victim, as defined by Article 56A.001(3) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.

b. Follow the referral provisions outlined in General Order 600-06, **Family Violence**, in addition to this General Order, if the incident involves family violence, stalking, or terroristic threat.

c. Refer the victim to the Victim Services Division for any inquiries concerning the Crime Victims' Compensation application itself or eligibility. The employee may assist the victim with filling out the application but shall not decide eligibility.

d. Document in the incident report or supplement that the victim received a *Blue Card* and the name of the employee that provided the *Blue Card*.

The employee should also provide a *Blue Card* to any person the employee believes might benefit from the resources and information listed on the *Blue Card*. If an employee is unsure whether to provide a *Blue Card*, the employee shall give the victim a *Blue Card* and instruct the victim to contact the Victim Services Division for further information.

Each division commander shall ensure their division and storefront(s) have an adequate supply of *Blue Cards* readily available to employees. Each division requiring *Blue Cards* shall request the appropriate number of *Blue Cards* from the HPD Print Shop with at least 30 business days advance notice. If the division needs an immediate, short-term supply of *Blue Cards*, the *Blue Card* is available on the Intranet Portal.

Department Employees

If an employee is a victim, whether on-duty or off-duty, the employee should contact Victim Services Division, as the employee may be eligible to apply for benefits from the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Program.

2 OTHER RESOURCES AND REFERRALS

Mental Health

The *Mental Health Division Resource Information Guide* (*Green Form*) is available to employees through the department's Mental Health Division. An employee may provide the *Green Form* to any person needing contact information and resources regarding mental health issues. Officers shall complete mental health referrals pursuant to General Order 500-12, **Response to Mental Health Incidents**.

Troy Finner
Chief of Police