

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 719

Short Title: NC Victims of Crime Assistance Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Bradley, Mohammed, and Theodros (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 26, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO CREATE THE NORTH CAROLINA VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE ACT,
FUND, AND COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**CREATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE (NC
VOCA) ACT, FUND, AND COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM**

SECTION 1.(a) Chapter 15B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
article to read:

"Article 3.

"North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Act.

"§ 15B-50. Short title.

This Article may be cited as the "North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Act."

"§ 15B-51. Definitions.

As used in this Article, the following definitions apply, unless the context requires otherwise:

- (1) Assistance Fund. – The North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Fund.
- (2) Commission. – The Governor's Crime Commission.
- (3) Grant Program. – The North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance
Competitive Grant Program.
- (4) Victim. – A person who suffered physical, sexual, financial, or emotional
harm as a result of the commission of a crime.
- (5) Victim assistance program. – A program operated by a public agency or
nonprofit organization that (i) provides services to victims of crime and (ii)
demonstrates a record of providing effective services to victims of crime.

"§ 15B-52. North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Fund.

(a) Fund Created. – The North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Fund is established
as a special fund within the Department of Public Safety. The Governor's Crime Commission is
responsible for administering the Assistance Fund using personnel and other administrative
resources of the Department of Public Safety.

(b) Fund Purpose. – The Assistance Fund shall be utilized to distribute grant funds
pursuant to the North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Grant Program created by this
Article.

(c) Fund Sources. – The Assistance Fund may receive any of the following:

- (1) Funds appropriated by the General Assembly.
- (2) Funds received pursuant to State law.
- (3) Gifts, grants, or donations from any public or private sources.



"§ 15B-53. North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Competitive Grant Program.

(a) Grant Program. – There is established the North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Competitive Grant Program to be administered by the Governor's Crime Commission for the purpose of awarding and distributing grants to public or nonprofit organizations serving residents of the State through victim assistance programs. The Grant Program shall be funded by the North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Fund created by this Article.

(b) Grant Program Guidelines. – The Commission shall develop guidelines and procedures for the administration of the Grant Program, including at a minimum the following requirements and limitations:

(1) The maximum grant amount shall not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000).

(2) The maximum total award amount to a grantee during a single fiscal year shall not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000). For purposes of this subdivision, the total award amount shall only include funds awarded in the fiscal year in question and shall not include funds awarded to that grantee during prior fiscal years, regardless of whether all or part of those funds awarded during prior fiscal years remain unspent.

(3) Each grantee shall operate one or more victim assistance programs serving victims in the State in at least one of the following ways:

a. Responding to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims.

b. Assisting victims of crime in stabilizing their lives after a victimization.

c. Helping victims understand and participate in the criminal justice system.

d. Providing victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.

(4) Each grant applicant shall include in its application a detailed explanation of how the applicant plans to use the grant funds, including at a minimum each of the following:

a. A description of the geographic area the organization serves and the needs of victims in that area.

b. A plan to address the needs of victims using the grant funds.

c. A description of the organization's capacity to implement its plan to address the needs of victims, including the organization's staffing level, systems, partnerships, existing funding, and existing programs.

(5) No later than one year after the receipt of grant funds pursuant to the Grant Program, grantees shall report to the Governor's Crime Commission each of the following:

a. Progress on the development and implementation of its plan as delineated in its grant application.

b. A detailed explanation of the uses of the grant funds.

c. The number of victims assisted by the use of the grant funds.

d. The amount of grant funds remaining at the time of reporting.

e. Any additional information required by the Commission.

(c) Reporting. – No later than March 1 of each year, the Governor's Crime Commission shall report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety regarding the Grant Program, including at a minimum each of the following:

(1) The number, amount, and recipient of all grant funds awarded in the prior calendar year.

(2) All information received pursuant to the grantee reports required by subsection (b) of this section.

(3) The current, unencumbered funds available within the North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Fund.

(d) Disbursements. – If grant funds awarded under this section cannot be paid due to insufficient funds in the Fund, payment shall be delayed until sufficient funds are available and no further grant awards shall be made until sufficient funds are available."

SECTION 1.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law.

INCREASE CRIMINAL COURT COSTS TO SUPPORT THE NORTH CAROLINA VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE FUND

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 7A-304(a) reads as rewritten:

"§ 7A-304. Costs in criminal actions.

(a) In every criminal case in the superior or district court, wherein the defendant is convicted, or enters a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, or when costs are assessed against the prosecuting witness, the following costs shall be assessed and collected. No costs may be assessed when a case is dismissed. Only upon entry of a written order, supported by findings of fact and conclusions of law, determining that there is just cause, the court may (i) waive costs assessed under this section or (ii) waive or reduce costs assessed under subdivision (7), (8), (8a), (11), (12), or (13) of this section. No court may waive or remit all or part of any court fines or costs without providing notice and opportunity to be heard by all government entities directly affected. The court shall provide notice to the government entities directly affected of (i) the date and time of the hearing and (ii) the right to be heard and make an objection to the remission or waiver of all or part of the order of court costs at least 15 days prior to hearing. Notice shall be made to the government entities affected by first-class mail to the address provided for receipt of court costs paid pursuant to the order. The costs referenced in this subsection are listed below:

...

(4) For support of the General Court of Justice, the sum of one hundred ~~forty-seven~~fifty-one dollars and ~~fifty cents~~ (\$151.00) in the district court, including cases before a magistrate, and the sum of one hundred ~~fifty-four~~fifty-eight dollars and ~~fifty cents~~ (\$158.00) in the superior court, to be remitted to the State Treasurer. For a person convicted of a felony in superior court who has made a first appearance in district court, both the district court and superior court fees shall be assessed. The State Treasurer shall remit the ~~sum of ninety-five cents (\$.95)~~following sums of each fee collected under this ~~subdivision to the~~subdivision:

a. Three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Fund.

b. Ninety-five cents (\$.95) to the North Carolina State Bar for the provision of services described in G.S. 7A-474.19.

...."

SECTION 2.(b) This section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to court costs assessed on or after that date.

INCREASE MARRIAGE LICENSE FEES TO SUPPORT THE NORTH CAROLINA VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE FUND

SECTION 3.(a) G.S. 161-10(a) reads as rewritten:

"§ 161-10. Uniform fees of registers of deeds.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, all fees collected under this section shall be deposited into the county general fund. While performing the duties of the office, the register of deeds shall collect the following fees which shall be uniform throughout the State:

...

(2) Marriage Licenses. – For issuing a license ~~sixty~~sixty-five dollars ~~(\$60.00); (\$65.00), of which five dollars (\$5.00) shall be credited to the North Carolina Victims of Crime Assistance Fund;~~ for issuing a delayed certificate with one certified copy twenty dollars (\$20.00); and for a proceeding for correction of an application, license or certificate, with one certified copy ten dollars (\$10.00).

...."

SECTION 3.(b) This section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to marriage licenses issued on or after that date.

EFFECTIVE DATE AND SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

SECTION 4.(a) Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.

SECTION 4.(b) If any section or provision of this act is declared unconstitutional or invalid by the courts, it does not affect the validity of this act as a whole or any part other than the part declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.