**FAQs about Victim Notification Packets & the VIS**

**Victim Notification Packet**

**Question**: “What should I include in the crime victim written notification packet our office is required to send out to victims under Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 56 Article 56.08?”

**Answer**: The following is an outline of what should be included in a written notification packet sent to crime victims no later than the 10th day after the date of indictment or information:

* Cover letter on prosecutor office letterhead addressed to the crime victim including:
	+ the case number and assigned court for the case
	+ written wording with their right to file a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) and Victim Information Sheet
	+ written wording with their right to complete an Crime Victims’ Compensation Application
	+ name, address, and phone number of the local Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC)
* an offer to assist with completing the documents enclosed
* written wording for the crime victim to keep the prosecutor office informed of their current address and telephone number

In the written notification packet, please include the following forms and brochures:

* Victim Impact Statement (VIS) & Victim Information Sheet
	+ Including “It’s Your Voice” Victim Impact Statement brochure.
* Application for the Crime Victims’ Compensation fund
	+ Including Crime Victims’ Compensation brochure.
* Texas Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) program brochure (if VINE is available in your county)
* Crime Victims’ Rights brochure
* Referral brochures to social service agencies from your community which may offer assistance.

**Victim Impact Statement**

**Questions**: “Who should we mail a VIS to? OR

“How does our office know which crimes constitute including a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) in the notification packet? “

**Answer:** Code of Criminal Procedure Article 56.01 provides the definition of a crime victim and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division (VSD) Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse has guidelines on what type of crimes requires a VIS. The VSD keeps statistics on how many VISs are sent out and how many have been returned statewide. The VSD provides to your office by e-mail a quarterly VIS Activity Report. The types of offenses tracked by the VIS Activity Report Section 2B are those listed in the Code of Criminal Procedure art. 56.01. The Property crimes category is included for those counties that provide VIS forms in those offenses. The Other category should be utilized when a VIS is provided but the offense is not listed.

Offenses included in the VIS Activity Report:

Aggravated Assault

Assault

Homicide

Injury to a Child, Elderly Individual, or Disabled Person

Intoxication Assault/Intoxication Manslaughter

Kidnapping

Property Crimes

Robbery

Sexual Offenses against a Child

Sexual Offenses against an Adult

Trafficking of Persons

Other

Please keep in mind the Victim Impact Statement (VIS) is sent to crime victims for them to provide the criminal justice system with a detailed account of the emotional/ psychological, physical, and financial impact of the crime on the victim and their family members. Also, the VIS is used by crime victims to explain their feelings such as loss, frustration, fear, and/or anger.

**Forms & Brochures for victim notification packet**

**Question: Where can I find forms and brochures for victim notification packets?**

**Answer: To obtain forms and brochures for your victim notification packets:**

* VIS forms can be found at website: <http://tdcj.state.tx.us/publications/pubs_victim_impact_statement.html>
* “It’s Your Voice” Brochure can be found at website: <http://tdcj.state.tx.us/documents/Its_Your_Voice.pdf>
* CVC application can be found at website: <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/files/cvs/cvcapplication.pdf>
* CVC Brochure can be found at website: <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/files/cvs/cvc_brochure.pdf>
* To order hard copies of CVC applications, Crime Victims’ Rights and brochures see website:

<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/files/cvs/orderform_cvs.pdf>

* For Texas Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) brochure see website: <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/files/cvs/vine_state.pdf>
* Free publications from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division: Download the free publications order form: <http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/victim_clearinghouse_order_form.html>
* VIS Activity Report due to TDCJ Victim Services Division:Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse each quarter: <http://tdcj.state.tx.us/publications/pubs_victim_impact_statement_report.html>