



# Issue Brief - 2008

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

## Services for Victims of Crime

### Overview

Every inmate in the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) has at least one victim. To be effective, the criminal justice system must work with people and communities who have been victimized by crime. DOC works with an array of public and private partners and non-profit organizations to help these victims return to safe and normal lives.

### Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE)

When asked what they expect from the criminal justice system, many victims answer that they need information, notification of release and an increased sense of safety and security from those who have victimized them. In April 2001, the VINE system was implemented in Oregon in a partnership between DOC, community corrections agencies, the Oregon Department of Justice, the Oregon Sheriffs' Association and the Oregon Youth Authority.

VINE is a free and anonymous telephone service that provides crime victims and other concerned citizens with:

- 24-hour access to offender custody or case information.
- The ability to verify an offender's custody or community supervision status.
- Automatic notification to registered users when a change in offender custody or case status occurs, including transfer, release, re-incarceration, and escape.

Most users register by calling the VINE toll-free number, 1-877-OR-4-VINE. Requirements for registration are explained during the call-in and are very simple. The service is available in English and Spanish with a live operator available, if needed. In August 2004, e-mail registration and notification were made available at: [www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com).

Approximately 19,400 phone numbers and 19,700 email addresses are registered for notification. In 2006, 6,167 general release phone notifications were confirmed by phone and 7,825 delivered by e-mail.

### The Facilitated Dialogue Program for Survivors/Victims of Serious and Violent Crime and their Offenders

This program is a free service developed by the Coalition of Oregon Victim Offender Mediation Programs (COVOMP) developed and established in collaboration with victim advocacy groups, Department of Justice Victim Assistance Services and the Oregon Department of Corrections.

COVOMP began development in 2000, when crime victims asked to participate in a dialogue process with their offender(s). The committee created a set of protocols by which a crime victim could engage in a safe and meaningful dialogue with the offender that impacted his or her life.

The first facilitator trainings were conducted in July 2004 by internationally recognized experts from the Canadian Department of Corrections, sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections.

### *Key components of facilitated dialogue in cases of serious and violent crime:*

- The process is initiated and driven by the crime victim.
- Participation is voluntary for both parties.
- The inmate's cooperation and participation will have absolutely no impact or influence on his or her sentence.
- The dialogs are facilitated by professionally trained volunteers with backgrounds in victim-offender mediation or other related fields.
- A DOC program coordinator ensures consistent and accurate communication among all dialogue

participants (participants, institutional liaison, facilitators, support persons and care providers).

- Facilitated dialogue processes are confidential unless all parties agree otherwise in writing.
- Pre-dialogue preparation, including careful screening, working with institutional liaisons to ensure safety, and identifying appropriate support networks is a critical part of the process and can take months or even years to complete.
- Post-dialogue follow-up is essential to a successful process. This could include assistance in accessing appropriate after-care.
- Evaluation of the dialogue process, facilitators and overall program policies and procedures is critical to ensuring a quality process to the parties involved.
- The Serious and Violent Crime subcommittee of COVOMP will continue to monitor and evaluate all aspects of this process. ■

**The mission of the  
Oregon Department of Corrections  
is to promote public safety by  
holding offenders accountable for their  
actions and reducing the risk of future  
criminal behavior.**



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