



# National Institute of Justice

I s s u e s   a n d   P r a c t i c e s

## *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses*

*2nd Edition*

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The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a component of the Office of Justice Programs, is the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ was established to prevent and reduce crime and to improve the criminal justice system. Specific mandates established by Congress in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 direct the National Institute of Justice to:

- *Sponsor special projects, and research and development programs* that will improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and reduce or prevent crime.
- *Conduct national demonstration projects* that employ innovative or promising approaches for improving criminal justice.
- *Develop new technologies* to fight crime and improve criminal justice.
- *Evaluate the effectiveness of criminal justice programs* and identify programs that promise to be successful if continued or repeated.
- *Recommend actions* that can be taken by Federal, State, and local governments as well as by private organizations to improve criminal justice.
- *Carry out research on criminal behavior.*
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- Pioneering scientific advances such as the research and development of DNA analysis to positively identify suspects and eliminate the innocent from suspicion.
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- Operation of the world's largest criminal justice information clearinghouse, a resource used by State and local officials across the Nation and by criminal justice agencies in foreign countries.

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U.S. Department of Justice  
**Office of Justice Programs**  
*National Institute of Justice*

# **Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses**

## **2nd Edition**

by  
**Julie Esselman Tomz**  
and  
**Daniel McGillis**

*First Edition prepared by Peter Finn and Beverly Lee*

February 1997

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*Issues and Practices in Criminal Justice* is a publication series of the National Institute of Justice. Each report presents the program options and management issues in a topic area, based on a review of research and evaluation findings, operational experience, and expert opinion on the subject. The intent is to provide information to make informed choices in planning, implementing, and improving programs and practice in criminal justice.

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The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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# Table of Contents

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	<i>page</i>
<b>Director’s Foreword .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Crime Victims: Emerging Trends and Responses .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Evolution of Concern for Victims of Crime .....	2
Developments Encouraging the Expansion of the Victims Movement .....	3
Increasing Awareness of Effects of Victimization .....	3
Increasing Awareness of Insensitive Criminal Justice System Treatment of Victims .....	4
The Emergence of Community Policing .....	5
What Do Victim Assistance Programs Do? .....	5
Responsibilities of the Criminal Justice System .....	9
Endnotes .....	9
<b>Chapter 2: Developing and Improving the Victim Assistance Program .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Obtaining Guidance .....	12
Conducting an Initial and Periodic Needs Assessment .....	14
Why Conduct a Needs Assessment? .....	15
Consider Special Populations .....	16
Who Conducts the Needs Assessment? .....	17
How is a Needs Assessment Conducted? .....	17
Formulating and Redefining the Program’s Mission, Goals, and Objectives .....	19
Identifying and Revising Target Populations .....	22
General Guidelines for Selection .....	22
Specific Guidelines for Selection .....	22
Periodic Reexamination of Target Groups .....	26
Selecting and Reevaluating the Service Mix .....	26
Required Services .....	26
Overview of Victim Assistance Services .....	26
Procedures for Selecting and Modifying the Service Mix .....	28
Stimulating and Maintaining Public Awareness and Support .....	30
Endnotes .....	32
<b>Chapter 3: Structural Alternatives: Sponsorship and Staffing .....</b>	<b>35</b>
Deciding on Program Affiliation .....	36
Selecting a Program Location .....	38

---

---

Determining Funding Needs .....	42
Staff Needs and Recruitment .....	42
Estimating Staff Levels .....	43
Stipulating Skills and Qualifications .....	45
Using Volunteers .....	46
What Volunteers Can Do .....	48
Volunteers: Pros and Cons .....	49
Recruiting and Screening Staff .....	49
Endnotes .....	51
<b>Chapter 4: Developing Effective Relationships With Other Organizations .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Why Develop Relationships With Other Organizations? .....	54
Cooperation Among Organizations Has Expanded .....	54
Working With the Criminal Justice System .....	55
Working With Law Enforcement .....	55
Handling Referrals .....	58
Serving as a Buffer Between Victims and Police .....	60
Helping Locate and Protect Witnesses .....	61
Providing Case Status Information .....	61
Furnishing Better or More Evidence .....	61
Implementing A Witness Alert Program for Police .....	61
Working With Prosecutors .....	62
Working With Judges .....	65
Working With Corrections .....	67
Addressing Potential Conflicts of Interest in Working With Justice Agencies .....	69
Working With Social Service Organizations and Community and Support Groups .....	70
Approaches to Working with Social Service and Other Organizations .....	70
Difficulties in Networking with Social Service Organizations .....	73
Working with Schools .....	74
Endnotes .....	75
<b>Chapter 5: Conducting Outreach and Case Processing .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Establishing Case Processing Procedures .....	77
Identifying Clients .....	77
Establishing Contact with Victims and Witnesses .....	79
Conducting Proactive Outreach .....	80
Maintaining Contact .....	80
Terminating Contact .....	81
Pitfalls in Case Processing .....	81
Conducting Outreach to Special Populations .....	82
Elderly Crime Victims .....	82
Ethnic and Minority Crime Victims .....	83
Gays and Lesbians .....	85
Endnotes .....	86

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<b>Chapter 6: Providing Victim Services .....</b>	<b>87</b>
Role of the Criminal Justice System .....	87
Range of Victim Services .....	88
Emergency Services .....	88
Counseling .....	89
Personal Advocacy and Support Services .....	91
Assistance in Filing for Victim Compensation and Restitution .....	94
Court-Related Services .....	94
Postsentencing Services .....	95
Systemwide Services .....	97
Endnotes .....	98
<b>Chapter 7: Training and Supervising Staff.....</b>	<b>101</b>
Conducting Staff Training .....	101
Preservice Training .....	102
In-Service Training .....	105
Conducting Staff Supervision .....	107
Assigning Cases .....	107
Maintaining Volunteer Commitment .....	107
Contending with Staff Burnout .....	109
Endnotes .....	110
<b>Chapter 8: Maintaining Program Support and Assessing the         Victim Assistance Program .....</b>	<b>113</b>
Monitoring and Evaluating Victim Assistance Services .....	113
Record Keeping and Program Documentation .....	113
Program Monitoring .....	114
Process Evaluation .....	115
Impact Evaluation .....	116
Alternative Responses to Funding Changes .....	120
Strategies for Coping with Changing Fiscal Environments .....	120
Cost Effectiveness and Cost Benefit Analyses .....	121
Factors Involved in Program Success .....	122
Endnotes .....	123
<b>Chapter 9: Funding Victim Assistance Programs .....</b>	<b>125</b>
Federal Funding .....	125
The Pioneering Role of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration .....	125
The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 .....	126
The Violence Against Women Act Grant Program .....	127
State and Local Funding Sources .....	127
Private Funding Sources .....	128
Endnotes .....	129

---

**List of Figures**

Figure 1-1:	The Victim Services System .....	6
Figure 1-2:	Range and Definitions of Victim Services .....	8
Figure 2-1:	Percentage of Programs Providing Specific Victim Services in 1986 and 1994 .....	27
Figure 3-1:	Program Sponsorship: Advantages and Disadvantages .....	38
Figure 3-2:	Checklist for Estimating Program Costs .....	43
Figure 3-3:	Staff Size in Relation to Selected Program Characteristics: A Look at Five Programs .....	44
Figure 3-4:	Range in Staff Size and Mean Number of Staff in Relatively Large Victim Assistance Programs in 1982, 1986, and 1994 .....	45
Figure 3-5:	Relative Time on Average Required to Furnish Victim Assistance Services on a Per-Client Basis .....	46
Figure 3-6:	Flow Chart of Sample Procedure for Estimating Professional Staff Needs for a Hypothetical Victim Witness Program .....	47
Figure 7-1:	Common Victim Assistance Training Topics .....	102
Figure 7-2:	Training Programs in Five Victim Assistance Programs .....	104
Figure 8-1:	Sample Victim Witness Objectives .....	115
Figure 8-2:	Approaches to Impact Evaluation .....	117

**Appendixes**

Appendix A:	Victims Assistance Programs Contacted By Telephone for This Publication .....	131
Appendix B:	Selected Resources .....	135
Appendix C:	Sample Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Social Service Organizations .....	139
Appendix D:	Colorado Springs Police Department, Volunteer Job Description, Victim Contact Assistant .....	141
Appendix E:	Suffolk County Victim Witness Assistance Program Internship Description .....	143
Appendix F:	Police and Victim Services Information Card, Minneapolis Police Department .....	145
Appendix G:	Sample Letter Informing Victim of Case Status .....	147
Appendix H:	Sample Letter Notifying Victim of Offender's Status in Penal System .....	149
Appendix I:	Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Brochure and Training Curriculum .....	151
Appendix J:	Sample Verification Letter to Employer that Employee Was a Witness in a Criminal Proceeding .....	155
Appendix K:	Sample Parole Notification Letter to the Victim (Adaptable to Family Members of Homicide Victim) .....	157
Appendix L:	Sample Agenda for Prospective Volunteers .....	159
Appendix M:	California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council Victim Advocate Certification Application and Certificate .....	161
Appendix N:	Suffolk County District Attorney's Office Victim Witness Service Program Intern/Volunteer Contract .....	163
Appendix O:	Monthly Tally, Scottsdale, Arizona .....	165



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# Foreword

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This publication updates and expands the first edition of *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses*, a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) *Issues and Practices in Criminal Justice* report originally published in 1987. During the first half of the 1980's, victim assistance programs and public awareness of crime victims' problems were beginning to spread rapidly across the country. In 1982, President Reagan's Task Force on Victims of Crime issued its final report, which recommended the wider establishment of victim assistance programs. Recognizing the need for practical guidance for program development, NIJ requested the preparation of the first edition of *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses* to offer information on how to initiate, improve, and, when necessary, modify services for victims and witnesses.

The original edition of *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses* combined suggestions regarding program development with detailed descriptions of six programs across the country. The publication proved to be popular among victim service providers. By 1994, however, it was clear that some of the information in the report had become outdated. Given the significant proliferation of programs, victims' rights legislation, and State constitutional amendments occurring since 1985 and given the need for current data regarding the structure and operations of these programs in 1994, NIJ commissioned this second edition of the report. The second

edition provides a detailed discussion of strategies for planning, implementing, and refining victim assistance programs.

Since the crime victims movement began over 20 years ago, considerable progress has been made in recognizing and meeting the needs of crime victims. Many talented program administrators and policymakers have fostered the growth of victim assistance programs over the years, and these efforts continue to evolve and grow to meet the compelling needs of our nation's crime victims. Most victim advocates argue, however, that considerable work still remains. It is noteworthy that the leadership in this movement comes largely from the Office for Victims of Crime, working in conjunction with State officials, local officials, and other components of the Department of Justice.

As we approach the 21st century, the National Institute of Justice hopes that this second edition of *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses* will prove as useful as the first for promoting the development and improvement of victim services.

Jeremy Travis  
*Director*  
**National Institute of Justice**

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- Harold Boscovich, Director  
Alameda County District Attorney  
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- Janet Fine, Chief  
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- Phillip Riccio, Supervisor  
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- Marlene Young, Executive Director  
National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)

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us; the insights and information they provided make up the essence of this publication. These individuals are listed in appendix A. In particular, we want to thank the directors and other staff of the originally visited programs who reviewed the first edition and provided updated information about their programs' operations and services: Mr. Boscovich; Mr. Riccio; Marcia Barker, with the Greenville County Victim/Witness Assistance Program in South Carolina; Shelly Stoll, with the Multnomah County Victims Assistance Program in Portland, Oregon; and Kathleen Alme, with Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul.

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# Executive Summary

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The crime victims movement in the United States has grown progressively stronger over the past two decades. *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses, 2nd Edition*, provides a detailed discussion of strategies for planning, implementing, and refining victim assistance programs, with examples of program operations and activities, as well as suggestions of resources for further assistance. The publication is intended primarily as a guidebook for directors and other staff of existing victim assistance programs, planners designing a new program, and agency supervisors and administrators who may wish to sponsor a program.

## Emerging Trends and Responses

Since 1985, there have been several major signs of the expansion of the crime victims movement, including the increased amount of Federal funding available for crime victim compensation and assistance; the ongoing success of private national organizations in the field; passage in 49 States of Victims' Bills of Rights and the enactment in 22 States of constitutional amendments requiring the provision of certain services to crime victims; and the creation by government agencies and private organizations of hundreds of general and specialized victim assistance programs. Expansion of the crime victims movement has been encouraged by an increasing awareness of the effects of victimization and of the shortcomings of the criminal justice system in responding to victims' needs, and by the emergence of community policing, which emphasizes "customer" service, especially for crime victims.

While many programs remain focused on providing basic services to victims of crime, some programs have begun to extend their outreach and services to so-called "derivative victims," including traumatized witnesses to and survivors of violent crime and victims of environmental and other disasters.

## Developing and Improving Victim Assistance Programs

In starting victim assistance programs, planners must assess victims' needs, develop appropriate program goals and objectives, identify target populations for services, develop

the mix of services to be delivered, and stimulate and maintain public awareness and support. Program staff need to periodically reassess these factors to ensure that they are operating efficiently and providing needed services.

## Structural Alternatives

Sponsorship is one of the most critical considerations for a victim assistance program, because it influences the program's mission, funding, staffing, and other key characteristics. Most victim assistance programs are affiliated with a prosecutor's office, law enforcement agency, or private non-profit organization. However, an increasing number of departments of corrections, probation, and parole are sponsoring victim assistance programs.

## Developing Effective Relationships With Other Organizations

By developing close working relationships with a network of relevant organizations, victim assistance program staff can more easily accomplish their goals. Program staff can consider working with each component of the criminal justice system and with social service and community organizations, schools, victim support groups, and other community organizations that serve victims.

## Case Processing and Conducting Outreach

In addition to examining criminal justice reports, mailing letters, and telephoning victims, program staff may wish to conduct proactive outreach by going to crime scenes, meeting the victims at the hospital or police station, and conducting home visits. Special outreach efforts may also be necessary for victims who face particular barriers to working with the criminal justice system, such as members of minority groups. Once victims have been identified for services, it is important that a program have clear objectives, policies, and procedures for handling and closing cases.

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## **Providing Victim Services**

The range of victim services provided generally includes emergency services, counseling, personal advocacy and support services, claims assistance, court-related services, post-sentencing services, and systemwide services. Some programs in recent years have begun providing services to large groups of individuals traumatized by crimes or other catastrophic events. These services primarily involve crisis intervention and critical-incident stress debriefing. An increasing number of victim assistance programs are providing or assisting with postsentencing services.

## **Training and Supervising Staff**

Up-to-date, comprehensive training—both pre-service and in-service—is critical to the effectiveness of any victim assistance program. With increasing collaboration among victim assistance programs, criminal justice agencies, and community agencies and organizations, there are more opportunities to conduct interagency and multidisciplinary training. Training and supervision are receiving increased emphasis among victim service experts in an effort to professionalize the position of victim advocate.

## **Maintaining Program Support and Assessing the Victim Assistance Program**

Monitoring can provide a number of benefits, including allowing program planners to assess goal achievement, improve staff transitions, and generate useful information for other agencies. Impact evaluations are particularly important for determining the effects the program has had on victims and for providing guidance in program improvement.

## **Funding Victim Assistance Programs**

State and local governments are the primary funders of victim assistance programs. Obtaining funding from a number of public and private sources can help to maximize a victim assistance program's funding stability and its capacity to deliver services. Program administrators seeking Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding should give careful consideration to the priority categories of victims targeted by the Act.

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# Chapter 1

## Crime Victims: Emerging Trends and Responses

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### Using the Document: Read, Skim, Copy and Distribute, or Refer

*Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses, 2nd Edition* has several potential audiences:

- *Directors of existing victim assistance programs* and other program staff who need help in resolving problems in providing services and who are interested in improving the assistance they provide to victims and witnesses;
- *Planners designing a new victim assistance program* who need help in the complex and time-consuming task of establishing a program; and
- *Agency supervisors and administrators (including those in law enforcement, prosecutor's offices, the judiciary, corrections, and other government and independent agencies)* who may wish to sponsor a program and who need policy guidance to determine what program features will conform best to their interests and needs.

These individuals can use the document in one or more ways:

- **Read** the document in its entirety. This method may be particularly useful for program planners and new program staff who need an introduction to victim services and detailed information on operating a program and providing services.
- **Skim** the document for topics of interest. This approach may be particularly useful for experienced victim assistance program staff who already have a firm grounding in victim services but who may want to learn about other programs or expand or improve their own program. The detailed table of contents, index, and the key points summarizing the contents of each chapter can help readers locate topics of interest.
- **Copy chapters** that are particularly pertinent and **distribute** them to staff. For example, rather than suggesting that new staff read the entire publication, a program director may want to distribute those chapters that are most relevant to the new staff person's work, such as the chapters on conducting outreach or providing victim services.
- **Refer** to the document for information regarding particular problems or needs that arise. In addition to the information provided in the publication itself, appendixes list the names and telephone numbers of experienced program directors and organizations involved in victim services.

Because readers may read only a section of the publication rather than read from cover to cover, some information and program descriptions appear more than once throughout the publication.

The crime victims movement in the United States has grown progressively stronger over the past two decades. According to one observer of this growth, "the fundamental basis of the power of the victim movement lies in public and political acceptance of the view that its clients are good people, done

in by those who are bad. This belief alone has made its growth irresistible."<sup>1</sup> Although most victim advocates would agree that enormous strides have been made since 1975, much remains to be done to address victims' needs adequately. For example, there still remains a significant gulf between the

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level of resources dedicated to offenders and the level dedicated to victims, with no Federal tax dollars earmarked for services for crime victims.<sup>2</sup>

Victim assistance programs, an important component of the nation's crime victims movement, have expanded in number and scope since first being established in the 1970's. They provide a diverse array of services intended to meet a variety of victims' needs, including immediate crisis intervention; counseling and general advocacy services; support services during criminal justice investigations, during prosecution, and after case disposition; and public education and training. This chapter reviews the growth of the victims movement and places victim assistance programs in historical perspective.

## Evolution of Concern for Victims of Crime

During the 1970's, many individuals in the criminal justice system became concerned about the harmful effects of the insensitive treatment of victims and witnesses by police officers, prosecutors, and judges. Studies revealed, for example, that a staggering proportion of crimes are never reported;<sup>3</sup> one probable cause of this silence is victims' dread of "getting involved" with the criminal justice system.

Police failure to address victims' problems resulting from a crime may reduce the quality of evidence victims provide to investigating officers—an alarming consideration, when the single most important determinant of whether a case will be solved is information that the victim supplies to patrol officers.<sup>4</sup> Finally, many witnesses are so inconvenienced or distressed by their involvement with the courts, or are so afraid that they will suffer reprisals from the defendant if they appear, that they fail to testify. As a result, cases are dismissed for lack of "prosecutability."<sup>5</sup>

At the same time that criminal justice officials were beginning to recognize these consequences of the criminal justice system's lack of concern for victims and witnesses, community groups were becoming troubled by the psychological and financial burdens that crime imposes on its victims. Women's advocacy groups, in particular, were concerned about the double trauma of rape victims, who are first assaulted by the rapist and then often handled insensitively by the criminal justice system. Other organizations began looking into the special problems of battered women. In 1975 and 1976, social service providers and criminal justice personnel met in Fresno, California, to create the National

Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) to promote a victim-oriented perspective in the administration of criminal justice.

As a result of this heightened attention, there was a marked increase in the development of strategies to identify and address the needs of victims and witnesses, including mediation efforts to help resolve family and neighborhood disputes, victim compensation and restitution efforts, and victim assistance programs.<sup>6</sup> In 1974, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) of the U.S. Department of Justice funded eight victim assistance programs through the National District Attorneys Association; eventually, LEAA contributed \$50 million to victim assistance programs nationwide. However, with the termination of LEAA in the early 1980's, Federal funding for victim programs declined. As a result, many programs, forced to switch from Federal to local government funding, experienced a decline in their budgets. With reduced funding, many programs had to curtail or discontinue some services (e.g., child care, security repair) and restrict others to only the most needy victims (such as the elderly). Even programs whose funding remained constant had difficulty coping with increasing salaries and operating costs.

At the same time, however, the concept of providing specialized services to victims took hold in the public consciousness and in the minds of many police officers, prosecutors, and judges. One dramatic manifestation of this increased awareness was the appointment in 1982 of a Presidential Task Force on Victims of Crime to investigate the needs of victims and the most effective means of addressing them. The Task Force recommended that Federal, State, and local governments, together with private sector organizations, undertake a series of sustained actions to improve the plight of victims, including creating mechanisms for ensuring permanent funding for existing victim assistance programs.<sup>7</sup>

In 1984, Congress implemented one of the principal recommendations of the Task Force when it passed the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which reestablished strong Federal leadership in victim assistance. The Act established the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice and, among other significant efforts, provided funding to States on a formula grant basis for allocating funds to qualified victim assistance and victim compensation programs.

Major signs of the expansion of the victims movement are evident at all levels of government and in the efforts of diverse private community organizations across the nation.

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For example, the amount of Federal funds available through the Crime Victims Fund for victim compensation and assistance has increased substantially, and in 1994 Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act, which funds a variety of measures to combat violence against women.

Increasingly, too, States have been funding victim assistance programs on a regular basis from general revenues or by earmarking a percentage of fines imposed on criminal offenders. Since 1980, when California became the first State to enact statewide funding for general victim services, a majority of the States have made some provision for ensuring that general victim services are provided at the local level. Forty-three States have funded compensation programs from fees or assessments against offenders. Thus, while in many cases budgets decreased in the early 1980's as a result of reduced Federal support, since the mid-1980's funding has become increasingly secure and has even increased in some jurisdictions.

Furthermore, 49 States have passed Victims' Bills of Rights, and 22 States have enacted constitutional amendments requiring the provision of certain services to crime victims. Locally, both government agencies and private organizations have created hundreds of general and specialized victim assistance programs. An additional sign of the continued growth of the crime victims movement is the ongoing success of major private national organizations in the field, including the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), the National Victim Center, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, and Parents of Murdered Children. In sum, the past decade has seen private organizations, as well as State and local officials responding to public pressure to address victim rights, and the Federal government resuming a strong leadership role in the victims' rights movement.

## Developments Encouraging the Expansion of the Victims Movement

A variety of factors have encouraged the growth of the victims movement, including 1) increasing awareness of the effects of victimization, 2) greater recognition of the shortcomings of the criminal justice system in responding to the needs of victims, and 3) the emerging prominence of community policing as an important law enforcement philosophy in the United States.

## Increasing Awareness of Effects of Victimization

The crime victims movement has significantly raised awareness of the effects of victimization, and this awareness has in turn encouraged the continued growth of the movement. Physical injuries requiring ongoing treatment and rehabilitation often accompany victimization and may involve pain, disfigurement, and disability. Indeed, someone is injured in nearly one-third of all violent crimes.<sup>8</sup>

### Project Methodology

This publication updates and expands the first edition of *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses*, published in 1987. Much of the information that appeared in the original publication remains useful today and therefore was not changed. New and particularly interesting program activities are highlighted throughout the current text.

Information for the second edition was obtained in several ways.

- The 25 programs that were surveyed for the original publication were reinterviewed in 1994.
- The six programs that were highlighted in the first edition provided detailed, updated information about their program activities. The programs are: Citizens Council Victim Services (formerly Crime Victim Centers), in Minneapolis-St. Paul; Victims Assistance Program, in Portland, Oregon; Victim/Witness Assistance Division, in Alameda County, California; Police Crisis Intervention Unit in Scottsdale, Arizona; Victim/Witness Assistance Program, in Greenville, South Carolina; and Victim Service Council, in St. Louis County, Missouri.
- An advisory board of victim assistance program directors and experts (see acknowledgments) reviewed the first edition and provided information on changes in the victim assistance field. The board also reviewed a draft of the second edition.
- Interviews were conducted with the directors of nearly 30 programs that were conducting activities that either were not addressed in the first edition or that required expanded discussion.

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Victims may also experience financial losses in the form of property destruction, loss of money and other valuables, loss of income, medical expenses, and rehabilitation costs.

However, research has increasingly shown that psychological stress may be the most significant consequence of victimization—and that unless attention is paid to these emotional problems, some crime victims may sustain long-term psychological damage. When describing practical problems such as stolen property, medical expenses, difficulties with employers, and disruption of daily routine, three-fourths of the victims in one study presented these consequences in psychological terms.<sup>9</sup> The shock of becoming a victim is often followed by feelings of fear, anger, shame, self-blame, helplessness, and depression, which may lead to immediate stress and sometimes to long-term psychological disabilities. Burglary victims may move from their homes, and survivors of homicide attempts sometimes live for years in a state of emotional paralysis. Other victims change their lifestyles in less dramatic ways, withdrawing from activities they enjoy or taking excessive preventive measures against further victimization. Symptoms such as sleeplessness, loss of concentration, and fear of being left alone may persist long after the crime occurred. To all this may be added social stigmatization from family, friends, or neighbors who may blame and shun the victim.

Crime may have different effects on different victims. Battered women may require temporary shelter, while poor or uninsured victims may need immediate financial assistance. Most people, however, have similar *emotional* reactions to crises, and, as a result, there has been an increased recognition that most victims need comparable forms of counseling assistance. One study found that the incidence and intensity of crime-related problems were not even moderately associated with age, education, or revictimization, although women were more likely than men to report physical injury, problems with their family, and mental or emotional suffering.<sup>10</sup>

Most victims, therefore, require the same psychological assistance—a sympathetic and trained ear to help them express their fear and anger, rebuild self-esteem, cope with a new or heightened perception of vulnerability, avoid self-blame and self-recrimination, reduce feelings of shame, and relieve uncertainty about their future involvement with the criminal justice system. Recognition of the need for this assistance has helped fuel the victims movement, particularly the need for victim assistance program counseling services.

## Increasing Awareness of Insensitive Criminal Justice System Treatment of Victims

At the same time that they experience the impact of a crime, victims too often endure what has been called a “second victimization”—insensitive treatment at the hands of the criminal justice system. Advocacy groups have been successful in continuing to raise consciousness about the many ways in which both victims and nonvictim/witnesses may experience this type of secondary distress, including:

- insensitive questioning by police officers;
- police or prosecutor attitudes suggesting that the victim contributed to his or her own victimization;
- delays in return of property kept as evidence or failure to retrieve the property at all;
- fear of reprisal by the defendant;
- lack of information about the status and outcome of the case;
- frustration and inconvenience related to waiting for court appearances or appearing in court only to have the case continued or dismissed;
- difficulty finding transportation and child care and taking time off from work in order to come to court;
- lost wages due to time spent testifying in court; and
- anxiety about testifying in open court, including hostile questions from defense attorneys and threatening behavior by the defendant’s family or friends.

Increasing recognition of this secondary victimization has encouraged policymakers to take steps to make the criminal justice system more sensitive to the needs of victims. The services provided by victim assistance programs are reviewed in chapter 6 and address the many problems listed above.



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## The Emergence of Community Policing

The emergence of community policing as the dominant law enforcement philosophy in the United States has also encouraged the further growth of the victims movement.<sup>11</sup> Community policing promotes crime prevention through police problem-solving in collaboration with communities, while strongly emphasizing “customer” and “client” services, especially for crime victims. Community policing has important implications for the relationship between victim service providers and law enforcement.

1. *Victim referral.* The strong community policing focus on customer service stimulates interest among law enforcement agencies in the types of assistance provided by victim service programs, since these programs can assist officers in meeting victims’ needs. This focus may lead police departments to increase referrals and assistance to victim service programs.
2. *Collaboration on crime prevention.* Community policing’s focus on creative problem-solving and crime prevention may result in increased police interest in victims’ and witnesses’ perceptions of how crimes can be avoided in the future. With community policing, community members are viewed as partners in the policing effort. Furthermore, some victim service providers may serve as a valuable source of information for the police regarding crime prevention options because they are familiar with the patterns of victimization.
3. *Enhanced prosecution efforts.* Police officers typically measure their success by their arrest rate. With community policing’s emphasis on problem-solving, however, officers may show an interest in convictions, not just arrests. When that is the case, community policing officers may increasingly look to victim assistance programs for assistance in obtaining the cooperation of victims and witnesses.

Subsequent chapters describe community policing innovations that illustrate how law enforcement and victim assistance programs can work together.

## What Do Victim Assistance Programs Do?

Victim assistance programs provide a wide range of services to clients, from child care to crisis intervention. The National

Organization for Victim Assistance has divided the services that victims and witnesses may need into eight stages during the criminal justice process, from crime scene assistance to postsentencing help. Figure 1–1 shows this process and the services that may be needed at each stage. The figure is helpful in associating discrete services with the critical stages many victims and witnesses experience. Figure 1–2 includes all of the services in the NOVA list but rearranges them into seven functional, rather than by chronological, groupings: emergency services, counseling, advocacy and support services, claims assistance, court-related services, postsentencing services, and systemwide services. Chapter 6 discusses these services in more detail.

Victim assistance programs also engage in program planning, fund-raising, legislative lobbying, establishing working relationships with the criminal justice system and other social service providers, case monitoring, and evaluation. This publication addresses these aspects of initiating and maintaining a successful program in chapters 2, 4, and 8.

Finally, victim assistance programs encourage and assist the criminal justice system, when appropriate, to assume responsibility itself for responding to the needs of victims and witnesses. Many programs provide instruction and training in victim needs and treatment to police, prosecutors, and judges. Chapter 4 addresses this activity.

Victim assistance providers have traditionally focused on the delivery of services to the direct victims of crime. However, in recent years a number of programs have begun to extend their outreach and services to so-called “derivative victims.” These victims include traumatized witnesses to and survivors of violent crime (e.g., students at a school where someone is murdered) and victims of environmental and other disasters (e.g., hurricane victims or survivors of bombings and plane crashes). Researchers have noted that in some sense all members of society are victimized by the fear associated with disorder and crime in their communities.<sup>12</sup>

Since most victim assistance programs struggle with limited resources, steps to extend services beyond the direct victims of crime must be carefully considered. The precise characteristics of additional classes of victims to be served must be defined very clearly in order to avoid case overload and the generation of expectations that cannot be met. Subsequent chapters provide examples of services to derivative victims and illustrate how programs providing such services have circumscribed their efforts to avoid these potential problems.

**Figure 1-1  
Victim and Witness Services**

<b>Stage One: Emergency Response</b>	<b>Stage Two: Victim Stabilization</b>	<b>Stage Three: Resource Mobilization</b>	<b>Stage Four: After Arrest</b>
<p><b>When:</b> First contact after crime</p> <p><b>Who:</b> <i>By telephone:</i> 911 operator Crisis line Family and friends <i>Face-to-face:</i> On-scene crisis intervener Law enforcement Family and friends Public</p> <p><b>What:</b> Trauma assessment Physical first aid Emotional first aid Crisis intervention Protection from further harm</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> Protection Information Dignity and compassion</p>	<p><b>When:</b> On scene, or upon report, or within 48 hours After victim reacts to trigger events</p> <p><b>Who:</b> Crisis counselors Law enforcement patrol and investigators Family and friends</p> <p><b>What:</b> <i>Crisis counselors or law enforcement:</i> Stabilizing interviews Crisis counseling Conflict management Shelter, transportation or protection Criminal justice orientation Referrals <i>Family and friends:</i> Personal assistance Emotional first aid Companionship and reassurance</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> Protection Information Dignity and compassion</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Until resolution of victimization experience</p> <p><b>Who:</b> Victim service providers Law enforcement Compensation Programs Family or friends</p> <p><b>What:</b> <i>Victim services:</i> Outreach Supportive counseling Information, referrals <i>Aid with:</i> Financial claims Landlords, creditors Employers Property return Legal referrals Crime, violence, substance abuse information Advocacy <i>Law enforcement:</i> Fast property return Information, referrals <i>Compensation:</i> Outreach Assistance with claims Emergency aid <i>Family and friends:</i> Information Understanding Aid with crime prevention Advocacy</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> Protection Information Reparations Property/employment Dignity and compassion</p>	<p><b>When:</b> First contact after arrest</p> <p><b>Who:</b> Prosecutors Victim service providers Law enforcement Family and friends</p> <p><b>What:</b> <i>Prosecutors</i> <i>Information on:</i> Justice process Case status Reparations <i>Consultations on:</i> Charging decisions Release decisions conditions Diversion Case scheduling <i>Aid with restitution:</i> Restitution Intimidation reports Protection orders Relocation <i>Victim services:</i> Start/continue Stage 1-3 services Aid with media Supportive counseling <i>Law enforcement:</i> Protection order, bail enforcement Relocation <i>Family and friends:</i> Support in system</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> Protection Information Counsel Reparations Property/employment Due process Dignity and compassion</p>

Note: Adapted from NOVA Newsletter, No. 4, 1995, 4-5.

**Figure 1-1 (Continued)**  
**Victim and Witness Services**

<b>Stage Five: Pre-Court Appearance</b>	<b>Stage Six: Court Appearance</b>	<b>Stage Seven: Before Case Disposition</b>	<b>Stage Eight: After Case Disposition</b>
<p><b>When:</b> Before any appearance</p> <p><b>Who:</b> Prosecutors Victim service providers Family and friends</p> <p><b>What:</b> <i>Prosecutors:</i> Enforcement of protection orders, bail Protection of victim names, addresses <i>Information on:</i> Justice process Case status scheduling, continuances Testifying and the courtroom Consultation on plea Aid with landlord, creditor, employer Support on due process claims <i>Victim Services:</i> Start/continue Stage 1-4 services Justice orientation Aid with media Aid with victim impact statements Aid with transportation, child care, creditors, etc. <i>Family and friends:</i> Support in court</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> Protection Information Counsel Reparations Property/employment Due process Dignity and compassion</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Day of hearing or trial</p> <p><b>Who:</b> Prosecutors Judiciary Victim service providers Family or friends</p> <p><b>What:</b> <i>Prosecutors:</i> Protection from intimidation, media intrusion Aid with transportation, child care, creditors, etc. Consultation on unexpected events Aid with witness fees Aid with due process claims <i>Judiciary:</i> Ban badgering by defense, media Let victims, family attend all proceedings Provide information about court process <i>Victim service providers:</i> Start/continue Stage 1-5 services Help prosecutor provide services <i>Family and Friends:</i> Support in court</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> All victim rights involved</p>	<p><b>When:</b> After verdict or entry of guilty plea</p> <p><b>Who:</b> Judiciary Probation Prosecutors Victim service providers Family and friends</p> <p><b>What:</b> <i>Judiciary:</i> Ban badgering by defense, media Allow victim impact statement, allocution Order restitution for all damages Address victim concerns at hearing <i>Probation:</i> Information on verdict, sentencing hearing Consultation on victim impact statement, restitution claims Explore VORP option <i>Prosecutor:</i> Parallel services with probation <i>Victim services:</i> Start/continue Stage 1-6 services Help prosecutor, probation provide services Information, referrals on civil entitlement <i>Family and friends:</i> Provide victim impact information Support in court</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> All victim rights involved</p>	<p><b>When:</b> After disposition</p> <p><b>Who:</b> All corrections agencies Victim service providers Prosecutors Judiciary Family and friends</p> <p><b>What:</b> <i>Probation:</i> Administer VORP Offender status info Enforce conditions, restitution orders <i>Corrections:</i> Offender status information Teach “victim impact” Enforce restitution <i>Parole:</i> Notice on hearings Allow victim input Order/enforce restitution, protection <i>Prosecution:</i> Invite victim input in revocation hearings <i>Judiciary:</i> Enforce conditions <i>Victim service providers:</i> Advocacy with, support to, others Start/continue Stage 1-7 services <i>Family or friends:</i> Ongoing support Protection of victim from further intimidation or harassment Provide victim impact information</p> <p><b>Rights:</b> All victim rights engaged</p>

## Figure 1-2 Range and Definition of Victim Services

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Shelter/Food:** Find housing for victims who cannot safely remain in their current home or have no place to stay, and provide food to tide them over initial crisis period

**Security Repair:** Repair locks, board up windows, and take similar security measures designed to prevent immediate reburglarization of a home or apartment

**Financial Assistance:** Provide petty cash for meeting immediate needs related to transportation, food, shelter, and other necessities

**On-scene Comfort:** Provide support at scene of crime and shortly thereafter

**Medical Care:** First aid at scene of crime

### COUNSELING

**24-Hour Hotline:** Provide round-the-clock availability for counseling or referrals to victims who telephone with troubles

**Crisis Intervention:** Meet urgent emotional or physical needs of victims

**Follow-up Counseling:** Counsel after initial victimization and for other than crisis reactions; for example, advise on practical problems created by the victimization experience

**Mediation:** Assistance in resolving family disputes and neighborhood or friend disputes without resort to the criminal justice system

### ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

**Personal Advocacy:** Act on behalf of victims or witnesses to secure their rights vis-a-vis other social service agencies and the criminal justice system (includes several of the individual services below)

**Employer Intervention:** Document legitimacy of clients' absences or tardiness to employers and facilitate payment of wages or salary when clients must testify in court

**Landlord Intervention:** Facilitate postponements in payment of rent, mortgages, utility bills, and similar financial obligations

**Property Return:** Facilitate postponements in payment of rent, mortgages, utility bills, and similar financial obligations

**Property Return:** Facilitate swift return of victims' property kept by police as evidence

**Intimidation Intervention:** Provide reassurance or protection for victims and witnesses experiencing fear of reprisal

**Victim Impact Reports:** Provide prosecutors and judges with descriptions of the impact of the crime on victims to assist in imposing sentencing and restitution

**Legal/Paralegal Counsel:** Provide legal advice, for example, in civil areas related to having been victimized

**Referral:** Recommend or obtain sources of assistance not provided directly by program

### CLAIMS ASSISTANCE

**Insurance Claims Aid:** Help in securing financial reimbursement for medical expenses, life insurance, and lost wages

**Restitution Assistance:** Assist in urging prosecutors to advise to judges that they impose, or probation authorities collect, restitution

**Compensation Assistance:** Help in filling out application forms for victims-of-violent-crime compensation in states that have this program.

**Witness Fee Assistance:** Help in securing any available fee for appearing in court

### COURT-RELATED SERVICES

**Witness Reception:** Staff courthouse reception area to orient victims/witnesses

**Court Orientation:** Provide information on the criminal justice system and victims' or witnesses' responsibilities in court

**Notification:** Inform witness of required upcoming court appearance

**Witness Alert:** Place witnesses on standby to come into court (and, less often, to shelters or social service agencies)

**Transportation:** Transport witnesses to and from court (and, less often, to shelters or social service agencies)

**Child Care:** Provide baby-sitting services for witnesses testifying in court

**Escort to Court:** Accompany witnesses to courtroom, support during proceedings

**POST-SENTENCING SERVICES** (usually provided by advocates within corrections agency, or by other program staff who work with or assist the agency)

**Orientation:** Explain the corrections system, the roles of officials within the system, and victims' rights within the system

**Notification:** Inform victim of the offender's status within the penal system

**Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program:** Help coordinate, if desired by both parties, meeting between offender and victim

**Restitution:** Help victims to obtain restitution payment

### SYSTEMWIDE SERVICES

**Public Education:** Educate public through media, brochures, or speeches on victimization issues and program services

**Legislative Advocacy:** Lobby or provide assistance to secure State legislation that provides or funds additional services to victims

**Training:** Train police, prosecutors, and other human service providers on how to improve their handling of victims and witnesses and how to avail themselves of the program's services

Note: These categories (but not the definitions) were originally suggested, in a somewhat different form, in the National Evaluation Program Phase I Assessment of Victim/Witness Assistance projects conducted for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration by the American Institutes for Research. Programs surveyed for this publication (in both 1986 and 1994) were asked about their provision of each of these services except for postsentencing services.

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## Responsibilities of the Criminal Justice System

Initially, the response to the needs of victims and witnesses took the form of programs specializing in victim assistance. As the victim rights' movement has gained momentum, however, many police officers, prosecutors, and probation and parole administrators have recognized that fulfilling their obligations for meeting victims' needs requires the integration of victim services into the normal operating procedures of the criminal justice system, not just system cooperation with local victim assistance programs. For example, many police academies have made training in crisis intervention a standard part of recruit orientation, and some prosecutor's offices offer training in dealing with victims of crime. Judicial organizations and individual judges have taken steps to provide separate waiting areas for defense and prosecution witnesses, permit a victim's advisor to remain in the courtroom, and encourage and consider victim impact statements before sentencing.<sup>13</sup>

The U.S. Attorney General's Office has also developed and issued guidelines for Federal prosecutors to follow in assisting victims and witnesses.<sup>14</sup> All U.S. attorneys' offices have been asked

- to consult victims of serious crimes regarding plea negotiations,
- to allow victims to address the court at sentencing, and
- to advise victims on how they can express their opinions on sentencing decisions through victim impact statements.

While this report focuses on the activities of victim assistance programs, it suggests throughout how police, prosecutors, judges, and correctional personnel can play a significant part in providing victim services, and how program staff can encourage and assist criminal justice professionals to do so.

## Endnotes

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2. Correspondence, Susan Laurence, U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, July 1995.
3. John H. Laub, "Patterns of Criminal Victimization in the United States," *Victims of Crime: Problems, Policies, and Programs*, 40–42.
4. See Philip H. Ennis, *Criminal Victimization in the United States: A Report of a National Survey* (Washington, D.C.: 1967). See also Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994); U.S. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, *Criminal Victimization in the United States: A Comparison of the 1973 and 1974 Findings* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, 1976), 40–41; and David A. Lowenberg, "Your Clients Will Be There Next Year. Will You?," *Victim/Witness Programs: Human Services of the 80's*, ed. Emilio C. Viano (Washington, D.C.: Visage Press, 1980), 404–410.
5. National District Attorneys Association, *Help for Victims and Witnesses: An Annual Report* (Washington, D.C.: National District Attorneys Association, 1976); Kathleen B. Brosi, *A Cross-City Comparison of Felony Case Processing* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Law and Social Research, 1979), 20; Roberta C. Cronin and Blair B. Bourque, *Assessment of Victim/Witness Assistance Projects. National Evaluation Program Phase I Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 1981), 3; American Bar Association, *Reducing Victim/Witness Intimidation: A Package* (Washington, D.C.: American Bar Association, 1979).
6. The use of the term "program" should be viewed as a short-hand reference, because many agencies do not define their victim assistance activities as programs.
7. *President's Task Force on Victims of Crime: Final Report* (Washington, D.C.: Executive Office of the President, 1982).
8. National Organization for Victim Assistance, *Campaign for Victim Rights: A Practical Guide*. (Washington, D.C.: National Organization for Victim Assistance, 1983). See also Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1992*.

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9. Richard D. Knudten, Anthony Meade, Mary Knudten, and William Doerner, "Victims and Witnesses: The Impact of Crime and Their Experience with the Criminal Justice System" (Milwaukee: Marquette University Victim/Witness Project, 1976), 24, 37; Kenneth Friedman, Helen Bischoff, Robert Davis, and Andrea Person, *Victims and Helpers: Reactions to Crime. Summary* (New York: Victim Services Agency, 1982), 6.
  10. Knudten et al., "Victims and Witnesses," 27.
  11. For background information on community policing, see Dennis Rosenbaum, ed., *The Challenge of Community Policing: Testing the Promises* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1994).
  12. Wesley G. Skogan, *Disorder and Decline: Crime and the Spiral of Decay in American Neighborhoods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
  13. Statement of Recommended Judicial Practices, Plenary Session of the National Conference of the Judiciary on the Rights of Victims of Crime, the National Judicial College, Reno, Nevada, December 2, 1983.
  14. Office for Victims of Crime, *Victims of Crime Act of 1984 As Amended: A Report to Congress by the Attorney General*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, 1994), 39–55.

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# Chapter 2

## Developing and Improving the Victim Assistance Program

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### Key Points

- *Planning is an indispensable component of any victim assistance program's activities.*
- *It is vital that victim assistance program staff assess—and periodically reassess—the needs of potential clients and how these needs can best be met in light of changing crime trends (e.g., increases in violent crime by juveniles), available resources (e.g., funding, volunteers), and other local considerations (for example, State constitutional amendments guaranteeing victim rights).*
- *To assess victims' needs, program staff may want to contact not only criminal justice officials and social service providers but also churches, schools, universities, physicians and public health officials, and local community organizations.*
- *It is important that program staff formulate explicit written goals, objectives, policies, and procedures. These will help to:*
  - inform clients and other groups of program activities;
  - focus program activities;
  - make it possible to evaluate program success; and
  - establish credibility with funding sources and other criminal justice agencies.
- *Program objectives need to identify the primary types of program clients. Owing to limited resources, staff of most programs concentrate on the basic needs of victims of violent crime. However, staff of some programs are able to develop specialized services (e.g., for victims of domestic violence) and to expand their concept of victimization (e.g., to include traumatized witnesses of crime, victims of environmental disasters, or residents of crime-ridden neighborhoods).*
- *It is important that program staff carefully consider—and periodically reconsider—which combination of services to provide. This decision needs to be based on:*
  - the requirements established by funding sources;
  - the results of the needs assessment, particularly with respect to priority target groups;
  - the types and quality of services already available from other service providers or from the victim's family and friends;
  - the types of services that will also benefit the criminal justice system (and hence help the program win cooperation from criminal justice agencies); and
  - available funding and staffing resources.
- *Victim assistance program planners and staff can obtain valuable guidance and ideas for innovative activities from many sources, including staff of other victim assistance programs, victim service networks, written materials and conferences, advisory committees, law enforcement officers and other criminal justice officials, and social service providers.*

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Planning is an indispensable component of any victim assistance program. Sponsors want to know about a program's goals and activities before giving it money. Program directors must know what kind of staff to seek and what kinds of services staff should offer.

*Program development should be viewed as an endeavor that continues throughout the life of a program.* Staff of existing programs need to periodically reassess their activities, identify ways to improve, and respond to changing fiscal and political circumstances. Without adequate planning, continuous reassessment, and willingness to change, programs may experience serious problems because staff fail to anticipate potential difficulties. The needs of victims may also change over time, requiring different services and staff expertise.

- The Victims Assistance Program in Portland, Oregon, began in 1974 with a single target group—rape victims—but later added other victims of violent crime to its mandate. Two years later, funding was secured to add a restitution component. In recent years, the program has obtained two Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants to address the needs of victims of gang and hate crimes, and victims of juvenile offenders.
- The Victim/Witness Assistance Program in Greenville, South Carolina, began by selecting victims on the basis of the gravity of the crime but later switched to the criterion of victim impact, so that highest priority was assigned to rape victims and the families of homicide victims. Then, in response to State guidelines and through increased staffing and funding, the program began contacting not only all victims of violent crime but all other victims of crimes in which an arrest was made. In addition, a VOCA grant enabled the director to hire an advocate to work solely with victims of domestic violence.

Program development and modification may be divided into nine principal tasks. This chapter discusses six of these tasks:

1. obtaining guidance for program development;
2. conducting initial and periodic needs assessment;
3. formulating and redefining objectives;
4. identifying and revising target populations;

5. selecting and reevaluating services to be provided; and
6. stimulating and maintaining public awareness and support.

Chapter 3 addresses the three remaining tasks:

7. determining service sponsorship and location,
8. estimating funding needs,
9. estimating staffing needs, and recruiting and changing staff.

Program staff need not follow these steps in the exact order presented here. Rather, they can adopt a sequence that best accommodates their local planning constraints and opportunities.

## Obtaining Guidance

Throughout all of the steps listed above, it is important that planners and staff seek guidance from individuals experienced in victim services. Program planners and staff almost always seek guidance from staff of *other programs*, both within and outside their State. For instance, to obtain ideas for starting the Greenville Victim/Witness Assistance Program, planners culled through 70 requests for Federal funding of victim assistance programs. Similarly, the founder of the Minneapolis—St. Paul program telephoned directors in Pima County, Arizona, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for advice on where to locate the program. (See appendix A for contact names and for the addresses and telephone numbers of programs described in this publication.)

Informal contact by phone or in person is, of course, the most common way to learn from other program staff. In addition, as the number of victim assistance programs has grown in recent years, national, State, and local networks of victim service providers have become more common, providing comprehensive sources of information for both new and existing programs. When the victim assistance coordinator for the Colorado State Patrol was first developing her program, she joined the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance. Members assisted her with the development of brochures and other program materials; she obtained further guidance during the organization's annual retreat and bi-monthly training seminars.



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## Sources of Guidance for Program Development and Improvement

- Other programs
  - informal contacts by phone, in writing, or in person
  - national, State, and local networks of victim service providers (for example, through training seminars, meetings, program contacts)
- Written materials and conferences
  - for example, materials and statewide, regional, and national conferences produced or sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, the National Victim Center, and other agencies and organizations
  - research studies and manuals
- Internet sources of information
  - the Partnerships Against Violence Network (PAVNET) and the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) databases on the Internet are valuable sources of information on programs, funding sources, and related topics
- Advisory committees
  - include representatives of criminal justice system, social service agencies, and other community groups involved in victim services (e.g., support groups)

*Written materials and conferences* can assist both fledgling and established programs. National, State, and local victim service networks and organizations regularly host conferences; sometimes program planners and staff may also be able to obtain the written proceedings from past conferences. Some of the most useful recent publications are listed in the box on the following page, “How to Operate a Victim Assistance Program: Recent Comprehensive, ‘How-To’ Publications.” Additionally, State or national clearinghouses, such as the Federal Government’s National Criminal Justice Reference Service, or the organizations mentioned above can locate up-to-date publications. University criminal justice and social science departments, as well as libraries, can also be useful sources.

*Internet sources of information* can provide substantial assistance to program planners, including timely information regarding funding opportunities, descriptions of promising programs, and information on technical assistance. Two of the most valuable Internet information sources are the Partnerships Against Violence Network (PAVNET) and the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)

databases. Both are operated by the U.S. Department of Justice and can be accessed through Internet listings of governmental sources of information. The *PAVNET Online User’s Guide* is available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service ([800] 851–3420).

*Program advisory committees* can provide expert advice on starting and improving a program. They can also help with:

- identifying and gaining the support of resources in the local community;
- avoiding duplication of effort;
- advertising program services; and
- securing leads to funding sources.

In establishing an advisory board, it is important to include representatives of the criminal justice system, the social service agencies, and other community groups with which program staff most likely will be collaborating. The Victim

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## How To Operate a Victim Assistance Program: Recent, Comprehensive, “How-To” Publications

- *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance, A Training and Resource Manual* (Arlington, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1994), \$45.\* *Contact the National Victim Center at (703) 276-2880.*
- Marlene Young, *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1993), \$34.95.\* *Contact NOVA at (202) 232-6682 or Kendall/Hunt Publishers at (800) 228-0810.*
- *Helping Victims and Witnesses in the Juvenile Justice System: A Program Handbook* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1991), \$15. *Contact the National Victims Resource Center, a component of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, in any of the following ways:*

phone: (800) 627-6872 or (800) 851-3420  
fax: (301) 251-5212  
mail: NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
email: askncjrs@ncjrs.aspensys.com

\* The first two publications listed above are also available through the National Victims Resource Center on interlibrary loan.

Service Council in St. Louis County assembled an advisory board soon after it received first-year funding. The board included two police chiefs, a police captain, the prosecuting attorney, and the county court administrator. Its contribution was most helpful in areas involving long-term strategy and improving relationships with the criminal justice system. When, toward the end of their first year, program administrators expressed apprehension to the board about future funding, a police chief on the board suggested that they submit a three-year plan to county officials, a step that turned out to be an essential ingredient in the program's survival.

Planners and staff need to consider which resources may be most helpful at various stages of program development. For instance, written materials may be most valuable during the early stages of planning. Advisory board contributions may be most critical during the planning and early stages of the program. Conferences can be useful both during the initial stages, when program planners can establish valuable contacts and obtain advice from experienced advocates, and after a program has been in operation several months, when staff can compare their own experiences with those of other, more established programs.

## Conducting an Initial and Periodic Needs Assessment

Conducting a needs assessment is one of the most crucial tasks that program planners and staff can perform. The task involves two primary elements:

1. identifying the problems that victims in the program's jurisdiction encounter as a result of their victimization, and
2. determining the extent to which these problems are currently being addressed.

It is usually best if program planners conduct a needs assessment as the first step in program planning. In the past, programs were often assured of funding from public sources and impatient to get the project up and running. Also, some victim advocates may think victims' needs are obvious. Nevertheless, experienced program practitioners usually stress the importance of beginning with a needs assessment and conducting periodic reassessments throughout the life of the program.<sup>1</sup>

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## Why Conduct a Needs Assessment?

There are six compelling reasons for conducting a needs assessment, whether as the initial planning step or as an ongoing activity:

1. *To identify the specific needs of victims and witnesses in the jurisdiction.* The Alameda County Victim/Witness Assistance Division learned through a survey that nearly 30 percent of victims whose stolen property was recovered by police never had it returned by the courts. Victim/Witness Services in Milwaukee discovered that nearly 45 percent of the victims it surveyed had difficulty finding transportation to the courthouse.<sup>2</sup>

Without a needs assessment, program staff may begin by providing some services that are largely unnecessary while neglecting others that are badly needed. For example, a study of four victim assistance programs found a significant discrepancy between victims' reported needs and the programs' services: victims did not receive the security-related and financial assistance that they said they needed. The study also indicated that program staff need to find out which needs victims tend to satisfy through other sources. For instance, victims reported that their primary need after the crime was "to talk with someone." However, they were far more likely to fulfill this need through family and friends than through a victim assistance program.<sup>3</sup>

2. *To determine which victims have the greatest need for services.* Program planners and staff who omit a needs assessment can waste considerable effort directing services at clients with relatively minor problems while neglecting victims with serious problems. Failure to assist victims and witnesses in greatest need, with the help they most want, can be politically harmful to the program if funding authorities and other sources of support become concerned about its lack of initial achievement.
3. *To determine whether these needs are being met—or could be met—by other human service providers in the community, and to establish program ties where this is the case.* Staff of the Greenville Victim/Witness Assistance Program knew that an existing Rape Crisis Council was effectively caring for victims of sexual assault at the scene of the crime, making it unnecessary for the program to provide immediate crisis counseling. By

working with many community service providers, the director of the program is able to ensure that her program's services do not overlap with those of other programs. "Our plate is full as it is," this director stated. Program directors advise keeping in touch with other agencies to find out whether they have dropped or added any services.

4. *To learn about other agencies' needs in dealing with victims and witnesses.* In developing its child abuse unit, the Suffolk County (Massachusetts) District Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Service Program found that many criminal justice and social service officials were eager to have one agency coordinate the various interviews and services needed in child abuse investigations.
5. *To generate information for promoting the program to potential and current sources of funding.* Funding sources may be more likely to support a program if they see documented evidence of victims' needs and of the potential benefits of program services. Alameda County (California) program planners found that their needs assessment convinced prosecutors of the potential value of the program's services. Initially, district attorneys felt that the program would be a waste of Federal funds; but, after a survey revealed that victims' biggest complaint was lack of notification of case outcome, some attorneys began to see the project's value for increasing witness cooperation.<sup>4</sup> Information from a needs assessment can also be used later in the life of the program to demonstrate program effectiveness.
6. *To highlight areas in which existing programs need improvement.* New York's Victim Services Agency found from a survey that witnesses needed social services as well as assistance in court attendance. As a result, program staff shifted some of their efforts from witness management to victim services.<sup>5</sup>

Some states have conducted statewide needs assessments in order to decide which programs should be funded under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA). For instance, before awarding any of its VOCA funds, Pennsylvania required each county to make its own determination of the need for victim services within its jurisdiction and then, using the results of this needs assessment, to solicit and evaluate proposals from eligible programs within its borders. Virginia has conducted a similar statewide assessment.

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## What Characterizes a Good Program? Using Program Standards as a Guide

As the number and breadth of victim assistance programs have increased in the past 20 years, the Federal Government and some State governments have developed program standards to guide the establishment, operation, and improvement of programs. The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) developed a "Model Victim Assistance Program" that outlines essential developmental steps and provides performance guidelines for activities in the areas of planning, management, service, and evaluation. This categorization can help staff in new programs develop realistic standards for themselves and can enable staff in established programs to better assess their strengths and weaknesses. (See the box, "National Recommendation of Ranges of Services," later in this chapter.)

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's (PCCD's) State-funded Victim Service Program, which administers grants to improve the State criminal justice system's treatment of victims and to enhance community-based services to crime victims, developed a resource manual that outlines minimum and model standards for various victim assistance program activities and characteristics. The Commission encourages programs in the State to use the manual for self-evaluation and to ensure that they are at least meeting all of the minimum standards before they strive for the model standards. The Commission also uses the standards as a uniform basis for monitoring State-funded programs.

For example, the Commission established the following standards for staff training:

*Minimum standard: All victim service staff, both full-time and part-time, within sixty days of their hiring, shall receive and successfully complete 40 hours of orientation training. It will be the responsibility of the PCCD to establish a training schedule.*

*Model standard: In addition to the above 40 hours of orientation training, new hires, both full-time and part-time, will attend 40 hours of "victimization training" within their first year of employment. Victim service staff will obtain 40 hours of continuing education training on an annual basis.*

More information on the NOVA standards is available through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, (800) 851-3420. Or contact NOVA, (202) 232-6682 to obtain a copy of *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals*, by Marlene Young, Executive Director.

The Pennsylvania standards can be found in the *Standards and Procedures Manual for Victim/Witness Assistance Programs*, July 1992, available from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency Victim Services Program, (717) 787-8559.

### *Consider Special Populations*

Some program planners may from the outset want to target services to particular types of victim populations, such as children, minorities (including African-Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other ethnic groups), or victims of workplace violence; such targeting may be needed because of funding requirements or because these groups are

being neglected. Staff of well-established programs may want to consider refocusing their efforts on special populations, or needs assessment may reveal unexpected types of victims that have special needs or are underserved. To determine the needs of special victim populations, program planners or staff may want to survey only particular target groups, or they may wish to analyze the results of a survey of all types of crime victims for indications that certain groups

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need special attention. Consultation with local advocacy groups and social service agencies can also be useful.

### *Who Conducts the Needs Assessment?*

Program planners and staff will usually find it most economical to develop and conduct the needs assessment themselves. However, it is important that they understand thoroughly how to conduct a comprehensive, credible, objective survey. The needs assessment may be considered biased if conducted in-house.<sup>6</sup> Program planners and staff must be sure that the information they receive is accurate so that they can respond to victims' most pressing needs and so that the results can stand up under the scrutiny of potential collaborators and funding sources.

If resources permit, program planners or staff may want to consider using a consultant—who would likely be more knowledgeable about survey techniques and would be less apt to arouse charges of bias—to conduct the needs assessment. Local universities may be good sources of researchers or graduate students interested in designing and conducting an assessment, sometimes at little or no cost.

### *How Is a Needs Assessment Conducted?*

Conducting a needs assessment need not be costly or time-consuming for an individual program. Each of the techniques described below can generate valuable and reliable information.

**Examine criminal justice data sources.** Program planners and directors can secure data about specific crimes in the community from police, prosecutors, and local officials, and examine it for clues regarding victim services. Useful data might include:

- proportion of cases' charges withdrawn because of victim/witness nonattendance or other reasons;
- proportion of cases in which restitution is ordered and collected;
- proportion of injured victims eligible and applying for crime victim compensation; and
- number of home security checks conducted by police.

This information can suggest activities that staff of a new or existing program might want to undertake or modify. For example, high rates of witness nonattendance may point to

the value of establishing a witness management component. The information can also be used as a baseline against which to make comparisons after the program has been in operation.

In addition to local statistics, findings of national and State studies regarding victims' needs can be useful. (See appendix B for selected national studies.) Government reports, such as the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics victimization surveys, may also prove helpful.

**Interview criminal justice officials and staff.** Talking with police officers, prosecutors, and judges, and with corrections, probation, and parole officers can:

- familiarize program staff with the activities and needs of criminal justice agencies;
- provide information on the needs of victims and witnesses;
- reveal how criminal justice agencies can best participate in the effort to improve the treatment of crime victims;
- help secure support from criminal justice system officials early on and establish ties for future collaboration; and
- identify potential advisory board members and other potential collaborators.

In general, it is a good idea to interview both agency administrators and staff—for example, the chief prosecutor *and* the assistant prosecutors, or the police chief *and* investigators and patrol officers. The program director for the Alameda County Victim/Witness Assistance Division discovered from police property clerks that they were experiencing considerable difficulty storing all the property assigned to them—a problem of which police administrators were unaware. The director secured the clerks' and then the chief's support for a system of photographing evidence instead of storing it, which benefited victims and police alike. (As in this example, it is best if program staff obtain the support of local authorities before attempting to change a procedure within the community's criminal justice system.)

It is especially important to interview police investigators and prosecutors responsible for cases involving homicide, burglary, and sexual assault (including child molestation and incest). They know the needs of these particularly traumatized and vulnerable victims, and their cooperation is espe-

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cially important for helping these victims. Officers with community policing responsibilities may be particularly willing to provide—and perhaps even be responsible for providing—information about victims’ needs.

Questions for criminal justice personnel generally fall into four categories:

1. *their perceptions regarding victim and witness needs, and how these needs are being addressed;*
2. *problems that they experience working with victims and witnesses, and whether and how victim assistance program staff can help them execute their responsibilities;*
3. *whether and how the respondent’s agency can refer victims and witnesses to the program; and*
4. *which agency (if there is a real choice in the matter) would be a good place to house the victim assistance program, and who should sponsor it.*

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***It is important to learn about the organization, activities, and concerns of the various criminal justice agencies prior to interviewing staff. This will help facilitate a productive interview and convince officials of the program’s seriousness and its ability to help them while serving victims.***

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**Interview social service agency staff and other community officials.** Program planners need to identify the social service agencies in the community that are already serving victims and witnesses or could help them. The needs assessment with these groups serves both to identify service needs and establish program linkages. A list of potentially relevant agencies and organizations, and the role of each, may be found in chapter 4. College and university officials may be useful sources of information regarding student victims’ needs in light of the passage of the Federal Student Right to Know Act of 1991, which requires colleges and universities to track and report campus crime.

As with the criminal justice agencies, where possible, it is best if the director of each agency or group is interviewed *along with* one or two staff members who may have more direct or recent experience with service delivery, and who may be in a better position to act as a liaison between the

program and the agency. Again, in-person interviews are typically the most effective approach to gathering information from human service delivery personnel.

Topic areas to cover in interviews with social service personnel and other community officials include the following:

- their perceptions of the needs of victims and witnesses;
- difficulties they have experienced, both in terms of troublesome clients and problems working with the criminal justice system;
- which kinds of services they offer or would be willing to offer to benefit victims and witnesses;
- whether they will accept referrals from a victim assistance program, and how many they can handle;
- what eligibility criteria they have for referrals and what fees they charge, if any;
- how they wish referrals to be handled, and what kind of follow-up they would like from the victim/witness assistance unit;
- whether they want to refer victims and witnesses to the program, and how many they are likely to refer;
- their opinions regarding the best possible location and sponsor for a victim assistance program (if planners have some flexibility in the decision).

Appendix C provides a sample questionnaire developed by the St. Louis County Victim Service Council for social service organizations.

Staff of existing victim assistance programs can interview human service provider staff to update previously collected information. Some agencies’ services and needs may change over time, requiring alterations in the victim assistance program’s referrals to these agencies and modifications in the program’s own services. It may also be worthwhile for staff of an established program to talk with social service agencies when the program changes its target victim population. When the new director of Suffolk County’s Victim/Witness Services in Massachusetts revitalized the program’s child abuse unit, she met with health professionals, social workers, and other service providers to coordinate interviews of child victims and the provision of services to them.

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**Interview representatives of schools and other community groups.** Schools, churches, support groups, and other community groups are increasingly providing outreach and services to crime victims. Victim assistance program planners and staff can interview representatives of such groups for their perceptions of victim needs and for information about services they provide. This can be particularly important when seeking to serve special populations, such as minority victims, with whom these organizations may work closely. Interviews with these representatives may also result in the recruitment of volunteer staff and may lay the groundwork for future collaborative efforts.

**Survey victims and witnesses.**<sup>7</sup> In order to obtain systematic information, it is helpful to develop a questionnaire that elicits the following types of information:

- type of crime or other victimization (assault, suicide in family, purse snatching, etc.);
- immediate and long-term emotional impacts (fear, anger, guilt) as well as physiological disturbances such as nausea, headaches, and insomnia;
- immediate and lasting physical injury;
- financial losses (medical costs, wages, lock repair), and whether and how these were or will be recovered (insurance, compensation, civil recovery, restitution, borrowing);
- experience with police and courts, and with probation, parole, and corrections departments (how treated, delays);
- need for assistance in overcoming problems created by the crime (counseling, emergency repairs, short-term financial assistance, property return, transportation to court);
- awareness of existing service agencies, and *use of and satisfaction with their services*;
- availability and helpfulness of informal networks of support (family, friends, neighbors); and
- future intentions with regard to reporting crime or taking crime prevention measures.

It is also useful to include questions about the *severity of problems* so that services are targeted to the most pressing

client needs. Some widespread difficulties may be relatively trivial (e.g., finding parking at the courthouse), while others may be infrequent but devastating (e.g., permanent physical injury).

*Demographic data* may also be gathered—such as the victims’ and witnesses’ sex, age, income, marital status, education, and employment status, and whether the victim is a renter or home owner—but care should be exercised to avoid offending groups that may misunderstand the purpose of acquiring such information. Demographic information can be useful in anticipating victim and witness needs for temporary shelter, emergency repairs, financial assistance, and translation services.

A questionnaire may be short and still provide useful information. The number of victims and witnesses who are interviewed can also be adjusted to reflect staff resources available for administering the questionnaire and analyzing the results.

Victims and witnesses can be reached by mail, by telephone, or in person. Each approach may be used by itself or in conjunction with one or both of the other approaches. Program staff planning to telephone or visit victims and witnesses may find it helpful to send letters advising them of the survey in advance so as to avoid the resistance that surprise can arouse.

## Formulating and Redefining the Program’s Mission, Goals, and Objectives

Program administrators can articulate program aspirations at three levels: a mission statement that describes the overarching ambition of the program (e.g., to make victims’ needs an integral focus of the criminal justice system); a set of goals (e.g., to counsel victims—perhaps identifying priority target groups—or to educate criminal justice personnel about victims’ needs); and specific objectives, which are usually more operationally and empirically defined than goals (e.g., to provide counseling to at least 100 violent crime victims or to conduct at least 10 public education seminars over the next 12 months).

Planners sometimes avoid or delay this task because the program purpose seems obvious or superfluous, the task is time-consuming, explicit objectives might inhibit change, or the planners are reluctant to state their true ambitions.

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## Identifying Victims and Witnesses for a Needs Assessment Survey

Victims and witnesses can be identified through police and court records. (Relying only on court records, however, misses individuals whose cases have not been charged.) To the extent possible, it is best if victims and witnesses are selected randomly. In addition, a stratified sampling helps to ensure that victims of each major type of crime—rape, homicide (survivors are interviewed), assault and battery, and major property crimes—and victims representing different ethnic and demographic groups are included. Program staff may wish to consult with a professional survey design expert to identify whom to interview.

Planners for the Minneapolis–St. Paul’s Citizens Council on Victim Services telephoned 451 victims and witnesses to determine needs for services. Individuals were selected on a random basis from victims who had reported crimes to the police during a three-month period before the program opened and again nine months after.

New York City’s Victim Services Agency conducted a mid-course assessment to discover ways to improve its service delivery. Staff interviewed 274 recent victims from a pool of 1,919 police complaint reports. A follow-up interview was conducted with 182 of the victims to assess their needs four months after they had been victimized.<sup>8</sup>

These examples illustrate the importance of conducting needs assessments not only before but also after a program is under way to ensure that victim and witness needs are being adequately met. (See chapter 8 on program monitoring and evaluation.)

However, it is important to establish in writing all three levels of program intent early in the planning process—and to reestablish them as necessary—for several reasons:

- Goals and objectives give other groups, including victims and witnesses, an idea of what to expect from the program and enable them to cooperate with it effectively. A strong mission statement gives program staff an inspiring ideal to guide their activities.
- Well-defined goals and objectives help to encourage staff to focus their efforts on activities that will accomplish these aims. Consensus on program goals and objectives helps avoid inconsistent, conflicting, and superfluous activity.
- A clear statement of mission, goals, and objectives may establish credibility with potential funding sources.
- Evaluating program success is impossible unless a program’s expectations have been identified. (Program objectives are more important than the general mission

statement and goals for evaluating a program’s accomplishments.)

A program’s mission can probably be developed at the earliest stage of program planning. The more specific program goals and objectives should flow naturally from the needs assessment and, once conducted, from the identification of target groups and determination of service location, program sponsor, and funding sources. Goals and objectives set forth what program staff plan to do to meet victims’ and witnesses’ needs. Sponsor wishes and funding levels also influence the selection of goals and objectives. For example, many programs operated by prosecutor offices include witness management as a primary objective in response to prosecutors’ concerns about witness appearance in court.

Experienced program staff recommend several approaches to facilitate establishing and modifying goals and objectives.

**Establish the extent to which staff will devote time to community-at-large goals**, such as increasing awareness of crime prevention techniques or promoting legislation to



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## Sample Victim Assistance Program Mission and Goals: The Marion County (Oregon) District Attorney's Victim Assistance Program

The mission of the Marion County District Attorney's Victim Assistance Program is to involve crime victims and the community in a restorative process that diminishes the devastating impact of crime. The goals of the program are to:

1. Provide direct victim services. We offer support, accompaniment, and advocacy to victims and their loved ones, as well as (to) many witnesses during the criminal justice process;
2. Advocate for victim rights. We represent victims' concerns and needs in the enactment, implementation, and accessibility of victims' rights;
3. Offer volunteer opportunities. We provide a learning environment for community members to participate in, better understand, and assist in the criminal justice process;
4. Provide education and awareness. We disseminate victimology and criminal justice information to the community through written, visual, and oral presentations and trainings; and
5. Promote professional and agency communication. We seek to improve the quality of care and response to crime victims by encouraging and supporting agency and individual communication and cooperation.

Note: Excerpted from *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance* (Arlington, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1994).

improve the plight of victims and witnesses. Some practitioners add these goals only after their program has been in existence several months or even years. For example, after the Pima County (Arizona) Victim/Witness Program was well established and respected in the county, staff began providing stress debriefing services to traumatized witnesses of crime and to individuals in crime-ridden areas (for example, residents of an apartment complex where a rapist had attacked several women). Others have reduced their emphasis in these areas when funding cutbacks required a choice between activities designed to promote long-term benefits and those providing direct service delivery. Programs usually can achieve community-at-large goals and objectives only by collaborating with other service providers and community organizations.

**Decide how limited or comprehensive the program will be.** Programs will vary in scope depending on:

1. whether staff provide direct services not only to clients but also to the criminal justice or social service system;

2. whether staff seek to achieve community-at-large goals and objectives or only those related to direct client assistance;
3. whether staff serve both victims and witnesses;
4. resources and funding mandates; and
5. related services provided by others in the community.

In general, it is best to start small and begin with modest goals. The Victims Advocate Foundation, for example, was established to serve five counties in rural Indiana with only one full-time staff person. As a result, that person, the program director, concentrates his efforts on victims of violent crime, especially in emergency situations—such as a battered wife who needs immediate assistance.<sup>9</sup>

**Be flexible.** Goals and objectives should be regarded as provisional and subject to modification as experience, subsequent needs assessments, and evaluations indicate the need to change course. The Pima County Victim/Witness

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Program included among its original goals “increasing the willingness of victims and witnesses to cooperate with police and prosecutors after a crime has been reported.” Program staff abandoned this goal when program priorities changed and early attempts at documenting “willingness” proved futile.<sup>10</sup>

**Be specific.** Remember that the more operationally defined a program’s objectives are, the more useful they will be as measures of achievement, statements of purpose, and guidelines for staff. Vague statements like “to promote improved relationships between the police, the courts, youth and adult services, and the general public” contrast sharply with an objective like “to notify 25,000 victims and police officers of the outcome of their cases and to thank them for their assistance.”

## Identifying and Revising Target Populations

Planners need to prioritize client types, either before the program begins operations or not long thereafter, because limited resources will probably make it impossible for staff to assist all the victims and witnesses who need help. An explicit policy, identifying target groups that program staff believe merit assured attention, will ensure that these individuals do not “slip through the cracks.”

Identifying specific target populations will also ensure that program staff do not raise false expectations among criminal justice officials and community groups regarding the victims it will serve and the services it will provide. (Program staff rarely refuse to help a victim who telephones, walks in the door, or has been referred by police, prosecutors, or other agencies. The choices program staff face are whether to *initiate* contact and *how much time* to spend with certain categories of victims.)

### *General Guidelines for Selection*

Certainly, the *needs assessment* can help determine the program’s target audiences. An assessment can reveal which types of crime victims are most prevalent and have the most pressing needs. It also can identify gaps in current service delivery to certain groups, such as children or minorities.

The *local political context* can influence the selection of target groups in a number of ways. Program managers need to be sensitive to local political processes and stakeholders and, where necessary or appropriate, select client types that

meet the concerns of special interest groups in the community.

*Funding constraints* may also influence target populations and are often part of the local political context. The California Penal Code requires that State-funded programs serve victims and witnesses of all types of crime, with particular emphasis on elderly crime victims. The Federal Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) makes funds available to States for victim assistance with the mandate that programs serving certain target groups, including victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse, receive priority consideration. Amendments to VOCA in 1988 require States to also give special consideration to previously underserved victims of violent crime, including families and friends of homicide victims, victims of drunk driving accidents and physical assault, and Native American victims. The Victim Assistance in Indian Country Discretionary Grant Program was established by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) in 1988 with the express purpose of funding programs that would serve Native Americans on reservations.<sup>11</sup>

The Victims Assistance Program in Portland, Oregon, obtained two VOCA grants to address the needs of victims of gang and hate crimes and victims of juvenile offenders. The Chicago Housing Authority Victim Assistance Program was funded by the city as one of many efforts to address the issues of drugs and drug-related crime in public housing. The program targets only victims who are residents in authority housing.

Normally, planners and staff must make *subjective value judgments* regarding their priorities for serving victims and witnesses. If staff limitations require a choice between devoting major resources to victims of child molestation or to battered spouses, and neither the needs assessment nor the concerns of the community point to a clear-cut preference between the groups, then program planners and staff must rely on their own estimation of need and on the availability of other appropriate resources in the community to decide which group merits priority treatment. The suggestions of an advisory board can also be extremely useful.

### *Specific Guidelines for Selection*

Planners and staff can also consider type of offense, client characteristics, and case status when determining which target populations to serve. In terms of *offense categories*, most programs give priority to victims of violent crimes, because of the physical impact on the victim and the emotional distress that typically results. Homicide, rape, aggra-

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vated assault, domestic violence, and child sexual assault are offense categories that program staff typically seek to address.

Many program staff have found that they are being asked to handle increasing numbers of domestic violence cases, in part because of increased public awareness of the problem and to laws mandating the arrest of batterers. The Victim Service Council in St. Louis County, for example, experienced a dramatic rise in the number of victims who seek assistance in obtaining orders of protection. Many victim assistance programs on Native American reservations have caseloads filled primarily with victims of domestic violence. Tender Hearts, Inc., a victim assistance program on the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota, operates primarily as a shelter for battered women and children. Domestic violence victims make up the majority of clients served by the Kickapoo Victims of Crime Assistance Program, which serves Native Americans and other individuals throughout Kansas.

Property crimes are generally not high-priority categories for victim assistance programs. However, staff of Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul believe that the impact of property crimes is underestimated, particularly for victims who live alone. As a result, program staff regularly provide services to victims of burglary as well as to victims of violent crime. For example, program staff and volunteers help operate an independent victim-offender reconciliation project that mediates restitution agreements between burglars and their victims. Until the program's mobile unit became too costly, staff used to visit the homes of elderly burglary victims to temporarily board up broken windows or secure damaged doors. Staff now use their own vehicles, when possible, to provide these services.

Victims of workplace violence have received increasing attention from some victim assistance programs and other agencies that provide counseling and other services. Bank robbery in particular has been the focus of several programs' services, owing in part to the increasingly violent nature of this crime. The victim/witness coordinator for the U.S. attorney's office in the Eastern District of Wisconsin formed a support group for bank tellers who had been victims of or witnesses to a robbery. Post Trauma Resources, a private counseling group in South Carolina, trains bank managers on how to provide support for tellers in the event of bank robbery; after a robbery, the group provides debriefing, counseling, and other support services for victimized tellers. Local law enforcement officers and victim assistance program staff refer victim tellers to this group of therapists. The

victim/witness specialist of the U.S. attorney's office in the district of Oregon has developed a bank robbery victims response network that includes both volunteer advocates who contact and assist victims and referral sources that provide victims with counseling and other help. The Counseling Team, a group of mental health professionals in San Bernardino, California, has contracts with 15 area banks and credit unions to provide critical incident debriefing services. In 1995, when a bank teller was shot, the team conducted debriefing sessions with other employees and counseled the victim's mother and boyfriend. Also in California, victim advocates located in U.S. attorney's offices have provided robbery response training for other victim service providers throughout the State.

Another criterion for selecting client groups is *client characteristics*, independent of the crime involved. Certain types of victims—such as the elderly, children, minorities, and the handicapped—may experience the effects of victimization more severely than other groups, or may not be receiving adequate assistance from human service providers in the community. For example, many victim advocates place a priority on helping elderly victims, recognizing that the emotional and financial impact of even minor crimes is often greater for this group than for younger victims.<sup>12</sup> Northwest Victim Services in Philadelphia frequently assists not only elderly crime victims (including victims of elder abuse) but also elderly individuals who need help obtaining social services. Suffolk County (Massachusetts) Victim/Witness Services staff coordinate interviews of and services to child abuse victims so that the children do not have to go from the police department to the prosecutor's office to the mental health clinic to child protective services for repeated questioning.

Another potential client group is witnesses. Many programs provide some witness-related services, both to clients who are victims and to witnesses who are not themselves crime victims but who are referred by prosecutors for special assistance. Program staff must also decide whether they will target witnesses in general as a priority. Many programs (typically those sponsored by district attorneys) provide services to all civilian witnesses, whether or not they are victims.

Some programs provide direct assistance to police officers. Typically, they place police witnesses on standby notice so that the officers can avoid waiting long periods in court or showing up only to have a case continued or dismissed. This service saves the community overtime pay associated with these delays.

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## Prioritizing Targeted Victim Groups

### *Reasons to Prioritize Victim Groups*

- Focuses limited resources
- Identifies victims with whom to initiate contact
- Ensures that the neediest victims and witnesses are served
- Ensures that false expectations for the program are not raised

### *Considerations for Prioritizing Victim Groups*

#### **General Considerations:**

- Results of needs assessment
- Local political context
- Funding constraints
- Subjective value judgments

#### **Specific Criteria:**

- Type of offense (violent crimes, homicide, rape, aggravated assault, bank robbery, domestic violence, child molestation, threats/harassment, property crime)
- Client characteristics (age, ethnic group, disabled witnesses, residents of crime-ridden communities)
- Case status (crime unreported, reported to police, filed for prosecution, prosecuted, sentenced)

Finally, programs may choose target groups on the basis of *case status*. That is, program staff may provide assistance to all victims regardless of whether they report the crime; only to victims who report the crime; only to victims who report the crime and whose case is charged; or only to victims whose case is prosecuted (not dismissed). The Alameda County (California) program provides assistance to victims of violent crime regardless of whether their case goes to court. All victims of property crime receive letters notifying them of the availability of the program's services; victims who then request help or are referred to the program by criminal justice officials receive assistance.

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*Studies have suggested that a surprising number of witnesses are subjected to intimidation and need help dealing with fear of reprisal.<sup>13</sup> Advocates with the Clark County Victim Assistance Program in Las Vegas, which operates out of the District Attorney's Office, help threatened witnesses find alternative housing arrangements. Witnesses also frequently experience stress from having witnessed a crime and need reassurance about the naturalness of their reactions and an opportunity to share them.*

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A decision to limit services to victims who report the crime may reflect lack of access to nonreporting victims or a reluctance to devote staff time to individuals who have been victimized but who do not attempt to bring the offender to justice. Some programs accept certain groups of victims regardless of whether they report the crime—for example, rape victims—but refuse to serve victims of other violent crimes who fail to press charges.

To some extent, a program's ability to select clients on the basis of case status is determined by its location or sponsor. Citizens Council Victim Services, one unit in a large, independent organization in Minneapolis–St. Paul that addresses criminal justice issues, initially reached victims regardless of whether they had reported a crime by maintaining four storefront offices where victims could walk in for assistance. Staff found, however, that most crime victims contacted the program through its crisis telephone line rather than by going to an office. Program staff now concentrate their operations in one office but continue to serve victims who have not reported the crime, frequently by going to the victim's home to provide home repair, counseling, or other services.

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## Victims of Trauma: A Target Population for Victim Assistance Programs?

Most victim assistance program staff struggle to provide basic services to violent crime victims. As some programs have gained experience, credibility, and additional financial and staffing resources, however, staff have begun to conduct outreach to individuals who are not themselves victims of crime.

When a high school student in Arizona held a class hostage, Pima County Victim/ Witness Program staff were called in to work with students as they were released from the class. The principal of the school later asked program staff to work individually with other students in the school who were traumatized by the incident. The program now has a critical incident stress debriefing team, consisting mainly of trained volunteers, that targets its services to individuals involved in crisis situations. For instance, the team conducted nine debriefings for college students and faculty after a professor was killed and debriefed residents of apartment complexes where a serial rapist had attacked several women. The program has recently expanded its target population even further by using youth peer advocates to work specifically with youth who have been involved in crises or who live in crime-ridden neighborhoods.

What these “nontraditional” clients usually have in common is the experience of trauma or fear as a result of crimes or disasters. As discussed in chapter 1, this new type of target population may be categorized into three general groups:

*Derivative victims.* These include individuals—themselves not victims of crime—who have been traumatized by a crime, such as family and friends of homicide victims, survivors of attempted suicide, traumatized witnesses to crime who need more than court-related services, residents of apartments in which a burglary or violent crime has taken place, abandoned children, and employees of banks and other workplaces where a robbery or other crime has occurred.

*Victims of environmental and other disasters.*<sup>14</sup> These victims include disaster relief workers, survivors of plane crashes, and individuals in an area destroyed by a hurricane, tornado, or other disaster.

*Residents of high-crime areas.* These include students in schools with high rates of violent crime and residents of neighborhoods that are intimidated or traumatized by gang violence, graffiti, drug use, and similar conditions.

Programs that serve these groups usually provide counseling services, crime awareness and prevention presentations, critical incident stress debriefings, and referrals to other sources of help. Not all programs have the resources to provide more than referrals to victims of trauma, and staff of many programs may not even be able to provide consistent referrals. Even programs that do target nontraditional victims usually make direct victims of violent crime their priority.

Assisting victims who may be at least partially culpable has proven troublesome for some programs. Staff members sometimes avoid these clients because helping them exceeds the program’s mandate to assist “victims” or conflicts with the goals of the sponsoring agency. Participants in barroom assaults, for example, are sometimes assigned to this nebulous category. Some programs are increasingly being asked to assist victims who have themselves been involved in

crime, particularly drug dealers who become victims. The Victim/Witness Assistance Program in Atlanta used to refuse services to any victims who were drug-involved. With the increase in such cases, however, program staff now serve them and their families. In general with these cases, it is important that staff members talk personally with victims, since police officers’ and prosecutors’ judgments of which victims share responsibility for victimization may be errone-

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ous or irrelevant in deciding whom to help. The director of the Alameda County program pointed out that it is important that program staff treat all victims and their families in a professional manner, even if it is only to refer them elsewhere for help.

### *Periodic Reexamination of Target Groups*

To ensure that victims and witnesses continue to receive appropriate attention, program staff may want to reexamine their target groups periodically. An infusion—or withdrawal—of funds may also create a need to determine whether new target groups can be added to, or old ones dropped from, a program's existing clientele. For example, some programs that had previously assisted only battered spouses have, with funding from the Federal Victims of Crime Act of 1984, been able to add staff who can serve other victims. Victim Service Council in St. Louis County staff began targeting victims of juvenile crime after noting a rise in such cases and after the state passed a statute requiring the provision of victim services in juvenile court. Program staff can reassess client categories formally, by means of an ongoing needs assessment, or informally, by being sensitive to the needs expressed in the local press, in the complaints of current clients, and in talks with criminal justice and social service system personnel.

## **Selecting and Reevaluating the Services Mix**

One approach to determining which services to provide is to review the services provided by victim assistance programs across the country, and victims' needs identified in research studies. A more beneficial approach is to implement a step-by-step service selection procedure that reflects conditions in the local community.

### *Required Services*

Some program sponsors, particularly government agencies, require or recommend that programs provide certain services. The California Penal Code, for example, requires that State-funded victim assistance programs carry out a number of activities, including home visits, translation services for non-English-speaking victims and witnesses and the hearing-impaired, coordination of volunteer participation, and services for elderly crime victims. In addition, the code requires the provision of primary services—such as crisis intervention, direct counseling, assistance with claims, court

escorts, and public presentations—and recommends the provision of several optional services, such as child care, intervention with the client's creditors, crime prevention services, and witness protection. The optional services, however, may be offered only if the program already adequately provides all of the primary services.

### *Overview of Victim Assistance Services*

Chapter 1 presented a list of services that victim assistance programs may provide. Figure 2–1 shows how many of the 23 to 25 programs contacted in the 1986 and 1994 surveys provide each service. As the figure indicates, most of the programs provide many of the same services.

A few interesting changes occurred in service delivery between the two surveys. The number of programs providing food and shelter assistance increased significantly (from one-third to nearly two-thirds). However, a dramatically smaller number of programs reported that they are providing mediation services, legal and paralegal counsel, witness fee assistance, and child care. Other research indicates that corrections-based services, such as notification of parole hearings and victim-offender reconciliation, are becoming more prevalent.<sup>15</sup>

A survey of nearly 200 programs conducted in 1985 found that the most frequently reported services were explaining the court process, making referrals, providing a court escort for the victim, and helping the victim with victim compensation applications. Of the services listed in the questionnaire, those provided least often were child care while the parent testified, emergency financial assistance, and repairing or replacing broken door locks. The study includes descriptions of programs that offer some of these services.<sup>16</sup> A Federal survey of 319 programs conducted in 1990 found that the majority of victims served received information on their rights, information on the criminal justice system, notification of court dates, assistance with applications for state victim compensation, and referrals to social service agencies.<sup>17</sup> These studies may have arrived at different results because of inconsistency in the research methodology, lack of random sampling, or other research limitations.

Program staff often find that services that are time-consuming on a per-client basis (such as witness escort and transportation) are not necessarily those on which they actually spend the largest proportion of their time. For example, crisis intervention or witness notification may require only a few minutes, but these services may be furnished so often that cumulatively more staff time is spent on them than on any

**Figure 2-1**  
**Percentage of Programs Providing**  
**Specific Victim Services in 1986 and 1994**

<i>Services</i>	<i>1986</i>	<i>1994</i>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	(n=25)	(n=23)
1. Medical care		
<b>2. Shelter or food</b>	8	0
3. Security repair	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>
4. Financial assistance	40	35
5. On-scene comfort	44	52
	52	52
<b>Counseling</b>		
6. 24-hour hotline	28	22
<b>7. Crisis intervention</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>96</b>
8. Follow-up counseling	80	91
<b>9. Mediation</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Advocacy and Support Services</b>		
10. Personal advocacy	92	100
11. Employer intervention	96	87
12. Landlord intervention	88	83
13. Property return	96	87
14. Intimidation protection	76	74
<b>15. Legal/paralegal counsel</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>9</b>
16. Referral	100	100
<b>Claims Assistance</b>		
17. Insurance claims aid	48	35
18. Restitution assistance	88	87
19. Compensation assistance	96	96
<b>20. Witness fee assistance</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Court-Related Services</b>		
21. Witness reception	76	65
22. Court orientation	92	83
23. Notification	84	78
24. Witness alert	68	57
25. Transportation	84	78
<b>26. Child care</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>30</b>
27. Escort to court	100	96
28. Victim impact reports	72	74
<b>Systemwide Services</b>		
29. Public education	92	100
30. Legislative advocacy	84	78
31. Training	92	96

*Note:* Noteworthy changes between the two surveys are bold/italic.

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other single service. It is therefore instructive to know not only what the most commonly provided services are but also how much staff time is devoted to furnishing them.

Another perspective from which to examine service selection is how important the services are in meeting clients' needs. Some surveys of victim assistance program staff and of victims themselves have indicated that crisis intervention, follow-up counseling, and protection from intimidation are among the more commonly reported needs.<sup>18</sup> At least two studies, however, have found that among victims' most urgent needs are improved security and financial assistance. (See the box, "Victims' Needs May Not Be What You Expect.")<sup>19</sup>

Research findings, along with anecdotal information obtained from program directors across the country, indicate that most programs provide a core of services that includes counseling, crisis intervention, referrals, and personal advocacy in the criminal justice system. Beyond this core, program staff must decide for themselves which services are most necessary in their jurisdiction. Before expanding into services that seem innovative (such as providing stress debriefings to individuals traumatized by a crime in their school or workplace), victim service experts recommend that programs ensure that they are providing high-quality basic services to actual victims of violent crime.<sup>20</sup>

### *Procedures for Selecting and Modifying the Service Mix*

How program planners and staff identify which services to furnish varies considerably. When Alameda County (California) program managers found from a needs assessment that expedited property return procedures and case disposition notification were the most urgently expressed victim needs, staff began by concentrating on meeting these two needs. Over time, the program added other services as it added personnel, selecting services based on informal staff perceptions of recurring needs among the victims and witnesses they were already assisting.

By contrast, Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul was mandated by the State to provide specific services as part of its funding conditions. These services included 24-hour on-scene crisis intervention, transportation, financial assistance (primarily through advocacy to public agencies and other sources of emergency financial assistance), public education, and system advocacy. Some newly established programs in correctional facilities are in direct response to legislative statutes mandating the provi-

sion of certain services to victims, such as notification of parole hearings.

What follows is a straightforward process for determining which services a new program should provide. This procedure, while retaining the flexibility to add and discard services as needed, introduces a structure to the selection process.

**Step One: List the victim and witness problems identified in the needs assessment.** As emphasized several times in this chapter, program planners and staff need to determine which problems are experienced by victims and witnesses in their community. Planners and staff may wish to distinguish between problems that *many* victims and witnesses experience (incidence) and problems that victims and witnesses experience as *serious* (intensity).

**Step Two: Identify which services will address each problem.** In some cases, only one service is appropriate for a given problem (for example, property return for dealing with victims' possessions being kept as evidence). In other cases, several services can help resolve a problem (for example, fear of the criminal justice system can be reduced by court orientation, witness reception, escort services, and public education).

**Step Three: Identify services already being provided effectively in the community.** These services can be excluded as a responsibility of the victim assistance program. In addition, program planners and staff need to consider the extent to which informal support networks, such as family members, friends, and neighbors, are capable of providing some of the services that victim assistance program staff would otherwise have to furnish. Reliance on these individuals, however, should be tempered by evidence that helpers from an informal network may themselves experience considerable stress and financial burdens trying to meet the needs of victims.<sup>21</sup>

**Step Four: Identify which services will most significantly, or most visibly, meet the needs of the criminal justice system as well as the needs of victims and witnesses.** Providing courtroom assistance, for example, may help prosecutors to present their cases more effectively; on-scene crisis intervention may enable officers to spend more time investigating the crime.

**Step Five: Identify which services will meet the needs of any target groups singled out for priority assistance.** Providing transportation services assists not only victims and witnesses who do not have the means to get to court but



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## National Recommendation of Ranges of Services

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) developed a set of general performance guidelines for the range of services that a program can provide, ranging from “basic” to “excellent” services.<sup>22</sup> For example, guidelines for crisis intervention services include the following:

- Basic: Crisis intervention counseling; emergency referrals or direct assistance for medical care, shelter, and food; emergency referrals or direct assistance for substance abuse treatment; accessible services for the hearing impaired, seeing impaired, other people with disabilities, and populations whose first language is not English.
- Good: All of the above, enhanced by emergency referrals or direct assistance for at least three of the following: clothing, money, child care, property repair, transportation, death notification, body identification, crime scene clean-up, protection through temporary restraining orders, and notification of loved ones.
- Very Good: The above plus at least three more of the above list.
- Excellent: All of the above, plus special outreach to underserved victim populations and attention to effective cross-cultural service delivery.

Program staff’s abilities to provide “basic” through “excellent” services will depend to a large extent on available resources. Nevertheless, these guidelines can help to prioritize basic services over those that would be helpful but are not essential.

also battered women who need transportation to stay with a friend or enter a shelter. Interpretation services will assist minority victims who do not speak English.

**Step Six: Record the cost or amount of time required to provide each service on a per client basis.** Categorize services as expensive, moderately expensive, or inexpensive. Keep in mind that new staff will eventually be able to perform many services much more productively as they gain experience. (Chapter 3 provides additional indications of the relative cost of services.) Because a single need can often be met by more than one service, program planners and staff have some flexibility in substituting less expensive services for higher priced ones if they are constrained by limited resources.

Once they have displayed this information clearly in chart form, program planners and staff can take the seventh and final step in selecting services.

**Step Seven: Balance all of the above, sometimes conflicting, considerations,** keeping in mind the amount of funding and other resources the program expects to have available.<sup>24</sup>

There is no formula for weighing all these considerations and developing a “correct” mix of services. Subjectivity and a certain amount of guesswork are inevitable. The goal is to inject as much rationality as possible into the process of selecting services so that the program is able to offer the maximum benefit to the greatest number of victims and witnesses and still remain viable.

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*Managers of broad-scale programs permit staff specialization and economies of scale, and can broaden political and community support by benefiting more constituencies. However, starting small avoids the problem of “biting off more than you can chew” and, hence, doing many things poorly instead of at least a few things well. Grandiose initial objectives can raise unrealistic expectations, leading to disappointment among funding sources, sponsors, the public at large, and the program staff.*

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Three final considerations may be useful while identifying which services to furnish. First, *start relatively small and, if*

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*appropriate, expand later.* In general, most experts advise that, if a program can provide only limited assistance to victims, it should reduce the range of services it undertakes while still assisting as many types of victims and witnesses as possible.<sup>25</sup> Such an arrangement is feasible because victims and witnesses tend to have common needs, regardless of their background and personality or the nature of the case.

Another additional guideline in selecting or modifying the service mix is to *be flexible and open to change* based on a number of contingencies:

- Some services may require more time than is warranted relative to the benefits they provide.
- Clients may reveal a need which program planners did not anticipate in the planning stages.
- Services provided to enlist the support of police or prosecutors may no longer be required once cooperation has been secured.
- The political climate or research findings may signal the need for an increase in certain types of services, such as on-the-scene crisis counseling for rape victims.
- Additional volunteers may present an opportunity to expand services.
- Program changes among other service providers, or the creation or demise of other social service organizations, may render an existing program service redundant—or an absent one necessary.
- Increased staff productivity may create time in which to provide additional services.
- It may be possible to expand services if funding increases, or it may be necessary to curtail services if funding is cut back.

A final consideration in selecting or modifying services is the administrative ease with which they can be furnished. *Services that are operationally difficult to administer may be less attractive for planners and staff than those that can be delivered easily.*

## Stimulating and Maintaining Public Awareness and Support

Both new and established programs share the common, constant need to stimulate and maintain awareness and support of victim needs and services among the criminal justice system, other service providers, and the community at large. Publicity and public education can accomplish three vital goals:

1. Generate clients;
2. Create support for the program itself; and
3. Increase public knowledge about specific crimes (such as rape, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse), the experience of victimization, the operations of the criminal justice system, and crime prevention techniques.

Generating clients and support for the program are considered publicity efforts, as opposed to increasing public knowledge, which relies on public education. A variety of publicity avenues are open to victim assistance programs:

- securing news coverage,
- making television appearances and radio broadcasts,
- posting advertisements,
- making presentations to community groups,
- attending community meetings, and
- distributing program literature.

Publicity can enhance program visibility and acceptability, as well as generate program support in the form of financial contributions or in-kind donations. Many programs also use publicity to recruit volunteers. As a program becomes more established and develops regular referral sources, staff may find further publicity useful but not as necessary.

The director of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program in Atlanta has tried to encourage local media to publicize topics like stalking and domestic violence. When a local radio station whose primary listeners are young African-Americans requested an interview, the director convinced the

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## Victims' Needs May Not Be What You Expect: One Study's Result

A 1987 study revealed a significant mismatch between the reported needs of victims interviewed in four cities and the services provided by victim assistance programs in those cities.<sup>23</sup> The researchers asked nearly 500 victims of burglary, robbery, and assault about 17 categories of assistance. Some of the victims had used program services while others had not.

Over half of the interviewed victims said they had none or only one of the suggested needs. Among those who expressed at least one need, the following needs were reported most often:

- someone to talk to about feelings that were troubling you (28%);
- information about how to avoid becoming a victim again (18%);
- protecting yourself from offenders (14%);
- repairing a broken door or lock (13%); and
- installing better locks or improving security (13%).

Although most of the programs focused on counseling services, victims reported that family and friends usually fulfilled the need to talk about troubling feelings. The other four needs remained largely unmet by *any* sources of assistance. In addition, over two-thirds of the victims reported that they received no assistance with insurance claims, while about one-third said that their need for legal advice went unmet. Overall, the top two-thirds of services that the four victim assistance programs provided accounted for less than one-third of the needs reported by victims.

Another significant finding was that one-fourth of victims who were aware of the victim assistance program in their city did not seek help because they did not have the time or means to travel to the program's office. The study also found that needs varied among types of victims. For instance, female victims were more likely to want improved security, while single victims were more likely to report needing financial assistance.

station to produce an entire day of programming on location at her office in the courthouse. Starting at 6:00 a.m., the station conducted interviews with the sheriff, judges, victims, and others on the topic of victims and violence. In an attempt to reach the community more effectively and to highlight the benefits of her program to police and politicians, the director has established a publicity committee which plans to develop a speaker's bureau, public service announcements, and short articles for local publications (including "newsletters" for subway riders).

Some programs have found that publicity can result in a barrage of calls from people needing assistance that is not

necessarily appropriate for a victim assistance program to provide. As a result, directors caution program staff to be realistic and accurate in their publicity efforts and not to offer more than the program can provide. The director of the Atlanta program adopted the position, however, that it is better to have more calls than no calls.

To conduct public education, program staff often give lectures at universities, churches, senior citizen centers, and local community clubs. Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul organized "Blockwatch," a public education campaign on crime prevention for neighborhoods and apartment complexes. Meetings, led jointly by a staff

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member from the program and a police officer from the local precinct, were attended by over 18,000 people in a three-year period. The program also showed a short film for senior citizens on how to avoid getting mugged. In conjunction with public education lectures, many programs use written materials, such as brochures and pamphlets. It is important that program literature be available in other languages if a large part of the community does not speak English. Encouraging the spread of information about the program through word of mouth can also be useful.

Victim assistance programs can consider using volunteers to give presentations or working with other human services providers and members of the criminal justice system to engage in joint publicity or public education activities. The program director of the Suffolk County (Massachusetts) Victim/Witness Services program conducts local community forums with criminal justice officials and local service providers to increase community awareness of victim needs and support for program services. She also tries to publicize Victim Rights Week and program activities among small local newspapers, which are more receptive to events in their communities than are the large Boston newspapers. The Pima County, Arizona, program sponsored a victim's rights poster and essay contest which drew almost 400 entries from local school children. The program also developed three victim services public service announcements, featuring volunteer staff, that aired on local television channels.

The next chapter addresses three other major aspects of program planning: determining service sponsorship and location; estimating funding needs; and estimating staffing needs and recruiting and changing staff. As with the planning tasks discussed in this chapter, programs need to address these issues not only during the planning process but throughout the life of the program.

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# Chapter 3

## Structural Alternatives

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### Key Points

- Sponsorship is one of the most critical considerations for a victim assistance program, because it influences the program's mission, funding, staffing, and other key characteristics.
- While most victim assistance programs have traditionally been affiliated with prosecutors' offices, sponsorship by law enforcement agencies appears to be gaining in popularity. This may be because:
  - Programs are increasingly focused more on meeting a wide array of traumatized victims' needs rather than just providing court assistance;
  - Affiliation with law enforcement agencies helps advocates reach victims soon after the crime has occurred; and
  - The emergence of community policing as a guiding philosophy for many police departments has led police to look for ways to better attend to victims' needs and to cooperate with victim service providers.
- An increasing number of departments of corrections, probation, and parole are sponsoring victim assistance programs. In addition, programs that provide services exclusively to victims of juvenile crime have emerged.
- It is important to select a host that finds it politically advantageous to sponsor a victim assistance program, is willing to dedicate resources, and whose interest will last.
- It is imperative that program staff budget expenses and funding needs realistically, not only for the start-up or upcoming year but for several years into the future.
- Programs may find it easier to obtain funding if they have clear objectives and plans that are based on a needs assessment in their community.
- Victim assistance programs are increasingly relying on volunteers to provide low-cost services. However, program directors should carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of using volunteers. If volunteers are recruited, it is important that they be screened, trained, and supervised.
- Identifying and recruiting staff, typically the final planning step, is perhaps the single most important task that planners face. Many programs find it helpful to have staff who are of the same ethnic background or come from the same community as most of their clients. However, some program directors maintain that it is even more important that staff first and foremost be sensitive and dedicated individuals.

Three issues dominate any discussion of how a victim assistance program is structured and operates:

1. who sponsors it and where it is physically located,
2. who funds it and at what level of funding, and
3. who works in it.

Of course, the level and types of services the program will offer is another important consideration with regard to program operations. The mix and delivery of services are discussed in chapter 2 and chapter 6.

The above three issues, discussed in this chapter, are intertwined: sponsorship can influence the choice of funding

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sources and the nature of the staff; funding levels determine the number and experience of the staff; and the staff levels and expertise needed can in turn affect the choice of sponsor and the amount of funding to pursue. Thus, although the issues of sponsorship, funding, and staffing are treated separately and sequentially below, in practice they need to be considered concurrently and interactively.

Victim assistance programs are usually sponsored by a police department, a prosecutor's office, or a community-based agency. Surveys conducted in 1981 and 1985 found that a majority of programs—55 and 58 percent, respectively,—were based in city or county attorneys' offices.<sup>1</sup> The 1990 Federal National Assessment Program survey found that 86 percent of prosecutors' offices surveyed had victim assistance programs, up from 77 percent in 1986.<sup>2</sup> This prosecutorial locus likely occurred because the victim assistance movement initially emerged as an effort to help victims navigate the intimidating and confusing criminal justice system process, and to help prosecutors, police, and others in the system function more efficiently. Furthermore, victims usually have brief contact with the police but extended contact with the prosecutor's office.

In recent years, the provision of court assistance has come to be only one of many features of victim assistance programs, with an increasing number of programs providing crisis intervention and counseling to victims with emotional and psychological needs. In fact, the "restoring" of victims to emotional and psychological well-being was declared one of the four major goals of the criminal justice system in a recent Federal report on the development of a new paradigm for the system.<sup>3</sup> According to some victim assistance experts, programs based in law enforcement agencies, where staff have immediate access to traumatized victims and witnesses, have become increasingly popular.<sup>4</sup> This trend has been promoted to a large extent by State statutes and constitutional amendments that require law enforcement agencies to ensure basic victim rights and by the emergence of community policing.

The number of departments of corrections, probation, and parole that provide victim services has increased dramatically. Whereas relatively few programs were based in these departments during the early years of the victim assistance movement, by 1991, 31 adult corrections agencies, 7 juvenile corrections agencies, and 29 parole agencies were providing notification services to victims regarding offenders' status.<sup>5</sup> Departments of corrections, probation, and parole are required by statutes and constitutional amendments in some States to provide certain victim services, such as providing notification of the offender's status and arranging

payment of restitution. In 1988, the American Correctional Association Task Force on Victims of Crime issued 15 recommendations regarding victim services that prisons should provide.<sup>6</sup>

## Deciding on Program Affiliation

Sponsorship determines who will have administrative authority over a program and its level of funding, both of which affect a victim assistance program's ability to provide services successfully. Strong, consistent private and public support from a parent agency is also necessary for program survival. As a result, it is important to select a host that not only finds it politically advantageous to sponsor a victim assistance program but whose interest will last. Of course, officials in various criminal justice agencies must decide whether their agency is the best physical location for a victim assistance program.

In many instances, the choice of sponsor is made before planning begins. If a district attorney, police chief, correctional official, or social service agency administrator initiates the planning process, he or she usually expects to sponsor the program. Some agencies are mandated by law to provide victim services. The U.S. Attorney General's Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance, for example, makes U.S. Attorneys' Offices responsible for providing services to victims of and witnesses to Federal crimes. A number of different types of agencies and organizations, however, have proven receptive to operating victim assistance programs.

If the sponsor is not predefined, selection of a host is usually influenced by the needs assessment and decisions about program objectives, target audiences, and range of services. Considerations that may play a role in selecting a sponsor include:

- the sponsor's ability to provide or secure funding;
- the sponsor's ability to provide access to victims and witnesses when program planners wish to contact them (for example, before arrest or after charging);
- the planners' desires to effect changes in the criminal justice system in order to improve the treatment of victims and witnesses;
- the planners' wishes to be able to act as an advocate for victims or witnesses;

- the planners' desired target group focus (victims, witnesses, or both); and
- the opportunity the sponsor provides for housing the program in a desirable location.

The Crime Victims' Center in Chester County, Pennsylvania, had the opportunity to be affiliated with the district attorney's office or the judiciary. However, program planners did not want to be limited to working only with victims who reported a crime and therefore chose to remain an independent, nonprofit organization. On the other hand, the Victim Service Council in St. Louis County, Missouri, after operating as a private non-profit organization for 18 years, began integrating with the prosecuting attorney's office in response to a Missouri statute requiring prosecutors' offices to offer victim services. (The Victim Service Council had already been receiving county funding and was housed in the county courthouse.)

The advantages and drawbacks to different sponsorship are discussed below and summarized in Figure 3-1.

- *Prosecutor-affiliated programs* generally seek to meet the needs of prosecutors for timely witness appearances and helpful testimony. Many prosecutor-based programs also focus substantial resources on the needs of victims. The principal benefits of affiliation with a prosecutor's office are quick and simple access to clients, and case information, and the credibility that city or district attorney sponsorship confers on program staff in dealing with victims, witnesses, police, and social service agency personnel. The most serious drawbacks can be a tendency to focus on victims in terms of their capacity to testify, rather than as individuals in need, and the restriction of services to victims whose cases are brought to trial. Furthermore, victim services providers who work out of a prosecutor's office may feel under pressure to accept the prosecutor's decision to prosecute or drop a case even if the decision seems inconsistent with the victim's needs.
- *Law enforcement-based programs* typically try to help police officers and deputy sheriffs by providing counseling to family disputants, sexual assault victims, and other troubled people (such as traffic accident victims, runaways, and mentally disturbed individuals) who law enforcement officers believe should not be their responsibility or whom they are uncomfortable assisting. Law enforcement-based programs provide early intervention to clients because police may be more likely to call

program staff to the scene and because they have easy access to arrest reports. This access enables program staff to provide immediate crisis intervention services to victims and traumatized witnesses alike.

With the emergence of community policing in many law enforcement agencies, victim assistance program planners may find police and sheriff's departments a more useful and appealing sponsor. The community policing approach places a stronger emphasis on victims' needs than do traditional policing methods. Some departments with community policing have designated officers as victim assistance officers. For example, the Philadelphia Police Department has assigned to each district a victim assistance officer, who works closely with the community's victim assistance program. Police and sheriff's departments that have implemented community policing may be useful sponsors because their increased focus on problem-solving involves working closely with other community agencies and organizations.

Like prosecutor-based programs, however, programs hosted by law enforcement agencies may have conflicts with grassroots organizations, which sometimes distrust police. Affiliation with a police agency may also discourage program staff from focusing on victims' needs after the investigation is over.

- *Probation- and corrections-based programs* often focus heavily on restitution issues, since staff deal directly with convicted defendants. Increasingly, programs may be located in corrections, probation, or parole departments to help these departments comply with legislative mandates to notify victims of offender status, including parole hearings, and to facilitate the provision of victim impact statements. The correctional system may also be an important place in which to designate a program or staff member to identify and provide assistance to inmates who become victims of sexual abuse.<sup>7</sup>

Because corrections-based programs sometimes gain access to victims at a very late stage of the criminal justice process, they may be unable to provide other victim-related services in a timely manner. However, some corrections- and probation-based programs have incorporated crisis intervention into their services. Staff of programs affiliated with departments of correction may also experience conflict between their concern for victims and their sponsor's offender orientation.



**Figure 3–1  
Alternatives in Program Sponsorship: Advantages and Disadvantages**

<i>ADVANTAGES</i>	<i>DISADVANTAGES</i>
<p><b>Prosecutor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides swift access to case information</li> <li>• provides easy access to clients via charging sheets</li> <li>• enables staff, through direct observation, to understand the criminal justice system</li> <li>• provides program with mantle of authority and credibility in dealing with clients and other groups</li> <li>• provides area-wide jurisdiction</li> <li>• provides opportunity to improve prosecutors' handling of victims</li> <li>• facilitates access to judges</li> <li>• facilitates inclusion of victim concerns in sentencing recommendations</li> <li>• provides opportunity for court escort and witness reception center</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prosecutor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focuses on victims in terms of potential as witnesses, not as individuals in need</li> <li>• restricts services to victims whose cases are brought to trial</li> <li>• limits on-the-scene crisis intervention and early contact with victims</li> <li>• restricts opportunity of staff to act as victim advocates</li> <li>• delays acceptance by some grassroots organizations</li> <li>• can create conflicts over confidentiality and disclosure</li> <li>• can create pressure to prosecute or drop cases inconsistent with victim needs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Law Enforcement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides swift access to clients via arrest reports or calls to appear on the scene</li> <li>• facilitates 24-hour services because agency is already operating around the clock</li> <li>• provides opportunity to improve police handling of victims</li> <li>• provides opportunity to assist in interviewing children, rape victims, etc.</li> <li>• likely to be cooperative if the agency has implemented community policing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law Enforcement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creates initial fear of interference with established practices</li> <li>• association with law enforcement can alienate or frighten some victims</li> <li>• invites excessive referrals of non-crime cases</li> <li>• discourages service delivery after investigation</li> <li>• may create conflicts with grassroots organizations which distrust police</li> </ul> <p align="right">. . . continued on page 39</p>

- *Community-based organizations* often offer advantages that affiliation with the criminal justice system precludes or constrains, including familiarity with other sources of assistance for victims in the community, experience with direct service delivery to needy clients, and an advocacy perspective on behalf of the disadvantaged. As “outsiders,” however, free-standing programs often have difficulty building credibility with police and prosecutors, and they may have no built-in funding. Local considerations may warrant affiliating a new program with a medical center, a local unit of government, or a university.

### Selecting a Program Location

Program location usually follows naturally from the selection of a sponsor: programs sponsored by district attorneys are typically housed in the prosecutor’s office; those affiliated with law enforcement agencies have offices in the police department’s or sheriff’s headquarters; and programs run by community-based organizations share space with their host or rent offices in the community.

If planners believe that a particular location for their program is important for achieving their goals, that judgment may

**Figure 3–1 (Continued)**  
**Alternatives in Program Sponsorship: Advantages and Disadvantages**

<i>ADVANTAGES</i>	<i>DISADVANTAGES</i>
<p><b>Probation/Parole/Corrections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitates opportunity for victim to express sentencing wishes</li> <li>• facilitates provision of restitution through direct contact with offenders</li> <li>• facilitates opportunity to inform offender of the effects of his or her crime through victim-offender reconciliation and victim impact statements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probation/Parole/Corrections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limits access to cases from criminal justice system</li> <li>• limits potential for improving criminal justice system’s handling of victims</li> <li>• reduces criminal justice system’s interest in supporting program funding</li> <li>• inhibits building credibility with police and prosecutors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community-Based Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitates opportunity for staff to advocate for victim vis-a-vis criminal justice system</li> <li>• relaxes victims distrustful of criminal justice system</li> <li>• provides access to victims of unreported crimes and presents few disincentives to helping them</li> <li>• can provide enhanced access to referral resources as a member of human services provider network</li> <li>• can tap easily into local support services, such as churches, senior citizen centers, and block associations</li> <li>• can establish own objectives and priorities</li> <li>• more freedom to focus solely on the needs of victims, rather than also on the interests of the police or prosecutor</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community-Based Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accesses victims at late stage of criminal justice process</li> <li>• misses victims if no charges have been filed or no conviction occurs</li> <li>• creates potential conflict between offender orientation and concern for victims</li> <li>• may be distrusted by police and prosecutors who view community organizations as monitoring programs</li> </ul>

influence who the program sponsor should be. For example, if a storefront operation is desired, a community-based organization accustomed to street-level operations may be the best sponsor. With the emergence of community policing, however, which sometimes involves the establishment of neighborhood substations, law enforcement sponsorship may also be suitable for establishing a storefront operation.

There are exceptions, of course. Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul, although operated by the Minnesota Citizens Council on Crime and Justice with major funding from the State corrections department, for several

years used storefronts for its sites, until financial restrictions led the program to centralize its offices in one location. St. Louis County’s Victim Service Council, while sponsored until recently by a community-based organization, is housed in the county courthouse. Each program has found its unorthodox arrangement to be an advantage rather than a drawback. For Citizens Council Victim Services, the arrangement combined the benefits of institutional affiliation with open access to the general public; for the Victim Service Council, it has afforded both institutional independence and close contact with prosecutors and judges.

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## Victim Services in the Juvenile Justice System

Many rights and services extended to victims of adult offenders have not been extended to victims of juvenile offenders because of the due process and confidentiality protections given to juveniles. Few programs have been established specifically to assist this victim population, and many victim assistance programs in the adult court system have handled only a small number of juvenile cases.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the difficulty of providing certain information to victims regarding juvenile offenders, the juvenile court system may be even more difficult for victims to understand than the adult system.

With the increased recognition of these problems and the rising number of crimes committed by juveniles, more programs are being established within the juvenile justice system to assist victims. The Columbia (South Carolina) Department of Youth Services Victim Assistance Program, for example, was established in 1987 to serve victims of juvenile violent crime. The one full-time staff member identifies clients by screening juvenile cases referred to the department.<sup>9</sup> Legislation is being enacted in some States to grant the same rights and services to victims of juvenile crime as have been won by victims of adult offenders (e.g., to know the identity of the accused and to be notified of and attend all hearings).

Program planners and staff who want to establish a program for victims of juveniles or include services for these victims in an existing program should consult their State's juvenile code and any other State statutes regarding crime victims for potential obstacles to working in the juvenile justice system (such as restricted access to information).

*Helping Victims and Witnesses in the Juvenile Justice System: A Program Handbook*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1991), provides information regarding the operation of a victim assistance program for victims of juvenile offenders. *Victims and Witnesses in the Juvenile Justice System: Assessment Report*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1989), presents the results of the first phase of the agency's Victims and Witnesses in the Juvenile Justice System Development Program. The report includes information on legislation pertaining to victims and witnesses in the juvenile justice system and case studies of programs serving this clientele. Both OJJDP documents can be ordered through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at (800) 851-3420.

Individuals interested in establishing a program within a correctional institution for victims of juvenile offenders may want to consider *Report and Recommendations on Victims of Juvenile Crime*, (Lanham, Maryland: American Correction Association, 1994). Contact the ACA at (301) 206-5100.

When there is flexibility in choosing sites, the following issues merit consideration:

- Locating in criminal justice system offices provides access to police, prosecutors, files, and victims themselves. Program planners who want to provide crisis counseling should probably be located in a law enforcement agency, where victims are brought for questioning. Furthermore, operating from a criminal justice system
- office can result in continuous formal and informal contact with criminal justice system personnel that can help build credibility and secure referrals.
- Victim assistance services housed in buildings outside the criminal justice system do not appear to experience problems because of their location. Proximity to the court is helpful, however, for witness-oriented programs, both for greeting and directing witnesses and for

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accommodating program activities to changing court and prosecutorial schedules.<sup>10</sup>

- Storefront locations make programs particularly accessible to people who may be unfamiliar with social welfare agency services and intimidated by large bureaucracies and the criminal justice system. Local satel-

lite offices also can increase accessibility for the poor, who are often segregated geographically and frequently have limited means of transportation.

Occasionally, programs have offices in more than one location, but they typically start with a single site and then expand as they gain experience and acquire additional financial

## **Sponsorship by Corrections, Probation, and Parole Departments:**

### *The “Last Frontier” in Victim Assistance?*

Programs based in departments of corrections and departments of probation and parole have become more popular in recent years, owing in part to legislative statutes and State constitutional amendments that require that victims receive notification of offender status, be permitted to attend and submit impact statements to parole hearings, and receive other services after conviction of the offender. Because of the relatively late start among departments of corrections, probation, and parole to establish victim services, some victim services experts refer to corrections as the “last frontier” in victim services. (See chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of networking with these departments.)

In Pennsylvania, individuals involved in victim services observed that victims had needs even after the person who committed the crime against them had been sentenced. In the early 1990’s, the state passed a law mandating the provision of certain services to victims after conviction. In 1993, the Crime Victim Input and Notification Program was established in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and Board of Probation and Parole. The program’s office is part of the central administrative offices of the Department, and the program is funded as part of the department’s general operating budget.

Similarly, in 1991, the California Youth Authority established the Office of Prevention and Victim Services, with four full-time victim service staff, and other staff who work partly on victim services and partly on crime prevention activities. The program is based in the California Youth Authority’s Sacramento headquarters.

Also in 1991, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), part of the U.S. Department of Justice, funded two national corrections-based training and technical assistance programs, focusing on both institutional and community corrections. By 1995, intensive training had been provided to 15 States, Department of Defense correctional officials, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Less intensive training and technical assistance were provided to approximately 20 additional States.

For more information about the extent of corrections-based victim assistance programs across the country as of the early 1990’s and the services the programs offer, see *National Victim Services Survey of Adult and Juvenile Corrections and Parole Agencies: Final Report* and *Crime Victims and Corrections: Setting the Agenda for the 1990’s* (a notebook from a national conference), both of which can be obtained through the National Victim Center at (703) 276–2880. For more information about OVC’s training and technical assistance programs, call the National Victims Resource Center at (800) 627–6872.

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support. Outposts can bring services to more victims, and to more police and prosecutors, than can a single office. Multiple sites can also reduce travel time to meet with and transport victims and witnesses. However, multiple locations can increase problems in overseeing work quality and may prevent staff from feeling that they are in the mainstream of program activities. They also increase supervisor travel time and overhead costs.

The Alameda County (California) program, for example, closed its subunit in the southern part of the county for several of these reasons. The caseload in the south was less than that in the northern office, and, with limited personnel, the program was sometimes short-handed in the north while at the same time not very busy in the south. In addition, the program director found it difficult to supervise staff in the southern office and to juggle staff when vacation or sick leave was taken. Finally, staff in the subunit felt isolated and out of touch with their colleagues in the main office, with limited opportunities to debrief or vent their frustration together. Citizen Council Victim Services Minneapolis, St.-Paul (Minnesota) closed its four storefront locations when staff found that most crime victims continued to contact the program primarily through its crisis line. The added cost of maintaining the storefront offices was not worth their limited benefits.

An option potentially available to any program is to establish a victim and witness reception area in the courthouse to contact clients who may otherwise slip through the cracks. This approach has the advantage of reducing court trips whenever a victim or witness needs assistance. To set up a reception area, the program may want either to assign a full-time staff person or to train volunteers to provide this service. The court must experience enough traffic flow to warrant this allocation of staff time, and court administrators must be able and willing to provide space for the service.

## Determining Funding Needs

Funding is a concern that planners must consider from the moment they decide to establish a program and a worry that is never far from the minds of directors of existing programs. There are three principal steps in developing strategies for securing funds:

- estimating program costs,
- identifying promising funding sources, and
- preparing grant proposals to each potential source.

Planners must develop cost estimates for all program services and materials, even ones they expect to be free. Program administrators should be able to document the dollar value of gratis and in-kind contributions in case these contributions are discontinued and administrators need to apply for funding to purchase them.

Generating cost estimates compels planners and staff to examine all anticipated or existing activities in detail. Figure 3-2 lists the major items a victim assistance program should consider in estimating expenditures. New programs should estimate costs not only for the start-up year but also for each of the following two years, since expenses for subsequent years are typically much lower. Existing programs, too, should estimate their expenses a few years into the future.

One study concluded from several site visits that certain program activities are associated with higher costs:<sup>11</sup>

- 24-hour, 7-day-a-week availability;
- crisis intervention at the crime scene as the preferred contact strategy;
- multiple contacts with a client, rather than one-time-only intervention;
- emphasis on direct service rather than referral; and
- allocation of significant resources to nonclient services such as research, training, public relations, and lobbying for statutory changes.

The results of a small survey conducted for this publication provide another yardstick for estimating costs. Figure 3-3 provides the estimated annual budgets, staff levels, and caseloads served by five programs visited for the study. A detailed discussion of potential approaches to receiving program funding is provided in chapter 9.

## Staff Needs and Recruitment

Identifying and recruiting staff, typically the final planning step, is perhaps the single most important task planners face. The discussion below provides guidelines for determining how many people to hire, what skills and qualifications to require, how to recruit and screen staff, and what role volunteers can play. Chapter 7 discusses issues of staff training and supervision.

## Figure 3-2 Checklist for Estimating Program Costs

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Labor (salaries/wages):</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Professional staff</li> <li>* Secretarial staff</li> <li>* Fringe benefits</li> <li>* Volunteer staff (dollar equivalents)</li> <li>* Interns (dollar equivalents)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Nonlabor:</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Overhead (rent, utilities, interest payments, etc.)</li> <li>* Equipment (duplication machines, beepers, etc.)</li> <li>* Supplies (stationery, etc.)</li> <li>* Training supplies (manuals, conference fees, etc.)</li> <li>* Duplication</li> <li>* Postage</li> <li>* Computer</li> <li>* Telephone</li> <li>* Travel               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• per diem (room and board)</li> <li>• mileage (local travel, including for transportation of victims and witnesses)</li> <li>• air/bus/train fares</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Subcontracts (e.g., for evaluation and training)</li> <li>* Capital outlay (office furniture and equipment; building remodeling, vehicles, communications equipment)</li> <li>* Equipment maintenance</li> </ul> |

### *Estimating Staff Levels*

In practice, planners and directors will be constrained in their staffing decisions by the available funds. When there is flexibility in deciding how many people to hire, the considerations addressed below may be helpful for estimating the number of staff needed.

Among the limited sample of relatively large programs surveyed for this publication, the number of staff has generally risen in the past decade (see figure 3-4), with the average number of full-time staff increasing from 4 to 14, and the average number of part-time volunteers up from 5 to 18. However, because these programs provide a wide range of services, they have atypically large staffs. Other surveys with larger samples of programs have found that most programs have fewer staff. According to the 1990 Federal National Assessment Program (NAP) survey of 319 victim assistance programs, the average number of full-time paid service providers was 2 per program. In a 1985 survey of 184 programs, nearly three-fourths employed 5 or fewer full-time staff, and 19 programs did not have any full-time staff but instead relied on part-time employees and volunteers.<sup>12</sup>

One way to estimate staff needs is in terms of the population to be served and the services to be provided. St. Louis County's (Missouri) Victim Service Council calculated that 2 staff members and 15 to 20 volunteers could provide service to 1,000 clients a year.<sup>13</sup> Other studies have suggested that 6 to 10 staff members are required for a population of 500,000.<sup>14</sup>

The type of services a program plans to provide, of course, will also substantially influence the number of staff required. One approach to estimating staff needs, therefore, is to divide services into those that require considerable staff time on a per-client basis (which will depend in part on staff skills and qualifications), those that require relatively little staff time, and those that fall somewhere between. Figure 3-5 provides such a breakdown. To arrive at an estimate of needed staff hours, program planners can multiply the time needed for each service by the number of clients who need it. New programs can estimate service needs from the results of a needs assessment; existing programs can determine service needs by examining their actual service delivery experience.

**Figure 3-3  
Staff Size in Relation to Selected program Characteristics: A Look at Five Programs**

	Alameda County (California) Victim/ Witness Assistance Division	Greenville (South Carolina) Victim/Witness Assistance Program	Minneapolis-St. Paul (Minnesota) Citizens Council Victim Services	Portland (Oregon) Victims Assistance Program	Scottsdale (Arizona) Police Crisis Intervention Unit
<b>Staff size</b>					
paid full-time	16	6	6	8	4
paid part-time	•	•	6	•	•
volunteers	4	10	30	55	•
<b>1994 budget</b>	\$872,012	N/A	\$382,880 <sup>a</sup>	\$477,222	\$220,000
<b>Major services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counseling</li> <li>• victim notification</li> <li>• court orientation</li> <li>• victim compensation assistance</li> <li>• referrals</li> <li>• court support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counseling/referrals</li> <li>• victim orientation</li> <li>• victim advocacy</li> <li>• witness notification</li> <li>• public education</li> <li>• restitution</li> <li>• court support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on-scene crisis intervention</li> <li>• victim advocacy</li> <li>• victim orientation</li> <li>• public education</li> <li>• victim compensation assistance</li> <li>• court support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on-scene crisis intervention</li> <li>• court orientation</li> <li>• victim notification</li> <li>• counseling</li> <li>• restitution assistance</li> <li>• referrals</li> <li>• public education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on-scene crisis intervention</li> <li>• referrals</li> <li>• victim advocacy</li> <li>• public education</li> </ul>
<b>Annual caseloads<sup>b</sup></b>	2,600 (Plus 3,200 for State compensation assistance)	4,000	6,600	10,300	9,400
<b>Population served</b>	1,300,000	1,000,000	2,288,721	620,000	160,000

a No attempt has been made to judge the quality of services the programs provide. In addition, the programs are not strictly comparable, since programs do not keep similar data or assign their staff identical responsibilities. The data are intended to suggest the range of costs, caseloads, and services associated with various staffing patterns.

b The numbers presented here may be skewed by different program directors' interpretation of "caseload" (e.g., victims who have been contacted vs. those who have received direct services).

**Figure 3-4**  
**Range in Staff Size and Mean Number of Staff in Relatively Large Victim Assistance Programs in 1982, 1986, and 1994**

	RANGE		1994 (n=23)	MEAN NUMBER		1994 (n=23)
	1982 (n=25)	1986		1982 (n=25)	1986	
Full-time staff	0-17	0-28	0-50	4	9	14
Part-time staff	0-15	0-12	0-14	1	2	2
Full-time volunteers	0-19	0-9	0-15	0	1	1
Part-time volunteers	0-100	0-300	0-120	5	15	18

Indirect services (such as system advocacy, public education, and training of police and prosecutors) and administrative time should also be calculated. Typically, 10 to 25 percent of a program administrator's time is spent on purely managerial activities, and another 10 to 35 percent on liaison with other organizations. Finally, after professional staff needs have been calculated, secretarial needs must be added. Generally, one full-time secretary is needed for each two to six full-time paid staff members, but more will be required if clerically oriented services like witness notification are to be provided.

Figure 3-6 provides an exercise for estimating staff needs based on the above guidelines. After completing the exercise, planners can compare their findings with the staffing patterns presented in figure 3-3 to see if there is at least rough comparability in staff levels. Of course, volunteer services may substitute for paid staff to a considerable extent (see below.)

*Stipulating Skills and Qualifications*

Requisite staff skills depend on the services and other activities to be performed. For example, if crisis intervention is required, individuals with experience in emergency counseling will be necessary; if paralegal or legal counseling will be undertaken, staff with a background in the law will be essential.

Employment history or education may be helpful in assessing applicants' qualifications for working in a victim assistance program, but there is no empirical evidence to support specific experience or training as a job requirement. A 1985 study found that more than 90 percent of staff members of the programs surveyed had bachelor's degrees; more than one-fourth of these staff had graduate degrees, usually in social work, sociology, criminal justice, or counseling.<sup>15</sup> The study, however, did not investigate the need for formal education in order to be an effective victim advocate. According to many experienced victim advocates, staff can have very different backgrounds, personalities, and work styles and still be effective, so long as they have the following characteristics:

- the ability to integrate well with existing staff;
- the capacity to relate to victims in situations of stress without making judgments;
- emotional stability, assertiveness, self-confidence, and common sense;
- strong assessment skills; and
- the resilience and flexibility to deal with a variety of problems on short notice, to work overtime, and to accept failure with many clients.



*Special efforts are often made, in jurisdictions with concentrations of minority groups, to hire staff who understand the special cultural perspectives of many minority groups toward crime and the criminal justice system and whom minority victims will feel comfortable approaching for assistance. Program staff, however, report that, while it is helpful to hire individuals of the same ethnic background as many clients, it is most important that staff understand and be sensitive to victims' needs.*

Special talents are essential for the program director. He or she must not only have management and supervisory skills but also a gift for public relations. A victim assistance program director must work simultaneously with the police department, the prosecutor's office, the judiciary, the correctional system, human service provider agencies, and the media. Victim assistance program directors also need entrepreneurial skills, given the unending need to enlist support, in-kind services, funds, and other assistance in a time of fiscal retrenchment and competition for limited resources.

Resourcefulness, energy, and commitment are needed to resolve the typical range of client problems, from repairing broken locks to finding emergency food rations.

A program director must have good direct service delivery skills, since he or she will frequently be called on to fill in for absent staff or to handle especially difficult cases. Finally, where possible, it is helpful if the director of a criminal justice system-based program is recruited from within the system to facilitate acceptance of the program by police, prosecutors, judges, and correctional officers, and to eliminate the start-up delays that occur when a newcomer learns the ropes.

### *Using Volunteers*

As noted above, some programs use no volunteers and others use as many as 120. (Programs funded with Federal VOCA money must use volunteers unless the State grantee determines that there is a compelling reason to waive this requirement.) During its first two years of operation, the Pima County Victim Witness Program (Arizona) recruited and trained 128 volunteers, who assisted paid staff with virtually

**Figure 3-5**  
**Relative Time on Average Required To Furnish Victim Assistance Services**  
**on a Per-Client Basis**

*(1994 Survey of 23 Programs)*

<b>Considerable Time Required on Average (30 mins. or more)</b>	<b>Moderate Time Required on Average (15-29 mins.)</b>	<b>Little Time Required on Average (1-14 mins.)</b>
Shelter/food Financial assistance On-scene comfort 24-hour hotline Crisis intervention Follow-up counseling Mediation Personal advocacy Intimidation protection Restitution assistance Compensation assistance Court orientation Transportation Escort to court Victim impact reports	Security repair Legal/paralegal counsel Referral Insurance claims aid Witness reception Child care	Employer intervention Landlord intervention Property return Witness fee assistance Notification Witness alert

**Figure 3-6**  
**Flow Chart of Sample Procedure for Estimating Professional Staff Needs of a Hypothetical Victim Assistance Program**

	Considerable Time Required on Average (30 mins. +)	Est. No. of Clients Needing Service/Month	Moderate Time Required on Average (15-29 mins.)	Est. No. of Clients Needing Service/Month	Little Time Required on Average (1-14 mins.)	Est. No. of Clients Needing Service/Month															
<b>STEP 1:</b> Estimated number of clients needing service per month	security repair on-scene comfort mediation transportation court escort intimidation protection	2 7 a 5 12 a <hr/> 27	shelter/food crisis intervention follow-up counseling personal advocacy legal/paralegal counsel court orientation	2 240b 188b 17  22 <hr/> 114 <hr/> 583	financial assistance 24-hour hotline employer intervention landlord intervention property return referral insurance claims aid restitution assistance witness fee assistance witness reception notification witness alert child care	18 c 12 7 a 63 31 14 a d 140 a <hr/> a <hr/> 285															
<p><b>STEP 2: Estimate staff hours needed to provide direct services (number of clients X number of minutes per service)</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>Direct Services Per Month</b></td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>27 clients @ average 2 hrs. each:</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">27 x 2 = 54 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>583 clients @ average 1/3 hr. each:</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">583 x 1/3 = 192 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>285 clients @ average 1/6 hr. each:</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">285 x 1/6 = <u>47 hours</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>Total = 293 hours</b></td> </tr> </table>							<b>Direct Services Per Month</b>			27 clients @ average 2 hrs. each:		27 x 2 = 54 hours	583 clients @ average 1/3 hr. each:		583 x 1/3 = 192 hours	285 clients @ average 1/6 hr. each:		285 x 1/6 = <u>47 hours</u>			<b>Total = 293 hours</b>
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<p><b>STEP 3: Estimate staff hours needed to provide indirect services</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>Indirect Services Per Month</b></td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>public education</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">24 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>training of police</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">4 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>attendance at seminars</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>4 hours</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>Total = 32 hours</b></td> </tr> </table>							<b>Indirect Services Per Month</b>			public education		24 hours	training of police		4 hours	attendance at seminars		<u>4 hours</u>			<b>Total = 32 hours</b>
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<p><b>STEP 4: Estimate program administration hours at 50% of fulltime</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>Program Administration</b></td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>.50 x 160 hours/mo.</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>= 80 hours</b></td> </tr> </table>							<b>Program Administration</b>			.50 x 160 hours/mo.		<b>= 80 hours</b>									
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<p><b>STEP 5: Calculate total hours (steps 2 + 3 + 4)</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>Total Professional Staff Hours</b></td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>293 + 32 + 80</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>= 405 hours</b></td> </tr> </table>							<b>Total Professional Staff Hours</b>			293 + 32 + 80		<b>= 405 hours</b>									
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293 + 32 + 80		<b>= 405 hours</b>																			
<p><b>STEP 6:</b> Compute staffing equivalent at 160 hours per month per staff member</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>Number of Staff</b></td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>405 ÷ 160</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>= 2.5 full-time professional staff</b></td> </tr> </table>							<b>Number of Staff</b>			405 ÷ 160		<b>= 2.5 full-time professional staff</b>									
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<p>Note:  a Program not providing this service.  b Assumes an average of two times for each client, since some clients will need this service more than once.  c Would require full-time staff person each 8-hour shift. Program not furnishing this service.  d Would require full-time staff person 9-5 each day. Program not furnishing this service.</p>																					

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every aspect of program operation; by 1993, a total of over 3,000 volunteers had been trained. About 100 volunteers regularly commit their time to driving unmarked police cars in the evening to respond immediately to police requests for help at the scene of a crime. On the other hand, the Alameda County (California) program, despite its relatively large size, has never used more than four volunteers at any one time and on occasion has had none.

### *What Volunteers Can Do*

Volunteer activities also vary dramatically across programs, ranging from purely clerical tasks to rape crisis intervention at hospital emergency wards. The volunteer job descriptions shown in appendixes D and E include examples of volunteer activities. In some programs, volunteers are restricted to a single activity, such as assisting victims with compensation claims; in others, they engage in a variety of tasks. Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul uses some volunteers for office work while others are on-call overnight to provide assistance by phone to crime victims who do not need immediate help in person. Staff may also want to encourage neighborhood residents to form neighborhood watch groups and provide information and support to neighbors who are victimized.<sup>16</sup>

Generally, volunteers perform tasks reflecting the personal qualities they bring to the job, the amount of training they have received, and the supervision they are given. Volunteers who are interns or college students typically do not have the experience to engage in many of the victim-oriented tasks that older volunteers can manage. However, those who are studying criminal justice or related issues may bring an unmatched enthusiasm to their assignments. The coordinator of the Colorado Springs Police Department's Victim/Witness Office said that her student volunteers are often willing to do extra work and that she is "not sure if we could function without them." The director of the Pima County (Arizona) program recently began training youth between 12 and 17 years old as peer advocates to talk with young crime victims and witnesses. This service was spurred by the director's experience debriefing residents of an apartment complex where a child had been murdered and seeing how well her young daughter, who went with her, interacted with the children in the complex. The director said she is careful, however, to be sure that the youth are not asked to handle a situation that could traumatize *them*.

The more training and supervision a program can provide for volunteers, the more complex and sensitive are the tasks they

## **Multicultural Staffing: Matching Staff and Clients**

Some victim assistance program administrators find it particularly important that staff be of similar ethnic background as the majority of clients, in order to reduce any linguistic or cultural barriers that might discourage victims from using program services. Also, victims may feel less intimidated by the criminal justice system if they are receiving assistance from someone who they feel understands them and their background.

Because staff of the Lummi Victims of Crime program in Washington State are Native American and have lived on the reservation, they are able to conduct outreach in the community and at cultural activities and help victims move through the tribal court system. Furthermore, they are familiar with the tribe's spiritual healers, to whom victims sometimes are referred. The Victim Service Unit of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office has both a Vietnamese and a Cambodian coordinator, who are responsible for conducting outreach to the city's Vietnamese and Cambodian communities. The coordinators also help Vietnamese and Cambodian victims move through the court system—for example, by providing court accompaniment and interpretation.

*Color of Justice*, by Brian Ogawa, director of the Maui Victim/Witness Assistance Program in Hawaii, examines multicultural issues in the criminal justice system. The book includes a chapter on redesigning victim services. To order the book, contact the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1130 K Street, Suite 300, Sacramento, California 95184, (916) 324-9100.

can undertake. Some program administrators recruit volunteers with specialized skills. Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul has volunteer locksmiths and carpenters on call 24 hours a day. Some programs do not expect much from volunteers—and, as a result, do not get much. Programs that expect a lot tend to get a lot.

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## *Volunteers: Pros and Cons*

The two major reasons for using volunteers are *to save money* and *to expand service delivery*. The California guidelines for State-funded victim assistance programs require programs to increase their use of volunteers as a purely fiscal measure. By training volunteers to handle victims of sexual assault, Portland's Victims Assistance Program has been able to provide 24-hour crisis intervention to rape victims at hospital emergency wards immediately after the crime. When the grant amount awarded to the Victims Advocate Foundation in Indiana declined, volunteers paid for their own gas to transport victims to shelters or court, and they donated office supplies for the program director.

Several programs have found that using volunteers serves as a valuable method of screening for potential paid staff. Program directors have an opportunity to view volunteers' abilities and commitment first-hand, and volunteers have a chance to find out whether they enjoy the work. A former case coordinator in the Greenville (South Carolina) program began as a volunteer in 1979, was offered part-time pay in 1980, and became a full-time staff member in 1981. The director of the Victims Advocate Foundation in rural Indiana volunteered his time to help the program's founder with start-up activities and then took charge of the program after the founder moved to another state.

Several considerations, however, are disincentives for using volunteers, or using them more extensively.

- *Time required.* Finding appropriate candidates can be time-consuming, and for volunteers to be effective in anything beyond simple clerical tasks, they need extensive training. Providing training can be difficult, however, for volunteers who come in only once or twice a week. Making the trade-off between volunteer training and supervision and devoting that same time to program activities may lead to short-changing the volunteers. Scheduling volunteers can also be time-consuming and frustrating. And expending time on volunteers may be of questionable value if they leave before the investment produces payoffs in service delivery.
- *Uncertainty of commitment.* Some volunteers are undependable or lose interest because of unrealistic expectations of what the job entails, because they feel no obligation to an assignment for which they are not being paid, or because their original intentions were unrelated to the work required—if, for example, they were seeking only a stepping stone to paid employment or a supple-

ment to their resume. Student interns typically spend only short periods with a program.

- *Unprofessional attitudes or behavior.* Some volunteers may express hostile opinions of the criminal justice system to victims, thereby jeopardizing the ability of paid staff to work with police and prosecutors. Many programs have access to sensitive information which volunteers may abuse. Also, some practitioners caution that for some volunteers who have been crime victims themselves, their prior experience may interfere with their ability to provide effective, professional services.

Programs that have used volunteers extensively and effectively have demonstrated that these drawbacks can be minimized, if not eliminated, with careful screening, thorough training, and close supervision. Timing is also important. It may be advisable not to involve volunteers until the program has firmly established its objectives, target groups, caseload, and services, and until paid staff have enough free time, after the start-up period, to train and supervise volunteers properly.

A large pool of volunteers with the Pima County Victim Witness Program was utilized infrequently during the first year because paid staff wanted to establish confidence and rapport with other community agencies before sending volunteers into unfamiliar territory. Even well-established programs may find it difficult to divert staff time from direct service delivery to involving volunteers in program activities. Staff may have to reduce their current activities in order to find and use volunteers who, in the long run, can free them to concentrate on previously neglected activities.

Program directors must carefully weigh the long-term benefits of involving volunteers against the very real short-term inconvenience involved in preparing volunteers for work. Generally, program directors find that volunteers need to remain with the job for at least a year to repay the investment in preparing them; expecting volunteers to commit themselves to a longer stint is usually unrealistic. Some programs have retained volunteers for several years, but turnover is inevitable in most cases. As a result, programs must develop permanent mechanisms to replenish their cadre of volunteers.

## *Recruiting and Screening Staff*

Recruiting methods for hiring paid staff are diverse. Greenville's (South Carolina) Victim Witness Assistance Program chooses to follow county hiring procedures and

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fields many phone calls from individuals inquiring about potential jobs. The program director asks for their resumes and explains the county application process. Portland's (Oregon) Victims Assistance Program hires exclusively from civil service lists, since all paid staff must be county employees. Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul has recruited by placing newspaper advertisements, circulating announcements among its funding agencies, and posting notices in college placement offices. Program staff do extensive recruiting in minority communities through neighborhood agencies and organizations, churches, and ethnic newspapers. The Alameda County (California) pro-

gram usually hires staff from the agencies with which it has been coordinating activities, because in the process of using these individuals as resources, program staff become very familiar with their capabilities.

*As in most occupations, the single most common method for locating paid staff is word of mouth.* Pima County (Arizona) Victim Witness Program staff prepared public service announcements for television and radio, encouraged newspaper reporters to write about the program, and presented the program to university classes and civic organizations—until it developed a waiting list of applicants. The Suffolk County

### **A New Source of Victim Service Volunteers: AmeriCorps**

The Clinton Administration's national service program, AmeriCorps, has channeled thousands of individuals into volunteer positions within the criminal justice system. The program was formed through the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which established the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). In what is commonly referred to as a domestic Peace Corps, volunteers devote two years to community service in one of four priority areas: education, public safety, human needs, or the environment. They receive financial aid in return for their service.

It has been suggested that victim assistance programs use AmeriCorps volunteers to monitor community restitution programs, provide support in neighborhood courts, help victims and witnesses navigate the court system, assist victims with obtaining support from social agencies and support groups, and notify victims of the progress of their case or the status of the offender. The CNCS suggests that volunteers become part of a comprehensive community policing strategy which incorporates victim support and assistance and attempts to solve social problems that lead to crime and community-wide victimization.<sup>17</sup>

For example, the Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department's Victim Advocate Program uses AmeriCorps volunteers to explain legal options and court procedures to domestic violence victims and to work directly with the police department's major crime unit in providing general assistance and referrals to victims. Several volunteers are assigned to the county's five police districts to provide outreach to victims and notify them of available services within the department and the community.

Funds are provided by CNCS to national organizations and State commissions, which then distribute the money to local programs that apply to sponsor a volunteer or volunteers. Sponsoring programs are expected to provide matching funds. The money covers such expenses as training, a living allowance for the volunteer, and health insurance costs.

*National Service and Public Safety: Partnerships for Safer Communities* is a handbook that describes AmeriCorps and gives examples of the services that AmeriCorps volunteers can provide. The book includes phone numbers and contact names for State commissions. It can be obtained through the National Crime Prevention Council, 1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 466-6272. More information about AmeriCorps may be obtained by calling (800) 94-ACORPS.

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(Massachusetts) Victim Witness Assistance Program director provides a written job description to local universities' internship offices (see appendix E).

Many program directors allow current staff to interview candidates for paid and volunteer positions. For example, after initially screening applicants, the Alameda County program director has his staff interview the most promising candidates. His policy is not to hire anyone whom current personnel do not find acceptable. The Suffolk County program director and a victim advocate screen potential college interns together. In addition, many program directors advise running a criminal history background check on potential staff and volunteers.

## Endnotes

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2. Barbara A. Webster and J. Thomas McEwen, *Assessing Criminal Justice Needs*, Research in Brief (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, August 1992), 5.
3. John J. DiIulio, Jr., *Rethinking the Criminal Justice System: Toward a New Paradigm*, A Discussion Paper from the BJS-Princeton Project (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1992), 11.
4. This development was reported by the advisory board for this publication. Note, however, that the 1990 National Assessment Program survey found that the percentage of programs located in police departments declined slightly from 34 percent in 1986 to 28 percent in 1990.
5. *National Victim Services Survey of Adult and Juvenile Corrections and Parole Agencies: Final Report* (Arlington, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1991).
6. American Correctional Association, *Task Force on Victims of Crime: Final Report* (Laurel, Maryland: American Correctional Association, 1988); see also American Correctional Association, *Report and Recommendations on Victims of Juvenile Crime* (Laurel, Maryland: American Correctional Association, 1994).
7. F. Sepler, "Victim Advocacy and Young Male Victims of Sexual Abuse: An Evolutionary Model," in *The Sexually Abused Male: Prevalence, Impact, and Treatment*, vol. 1, ed. Mic Hunter (1990), 73–85.
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10. Roberta C. Cronin and Blair B. Bourque, *National Evaluation Program Phase I Assessment. Victim/Witness Assistance Projects* (Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research, 1979), 53, 71.
11. Cronin and Bourque, *National Evaluation Program Phase I Assessment*, 119.
12. Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims*, 89.
13. Marjorie Susman and Carol Holt Vittert, "Building a Solution: A Practical Guide for Establishing Crime Victim Service Agencies" (St. Louis: National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section, 1980), 19.
14. Emilio C. Viano, Herbert Jones, Margaret Neuse, James Schiller, Ora Spaid, and Sheldon Steinberg, *Victim/Witness Services Participant's Handbook* (Washington, D.C.: University Research Corporation, 1977).
15. Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims*, 92.
16. *Neighborhood Watch Victim Assistance: A Program Manual*, National Sheriffs' Association Victim Assistance Program (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, 1987).
17. Janet Reno, "AmeriCorps: A Call to Service," *Research in Action* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, November 1993), 2; Catherine Milton, "National Service: Secret Weapon in the Fight Against Crime," *Public Management* (July 1994), 8, 10; "National Service and Public Safety: Partnerships for Safer Communities" (Washington, D.C., National Crime Prevention Council, March 1994), 20.

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# Chapter 4

## Developing Effective Relationships With Other Organizations

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### Key Points

- *Developing effective relationships with other organizations is one of the most important initial activities that staff at new programs undertake, and is an ongoing priority for staff of established programs.*
- *Program staff should consider working with each component of the criminal justice system and with social service and community organizations, schools, victim support groups, and other community organizations that serve victims.*
- *By developing close working relationships with a network of relevant organizations, victim assistance programs can more easily accomplish their goals.*
- *Developing extensive relationships with a network of organizations has become more commonplace in recent years.*
- *The maintenance of effective working relationships with other organizations requires continuous monitoring; program staff should never take networks for granted.*
- *It is important that program staff explain what they can and cannot provide to other organizations and that they deliver on their promises.*
- *Working with other organizations will almost always involve obstacles. Programs may encounter resistance from other groups (for example, because of perceived interference or competition for funding) and experience conflicts (for example, over the proper handling of a criminal procedure). Program staff need to anticipate these barriers and develop strategies for dealing with them.<sup>1</sup>*

Most successful victim assistance programs maintain mutually beneficial relationships with each component of the criminal justice system and with other human service providers and community groups (including other victim assistance programs). Working together effectively usually involves two elements:

- All parties secure some advantages from and provide some benefits to each other—or at least are prepared to reciprocate if called on for help.

- The parties have an explicit agreement about how cooperation will be implemented. The understanding may be informal (based on telephone calls or meetings) or highly codified (written into contracts or memos of understanding).

As the discussion below makes clear, program collaboration may occur at a number of levels, from simple, informal approaches (such as mutual referrals) to sophisticated, formal relationships (such as coordinating services to child abuse victims).

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## Why Develop Relationships With Other Organizations?

There are *five major reasons to establish networks*:

- *To gain access to victims and witnesses.* Often police and prosecutors—and to a lesser extent social service and other agencies or organizations—may be able to refer clients or provide access to records that can be used to identify clients.
- *To identify other resources in the community that can help victims and witnesses.* Few programs are able to provide all the help their clients need. Other organizations that can fill these service gaps must be found.
- *To improve the treatment of victims and witnesses already served by other organizations.* Working with criminal justice and social support system agencies can provide an opportunity to assist these groups to respond to specific needs of crime victims and witnesses.
- *To develop and institutionalize program support.* Demonstrating to criminal justice agencies how services to victims and witnesses typically benefit them can motivate them to support program funding.
- *To share information and strategies.* Working with criminal justice and social service agencies and with other community organizations can lead to the discovery of improved or innovative ways of helping victims and witnesses and to new sources of information and technical assistance (e.g., through training seminars). Program staff can also work with personnel from other agencies to achieve common goals, such as legislative changes to assist and benefit crime victims.

Programs that receive funding through the Federal Victims of Crime Act are encouraged by the Office for Victims of Crime to coordinate their activities with other agencies.

### *Cooperation Among Organizations Has Expanded*

In the last ten years, cooperation among victim assistance programs, the criminal justice and social service systems, and community groups has increased significantly for a number of reasons:

- By the mid-1990's, State constitutional amendments ensuring victim rights were adopted in 20 states. As a result, officials in the criminal justice system have found themselves required by law to provide certain services to victims of crime (such as notifying victims of case status), and they have looked to victim assistance programs for training and assistance in carrying out these requirements.
- Because victim advocacy has been more widespread in the last two decades, victim advocates have found it easier to gain acceptance and cooperation from other organizations. (Programs that struggled to prove their worth to agencies (especially to law enforcement) have helped pave the way for newly developing programs throughout the 1970's and 1980's.) In some jurisdictions, victim assistance programs have become an integral part of the criminal justice system.
- The emergence of community policing among many police departments has often resulted in a closer working relationship between law enforcement and victim assistance programs.
- The rapid expansion of victim services into the correctional system has opened up another arena for cooperation. Many correctional, probation, and parole departments have begun providing services to crime victims, as well as to victimized correctional staff. The California Youth Authority's Office of Prevention and Victim Services, for example, notifies victims of juvenile offenders of the offender's parole or release hearings, conducts classes for offenders on the impact of crime on victims, and performs other related services.
- Most victim assistance programs struggle with limited resources just to serve victims of violent crime. In recent years, however, as mentioned elsewhere in this publication, a number of programs have begun extending outreach and services to derivative victims of crime, including traumatized witnesses to violent crime, victims of environmental and other disasters, and residents of crime-ridden communities. Usually victim assistance advocates find that cooperating with other organizations affords the best opportunities for serving these kinds of victims. Pima County (Arizona) Victim/Witness Program staff, for example, worked with school officials in providing critical incident stress debriefing sessions for college students when a professor was killed.



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- Some programs have expanded their networks in order to undertake crime prevention activities—for example, by giving presentations at schools and neighborhood meetings. The coordinator of the Colorado Springs, Colorado Police Department’s Victim/Witness Office worked closely with faculty in designing curriculums for the area’s largest school district on personal safety and conflict resolution.

The apparent expansion of working relationships with other organizations notwithstanding, all of the program staff, criminal justice system personnel, and victim experts contacted for this publication stressed the importance of being realistic in establishing and maintaining networks. Specifically, they spoke of the need to be sensitive to potential sources of friction or difficulty in working with different groups, to recognize that building networks and establishing credibility take time, and to guard against being naively optimistic or prematurely discouraged.

Victim assistance program staff are in a unique position to encourage and help the criminal justice system and social service agencies to meet the needs of victims and witnesses. There are a number of services to victims and witnesses that police, prosecutors, judges, correctional officers, and social welfare workers can undertake as a normal part of their jobs. By establishing and sustaining close and mutually beneficial relationships with these groups, victim service providers will best be able to help them provide such services.

## Working With the Criminal Justice System

Most victim advocates find that concerted efforts are necessary to gain the cooperation of the criminal justice system, even if their program is sponsored by a criminal justice agency. In recent years, as mentioned above, the criminal justice system has taken significant strides toward attending to victim needs by changing the way personnel deal with victims and by working more closely with victim assistance programs. The Federal Government’s proposed regulations governing grants to combat violent crime against women, using funds available through the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, encourage a “partnership” among law enforcement, prosecutors, the courts, victim advocates, and service providers. There are a number of strategies that program staff can implement and pitfalls they should anticipate when working with the criminal justice system.

## Working With Law Enforcement

Whether a victim assistance program is based directly within a police or sheriff’s department or operates out of another agency or as a private nonprofit organization, securing the support and cooperation of law enforcement is essential to a program’s ability to serve victims effectively.

**Approaches to gaining cooperation.** There are a variety of ways in which program staff can initiate, strengthen, and maintain a strong working relationship with law enforcement agencies and individual police officers.

1. Contacting police for planning and liaison purposes requires a *good understanding of the nature of police work* and of the idiosyncrasies of law enforcement agencies. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including interviews, informal chats, and direct observation.

Ride-alongs can be particularly beneficial for learning first-hand what police work entails and for building rapport between program staff and individual officers. Both the Minneapolis (Minnesota) and Scottsdale (Arizona) programs used ride-alongs for these purposes; indeed, Scottsdale staff spent one shift per week for a year on the road with police officers. Ride-alongs are also useful at any time to refresh staff about what goes on in the field and to maintain rapport between program staff and officers. Program staff can also ask the police to provide training or orientation sessions for them, focusing on the nature of law enforcement and the problems officers experience with victims and witnesses.

2. *Involving police representatives in program planning* at an early stage can be very useful. Guidelines for how the police and the program will work together can be developed by mutual agreement from the start, dealing with issues such as whether and how the police will share arrest reports and whether program staff may talk with victims before, after, or while police investigators question them. The Victim Service Council in St. Louis (Missouri) County formed an advisory board that included three police representatives, including the county superintendent of police and the police chief of the largest municipal police department in the county. The police members of the board helped program administrators develop a reliable method for screening clients.

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## Guidelines for Developing Working Relationships With Other Organizations

It is important that program planners and staff keep *five general considerations* in mind as they develop and maintain their networks.

1. It is not necessary to secure the cooperation of all—or even the majority—of the individual police officers, prosecutors, or social workers in an agency in order to develop a constructive working relationship with that organization. Also, the degree of cooperation with each person in the agency does not need to be uniformly high. Typically, some prosecutors work frequently with the staff; many work with them only occasionally; and a few never interact with them.
2. It is usually helpful to identify key individuals in an organization—not necessarily only supervisors—who have the respect of their colleagues, and to work hard to gain their support in the hope that they will recommend the program to other personnel. In establishing conflict resolution classes for high school teachers, the coordinator of the Colorado Springs, Colorado Police Department's Victim/Witness Office frequently bypassed administrators in favor of approaching individual teachers who had already expressed interest in the program.
3. Networks are never established once and for all. They require continuous monitoring and adjustment as organizations change their objectives, services, or staff.
4. Approaches that serve to *establish* cooperation will not necessarily *maintain* good relations. Some program staff begin by responding to police requests for assistance with nonvictims in order to build a working relationship with law enforcement agencies but are later compelled by limited resources to restrict their service to *bona fide* crime victims. Even the Scottsdale (Arizona) Police Crisis Intervention Unit, sponsored by the police department, eventually had to turn down requests from officers to help with drunk and disorderly cases.
5. The successful building of relationships requires *reliability, accessibility, and accommodation*.

*Reliability:* program staff need to do what they say they will do.

*Accessibility:* it is best if staff are available immediately, and at all hours, to answer requests for help, at least in the initial stages of a program.

*Accommodation:* wear appropriate attire, do not promote points of view that may be interpreted as politically or socially unacceptable, and bend program rules at times to handle referrals that may not be within a program's mandate, such as victims of automobile accidents and attempted suicides.

In working with law enforcement agencies, designating a single person in the program and one person in the police or sheriff's department to act as liaisons between the two organizations helps prevent miscommunication and diffusion of responsibility by providing a centralized, accountable source of information.

3. *Finding the "right" people to talk with* in a law enforcement agency is essential. These may include the police chief or sheriff, whose approval and active support are essential, key policymakers who are sympathetic to the concept of victim services and are respected by the department hierarchy, and line officers who will benefit

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directly from the program, have the respect of their colleagues, and are not afraid to advocate for change within the department.

When Scottsdale (Arizona) program staff found that the willingness of police officers to work with the program was contingent on the attitude of their sergeants, it targeted sergeants for special attention. Program personnel that plan to engage in on-the-scene assistance will need to work with patrol officers; staff that expect to become involved at the investigation stage will want to cultivate rapport with detectives. The order in which to approach these individuals will vary according to their attitudes and accessibility—and depends as well on the focus of program services. Program directors point out that, rather than approaching the chief first, it is sometimes wiser to secure the support of another officer whom the chief respects and uses as an “idea person.”

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***Police departments that wish to work with victim assistance programs will need to make some decisions of their own regarding the best way to encourage officers to collaborate. Neither leaving the choice up to the individual officer nor mandating cooperation by police personnel is especially effective. The most effective strategy is usually to ensure that officers are thoroughly familiar with the program’s purposes and activities and understand clearly that helping victims and witnesses will help them, too.***

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4. *Providing training for police* can facilitate working together in two ways. First, it makes officers aware of the program, informs them of what it does, indicates when they can call on the program for help, and points out how the program can benefit them. Second, training helps police identify strategies for responding to victims and witnesses that may increase cooperativeness, improve the quality of evidence, and reduce police stress.

Staff of Scottsdale’s Police Crisis Intervention Unit provide four hours of training for every new officer and assist with in-service training in such areas as child abuse and domestic violence. The director of the Middlesex County (Massachusetts) Victim Witness Service Bureau, with the assistance of the police chief of the largest city served by the program, arranged work-

shops for officers on the problems of working with rape victims. Forensic experts and the director of a local hospital rape crisis center discussed the preservation and testing of evidence. Two days after one of these sessions, an officer who had just worked with a rape victim reported that, as a result of the training, he felt more confident in what he was doing, did not rush the interview, and, recognizing the importance of making the victim feel safe, avoided asking accusatory questions.

Many victim service providers conduct 10- or 15-minute briefing sessions at roll calls to take advantage of the one time when all officers are easily accessible. Staff of the Minneapolis–St. Paul program initially found that attending the midnight shift roll call helped convince police that they were dedicated. As officers’ workload increased, however, they became less willing to allow presentations during roll call. When staff are able to schedule roll call sessions, it may be helpful to plan in advance for a police officer to describe how the program has benefited him or her so that other officers hear the story from one of their own. Victim assistance program staff can also try to schedule training during police academies.

After—or as part of the process of—establishing a secure working relationship with the police, program staff can arrange with the chief or sheriff to train law enforcement staff in victim witness issues and services, such as crisis intervention, working with sexual abuse victims and children, and expediting property return.

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***It is important that initial training and briefing sessions for police include explicit statements that program staff do not intend to interfere with police operations in any way.***

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As a matter of strategy, staff may want to avoid emphasizing concerns over the emotional well-being of victims or officers and instead focus on concrete benefits to the police department. More generally, it is important that program staff make a concerted effort to avoid the “bleeding heart” image many police may initially—and for a long time—have of staff. (At the same time, staff should not downplay the advantages they expect to gain by cooperating with the police. Law enforcement officers know that most people who come to them want help,

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and they prefer that people be straightforward in asking for what they want.)

5. Program staff can *capitalize on previous contacts* to establish their own informal contacts with line officers with whom they hope to work. His eight years' experience as an Oakland (California) police officer and current peace officer status sometimes makes local police departments more receptive to working with the program director of the Alameda County (California) Victim/Witness Assistance Division. The director of the Portland (Oregon) Victims Assistance Program is also chief deputy of the family justice division within the district attorney's office, a position that helps her in her dealings with law enforcement officers.

Staff can encourage police to stop by the program office to chat, and can themselves go to the station house to talk with officers. For example, staff of Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul had an open house for police at the program's inception and encouraged them to stop in at any time for coffee. As metropolitan area police departments have begun implementing community policing, victim services staff have occasionally worked out of police substations. Scottsdale (Arizona) program staff spend an hour or two per week meeting with officers in the law enforcement center to strengthen relationships.

6. Most victim service providers have found that the single most effective means of securing and maintaining cooperation with police is *word of mouth among police officers*. When one officer has a good experience with the program, he or she can pass the information on to other officers with a degree of credibility that no program sales pitch can match.
  - The robbery detail in Alameda County (California) was very cool toward the Victim Witness Assistance Staff Division's mobile crisis unit until a staff member worked with an officer on a sexual assault and robbery case. She established a good rapport with the officer based on her personality and her ability to relieve the pressure on him to deal with the victim's emotional and financial problems. As a result, the program began receiving regular calls from the other officers in the robbery unit.
  - When a new officer in the Greenville (South Carolina) Police Department admitted that the family of a homicide victim was "driving me nuts," an expe-

rienced officer was overheard telling him to call the Victim/Witness Assistance Program for help in supporting the family. The program now obtains referrals frequently from throughout the police department.

7. Finally, *thanking officers* who have been particularly helpful and cooperative, and *publicly praising them to their superiors*, can go a long way toward nurturing a constructive, positive working relationship and encouraging continued future assistance. Conversely, *avoiding public criticism of officers*, and instead dealing with most problems privately, can help build trust among initially reluctant officers.<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, establishing and maintaining a useful working relationship with the police depends on doing things for officers that benefit *them*.

**Program activities that benefit police.** Victim assistance programs can perform at least six activities that not only assist victims and witnesses but also have direct benefits for police. The benefits include reducing police stress, permitting quicker redeployment, providing additional or better evidence, and saving money.

### 1. Handling Referrals

The most common and beneficial service to police departments is for the program to handle victims referred by officers. Police requests can range from on-the-scene comforting of distraught victims to legal aid in a civil suit, to free meals for victims until their stolen food stamps have been replaced. Accepting these referrals may save police officers time and reduce their stress.

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*Police officers have told many programs that they find it tremendously helpful to have one telephone number to call for referring victims and witnesses for any type of service. As a result, officers do not have to leave an agitated victim with a dissatisfying, "Sorry I can't help you."*

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Statutes in many States now require officers to provide victims with information on victim services; victim service providers can help facilitate officers' efforts to comply with this requirement. For example, the staff of the Minneapolis–St. Paul program collaborated with officers from the Minneapolis Police Department to develop a Police and Victims

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## Collaborating with Community Policing Efforts in Philadelphia and Los Angeles

Policing in many cities and counties has changed dramatically in the last decade with the implementation of community policing. Some departments have adopted a few components of the philosophy, while others have based a total departmental reorganization of structure, management, and service delivery on the principles of community policing. Law enforcement agencies operating on the basis of community policing may be better equipped and more likely to address the needs of crime victims and witnesses.

### *Northwest Victim Services, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Victim assistance program personnel can capitalize on the movement toward community policing by collaborating with law enforcement officers dedicated to the ideals and strategies of community policing. One of the Philadelphia Police Department's first steps toward community policing was the establishment in 1987 of a network of victim assistance police officers (VAO's), crime prevention officers, and community relations officers assigned to individual districts. Staff of Northwest Victim Services, a private, nonprofit agency that provides services throughout four districts in the northwest part of the city, work closely with the VAO assigned to each of these districts (see appendix A for contact information). For instance, they conduct home visits to victims of crime together, hold joint meetings with other service organizations in the area or with neighborhood residents, and share information. When police in one district realized that a scam was operating in their area, they notified victim assistance staff, who in turn developed public service announcements and alerted police in nearby districts to the problem.

Although the VAO's may be called off their beat to attend to other duties, the police department tries to ensure that the officers have time to attend to victim services in the district to which they were assigned. In addition to working directly with the VAO's and other officers assigned to the four districts, program staff train all new northwest police officers regarding victim assistance services.

### *Los Angeles County District Attorney's Victim Services*

The Los Angeles County Victim Witness Assistance Program, which operates out of the district attorney's office, works closely with several law enforcement agencies that have adopted community policing (see appendix A for contact information). For example, the director of the program assigned victim advocates to specific Los Angeles Police Department patrol areas in south central Los Angeles. The advocates frequently make presentations to the officers, accompany them on their beats, and accept referrals from them.

The program also operates an intervention service for minority youth at risk for becoming involved in the criminal justice system. When the Inglewood Police Department implemented community policing, community policing officers were assigned to work with the Victim Witness Assistance Program's intervention for high-risk youth. Officers stop by the location where intervention services are provided to talk with youth and create a positive relationship between youth and law enforcement. In addition, the program director sits on a task force charged with developing a victim component of community-based policing statewide, looking at ways to train officers regarding victims issues and resources.

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Services Information card that contains information on victim rights and local service providers, including phone numbers for victim services, a sexual violence center, battered women's shelters, and criminal justice agencies (see appendix F). Officers are mandated by statute to distribute the information on the card. Because of its usefulness, the card was distributed statewide by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Although more and more departments are training officers to respond to victims, many police still feel uncomfortable consoling distraught victims or question the extent to which providing consolation should be part of their job. Often they are relieved to have support in this task. Accepting police referrals, especially when they occur on the scene, can also enable police officers to return to their beat more quickly. Victim advocates based in the Seattle (Washington) Police Department assist detectives in the sex crimes unit during interviews with rape victims by orienting the victims to the criminal justice process and providing general support.<sup>2</sup> Until State budget cuts made it unaffordable, the Alameda County (California) program operated a mobile crisis intervention unit from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. seven days a week to respond to police requests for assistance from crime victims. Unit staff worked out of the Youth Services Division of the Oakland (California) Police Department, where office space was provided at no cost. Patrolling the city in an unmarked county vehicle equipped with a police radio, staff were able to provide on-scene emergency assistance quickly.

Up to one-third of police referrals may be from individuals who are not the direct victims of a crime,<sup>3</sup> including witnesses to crime, victims of environmental and other disasters, families and friends of homicide victims, or mentally ill or agitated individuals who are creating a disturbance or require assistance. Law enforcement officers, after all, respond to all people in trouble. Nearly two-thirds of the clients in the Scottsdale (Arizona) Police Crisis Intervention Unit have not been victims of crimes immediately prior to referral; rather, they comprise such people as juvenile runaways, emotionally disturbed individuals, and the homeless. Other programs, such as the Pima County (Arizona) Victim Witness Program, serve victims of automobile accidents, survivors of suicide attempts, and traumatized victims of and witnesses to violent crime.

Program staff may need to *set limits on helping noncrime victims referred by police officers* in order to avoid overextending themselves. Two considerations are important when deciding whether to provide assistance. First, officers may

be testing a new program to see if staff are truly willing and able to help them. If program staff feel they are being tested, they may want to provide assistance initially and later, after a firm working relationship has been established, tactfully decline to handle selected or all referrals that they feel they cannot or should not help with. For instance, the Minneapolis–St. Paul program was asked to deal with a family that was disturbing a neighborhood and to board up a house that had burned down. Staff assisted with the first request, but not the second.

Second, the benefits that programs derive from their relationship with the police may be too substantial to allow them to turn down such requests. Although Pima County (Arizona) Victim Witness Program staff did not originally plan to assist noncrime victims, they decided to do so when they discovered that police expected program staff to assist them if the program was serious about wanting to be helpful. As a result, the program included nonvictims among its target audiences.

## 2. *Serving as a Buffer Between Victims and Police*

Victim assistance program staff can also aid police by comforting and assisting victims and by helping victims to understand police procedures, so that officers have more time to investigate the crime. Until it hired its own victim advocate, the Greenville (South Carolina) Police Department's homicide unit used the Victim Witness Assistance Program in the county courthouse for comforting victims' families so that detectives could work uninterrupted while examining the crime scene and questioning witnesses.

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***“What we’re finding is that paying attention to victimization helps us to build neighborhoods back. If people feel the system has abandoned them, then you don’t get the same level of cooperation.”***

— Edward McLaughlin, Chief  
Inspector, Philadelphia Police  
Department

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Portland (Oregon) police officers indicate that victim assistance staff can reduce public hostility—for example, by explaining to victims why no arrest has been made in a case (e.g., because police have not completed their investigation) or why charges will not be filed (e.g., because a legal technicality prevents prosecution). In serving as a buffer,

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victim assistance programs can increase victims' and community residents' confidence and trust in the police and in the rest of the criminal justice system.

### *3. Helping Locate and Protect Witnesses*

Police who are serving subpoenas or seeking witnesses in order to gather evidence often find that victims and witnesses have moved without leaving a forwarding address or gave a false address when questioned about the crime. Victim assistance program staff can provide a valuable service by tracking down witnesses for police. In addition, witness intimidation has become an increasing problem for many police and prosecutors. Staff can help address this problem in traditional ways—by counseling witnesses and accompanying them to court—or through more targeted approaches, such as helping to relocate threatened witnesses and their families. Police in Las Vegas (Nevada), for instance, refer threatened witnesses and their families to the Clark County Victim Witness Assistance Center, whose director arranges for motel or other accommodations, as well as for escort from the police department or prosecutor's office when the witness testifies.<sup>4</sup>

### *4. Providing Case Status Information*

Police sometimes do not hear the results of the cases in which they have been involved and are therefore unaware of the outcome of their efforts in making an arrest or interrogating victims and witnesses. Without learning the outcome of cases, police cannot gauge how to handle a victim who comes to their attention a second time—for example, a battered spouse who previously refused to press charges. Where desirable, victim/witness program administrators can establish procedures for routinely informing police of the outcome of each case or of certain types of cases. As a police inspector in Philadelphia noted, officers who spend their time trying to bring about justice like to know the results of their efforts, in terms of both the offender and the victim.

### *5. Furnishing Better or More Evidence*

Many law enforcement officers report that victim service providers improve the information and evidence provided by victims and witnesses. A staff member who can calm people and address their emotional and financial needs may enable them to concentrate better on providing accurate information. Training police in how to handle victims with sensitivity may also serve to improve the quality of the information or evidence victims provide.

Police have cited instances in which program staff discovered information—for example, from children—that investigating officers had been unable to obtain. Staff can also provide information that can help police assess how credible severely upset witnesses will be if called on to testify in open court.

Program staff must be careful, however, not to act as investigators. Information passed on to police should usually be limited to what they learn inadvertently, as part of advocacy or counseling activities, or what police have explicitly asked them to find out from a client.

Some program staff have developed special interests or skills that make them particularly valuable to police in interrogating victims and witnesses. For several years, the Minneapolis–St. Paul Citizens Council Victim Services employed a member who was skilled in sign language, a talent that police found helpful in a city where a school for the deaf has attracted several thousand deaf and speech-impaired residents.

### *6. Implementing a Witness Alert Program for Police*

Several programs have established a stand-by system for notifying police shortly before their testimony is needed in court in order to reduce the time officers have to spend waiting in court for their case to be called and to eliminate unnecessary trips when a case is continued or dismissed. Of course, many police officers like working overtime because of the extra money they earn. As a result, program staff need to exercise caution about whether and with whom they advertise the availability of such a service. In the long run, however, the courts can best perform this activity and, in the process, demonstrate their commitment to improving police efficiency and reducing law enforcement costs by minimizing the time police witnesses spend waiting in court.

**Potential difficulties in working with police.** Program staff, especially those at newly established programs, should be prepared for potential roadblocks in working with law enforcement agencies. Alameda County's (California) Victim/Witness Assistance Division experienced minor problems even though its director was a former police officer, and Scottsdale Arizona's Police Crisis Intervention Unit encountered difficulties even though the police department initiated and administered the program.

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Some of the difficulties program staff may encounter result from attitudes that researchers and many staff report as common among law enforcement officers,<sup>5</sup> including:

- *Distrust of outsiders.* Officers may be particularly skeptical of “social workers,” whom they may view as naive and unsympathetic to the needs of law enforcement.
- *Resistance to change.* Officers may fear that outsiders will interfere with or question their procedures, challenge their competence, or create additional work for them.
- *Placement of blame on the victim.* Police officers, like many others, may find it difficult to sympathize with advocacy on behalf of victims whom they see as at least partly blameworthy.
- *Skepticism of government and volunteer programs.* Officers may see such programs as wasteful and not worthy of support until they have proven their stability and seriousness.<sup>6</sup>

Some departments legitimately believe that it is legally or ethically improper for them to disclose information about victims to individuals they may consider outside the criminal justice system.<sup>7</sup> This concern has a statutory basis in some jurisdictions. Some law enforcement officers are also doubtful that program staff will keep information confidential, thereby jeopardizing the investigation—if not the merits of the case in court. In addition, police investigators may be afraid that staff will engage in activities beyond their authority—for example, by asking leading questions in cases of child abuse which could lead to contamination of the witness and thereby preclude use of the child’s testimony. Finally, many victim services providers have found that working with the police is hampered when officers are unfamiliar with what their program does or have an erroneous impression of its purpose, availability, and the restrictions and qualifications of its staff.

### *Working With Prosecutors*

Establishing liaison with prosecutors is often more quickly accomplished than with police, because the benefits to deputy district attorneys tend to be more obvious and immediate. Administrators of programs that operate either within or outside of prosecutors’ offices may want to consider the following approaches and activities in networking with prosecutors.

## **Secure the Support of the Chief Prosecutor**

It is especially important to secure the active support of the chief prosecutor. An evaluation of eight programs sponsored by district attorneys concluded that the most important factor in making victim assistance units viable and productive was the support and interest of the district attorney: “If the victim/ witness effort is clearly one of his priorities and he contributes both moral and organizational support, its chances of success are greatly increased. His support alone will not make it go . . . but, absent that support, the chances of its success are virtually non-existent.”<sup>8</sup>

**Approaches to gaining cooperation.** Many of the general strategies for establishing and maintaining a working relationship with police serve equally well with prosecutors:

- learning about their attitudes and their problems in the local community;
- asking them to train program staff in how cases are handled;
- contacting the most receptive individuals in the office first;
- involving prosecutors in program planning;
- being available to work with prosecutors during evenings and on weekends;
- training assistant district attorneys to use the program;
- relying on word of mouth to stimulate expanded use of the program.

In addition, program staff report having found the following specific strategies useful for gaining prosecutor cooperation:

- Conduct a needs assessment or draw on existing research<sup>9</sup> to document how victims and witnesses fail to cooperate fully with prosecutors because they are dissatisfied with the way they are treated by the criminal justice system.



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- Provide orientation to the program for newly hired prosecutors; have the district attorney introduce and endorse the program. Also, present valuable case information as soon as possible to establish the benefits the program can bring to case processing.
  - Never disagree with prosecutorial decisions about how to handle a case. Build trust first; once trust has developed, present alternatives, when appropriate, to how the case is being handled, but do not give advice or instructions.
  - Do not be overenthusiastic about cases or appear to be emotionally involved in them, unless the prosecuting attorney shares the excitement or concern. Be business-like and low-key.
  - Do not underestimate the initial impression made by dress, manner, and tone. In the courthouse, especially, prosecutors expect decorum.
  - Do not take notes of conversations with victims and witnesses if the program is in a jurisdiction in which staff can be subpoenaed and required to produce their “work product” in court.

As with police, the most effective strategy for establishing and maintaining collaboration with district attorneys is to focus, at least initially, on some of the victim and witness services which also provide the most benefit to prosecutors. A knowledge of these types of assistance is essential for gaining cooperation from district and city attorneys.

**Program activities that benefit prosecutors.** Victim assistance program personnel can assist prosecutors in a number of ways, the most common and helpful of which are to explain court procedures to witnesses and notify witnesses of court dates. The end result may be increased conviction rates—or at least fewer dismissals for lack of complaining witnesses or poor witness cooperation.

By allaying some of the fears victims and witnesses may have about testifying, and by instilling a positive attitude toward the criminal justice system, *court orientation* enables prosecutors to concentrate on providing good evidence, rather than spending a lot of time explaining court procedures to victims and witnesses.

A second benefit to prosecutors is *witness notification*. Taking on some or all of the responsibility for contacting

witnesses helps ensure that they appear in court and appear on time, reducing the burden on prosecutors for conducting this essentially clerical task. Providing telephone alert services was ranked the single most important help to district attorneys by prosecutors in eight prosecutor-based programs.<sup>10</sup> Appendix G shows a sample letter used by the Alameda County (California) program to inform witnesses that they may be asked to provide information regarding a case.

*Counseling* victims and witnesses is another significant help to prosecutors. Many attorneys feel that providing emotional support or giving advice is tangential to their jobs or feel they are not qualified to do counseling. Many district attorneys are uncomfortable talking with rape victims, battered spouses, and victims of child molestation. They appreciate it when program staff can calm anxious victims, prepare them for the embarrassing questions prosecutors may have to ask them, “desensitize” them to the necessity of providing explicit descriptions of what happened to them, and in general create a positive attitude toward the criminal justice system—all of which improves the motivation and ability of witnesses to testify effectively.

Closely related to this activity is helping victims to “hang tough” in the face of significant incentives to drop the case. The St. Paul (Minnesota) City Attorney used to inform all battered women who wanted to drop charges that they first had to go to Citizens Council Victim Services for an evaluation of their problem and for information on the possible consequences of not seeing the case through; program staff then attempted to assist the victim in continuing the case and recommended to the prosecutor whether to dismiss or prosecute based on the victim’s willingness and ability to proceed. (Another program in St. Paul that works specifically with domestic abuse victims now conducts this activity.)

Program staff at times *provide valuable witness information to prosecutors*. As noted above, a program sometimes uncovers information from sexual assault victims that leads to additional charges against an accused rapist. Even passing comments can be revealing and helpful to the prosecutor. Program staff in the Alameda County Victim/Witness Assistance Division learned that an elderly rape victim was mentally ill, had once been a madam, and had accepted \$5.00 from the defendant after the assault. Forewarned with this knowledge, which had not been revealed in the preliminary hearing, the district attorney decided to make a pretrial offer rather than expend resources on a trial he felt he would be very unlikely to win. Some prosecutors are wary of program

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## Helping Victims Pursue Civil Litigation

An emerging issue in the field of victim assistance is victims' pursuit of civil litigation as a means of recovering losses from a crime. Certain types of victims, such as abused women and children, and victims of campus and bias crime, have in particular been obtaining civil relief in recent years.<sup>11</sup> Victim advocates have traditionally helped victims obtain compensation and restitution but are only now beginning to work with victims to help facilitate civil recoveries.

Victim assistance program staff tread on uncertain ground in their involvement with civil litigation efforts because of the complexity and technicalities involved in the process, the chances of failure and hence revictimization, and possible legal limits to their efforts (particularly if they are based in the district attorney's office). However, they typically can help victims navigate the process by informing them about their legal rights and options, and about legal resources in the community. A victim advocate can assist a victim in assessing his or her potential for recovering losses in a civil suit and review the civil litigation process and the factors to consider in choosing an attorney.

The decision to pursue civil litigation and the choice of attorney should be left entirely up to the victim. Also, victim advocates should be careful not to provide specific legal advice themselves and to investigate any prohibitions against their making referrals to specific attorneys.<sup>12</sup> If the victim does want to sue the offender for damages, the victim advocate can assist the victim and his or her attorney with the collection and presentation of facts relevant to the case.

To provide effective services in the area of civil litigation, victim assistance staff must learn about the process and the circumstances that make it worth pursuing.

- The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), within the U.S. Department of Justice, has produced a number of resources on legal remedies for crime victims that advocates may find useful, including *Civil Legal Remedies for Crime Victims* (an OVC bulletin) and "Legal Remedies for Crime Victims Against Perpetrators: Basic Principles: A New Dimension in Victim Advocacy," a conference training manual and curriculum. Contact the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at (800) 851-3420 for information on how to obtain these and other relevant materials.
- "The Attorney's Victim Assistance Manual: A Guide to the Legal Issues Confronting Victims of Crime and Victim Service Providers," a 1987 publication of the American Bar Association, also may be useful. Call (312) 988-5000 to obtain this publication.
- Contacts with attorneys and attorney groups can also provide valuable information on civil litigation.

staff securing evidence, partly because this is the prosecutor's job and partly because they fear that program involvement at this level may compromise the legality of a case by making it seem that outside influence was exerted on witnesses to testify in certain ways. Determining the preferences and policies of individual prosecutors will help staff to collaborate most productively.

Many victim service providers can provide information that can help prosecutors *assess victims' and witnesses' ability to testify*, particularly the ability of children, rape victims, and elderly victims. When the person responsible for handling child molestation cases for the Alameda County (California) program is not sure whether a child is able to withstand the rigors of a trial, she makes an appointment to visit the victim at the family's home. After talking with the child,

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the staff member reports to the assistant district attorney whether the child appears to know the difference between a lie and the truth, is articulate, needs to build rapport with the prosecutor before the preliminary hearing, can sit still without squirming or losing interest, and requires (or would be embarrassed by) the presence of family or program staff in the courtroom.

Program staff often *act as a buffer* between prosecutors and victims and witnesses, just as they do for police. Staff can prepare victims for judicial decisions to release a defendant on bail and can explain why a case was dismissed or why an offender was acquitted or received a light sentence. A staff member of Portland's Victims Assistance Program was asked to console a murder victim's father, who was requested to stay out of the courtroom because the district attorney was afraid the man might create a disturbance; the investigating police officer had tried talk to the father and only alienated him further. The program staff person did the job, in part by promising to sit in on the trial and keep the father informed of what transpired.

Program staff can also assist prosecutors with *witness management* activities (see the box on the following page, "Witness Intimidation: How One Victim Assistance Program Helps"). These include:

- providing transportation for witnesses who would otherwise be unable or unwilling to appear;
- handling travel and accommodations for out-of-town witnesses; and
- obtaining relief for victims and witnesses who have been threatened by defendants or the defendants' families.

Programs can furnish some or all of these services to victims and witnesses in part as a benefit to prosecutors. In the long run, however, district and city attorney offices, like law enforcement agencies, are best suited to provide a number of these services, such as orienting witnesses to the criminal justice system, placing selected witnesses on call, and explaining potential or actual unfavorable trial outcomes. For example, program staff can begin by offering to counsel sexual assault victims and witnesses; ultimately, however, it is best if the district attorney trains prosecutors in questioning rape victims and victims of child molestation effectively. Program staff can offer either to conduct the training or to secure expert trainers from another organization.

**Potential difficulties in working with prosecutors.** Some prosecutors share the same reservations that some police have about working with a victim/witness program, including suspicion of outsiders and concerns about confidentiality and case control. Much of this reluctance to cooperate stems from the desire of many prosecutors to exercise complete control over their cases—over who talks with witnesses, who has access to files, who contacts defense attorneys, and who confers with judges and probation officers. Program staff and prosecutors contacted in this study reported that prosecutors may anticipate the following troublesome scenarios:

- Victim/witness program staff will be watchdogs, looking over the prosecutor's shoulder, ready to criticize his or her handling of a case.
- Program staff may secure information from victims and witnesses that is discoverable in court and that may compromise a case.
- Staff may give the victim a false impression of how strong the case is (because they hear only the victim's side or are unaware of a legal problem that weakens the case), whether the case will be prosecuted, or what the sentence will be. An embarrassed district attorney may then have to explain why the case was plea-bargained, dismissed, or lost, or why a light sentence was imposed.
- Program staff may urge prosecutors to pursue cases that have insufficient evidence or that present legal barriers to prosecution.
- Less often, staff may urge district attorneys to dismiss certain cases—for example, those involving a reluctant rape victim or a distraught victim of child molestation—which the district attorney feels should be prosecuted.
- Program staff may discuss confidential case information with friends or, worse, with defense attorneys or defendants.

### *Working with Judges*

Victim assistance programs can also benefit from judicial involvement.<sup>13</sup> For example, judges alone can provide an opportunity to advocate on behalf of victims at sentencing, allow program staff to accompany troubled victims during court proceedings, and expedite trials of cases involving sensitive victims.

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## Witness Intimidation: How One Victim Assistance Program Helps

Reported cases of victim and witness intimidation have increased in number and severity in recent years, particularly in cases of gang crimes. Threats of retaliation and actual physical violence intimidate many victims and witnesses into not cooperating with criminal proceedings. Intimidation represents another disturbing example of “second victimization” that many victims suffer. In some States, witness intimidation is now a crime in and of itself.<sup>14</sup>

Law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judges have traditionally responded to witness intimidation through such methods as warnings to the intimidators, prosecution of intimidation attempts, and the Federal Witness Protection Program. However, these strategies are often insufficient. Victim assistance programs can play an integral role in addressing victim and witness intimidation by working closely with the rest of the criminal justice system as well as with community groups. Traditional victim services, such as accompanying a witness to court and providing counseling, can help encourage an intimidated victim or witness to press charges or testify.

Some victim service providers are beginning to make special efforts to address intimidation. The director of the Clark County Victim Witness Assistance Center in Nevada, based out of the district attorney’s office, acts as a case manager for intimidated victims and witnesses, assessing their need for protection and lining up needed services from her own program, the police or prosecutor, or other sources (see appendix A for contact information). She has eight full-time staff but handles intimidation cases herself. She accepts referrals only from police and prosecutors. (However, all witnesses receive a booklet suggesting that they notify authorities if they are being intimidated.)

After the preliminary hearing, she suggests that the witness stay with family or friends in another location and offers financial assistance for transportation. She requires that the witness keep in touch, and she calls the family or friends to verify that they will accept the witness. Occasionally she calls the local police department to verify their address. Although this is the least accepted strategy, the director does relocate an average of six gang-related witnesses each year. The director also makes arrangements for intimidated witnesses to stay in a motel for a few nights or, for witnesses in public housing, for one or two weeks, while she attempts to obtain transitional housing for them through the city and county public housing authority. In such cases, she notifies the shift sergeant and the police gang detail in the motel’s jurisdiction so that they will be aware of the likely problem if they are called to the motel later. By doing ride-alongs with officers and doing occasional nonvictim-related work for them, the program director has developed a good rapport with them. Also, the program director is available by beeper to police, prosecutors, and selected witnesses on a 24-hour basis. For instance, one night the police called her for assistance after they learned that defendants had threatened to firebomb the house of the victim’s family. The director moved the family twice during the night and by morning was able to arrange for them to stay in a location out of town.

The director works with the prosecutor or with law enforcement officers to provide an escort for the witness, after testifying on the first floor of the courthouse, to the program’s office on the fifth floor. In this way, the witness does not have to wait in a part of the courthouse where he or she might be subjected to further intimidation. There are limits to what program staff will do, however, owing to the danger inherent in intimidation cases. Protection remains the responsibility of the district attorney’s office. Program staff do not leave the courthouse with intimidated witnesses but instead arrange for the investigating district attorney to provide transportation to wherever the witness is staying. The director provides or arranges for assistance in about four gang-related cases per month. Funding for the program’s witness intimidation services comes largely from the county and donations. The program spends about \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year on witness intimidation expenses.

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Program staff who work with judges assist them principally by helping witnesses to maintain emotional control in the courtroom. Many judges dislike interruptions from witnesses who become distraught on the stand and appreciate a program's ability to facilitate the smooth operation of the proceedings. A judge in Alameda County (California), noticing that a witness was trembling severely when taking the oath, allowed a program staff member to sit next to her during the trial. In cases where a witness has become too upset to continue, judges in several jurisdictions have called for a program staff member to come to the courtroom, take the witness aside, and help her or him regain composure so the trial can proceed.

Another service some programs provide to judges is the preparation of victim impact statements and recommendations for restitution. Some judges request that program staff be present during sentencing in important cases to provide impact reports. In a case in which three rape victims were too frightened to explain to the judge directly how the crime had affected them, a staff member of the Middlesex County (Massachusetts) Victim Witness Service bureau had the women submit letters of explanation; the judge also called the staff member to testify as to how the crime had affected the victims' personal and professional lives, and how they feel the case should be disposed.

Establishing working relationships with the judiciary can be difficult, however, in part because the areas in which cooperation can be useful are limited, and in part because judges tend to avoid activities they consider an infringement of their autonomy. After staff from one program sent case disposition notices to clients, some of the victims telephoned judges to complain about what they thought were lenient sentences. Staff of the same program also invited victims to attend sentencing procedures. Both activities infuriated several judges. Staff resolved the conflict by handling victim complaints themselves, thereby shielding judges from the ire of disappointed victims. Detailed information was also included in disposition letters, clarifying the ways in which conditions can make a probation sentence a more severe penalty than might otherwise appear to be the case. This was not an ideal solution, however, since some judges need to realize how important their sentencing practices are to victims. Sitting down and talking with the judiciary before instituting practices that may affect judges is essential to prevent misunderstandings and identify areas of mutual benefit.

### *Working with Corrections*

A victim's rights and needs within the criminal justice system do not end once the offender has been convicted and sentenced. Often victims want to be kept informed of the offender's status in the correctional system. Also, victims of an offender who has been ordered to pay restitution will want to obtain payment.

The correctional system has traditionally been concerned primarily with the punishment or rehabilitation of offenders; it has only been since the late 1980's that both institutional and community corrections have become significantly involved in addressing victims' needs. Some in the victim assistance field, in fact, consider corrections the "last frontier" in the victim assistance movement. Twenty-two States now have constitutional amendments that guarantee victims' rights; these amendments typically require corrections systems to notify the victim of changes in an offender's status in the system and to provide the victim an opportunity to be present at parole hearings. For instance, the Texas Crime Victims' Bill of Rights ensures victims the right to have a victim impact statement considered by the parole board prior to any parole action, to be notified about parole proceedings, and to submit information for consideration by the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The American Corrections Association (ACA) and the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) have actively begun to encourage agencies across the country to become more responsive to victims' needs and to pursue collaboration with already existing victim assistance programs. The APPA, in a position statement released in 1994, suggested the appointment of a "victim liaison officer" to provide victims with information, assistance, and referrals to other agencies. The Office for Victims of Crime, within the U.S. Department of Justice, has funded two national corrections-based training and technical assistance programs, operated by the National Victim Center and the APPA. (See appendix B for contact information.)

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***Corrections departments are now much more likely to view victims, as well as offenders, as part of their responsibility.***

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In general, corrections departments are now much more likely to view victims, as well as offenders, as part of their responsibility. Moreover, they are more likely to realize that victim programs can benefit their own staff members who may be victimized within a correctional facility. As of 1991, 26 adult corrections agencies, 15 juvenile corrections agen-

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cies, and 22 parole agencies had representatives in victim services coalitions, while 19 adult corrections agencies, 12 juvenile corrections agencies, and 20 parole agencies were providing direct assistance to crime victims.<sup>15</sup> The California Youth Authority Office of Prevention and Victim Services, for example, has three full-time staff victim advocates but has also trained over 80 personnel within the Youth Authority in victim services and conducted classes for offenders on the impact of crime on victims. The director of the youth authority's Office of Prevention and Victim Services considers this "web of people" throughout the agency essential to the provision of effective services to victims.

**Approaches and activities.** Victim assistance program administrators who wish to network with the corrections system (both adult and juvenile branches), including departments of probation and parole and correctional facilities themselves,<sup>16</sup> can implement the approaches recommended above for working with law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges.

Victim advocates can assist corrections officials with the provision of victim services through the following activities:

- Develop a *victim information brochure or fact sheet* that describes the corrections, probation, or parole department (or all three) and explains the services each can offer to victims. The brochure may include other sources of assistance available from correctional staff both within and outside the department. The California Youth Authority developed a crime victim information brochure, available in both English and Spanish, that answers common questions about the agency, parole, and victims' rights, and provides resources for further information and assistance. The California Department of Corrections produced a videotape concerning crime victims' rights within the correctional system and distributed it to local victim assistance programs and other community service providers.
- Offer *victim notification services* to keep victims informed of changes in the offender's status within the system. Because of the confidential nature of this information, correctional staff will likely need to provide this service themselves. However, victim assistance program staff can assist the agency with setting up the service—for example, by developing notification forms or making the forms available to victims. In the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, the Office of Victim Services operates a Crime Victim Input and Notification Program which notifies victims of all postsentencing release decisions or outcomes, including work release

furlough, parole, pardon, community corrections, placement, commitment to a mental health facility, or escape. In one and a half years, 3,500 victims have registered with the program. The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Pennsylvania, ensures that all victims of a personal injury crime have the opportunity to register a request for notification with the Chester County Prison. Appendix H shows a sample letter that the Washington (State) Department of Corrections' Victim/Witness Notification Program uses to notify crime victims of the offender's status.

- Provide *support to victims during parole and other hearings*. The corrections agency may provide a room in which crime victims can wait without running the risk of seeing the offender or his or her family. Victim advocates may accompany victims to the hearings, help them prepare a victim impact statement, and support the victim during presentation of the statement.
- Make arrangements for payment of *restitution* to the victim. Restitution can be difficult to secure, given many offenders' sparse resources. Nevertheless, many correctional agencies have developed effective methods of collection and payment.
- Conduct *classes for offenders on the impact of crime on victims*. Some program staff believe that classes can deter some offenders from future crime. The California Youth Authority's Office of Prevention and Victim Services has been conducting these classes for over 10 years. Using a six-week curriculum and videotapes of victims discussing their losses, instructors review various types of crimes and their impact on victims. Victims also speak directly to the classes about the impact of crime on their lives.
- Offer *victim-offender mediation* to victims who want to speak with their offender face-to-face to discuss the impact of the crime, restitution, and other matters.<sup>17</sup> Victim-offender mediation, which is also called victim-offender reconciliation (VORP) and restorative justice, has gained increasing popularity in recent years. It remains a controversial practice, however, in part because of the potential second trauma to which it may expose the victim. Nonetheless, some victim service providers report that mediation is beneficial to both victims and offenders. (See chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of mediation services.) Both parties must agree to the mediation, which uses a trained mediator, before the meeting takes place.

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**Potential difficulties in working with corrections.** Victim assistance program staff may encounter resistance among corrections personnel because consideration of victims' needs may be relatively new to many correctional agencies and because corrections staff may view offenders as the primary recipients of their limited resources. Probation officers, for instance, may be committed to the rehabilitation of the offenders they supervise and have little desire, time, or ability to work with victims. Furthermore, the time that correctional staff feel they can divert to victim services may decrease as they come under increasing pressure to provide more intensive supervision of offenders, whose numbers have been increasing rapidly in the last two decades.<sup>18</sup> The collection and payment of restitution may be particularly difficult, owing primarily, as noted above, to offenders' lack of money, but also because of the low priority that corrections staff may be willing to assign to restitution when faced with other pressing responsibilities.<sup>19</sup>

Victim program staff may encounter special difficulty in working with corrections to assist victims of juvenile offenders. Some offender information, such as notification of status, is considered confidential in the case of juvenile offenders. Moreover, most of the statutes that protect crime victims' rights do not extend to victims of juvenile crime.<sup>20</sup> Because of these barriers, the American Correctional Association Victims Committee has recommended that victims' rights be the same regardless of the age of the offender. Given the rise in violent juvenile crime in recent years—and the expected continuation of this trend—the issue of victims' rights in these cases may become an increasing problem for victim assistance programs.

Finally, collaboration with corrections may be constrained by the fear and mistrust many victims feel toward the correctional system, which they may view as threatening and uncaring because offenders are often released on parole or work furlough after serving only a portion of their sentence. Even victim advocates within the correctional system may be perceived as being on the offender's side. Correctional staff and victim advocates alike must be able to explain to the victim their responsibility under the law to respect offenders' rights as well as victims' rights.

## Addressing Potential Conflicts of Interest in Working With Justice Agencies

For the most part, victim service providers have found that serving victims and witnesses simultaneously benefits the

criminal justice system. However, there are potential conflicts between doing what is in the victim's best interest and processing cases successfully.

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*Most program staff are aware of the potential for conflict with criminal justice agencies and take precautions to avoid overt disagreement. As the director of a prosecutor-based program remarked, "You're always deciding whether you're working for the district attorney or the victim."*

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The most frequent dissension occurs with prosecutors. As noted above, program staff sometimes disagree with prosecutors about whether to prosecute a case. A city attorney in Minneapolis (Minnesota) refused to file charges in a case in which a paranoid schizophrenic woman had been assaulted, because he felt she would not be a credible witness in court; program staff arranged to have a complaint issued, and because it then appeared that the case would go forward, the defendant confessed. In Alameda County (California), Victim/Witness Assistance Division staff occasionally differ with prosecutors regarding the ability of mentally retarded victims and children to testify.

Defense attorneys may also present obstacles to victim services. For instance, when the Colorado Springs (Colorado) Police Department Victim/Witness Office was first established, defense attorneys occasionally accused its staff of preparing witnesses for testifying and tried to keep advocates out of the courtroom. Over time, such problems have become less frequent, in part because the program coordinator instructs her staff to be fully cooperative and professional with the attorneys and to refrain from negative comments about them.

A second area in which conflict may arise with prosecutors is in terms of sentencing severity, with victim services providers sometimes hoping for a stronger sentence than district attorneys are prepared to seek. Some program staff oppose pleas bargains in which no jail time is included and disagree with reductions in charges that will result in relatively mild punishment.

Some victim services providers have also experienced conflicts with judges and defense attorneys. In one case, a victim advocate was sitting in court with the mother of a homicide victim. The defense attorney noticed the mother grabbing the advocate's hand while listening to graphic testimony and

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moved for a mistrial. Victim services providers suggest that continued education for criminal justice officials on the role of victim advocates may prevent such conflicts.

Some disagreements with criminal justice system personnel are inevitable for program staff who engage in victim advocacy. Ultimately, the program is intended to serve victims and witnesses. If programs do engage in victim advocacy, they may need to be guided by certain limitations spelled out in criminal justice policy and procedures manuals. While ensuring the goodwill and cooperation of police and prosecutors will on occasion require accommodating their concerns and interests, program staff should be able to draw the line when they feel a client's problem is too important to be sacrificed for expediency. The program director can set the example of making victim and witness needs the highest priority and be receptive to discussing such dilemmas with the staff objectively and nonjudgmentally. In most cases, it is best if staff explain candidly and carefully their strong desire to act in a manner that may be contrary to the preferences of other criminal justice professionals.

## **Working With Social Service Organizations and Community and Support Groups**

Nearly all programs must gain the cooperation of other community resources that can provide services that the program itself does not furnish. Alameda County (California) program staff, for example, routinely refer victims and witnesses to other programs and organizations, most frequently to private counseling and therapy groups, shelters, and government social service agencies such as the welfare department and worker's compensation agency. It also makes referrals for legal services related to divorce, child custody, restraining orders, and administrative matters such as intervention with the social security system. Other programs have developed networking ties with funeral directors, doctors, dentists, other medical providers, and professional associations.

With the rapid development of victim assistance programs, statewide victim services networks have developed, enabling victim services providers to share training, technical assistance, and support, and to join in efforts to encourage legislative and community efforts to help victims.<sup>21</sup> Joining a State network can be particularly useful for new programs. The victim assistance coordinator for the Colorado State Patrol obtained assistance from other members of the Colo-

rado Organization for Victim Assistance in the development of brochures and other program materials. She also has found the network helpful for gaining an entree with other service providers. Victim services providers with Tender Hearts, Inc., a victim service program located on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota, work closely with the Multi-Agency for Non-Violent Families in North and South Dakota, which includes local and tribal police, schools, social workers, and other tribal programs.

Many victim services providers make referrals to self-help groups such as Parents United (for parental child abusers), Parents of Murdered Children, and Al-Anon (for spouses of alcoholics). Church groups, many of which have become increasingly active and organized in providing assistance to crime victims, can be valuable sources for practical assistance such as emergency food and shelter.<sup>22</sup>

Program staff are increasingly working with churches, volunteer agencies, and especially, schools in violence prevention efforts. The director of the Essex County (Massachusetts) Victim/Witness Assistance Program, based in the district attorney's office, supervises the office's violence prevention program coordinator. The coordinator organizes collaborative efforts, such as conferences and presentations on violence prevention, among the Victim/Witness Program staff; other staff within the district attorney's office; parents and staff of community agencies, businesses, and other organizations, and local schools. Violence prevention is also another area in which victim assistance programs, in conjunction with community-based programs, can collaborate with community policing efforts to solve community problems.

### *Approaches to Working With Social Service and Other Organizations*

Most program staff have found it helpful to contact other organizations by telephone or (preferably) in person. During these calls or meetings, program staff can inform each other of their current activities to avoid duplication of effort.

Many victim services providers have developed and maintained ties with social service organizations by setting up or joining coalitions and task forces of community groups that coordinate services for a particular kind of victim—for example, battered women, sexual assault victims, or child victims (see box “Working With Community Agencies To Help Child Abuse Victims”). In addition, program staff sometimes join the board or attend the meetings of other local social service groups, where they can exchange infor-



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## Establishing Support Groups: One Victim Assistance Program's Efforts

In addition to referring victims to support groups, staff of some programs have set up support groups on their own. Northwest Victim Services in Philadelphia, for example, has for five years been running a support group for elderly female crime victims. Groups of 12 to 15 women meet on a weekly basis at a local senior center, providing support to one another and listening to occasional guest speakers on topics of concern. A program staff member facilitates the discussions. Northwest Victim Services initially collaborated with the Supportive Older Women's Network, a general support group in the area, in running the victims group, but program staff eventually assumed full responsibility for coordination. Not all victims may need or want to join a support group, however. Based on victims' reported desire for some sort of support network, a social work student intern with Northwest Victim Services developed a support group for general crime victims in the northwest area of the city. Several facilitators were trained, and victims who had received assistance from Northwest Victim Services were notified of the support group. Yet, despite the reported need, few victims have attended these meetings. It is unclear why attendance was low, but staff intend to publicize the support groups better.

mation with their colleagues and become familiar with each other. The director of the Victim Witness Assistance Program in Suffolk County (Massachusetts) sits on the board of the National Network of Children's Advocacy Centers. A supervisor with the Alameda County (California) Victim/Witness Division is a board member of the local chapter of Families of Homicide Victims.

By meeting a group's representative at board or task force meetings, or just by having coffee or lunch together, program

administrators may be able to cut through red tape in the future when the agency's assistance is needed for a victim or witness. Alameda County (California) Victim/Witness Assistance Division staff find it useful to attend regular meetings of local cultural organizations (e.g., Hispanic and Southeast Asian groups) and networks of specialized victim services providers (e.g., agencies that work with victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, or child abuse). The director of the program serves on the California Mothers Against Drunk Driving advisory council, and one of his staff members is on the board of a local shelter. Victim assistance program personnel are also better able to assess a group's appropriateness for referrals if they have held in-person meetings rather than relying on telephone contacts or promotional literature. Alameda County program staff interview counselors who ask to be placed on its referral list to determine what kinds of victims they prefer to work with and to appraise their ability and skills.

It is also important that program staff send only those victims and witnesses to outside groups who meet the organizations' eligibility criteria. This helps maintain the victim assistance program's credibility and cultivates goodwill. Alameda County program staff found that, if they carefully screened the women they sent to local shelters, their referrals would be accepted when other groups were having difficulty finding bed space. The State of California requires the victim assistance programs it funds to develop written memorandums of understanding with agencies with which they work, outlining the services that each will provide. The director of the Alameda County program has found that these memos help to build goodwill among agencies and to ensure that one service provider does not interfere with or overlap the services of another provider.

Ultimately, building and maintaining good relationships with social service agencies and groups in the community requires open communication, resourcefulness, and hard work. Alameda County program staff enlisted the support of a rape crisis center that was hostile to the criminal justice system by hiring a person half-time who had helped found the center and was still a volunteer with it. On another occasion, a staff member went to a private child care clinic to secure day care and counseling for a young Asian victim and was told that the clinic needed a letter from the Chinese Community Center, verifying that the child needed immediate care. The staff member secured the letter, returned it to the child care clinic, and obtained the services for the child.

By *accepting referrals* from other social service agencies, victim services providers gain access to clients they might

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## Working With Community Agencies To Help Child Abuse Victims

Some victim services providers have found it helpful to network with other social service providers and community groups to address the needs of particular types of crime victims. The Victim/Witness Assistance Program based in the Suffolk County (Massachusetts) District Attorney's Office operates a child abuse unit that, using staff from a variety of local agencies, takes a multidisciplinary approach to the investigation of child abuse allegations, with the intent of minimizing the time and trauma involved<sup>23</sup> (see appendix A for contact information). For instance, rather than subjecting the child to multiple interviews in various locations concerning the alleged abuse, the victim office's child interview specialist conducts one interview with the child in a room near the courthouse with a two-way mirror. Other professionals—including representatives of the district attorney's office and the police department, medical and mental health professionals, and a social worker—can watch and listen to the interview. They can use a hearing device worn by the child interview specialist to prompt the specialist with questions they would like the child to answer. The interview is videotaped—which, the program director reports, has led to an increase in the number of prosecutions and guilty pleas due to the perceived strength of the prosecutor's case. Following the interview, the multidisciplinary team meets to discuss the results and develop appropriate plans for the investigation and prosecution of the case and the care of the child. The team usually reconvenes at a later date to conduct a case review.

The director of the Victim/Witness Assistance program noted that her experience as a victim advocate and other agencies' desire for a "breath of fresh air" in the handling of child abuse cases facilitated the development of a multidisciplinary team approach. Because the agencies already interacted with the district attorney's office on child abuse cases, the Victim/Witness office seemed like a natural place to centralize the team approach. The office conducts outreach to hospitals, mental health agencies, schools, day care centers, church groups, and other community groups to encourage referrals and cooperation. The agencies also participate together in training sessions coordinated by the office. Each agency that participates in the child abuse unit assigns staff to the unit's investigations on a rotating basis.

Friction sometimes occurs when agency representatives have different opinions regarding the best way to handle a case. Usually, however, the agency with the final mandate on a particular decision makes the final decision (e.g., the district attorney's office decides whether to prosecute, or the child protective services social worker decides whether to remove the child from the home).

The Victim/Witness office is planning to expand this approach to child witnesses of homicide and severe cases of domestic violence. The program is in the process of formalizing the approach by developing a nonprofit Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County.

There is a growing number of similar programs. Many receive training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities provided by the National Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, founded in 1987. Besides facilitating a single multidisciplinary interview of child victims, the centers provide a single location where children can receive all needed social, medical, and mental health services (see appendix A for contact information).

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## Frequently Contacted Social Service and Other Agencies

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| ✓ Counseling services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• private counseling services</li><li>• mental health agencies</li><li>• self-help groups</li><li>• women's groups</li><li>• churches</li><li>• rape crisis centers</li></ul> | ✓ Government social service agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• public welfare</li><li>• social security</li><li>• Medicaid/Medicare</li><li>• worker's compensation</li><li>• social workers</li><li>• legal aid services</li></ul> |
| ✓ Domestic violence shelters  | ✓ Emergency food and financial aid services   |
| ✓ Community crime prevention groups   | ✓ Support groups  |
| ✓ Elderly and child abuse programs  | ✓ Health centers  |

favor for other human services providers that may be reciprocated in the future.

- Domestic violence shelters in Portland (Oregon) refer victims to the Victims Assistance Program for possible prosecution of the abuse and for court orientation; the shelters accept referrals from the program of women who need counseling and shelter.
- Scottsdale Arizona's Police Crisis Intervention Unit has helped a local home for runaway girls on several occasions. When three girls ran away and got into an accident in a stolen car, the home called a crisis unit worker to find out what happened; the program staff member called a police contact and then called the home back in ten minutes with all the details of the case. As a result of such assistance, the home later waived its usual waiting requirements to accept a girl that the program needed to place immediately because she was being molested by her father.

More generally, social service agencies are usually delighted to have a contact in the district attorney's office or police department whom they can call for information regarding their clients' problems with the criminal justice system. Victim/witness programs are often well positioned to serve as this point of contact. In Suffolk County, Massachusetts, for example, social workers and other professionals usually worked with the district attorney's office on child abuse allegations, but they felt that coordination among the agencies involved could be improved. The office's victim witness

program director now coordinates a multidisciplinary team approach to child abuse cases. (See box, "Working With Community Agencies To Help Child Abuse Victims.")

Many victim services providers also assist social service agencies by *providing staff training* in how to deal with victims of crime, including specialized sessions on battered women and rape victims. A program staff member and a human services provider may conduct joint training sessions, which staff from both organizations attend. In this manner, program staff can also help social service organizations to meet the needs of crime victims. Suffolk County's (Massachusetts) Victim Witness Assistance Program, for example, coordinates training seminars for criminal justice, health, and social service agencies on issues related to child victimization and domestic violence. Northwest Victim Services in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) conducts training on victimization and crime prevention at local hospitals and for senior citizen, church, and other community groups. Program staff recently began training 911 operators on how to respond more effectively and sensitively to crime victims. As part of the training, a volunteer who had been raped describes the sensitive response of the 911 operator with whom she spoke.

### *Difficulties in Networking With Social Service Organizations*

The most serious difficulty in establishing a social service resource network is identifying the agencies and organizations that provide the services that victims and witnesses need. In many jurisdictions there is a shortage of precisely

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those services that victim assistance programs are typically unable to furnish, such as food, shelter, financial aid, and free or inexpensive long-term counseling services.

Many program staff also run into red tape in referring victims and witnesses to certain agencies for assistance. Some agency staff feel that they are already doing the best job they can; as a result, they may interpret attempts by a victim assistance program to streamline relations as an effort to get them to be more responsive than they feel is possible.

If their program is sponsored by a district attorney's office or a law enforcement agency, victim services providers may be suspected by other human services providers of placing the interests of "the system" over those of victims. Sometimes these conflicts are unavoidable. A rape crisis center in one city wanted a sexual assault case prosecuted, but a polygraph suggested that the victim had lied and the defendant had not; program staff could not ethically reveal this information, however, as an explanation for why they would not urge the district attorney to pursue the case, leaving center staff to conclude that the program was biased.

Some victim services providers experience conflict when grassroots organizations regard them as newcomers invading their territory with the advantage of government funding. In addition, grassroots groups may see a publicly funded program as perpetuating the problems it is purportedly trying to correct—such as rape and spousal abuse—by failing to work for social change to address the root causes of these injustices.

## Working With Schools

In recent years, colleges, high schools, and elementary schools have become increasingly involved in crime prevention efforts and in providing services to students who become crime victims, owing in part to the rise in the number of crimes committed on school grounds and the public's enhanced access to this information. Between 1987 and 1992, there was a nearly 25 percent increase in the number of juvenile victims of violent crime.<sup>24</sup> The Student Right To Know Act of 1991 mandated that schools receiving Federal funding report crime rates to Federal authorities, and the Campus Sexual Assault Victim Bill of Rights of 1992 required colleges to have formal policies for addressing sexual assault on campus and to notify victims of their rights and available services.

In light of increased crime against students and efforts by many schools to help these victims, victim assistance program staff may wish to network with schools in the following ways:

- *Provide direct assistance to student crime victims and witnesses.* Victim assistance program staff can provide counseling, crisis intervention, or other forms of assistance to victimized students and witnesses. As discussed elsewhere in this report, when a University of Arizona professor was killed, Pima County Victim Witness Program staff conducted nine critical incident debriefings (providing information, counseling, and support) for faculty and students over the course of five days. Staff of the same program also worked with students at a high school where a student had held a class hostage. Other victim services providers may be able to provide assistance to students on a smaller scale—for instance, by helping individual students whom the school has been encouraged to refer to the program.
- *Provide training to students, teachers, and school officials.* Educating students, teachers, and administrators about victimization, crime prevention, and related topics can enable schools themselves to address victimization more effectively and can also generate referrals for the program. Staff of the Victim/Witness Office in the Colorado Springs (Colorado) Police Department, for example, make many personal safety presentations in local schools and train a student victim assistance team at Colorado College. Program staff have also designed curricula for courses on personal safety and other crime prevention and victimization issues and have worked with teachers on violence prevention techniques and conflict management. The Pima County (Arizona) program sponsored a victims' rights poster and essay contest in the Tucson school system to raise victim awareness. The Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul (Minnesota) conducts outreach to high school students in collaboration with crime prevention programs. Staff make a one-hour presentation on victim issues to nearly every ninth grade social studies class in the St. Paul school system and collaborate with other victim services programs in similar educational efforts in Minneapolis. Victim services providers may want to look into collaborating with medical schools and students, many of whom are taking an increased interest in violence prevention, particularly among youth. Law schools may be interested in collaborating with victim

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assistance programs on teaching courses that address victim issues, providing a valuable opportunity for staff to establish contacts, recruit volunteers, and train upcoming lawyers.

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***When a University of Arizona professor was killed, Pima County Victim Witness Program staff conducted nine critical incident debriefings (providing information, counseling, and support) for faculty and students over the course of five days. Staff of the same program also worked with students at a high school where a student had held a class hostage.***

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- *Recruit volunteers from schools, particularly undergraduate and graduate interns.* Criminal justice, social work, and other students may be interested in volunteering with a victim assistance program to gain experience or possibly school credit. Program administrators may wish to contact campus volunteer centers or departments to arrange collaboration on either a formal or informal basis. The Suffolk County victim witness program in Massachusetts, for example, offers about 10 student internships each semester for undergraduate and graduate students. The coordinator of the Colorado Springs (Colorado) victim assistance program finds that the several student interns that she has on staff at any one time are essential to program effectiveness and are almost always willing to do extra work. She recruits volunteers while making presentations at colleges on victimization, particularly sexual assault.

Developing and maintaining good relationships with law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, judges, the correctional system, social welfare organizations, schools, and other community groups are essential if a victim assistance program is to be an effective advocate for victims and witnesses. Cooperation is also indispensable because these other groups may control access to clients or have resources for helping victims and witnesses that program staff themselves cannot develop. Building effective working relationships with other groups thus serves the dual function of mitigating the negative impact of criminal acts on the victim or witness and capitalizing on the availability of other resources in the community. In addition, such efforts can serve as a first step toward encouraging criminal justice and social service agencies to meet victim and witness needs more effectively.

## Endnotes

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# Chapter 5

## Outreach and Case Processing

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### Key Points

- *Although media coverage of crime victimization makes it seem as if identifying victims and witnesses would require almost no effort, program staff need to actively ensure that they are reaching all eligible clients.*
- *It is important that program staff use a variety of strategies for identifying potential clients. Generally, crime victims can be identified by*
  - examining reports and records from agencies in the criminal justice system,
  - accepting referrals from other agencies and groups,
  - generating self-referrals by publicizing the program, and
  - responding to calls for on-the-scene assistance.
- *In addition to mailings and telephone calls, program staff may want to conduct proactive outreach. This may involve going to the scene of the crime, meeting the victim at the hospital or police station, or conducting home visits.*
- *Knowing when to stop providing services can be just as important as initiating and maintaining contact with victims. To this end, it is important that a program have clear objectives, policies, and procedures; that supervisors review cases; and that staff are trained regarding when to close a case.*
- *Special outreach efforts may be necessary for victims who may face particular barriers to working with the criminal justice system. Specially targeted victim populations include the elderly, members of minority ethnic groups, and gays and lesbians, along with youth and the disabled.*

### Establishing Case Processing Procedures

#### *Identifying Clients*

Although media coverage of crime victimization makes it seem as if identifying victims and witnesses would require almost no effort, victim service providers need to actively ensure that they are reaching all eligible clients by:

- routinely examining police arrest reports and prosecutor case records;

- accepting—and encouraging—referrals from police, prosecutors, corrections officials, hospitals, and community groups and other social service organizations;
- generating self-referrals from telephone callers or walk-ins; and
- responding to requests for on-the-scene assistance.

**Police reports and case records.** Program staff may be able to gain access to police reports and case records in various ways:



- Some arrange to have record clerks automatically forward copies of all police reports or all prosecutor case records. It is time-consuming to sort through all reports and records, but doing so allows program staff to conduct their own initial screening.
- Other staff members request records clerks to forward copies of reports or records only for specific types of cases—for example, cases involving personal injury resulting from violent crime.
- Alternatively, staff members may examine reports and records in law enforcement, prosecutors', corrections, and probation and parole offices. While this method

draws staff away from program offices, it promotes their visibility among law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and corrections officials—who may, as a result, increase direct referrals as they become familiar with staff members as individuals.

**Referrals from police; prosecutors; corrections, probation, and parole officials; and social service and community agencies.** To generate referrals, it is helpful for program staff to establish linkages with these organizations—for example, by conducting orientation sessions for criminal justice officials and other agencies (see chapter 4).

Attending police roll calls is an effective method of informing line officers about a victim services program and how to use it. Some program staff have distributed information cards to officers both for their own information and to pass on to victims. St. Louis (Missouri) County's Victim Service Council staff found that the program's cards were not consistently distributed by officers or used by victims. In some States, however, police officers are now required by law to provide information on victims' rights and services. Staff of Citizens Council Victim Services helped the Minneapolis (Minnesota) Police Department comply with its statute by developing a police and victim services information card that provides basic information on victims' rights, available services, and criminal justice system contact numbers. (This card is reproduced in appendix F.)

Providing training at police academies can be a useful method of informing officers about a program and of encouraging referrals. Pima County (Arizona) Victim/Witness Program staff routinely provide training in crisis intervention, human relations skills, and victimology in the academies for the Tucson Police Department and the Arizona Law Enforcement Training Academy. This activity, along with the program's commitment to immediate (15–30 minutes) response to law enforcement calls, 24-hour staff availability, and a proven ability to be helpful and cooperative, is said to have aided the program in gaining acceptance among many law enforcement officers. Referrals from police to the program increased from 840 in 1977, shortly after the program began, to 15,000 in 1992. In fact, it was at the request of law enforcement officers that the program began accepting referrals for noncrime victims, such as victims of car accidents. Now, staff and volunteers patrol the streets during the evening in unmarked police cruisers, responding to emergency referrals from law enforcement dispatchers over car radios.

## Issues of Confidentiality in Identifying Clients

Issues of confidentiality may arise in obtaining information about victims from law enforcement agencies and prosecutors offices. Many States have laws prohibiting police and prosecutors from releasing information about victims to agencies outside the criminal justice system.

- In its early years, the Victim Service Council in St. Louis County (Missouri) contacted the superintendent of police to request access to police reports. Upon checking with the county counselor, the superintendent found that under the Sunshine Law there were no restrictions on the release of information during the first thirty days after arrest.
- Initially, staff of Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul (Minnesota) identified over half of their clients by examining police incident reports. However, when the police made it a policy not to disclose information about victims to the press, they had to deny access to incident reports to program staff as well. Staff arranged instead to review police complaint cards, which did not pose the same confidentiality problems because they contain information not necessarily about victims but about the person who placed the initial call to the police.



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In addition, program staff encourage law enforcement officers, prosecutors, corrections officials, and employees of social service or community agencies to give them the names and phone numbers of victims and a brief account of incidents. Sometimes officers or prosecutors personally deliver copies of reports or records to program staff. Referrals also occur informally, when program staff pass officers and attorneys in the courthouse or meet human services workers on social occasions. Many program staff reported that until police, prosecutors, and social workers fully understood eligibility criteria, these referrals included cases not involving crimes, such as lost or disoriented persons. Most programs initially accept all referrals, however, in order to gain the organizations' support. Furthermore, as mentioned in other sections of this report, an increasing number of programs are now actively targeting individuals who are not victims of crime but who have been traumatized by a crime that happened to someone they know or that occurred where they work, go to school, or live.

**Self-referrals.** Clients may also call or visit program offices on their own. Several programs are able to staff a *24-hour hotline*. The Pima County (Arizona) program, for example, relies to a large extent on its volunteers, equipped with beepers, to provide around-the-clock assistance. To generate public awareness and encourage victims to call or visit, program staff actively inform the community of their services by conducting *public education sessions* and *publicity campaigns* (see chapter 2). *Word-of-mouth* referrals from former clients are also important. These are especially effective approaches for obtaining clients who may be reluctant or unable to seek help, notably the poor and minorities. While public education sessions and publicity campaigns increase program visibility, they have the disadvantage of sometimes generating an excessive number of calls.

As noted elsewhere in this publication, to reach the young, black population of Atlanta, the director of the city's Victim/Witness Assistance Program encouraged a radio station that targets this audience to build an entire day of programming around the issue of violence and victimization. As a result, the program was deluged with calls for assistance or information.

Although some staff feel it is inappropriate or unnecessary to undertake an explicitly minority-oriented outreach effort, many program staff have made special efforts to encourage minority victims to use program services. Outreach to mi-

norities and other special victim populations is discussed at length later this chapter.

**Responding to police requests for on-the-scene assistance.** Finally, some victim service providers identify victims by responding to police requests for on-the-scene assistance. Paid staff or volunteers of Portland (Oregon)'s Victims Assistance Program respond at any hour to meet rape victims in hospital emergency wards. Trained volunteers with Scottsdale (Arizona)'s Police Crisis Intervention Unit respond around the clock to police requests for help with all types of victims. The volunteers patrol the streets in unmarked police cars equipped with a radio to receive police requests for assistance. Volunteers and staff also wear beepers so that they can be paged by police and police dispatchers. Programs that identify victims in this manner usually provide follow-up assistance by telephone, at the program offices, or in the courthouse.

### *Establishing Contact With Victims and Witnesses*

All programs use a combination of techniques to establish contact with victims, such as letters, telephone calls, face-to-face contact at program offices, intervention at the scene of the crime, and home visits. Most programs, however, rely primarily on mailings and phone calls, which allow them to establish more contacts than does face-to-face interaction.

Phoning helps to ensure that services are offered to victims on a consistent and equitable basis. Staff with St. Louis County (Arizona)'s Victim Service Council reported they have had "amazing success using phone contacts. Once victims understand the program's purpose, they are usually very open and pour out their problem."<sup>1</sup> As the sole means of establishing contact, however, phoning may not be effective in reaching all potential clients. Some clients may simply be difficult to reach, while others may not have phone service. Letters, then, are necessary.

Between 1993 and 1994, Alameda County (California) program staff mailed over 14,000 letters offering victims services and describing the status of their cases. As a means of establishing initial contact, however, mailings alone may be ineffective if victims are reluctant to take the initiative to seek help. In addition, victims without permanent or stable residences can, obviously, be difficult to locate. Furthermore, in writing to victims of spousal abuse, rape, and child sexual abuse, program staff must take special care not to embarrass

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or endanger the victim by informing others of the crime or of the victim's attempt to secure help. In general, however, program staff have found that letters are a useful supplement to phone calls as a means of establishing program credibility.

### *Conducting Proactive Outreach*

On-the-scene response provides the victim with attention at a time when help may be badly needed; home visits enable frightened victims to talk more openly than they usually dare in a courthouse or police station. The Alameda County (California) District Attorney Victim/Witness Assistance Division conducts an average of 325 home visits to victims each year. In fact, the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning, from which the program receives a large share of its funding, requires that staff in funded programs make field visits to a client's home, place of business, or other location whenever necessary to provide services.

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The director of the Victims Advocate Foundation, which serves five rural counties in Indiana, frequently receives calls from the police late at night to go to the scene of a crime, usually a domestic violence incident. If the crime occurs in Parke County, where he lives, he drives to the location; if it occurs in one of the other counties, he calls a volunteer to respond. This service is important in these rural counties, where it can sometimes take up to 20 minutes for police to travel to the scene of a crime. The director often drives battered women to a shelter outside his county because there are no shelters in the immediate area. Transportation is usually a problem on Native American reservations, as well. Staff of Tender Hearts, Inc., which serves primarily domestic abuse victims on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, use their own vehicles to travel to clients throughout the 2.8 million acres of territory the program covers.

"One-stop shopping" is another method of conducting proactive outreach, by providing or coordinating multiple services to victims in one location, such as a courthouse or hospital. Children's advocacy centers are becoming popular approaches for enabling alleged victims of child abuse to be interviewed by criminal justice officials and health and social service professionals at one time and to receive needed

services, such as mental health and medical evaluations, at the same location. The director of Victim/Witness Services in the Suffolk County (Massachusetts) District Attorney's Office is leading a coordinated effort by prosecutors, victim advocates, social service workers, mental health and medical professionals, school personnel, police, and other community service providers to establish such a center (see the box on "Working With Community Agencies To Help Child Abuse Victims" in chapter 4). Already she coordinates the joint interview of alleged child abuse victims by the police, the prosecutor, mental health professionals, and others, the interview is held in a child-friendly setting at the district attorney's office. Enabling children and their parents to go through the interview process and receive services in one place may limit the traumatic effects of the abuse and investigation, as well as streamline the criminal investigation, the prosecution, and service planning.

The logistics of face-to-face outreach need to be kept simple to avoid excessive transportation expenses and the need for additional staff to cover the office while other staff are in the field. When funding for the Parke County (Indiana) program dropped slightly one year, the director had to cut down on the amount of transportation he and his volunteers undertook to crime scenes, shelters, and courts. Several volunteers, however, chose to pay for transportation expenses themselves rather than not provide the services.

Situations warranting on-the-scene response and home visits are likely to be more volatile than those initiated by mail, telephone, and office contacts. On occasion, staff have been threatened or even attacked by irate husbands in spousal abuse cases. As a result, it is usually best if staff providing assistance to victims in the field travel in teams and receive training in crisis intervention and self-protection. Some program staff make it a practice to tell others in the office to send the police to the home they are visiting if they do not call in or return after a specified period of time. Others approach the scene and notify police that they are standing by but wait until the scene is secure before entering the scene and providing assistance.

### *Maintaining Contact*

Having made initial contact with victims and witnesses, program staff need to maintain communication. This not only helps clients recover from the experience of being victimized but may also elicit information of value to police investigators and prosecutors. Follow-up contacts also help program staff determine whether clients actively pursued referrals and how helpful other agencies were. Finally,

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maintaining client contact is important for ensuring that witnesses testify.

Some victim service providers find that certain victims require long-term assistance—for example, if counseling extends over a long period of time or the victim becomes involved in postsentencing activities, such as attending a parole hearing. Victim services providers who work directly in or with departments of corrections or probation and parole may be in contact with victims or their families for many years. If program staff do not feel that they have the resources to provide long-term assistance to victims, they need to explain this limitation to clients and be prepared to offer referrals for further assistance.

Although some victims and witnesses maintain contact on their own, many are reluctant to seek additional help, feeling they would be a burden on program staff. As a result, most program staff make follow-up appointments by telephone with clients on an individual basis after the initial contact. Letters are also a useful way to maintain contact with clients and keep them up-to-date on case status. Personal contact, through home visits or office appointments, is normally reserved for incidents that have had a severe impact on the victim.

### *Terminating Contact*

The decision to terminate contact is not always clear-cut. Program staff need to be careful not to close cases prematurely: the victim or witness may appear untroubled, but the full impact of a crime or court appearance may not be experienced for hours, days, or even weeks after the incident. Inexperienced staff may close cases too soon out of personal frustration—a tendency that may be especially likely among new volunteers, who may be overwhelmed by the victim's emotional trauma and feel unable to help.

At the same time, unless an explicit decision is made to end services, staff may find themselves swamped with an ever-increasing number of open cases. In some instances, victims become overly dependent on staff, seeking help with ongoing emotional or social support problems that are unrelated to their victimization.

To close cases in a timely fashion, while still ensuring that victims have received appropriate attention, victim services providers can take the following steps:

- Form informal “service contracts” with victims at the outset to clarify expectations and outline clearly what program staff will (and will not) do.
- Train staff to recognize when services are no longer needed—for example, when the victim or witness does not follow up on a referral or no longer wishes to initiate further contact.
- Require new staff to discuss with supervisors their reasons for terminating cases before doing so.
- Require staff to indicate the reason for closing a case on the case record.

No programs adhere to rigid termination dates for closing cases; rather, they adjust the date to meet victims' and witnesses' individual needs. Most advocates recommend that before closing a case, staff should put the client in touch with other support systems through referrals and should check on whether a personal network of family and friends is available to help. Although each case varies, closing generally takes place when the client has resolved the major emotional and financial problems caused by the crime.

### *Pitfalls in Case Processing*

Victim assistance programs commonly face a number of problems in case processing which may be grouped under logistics, the nature of victim service, and personal staff difficulties. The most serious *logistical* case processing problem is when cases slip through the cracks. With limited staff and a high volume of cases, outreach and follow-up are not always conducted diligently. Program staff may wish to make regularly scheduled contacts with all open cases or with all open cases defined as high priority (e.g., sexual assault, attempted murder); staff then call these victims or witnesses weekly, biweekly, or monthly, rather than relying on clients themselves to contact the program. To ensure that all appropriate cases come to the program's attention in the first place, staff can also increase their outreach efforts.

A second logistical problem is that victims or witnesses may be difficult to reach. Victims may move in with family or friends, or change or disconnect their phones; in these instances, the only solution is to persevere. Staff can check with utility companies to try to locate victims. Police investigators assigned to cases can often be helpful in locating transient victims and witnesses. Staff can also be careful to obtain information on family and friends during initial intake.

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Finally, staff may be faced with scheduling conflicts, as when several simultaneous court appearances require witness escort services. If this occurs frequently, program administrators can consider implementing or expanding their volunteer component.

Other problems are attributable to *the nature of serving victims and witnesses*. Victims are sometimes unable or unwilling to articulate their needs. This situation requires patience on the part of staff to help these clients identify feelings they have difficulty expressing. Terminating a case at an inappropriate time is another case processing problem that can be addressed by monitoring service delivery and developing explicit guidelines for closing cases. Some clients, such as “agency addicts,” can be exasperating to work with. They may have to be confronted with their self-destructive behavior or dependency needs, and possibly denied further assistance, at least from program staff.<sup>2</sup> Finally, staff may be reluctant to assist victims who are themselves involved in criminal activity (such as drug dealers). The section on target populations in chapter 2 addresses this problem in more detail.

The last set of case processing problems stems from *personal difficulties staff face* as providers of victim services. On the one hand, staff may become so possessive that, if clients require assistance when the staff member is unavailable, no one else has the information to help them. It may help to make clear to staff that, while they may be assigned primary responsibility for a particular case, to some extent cases are transferable. On the other hand, staff may experience a sense of inadequacy at being able to offer only limited—or possibly no—assistance to victims and witnesses and, as a result, exert themselves too strenuously in trying to “save” troubled victims.

## Conducting Outreach to Special Populations

According to a recent study, one of the most pressing needs expressed by program staff was for outreach to special populations. Staff expressed frustration with language barriers and with many victims’ reluctance to cooperate with the criminal justice system.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above, some programs make special efforts to reach victims who may face particular barriers to working with the criminal justice system. This section briefly examines three types of specially

targeted victim populations: the elderly, members of minority ethnic groups, and gays and lesbians.

### *Elderly Crime Victims*

Individuals aged 65 and older constitute one of the fastest growing populations in the United States. It is estimated that this group will make up 13 percent of the country’s population by the year 2000. As a result, elder abuse and violent crime against the elderly have received increasing attention in recent years. The same physical and mental limitations that may make these individuals more vulnerable to crime, however, may also make them less willing or able to participate in the criminal justice system, seek compensation, and obtain the other assistance they may need if victimized. Some elderly people may also be reluctant to report crimes because they are easily intimidated, fear reprisal from the offender, or fear the criminal justice process itself. Elderly individuals who are abused by family members may be ashamed to report the abuse or may not consider it a crime.<sup>4</sup>

Making presentations at churches, senior citizen centers, and other places where elderly individuals meet or live is one useful way to inform them of crime victim rights and program services. Northwest Victims Services staff in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) make frequent presentations at senior citizen centers to inform elderly individuals about how to prevent themselves from becoming victims of fraud. The program also operates a “Bank Session Project” in which staff, volunteers, and police visit a local bank at the beginning of each month, usually a busy banking day, to provide information about safe banking habits and general safety issues. In the typical year, staff make contact with about 2,000 senior citizens at 10 banks.

Elderly volunteers from local churches, businesses, or community groups may be effective in spreading the word about program services and making victims feel more comfortable about receiving services.<sup>5</sup> Program staff may consider designating a staff person or volunteer to work specifically with elderly crime victims. The Victim/Witness Assistance Program in Santa Ana, California, has a “senior victim of crime specialist” who is responsible for providing outreach to elderly individuals. This person works with other community groups that serve the elderly to provide a range of services to elderly crime victims.<sup>6</sup>

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When informed by police or other sources of a crime against an elderly person, staff may need to go to the individual's home rather than expect the victim to come to the program office for services. Northwest Victim Services frequently receives referrals from Philadelphia police officers regarding elderly victims of crime and abuse, and staff respond by going to the victim's home to provide basic assistance and determine the victim's needs. Another helpful way to reach older individuals is to print brochures and other program literature in large, bold print.<sup>7</sup> Finally, working closely with other community organizations and social service agencies can put the program in a better position to learn about and help intervene in elder abuse cases.

### *Ethnic and Minority Crime Victims*

Many members of ethnic minority groups feel intimidated by a system they believe sometimes works against them. Crime

victims who do not speak English may find it particularly difficult to navigate the court system. In addition, some cultural characteristics of certain minorities may necessitate special outreach efforts. Some women from certain cultures, for example, may be reluctant to seek outside assistance in cases of sexual harassment and violence.<sup>8</sup>

Several programs have conducted special public education campaigns in poor and minority neighborhoods in an effort to assist crime victims and encourage them to report crimes and cooperate with the criminal justice system. For example, Pima County (Arizona) program staff conduct outreach to the many Spanish-speaking residents of the area in Arizona that they serve. The program has developed numerous pamphlets in Spanish explaining the program's services. Because domestic violence is a common problem among the county's residents, a separate brochure addressing this prob-

## **Three Recent Sources of Guidance on Outreach to Special Populations**

*Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance* (Arlington, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1994), is a manual produced in 1994 by the National Victim Center, American Prosecutors Research Institute, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Although the manual is targeted to prosecutor-based victim assistance, many of the suggestions are applicable to all kinds of victim assistance programs. In separate sections, the manual addresses the following victim populations: child victims, family violence victims, sexual assault victims, friends and family of homicide victims, hate or bias-motivated crime victims, cross-cultural victims, elderly victims, disabled victims, and victims of juvenile offenders. Each of these sections includes a list of suggested readings and resource contacts. (The National Victim Center can be contacted at (703) 276-2880.)

*Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals*, (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993), by Marlene Young, executive director of the National Organization for Victim Assistance, addresses outreach and services to child victims, victims of family violence, victims of sexual assault, friends and family of homicide victims, victims who are members of ethnic minority groups, and victims of bias crimes. (The Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company can be contacted at (800) 228-0810.)

*The Color of Justice: Culturally Sensitive Treatment of Minority Crime Victims* (Sacramento, California: Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1990), written by the coordinator of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program in Maui, Hawaii, as part of the Minority Victims Project conducted by California's Office of Criminal Justice Planning, includes personal accounts of crime victims and program descriptions. The book discusses the impact of violent crime on minorities and their recovery from the traumatic effects of victimization. (The California Office of Criminal Justice Planning can be contacted at 1130 K Street, Suite 300, Sacramento, California 95814.)

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## Reaching Out to Southeast Asian Crime Victims in Philadelphia

In an effort to reach out to crime victims in Philadelphia's Vietnamese communities, the Victim Services Unit of the District Attorney's Office has both Vietnamese and Cambodian victim/witness coordinators who guide members of the Southeast Asian community through the criminal justice system. These advocates accompany victims to court and follow cases through from beginning to end.

In addition, these staff persons conduct outreach to Vietnamese and Cambodian students in the local schools, explaining how to use emergency services (such as the emergency 911 service line that will link them with a Vietnamese or Cambodian speaker) and how to prevent crime. Often the victim advocates make presentations at schools or to parents. The victim advocates also distribute a victim services brochure that has been translated into both Vietnamese and Cambodian.

According to the program director, more Vietnamese people have been reporting crime since the program began the outreach effort. (See appendix A for contact information for this program.)

lem was developed in Spanish. Several paid and volunteer staff act as Spanish-speaking trial advocates who interpret for non-English-speaking crime victims.

Native Americans sometimes require special outreach efforts because they may distrust the criminal justice system, treat even violent behavior as a private matter, or lack transportation. Native American victims of domestic violence, for example, may be more likely than some other groups to treat abuse as a family matter. The director of Tender Hearts, Inc., a victim assistance program and shelter for battered women on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota, has found these problems a significant barrier, which she tries to overcome by recruiting volunteers from the reservation to contact victims of crime and by meeting with victims in her car when victims are unable come to her office.

Los Angeles County Victim Assistance Program staff work with local community policing officers to provide intervention and counseling services to African-American and Hispanic youth who not only have been victims of or witnesses to violent crime but who are also at high risk for committing crimes themselves. The police officers and victim advocates frequently stop by neighborhoods where the targeted youth live. By building trust between the youth and law enforcement, it is hoped that the youth will be less likely to break the law and more likely to cooperate with the criminal justice system as victims and witnesses. Given that his program serves such an ethnically mixed area, the program director has also hired a culturally diverse staff and, when possible,

assigns victim advocates to serve community areas based on language ability. When he hired a Russian-speaking advocate, the number of crime victims from the area's Armenian population requesting assistance soared.

Minority residents of inner-city public housing may be particularly reluctant to report crimes, cooperate with the criminal justice system, or seek help after they have been victimized. This may be due to fear of reprisal from the offender or his or her friends or to the widespread feeling that the system does not work on their behalf. These factors, coupled with financial hardship and the constant violence and fear with which some public housing residents live on a daily basis, make this victim population a particularly important target for outreach.

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) (Illinois) Department of Prevention Programs established its Victim Assistance Program in 1991 as one aspect of the authority's efforts to address drugs and drug-related crime. To reach victims, staff work out of two public housing developments. The program relies to a large extent on clients to spread word about program services to other residents; staff do not market or advertise the program. Even though staff originally intended to serve residents of the two developments, because of the pervasive need for their services, they now serve residents of the authority citywide. Services include emergency relocation for crime victims and witnesses who are threatened or intimidated; short-term food assistance, transportation, and clothing; crisis response; and assistance in completing compensation forms. However, because the pro-

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gram is currently limited to relocating intimidated victims and witnesses only to other locations within the authority, many residents who are victims of violent crime reportedly remain fearful of reporting crime and testifying.

### *Gays and Lesbians*

Many gay men and lesbians are said to be reluctant to cooperate with a criminal justice system that they feel has not supported and at times has been hostile toward them. Gays and lesbians may also be unwilling to report crimes or testify if they do not want to reveal their homosexual orientation. As crimes against gays and lesbians have increased in recent years (sometimes directed specifically against individuals thought to have AIDS<sup>9</sup>), the provision of assistance to these victims has taken on renewed urgency among some victim assistance programs.

To reach out to gay and lesbian crime victims, victim assistance program administrators can designate a staff member to act as a liaison with the gay and lesbian community, inform them of the program's services, and let this population know that program staff are committed to serving them. Some administrators have found it helpful to invite a leader in the gay and lesbian community to train program staff on gay and lesbian issues. Advertisements in newspapers targeted to the gay community can be useful. Working closely with the hate crimes unit in the police or prosecutor's office can help facilitate referrals. Finally, it is important that victim assistance programs establish and enforce a program policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.<sup>10</sup>

Community United Against Violence (CUAV), a community-based group in San Francisco (California) State, was established 16 years ago to combat violence against gays and lesbians. The organization receives part of its funding through

## **Outreach to Victims of Hate Crime**

The prevalence and violent nature of hate crime have gained increasing attention in recent years, prompting some victim assistance programs to take new measures to prevent such crime and help its victims. Many of the groups that require intensified outreach efforts are also more vulnerable to hate crime. According to the Federal Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990, hate crime occurs when a person is targeted for victimization based on his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. It appears from some reports that the incidence—not just the awareness—of hate crimes has increased.<sup>11</sup> Many police departments and prosecutors' offices now have hate crime units.

Victims of hate crime may be particularly reluctant to become involved in the criminal justice system because of fear of the criminal justice system, of retaliation, and of unwanted publicity (for example, closeted gay men and lesbians may not want to be put in the position of revealing their sexual orientation). These victims may feel especially vulnerable or violated because they were assaulted as a result of a particular characteristic and therefore may be in more need of counseling and other services than some other victims. It is important that victim advocates become aware of Federal, State, and local hate crime legislation and of victims' rights as spelled out in the legislation. Advocates will then be in a position to educate individuals who are typically targeted for hate crimes about their rights and remedies should they become victims of a hate crime. Other helpful steps are placing advertisements in newspapers directed at vulnerable populations and notifying their social or political leaders about the program's services.<sup>12</sup> Finally, if a police or prosecutor hate crimes unit operates in their jurisdiction, victim assistance staff can work closely with the unit. The Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, funded the development of a curriculum, "National Bias Crimes Training for Law Enforcement and Victim Assistance Professionals," which has been presented at several State and national conferences and training seminars. Information for the National Victims Resource Center can be found in appendix B.

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a contract with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office to provide court-related services to the gay and lesbian population. Staff conduct crime prevention activities and refer victims to community resources, assist them with victim compensation forms, inform them of court processes, accompany them to court, and perform many other services. They also sometimes act as liaisons between gay and lesbian crime victims and criminal justice agencies. Many victims feel more comfortable providing information to program staff and then having them relay the information to police and prosecutors.

Although the program has operated in San Francisco for several years, staff still spend a significant amount of time informing the community of the program's services. The program has secured the pro bono assistance of a local advertising company to develop posters for locations such as bus shelters; staff also describe the program at gay and lesbian events and at schools and other locations in the community. Although CUAV targets one specific victim population, many of its activities could be replicated by staff of more general programs.

Once program staff have identified and made contact with victims, they can begin providing a variety of services. The following chapter briefly describes common services that victim assistance programs offer and some of the obstacles that staff encounter in providing these services.

## Endnotes

1. Marjorie Susman and Carol Vittert, "Building a Solution: A Practical Guide for Establishing Crime Victim Service Agencies" (St. Louis: National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section, 1980), 17.
2. Susman and Vittert, "Building a Solution," outlines different types of problem clients and how to cope with them.
3. Tom McEwen, "Understanding the Needs of Victim Assistance Programs," Draft Report to the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Law and Justice, 1994), 8.
4. Albert R. Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims: Research, Policy, and Practice* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 78.
5. *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance: (A Training and Resource Manual)*, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1994).
6. Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims*, 82.
7. *Focus on the Future*.
8. For a detailed review of culturally sensitive treatment of minority crime victims, see Brian Ogawa, *The Color of Justice: Culturally Sensitive Treatment of Minority Crime Victims* (Sacramento, California: Office of Criminal Justice Planning, 1990).
9. *Focus on the Future*; "NOVA Makes Recommendations for Gay and Lesbian Crime Victims," *Crime Victims Digest* (August 1987), 5.
10. "NOVA Makes Recommendations for Gay and Lesbian Crime Victims," 6.
11. As discussed in *Focus on the Future*, the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission reported a 22 percent increase in hate crimes from 1990 to 1991. Most victims of hate crime were gay men, African-Americans, and Jews.
12. Marlene Young, *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993), 127.



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# Chapter 6

## Providing Victim Services

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### Key Points

- Victim assistance programs can provide a very broad range of services. In light of typical resource limitations, however, program staff can avoid overextending themselves by focusing on those services that are most needed and those that staff are best equipped to provide.
- The range of victim services generally incorporates emergency services, counseling, personal advocacy and support services, claims assistance, court-related services, postsentencing services, and education, training, and advocacy within the criminal justice system.
- Some programs in recent years have begun providing services targeted to large groups of individuals traumatized by crime or other catastrophic events, such as earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes. These services primarily involve crisis intervention and critical incident stress debriefing.
- An increasing number of victim assistance programs are providing or assisting with postsentencing services. These services include orientation to the penal system, notification of the offender's status within the system, collection and payment of restitution, coordination of victim impact panels, and victim-offender reconciliation.
- As victim assistance programs have become increasingly integrated into the criminal justice system, advocates have become more active through legal and policy reforms in changing the system to be more responsive to victims' needs.

Victim services are needed at many stages in the victim's experience, from on-the-scene counseling to notification of the offender's release on parole. One victim assistance program typically cannot—and should not try to—provide all needed services. Rather, programs can play to their natural strengths. A program based in a police department is often better positioned to provide immediate crisis assistance than other programs; a prosecutor's program may be better equipped to provide witness notification; a program operated by a department of corrections is in the best position to provide notification of the offender's status following conviction. If more than one victim assistance program exists in a jurisdiction, program staff can coordinate services to avoid duplication. If, however, only one program serves an entire locale, staff must carefully consider victims' needs, staff resources, and program goals in deciding what services to provide (see chapter 2).

While most programs struggle to provide the most basic services, some have begun to offer such services as critical incident stress debriefing and other assistance to noncrime victims. As discussed in chapter 2, however, even programs that have the resources to offer more than basic services stress that the basics are their first priority.

### The Role of the Criminal Justice System

Many of the services described in this chapter require the undivided attention of victim assistance program staff. For example, many counseling services are beyond the resources and expertise of criminal justice agencies. Indeed, in jurisdictions where a victim assistance program operates, police,

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prosecutors, and corrections officials often come to rely on program staff to meet both the immediate and long-term counseling needs of victims.

There are other services, however, which police, prosecutors, and judges can provide without assistance as a routine part of their jobs, rather than delegating them to a separate program. For example, police, often the first to arrive at the scene of a crime, must usually provide on-the-spot crisis intervention and mediation. In many jurisdictions, police already receive training in crisis counseling and family dispute resolution. Victim assistance program staff, however, can motivate officers to apply what they learn by pointing out how crisis intervention can enable victims and witnesses to provide better evidence. The emergence of community policing—with its focus on problem-solving and community collaboration—appears to be leading to increased police cooperation with, and attention to, victim services.

Prosecutors and other court personnel can also provide some personal advocacy and support services. Prosecutors or corrections officials are in the best position to obtain victim impact statements and present them to judges as part of sentencing recommendations. Similarly, police are best equipped to provide physical protection to threatened victims and witnesses. Courts can often help reduce intimidation by providing separate waiting areas for witnesses. Although victim assistance programs can seek to expedite property return, police property clerks can adopt a policy of photographing evidence instead of retaining it, or can initiate other methods of returning property quickly to victims.

Providing community-wide referrals is a task which police, prosecutors, court personnel, and corrections officials alike can perform in the course of their daily contacts with victims and witnesses. To facilitate such referrals, program staff can provide officials with up-to-date information on community resources.

Of the many services victim assistance programs provide, those related to negotiating the intricacies of the criminal justice system are perhaps the most appropriate for prosecutors and courts to assume. Realistically, without victim assistance programs the system would not usually be able to escort witnesses to and from the courtroom, provide transportation and child care, or personalize services. However, prosecutors, who are clearly among the most knowledgeable about the workings of the criminal justice system, can—and often do—provide court orientation. The program can prepare a list of questions victims and witnesses most frequently ask and encourage the chief prosecutor to distribute the list,

with recommended answers, to all deputy prosecutors. Program staff can explain to prosecutors how presenting the information typically takes only a few minutes and often improves the cooperation they receive from witnesses.

Prosecutors can also be encouraged to incorporate witness notification and alert functions into their daily routines, either by establishing a notification unit within their offices or, caseload permitting, by performing these services on an individual basis. Judges, too, can provide information to victims and witnesses on the courts and can take a leadership role in ensuring that victims and witnesses are treated properly. For example, they can urge court administrators to establish separate waiting areas for defense and prosecution witnesses, order restitution as a matter of practice, permit a victim advocate to remain in the courtroom, encourage and consider victim impact statements before sentencing, and expedite trials of cases involving sensitive victims.

## The Range of Victim Services

This section presents a brief outline of the practical implementation considerations and problems that victim assistance program staff have identified in direct service delivery. The specific services described have been grouped under seven headings: emergency services, counseling, personal advocacy and support services, assistance in filing for victim compensation and restitution, court-related services, postsentencing services, and systemwide services.

### *Emergency Services*

Emergency services address the most immediate needs of a victim or witness following the crime.

**Medical care, shelter, food.** Most victim assistance programs provide these services by means of referral. (See below for how programs make such referrals.) In a few instances, program staff or volunteers make their homes available as temporary shelters for victims or witnesses; increasingly, victim services providers are helping intimidated witnesses to relocate. Program staff may also wish to recruit volunteers from local churches to assist with the provision of emergency food and shelter. Religious leaders are becoming increasingly aware of victims' needs and may be enthusiastic about encouraging parishioners to help victims in their community.<sup>1</sup>

**Security repair.** After being burglarized, victims often feel (and in fact may be) unsafe in their own homes. As mentioned

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in previous chapters, studies have revealed that security repair is among victims' most frequently unmet needs. Victim services providers can restore a sense of safety by providing security surveys and lock repairs. Some programs limit security service to certain groups, such as the elderly. Usually, these programs also provide on-the-scene crisis intervention and perform security surveys and repairs at the same time.

**Emergency financial assistance.** Immediately following a crime—particularly in cases involving purse-snatchings and muggings—victims often need money for transportation, phone calls, food, or shelter. Many programs have set aside money to distribute to victims in such instances; typically, the money is stored in a petty-cash box, and staff must obtain authorization from the program director or a supervisor before disbursing it. Many programs, however, do not have the resources to provide this service. According to a recent survey of nearly 200 victim assistance programs, only 25 percent were able to provide emergency financial assistance, and then only based on strict criteria. For example, while the Chesapeake (Virginia) Sheriff's Victim Assistance Program provides up to \$200 to elderly victims and to victims whose income is at or below the poverty level, the crime must be reported to the police within 72 hours, the victim must cooperate in the prosecution, the victim must sustain a personal loss that is not insured, and the loss must be documented. The emergency money is raised at an annual fund-raising barbecue.<sup>2</sup>

**Transportation.** Many victims need emergency transportation immediately after a crime. In particular, domestic abuse victims may need transportation to battered women's shelters. The director of the Parke County Victims Advocate Foundation in rural Indiana frequently picks up domestic violence victims and takes them to a shelter in a nearby county. This service, however, can be costly and time-consuming. For many years, transportation to battered women's shelters was the most time-consuming service provided by Citizens Council Victim Services in Minneapolis–St. Paul (Minnesota). The program repeatedly applied for funding from battered women's resources specifically for this service but was unsuccessful. As a result, the service for battered women was discontinued, and shelters must now make their own arrangements for transporting victims.

**On-the-scene comfort.** Some victim services providers provide reassurance and support to victims at the scene of the crime or shortly thereafter by means of home visits. The discussion below reviews the practical considerations involved in providing on-the-scene comfort.

## *Counseling*

Three types of counseling may be distinguished: crisis intervention, follow-up counseling, and mediation.

**Crisis Intervention.**<sup>3</sup> Several models for crisis response have been developed. Each approach generally includes the following steps:

- making contact with the client, and, if necessary, defusing any volatile situations;
- providing information to the client regarding what will happen next and why;
- interviewing the victim and identifying his or her most pressing needs; and
- developing a plan of action to meet those needs.

The crisis intervention response implies that contact with victims is established as soon as possible after the crisis occurs, which usually means immediately after the crime has taken place. To make immediate contact, program staff must work closely with those who first respond to the scene—law enforcement officers and emergency medical staff. Furthermore, to address all the needs of victims, program staff must have quick access to a network of other human service providers. (For a detailed discussion of strategies for establishing cooperation with law enforcement and social service agencies, see chapter 4).

Another practical consideration is whether to provide crisis intervention around the clock. Arguing in favor of 24-hour availability is the fact that a little help, purposefully given at a strategic time, is usually more effective and economical than extensive help offered after the client has developed more severe disorders. Responding on a 24-hour basis can also enhance a program's credibility, particularly with law enforcement.

However, not all programs have the capacity to respond on a 24-hour basis, since the service is costly and requires a relatively large number of staff or volunteers. Furthermore, staff on overnight call may be more susceptible to burnout. As a result, the majority of programs contacted for this publication furnish crisis intervention services only during business hours, although some extend the service until 11 p.m. or midnight.

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Program administrators must also consider whether to provide *on-the-scene* crisis intervention, a costly service in terms of staffing needs. Programs that provide on-the-scene crisis intervention usually send a two-person team, for reasons of safety and efficiency. A two-person team allows one member to focus on the victim's emotional needs while the other attends to such matters as conducting a security survey and contacting shelters. Program administrators who provide this service must ensure that other staff members are available to handle nonemergency victim needs and that some means (such as, beepers) is available for contacting crisis-intervention staff in the event that another victim requires immediate attention. Finally, programs that provide on-the-scene crisis intervention need to furnish transportation for staff or provide mileage reimbursement if staff use their own vehicles. The director of the Pima County program

was able to obtain unmarked cars from the police and sheriff's departments as well as donated cars from local used car dealers.

The National Organization for Victim Assistance provides training for victim assistance program personnel on crisis intervention for individuals and communities. In particular, NOVA helps communities develop a team response in the event of community tragedies such as an earthquake or mass killing.

**Follow-up counseling.** Along with crisis intervention and personal advocacy, follow-up counseling is usually one of the most time-consuming services victims may need. Counseling crime victims consists of providing emotional support, probing to clarify victims' feelings and needs, assisting

## Counseling Victims of Trauma: Critical Incident Debriefing

Several programs have begun providing critical incident debriefing services for individuals traumatized not only by violent crimes but also by environmental catastrophes, accidents, and violence in a workplace (for example, in the case of a bank robbery). Staff help victims, witnesses, survivors, family and friends, and others who may have been traumatized by the incident to verbalize their emotions, understand that their reactions are normal, and cope with their reactions to the event.<sup>4</sup>

The Pima County (Arizona) Victim/Witness Program has long been involved in crisis intervention. In 1990, a high school principal asked staff to counsel students who were being released from a class held hostage by another student. Later the principal asked staff to address larger groups of students who were traumatized or troubled by the event. Recognizing that they could serve other individuals involved in similar disasters, program staff received training from the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) on how to respond to communities in crisis. Initially, program staff thought they would reserve this service for catastrophic events; eventually, they realized that groups affected by crimes and other traumatic incidents could benefit from the service. Critical incident stress debriefing teams have provided assistance to employees after bank robberies, to students and faculty after a local university professor was killed, to employees of a restaurant after the manager was killed in a drunk driving accident, and to residents of an apartment complex where a serial rapist had attacked several women (see appendix I for the program's critical incident stress debriefing brochure and training curriculum). Staff have worked with groups ranging from five to several hundred. Each team is comprised primarily of about 5 regular staff and 10 volunteers trained by the program director and other staff. As with other program activities, prior to conducting a debriefing, staff are careful to talk with police investigators since the debriefings may involve witnesses talking about a crime.

The Pima County program director has recently begun training 12- to 17-year-olds in providing critical incident stress debriefing to young people who have been traumatized by crimes or other serious events (e.g., young residents of an apartment complex where a child was killed). She initially recruited children of program volunteers, as well as her own two daughters. (See appendix A for contact information on the Pima County program.)

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victims in understanding and assessing their options, and facilitating clients' ability to cope with the experience of victimization. Counseling is typically provided throughout a program's contact with the victim, primarily by phone but also, depending on the case, in person at program offices or in home visits. Counseling provided by victim assistance program staff aims to solve only the problems stemming from the experience of victimization, not any underlying problems that preceded the crime.

Staff members cited three primary problems in counseling victims:

1. *Clients sometimes slip through the cracks*, a case processing problem that can be resolved by close monitoring and supervision (see the section, Maintaining Contact, in chapter 5).
2. *Victims may become overdependent on staff* and turn to them for long-term therapeutic needs or to solve their everyday problems. This situation is sometimes fostered by new staff or volunteers, who may rely too strongly on the considerable personal gratification they derive from meeting in terms of victims' needs. Training staff to set limits in terms of meeting victim needs is essential—for example, by drawing up an informal plan of action that outlines what both staff and victims will be responsible—and not responsible—for doing.
3. *Program staff and their case notes may be subpoenaed*. One program director keeps a separate notebook in which he records details of interviews and conversations with victims and witnesses; he then transcribes a summary for the case files. According to a guidebook on crime victim services developed by the National Council of Jewish Women, "In most states, there is no statutory privilege which would protect communications between a lay caseworker and victim. However, some programs which are part of the prosecutor's office have been successful in extending the lawyer client relationship to include their caseworkers."<sup>5</sup> If staff members are summoned to testify or if case notes are subpoenaed, legal advice should be obtained.

**Mediation.** Disputes within families or between neighbors can sometimes be resolved through mediation with limited law enforcement or court intervention. In some jurisdictions, courts have established mediation centers to which victim assistance program personnel may refer clients. In other

communities, the victim assistance program itself provides mediation. Briefly, mediation involves:

- calling the disputants together for a hearing;
- setting ground rules (such as no physical violence and no shouting);
- hearing both sides and avoiding determining guilt or innocence;
- identifying what each party wants and is willing to give in order to end the conflict; and
- formulating specific terms that can lead to a long-term solution.

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***There are over 100 victim-offender mediation programs in the United States, and studies show that many of them appear to result in high levels of victim and offender satisfaction and increased rates of offender payment of restitution.***

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Victim assistance programs may use different criteria to identify cases that are appropriate for mediation.<sup>6</sup> Programs may choose to mediate only felonies when a prior relationship exists between the disputants and no serious injuries have occurred; only misdemeanor cases in which a justice of the peace has determined that the complainant is in danger of being threatened or struck or having property damaged, and has ordered the defendant to deposit a bond; or only disputes in which it appears that both parties are committed to reaching a solution. In order to provide mediation, victim assistance programs must have, at a minimum, an adequate number of staff who are trained in the techniques of mediation and conflict resolution, a separate room available for hearings, and a means of monitoring settlements.

### *Personal Advocacy and Support Services*

Victim assistance programs provide a variety of additional services that go beyond the immediate needs of their clients.

**Employer/landlord intervention.** Victim assistance program staff often negotiate with employers to ensure that victims do not lose pay for the time they spend in court. This is particularly important in jurisdictions where courts do not

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pay witness fees. Program staff may experience difficulty securing cooperation from major industries with a unionized work force and from small retail businesses which cannot afford to pay. The latter, however, are often willing to rearrange working hours to accommodate employees' court schedules.

In some cases, the experience of being victimized leaves a person physically, emotionally, or financially unable to work. Victim services providers can help explain these problems to employers and perhaps obtain a leave of absence for the employee (see appendix J for a relevant sample letter). Sometimes employer intervention extends beyond the immediate needs of the victim, as in the case of a program that persuaded a company to install lights in its parking lot where several employees had been accosted after dark. Victim assistance program staff can also negotiate with landlords and other creditors to allow victims to defer payments.

**Property return.** Burglary victims—both private citizens and merchants—suffer inconvenience and even lost income when stolen goods are retained as evidence. At the same time, police property rooms are often filled to overflowing. Hence, by expediting property return, a program serves both victims of crime and the criminal justice system. Once in place, a property return system requires little staff attention. The National Organization for Victim Assistance suggests the following model, based on a system developed by the Alameda County District Attorney's Victim/Witness Assistance Division:<sup>7</sup>

- Police property clerks prepare an evidence identification card, with the date and time of the offense, a short description of the property, its estimated value, and the suspect's name.
- The clerks then take a color photograph of the card, the stolen property, and the suspect.
- They enter on an evidence log the frame number of the film roll on which the suspect and evidence have been recorded.
- When the case goes to court, the prosecutor need only present the photographs as evidence.

According to the Alameda County program director, once the benefits of an expedited property return system were demonstrated to evidence clerks and to police officials and line officers, everyone cooperated in making the change. Some trial attorneys objected, however, because they felt

that the actual stolen property, rather than photographs, makes a more dramatic impact in court, especially in cases involving unique items. By working with local prosecutors and law enforcement, program staff can determine what is permissible on a case-by-case basis.

**Intimidation protection.** Victims and witnesses may fear reprisal from the alleged offender whether or not there is any real danger. In recent years, however, more victims are receiving threats from offenders or offenders' acquaintances, particularly in cases involving drugs, gangs, or domestic violence.<sup>8</sup> While most program staff cannot provide actual physical protection themselves, the basic services provided by a victim assistance program—such as counseling, court orientation, and court escort—can often reduce feelings of intimidation. The American Bar Association held public hearings on intimidation and concluded that “the mere presence of a third person who knows the criminal justice system can be dramatically reassuring to the crime victim or key witness.”<sup>9</sup>

Establishing separate waiting areas in courts for witnesses and informing victims and witnesses whether a suspect is under arrest or in custody can also reduce fear of intimidation. If necessary, program personnel can encourage police investigators and prosecutors to provide intimidation protection. Some program staff are becoming more involved in helping to protect victims and witnesses, sometimes arranging for them to be temporarily relocated. (See the box in chapter 4 describing the Clark County (Nevada) Victim/Witness Assistance Center.)

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***“Simply having someone to talk to during the trial or to walk to the drinking fountain or the restroom with (vitally important if the defendant is on bail or his family is in or near the court) is very important to the victim or witness in reducing perceived intimidation in almost every case and to the reduction of real threats in a considerable number.”***

— American Bar Association, *Reducing Victim/Witness Intimidation: A Package and “How To Do It” Suggestions for Implementing the ABA Victim/Witness Recommendations*

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**Victim impact statements.** To give victims a voice in sentencing, program advocates may record victims' statements on the physical, psychological, and financial effects of the crime to submit to judges and prosecutors. In some jurisdictions, this is done informally. In Alameda County (California), staff of the Victim/Witness Assistance Division convey the victim's wishes orally to the prosecutor prior to plea bargaining or put the victim directly in touch with the prosecutor. In other jurisdictions, program staff help the victim submit a written statement to the prosecutor which is forwarded to the judge along with the presentence investigation report. Some victim assistance experts point out that it is important to encourage victims to describe the impact of the crime in their own words, rather than writing a formulaic statement for them.

No State explicitly denies the court the right to allow the victim's feelings and opinions to be heard during a presentence investigation or to be mentioned in a presentence report. On the contrary, most States have statutes that make a victim impact statement a mandatory part of the presentence investigation. Victim impact statements are also increasingly being presented to parole boards.

It is important that program staff explain both to victims and to the court that the impact statement is not intended to try to bind the judge in any way but is submitted for the court to consider in determining a sentence. This explanation may help prevent victims from developing unrealistic expectations about case disposition—and the court from misperceiving the impact statement as an attempt to infringe on its discretionary powers.

**Legal/paralegal counsel.** Most programs refer victims and witnesses to another agency, such as a Legal Aid Office, for legal counsel, but some provide paralegal counseling in-house. In fact, program staff must be particularly careful *not* to offer a victim specific legal advice or refer a victim to a specific attorney. Program directors must understand their limits in this area of service delivery and communicate them clearly to staff.

Despite these caveats, providing information regarding legal options is becoming a particularly important service as more and more victims pursue civil litigation as a means of recovering lost wages, hospital costs, property damage, and other expenses resulting from their victimization.<sup>10</sup> If a victim wants to pursue civil action, an advocate can discuss with the victim factors to consider when selecting an attorney, as well as the availability of bar association referral

networks.<sup>11</sup> (See the box, "Helping Victims Pursue Civil Litigation," in chapter 4.) The National Victim Center, near Washington, D.C., recently established the Carrington Victims' Litigation Project (CVLP), which includes a network of attorneys nationwide who have handled cases for crime victims. Victim services providers can refer victims who want to pursue civil litigation to the National Victim Center.<sup>12</sup>

**Referrals.** No one program can provide all of the services victims and witnesses need. Referral to other human services agencies and support groups in the community is therefore essential, especially since victims themselves are often unaware of resources in the community that can provide assistance.<sup>13</sup> (See chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of how to work with agencies and organizations to make mutual referrals.)

The program may make a referral simply by giving the victim the name, address, and phone number of the appropriate agency along with the name of a contact person. Some program staff call the contact person themselves. Others make an appointment on behalf of the victim, and a few actually accompany or transport the victim to the agency. Regardless of the approach, outside resources are most receptive to assisting victims when the referrals meet the eligibility criteria of the outside agency and when accurate assessment information is provided about the referred victim or witness.

Follow-up is important to determine whether clients' needs are met, to determine which agencies do a good job, and to strengthen ties with these organizations. In practice, however, most program staff find that they have time to conduct follow-up only in special cases, as when a particularly needy victim has been referred or an outside resource is being used for the first time. Programs may be able to use volunteers to follow up on referrals, either by telephoning the victim to find out what happened or by sending a letter asking the victim to call the program to report on the experience.

In order to provide comprehensive services to clients, program administrators must be aware of new agencies being established and others closing their doors. Creating and updating resource files is a task that volunteers can perform easily with little supervision.

Sending victims and witnesses to other organizations for help requires that the program be receptive to accepting clients from these agencies in return (see chapter 4 on

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establishing linkages with social service agencies). Occasionally, offering reciprocity can result in inappropriate or excessive numbers of referrals, in which case the victim assistance staff must decide whether the extra effort is repaid by increased cooperation from these organizations.

### *Assistance in Filing for Victim Compensation and Restitution*

Helping crime victims with filing for compensation has become an important service provided by many victim assistance programs.<sup>14</sup> Each state has enacted legislation to compensate victims who suffer economic hardship as a result of their victimization, and some jurisdictions also impose a restitution requirement on offenders whenever appropriate and feasible. States receive a considerable amount of funds for crime victim compensation from the Federal Crime Victims Fund, financed by Federal criminal fines and fees. (See chapter 9, “Funding Victim Assistance Programs.”) To determine the amount of restitution that should be ordered, or the amount of compensation for which victims may qualify, victims must document losses and expenses, including any reimbursements from insurance or other sources. Helping victims to document their losses and expenses is a relatively straightforward but tedious task.<sup>15</sup> Some programs, such as the Alameda County (California) Victim/Witness Assistance Division, have claims specialists dedicated solely to helping victims obtain compensation. Staff in some programs send for the required documentation and assist the victim in filing the papers. Other staff advise the victim to secure and submit the necessary documentation but often find that, despite repeated requests, victims fail to secure them before the filing date has passed or the sentencing hearing has occurred. Some clients do not understand the eligibility criteria and assume that, because they have been victimized, they automatically qualify for compensation or restitution. Furthermore, victims who do qualify want—and often need—immediate reimbursement. Program staff need to warn victims about waiting periods so that they do not develop unrealistic expectations.

Documenting victims’ losses and expenses provides prosecutors and judges with helpful information on the amount of restitution to order. Staff from a number of programs also help victims to complete insurance claims forms for securing medical benefits and reimbursement for lost or stolen property.

### *Court-Related Services*

Familiarizing victims and witnesses with the criminal justice system and providing witness management services are critical, especially for clients who must make court appearances.

**Court orientation.** A brief explanation of the adjudication process, sometimes supplemented by brochures, is usually provided to clients as soon as possible. Not surprisingly, the further a case proceeds in the courts, the more in-depth the explanation becomes, with the most orientation required for cases that actually go to trial. In such cases, a witness who will testify is sometimes given a tour of the courtroom. In addition, many victim services providers single out victims of child abuse, rape victims, and the elderly for special assistance in preparing them to testify.

In order to provide detailed information on the criminal justice system, and especially the trial process, staff themselves must be knowledgeable about criminal justice case processing. Staff surveyed for this report consistently cited this area as one in which they would have liked more training. At the same time, however, they suggested that formal training is not really feasible; the best way to learn about the criminal justice system is to work in it. For these reasons, experienced staff, or those who come to the program with a criminal justice background, may be best suited for providing court orientation.

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*“I found it enormously comforting and helpful to work with a victim/witness advocate who could focus on assisting the victim with his/her emotional and physical reactions to victimization and provide the necessary support to enable them to participate in the prosecution of their case.”*

— Ralph C. Martin II, District Attorney  
of Suffolk County, Massachusetts

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**Witness notification.** Notifying witnesses of upcoming court appearances, informing them of postponements, and letting them know the final disposition of their case not only helps prevent unnecessary trips by witnesses but also relieves prosecutors of the burden of tracking down witnesses and keeping them up-to-date regarding case status. Most



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important, witness notification improves appearance rates. Based on the needs assessment, program goals, and sponsor priorities, administrators will have to establish the scope of the program's witness notification services. Most of the programs contacted for this study provide witness notification only for victims they have assisted; some extend this service to police witnesses; and a few others include all witnesses, whether or not they are victims. (Many programs also notify victims about the status of the police investigation, before the case even reaches court.)

On a practical level, witness notification involves a great deal of paperwork. Staff must review court dockets and check prosecutor records, and then convey the information to the witness by phone or by mail. Many programs have developed form letters which staff send to witnesses along with a brochure on trial procedures and the role of the witness in the courtroom. Some programs also use form letters to provide information on a case disposition to witnesses who were not present when their cases were heard. Program staff may send case disposition letters to police witnesses as well, because otherwise the officers, who may never hear from other sources what happened to suspects they arrested and interrogated, may feel that their efforts were wasted.

Informing victims and witnesses of case disposition can be difficult when defendants are found not guilty or when the sentence appears lenient. Victims also tend to view plea bargaining (which occurs in the vast majority of criminal cases) as "letting the offender off easy." Staff may therefore have to absorb victims' anger at the perceived inequities and red tape in the criminal justice system. To prepare victims for possible unsatisfactory outcomes, it may be helpful to inform them at the outset of the realities of plea bargaining and judicial sentencing.

**Witness alert.** Closely related to witness notification is witness alert, or on-call services. Normally, witnesses are told to arrive at 8:30 a.m. and to be available all day to testify. With a witness alert service, however, witnesses may remain at home or at work until shortly before the time they testify (if they are called to the stand at all). This reduces the amount of time witnesses spend at the courthouse—and their frustration level. Some prosecutor's offices already provide witness alert services, in which case there is no need for the victim assistance program to take on this task.

If the program will be providing this service, program administrators must decide in advance with the district

attorney on the eligibility criteria for witnesses to be placed on alert status—for example, how close to the courthouse they must live or work, or what indicators of reliability, if any, they must demonstrate. When program staff take the initiative to place witnesses on stand-by notice, they must make sure that the witnesses do not damage the program's credibility with prosecutors by not appearing. As with witness notification, witness alert is usually limited to victims the program has assisted.

**Witness reception and escort.** Providing an area where clients may wait apart from defendants, as recommended by the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, can give considerable relief to victims and witnesses.<sup>16</sup> Some programs, already located in a courthouse, make part of their own office space available to witnesses who are waiting to testify. The Clark County (Nevada) program has an office on the fifth floor of the courthouse where witnesses can wait. (Staff, however, will not escort witnesses who have been threatened; instead they rely on the prosecutor's office to arrange for escort.) Other programs that have offices outside the courts have set up a witness reception booth in the courthouse. This increases the burden on staff resources, however, since someone must be available to answer witnesses' questions and direct them to appropriate courtrooms.

Witness escort is usually reserved for victims who have been severely affected by their victimization, typically victims of violent crime, the elderly, and children who have been sexually abused. These victims find it especially reassuring to have a familiar face in the courtroom when they testify and are cross-examined.

**Transportation and child care.** Victims with limited financial resources are often faced with problems in getting to and from court and in caring for their children. Victim assistance staff sometimes drive clients to court and, if necessary, provide child care themselves in program offices. Cutbacks in funding, however, have forced many victim assistance programs to limit or even eliminate transportation and child care services.

### *Postsentencing Services*

Postsentencing services represent one of the more significant areas of expansion among victim assistance programs. An increasing number of departments of corrections, probation, and parole are recognizing—sometimes under mandate of law—that victims are as significant a part of their clientele as

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offenders. Many victims want services regardless of whether the offender was imprisoned, is on probation or parole, or is in some form of community-based corrections (e.g., day reporting). In addition to the services discussed below, victim services that can be offered after sentencing include assistance with victim impact statements and with preparing to speak before the parole board, coordination of victim impact classes at which offenders hear victims speak about the effects of crime on their lives, and general ombudsman services for victims with complaints about the penal system.

**Orientation.** The corrections system can be difficult to understand and often arouses deep resentment on the part of victims who may not understand, for example, why an offender was sentenced to community-based corrections or why prison overcrowding precipitated early release. Victim services providers can verbally provide victims with information about the corrections system, the roles of various officials within the system (e.g., probation officers), and victims' rights within the system. Brochures are another, but less effective, way to provide this information to victims.

**Notification.** As of 1995, 31 States had enacted statutes giving victims the right to notification of parole hearings and of early release of the offender.<sup>17</sup> This includes identifying which prison the offender is in or where the offender is living if on probation, and notification of any escape, furlough, parole hearing, early community placement, and release hearing (see appendix K). Usually victims are notified by mail. It is important that victim assistance staff learn whether offenders can find out if a victim has requested notification of the offender's status within the penal system or if program staff can keep notification requests confidential.

**Restitution.** Victim services programs that work out of the correctional system are in a good position to help victims obtain restitution. (See the discussion above, "Assistance in Filing for Victim Compensation and Restitution.") The California Youth Authority Office of Prevention and Victim Services serves as a liaison between victims and the Youth Authority regarding restitution. The authority sets up a payment schedule and withholds money from the offender for deposit into a restitution account. Then a check is sent to Victim Services, the only depository of victims' addresses maintaining a single depository protects the confidentiality of victims. Similarly, when an offender is on parole, the parole officer obtains the restitution payments and turns them over to Victim Services, which sends them to the victim.

**Victim-offender reconciliation programs (VORP).** Also often called victim-offender mediation, VORP gives victims the opportunity to talk with their assailants and explain how the crime has affected them. However, whereas traditional mediation affords the chance to work out a resolution that is agreeable to both victim and offender, victim-offender reconciliation usually occurs after sentencing. In recent years VORP's have gained in popularity, but victim advocates caution that this service should be provided only on a voluntary basis and with careful explanation to both parties of what it entails. Victim assistance programs that cannot operate a VORP themselves can refer victims to local reconciliation programs. (See the box in this chapter, "Crime Victims and the Restorative Model of Justice?")

## Victim Notification in the Information Age

The Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system is an automated telephone system developed by a local company to give victims in Jefferson County, Kentucky, the opportunity to obtain information about the status of inmates.<sup>18</sup> Modeled after the system used by banks to provide account information, VINE uses a computer that relies on voice recognition. The system gives callers information about times and locations of court dates and the status of inmates incarcerated in the county correctional system. Victims can also register by phone to be automatically notified when an inmate is to be released; the system calls registered victims repeatedly until contact is made. Victims can also obtain information on other county victim services and the phone numbers of court and corrections officials. According to county officials, domestic violence victims are the most frequent users of the system. At least 50 other jurisdictions across the country are planning to set up VINE systems. The VINE system can be tested by calling (502) 574-8463 and using the inmate number "111111." For more information on the VINE system, contact Mike Davis, vice president of marketing development for Interactive Systems, in Louisville, Kentucky, at (502) 561-8463.

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## Systemwide Services

Victim assistance programs provide services that can improve the overall response of the community and the criminal justice system to victims and witnesses, including conducting public education sessions, supporting legislation that addresses victim and witness concerns, and providing training for police, prosecutors, and other human services providers.

*Public education sessions* serve as a forum for victim assistance program personnel to provide information on topics

### Crime Victims and the Restorative Model of Justice?

As the criminal justice system becomes increasingly burdened with record numbers of offenders, including more juvenile and violent offenders, officials are struggling to devise ways to cope. There appears to be a growing consensus that what is needed is a restructuring of the entire system, or at least a dramatic change in approach.<sup>19</sup> Some observers maintain that the needs of victims should be at the forefront of a new model, popularly called restorative justice. The restorative justice model focuses on resolving problems created by crime—such as injuries and difficulties suffered by victims—in contrast to the retributive model, which focuses primarily on establishing guilt and punishing offenders.

As an emerging philosophy in the criminal justice system, restorative justice has been implemented mainly in the corrections system. Victim-offender mediation and reconciliation, the payment of restitution (both monetary and through community service), victim impact panels, and victim impact statements are all important aspects of restorative justice.<sup>20</sup> Some criminal justice officials hope that the development and use of more of these approaches will ease the burden on the court and corrections systems and help to “restore” crime victims to “wholeness” again.<sup>21</sup>

ranging from crime prevention to the needs of specific categories of victims, such as domestic violence, rape, and robbery victims. More victim services providers are becoming involved—usually in conjunction with schools and other community groups—in violence reduction activities, particularly among youth. The director of the Essex County (Massachusetts) Victim/Witness Assistance Program supplements the district attorney’s efforts to prevent violence by coordinating and giving presentations at local conferences and workshops on such topics as teen dating violence and sexual harassment. In addition, program staff use public education sessions to make the community aware of the program’s services, generate referrals, and provide information about victims’ rights and other community services. (Chapter 5 provides a more detailed discussion of public education sessions.)

Many program staff have been involved in *advocating legislative changes* that address the needs of victims and witnesses.<sup>22</sup> Legislative support activities can take the form of drafting bills, arranging for victims and witnesses to testify before task force hearings, or participating in lobbying efforts. When appropriate, program administrators can ask staff of other human services providers in the community to help draft legislation or lobby for its passage.

Before engaging in lobbying, the program must have a clear written agreement with funding sources that lobbying is acceptable. Program staff have supported legislation that provides:

- victim compensation, witness compensation, and restitution;
- notification programs, intimidation protection, expedited property return, and victim impact statements;
- protective orders for victims of domestic violence;
- medical examination and treatment of victims of sexual assault; and
- institutionalized funding of victim/witness services.

Victim services providers can also work for *systemic changes within police departments and prosecutors’ offices* to benefit victims and witnesses. For example, staff can seek to make it standard policy in the district attorney’s office to request restitution in all possible cases and ask that it be collected before court costs and fines.

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Finally program staff can *conduct training* for police, prosecutors, and human services providers in handling victims and witnesses. Training may improve program credibility and interagency cooperation, and the quality of services provided to victims and witnesses. Training police and prosecutors, of course, requires the approval of the chief of police and the chief prosecutor. To avoid the problem of overtime pay, many program staff request permission to address officers during regular departmental training sessions or at roll calls. Chapter 4 provides a more detailed discussion of these training programs.

## Endnotes

1. See David and Anne Delaplane, *Victims: A Manual for Clergy and Congregations* (Sacramento, California: The Spiritual Dimension in Victim Services, n.d.).
2. Albert R. Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims: Research, Policy, and Practice* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 55–56.
3. For detailed information on crisis management, refer to Marlene Young, *The Victim Service System: A Guide to Action* (Washington, D.C., 1983); Lee Ann Hoff, *People in Crisis: Understanding and Helping* (California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978); David A. Lowenberg and Paul Forgach, *Counseling Crime Victims in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Aurora Associate, Inc., 1982); Marjorie Sussman and Carol Vittert, “Building a Solution: A Practical Guide for Establishing Crime Victim Service Agencies” (St. Louis: National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section, 1980).
4. J. R. Freedy, H. S. Resnick, D. G. Kilpatrick, B. S. Dansky, and R. P. Tidwell, “The Psychological Adjustment of Recent Crime Victims in the Criminal Justice System,” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 9 (1994): 450–468.
5. Sussman and Vittert, “Building a Solution,” 67.
6. For discussions of what types of cases are appropriate for mediation, see chapters 8 and 9 in Burt Galaway and Joe Hudson, eds., *Perspectives on Crime Victims* (St. Louis: C. V. Mosby, 1981), and Daniel McGillis and Joan Mullen, *Neighborhood Justice Centers: An Analysis of Potential Models* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 1977).
7. National Organization for Victim Assistance, “Responding to Crime Victims is Good Business: A Report to the American Business Community” (Washington, D.C.: National Organization for Victim Assistance, 1980).
8. See Kerry Healey, *Victim and Witness Intimidation: New Developments and Emerging Responses*, Research in Action (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, October 1995); Peter Finn and Kerry Healey, *Preventing Witness Intimidation: A Practical Guide*, Issues and Practices (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, forthcoming); and Claire Johnson, Barbara Webster, and Edward Connors, *Prosecuting Gangs: A National Assessment*, Research in Brief (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 1995).
9. American Bar Association, *Reducing Victim/Witness Intimidation: A Package and “How To Do It” Suggestions for Implementing the ABA Victim/Witness Intimidation Recommendations*. Copies of the publication can be obtained from The American Bar Association, Criminal Justice Section, 1800 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.
10. Victoria O. Brien, *Civil Legal Remedies for Crime Victims*, Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, December 1992).
11. For a detailed discussion of civil litigation on behalf of crime victims, see Victoria O. Brien, *Civil Legal Remedies for Crime Victims*, Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, December 1992), 1. Also, the National Victim Center developed for the Office for Victims of Crime a conference training manual and curriculum, *Legal Remedies for Crime Victims Against Perpetrators: Basic Principles*, published in 1992. To obtain the manual and curriculum, contact the National Victim Center at (703) 684–5300.
12. Contact the National Victim Center at (703) 684–5300.
13. Cannavale and Falcon, *Improving Witness Cooperation*, 30.
14. See Dale G. Parent, Barbara Auerbach, and Kenneth E. Carlson, *Compensating Crime Victims: A Summary of*

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- Policies and Practices* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 1992).
15. For a comprehensive review of approaches to helping crime victims obtain restitution, see Daniel McGillis, *Crime Victim Restitution: An Analysis of Approaches, Issues and Practices* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, December 1986).
  16. *President's Task Force on Victims of Crime: Final Report* (Washington, D.C.: Executive Office of the President, December 1982), 72. The National District Attorneys Association Commission on Victim Witness Assistance of Washington, D.C., issued a pamphlet, *A Primer for Model Victim Witness Assistance Centers*, on the creation of comfortable and secure victim and witness reception centers.
  17. *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance: A Training and Resource Manual* (Alexandria, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1994).
  18. *Law Enforcement News*, 21, no. 22 (April 1995), 5.
  19. John J. DiIulio, Jr., *Rethinking the Criminal Justice System: Toward a New Paradigm*, A Discussion Paper from the BJS-Princeton Project (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1992).
  20. Myron Steele and Thomas J. Quinn, "Including Victims in the Criminal Justice Equation: Community Justice in the Next Century," *Perspectives*, Special Issue, 18, no. 3 (American Probation and Parole Association, 1994), 31.
  21. DeIulio, "Rethinking the Criminal Justice System," 11.
  22. American Bar Association, *Reducing Victim/Witness Legislation*. Also, for a detailed discussion of the steps involved in conducting legislative advocacy, see *Legislative Advocacy and Policy Development* (Alexandria, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1990).

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# Chapter 7

## Training and Supervising Staff

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### Key Points

- *Up-to-date, comprehensive training—both preservice and in-service—is critical to the effectiveness of a victim assistance program.* Training helps ensure that staff have the expertise and skills to provide quality services and helps keep staff motivated about their work.
- *Training does not have to be expensive and time-consuming.*
- *With increasing collaboration among victim assistance programs, criminal justice agencies, and community agencies and organizations, there are more opportunities to conduct interagency and multidisciplinary training.* This type of training not only helps to enhance participants' knowledge and skills but also contributes to better relationships among agencies.
- *A wealth of State and nationally based training opportunities focused specifically on victim services are now available through victim services agencies and networks.*
- *Training is receiving increased emphasis among victim services experts as they attempt to raise the position of victim advocate to professional status.* Some States have adopted training standards and curriculum for State-funded programs.
- *Staff supervision is particularly important in the areas of case assignment, maintaining volunteer commitment, and preventing burnout.* Increasingly, supervisors also need to ensure that staff follow proper policies and procedures to protect themselves and the program from legal liability.

Training and supervision of both paid staff and volunteers are critical tasks for victim assistance programs. Training helps ensure that staff have the expertise and skills to provide high-quality services, while supervision helps to improve the competence and confidence of advocates, ensure that victims are being reached and are receiving effective services, and foster staff morale, commitment, and professionalism. This chapter examines ways of conducting preservice and in-service training of both volunteers and paid staff, as well as strategies for supervising both.

### Conducting Staff Training<sup>1</sup>

Training is often ignored or downplayed, usually because of indifference, lack—or unawareness—of training opportuni-

ties, or limited funds, staff, or time. In a recent survey of over 300 programs, nearly half provided *neither* preservice *nor* in-service training for either paid staff or volunteers.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the director of the Victims Advocate Foundation, located in rural Indiana, notes that the most important advice he can offer to other programs' staff is to attend all the conferences and training sessions they can. Ralph Martin II, district attorney of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, which has a long-running victim assistance program, maintains that comprehensive introductory and in-service training for advocates is one of the essential components of an effective program.<sup>3</sup>

Training does not have to be expensive or time-consuming. It is important, however, that program administrators maximize the investment they do put into training. Spending two

hours observing an experienced advocate on the job, for instance, could be more valuable than six hours of lectures. And given the increased quantity and quality of working relationships with other groups that victim assistance programs are developing, inexpensive interagency training can often be arranged. Program directors must be careful to obtain up-to-date, comprehensive training materials; to use training techniques that convey considerable information in a short amount of time; and to keep informed about training opportunities in their community and State and on the national level.

In the survey of 300 victim assistance programs mentioned above, of the programs that offered *preservice* training, paid staff generally received 40 hours and volunteers received 20 hours of training; of the programs that offered *in-service training*, paid staff generally received 24 hours and volunteers received 15 hours. Figure 7-1 shows the topics addressed during training by a majority of survey respondents who provide training. Over three-fourths of the respondents said that their primary training objective was to improve the efficiency of their program. A majority of staff also cited the goals of developing skills to work within criminal justice

agencies, defining the role and function of the program, and developing counseling and other skills among program staff and volunteers. Two-thirds or more of all survey respondents said that they need additional training in working with special victim populations (particularly elderly, juvenile, and mentally ill victims and victims of domestic violence), knowing the legal rights of victims, developing community resources, counseling and interviewing techniques, obtaining restitution for victims, and working with law enforcement officials.

### *Preservice Training*

Figure 7-2 summarizes the training that five programs conduct for both paid staff and volunteers. Preservice training that these and other programs provide typically seeks to impart the following skills and information:

- the program's goals, organization, services, and policies and procedures;
- operating procedures of the criminal justice system;

## **Figure 7-1 Common Victim Assistance Training Topics**

In a recent survey of over 300 victim assistance programs, the majority of programs that provided training reported addressing the following topics:

### ***General Knowledge***

- Counseling and interviewing techniques
- Communication skills
- Funding for victim assistance programs
- Development of community resources
- Working with child welfare agencies

### ***Special Victim Populations***

- Victims of domestic violence
- Juvenile victims
- Elderly victims
- Victims of neglect and abuse
- Working within family structures

### ***Criminal Justice Knowledge and Skills***

- Legal rights of victims
- Criminal justice system operations
- Working with law enforcement officials
- Working with prosecutors
- Obtaining restitution for victims
- Legal evidence

### ***Victim Assistance Skills***

- When to provide assistance to victims
- How to be an advocate for victims
- Motivating victims to participate in the criminal justice system

*Source:* Tom McEwen, "Understanding the Needs of Victim Assistance Programs," Draft Report, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice (Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Law and Justice, 1994).

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- the availability of other service providers in the community, and the services they provide;
  - counseling and interviewing techniques, including listening skills, observing, questioning, and paraphrasing;
  - crisis intervention techniques, such as establishing contact, taking safety precautions, assessing the problem, defusing anger, providing reassurance, planning therapeutic interventions, and making referrals.

Programs may address additional topics depending on the specific responsibilities assigned to volunteers in a given program; appendix L presents a sample training agenda for volunteers. Programs may train staff and volunteers using lectures, films and reading materials, role playing, observing staff during working hours (“shadowing”), assigning the newcomer to an experienced staff member as a buddy, sensitivity training, and videotaping. Most programs use a combination of approaches, presenting crisis theory and information on the criminal justice system through lectures, written materials, and client contact and developing counseling skills through role playing and observation.

There is a wealth of written material on victimology and victim services that both experienced and new victim services providers can read. (See appendix B and the endnotes of each chapter for a list of useful publications.) However, learning improves when trainees actively participate in the sessions.<sup>4</sup> Preservice training can be particularly effective when it includes exercises which simulate actual cases. Furthermore, it is usually best if training is conducted by individuals with first-hand experience in service delivery, as well as by program directors and staff who are familiar with the program’s day-to-day operations.

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***According to the Victim Service Council of St. Louis County (Missouri), “Our first orientation session, though conceived with good intentions, was almost worthless. It consisted of six sessions, five of them presented by outsiders with no understanding of victim services. It was only when we actually began to provide services that we realized we had been training in a vacuum. We revised our training based on our direct services experience.”***

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When deciding on the content and format of preservice training, it is useful to consider the program’s objectives and how much training staff have already had. Programs that offer 24-hour on-the-scene services need to emphasize crisis intervention skills more heavily than programs that focus on victim advocacy and operate primarily during normal business hours. Staff need to be trained on how to work with victims of crimes that require the most attention or special expertise, such as rape and other sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse.

As more victim experts recognize the need to provide outreach to victim populations that face particularly difficult obstacles to cooperating with the criminal justice system (including ethnic groups, gays and lesbians, and the elderly) more staff are being trained to meet these groups’ special needs. Nineteen of the 25 programs originally surveyed for this study reported that they had provided staff orientation on language barriers or on cultural factors affecting minority victims. This kind of training is usually most effective when conducted by a member of—or someone who works frequently with—the particular group involved.

Preservice training also generally includes discussions of obstacles to cooperation with other agencies in the program’s referral network and how to overcome them. In many programs, trainees participate in police ride-alongs and observe trials in court. Program administrators also frequently distribute resource directories to staff.

As figure 7–2 shows, training for volunteers sometimes differs from training for paid staff. Generally, preservice training for volunteers is more extensive, covering basic counseling techniques, while preservice training for staff (who usually already have counseling experience) is less structured and concentrates on how the criminal justice system operates and the particulars of the program’s operations, such as recordkeeping.

Some program administrators use preservice training as a screening device for volunteers, allowing anyone who is interested to attend but recruiting only participants who complete the training successfully. Preservice training conducted by the Pima County (Arizona) Victim/Witness Program, for example, is open to anyone who wants to learn crisis intervention concepts, skills, and techniques. In order to become a volunteer in the program, however, trainees must attend 11 of 12 three-hour sessions conducted by program staff and, after being interviewed and selected,



**Figure 7-2  
Training Programs in Five Victim Assistance Programs**

PROGRAM	PRE-SERVICE		IN-SERVICE	
	Volunteer	Paid Staff	Volunteers	Paid Staff
Alameda County (California) Victim/Witness Assistance Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of criminal justice system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduction to key staff of other agencies with which programs work</li> <li>observation of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on-the-job training regarding the program's procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>workshops and conferences (40 hours training required during first year)</li> </ul>
Greenville (South Carolina) Victim/Witness Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>orientation as part of screening process</li> <li>review of job description</li> <li>court observation</li> <li>shadow fieldline advocate</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>workshops</li> <li>on-the-job supervision</li> <li>regional conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on-the-job supervision</li> <li>conferences (including annual statewide solicitor's conference)</li> <li>continuing education credits required</li> </ul>
Portland (Oregon) Victims Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>job definition</li> <li>orientation from police, prosecutors, hospital staff</li> <li>instruction on making referrals</li> <li>observe and work with staff "buddy"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None (new employees must meet certain education requirements and have experience in direct victim services; may consult with more experienced staff or director as needed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seminars</li> <li>continuing legal education</li> </ul>	
Minneapolis-St. Paul (Minnesota) Citizens Council Victim Services	<p>given over six weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reading assignments, films</li> <li>briefings on common cases</li> <li>observation of staff</li> <li>visits to shelters/hospitals</li> <li>police ride-alongs</li> <li>role playing</li> </ul>	<p>given over two weeks</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monthly lectures by representatives of other agencies updating staff on changes in case processing client eligibility or other developments in the field to maintain and expand referral network</li> </ul>
Scottsdale (Arizona) Police Crisis Intervention Unit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>orientation to criminal justice system and to agencies in program's referral network</li> <li>police ride-alongs</li> <li>accompany experienced staff on call</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simulated exercises with SWAT team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seminars and workshops</li> <li>defensive driving</li> <li>self-defense</li> <li>monitored telephone training</li> <li>computer training</li> </ul>

Source: Interviews with directors and staff of the above programs were conducted by Abt Associates in 1982 and 1986, with updated information provided in writing by program directors in 1995.

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participate in an additional 15 hours of training. Trainees must then observe and work with experienced staff during a six-month probationary period before graduating to full volunteer status and being allowed to work alone.

Most program administrators find that a minimum of 40 hours of training is desirable for both paid staff and volunteers. However, training is often briefer because program staff who conduct the training can typically spare only a limited amount of time from their other responsibilities. In the long run, however, program directors report that allowing trainers adequate time to orient new staff usually pays off by reducing the number of blunders new staff invariably make.

Program administrators have found an evaluation component useful in obtaining information from trainees on the content and presentation of the training. Staff trainers of Pima County (Arizona)'s Victim/Witness Program solicit oral assessments from participants after each exercise in addition to distributing evaluation forms at the end of the training. Daily comments from trainees facilitate mid-course corrections in the training program as well as modifications of future training sessions.

### *In-Service Training*

In-service training, usually less elaborate and less formal than preservice training, typically takes one of the following forms:

- round-table discussions of cases that were particularly difficult or rewarding to handle;
- guest speakers from other agencies, who bring program staff up-to-date on changes in eligibility criteria, services offered, or case processing; or who address victim assistance topics such as domestic violence, child abuse, or rape; and
- attendance at seminars, conferences, or workshops given by regional, State, and national victim assistance agencies and networks, universities, or other organizations.

In compliance with requirements of the California Penal Code for State-funded victim assistance programs, new staff with the Alameda County Victim/Witness Assistance Division must complete 40 hours of training before they complete their first year on the job. All other staff must receive at least 24 hours of training each year through workshops, conferences, and seminars.

Most programs use on-the-job training both for paid staff and volunteers. This approach requires fewer resources than formally structured training programs and permits faster start-up. In addition, assisting victims and witnesses cannot be taught in the abstract but must be learned by actually providing services. While on-the-job training is not recommended as the primary method of qualifying new staff who have had little or no experience in human services delivery, providing new staff with first-hand experience in dealing with victims and witnesses is an essential supplement to formally structured training. Close supervision is necessary to minimize harmful interactions between new staff and clients and to identify areas in which new staff need improvement.

Many national, State, and local networks of victim services providers offer training courses and technical assistance. The director of the Victims Advocate Foundation in Indiana had been working in the area of victim assistance for about four years when he attended a week-long training session on crisis response at the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) in Washington, D.C. The seminar, he said, "made all the difference in the world" in his ability to assist victims. The director of the Colorado State Patrol Victim Assistance Program considers the bimonthly training seminars and annual retreats offered by the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance to be invaluable. The National Victim Center (NVC) and the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) also sponsor conferences and training courses and provide on-site technical assistance to programs (see appendix B). For example, with OVC funding, NVC provides training and technical assistance to victim advocates regarding serving crime victims who have or fear they have contracted the HIV virus. The organization recently developed a comprehensive training manual on this topic.<sup>5</sup>

Inviting staff from other programs or agencies to provide training to victim assistance program staff—or attending training sessions that these other groups offer—will not only improve the expertise of victim advocates but also contribute to the development of working relationships with the other agencies. According to the director of the Suffolk County (Massachusetts) Victim/Witness Assistance Program, "Part of developing better interagency cooperation is our need to educate each other." She frequently coordinates training meetings between her staff and law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and community service providers.

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## Victim Advocate: An Emerging Profession?

As the number of victim advocates nationwide continues to increase, and as advocates' expertise becomes more sophisticated, there is a growing movement to professionalize the position.<sup>6</sup> The movement in part reflects increased pressure from Federal and State funding sources for uniform standards among victim assistance programs. In addition, many victim advocates believe that, in order to accomplish program activities more effectively, they need to be perceived as professionals—not just do-gooders—by lawyers, judges, and other professionals with whom they work.<sup>7</sup>

To facilitate the professionalization of the position of victim advocate, many victim assistance networks and program administrators are placing increased emphasis on staff qualifications and training, program standards, and public recognition of program accomplishments. Also supporting the professionalization of victim services is the growing body of research regarding victimology and victim services. The National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA) has proposed a code of ethics to guide victim assistance providers in professional conduct with crime victims, colleagues, other professionals, and the public. The organization is also strongly encouraging colleges and universities to offer courses and specialized degrees in victim assistance.<sup>8</sup>

Accreditation is another increasingly prevalent method of standardizing and professionalizing victim services. The California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council established a system of victim advocate certification in 1993 to recognize the professional standing of victim advocates in the State. Victim assistance program employees apply for certification by completing a form that lists their educational background, the number of months or years employed by a comprehensive victim services agency (as defined by the California Penal Code), and any specialized training sessions or courses the employee has taken. The director of the program for which the employee works must recommend employees for certification by signing their application.

"Certificates of professional standing" are presented in the following categories, with requirements as noted:

**Victim Advocate:** To qualify, employees hired before July 1, 1993, must have completed one full year of work in a comprehensive victim services agency and must have demonstrated through education, experience, and specialized training the ability to assist victims and witnesses. Employees hired on or after July 1, 1993, must fulfill these requirements as well as a State-approved 40-hour training curriculum during their first year of employment with the victim services agency. (Training requirements include 16 hours regarding the criminal justice system; 6 hours regarding victimization; 2 hours regarding cultural, ethnic, and special needs assessment; 4 hours each regarding victim/witness services and crisis intervention techniques; 2 hours regarding victim compensation; and 6 hours regarding basic needs assessment and case management.)

**Senior Victim Advocate:** To qualify, employees must have five years of experience as a victim advocate in California and must have demonstrated through continued education and specialized training the ability to assist victims and witnesses.

Appendix M shows a sample application for certification and a sample certificate.

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## Conducting Staff Supervision

Supervising staff involves close attention to case assignment, volunteer commitment, and preventing burnout.<sup>9</sup> Although all program directors and supervisors may find the following strategies useful, each supervisor has a unique style for monitoring staff and communicating evaluation results with them.

### *Assigning Cases*

Some program administrators assign cases to staff according to the area of the city in which the client resides. Thus, for several years, two staff members of Scottsdale (Arizona)'s Police Crisis Intervention Unit handled the northern half of the city, and two handled the southern half. Other program administrators assign cases according to the type of problem involved. As a rule, supervisors using this system assign less complex matters (such as burglary or purse snatching) to less experienced staff and to volunteers, while more experienced staff are assigned more complex cases. In Portland (Oregon)'s Victims Assistance Program, one advocate deals with gang/hate crimes, another works exclusively with victims of juvenile offenders, and a third coordinates the county multidisciplinary child abuse team. Staff preferences guide some case assignments in many programs. Finally, some program administrators make case assignments on the basis of the type of service required or staff availability. A supervisor for the Alameda County (California) program reviews all prosecutor charging sheets and police reports and assigns cases to staff on a "next-up" system unless caseload or other case assignment considerations warrant a different assignment.

Apart from assigning less complicated cases to newer staff or volunteers, specializing in particular types of cases is the exception in the programs that were visited for on-site study. In most of these six programs, staff are "generalists" who can be assigned different types of cases. Since most programs cannot afford to hire enough staff to allow them to specialize, the generalist approach is, in part, a matter of practical economics. It is also a way of minimizing staff burnout. A number of staff reported that concentrating on similar cases over time impaired their ability to empathize with clients. Furthermore, repeatedly handling upsetting crimes like homicide, domestic violence, or rape can lead to fatigue and depression. With specialization, staff may also become possessive about "their" cases, feeling that no one else can handle them as well.

However, specialization allows staff to build expertise in a particular area and, by designating a single person as the contact for certain types of cases, can strengthen the program's linkages with other agencies. Staff in the Alameda County (California) program, where specialization used to be the rule, found that concentrating on one or two types of cases allowed them to keep abreast of legal changes in their areas of expertise and to modify service delivery accordingly. Similarly, staff who specialize can keep close track of community resources related to their particular area of responsibility—unlike generalists, who must strive to be aware of changing resources in a variety of fields. And Alameda County staff report that they began to develop a sixth sense about their cases, which enabled them to make better judgments about their clients' candidness and emotional state than generalists, who usually see only a limited number of each type of victim or witness, could have made. Recently, however, because of increased caseloads and a desire to assign cases more equitably, Alameda County staff have begun to handle all types of cases. But staff specialization with respect to certain kinds of community resources (such as police or community-based organizations) has been maintained.

### *Maintaining Volunteer Commitment*

One of the most difficult tasks victim services providers face is keeping volunteers for a significant period of time. Because many programs depend heavily on volunteers, this is also one of the most critical tasks for programs. A number of measures can be taken to reduce volunteer turnover, beginning with a contractual agreement. Establishing a contract formalizes the two-way commitment of the agency to the volunteer and the volunteer to the agency by articulating both the program's expectations of the volunteer, both in terms of the amount of time required and the type of work involved, and what the volunteer can expect from the program (e.g., training). Furthermore, a written contract fosters a more professional image for the volunteer and the program within the community. The director of the Suffolk County (Massachusetts) Victim/Witness Assistance Program asks each intern and volunteer to sign a contract (see appendix N) stating the length of time during which they will work for the program, the number of hours they will work each week, and the specific responsibilities they will assume. Academic advisors of student interns must also sign the contract.

Involving volunteers in direct service delivery will help to give them a stake in the program. Unsure of the ability and reliability of volunteers, many program directors are reluctant to use them in this capacity; nonetheless, experience has

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demonstrated that properly trained and supervised volunteers can not only provide direct services competently, but can be critical to program survival. Many victim assistance program administrators, such as the director of the Suffolk County (Massachusetts) program, have made arrangements

with local universities for volunteers who complete program training and devote a certain amount of time to the program to earn course credits. Close supervision and continual assessment of volunteers' achievements and deficiencies are also useful for maintaining volunteer interest. Finally, pro-

## Civil Litigation: Training Staff To Help Clients—and Protect Themselves

It is becoming increasingly important that victim assistance program staff, in addition to having general knowledge about criminal proceedings, be informed about victims' options for bringing civil litigation—both against offenders and against the victim assistance program or advocates themselves.

As mentioned in other chapters (see the box on “Helping Victims Pursue Civil Litigation” in chapter 4, in particular), an increasing number of victims are seeking to recover damages from offenders for such expenses as damaged property, lost wages, and hospital costs. Although victim advocates should not attempt to offer legal advice to clients, they can inform victims of their legal options and of the availability of bar association legal networks, and can provide support during consultation with a civil attorney.<sup>10</sup>

Staff can obtain training on the fundamentals of civil law and crime victims' civil options from local civil attorneys and from the increasing amount of written material on the subject, including the following:

- *Legal Remedies for Crime Victims Against Perpetrators: Basic Principles*, (Arlington, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1992), includes both a training curriculum and a manual for use at regional conferences (see appendix B for contact information on the National Victim Center).
- The Carrington Victims' Litigation Project (CVLP), also developed by NVC, published resources for victims, victim advocates, attorneys, and others interested in pursuing civil litigation against offenders. As part of the project, NVC refers victims to members of its Coalition of Victim Attorneys and Consultants (COVAC), who have access to a civil justice database, a quarterly newsletter that addresses civil remedies for crime victims, and NVC's library.
- *The Attorney's Victim Assistance Manual: A Guide to the Legal Issues Confronting Victim of Crime and Victim Service Providers*, was prepared for NVC in 1987 by the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section.

In addition, it is important that victim assistance programs have policies and procedures in place to protect the program and staff from liability and that all staff are trained to follow them.<sup>11</sup> For example, victims may be able to file third-party civil actions if an advocate is negligent in performing his or her duties (for example, if the advocate did not provide a service mandated by a statute or constitutional amendment and this failure caused injury to the victim). If State law protects the confidentiality of a victim's name and address, program staff have to adhere to this requirement.<sup>12</sup> Staff need to be trained regarding the kinds of information that they may obtain from victims that must be turned over to the prosecutor (e.g., information that may exonerate the defendant). As mentioned above, program directors and staff may wish to consult with local attorneys to carefully examine these and other legal matters.

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## Thirty Simple Ways To Keep Volunteers and Staff Motivated

The National Organization for Victim Assistance suggests the following 30 ways to keep volunteers motivated.<sup>13</sup> Many of these strategies could be equally useful for motivating paid staff.

1. special awards
2. gifts and mementos
3. notes of appreciation
4. annual volunteer recognition event
5. acknowledgment lists
6. invitations to personal dinners, lunches, or other social activities with the volunteer coordinator or the program director
7. training
8. participation in conferences
9. responsibility and authority to accomplish assignments
10. opportunity to participate in agency planning decisions
11. interest of volunteer coordinator or program director in volunteer's family
12. opportunity for volunteer to bring children to work
13. acknowledgment by program staff on birthdays and holidays
14. T-shirts, buttons, etc., that allow volunteers to identify with the program in public
15. opportunity to learn new things
16. coffee, tea, and other refreshments
17. evidence that the program is important or making a difference in the world
18. respect from paid staff for volunteer work
19. telephone reminders of program events
20. involvement with other volunteers
21. opportunities to meet celebrities or public officials
22. opportunities to serve in leadership positions
23. photographs of volunteer participation in program activities
24. mention of volunteer activities in newspapers or other publications
25. opportunities to work with victims
26. feedback on performance
27. regular volunteer meetings
28. opportunities to work with interesting staff and activists
29. field trips with volunteers and staff
30. thank you's—big and small

gram directors can invite volunteers to help review program policies and procedures, evaluate program services, conduct needs assessments, and assist with other managerial activities.<sup>14</sup>

As with paid staff, program directors should set high standards for volunteers and hold them accountable for their work. Volunteers should be treated as professionals even though they are not being paid. As Marlene Young, executive director of NOVA, has noted, monitoring volunteer work and insisting on adequate performance “helps to increase the morale of the worker bees and to get rid of the sloths.”<sup>15</sup> Publicly recognizing the importance of the work that volunteers do is also extremely important. The Pima County program has an annual volunteer banquet at which awards are given to volunteers.

While it is valuable to establish a set schedule and a minimum time commitment for volunteers, it is equally important to allow some flexibility in scheduling. Programs with large volunteer components report that they devote a great deal of time to scheduling and take care to accommodate volunteers' requests for scheduling changes in light of the fact that their services are free and they have other important commitments.

### *Contending with Staff Burnout*

Without exception, program directors have had to contend with staff stress or burnout. Working with victims and witnesses can easily lead to exhaustion, and staff can also become overinvolved with victims who have consuming emotional needs. Some advocates may try to be all things to all people.<sup>16</sup> Staff new to the profession may grow fearful of

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becoming victims themselves and end up taking unnecessary safety precautions. Like victims and witnesses, staff can become frustrated by injustices in the criminal justice system—concluding, for example, that it is pointless to work hard on behalf of victims when the offender ends up with a light sentence or a not guilty verdict. As one staff member put it, “You begin to feel, ‘Why bother? No one else in the system seems to care.’” In addition, staff may have to contend with limited resources, condescending attitudes from others in the criminal justice system who view advocates as “do-gooders” and not professionals, and a lack of guidelines and training to aid their decisionmaking.<sup>17</sup>

Having extra staff or volunteers on hand to assume some of the burden of overnight and weekend duty is one of the easiest ways to prevent staff burnout. Several program directors reported a reduction in staff burnout once enough people came on board to allow for rotation in weekend and night duties. Building close working relationships with representatives of criminal justice agencies, social service agencies, and other community groups can also relieve staff burnout.

Additionally, assigning different types of cases to staff may be useful in preventing burnout. This may be especially true with respect to cases involving battered women, which advocates can find particularly frustrating, because women in the early stages of abuse may not yet be ready to take legal action against their partners and often go through a pattern of repeatedly returning to their abusers. Making staff generalists also gives them the opportunity to be challenged and stimulated by new types of cases—such as victims who have been held hostage. In a similar vein, allowing staff to transfer cases, rather than requiring that the staff member who initially opened a case be the only contact with the victim or witness, can help to alleviate pressure.

Staff training can also reduce staff burnout through a discussion of common sources of stress and ways in which staff can prevent and relieve it. Staff support groups, which often develop spontaneously in programs with few staff members, provide an outlet for staff to vent anger and fear. In the Alameda County (California) Victim/Witness Assistance Division, the entire Oakland-based office used to work together in one large room, and staff members reported that access to a sympathetic ear “saved our sanity many times.”

Lastly, program directors can encourage staff to take vacations and daily breaks. Many directors said that they had to

enforce time off, because staff became so dedicated that they would not take vacation on their own. Signs of appreciation can also go a long way to rejuvenating staff under stress.

A final word on staff burnout: it cannot always be prevented or cured. Burnout can sometimes serve as an indicator that it is time for a staff member to move on.

## Endnotes

1. A training curriculum that can be used for both program staff and volunteers, as well as for representatives of other community agencies and organizations, can be found in the National Victim Center’s 1994 training and resource manual, *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance*. Contact the National Victim Center at (703) 276–2880.
2. Tom McEwen, “Understanding the Needs of Victim Assistance Programs,” Draft Report, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice (Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Law and Justice, 1994).
3. Ralph C. Martin II, letter to the authors, June 26, 1995.
4. David A. Lowenberg and Paul Forgach, *Counseling Crime Victims in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Aurora Associates, Inc., 1982), 16.
5. *Networks*, National Victim Center, 9, no. 3 (November 1994), 6.
6. Robert C. Davis and Madeline Henley, “Victim Service Programs,” in *Victims of Crime: Problems, Policies, and Programs*, eds. Arthur J. Lurigio, Wesley G. Skogan, and Robert C. Davis (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 163.
7. For a detailed discussion of the professionalization of the position of victim advocate, see chapter 23, “Victim Services as a Profession,” in Marlene Young, *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993).
8. Young, *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals*, 405.

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9. For a detailed discussion of program management, see chapter 14, “People Management in a Victim Assistance Program,” in Marlene Young, *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals*, 221–246.
  10. Victoria O. Brien, *Civil Legal Remedies for Crime Victims*, Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1992), 1–2.
  11. *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance. A Training and Resource Manual*. (Arlington, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1994).
  12. *Focus on the Future*.
  13. Young, *Victim Assistance*, 215.
  14. *Ibid.*, 203
  15. *Ibid.*, 216.
  16. *Coping With Stress and Preventing Burnout, Victims’ Rights: Opportunities for Action Series* (Alexandria, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1990), 6.
  17. *Coping With Stress and Preventing Burnout*, 1.



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# Chapter 8

## Maintaining Program Support and Assessing the Victim Assistance Program

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### Key Points

- *To improve operations, it is important that victim assistance program staff carefully monitor their delivery of services in order to obtain feedback. Careful recordkeeping is essential to ensure adequate monitoring.*
- *Monitoring can provide a number of benefits, including allowing program planners to assess goal achievement, improve staff transitions, and generate useful information for other agencies.*
- *Impact evaluations are also important for determining the effects the program has had on victims, and for providing guidance in program improvement.*
- *Changes in program funding—either increases or decreases—require program administrators to make careful decisions regarding the mix of victim services that can be provided with available funds.*
- *Cost effectiveness and cost benefit analyses are useful tools in making decisions about program operations.*

There are several keys to program survival, including 1) monitoring and evaluation, and 2) analyzing program costs and alternative responses to changing fiscal environments. Successful programs use the information generated by these activities not only for planning purposes but also to encourage the criminal justice system to provide program funding. The value of performing these activities is suggested by the longevity of the programs that have devoted time to them.

### Monitoring and Evaluating Victim Assistance Services

Making a convincing argument for continuing or expanding program funding requires that a program demonstrate what the funding agency is getting for its money and why its investment is worthwhile. Two useful approaches to documenting a program's value are monitoring and impact evaluation. These techniques are also useful in assessing goal achievement and in modifying and improving program operations.

### *Record Keeping and Program Documentation*

Program records and documents (such as procedural manuals that provide descriptive accounts of program activities) often contain much of the information needed for monitoring and evaluation purposes. For example, clients may offer comments, questions, and suggestions on service provision in their conversations with program staff; this information can be recorded in case narratives.

Information that can be used for monitoring and evaluation includes: client demographics (name, age, sex, place of residence); type of problem or incident (e.g., assault, domestic dispute, robbery); case status (police incident report filed, arrest made, case filed for prosecution, court disposition rendered); and services provided (including whether any referrals were made and, if so, to which agencies and organizations).

Programs use a variety of record-keeping forms in addition to intake forms or client profiles that provide demographic

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information. For example, the Alameda County (California) Victim/Witness Assistance Division uses separate forms for cases requiring property return and restitution. Program recordkeeping systems can be manual, computerized, or both, and the information can be recorded on anything from index cards to computer-coded sheets. The method is not important; what is essential is that the information necessary for monitoring and evaluation be recorded accurately and be readily accessible.<sup>1</sup>

For example, Scottsdale (Arizona) Police Crisis Intervention Unit specialists each maintain an index card file on their cases. Every month, they scan the cards to put together a monthly tally of the number of clients served, the types of problems addressed, the number of referrals made, and the number of meetings attended (see appendix O for the monthly tally form used by the Scottsdale program). For administrative purposes, each staff member's monthly reports also contain an account of his or her time, broken down into days worked, vacation time or sick leave taken, and "comp time" earned. At the end of the year, numbers from the monthly reports are simply added together for an annual report. This is an example of a manual system that is easy to maintain yet can generate accurate, useful, and accessible information both for monitoring purposes and for fund raising presentations.

The Scottsdale program is a small one. For a larger program with frequent follow-up contacts and very large caseloads, compiling similar information by hand would be unwieldy. Staff at the large Minneapolis–St. Paul (Minnesota) Citizens Council Victim Services and at St. Louis County (Missouri)'s Victim Service Council record case information directly onto precoded record-keeping forms for easy computerization. With assistance provided by the county's data processing department, the St. Louis County program now has computerized tracking of case information.

### *Program Monitoring*

Program monitoring provides basic information on how a program operates. Such information is collected by the program's leadership on an ongoing basis and can lead to occasional minor adjustments to fine-tune program services and procedures. In contrast, process evaluations (discussed below) are more intensive studies of program operations that may be conducted periodically, often by outside evaluators in order to assess the overall program strategy as well as aspects of daily operations.

At a minimum, monitoring takes the form of regular staff meetings at which staff have the opportunity to air complaints, report developments in agencies that collaborate with the program, discuss legislation related to victim/witness rights, share cases, offer suggestions for increasing program efficiency, and simply socialize.

A more formal monitoring process is helpful to ensure that program operations are thoroughly and systematically examined on a regular basis. This approach can include examining program records; surveying victims and witnesses, criminal justice system personnel, and social service agency officials; and observing changes in the local environment (for example, by examining local crime statistics). These inquiries are directed toward answering two general questions:

1. Is the program reaching the appropriate target population?
2. Is the program providing the resources and benefits targeted in its service design?

Monitoring provides information on the specific activities in which the program engages and quantifies those activities: the number and types of clients it is reaching, the number and types of services it is providing, the number of staff hours it devotes to each activity, and the costs it incurs for each service.

**Monitoring to assess goal achievement.** Perhaps the most compelling reason for monitoring program operations is to improve the program's operational efficiency, which in turn can lead to greater effectiveness in providing services to program clients. In addition, information collected in the course of monitoring can provide documentation of the program's success in achieving its goals. This information can be presented to the public, to the criminal justice system, and to other pertinent agencies, organizations, and public officials. For example, the program may decide to investigate whether it is serving target populations established during program planning. In reviewing its client composition, the St. Louis County (Missouri) Victim Service Council discovered that it was serving a disproportionately large number of battered women. Realizing that this was due in large measure to the passage of state legislation that allowed battered women to defend themselves without legal counsel, the program decided to keep an eye on client composition to ensure that other victims and witnesses were not neglected.

As discussed earlier in this report, it is important that program planners set realistic goals and express these goals in measurable terms. Objectives that are overly ambitious and vague will prove impossible to monitor and evaluate. This in turn could jeopardize funding support. Figure 8–1 displays sample objectives from the programs visited and illustrates how these objectives might be monitored.

**Monitoring to ease staff transitions.** In addition to assessing goal achievement, program monitoring can help smooth transitions for new directors and staff. Program documentation—progress reports, operational manuals, training materials—create a permanent written record of program activities, which provides new staff with explicit written guidelines to program operations.

**Monitoring to help other agencies.** Finally, monitoring can generate information that is useful to other agencies. However, since monitoring focuses on the internal operations of a program and not on its external effects or outcomes, caution should be exercised in interpreting the information obtained from this effort. For example, measuring the number of clients served and the services provided may indicate that the program was successful in meeting the goal of providing comprehensive assistance to the maximum number of vic-

tims and witnesses, but, this information does *not* indicate that a program successfully reduced the emotional and financial problems experienced by its clients. To obtain information on program outcomes, an impact evaluation is needed.

## Process Evaluation

A recent report prepared for the National Institutes of Health noted that “a process evaluation seeks to answer questions about program effort (resources), operations, and types and amounts of services provided.”<sup>2</sup> These are the same questions addressed during program monitoring. A process evaluation typically differs from program monitoring in the depth and comprehensiveness of the information collected regarding program resources, operations, and services. In addition, process evaluations are typically conducted by independent evaluators outside of the program rather than by program managers, so as to provide an objective assessment of program achievements.

The aim of periodic process evaluation studies is to examine program processes very closely to determine whether the program is reaching expected levels of achievement. The information can help to determine whether significant changes

**Figure 8–1**  
**Sample Victim Assistance Program Objectives**  
**and Information Needed for Monitoring**

<i>Sample Objective</i>	<i>Information for Monitoring</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be available for on-the-scene counseling (Scottsdale)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of responses to requests for on-the-scene counseling</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify 25,000 victims and police officers of the outcome of their cases and thank them for their assistance (Portland)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of case disposition letters sent or calls made to victims and police officers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize and coordinate existing community resources and encourage the development of services not already provided (Minneapolis–St. Paul)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of referrals made</li> <li>• Number of interagency meetings held</li> <li>• Number of new services begun in the community</li> </ul>

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are needed in program strategies or operations in order to achieve the program's goals. Evaluators seek to frame evaluation questions carefully, in collaboration with program personnel, to assess accomplishments precisely against clear expected benchmarks for achievement (for example, measures might include numbers of clients served or amount of time required to deliver specific services).

Programs that plan to conduct impact evaluations (discussed below) need to conduct thorough process evaluations in conjunction with the impact evaluation. The process evaluation provides detailed information on the program's level of service delivery. Without this information, it is difficult to interpret impact evaluation findings. For example, if the impact evaluation indicates that the program is not reducing clients' emotional distress, it is essential to know whether this is because of deficiencies in the counseling that the program offers or because of a failure to deliver counseling in the first place.

### *Impact Evaluation*

Unlike process evaluations, which track program activities and operations and assess service efficiency, impact evaluation seeks to determine the effects the program has had on victims and witnesses, the criminal justice system, and other human services providers in the community. For example, did victims and witnesses assisted by the program experience reduce anxiety in testifying in court compared with how they felt before they received program services? Was stolen property returned promptly to 95 percent of burglary and robbery victims? Impact evaluations may reveal unintended and perhaps undesirable consequences of program activities. For example, crime prevention presentations, although designed to reduce fear of victimization, may increase fear of crime. The most rigorous impact evaluation serves to document not only the intended and unintended changes observable since program inception but also whether these changes can be attributed solely to the program. Increases in reporting of certain crimes, for example, may reflect legislative changes in addition to the influence of program intervention; reduced financial burdens on clients may result from a new victim compensation, law as well as from program efforts.

On the one hand, the complexities of design, data collection, and interpretation involved in an impact evaluation can be formidable. In fact, one expert notes that most victim assistance programs do not have the resources for a rigorous impact evaluation and will therefore require outside assistance, not only in performing the evaluation but also in funding it. Without sufficient resources or skills, the results

of an impact evaluation may not merit the investment of staff time required—which is still considerable—and will probably not be considered sound research.

On the other hand, informal, small-scale impact evaluations can still be politically valuable for securing funding and support and can be useful for internal program monitoring. Local universities can often provide assistance in conducting an impact evaluation at very little or no cost. Graduate students in criminal justice, sociology, and research methodology are good candidates for helping programs with impact evaluations. The Scottsdale (Arizona) Police Crisis Intervention Unit, the Pima County (Arizona) Victim Witness Program, and the Danville (Illinois) Victim/Witness Advocate Program all had evaluations performed by graduate students at local universities. Another useful resource is the Program Assessment System developed by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), designed both for self-administration by program staff and for implementation by outside evaluators.

If program directors want to engage independent researchers to perform an impact evaluation, they might want to provide prospective evaluators with (1) a statement of why the evaluation is being conducted and the evaluation's audiences (which might include project personnel, funding agencies, or planning agencies that set standards and establish program guidelines) and (2) information on the organization and activities of the project, including its short- and long-term goals. Key elements of a proposed evaluation design include a list of the questions that will be answered and the types of information that will be provided; the methods by which information will be obtained; an indication that the researcher knows how to conduct a technically sound evaluation; and staffing and cost plans that are within program budget for evaluation efforts.

The first step for a program interested in conducting an impact evaluation is to specify the outcomes that the program is supposed to achieve. Many victim assistance program administrators identify outcomes or impacts when they formulate and redefine objectives (see chapter 2). Again, it is important that programs specify realistic and measurable outcomes. Figure 8–2 shows examples of impact goals that a victim assistance program might establish, the information needed to assess their achievement, and the sources of that information.

Generally, two methods of conducting impact evaluations can be used. First, evaluators can compare measures such as the emotional and financial problems of victims and wit-

**Figure 8–2  
Approaches to Impact Evaluation**

Goals	Examples of Impact Goals	Information Needed	Sources of Information
Improved victim/witness treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist victims and witnesses by alleviating emotional and financial problems resulting from victimization</li> <li>• Prevent victims from being victimized again by the criminal justice system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of client satisfaction</li> <li>• Police, prosecutor, and social service agency perceptions of program impact</li> <li>• Number and quality of claims for property return, compensation, restitution, and witness fees either a) before and after program inception or b) between program jurisdiction and comparable jurisdiction</li> <li>• Program staff and other human service agency perceptions of victim functioning at case termination compared to intake</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey of victims and witnesses</li> <li>• Survey of police, prosecutors, and social service agency representatives</li> <li>• Court files</li> <li>• Program files</li> <li>• State compensation board files</li> <li>• Survey of staff and human services providers</li> </ul>
Improved system efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce amount of police time spent in noncriminal social service duties</li> <li>• Reduce the amount of time witnesses spend waiting in court to testify</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of time police spent providing counseling and support before program inception or before using program services compared with after using program services</li> <li>• Amount of time witnesses wait in court before their appearances compared with after program inception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Survey of police perceptions</li> <li>• Survey of witnesses, including police witnesses</li> </ul>

nesses *before and after* the program’s implementation. Differences can then be examined to determine whether any changes have occurred that might reasonably be attributed to

the program. This approach requires that data collection commence with program initiation, since information about preprogram conditions is likely to be increasingly difficult to retrieve with the passage of time. An alternative approach, to

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help ensure that the program—and not some other event or agency—is the cause of any reduction in victim and witness problems, involves comparisons of the experiences of assisted victims and witnesses with the experiences of individuals in the same or similar jurisdictions who have not received assistance. One technique involves assigning individuals on a random basis either to a group that will receive

assistance or to a group that will not. Another involves matching program clients with people similar in all respects except for program assistance and comparing outcome measures for both groups. Both methods require trade-offs in terms of the scientific rigor of the results, ethical considerations of denying assistance to those who may need it, and the feasibility of performing an impact evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

## Case Monitoring in the Computer Age: One Program's Efforts

The proliferation of personal computers in the workplace has significantly helped many victim assistance programs in a variety of ways. The Alameda County (California) District Attorney's Victim/Witness Assistance Division has implemented a computer network that has helped staff monitor cases and client contacts, quickly produce letters to clients, and develop intake and other program forms (see appendix A for contact information for the victim/witness services division).

The program's director and five advocates each have their own personal computer and share a printer. When the program receives a referral from the police, the district attorney's office, or some other source, the victim's name, the crime, and a victim identification number are logged into the computer system. Using one of several standard disposition letters on file in the system, an advocate can quickly insert the victim's name, personalize the letter, and then print and mail it. If the victim becomes a client, an advocate can pull up the victim's file and update it as needed with new information about case status and services provided. The California Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP), one of the program's major funding sources, requires the program to record service and client data, including gender and ethnic background.

The computers are connected through a local area network, which enables each staff member to call up a file that was entered by another staff member. In this way, staff can readily share information, and the director can easily track cases, monitor staff activities, and compile statistics and other information for program reports. When a client calls on the phone, staff can retrieve the client's file almost immediately on their computer and provide quick, personalized service.

In addition, through modem-equipped computers, program staff have access to case records stored on the county court's and prosecutor's computer system. (Only victim assistance staff have access to victim information stored on the network.) An advocate can quickly learn the status of a case without leaving the office.

The program director and staff received computer training at no cost from the prosecutor's Office Automation Unit. Staff from this unit are also available to answer questions and make repairs. According to the program director, the implementation of the computer network has saved his staff a considerable amount of time. Because of their success with the computer tracking system, program staff developed a "how-to" manual to instruct other victim assistance programs on how to use such a system if they set one up themselves.

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The information sources for impact evaluations include those used for conducting needs assessments and monitoring. However, data must be collected from other groups (such as victims and witnesses in jurisdictions where no assistance program exists), or the information must be expanded to span a longer period of time and include the period before and after program implementation.

The most common means of assessing impact on clients is to conduct a client satisfaction or opinion survey. The evaluation of Minneapolis–St. Paul (Minnesota) Citizens Council Victim Services (formally called the Crime Victims Center) included a survey of clients assisted during a three-year period. A one-page multiple-choice service evaluation form was mailed to each client receiving substantial services (in other words, beyond just information over the phone). The majority of clients were satisfied with the assistance they received—particularly with crisis intervention, counseling, and court assistance—and the level of client satisfaction increased over time as the program developed experience in responding to clients’ problems.

Surveys of former clients can pose problems, however. A research analyst for the Pima County (Arizona) Victim/Witness Program noted that many clients contacted for follow-up surveys could not even remember the program two to three months later. Some victims do not realize they are being assisted by a separate program, mistaking staff for police or prosecutor assistants. Or they may actually erase all memory of the program in an effort to forget the pain of having been victimized. For other victims, the survey may bring back memories of overpowering pain. Furthermore, it is sometimes difficult to locate victims and witnesses for evaluation purposes.<sup>4</sup> Finally, a program that plans to actively solicit opinions from victims and witnesses should make sure respondents feel comfortable about sharing their reactions and take precautions not to jeopardize confidentiality. Some victims may not want their families or partners to know that they were victimized or that they sought assistance in coping with the experience.

Evaluation of program impact on police, prosecutors, and human services providers might require examining agency records and interviewing agency staff. For example, researchers from the Minnesota Department of Corrections conducted a survey of police officers to determine how frequently they referred crime victims to the Minneapolis–

St. Paul program, what impact the program had on police officers’ work, and their impressions of the general quality of the program’s services. Survey forms were distributed to officers at the end of the program’s first year of operation and again after the program had been in operation for three years. In both surveys, most officers reported making referrals on a monthly basis and noted that, when they did work in cooperation with the program staff, their efficiency increased. Their overall evaluation of the quality of the program’s services was positive.

Formal surveys of clients and other users is labor-intensive. Review of aggregate data can be less expensive and less obtrusive. For example, police incident reports or court records can be reviewed to examine changes in crime reporting or in the rate of filing charges, or to observe how many new social service agencies have started up or whether consortiums of human services providers have formed.

Many important questions about the benefits of victim assistance programs remain unanswered. For example, it has not been conclusively demonstrated that crisis intervention has a positive impact on victims of crime.<sup>5</sup> Nor is it known whether, in the long run, individuals who have received assistance are healthier or suffer significantly less financial loss as a result of program efforts. Attempts to measure whether program efforts have led to increases in successful prosecutions, or made victims and witnesses more willing to cooperate with police and prosecutors and to report crimes, have also been inconclusive.

Nevertheless, the widespread impulse to provide a humane and supportive response to the needs of innocent victims of crime may be a stronger justification for program efforts than any numerical findings. In addition, researchers have documented some ways in which victim assistance programs have benefitted the criminal justice process: evaluations have shown that witness notification reduces the time civilians and police officers spend waiting to testify and the time prosecutors must devote to locating witnesses.<sup>6</sup>

Above all, program success depends on responsiveness to changing environments. In every aspect of development and operations, the program must remain flexible, making adjustments as necessary and constantly rearranging priorities. The most obvious example is altered funding levels. Cutbacks challenge the program to find alternative sources of

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support or to reduce services or staff without compromising the quality of services; funding increases call for the program to plan carefully to ensure that the additional money is put to best use. These issues are examined in the following section.

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*Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are important, since successful victim assistance programs are subject to many changes over time. In addition, information monitoring and evaluation can effect change. By taking corrective measures, staff can improve program operations, enhance credibility, and gain support.*

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## Alternative Responses to Funding Changes

Providing accurate cost information, including a bottom-line figure and a breakdown by budget category, is essential in maintaining and institutionalizing program funding, in appropriately managing the program, and in knowing how to accommodate any increases or decreases in funding or service requirements. Typically, existing programs obtain a clear picture of the actual costs of operation when they develop annual budgets for their funding agencies. (A discussion of how new programs can estimate costs may be found in chapter 3). However, calculating program costs, like program planning, is best viewed as an ongoing endeavor. Services and staffing can change at any time, and operating costs are likely to increase continually, because of salary increases and inflation.

### *Strategies for Coping With Changing Fiscal Environments*

Over time, it is virtually inevitable that a program will be faced with budget reductions or increases. During the late 1970's and early 1980's, the most common budgetary change was a decline in funding. However, with the passage of the Federal Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA, discussed in chapter 9), hundreds of programs received supplemental grants. Since its inception, more than \$557 million in VOCA funds have been awarded to States to support local victim assistance programs. Even when fiscal retrenchment was the general rule, some programs managed to secure additional funds.

Of course, coping with budget reductions is the more difficult circumstance to deal with. In response to cutbacks, programs can attempt to (a) secure funds from other sources, (b) secure services or equipment at no cost, (c) reduce their services or paid staff, or (d) encourage police, prosecutors, and judges to take over some program services.

Chapter 9 describes the basic steps involved in identifying and approaching *alternative funding sources*. Several strategies for coping with funding reductions and increased expenses are pertinent here, however. First, program directors often find that their efforts to secure funding conflict with their duty to provide victim services. "Too many programs are consumed by fund-raising," the founders of St. Louis County (Missouri)'s Victim Service Council noted in the early 1980's, "leaving no one to see that services are provided."<sup>7</sup> The St. Louis County program resolved this conflict by designating an administrative chairwoman from its original supervising agency, the National Council of Jewish Women, to handle all funding responsibilities, leaving the director free to devote all her time to providing services and supervising staff.

Second, when Federal or local funding is cut for all social services, the program is likely to meet with stiff competition from other human services providers for the funding available from alternative sources. Diplomacy is required, since these same agencies may later be joint providers of services to the clients of the victim assistance program. Finally, after an agency or organization has provided funds, the founders of the St. Louis County Victim Service Council recommend attending all its public meetings in order to establish rapport and to keep abreast of any changes in funding requirements or availability. "At one meeting of our funding source," they reported, "board members discovered some unspent money which had to be allocated that same day. Because we were there, we made the only pitch for the funds and got them."<sup>8</sup> As an alternative or supplement to soliciting funds from public and private sector groups, programs may wish to consider holding their own fund-raising benefits.<sup>9</sup>

To *reduce the costs of services and equipment*, or to obtain their use gratis, programs must rely on resourcefulness and creativity. By assisting prosecutors with their paperwork in the complaint room and at arraignment, New York City's Victim Service Agency obtained access to a telephone, duplicating equipment, and work space at no cost.<sup>10</sup> Using volunteers can result in substantial savings (see chapter 3). The Greenville program uses the services of a retired carpenter (himself the victim of a break-in) to repair locks, damaged doors, and windows for destitute victims of break-ins. The



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savings from such imaginative arrangements not only help offset rising costs or reductions in funding, but they also strengthen efforts to secure continued funding by demonstrating the program's cost-effectiveness. St. Louis County's Victim Service Council documented considerable savings by using volunteers to provide direct victim services, administrative support, and legal and psychological consulting; as a partial consequence, the county government assumed the entire funding burden for the program. In effect, the program gives the county a "matching grant"—volunteers for paid staff.

Though funds from alternative sources and free or in-kind services and equipment may allow staff to maintain operations at the same level, the program may still be forced to compensate for inflation and reductions in funding by *reducing services or paid staff*. The Minneapolis–St. Paul (Minnesota) program obtained funding from an increasing number of private foundations each year, but the new money did not fully replace the loss in State funds. As a result, the program was forced to reduce its paid staff, including laying off one of its two directors. In addition, the program closed one of its five satellite offices and reduced the number of hours in three of its remaining offices. Not surprisingly, the program reduced some of its services as well, limiting security repair and transportation to elderly and handicapped victims.

Finally, when funding cuts force programs to limit services, in some cases they can encourage criminal justice agencies to provide them instead. Chapter 4 discusses victim/witness services that police, prosecutors, and judges can appropriately provide themselves. By transferring some of these services to the criminal justice system, the program can devote its remaining resources to those activities that only it can effectively provide.

In order to make appropriate decisions about staff or service reductions, program administrators must have a clear idea of their goals and priorities, and of the costs of different services and types of cases. For example, by generating cost information by service category or by individual case, programs can identify the types of services and cases that consume most of their resources. Expensive activities include 24-hour availability, on-scene crisis intervention, intensive counseling, and court orientation (as compared with one-time intervention), direct service (as compared with referral), and "nonclient" services like public relations and lobbying for statutory changes. Reducing or eliminating costly activities

will, of course, result in the greatest economies. However, the most expensive services or cases are not necessarily the ones that should be eliminated if they are crucial to the program's goals and priorities and can be shown to be effective.

In the case of budget *increases*, gaps in program coverage are often so blatant that it is obvious where the additional money should be spent. However, in many instances there are several pressing needs, only some of which can be financed with the additional money. Furthermore, there may be target groups or services that merit priority but whose significance is not immediately visible. As a result, an expanding program needs not only to estimate the costs of adding target populations or expanding services but also to systematically reexamine the unmet needs both of existing clients and of victims or witnesses not currently being served.

Whether planning to contract or expand, a program must first balance objectives, needs, and costs and then determine which components to reduce or eliminate, on the one hand, or expand or initiate, on the other. Chapters 2 and 3 provide guidelines for making these decisions, and chapter 9 describes the planning process some States require of local programs in order to demonstrate eligibility and priority for receiving Federal Victims of Crime Act funds.

### *Cost-Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit Analyses<sup>11</sup>*

Cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses can help the program director and staff make decisions about modifying program operations, as well as support requests for funding from other sources. Program staff may require expert assistance in performing these analyses.

*Cost effectiveness* is a measure of the effectiveness of a program in attaining actual outcomes in relation to the monetary value of the resources devoted to the effort. Information on cost effectiveness allows directors to compare 1) the costs of alternative delivery methods for conducting the same service (e.g., telephone vs. face-to-face contact for counseling victims) or 2) the costs several similar programs incur using identical methods for providing the same services. Both comparisons make it possible to identify which procedures are most effective in achieving the same results.

The first step is to obtain accurate estimates of program costs, as discussed above. The simplest cost-effectiveness analysis is to compare the total budgets of two victim

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assistance programs that are similar in structure (both located in prosecutors' offices, for example), approach (both operate, say, only during normal business hours), size (both have roughly the same number of staff and volunteers), and objectives. Figure 3–3, "Staff Size in Relation to Selected Program Characteristics: A Look at Five Programs" represents a preliminary effort in this direction. To analyze the cost effectiveness of *specific* services, directors will have to express costs in different ways than they do for budgeting purposes. Instead of listing the total costs for each line item (staff salaries, telephone, travel expenses, etc.), administrators need to calculate the costs associated with a particular service separately by line item. Clearly, deriving costs by type of service is not an easy task, and the calculations will most likely be estimates. Nonetheless, even approximate cost figures can be helpful for determining whether there are less expensive ways to achieve the same goals.

Cost-effectiveness analyses are also useful in considering program organization options. As with service and staffing choices, however, it is usually best if this decision takes program priorities and dollar amounts into account. Selection can then be an informed choice—with both the rationale and the ramifications for funding understood by program sponsors and staff. When, for example, the Minneapolis (Minnesota) Department of Corrections evaluated the Minneapolis–St. Paul program, evaluators gave the decentralized storefront model high marks for service delivery but argued that incorporating victim services into another existing agency or consolidating them statewide would be more cost-effective because of potential savings in salary, rent, and overhead expenses. However, because satellite offices were deliberately located in neighborhoods where the need for victim services was greatest—thus directly supporting a basic program priority of making services readily accessible to a broad spectrum of clients—the sponsoring agency, the Department of Corrections, and the legislature both agreed to maintain the program's storefront structure.

*Cost-benefit* analysis compares the economic costs of the program or service with the dollar value of the benefits it provides. Whereas cost-effectiveness indicates whether there are less expensive ways of achieving certain results, cost-benefit analysis quantifies the returns that society and funding agencies are getting from their investment in the program. For example, the overtime hours a program saves police through a witness notification component can be converted into dollars saved, and this figure can then be compared with the cost of providing the service.<sup>12</sup>

As a rule, cost-benefit analysis is exceptionally difficult to conduct for social service projects because of the problem of measuring the value of benefits and the difficulty of estimating all of the costs of the project.<sup>13</sup> Victim assistance programs can, however, calculate the dollar value of quantifiable benefits such as witness time saved or the costs of purchasing services such as counseling, transportation, and baby-sitting in the private sector. For example, an evaluation of eight victim assistance programs funded by the National District Attorneys Association computed savings in witness time by multiplying the number of appearances avoided by two hours per appearance, and then by \$2.50 per hour (the minimum wage at the time of the evaluation). Comparing these savings with what it costs to provide witness notification yields potentially valuable cost-benefit information. Similarly, Portland (Oregon)'s Victims Assistance Program administrators calculated that in 1985 the program helped victims secure \$1,831,000 in restitution ordered by the courts and \$872,000 in social services. With a total budget of \$346,000 for the year, the program provided assistance to victims worth \$7.82 for every dollar spent on the program. Even looking at the figure conservatively—that is, social services obtained plus paid (not just court-ordered) restitution—shows that for every dollar used to fund the program, \$3.61 was obtained on behalf of victims.

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) has prepared a useful Cost-Benefit Analysis System for specific application to victim assistance programs (see appendix B).

## Factors Involved in Program Success

Given the variety of practices in victim assistance programs and the differing needs of jurisdictions, no one program can be considered the perfect model. Nonetheless, successful programs do have certain elements in common. Successful program directors and staff are dynamic and dedicated individuals, interested in and capable of helping other people. They have a firm understanding of program costs and have conducted at least basic monitoring efforts to generate data useful for gaining support. Victim assistance programs that have survived economic hardships have done so because they managed to continue to provide quality services and because they have established and maintained strong working relationships with the criminal justice system and with

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human service agencies. The successful victim assistance program is not merely responsive to change but initiates new approaches—searching for, recognizing, and capitalizing on any opportunity for improvement.

Within their networks with other agencies, successful victim assistance programs have found strong advocates who are important to their program's survival. The Portland (Oregon) Victims Assistance Program is supported by the prosecutor's office because the district attorney believes that the program gives victims and witnesses their only positive experience within the criminal justice system. During the early stages of the St. Louis County (Missouri) program, the county's superintendent of police, a member of the program's advisory board, encouraged line officers to work with the program because of his belief that program services benefited both victims and police. In addition, during program planning, it was the superintendent who suggested developing long-term funding mechanisms—an element that proved crucial to the program's longevity.

## Endnotes

1. In addition to the forms on which programs record detailed information on clients, most programs maintain a second set of files for cross referencing.
2. National Institutes of Health, *How Good Is Your Drug Treatment Program? A Guide to Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993).
3. Under the most rigorous impact evaluations, the target population is randomly assigned to one of two groups: a "treatment" group (e.g., victims and witnesses who are assisted by the program) and a "control" or comparison group (who receive no help). Random assignment ensures that any differences detected between the two groups can be attributed to program services rather than to preexisting differences between the groups or to events in the external environment that could account for client improvement. Theoretically, under random assignment the control group would include victims and witnesses who were eligible for services but would not receive assistance; rather, they would rely on informal networks and, if charges were filed, would be processed through the criminal justice system in a traditional fashion. This type of impact evaluation design yields results in which programs can place the highest level of confidence. Comparing the experience of victims and witnesses who have been assisted by programs with the experiences of those who have not received any formal services allows programs to determine
- with some certainty whether their services are, in fact, having an impact on clients. However, this design also raises practical and ethical difficulties—because it is costly to conduct and difficult to implement in real life, and because in some cases it requires that services be denied victims and witnesses who need assistance and would otherwise be eligible for them. A common alternative to random assignment impact evaluation is to match the program clients with demographically similar groups in jurisdictions where no formal victim/witness services program operate. This alternative does not pose the same ethical problem of denying services to victims and witnesses who need assistance and would otherwise be eligible for them. However, it does detract from the level of confidence programs can place in the evaluation findings, since factors other than program assistance, unanticipated and hence unaccounted for in the matching process, may contribute to differences between the two groups. Several books provide detailed guidelines for the nonresearcher conducting an impact evaluation, including David C. Hoaglin et al., *Data for Decisions* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abt Books, 1982); Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966); Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979); and Richard A. Berk and Peter H. Rossi, *Thinking About Program Evaluation* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990).
4. D. C. Bolin, "The Pima County Victim/Witness Program Analyzing Its Success," *Evaluation and Change* (1980): 120–26.
5. Robert C. Davis and Madeline Henley, "Victim Service Programs," *Victims of Crime: Problems, Policies, and Programs*, eds. Arthur J. Lurigio, Wesley G. Skogan, and Robert C. Davis (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 169.
6. Roberta C. Cronin and Blair B. Bourque, "National Evaluation Program Phase I Assessment. Victim/Witness Assistance Projects. Draft Final Report" (Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research, 1979).

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7. Marjorie Susman and Carol Vittert, "Building a Solution: A Practical Guide for Establishing Crime Victim Service Agencies" (St. Louis: National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section, 1980), 1.
  8. Ibid, 1.
  9. National Organization for Victim Assistance, *Fundraising and Victim Services* (Washington, D.C.: National Organization for Victim Assistance 1982).
  10. Donna W. Zalichin and Mark Feinstein, "Becoming Part of the System: Institutionalizing a Victim/Witness Program," *Victim Witness Programs: Human Services of the 80s*, ed. Emilio C. Viano (Washington, D.C.: Visage Press, 1980), 82.
  11. Readers may wish to consult Peter H. Rossi and Howard E. Freeman, *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1982) and D. W. Pearce, *Cost Benefit Analysis* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).
  12. Zalichin and Feinstein, "Institutionalizing a Victim/Witness Program," 83; Evaluation Policy Research Associates, "Final Evaluation Report, Second Year Grant, Milwaukee County Project Turnaround" (Milwaukee: Price Waterhouse and Company, 1978), 61–83, 108–10.
  13. Anne L. Schneider and Peter R. Schneider, "An Introductory Guide to Evaluation of Victim Assistance Programs for Project Directors," in *Justice and Older Americans*, ed. Marlene Young (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1977), 151; "Evaluation Policy Research Associates," Final Evaluation Report, Second Year Grant, Milwaukee County Project Turnaround," 108; Robert H. Rosenblum and Carol Holliday Blew, *Victim/Witness Assistance* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice), 63–68; Battelle Law and Justice Study Center, "Program Review of National District Attorneys Associations Commission on Victim/Witness Assistance" (Seattle, Washington: September 1978), 79.

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# Chapter 9

## Funding Victim Assistance Programs

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### Key Points

- *Obtaining funding from a number of public and private sources can help to maximize a victim assistance program's funding stability and capacity to deliver services.*
- *Program administrators seeking Federal Victims of Crime Act funding should give careful consideration to the priority categories of victims targeted by the Act. Administrators should explore other Federal funding sources, such as the Federal Violence Against Women Act Grant Program.*
- *State and local governments are the primary funders of victim assistance programs. Program planners can generate funding support from these sources by working closely with local policymakers.*
- *Private funding sources are diverse and include foundations, local businesses, labor unions, local charitable groups such as the United Way, and independent fund-raising events. Creativity and persistence will enhance program administrators' efforts to obtain private funding.*

The two main sources of financial support for victim assistance programs are public funds (including support from Federal, State, and local governments) and private funds (including support from business and labor organizations, foundations and community trusts, and voluntary organizations). Many victim assistance programs that emerged when the field was still in its infancy secured all or most of their initial funding from the Federal government. Funding by State and local governments now predominates, although Federal support continues to be significant. This chapter reviews major funding sources for victim assistance programs. The task of maintaining adequate program funding is one of the central challenges confronting program administrators. Many programs obtain funding from a variety of separate sources.

### Federal Funding

The Federal government has played an important role in the victim assistance field.

### *The Pioneering Role of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration*

The Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) of the U.S. Department of Justice funded justice system innovations throughout the 1970's. Victim assistance programs received substantial support from LEAA during this period; indeed, a majority of victim assistance programs launched between 1974 and 1979 received their funding from LEAA.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the programs that were developed with LEAA support had a particularly important influence on the field. For example, in 1975, LEAA funded the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) to develop eight victim assistance programs. The accomplishments of these and other programs led the NDAA to recommend subsequently "that every prosecutor focus such attention on the needs of victims and witnesses in their respective jurisdictions."<sup>2</sup>

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When the LEAA was terminated in the early 1980's, many victim assistance programs were forced to cut back on services while seeking other sources of funding support.

### *The Victims of Crime Act of 1984*

The Federal government reasserted a leadership role in support of victim assistance in the mid-1980's. As noted in chapter 1, the President's Task Force on Victims made far-reaching recommendations in 1982 for improving services to victims. One of the consequences of the Task Force's work was the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984, which founded the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice and established a Crime Victims Fund within the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The fund accumulates revenues from surcharges on fines levied on individuals convicted of Federal offenses as well as revenues from forfeited bail bonds and other special assessments. These sources have generated a substantial sum of money for assistance to victims of crime: by 1992, over \$220 million dollars had accumulated in the fund. At that time only \$150 million dollars of this total could be distributed by the Office for Victims of Crime because Congress mandated a ceiling of that amount for this use. Congress subsequently eliminated this ceiling in 1992, providing the Office for Victims of Crime with the potential to provide even higher levels of support for victims.

The Office for Victims of Crime is authorized to provide funding support for State crime victim compensation programs, victim assistance programs, training and technical assistance, child abuse prevention and treatment grants, and additional purposes. Funding is provided to State governments which develop statewide funding plans. VOCA funds are allocated to specific programmatic areas through the use of formulas specified in the crime victims legislation. For example, after allocating a certain amount of funds to the Federal judicial branch, to the Department of Health and Human Resources for grants regarding child abuse, and to the Office for Victims of Crime for grants to assist Native American Indian tribes to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases, 48.5 percent of the remaining amount is available for victim compensation grants, another 48.5 percent for victim assistance grants, and 3 percent for demonstration projects and for training and technical assistance services to eligible crime victim assistance programs, as well as for programs that serve victims of Federal crime. A variety of types of victim assistance programs are funded by the Victims of Crime Act: some focus on a single class of victims (such as, victims of domestic

violence), while others provide services to a broad array of victims. The Office for Victims of Crime 1994 Annual Report notes that organizations that are funded include "rape crisis centers, shelters for battered women, treatment centers for child sexual abuse victims, prosecutors offices, law enforcement offices, mental health centers, universities, and hospitals."<sup>3</sup>

The types of services provided to victims by VOCA-funded programs include, in descending order of frequency, information referral, criminal justice support, crisis hotline services, counseling, follow-up contacts, personal advocacy, group treatment, shelter/safe house services, assistance with compensation claims, therapy, emergency legal advocacy, and emergency financial help.<sup>4</sup>

The Victims of Crime Act Grant Program Guidelines specify the major types of services that can be supported with the Federal funds.<sup>5</sup> These include

- services that immediately respond to the emotional and physical needs (excluding medical care) of crime victims, such as crisis intervention and accompaniment to hospitals for medical examinations; hotline counseling; emergency food, clothing, transportation, and shelter; emergency legal assistance, such as filing restraining orders; and other emergency services that are intended to restore victims' sense of dignity, self-esteem, and coping ability;
- services that assist the primary and secondary victims of crime in understanding the dynamics of victimization and in stabilizing their lives after a victimization, such as counseling, group treatment, and therapy;
- services directed to the needs of the victim within the criminal justice system, including criminal justice advocacy, accompaniment to law enforcement offices, transportation to court, child care while in court, trial notification and case disposition information, restitution advocacy, assistance with victim impact statements, and parole notification;
- services that offer an immediate measure of safety to crime victims, such as preventing reburglarization by boarding up windows or replacing or repairing locks;
- forensic examinations for sexual assault victims;
- advocacy on behalf of victims with creditors, employers, service providers, and others; and

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- meetings and panels at which crime victims are able to confront perpetrators, if they are requested by the victim and if they offer therapeutic value to crime victims.<sup>6</sup>

VOCA requires that the States “give priority to eligible victim assistance programs that provide services to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse” and “make funds available for grant programs which serve previously underserved victims of violent crime.”<sup>7</sup> Some of the types of victims that States have defined as “previously underserved” have included victims of elder abuse, victims of assault, and victims of vehicular accidents caused by drivers who were under the influence of alcohol.

The 1994 Annual Report of the Office for Victims of Crime provides a summary of the types of victims targeted by VOCA victim assistance program funds in 1991.<sup>8</sup> Thirty-five percent of these funds were targeted to domestic violence victims, 21 percent to sexual assault victims; 21 percent to child abuse victims; 14 percent to undesignated categories of victims, and the remainder to a number of other categories, particularly underserved groups of victims. This distribution reflects the legislatively established priorities for the distribution of VOCA funds.

Since a substantial portion of the VOCA funds, as well as funds from other sources, are earmarked for specific victim populations, victim assistance programs may need to design or adapt their operations with this consideration in mind. In addition to the specific priority victim populations noted above, over 52 programs have been established on Native American reservations with funding from the Assistance for Victims of Federal Crime in Indian Country grant program, begun by the Federal Government in 1988.

VOCA grantees must meet a number of eligibility criteria, including (1) being either a public or a private nonprofit agency, (2) having a record of delivering effective services to crime victims, (3) using volunteers to provide services to crime victims, and (4) promoting, within the community served, coordinated public and private efforts to serve crime victims.<sup>9</sup>

Brenda Meister, former Acting Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, recently noted that “VOCA conferred institutional legitimacy on the crime victims’ movement by establishing an overarching, legal framework from which to articulate—and, more importantly, to enforce—crime victims’ rights. Over the past 10 years, VOCA has not only served as a reference point and a source of guidance, but the Act has also strengthened our resolve as a victims’ move-

ment by reminding us of what we can collectively accomplish.”<sup>10</sup>

### *The Violence Against Women Act Grant Program*

Congress enacted the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994 to combat the high level of violence against women in the United States. The Act authorizes the Department of Justice to fund a wide variety of efforts to improve the response of law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and others to violence against women, such as “developing, expanding, or improving victim service programs, including improved delivery of such services for racial, cultural, and ethnic minorities, and providing specialized domestic violence court advocates.”<sup>11</sup>

The Department of Justice has developed a Violence Against Women Program Office within the Office of Justice Programs to administer the provisions of the Act, with the Department of Health and Human Services also administering portions of the legislation.<sup>12</sup> The total amount authorized for all Violence Against Women Act grant programs for Fiscal Years 1996 through 2000 is \$974 million.<sup>13</sup>

## **State and Local Funding Sources**

State and local governments are the primary funders of victim assistance programs. A survey of victim assistance programs across the Nation found that 28 percent of program budgets came from county revenues, another 28 percent from State revenues, and 9 percent from city budgets, for a total of approximately two-thirds of overall budgets. Federal funding, foundation support, donations, fund-raising events, and other sources contributed the remaining one-third of program support.<sup>14</sup>

A survey conducted in 1986 for the first edition of this report found that 36 percent of the 25 programs contacted reported receiving a majority of their funding from State government, while municipal funds were the primary source of support for 32 percent and county funds for another 20 percent. By 1986, 88 percent of the programs were receiving more than half their funds from State and local government. Although 20 percent of the programs received complete funding from one local governmental source, more than half combined funding from two or more governmental sources.

Between 1986 and 1994, some modest changes occurred in the funding sources of the surveyed programs. In 1994, more

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programs were receiving at least some Federal and municipal funding, while fewer were receiving any county or foundation funding. The increase in the percentage of programs receiving part of their funds from the Federal Government was due, in part, to the Victims of Crime Act of 1984. By late 1986, over 500 programs had already received VOCA funds, and, by 1994, as noted above, over 2,400 were receiving funds.<sup>15</sup> In 1990 and 1991 over three million individuals received assistance through projects funded by the Office for Victims of Crime.<sup>16</sup>

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*While many programs have turned to other sources of funding and support, the criminal justice system is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the needs of victims and witnesses are met. Program staff should stress the benefits of making victim/witness services a regular line item in law enforcement, prosecution, and probation and parole budgets.*

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State funding for victim assistance programs has grown over the years since the termination of LEAA in the early 1980's. Between 1981 and 1985, 28 States passed legislation providing funding for victim assistance programs. These efforts have typically been funded through surcharges on fines and penalty assessments levied on offenders convicted of State crimes. A minority of states fund victim assistance programs with general revenues instead of through such surcharges.<sup>17</sup> The 1994 Annual Report of the Office for Victims of Crime reports that State funding for victim assistance programs during Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991 totaled over \$700 million, based on information from State VOCA administrators. (In comparison, VOCA funds for victim assistance programs during the same period totaled \$130 million.)<sup>18</sup>

In addition to revenues from surcharges on fines and from the States' general tax revenues, some States have developed innovative mechanisms for raising funds for victim assistance. Inmates in the California Department of Corrections have held a variety of fund-raising events to generate money for victim assistance, including crafts fairs, walk-a-thons, a benefit concert, and raffles. During the 1992-93 fiscal year, the Department of Corrections raised over \$180,000 that was then donated to victim assistance organizations.<sup>19</sup>

Some States are exploring obtaining additional funds for victim assistance through increased taxes on such items as weapons, alcohol, and cigarettes. These efforts are risky, however, since they often stimulate organized resistance on

the part of the industries and consumers affected. Consideration in some States has been given to allocating a portion of lottery revenues for victim assistance. Lottery revenues are often earmarked for education, however, and educational institutions understandably resist any allocation of lottery revenues to victim assistance that would result in a diminution of education's total revenues.

Victim assistance programs that are sponsored by local law enforcement agencies, county district attorneys' offices, and related municipal and county agencies typically receive much or all of their funding from their local governments. Institutionalization of programs in such agencies can provide a relatively reliable ongoing source of funds. Programs funded in this matter often seek some Federal or private funding to supplement their budgets and expand their services.

## Private Funding Sources

Many programs supplement their governmental funding with revenues raised from private sources. Private funding sources include foundations, local businesses, labor unions, local charitable groups such as the United Way, and independent fund-raising events.

The most complete resource for foundation funding is the *Foundation Directory*, available in any major library. Some jurisdictions may also have local clearinghouses or State directories of funding sources.

Some cities have organizations, usually subsidized by businesses, that examine public service endeavors in the jurisdiction and report to corporations on program activities as a way to generate interest in corporate funding. Planners and staff can identify this type of organization in their community to learn what conditions they must meet in order for the organization to recommend the program to its member businesses. Several useful documents provide information on approaching funding sources and on proposal writing techniques.<sup>20</sup>

Many victim/witness programs have adopted innovative approaches to securing private funds.

- The Greenville (South Carolina) Victim/Witness Assistance Program sent letters to local businesses and to foundations and volunteer organizations requesting small contributions. The former program director sent per-



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## Fund-raising: Every Little Bit Helps

As any experienced program staff member can attest, fund-raising requires diligence and aggressiveness. And every little bit helps. Several years after one mother's four sons were murdered in 1977 in rural Indiana, she established the Victims Advocate Foundation to provide assistance to other crime victims and their families. To raise money for program expenses, she and a friend (now the program director) went door-to-door asking businesses and individuals for financial assistance. "We just drove up and down the road and got \$5 here and there," the program director said. Not until the program obtained a VOCA grant in 1986 was money for salaries available.

sonal letters to key individuals whom she had previously met, requesting \$300–\$1,000 for a specific and popular program activity. Grants were secured from J. P. Stevens, General Electric, the Women's Legal Auxiliary, a construction company, and two banks.

- The planner for the Minneapolis–St. Paul (Minnesota) Citizens Council Victim Services capitalized on his own previous record of fourteen years of program planning and initiation to persuade a major foundation to provide planning funds for what was still an incomplete idea for providing victim/witness services.
- Some programs have also used innovative approaches for obtaining funding from the courts. The Victim/Witness Liaison Office in Broward County, Florida, secured \$15,000 from fines imposed on a drug dealer. The Clark County (Las Vegas) Victim Witness Assistance Center was awarded \$25,000 from fines assessed on a popular singer for violating customs regulations.

Victim assistance programs also may want to consider offering businesses services—such as training seminars on crime prevention, on how to recognize signs of spousal abuse in victims, and on ways to help employees who have been victims of crime—in exchange for financial support.

Although victim assistance has continued to gain support nationwide, obtaining funding for these programs still requires constant vigilance, good record-keeping and program assessment, and periodic knocking on doors to solicit additional money.

## Endnotes

1. Roberta C. Cronin and Blair B. Bourque, *National Evaluation Program Phase I Report: Assessment of Victim/Witness Assistance Projects* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1981).
2. See Albert R. Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims: Research, Policy, and Practice* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990), 45; and National District Attorneys Association, Victim Witness Coordination Program, *The Directory of Prosecutor-Based Victims Assistance Programs, 2nd ed.* (Alexandria, Virginia: NDAA, 1987).
3. See *Office for Victims of Crime: Report to Congress, June 1994*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1994) 30.
4. *Office for Victims of Crime: Report to Congress, June 1994*, 31.
5. "Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance Grant Program Final Program Guidelines," In *Federal Register* (March 10, 1994).
6. *Office for Victims of Crime: Report to Congress, June 1994*, 13–14.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Brenda G. Meister, "The Future of Victim Assistance in the Federal Government," Marlene Young and John H. Stein, eds. *2001: The Next Generation in Victim Assistance* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1994).
11. See "Grants To Combat Violent Crime Against Women: Proposed Regulations," *Federal Register* (December 28, 1994).

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12. See *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 Briefing Book* prepared by the U.S. Department of Justice.
  13. *Office for Victims of Crime: Report to Congress, June 1994*.
  14. See Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims*, 87.
  15. *Office for Victims of Crime: Report to Congress, June 1994*, 29.
  16. *Ibid.*, 36.
  17. See Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims*, 46.
  18. *Office For Victims of Crime: Report to Congress, June 1994*, 36.
  19. See National Victim Center, *Technical Assistance Bulletin*, vol. 2, (March 1994), 1.
  20. See, for example, Marlene Young, *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1993); *To Light One Candle: A Manual for Organizing, Funding and Maintaining Public Service Projects* (Chicago: American Bar Association); *Grants: How To Find Out About Them and What To Do Next* (New York: Plenum Press); *Foundation Directory* (New York: Columbia University Press); *Developing Skills in Proposal Writing* (Portland Oregon: Continuing Education Publications); and *Cracking the Corporation* (Washington, D.C.:Center for Women Policy Studies).

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# Appendix A

## Victim Assistance Programs Contacted by Telephone for This Publication

(in 1986, 1994, and 1995)

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### Arizona

*Pima County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Program*

Viki Sharp, Director  
32 N. Stone, #800  
Tucson, AZ 85701  
(520) 740-5525

*Police Crisis Intervention Unit*

Philip Riccio, Supervisor  
9065 E. Via Linda  
Scottsdale, AZ 85258  
(602) 391-5055

*Victim Assistance Program,  
Glendale Police Department*  
Teary Neary, Lead Caseworker  
6835 North 57th Drive  
Glendale, AZ 85301  
(602) 930-2435

*Victim Witness Assistance Program, Arizona  
Attorney General's Office*

Teena Olszewki, Director  
Gail Palmatier, Deputy Director  
1275 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 542-3881

### California

*Alameda County District Attorney's Office  
Victim/Witness Assistance Division*

Harold O. Boscovich, Director  
1401 Lakeside Drive, Suite 802  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 272-6180

*Community United Against Violence (CUAV)*

Terry Person, Program Director  
973 Market Street, Suite 500  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 777-5500

*Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office  
Victim Assistance Program*

Herman Milholland, Director  
210 W. Temple St.  
Room 12-514  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 974-7499

*The Counseling Team*

Nancy Bohl, Director  
1881 Business Center Drive, Suite 11  
San Bernadino, CA 92408  
(909) 884-0133

*California Youth Authority  
Office of Prevention and Victim Services*

Don Saylor, Assistant Director  
4241 Williamsborough Dr.  
Sacramento, CA 95823  
(916) 262-1480

*Victim Witness Service Center*

Carolyn Golden, Director  
Fresno County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 453  
1110 Van Ness, 8th Floor  
Fresno, CA 93709  
(209) 488-3425

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*Victim Witness Unit, Ventura County District  
Attorney's Office*  
Deanna May, Interim Director  
Hall of Justice, Room 311  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 654-3622

## Colorado

*Colorado Springs Police Department  
Victim/Witness Office*  
Pat Wyka, Coordinator  
Ruth Myers, Coordinator of Volunteers for  
Senior Victim Assistance Team  
705 South Nevada Ave.  
P.O. Box 2169, Mail Code 1565  
Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2169  
(719) 444-7538/7441

*Colorado State Patrol Victim Assistance Program*  
Dolores Mitchell, Coordinator  
15055 South Golden Rd.  
Golden, CO 80401-3971  
(303) 272-1618

*Victim Assistance Program  
Denver District Attorney's Office*  
Steve Siegel, Director of Program Development  
303 West Colfax Avenue, Suite 1300  
Denver, CO 80204  
(303) 640-5176

## Florida

*Broward County Victim/Witness Liaison*  
Joel Shulman, Director  
Broward County Courthouse  
201 S.E. 6th Street, Room 470  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
(305) 831-6200

*Dade County Advocates for Victims*  
Robert Schroeder, Director  
7831 N.E. Miami Court  
Miami, FL 33138  
(305) 758-2546

## Georgia

*Victim Witness Assistance Program*  
Aurelia Sands-Belle, Program Director  
170 Garnet St.  
Atlanta, GA 30335  
(404) 865-8127

## Illinois

*Chicago Housing Authority  
Department of Prevention Programs*  
Bernie Lucas, Acting Director, Preventive Programs  
35 S. Paulina  
Chicago, IL 60612  
(312) 432-1060

## Indiana

*Victims Advocate Foundation*  
Kenneth Coleman, Director  
Rural Route One, Box 232  
Waveland, IN 47989  
(317) 569-2332

## Kansas

*Kickapoo Victims of Crime Assistance Program*  
Nora Parker, Director  
Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas  
P.O. Box 271  
Horton, KS 66439  
(913) 486-3591

## Kentucky

*Office of Victim Advocacy  
Office of Commonwealth Attorney*  
JoAnn Phillips, Director  
514 West Liberty  
Louisville, KY 40202  
(502) 595-2340

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## Massachusetts

*Suffolk County District Attorney's Office*  
*Victim Witness Assistance Program*  
Janet E. Fine, Chief  
New Courthouse, 6th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 725-8653

*Essex County District Attorney's Office*  
*Victim/Witness Assistance Program*  
Michaelene O'Neill McCann, Executive Director  
Museum Place  
One E. India Square  
Salem, MA 01970  
(508) 745-6610

*Victim Witness Service Bureau,*  
*Middlesex County District Attorney's Office*  
Jeff Ryan, Director  
40 Thorndike Street  
Cambridge, MA 02141  
(617) 494-4604

*Victim Witness Assistance Program,*  
*District Attorney's Office*  
Anthony J. Pellegrini, Director  
2 Main Street, Room 220  
Worcester, MA 01608  
(508) 792-0214

## Minnesota

*Citizens Council Victim Services*  
Jill Reizika, Director  
822 South Third Street, Suite 100  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
(612) 348-7874

## Missouri

*St. Louis County Victim Service Council*  
Kathleen Tofall, Executive Director  
7900 Carondelet Ave.  
Clayton, MO 63105  
(314) 889-3075

## Montana

*Native Indian Crisis Association*  
*Blackfeet Tribe Domestic Abuse Shelter*  
Irene Last Star, Program Director  
P.O. Box 1946  
Browning, MT 59417  
(406) 338-7921

## Nevada

*Clark County District Attorney's Office*  
*Victim Witness Assistance Center*  
Barbara Schell, Director  
P.O. Box 552220  
Las Vegas, NV 89155-2220  
(702) 455-4204

## New York

*Victim Assistance Services*  
Marianne Walsh, Coordinator of Homicide Crisis  
Outreach Program  
2269 Four Mill River Rd., Bldg. #3  
Elmsford, NY 10523  
(914) 345-3113

*Victim Services Agency*  
Lucy Freedman, Director of Planning and  
Development  
2 Lafayette Street  
New York, NY 10007  
(212) 577-7709

*Victim Assistance Unit, Rochester Police Department*  
Patricia Huntington-Sigel, Coordinator  
150 South Plymouth Avenue  
Civic Center Plaza  
Rochester, NY 14614  
(716) 428-6630

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## North Dakota

*Tender Hearts, Inc.*  
Eldora Poitra, Program Director  
Standing Rock Indian Reservation  
P.O. Box 478  
Fort Yates, ND 58538  
(701) 854-3402

## Oregon

*Multnomah County Victims Assistance Program*  
Helen T. Smith, Chief Deputy, Family Justice  
Multnomah County Courthouse  
1021 SW 4th, Room 804  
Portland, OR 97204  
(503) 248-3222

## Pennsylvania

*Northwest Victim Services*  
Janet Lemoine, Director  
6008 Wayne Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
(215) 438-4410

*Office of Victim Services,  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Corrections*  
Mary Achilles, Director  
P.O. Box 598  
Camp Hill, PA 17011-0598  
(717) 730-2722

*Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Victim Services Unit*  
Marcia Thomas-Bayne, Director  
1421 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215) 686-8026

*Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc.*  
Peggy Gusz, Executive Director  
236 West Market Street, Suite 2  
West Chester, PA 19382  
(610) 692-7273

## South Carolina

*Greenville Victim/Witness Assistance Program*  
Marcia Barker, Director  
Greenville County Courthouse Annex  
Room 113  
Greenville, SC 29601  
(803) 467-8612

*Post Trauma Resources*  
Laurence Bergmann  
1804 Hampton St.  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803) 765-0700

## Washington

*Lummi Indian Business Council,  
"Lummi" Victims of Crime*  
Dan Kamkoff, Program Director  
2616 Kwina Road  
Bellingham, WA 98226-9298  
(360) 384-2285

*Victim Assistance Unit, King County Prosecutor's Office*  
Ralyn Baird, Director  
516 3rd Avenue, Room E-564  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 296-9552

## Wisconsin

*U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District*  
Francia A. Wendelborn, Victim/Witness Coordinator  
517 East Wisconsin Ave., Room 530  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
(414) 297-1700

*Victim Witness Services*  
Jo Kolanda, Director  
821 West State Street  
412 Safety Building  
Milwaukee, WI 53233  
(414) 278-4659

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# Appendix B

## Selected Resources

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### ***Office for Victims of Crime*** ***U.S. Department of Justice***

633 Indiana Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 307-0774

Created in 1984 by the Victims of Crime Act, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) administers the Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits and provides grants to States for victim assistance and victim compensation. OVC also provides training and technical assistance to victim services providers and criminal justice officials and sponsors numerous projects related to victim issues. The National Victims Resource Center, funded by OVC, provides referral services and information on victim issues and other criminal justice topics. Documents are selected from the National Institute of Justice's National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), of which the National Victims Resource Center is a component.

The National Victims Resource Center can be contacted at (800) 627-6872 and, through NCJRS, in the following other ways:

- fax: (301) 251-5212
- mail: NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000
- e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.aspensys.com

### ***National Organization for Victim Assistance***

1757 Park Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 232-6682

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), founded in 1975, is a major leader of the victims movement and provides a wealth of resources on victim assistance program operations and services. Besides written materials, library and legislative databases, and training and technical assistance programs, NOVA sponsors numerous national and regional conferences every year. Members also receive a useful newsletter and have access to NOVA's extensive directory of victim assistance programs.

Publications written by NOVA staff include the following:

*Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals.* This is a 1993 compilation of individual manuals that the organization developed for regional training conferences. The book outlines major considerations for a wide range of victim assistance program activities and issues, including services to special populations, program standards, public speaking, fund-raising, media relations, and criminal justice alliances. *The Victim Service System: A Guide to Action.* Written by Marlene Young, executive director of NOVA, this book includes detailed descriptions of how to provide services and understand victims' emotional responses to crime, as well as sample forms, letters, fliers, and other materials.

*Self-Assessment Kit.* Revised in 1987, this kit contains three tools: (1) A Management Information System (MIS) for victim services programs manual system that lends itself to computerization; (2) A Cost-Benefit Analysis System that uses the information compiled by the MIS; and (3) A Program Assessment System that helps programs examine all of their management and service functions. The Program Assessment System is designed for self-administration by a program and for application by outside evaluators.

*2001: The Next Generation in Victim Assistance,* edited by Marlene Young and John Stein, the directors of NOVA, is a compilation of presentations by victim services and criminal justice experts at a 1992 NOVA-sponsored conference to consider the future of the victim assistance field.

### ***National Victim Center***

2111 Wilson Boulevard  
Suite 300  
Arlington, Virginia 22201  
(703) 276-2880

The National Victim Center (NVC), founded in 1985 to promote the rights and needs of violent crime victims, offers training and technical assistance for victim services providers and criminal justice officials; has a library of over 10,000 documents concerning violent crime and victimology, as well as a legislative database; and sponsors the Crime Vic-

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tims' Litigation Project, consisting of a newsletter, a legislative database, and a network of civil attorneys who work with crime victims. Members receive a quarterly newsletter on victim issues, another quarterly newsletter that covers a single timely topic, a biannual bulletin that spotlights exemplary programs, and access to databases and library materials. A National Crime Victims' Rights Week Strategies for Action Kit (which includes sample press releases and other materials) and other materials can be ordered at discounted prices. Members also can request informational bulletins and resource packages on 65 victim-related topics.

The National Victim Center has produced a number of publications, including the following:

*Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance.* This 500+ page training and resource manual, published in 1994, is targeted to individuals involved in prosecutor-based victim assistance programs, but the material is useful for any victim services provider. The manual has nine sections covering program planning and development, protocol for service delivery (including how to address the needs of special victim populations), working with criminal justice agencies, victim impact statements, enhanced program services (including postconviction hearings, compensation, restitution, and civil remedies), trends in service delivery (e.g., victim/offender mediation), volunteer management, effective stress and conflict management, and resource development. Numerous sample forms are included in the manual and on an accompanying computer disk.

*Legal Remedies for Crime Victims Against Perpetrators: Basic Principles.* This conference training manual and curriculum presents an overview of civil litigation on behalf of crime victims, discusses sources of collection, and reviews common and special cases in which crime victims can recover compensation for the losses they incurred.

Many criminal justice associations also have begun addressing issues relating to victims and can be contacted for information about their activities. These associations include:

- **American Correctional Association**  
(301) 918-1800  
Victims Committee Chair: Fred Finkbeiner  
(804) 560-5312

The 25,000-member ACA is composed of professionals, individuals, agencies, and organizations involved in

every aspect of the corrections field. In existence for more than 200 years, the ACA has been the driving force in establishing national correctional policies and advocating safe, humane, and effective operations. It offers several publications, training workshops, and forums, as well as technical assistance, national standards for the field, and other information and assistance. The ACA Victims Committee is charged with developing the ACA's policies on victims of juvenile crime; recommending national research, training, and technical assistance projects for the ACA to pursue in regard to victims; educating ACA members on the elements of restorative justice principles, programs, and practices; reviewing restorative justice principles; proposing strategies to forge greater coalitions with related organizations dedicated to improving the status of crime victims; and developing methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of victim services programs in corrections.

- **American Bar Association**  
(202) 662-1000  
Victims Committee, Criminal Justice Section Contact:  
Susan Hillenbrand

For almost 30 years, the 340,000-member ABA has been actively supporting legislation in support of crime victims. In 1976 the Victims Committee was established to review victim and witness issues. The committee has spearheaded revisions to the ABA Criminal Justice Standards—for example, calling on prosecutors to make every effort to remain advised of the victim's attitudes before reaching a plea agreement. It has also developed a package of recommendations for reducing victim/witness intimidation and sponsored a major effort to involve State and local bar associations in victim/witness issues. The committee has published a number of ABA-approved materials on victim issues, including an assessment of State victims' rights statutes and a manual for attorneys.

- **International Association of Chiefs of Police**  
(703) 836-6767  
Victim Services Committee Contact: Carolyn Cockroft

The IACP is a nonprofit organization of approximately 14,000 members from the world's law enforcement community. IACP supports law enforcement professionals with a wide variety of services, including conducting technical assistance programs; presenting state-of-the-art training programs and materials; publishing



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professional magazines and reports; and conducting extensive law enforcement research.

The IACP's Victim Services Committee is charged with developing training curricula for law enforcement agencies in the overall provision of victim services and the implementation of police-based victim services units; developing training strategies for officers to raise their awareness of victim issues; and developing programs and policies to respond to the needs of officers exposed to violent incidents.

## Other Recent Publications

Blair B. Bourque and Roberta C. Cronin, *Helping Victims and Witnesses in the Juvenile Justice System: A Program Handbook* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1991). This handbook is directed at juvenile justice policymakers, providers of juvenile justice services, and victim assistance providers. It identifies programs that have model approaches to providing services for victims of and witnesses to juvenile crime; describes important program components; provides practical guidelines on structuring and implementing a program; describes common obstacles and strategies for overcoming them; and provides a list of additional resources.

Albert R. Roberts, *Helping Crime Victims: Research, Policy, and Practice* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990). This book presents the results of a 1985 survey of nearly 200 victim assistance programs. Examples of many programs are included throughout the text. The book also contains an overview of victimology and victim services along with articles by other authors on responding to missing and murdered children, providing crisis intervention to battered women and their children, crisis and recovery services for family violence survivors, and restitution.

Wesley G. Skogan, Robert C. Davis, and Arthur J. Lurigio, *Victims' Needs and Victim Services: Final Report to the National Institute of Justice* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1990). Based on a survey of nearly 500 crime victims in four locations, this report describes victims' reported needs, where victims seek help, the kinds of services offered by victim assistance programs in their community, and which additional problems of victims need to be addressed by the programs.

Arthur J. Lurigio, Wesley G. Skogan, and Robert C. Davis, eds., *Victims of Crime: Problems, Policies, and Programs*, (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990). This compilation of articles by victim experts covers trends in victimization, the emotional impact of crime, the needs and problems of special victim populations, the evolution of victim programs and services, and other topics.

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# Appendix C

## Sample Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Social Service Organizations

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1. A. Do you provide services to victims of the following?  
Describe any limitations, i.e. hours, religious  
affiliation.

Rape: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Child sexual assault: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other sex offenses: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Homicide (families): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Felony assaults: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Misdemeanor assaults: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Robbery: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Burglary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Threats and Harassment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Domestic violence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Are your services oriented to special categories of  
victims (e.g. elderly, children, disabled, etc.)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following describe your function:

Information and referral: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Direct social services: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Counseling: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Victim advocacy: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Community education: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Legislative action: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What jurisdiction do you cover? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What are your eligibility criteria for services? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you make exceptions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In what circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many clients do you serve annually? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

		YES	NO
6.	At what point do you usually make contact with the victim (e.g: immediately after the incident, within 24 hours, 24 to 72 hours, more than 72 hours)? _____ _____ _____		
7.	How do you get clients? _____ _____ _____		
	If you get referrals, what are your major sources? _____ _____ _____		
8.	If you have a hotline, what hours is it operable? _____ _____ _____		
	How is it staffed? _____ _____		
9.	Do you do outreach? _____ _____ _____		
	If so, in which cases? _____ _____		
	How (e.g: mail, home visit, phone contact)? _____ _____		
10.	What is your most common form of contact with victims (e.g: home visit, phone, office visit, other)? _____ _____ _____		
11.	What are the most common services you provide to victims? Cite limitations when applicable. _____ _____ _____		
	a. Do you provide transportation to court for victims and witnesses? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	Other types of transportation? (for medical care, police department) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	b. Do you provide crime prevention information? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	Do you help victims make security repairs in their homes? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	c. Do you advocate on the victim's behalf with landlords, employers, etc.? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	With police and prosecutors? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	d. Do you have a fund for victim's emergency needs? If so, describe. _____ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	e. If your state has a victim compensation law, do you assist victims in filing for compensation? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	f. Do you provide counseling (professional, lay, crisis intervention, support groups, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	g. Do you escort victims to court? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	◇	◇
	All clients, or only when requested? _____		
12.	How long have you been in operation? _____ _____ _____		
13.	Do you plan to expand your services? In what areas? _____ _____ _____		
14.	Do you use volunteers? If so, in what capacity? _____ _____ _____		
15.	What do you see as the major gaps in services for victims in this community? _____ _____ _____		

Source: Susman and Vittert. *Building a Solution*. pp. 4-8

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# Appendix D

## Colorado Springs Police Department

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### Volunteer Job Description

**Position:** Victim Contact Assistant

**Background Information:** Crisis intervention to victim of crimes against persons (sexual assault, aggravated assault and robbery, homicide survivors), follow-up services and assistance throughout criminal justice process.

**Responsible To:** Patricia Wyka, Victim/Witness Coordinator

**Responsibilities:**

1. Advise victims of target crimes regarding departmental and community assistance available to them and of their legal rights.
2. Liaison with victim service agencies and coordinate resources for utilization of victims.
3. Direct needs assistance to victims (e. g., victim compensation applications, transportation, etc.).
4. Coordinate activities and information with other department personnel (e.g., submission of reports, schedules, etc. to supervisor).

**Time Required:** Minimum six months commitment to program; four hours weekly to program.

**Training:** Will be provided by Victim/Witness Coordinator

**Qualifications:** Sensitivity to persons in physical and emotional trauma, good communications skills, public speaking or public relations experience is desirable.

**Benefits:** Personal satisfaction.

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# Appendix E

## Victim Witness Assistance Program

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### *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

DISTRICT ATTORNEY OF SUFFOLK COUNTY  
RALPH C. MARTIN, II

NEW COURT HOUSE  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108  
Telephone (617) 725-8600

#### INTERNSHIP

**Program Summary:** Human services program within prosecutor's office responsible for providing crime victims, witnesses, and their families with services mandated by the victim Bill of Rights (M.G.L. c. 258B) and assisting them throughout the criminal justice system. Interns may be assigned to one of the nine district courts in the County, the superior court, or the specialized units in the office (for example, Domestic Violence Unit, Child Abuse Unit, Homicide Unit, Gang Unit, Juvenile Prosecution Unit).

**Primary Duties:** Duties coincide with individual intern's experience, assignment and interests, and may include direct intervention with victims and witnesses, administrative tasks, special research projects, etc.

**Position Requirements:** Applicants must have strong interpersonal, verbal communication, and organizational skills. Human services and/or criminal justice background helpful but not required.

**Time Requirements:** Minimum of 10 hours per week for 12 weeks. Flexible.

Cover letter should include applicant's specific interests, availability, and anticipated schedule if known. Resumes will be reviewed and candidates contacted for interviews.

# Appendix F

## Police and Victim Services Information Card

Minneapolis Police Department

<b>POLICE AND COURTS INFORMATION</b>	
Second Precinct .....	673-5702
Third Precinct .....	673-5703
Fourth Precinct .....	673-5704
Fifth Precinct .....	673-5705
SAFE.....	673-3015
Traffic Division .....	673-2981
Hennepin County Jail (Offender Release Information) .....	348-5112
Hennepin County Attorney/Victim Assistance .....	348-4003
Minneapolis City Attorney's Office (Information on filing criminal charges)..	673-2535
Minneapolis Police Records (Information about getting copies of reports)..	673-2961
Minneapolis Police Forgery/Fraud Unit .....	673-2953
Minneapolis Police Domestic Assault, Robbery and Homicide Unit .....	673-2941
Minneapolis Police Juvenile Division .....	673-2921
Minneapolis Police Child Abuse Unit .....	673-3072
Minneapolis Police Auto Theft .....	673-2972
Minneapolis Police Sex Crimes Unit .....	673-3081



### MINNEAPOLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT

SQUAD NUMBER:	CASE CONTROL NUMBER (CCN):	PRECINCT/DIVISION:
OFFICER(S) BADGE NUMBER(S):		

MP-6441 Rev. 1/94

## RIGHTS AND SERVICES FOR ALL CRIME VICTIMS

### Crime Victim's Rights:

1. You have the right to apply for financial help for losses resulting from a violent crime. This assistance does not cover property losses. For application and information, call 642-0395 or outside the Twin Cities area, call 1-800-247-3090; TDD: 1-612-297-2100
2. You have the right to request that the law enforcement agency withhold public access to data revealing your identity. The law enforcement agency will decide if this is possible.
3. You have the right, if an offender is charged, to be informed of and participate in the prosecution process, including the right to request restitution (money court ordered from the offender and paid to the victim).

If you feel your rights as a victim have been violated, call the Crime Victims Ombudsman's Office at 642-0397, 1-800-247-0390, or TDD: 1-612-297-2100.

**24 Hour Crisis Phone Lines:** Crisis lines are committed to serving persons regardless of race, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religion, disability or gender and will refer you to specific resources as needed.

Citizens Council Victim Services (Any Crime Victim) .....	340-5400
First Call for Help (Emergency Resources) .....	335-5000
Mpls Crisis Nursery (Shelter/Abuse & Neglect Prevention Counseling) .....	824 8000
Sexual Violence Center (TTY 871-1550).....	871-5111
Crisis Connection .....	379 6363
Rape and Sexual Assault Center .....	825-4357

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INFORMATION

**IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**, you can ask the city or county attorney to file a criminal complaint. You also have the right to notification if prosecution of the case is declined or criminal charges are dismissed. In addition you also have the right to go to court and file a petition requesting an Order of Protection from domestic abuse.

The order could include the following:

1. An order restraining the abuser from further acts of abuse;
2. An order directing the abuser to leave your household;
3. An order preventing the abuser from entering your residence, school, business, or place of employment;
4. An order awarding you or the other parent custody of or visitation with your minor child or children; or
5. An order directing the abuser to pay support to you and the minor children if the abuser has a legal obligation to do so.

### EMERGENCY SHELTER

Battered Women's Crisis Line/Shelter Information 24 Hour Line with TTY access .....	646-0994
Harriet Tubman Shelter, Minneapolis .....	827-2841

### OTHER ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic Abuse Office (Place to get order for protection) .....	348-5073
M.I.P. (Court Advocacy for Battered Women) .....	873-5628
I.B.C.A. Black Battered Women Program .....	871-7678
Division of Indian Work (Battered Woman's Program) .....	827-1786
CUHCC - Asian Battered Women's Program .....	827-4774
Centro Cultural Chicano .....	874-1412

(Issued pursuant to M.S. 62B.341)

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# Appendix G

## Sample Letter Informing Victim of Case Status

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*Alameda County*  
***District Attorney's Office***

January 18, 1995

Fast Cash  
39958 Cedar Blvd.  
Newark, CA 94560

RE: Case # 160906

Dear Sir/Madam:

The District Attorney's Office has filed a criminal complaint charging Arn Jones with grand theft.

It is very important to keep the District Attorney's office informed of your current address and phone number so that we are able to contact you about the case.

In the event that the defendant pleads guilty, or is convicted of the charges, the Alameda County Probation Department may contact you in an effort to assist the court in determining whether or not the defendant may be ordered by the Court to reimburse you for any losses that you may have incurred. Remember, such an order is dependent upon the sentence by the Court at the completion of the case, as well as the ability of the defendant to reimburse you for your loss. Please cooperate with the Probation Department in promptly furnishing them with any information that they may request.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (510) 272-6180.

Very truly yours,

THOMAS J. ORLOFF  
District Attorney

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Harold O. Boscovich, Director

HOB:mchl  
A. CHG.



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# Appendix H

## Sample Letter Notifying Victim of Offender's Status in Penal System

---

February 24, 1996

Victim/Witness  
Address  
City, State

RE: (Offender's Name)

Dear Victim/Witness:

The state of Washington has initiated a program which will notify the victims and/or witnesses of violent crimes of certain specific movements of the offender through the corrections system. Our file information indicates that you may be eligible to participate in the Victim/Witness Notification Program. Should you request notification of future system movements of the specific violent and/or sex offender, enclosed are the necessary documents for your information and program registration. Enclosures include a program description and instructions for program registration, a Victim/Witness Notification Registration Card and a self-addressed Victim/Witness Program envelope.

If you would like additional information about the program, please feel free to call the toll-free number listed below.

Sincerely,

William A. Stutz, Manager  
Victim/Witness Notification Program  
(206) 753-6211  
(800) 322-2201 (WA State only)

### *CERTIFICATE OF MAILING*

I certify that I mailed a true and accurate copy of this document to the person named herein at the address shown, which is the last known address of record, and that the information contained in this letter has been verified as to its accuracy, on (date).

---

Victim/Witness Program, Cora Lee Johnson

*NOTE:* Taken from the conference notebook for "Crime Victims and Corrections: Setting the Agenda for the 1990's," sponsored by the National Victim Center, the American Correctional Association, and other organizations and agencies.

# Appendix I

## Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Brochure and Training Curriculum

### Pima County Attorney Victim Witness Program

#### THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

##### 1. What is the team? When does it respond?

*This group of trained men and women consists of specially-trained staff members and volunteers of the Pima County Attorney's Victim Witness Program - and is available for call out 24 hours a day in any incident resulting in multiple deaths and/or serious injuries.*

*The need may result from a variety of events such as catastrophic weather conditions (earthquake, flood, etc.) airplane crash, train or bus wreck, explosion, escape of hazardous materials or the aftermath of a mass homicide.*

*Debriefings are also available to victims following the armed robbery of banks and other businesses.*

##### 2. What is the goal of the Response Team?

*The goal of the Critical Incident Response team is to facilitate recovery for people who are experiencing common reactions to a highly abnormal event.*

*Survivors of highly traumatic events often suffer many of the debilitating symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders - P.T.S.D. The debriefing process helps them verbalize and better understand what has happened, emphasizes that their emotional and physical reactions are common responses, and assists them*

*in regaining a sense of control over their lives. In addition, the team also helps to identify those victims who need additional or professional intervention.*

##### 3. What population does the Response Team serve?

*The services of this team are available not only for the victims themselves, but for family members of the deceased and injured. Services can also be provided for eye witnesses to the event, and for the professionals involved, including medics, fire fighters, law enforcement personnel and other disaster workers and care givers.*

#### Some Tips On Ways To Alleviate Stress

1. Within the first 24-48 hours take some time for strenuous exercise. Walk, run, jog, play racquetball, etc. Do according to your physical ability.
2. Take time to relax - listen to music, read a book, alternate with the periods of physical activity. These activities will help ease your physical reactions.
3. Keep to your normal routine. Don't make drastic changes in your life. Keep yourself occupied.
4. Your reaction is not so uncommon in response to such a terrible thing - you are not crazy. You are just experiencing common reactions to an abnormal event.
5. Avoid the use of alcohol and/or drugs. Mind altering substances will only complicate life for you. Drink lots of water, fruit juices, etc. Avoid coffee.
6. Talk to your co-workers, reach out and "touch someone". It's good to find out how they are doing, plus you feel better by talking to someone who shares the experience.
7. Get plenty of rest. If you can't sleep, start a Journal.
8. It's okay to feel rotten. Give yourself permission to feel it. It's also okay to feel good, and to share both of these feelings with others.
9. Eat sensibly - stay away from the junk foods, sugars and caffeine and remember to eat regularly. Pasta and other carbohydrates are especially beneficial.
10. Recurring dreams, thoughts, flashbacks, are common. Let them happen, and over time they will decrease.

#### Common Reactions to a Critical Incident

##### Physical

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appetite changes                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle Aches                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Weight Change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digestive Upsets                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Rash          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accident Prone                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Colds         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teeth Grinding                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tension       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pounding Heart                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restlessness                         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foot Tapping                         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finger Drumming                      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased alcohol, drug, tobacco use |  |

##### Emotional

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety            | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration        | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling that "no one cares" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The "Blues"        | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings        | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous laugh               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bad temper         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares         | <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying spells      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not feeling any joy         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easily discouraged | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hypervigilance     |  |

##### Spiritual

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emptiness             | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of meaning   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doubt                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Unforgiving       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Martyrdom             | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of Direction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needing to prove self | <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for magic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cynicism              | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathy            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of Faith         |  |

---

## I. General Tips

1. Don't try to work with people you know if at all possible. Simple "first aid" is acceptable until someone else is available.
2. There will always be some degree of confusion no matter how well you plan.
3. After a traumatic occurrence, try for a debriefing within the first 24-72 hours. In case of a death, avoid doing a debriefing on the day of the funeral or the day before.
4. Remember: debriefings are only for the short term. There may be need for continued professional counseling.
5. A neutral environment is best.
6. Watch for people in crisis. Be attuned to exaggerated statements, body language, and eye movements.
7. DO NOT USE "I understand" or "How do you feel?" or "why?"
8. Be sure to call it a debriefing. The use of this term facilitates attendance, whereas a "counseling session" may deter some from attending and is a misnomer.

## II. Pre-Debriefing

Debriefing team should meet before to confirm roles, get information, set up room.

## III. Guidelines

1. Large room if possible. Participants should be in a circle if possible.
2. Care givers should be spread out around the group. Three debriefers for ten clients, then add one for each additional ten.
3. No breaks; avoid sweets and caffeine.
4. Handouts should be distributed *at end of session*.
5. Kleenex, cups, and water should be readily available.

6. Let the people know where the bathrooms are.

7. Address the issue of smoking.

## IV. Roles of the Team Members

1. Leader—responsible for leading the debriefing.
2. Assistant Leader—may co-facilitate with leader or take over if necessary.
3. Care Givers—are there for support *only* for the people in crisis. Checks on anyone who leaves. Should not interrupt leader or assistant; otherwise control is lost.
4. Law Enforcement (lead investigator)—if appropriate, should be invited for the purposes of providing updated, accurate information.
5. Identified Groups—efforts should *not* be made to limit those attending *unless* specific problem/request is raised. In some cases, groups may be subdivided in order to work more effectively.

## V. Debriefing Steps— (usually takes 60 to 90 minutes)

1. Introduction stage
  - a. Leader thanks everyone for coming and says "I'm sorry this happened to you."
  - b. If people have been required to attend, leader acknowledges "I know some of you aren't here because you want to be, but because you were told to be." Let them know that they may be able to help someone else by something they say.
  - c. Leader introduces self and other team members.
  - d. Leader gives brief explanation of the Victim Witness program.
  - e. Leader introduces other agencies present that were involved with the incident (i.e., law enforcement) and has them provide information about the incident. If they are not present, leader should be up to date on accurate information and should provide it.

- 
- f. Leader explains ground rules:
    - i. We're here to talk about what happened, how you reacted, how it affected you, and what you can expect in the future. The purpose is to reduce anxiety and provide assistance in dealing effectively with the aftereffects.
    - ii. Permission to express their feelings. If they want something they say to remain confidential, they should notify the group.
    - iii. We are here for reassurance and to encourage mutual help. This is not the time for personal attacks, blaming, judging or criticizing.
    - iv. There is to be no violence — safety is of the utmost importance.
    - v. Permission to not speak, just listen.
  2. Validate: "It's a common reaction," "It's okay to be angry," "When a sudden tragedy happens, almost everyone tries to figure out why or how it could have been prevented," "You are having normal reactions to an abnormal situation." Use responses to briefly teach crisis theory/reactions.
  3. Draw parallels between members' responses. "Has anyone else experienced this? Is anyone else having a *similar* reaction?"
  4. Ask what they are most concerned about now. Explain the possible ranges of emotions and trigger events they may encounter in the future. Ask the group for ideas about coping with these concerns. "What has helped you in the past?" Explain common coping techniques. Validate techniques.
  5. Leader asks if there is anything in the situation that could be considered positive. Leader asks if there is anything that hasn't been covered or talked about. Solicit ideas, questions from the group. Summarize, reassure, give positive message. Provide handouts and resources. Thank participants for attending.

## *VI. Debriefing Approach*

1. Leader starts session:
  - a. Where were you when it happened or when you heard about it?
  - b. Who were you with?
  - c. What was your reaction?
  - d. What did you see, hear, smell etc.?

## *VII. Post-Debriefing*

Team meets afterwards to process and evaluate what occurred during the debriefing. This is also a time for the team to debrief and acknowledge their own feelings.

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# Appendix J

## Sample Verification Letter to Employer that Employee was a Witness in a Criminal Proceeding

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Date

To Whom It May Concern:

Your employee, [name of employee], was subpoenaed and appeared in [name of court] on [date], in the case of [defendant's name] as a witness for the State of [name of State]. [Name of employee] was required to be in court from [time] until [time].

[Name of employee] expressed his willingness to cooperate with us and we appreciate this kind of citizen involvement. It is only by such citizen involvement that our criminal justice system can be effective.

It is our hope that [name of employee] will not be penalized in any manner because of [his/her] court appearance. As a member of the business community, you have also made a contribution to the criminal justice process by cooperating with [name of employee] and [name of agency] in this matter.

As a witness, [name of employee] cannot be required to forfeit sick or annual leave while required to serve as a witness. While this may be somewhat of an imposition to your business, hopefully the loss will not be as serious as would be the hardship to our justice system and in particular, to [name of employee]. Additionally, [name of employee] [did/did not] receive compensation for appearing as a witness for the State. (If witness did receive compensation, please list the amount per day for witness fees, such as "The rate of compensation to [name of employee] was [amount per day].")

Once again, thank you for your cooperation in this matter. It is our hope that the court system can work with a minimum of inconvenience and expense to everyone. If you should need any further information or assistance, please call me at [phone number].

Sincerely,

Prosecuting District Attorney

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# Appendix K

## Sample Parole Notification Letter to the Victim

(Adaptable to Family Members of Homicide Victim)

---

Date

Victim's Name  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Re: Defendant's Name and Case Number

Dear (Victim's Name):

The [name of correctional or paroling authority for your jurisdiction] has notified this office they are considering granting parole to [name of defendant]. The [name of correctional or paroling authority] alone determines whether [name of defendant] will be granted on parole or another form of early release.

As the victim in this case [or, As the family member of victim's name], you have the right to protest [name of defendant]'s release on parole or other early release options. You may present your objections in writing or in person to the [name of correctional or paroling authority] at [address]. I have taken the liberty of enclosing a victim impact statement for your use if you should so choose to protest [name of defendant]'s release. You may have prepared an impact statement when [name of defendant] was sentenced; however, you may wish to use the enclosed impact statement to update the one you submitted earlier, especially updating any additional financial costs you have incurred since [name of defendant] was sentenced. If you should need any assistance in completing the impact statement, our office will be most happy to assist you.

If you would like to attend the parole hearing in person, please call the [contact information] at [phone number] or you can call our office at [phone number] to learn more about your right to attend and object to the release of [name of defendant]. [Add where applicable: Our office provides victim or family members who wish to attend parole hearings with transportation and parole accompaniment services when requested. If you are in need of these services, please contact our office as soon as possible so we can make the necessary arrangements.]

[Add where applicable: Our office will also send a letter of protest to the parole board.] If we can be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us. As soon as possible after the parole hearing, we will contact you with the parole board's decision. Once again, thank you for your cooperation throughout the entire justice process.

Sincerely,

Prosecuting or District Attorney

SOURCE: *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance* (Alexandria, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1993).

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# Appendix L

## Sample Agenda for Prospective Volunteers

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*Please Note:* These sessions can be taught by the victim-witness program staff members or may involve outside speakers and trainers. Many outside speakers and trainers are willing to donate training time to volunteer training programs.

### *Session I*

- 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Introduction of Program Staff and Brief  
Introduction of Each Staff Members Duties
- 7:30 – 8:00 p.m. History of Victim Services
- 8:00 – 9:00 p.m. Trauma of Victimization  
Crisis and Stress Theory
- 9:00 – 9:30 p.m. Question and Answer Session

### *Session II*

- 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Values Clarification Exercise
- 7:30 – 8:00 p.m. Counseling Self-Assessment
- 8:00 – 8:30 p.m. Introduction to Crisis Counseling
- 8:30 – 9:30 p.m. Volunteer Expectations and Responsibilities

### *Session III*

- 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Review of Crisis Theory and Crisis Intervention
- 7:30 – 8:00 p.m. General Listening Skills
- 8:00 – 9:30 p.m. Role Playing

### *Session IV*

- 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Review of Previous Sessions
- 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Family Court and Domestic Violence Overview

### *Session V*

- 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Final Session  
Joint Volunteer In-Service
- 8:30 – 9:30 p.m. Guest Speaker

NOTE: Adapted from the Fairfax County Victim Witness Program, Fairfax, Virginia (From *Focus on the Future: A Systems Approach to Prosecution and Victim Assistance*, Alexandria, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1993).

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# Appendix M

## California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council

### Victim Advocate Certification Application and Certificate

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

County/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of hire in a comprehensive victim service agency, as defined by California Penal Code §13835: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years/Months Employed: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: Highest degree/year earned \_\_\_\_\_

Specialized Training/Courses—Include Dates (*use additional pages if required*):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### Recommending Authority

I certify that I am the Director/Coordinator of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program for the County of \_\_\_\_\_ and am a member in good standing in the California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council. I affirm that the above named applicant through education, experience, and specialized training has demonstrated the ability to assist victims and witnesses and is qualified to be certified. VICTIM ADVOCATE \_\_\_\_\_ SENIOR VICTIM ADVOCATE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant has completed the 40-hour training curriculum as required by California Penal Code Section 13835.10.  
(07/01/93 hire date)

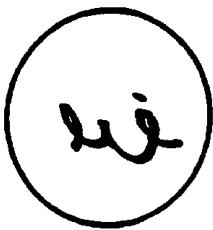
\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Director/Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

District Attorney/Chief Probation Officer/Executive Director

---





PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

## ***California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council***

Pursuant to the authority vested by the Board of Directors and upon recommendation of the 1. \_\_\_\_\_ for the County of 2. \_\_\_\_\_ the California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council confers upon

3. \_\_\_\_\_, 4. \_\_\_\_\_

who has demonstrated through education, experience and specialized training the ability to assist crime victims and witnesses, this certificate as evidence of professional standing as a

### ***Senior Victim Advocate in the State of California***

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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# Appendix N

## Suffolk County District Attorney's Office Victim Witness Service Program

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### Intern/Volunteer Contract

Intern/Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Advocate Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will provide \_\_\_\_\_ hours of services per/week as an intern/volunteer at the District Court/Unit, beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_.

My schedule will be as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### *Intern/Volunteer Responsibilities Include*

(Check all that apply)

- ◇ screening district court cases
- ◇ initial and ongoing support for victims and witnesses on assigned cases
- ◇ gathering restitution information
- ◇ assisting applicants for restraining orders
- ◇ keeping victim/witness statistics
- ◇ attending victim/witness trainings and staff meetings
- ◇ bi-weekly meetings with Advocate supervisor
- ◇ meet and work with court and office personnel
- ◇ participate in evaluation process
- ◇ assist Advocate with various administrative tasks

Additional Responsibilities and/or Special Projects (as agreed upon by intern/volunteer, Advocate supervisor, and Program chief): \_\_\_\_\_

Intern/Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advocate Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# Appendix O

## Monthly Tally, Scottsdale, Arizona

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

P. C. I. S.

Subject: Monthly Report

	<i>Current Month</i>	<i>Year To Date</i>	<i>Same Month Last Year</i>	<i>To Date LastYear</i>
Cases Received	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clients Received	_____	_____	_____	_____
Repeat Clients	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clients Continued	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total Clients	_____	_____	_____	_____

*Problems Handled:*

Suicide Related	_____	_____	_____	_____
Psychological, 918, Mental	_____	_____	_____	_____
Juvenile Related	_____	_____	_____	_____
Runaway	_____	_____	_____	_____
Incorrigible	_____	_____	_____	_____
Family Problems	_____	_____	_____	_____
Battered Husband	_____	_____	_____	_____
Battered Wife	_____	_____	_____	_____
Neighborhood Problems	_____	_____	_____	_____
Basics — Shelter/Unemployment	_____	_____	_____	_____
Death Related	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child Abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child Molest	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child Neglect	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child Dependency	_____	_____	_____	_____
Missing/Lost Person	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sexual Abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sexual Assault	_____	_____	_____	_____
Elderly/Senile	_____	_____	_____	_____
Alcohol	_____	_____	_____	_____
Drugs	_____	_____	_____	_____
Crime Related	_____	_____	_____	_____



	<i>Current Month</i>	<i>Year To Date</i>	<i>Same Month Last Year</i>	<i>To Date LastYear</i>
Referrals	_____	_____	_____	_____
Meetings	_____	_____	_____	_____
Days Worked	_____	_____	_____	_____
Training Time Given	_____	_____	_____	_____
Training Time Received	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overtime	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sick	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ride-Along	_____	_____	_____	_____

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# Index

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## A

### **Alameda County, California, Victim/Witness Assistance Division**

assigning cases, 107  
budget, 44  
case monitoring, 118  
community organizations, working with, 70–74  
    estimated population served, 44  
    home visits, 80  
judges, working with, 59  
major services, 44  
needs assessment, 16, 17  
police, working with, 57, 60, 61  
program location in “subunit” offices, 42  
prosecutors, working with, 62, 69  
services to victims based on case status, 24  
staffing, 44  
    and caseload (estimated annual), 44  
    recruit staff, 49  
    assistance with, 93  
    volunteers, use of, 46

### **Atlanta Victim Witness Assistance Program**

clients, identifying, 79  
services for victims who are drug dealers, 25  
stimulating public awareness and support, 29

## B

### **Bank robberies, services to victims of**

Counseling Team, The (California), 23  
Oregon U.S. Attorney’s Office, 23  
Eastern Wisconsin U.S. Attorney’s Office, 23  
Post Trauma Resources (South Carolina), 23

## C

### **California Youth Authority Office of Prevention and Victim Services, 54, 68, 96**

### **Chicago Housing Authority Victim Assistance Program**

target population of and services provided by, 22, 85

### **Citizens Council Victim Services (Minneapolis–**

### **St. Paul), 20**

budget, 44  
case status, services to victims based on, 25  
    caseload, 44  
clients, identifying, confidentiality issues in, 78  
    evaluation of, 119  
    funding of, 121, 129  
    location, 38  
    police, working with, 55–60  
    population served, 44  
    property crime, services to victims of, 23  
    prosecutors, working with, 62  
    public education, 30  
    schools, outreach to, 74  
    services, 44  
    staffing, 44  
        recruitment, 49  
transportation, for domestic violence victims, 89  
    volunteers, use of, 46

### **Civil litigation**

help for victims pursuing, 64  
training program staff, 108

### **Clark County (Nevada) Victim Assistance Program**

services for intimidated victims and witnesses, 24, 66, 95

### **Collaboration with other agencies**

with community organizations, 70–74  
with corrections agencies, 67–69  
expansion of, 54–55  
guidelines for, 55  
with judges, 65  
with law enforcement, 55  
with prosecutors, 62  
reasons for, 54  
with schools, 74

### **Colorado Springs Police Department Victim/Witness Office**

prosecutors, working with, 65  
schools, working with, 74  
volunteers, use of, 46

### **Colorado State Patrol Victim Assistance Program**

---

community organizations, working with, 70

**Community policing**

collaboration with victim assistance programs, 54, 59, 84

**Community United Against Violence (CUAV)  
(San Francisco), 85**

**Corrections** (see Collaboration. Program organization)

**Cost-effectiveness studies**, 121

**Crime Victims' Center (Chester County,  
Pennsylvania), 37**

**Criminal justice system**

role of in providing victim services, 87–88  
difficulties in working with, 69

**Criminal**

services for victims who may be, 25

**D**

**Derivative Victims**, 5, 9

collaborative efforts for, 54  
definition of, 23  
services for, 23

**E**

**Essex County (Massachusetts) Victim/Witness Assistance  
Program**

community organizations, working with, 70, 97

**F**

**Funding**

costs, estimating, 42, 44  
funding changes, coping with, 121  
sources,

Federal, 125  
State, 127  
private, 128

**G**

**Greenville (South Carolina) County Victim/Witness  
Assistance Program**, 12, 16

budget, 44  
caseload, 44  
funding of, 128

police, working with, 58, 60  
population served, 44  
services, 44  
staffing, 44  
recruitment, 49

**I**

**Impact evaluation**, 116

**Internet**

as source of information for victim assistance programs, 13  
Partnerships Against Violence Network (PAVNET), 13

**J**

**Judges** (see Collaboration)

**L**

**Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office Victim  
Witness Assistance Program**

community policing efforts, working with, 85  
outreach to, 85  
African-Americans and Hispanics, 83

**M**

**Marion County (Oregon) District Attorney's Victim  
Assistance Program**

mission and goals of, 20, 21

**Middlesex County (Massachusetts) Victim Witness  
Service Bureau**

judges, working with, 65  
police, working with, 57

**Monitoring**

record-keeping and program documentation, 113–115

**Multnomah County (Oregon) Victims Assistance  
Program**

budget, 44  
caseload, 44  
community organizations, working with, 70  
police, working with, 57, 60  
population served, 44  
prosecutors, working with, 62  
services, 44  
staffing, 44  
use of volunteers, 46

---

recruitment, 49  
target population, 22

## N

### **Native American victims and victim assistance programs**

domestic violence on Indian reservations, 23  
funding for Native American victim assistance programs, 125  
Kickapoo Victims of Crime Assistance Program (Kansas), 23  
Lummi Victims of Crime Program (Washington), 48  
outreach to Native American victims, 81  
Standing Rock Tribal Council (North Dakota), 23  
Tender Hearts, Inc. (North Dakota), 23, 70, 84

### **National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA)**

cost-benefit analysis system, 121  
program standards, 16, 28  
training on assisting victims of trauma, 90, 105

### **National Victim Center, 93, 105**

### **Needs Assessment**

identifying victims and witnesses for a survey, 79  
methods of conducting, 14, 19  
who conducts, 14, 15

### **New York Victim Services Agency, 16, 20**

### **Northwest Victim Services (Philadelphia)**

community organizations, working with, 70  
community policing efforts, working with, 58  
elderly victims, services to, 23, 82

## O

### **Outreach to victims**

identifying clients, 77, 80  
proactive outreach, 80  
special populations  
elderly, 82  
ethnic minorities, 83  
gays and lesbians, 85  
victims of hate crime, 85

## P

### **Parke County (Indiana) Victims Advocate Foundation**

funding of, 128  
target population, 22  
establishing contact with, 80  
transportation for domestic violence victims, provision of, 89  
volunteers, use of, 46

### **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, 16**

### **Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Victim Services Unit**

outreach to Vietnamese community, 48, 84

### **Pima County (Arizona) Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Program**

clients, identifying, 78  
critical incident stress debriefing, 19–20, 23  
evaluation of, 116  
goals of, 21  
police, working with, 60  
public awareness, stimulating, 30  
schools, working with, 74  
staff recruitment, 49  
volunteers, use of, 46

### **Police**

as target population for victim assistance programs, 24  
victim assistance programs, working with, 55–62

### **Process evaluation, 115**

### **Program location**

advantages and disadvantages of various locations, 38

### **Program organization**

community-based organization, 37  
considerations in deciding, 36  
corrections departments, 36, 37, 39  
juvenile justice system, 40  
law enforcement agencies, 37  
prosecutors office, 37  
sponsorship, 35–38

---

## **Program planning**

guidance, sources of, 12, 14  
advisory committees, 13–14  
    Internet (*see* Internet)  
needs assessment, conducting a (*see* Needs Assessment)

**Prosecutors** (*see* Collaboration)

## **Public awareness and support**

stimulating and maintaining support, 30–32, 97

## **R**

**Restitution** (*see* Services)

**Restorative justice**, 97

## **S**

**Schools** (*see* Collaboration)

## **Scottsdale (Arizona) Police Department Crisis Intervention Unit**

budget, 44  
caseload, 44  
community organizations, working with, 70  
police, working with, 55, 57, 60  
population served, 44  
program monitoring, 114  
services, 44  
staffing, 44

## **Services**

counseling  
    crisis intervention, 89  
    follow-up counseling, 90–91  
    mediation, 91  
    orientation, 94  
transportation and child care, 95  
    witness alert, 95  
witness notification, 94–95  
    witness reception and escort, 95  
critical incident stress debriefing, 23, 90  
emergency services  
    emergency financial assistance, 89  
    medical care, shelter, and food, 88  
    on-the-scene comfort, 89  
security repair, 88–89  
    transportation, 89

Federal efforts,

    intimidation, for victims of, 24,  
        overview of victim assistance  
        services, 26, 28  
    personal advocacy and support  
    employer/landlord intervention, 91–92  
        intimidation protection (*see* Witnesses)  
        legal/paralegal counsel, 93  
        property return, 92  
    referrals, 93–94  
        victim impact statements, 93  
post-sentencing, 95  
    notification, 96  
orientation, 96  
victim-offender mediation/reconciliation, 69, 96  
restitution, 68  
selecting a program's services mix, 26–30  
    standards, 28  
support groups, 70  
    public education (*see* Public awareness)  
time required to furnish, on average, 46  
to victims who may be criminals, 25  
victim compensation, 94  
victim notification, 68, 96

## **South Carolina Post Trauma Resources (*see* Bank Robberies)**

## **St. Louis County Victim Service Council**

budget, 44  
caseload, 44  
clients, identifying, 79  
    confidentiality issues in identifying, 78  
domestic violence victims, 22  
funding, 120  
location, 38  
organization, 37  
police, working with, 55  
population served, 44  
program monitoring, 113  
services, 44  
staffing, 44

## **Staffing**

average staff size of selected, large programs, 45  
estimating staff levels, 42, 43  
multicultural staffing, 48  
recruiting and screening staff, 49  
skills and qualifications, 45



---

training and supervising staff, 100–101  
    assigning cases, 107  
    format, 103  
    in-service, 105  
    pre-service, 103  
    reasons for training, 101  
    staff burnout, 109–110

**Suffolk County (Massachusetts) District Attorney’s Office Victim Witness Assistance Program**

    child abuse unit, 15, 23, 71  
    community awareness, increasing, 30  
    community organizations, working with, 70, 72  
    proactive outreach to victims, 80  
    staff, recruitment of, 46  
volunteers, maintaining commitment of, 109  
volunteers, recruitment from schools, 74

**T**

**Trauma, victims of** (*see* **Derivative Victims**)

**V**

**Victims, victimization**

constitutional amendments regarding, 3, 54, 67  
    criminal justice system response to, 5  
    derivative victims (*see* **Derivative Victims**)  
    effects of victimization, 3  
    elderly victims, 23  
    emerging trends and responses, 1–10  
“second victimization,” 4  
services for victims (*see* **Services**)  
victims movement  
    history of, 2  
Presidential Task Force on Victims of Crime, 2  
Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (*see* **Victims of Crime Act of 1984**)  
workplace violence, 23

**Victim advocacy**

emerging profession, 106  
Victim assistance programs  
    goals and objectives, 18–21  
networks of, 12  
    program standards, 15  
    services provided by (*see* **Services**)  
    sources of guidance for, 12–14  
    state funding, 2  
target population, 22  
    children, 15  
    how to determine, 21–22  
    minorities, 15  
    victims of workplace violence, 15

**Victims of Crime Act of 1984 VOCA**, 2, 15, 120, 126

collaborative program efforts, 54  
    targeted populations, 22  
Victim Assistance in Indian Country Discretionary Grant Program, 23  
    volunteers, requirements that programs use, 45

**Violence Against Women Act of 1994**, 3, 125

**Volunteers**

activities of, 46  
    advantages and disadvantages of using, 48  
    Americorps, 50  
maintaining commitment of, 107–108

**W**

**Wisconsin (Eastern) U.S. Attorney’s Office**

services for victims of bank robberies, 23

**Witnesses**

as general target population, 25  
intimidation of, 66