



# **CORRECTIONS-BASED SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME**

*Special Issues in Corrections*

*August 2004*

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## About This Study

As the call for programs and services for victims of crime has increasingly been recognized, corrections agencies have initiated a variety of new policies and practices to meet this need. The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) issued a survey in January 2004 to assess the nature and status of victim-related services sponsored by state departments of correction (DOCs).

The research is useful in conjunction with work by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, which has headed many recent studies and the development of resources for corrections. The present study shows that most state-level corrections systems in the U.S. are providing at least basic services to assist victims of crime. It also shares ideas about effective programs and about agencies' current needs as they continue to develop or expand their services related to crime victim issues.

**Project Objectives.** This survey was designed with three specific goals:

- To identify the frequency and location of corrections-based services for victims, both current and planned or in development;
- To help agencies share information and ideas regarding the provision of victim services; and
- To gather data for use in developing future NIC training programs and other assistance.

**Project Methodology.** To gather information for this study, NIC mailed a written survey instrument to DOCs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories and protectorates, selected large municipal governments, and the federal governments of the U.S. and Canada. NIC received responses from 50 jurisdictions, including DOCs in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam and the Correctional Service Canada. Where percentages are reported in this document, they are based on the 48 reporting jurisdictions from within the U.S.

## Study Highlights

Major findings of this research include:

- More than 90% of responding state DOCs are helping to provide avenues for crime victims to play a role in the justice system, by receiving their input on policies, practices, or decision-making in individual cases.
- Among responding agencies, more than 80% obtain input from crime victims on decisions they make in managing individual offenders.
- Nearly 80% of DOCs are participating in a formal victim advisory council or similar system that helps victims share input on policies and practices, or a council is in development in their state.
- Roughly 62% of DOCs indicated they are participating in statewide victim services initiatives.

- DOC services for crime victims most often include notification of the date of release, parole hearings, etc., with 98% of agencies now providing this notification or developing a system for doing so.
- Roughly 80% of the DOCs offer offender programming related to victim issues in at least one secure institution.
- More than half of responding DOCs (56%) have received grant funding to support services for victims of crime in the state. Of these agencies, about half could confirm that the DOC will provide, or is providing, continuation funding for the projects initiated with grant monies.

### **Hearing the Perspectives of Crime Victims**

A fundamental element of working with crime victims is openness to their concerns and views on agency operations. NIC survey data showed high levels of victim involvement in correctional processes.

- Forty-four (44) DOCs, or 92% of those responding, indicated that they are involved in some form of initiative that links crime victims with the DOC for input at the case level or at the level of policy and practice. This study identified four main ways that victim involvement is being accomplished:
  - ~ Statewide justice system initiatives for victim services;
  - ~ Independent, DOC-sponsored initiatives to obtain victim input on policies and practices;
  - ~ DOC initiatives to obtain input from victims for decision-making on specific cases; and/or
  - ~ Indirect input from victims that reaches the DOC for case-level decisions.
- Victims are provided opportunities to contribute to agency policy and practice in 38 DOCs (79%). This includes 21 DOCs that are operating independent programs to obtain victim input of this type. Thirty-four (34) DOCs receive input from a

victim advisory council or other channel for communication with victims or their advocates; the sponsorship of these councils was not examined. Fourteen (14) DOCs reported that state-level councils of this type were being developed at the time of the survey.

- Case-level input gives victims a voice in the handling of offenders who victimized them. DOCs receive this input in 39 state systems, or 81%, including 27 where the DOC is in direct contact with the victim and 12 where the victims' perspectives are provided by a third party.

Table 1 summarizes survey findings on how DOCs interact with crime victims.

**Table 1. Opportunities for Victim Input to the DOC**

DOC Receives Crime Victims' Input for Case-Specific Decision-making		DOC Receives Crime Victims' Input on Policies and Practices	
Direct contact with victim	Indirect input from victim	DOC program	Advisory council
27 (56%)	12 (25%)	21 (44%)	34 (71%)

**Statewide justice system initiatives for victim services.** Thirty (30) DOCs, or 62%, participate in a statewide justice system program focused on providing services for victims of crime. In one DOC, this was the only form of victim interaction reported. In contrast to the DOCs that collaborate within a state-level system of victim services, other DOCs either do not participate in available statewide initiatives (17%) or such initiatives are not known to exist in their states (23%).

Table 2, page 3, summarizes data about DOC participation in statewide justice system initiatives that focus on providing services for crime victims. The NIC study did not examine the services provided by these initiatives. It is clear, however, that statewide initiatives for crime victims span a wide range of advocacy

and direct services functions. Some DOCs cited involvement with non-profit organizations in addition to clearly government-run offices.

- Most common partners are organizations that provide *direct victim assistance*, reported by at least 11 states. These organizations work with individual crime victims to provide advocacy, services, and/or referrals. Examples include the Maine Victim Advocates Association, the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance, the Nebraska Coalition for Victims of Crime, and the Victim Services Advisory Commission of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.
- Seven (7) DOC respondents noted that their agencies work with *victims' rights groups*, such as Vermont's "Parallel Justice Project," the New Mexico Victim Rights Project, Mississippians for Crime Victims' Rights, Inc., and the Oklahoma Coalition for Crime Victims' Rights. These organizations represent the interests of crime victims by providing advocacy and education directed toward policy-makers and the public.
- Several DOCs participate in state-managed, *automated victim information and notification systems*, often known under the name Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE).
- Some states operate *specialized programs* for victims of particular types of crime or for persons otherwise affected by crime. Examples of the former include the Iowa Organization of Victim Assistance/In Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the New Hampshire Governor's Committee on Domestic and Sexual Violence, and the Utah Domestic Violence Advisory Council. The state of Mississippi provides assistance to the survivors of homicide victims. An example of the latter type of program is the Florida Network of Victim Witness Services, which assists persons who have witnessed a crime.
- Other unique programs include the Post Conviction Victim Issues Work Group in Minnesota, a Crime Victim Service Providers'

Steering Committee and Crime Victim Compensation Commission in Rhode Island, and the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board.

**Table 2. DOC Participation in Statewide Justice System Initiatives for Victim Services**

DOCs Participating in a Statewide Initiative	DOCs Not Participating in a Statewide Initiative	No Statewide Initiative Known in State
30 (62%)	8 (17%)	11 (23%)

**DOC initiatives for victim input on policies and practices.** As noted, respondents in 21 state-level DOCs (44%) indicated that the DOC operates an independent program for inviting victim input on victim-related policies and practices. The DOC in Guam also does so. Some DOCs have created ad hoc committees for meeting with victims and community advocates, such as the Victims' Advocacy Committee in West Virginia and a similar program in Wisconsin.

**DOC initiatives for case-specific victim input.** Respondents were asked whether their agencies directly interact with victims of crime to gather information for use in case-specific decisions regarding programming, management, and/or discretionary release of individual offenders. In more than half the DOCs (27, or 56%) and in the Canadian federal correctional system, the DOC interacts directly with crime victims for this purpose. One respondent noted that this opportunity is available only for victims of offenders sentenced to life in prison. The proportion rises to 81% when including an additional 12 DOCs that receive indirect input from crime victims on these matters. (See Table 1.)

Many of the programs that solicit direct victim input operate through the auspices of a victim services advisory council or similar entity. In other DOCs, the opportunity to provide statements or viewpoints is provided through victim services units and victim-witness programs. Some DOCs have specific points for input, such as at an offender's entry into a batterer

education program. Channels for indirect victim input were not identified by survey respondents.

## **Services Offered for Victims of Crime**

Every DOC that responded to the NIC survey provides two or more services for victims of crime, and many DOCs were developing new services at the time of the survey. Agencies differ in the specific services they offer, where within the DOC the victim services are based and managed, and how technology is being used to facilitate services to crime victims.

Table 3 summarizes the survey’s findings regarding the availability of corrections-based services for victims of crime. An overview of the services provided by each DOC is presented in Appendix A.

**Table 3. Availability of Corrections-based Services for Victims of Crime**

	<b>Agencies Providing</b>	<b>Agencies Developing</b>
Notification of offender parole hearings, release date, etc.	46 (96%)	1 (2%)
Notification of offender status/location	45 (94%)	1 (2%)
Restitution collection/processing	38 (79%)	5 (10%)
Special services for victims when threatened by offender	37 (77%)	5 (10%)
Garnishment of inmate work program wages for restitution	31 (65%)	5 (10%)
Use of a victim advisory council or other formal method for input	20 (42%)	14 (29%)
Special victim services related to executions	23 (48%)	5 (10%)

- **Notification of offender parole hearings, release date, etc.** In all responding states, crime victims can receive notification of events such as inmates’ release or parole hearings, or systems for

notification were under development at the time of the survey. This includes 46 state DOCs, plus Canada and Guam, as well as one (1) state DOC where a notification system was being implemented at the time of the survey.

In at least six (6) states, some types of notification are provided by the DOC itself and others by the paroling authority. Administrative linkages between these agencies vary. In one (1) state where the DOC provides no notification, notification is provided by a separately administered paroling authority.

The necessity of a formal victim request for this information was noted by some respondents. The Maryland DOC has a “Duty to Warn” policy, which requires that crime victims be notified when an inmate is being considered for work release or home detention and that victims be asked for their opinions.

- **Notification of offender status/location.** Notification of offender status and housing location is nearly as often provided, with 96% of the responding DOCs providing this information to victims or developing the capability to do so. This includes 45 of the responding state DOCs, plus one (1) state system that was developing this service at the time of the survey. The Correctional Service Canada also provides this notification.

Several DOCs indicated that notification was contingent upon certain conditions. For example, one agency provides this information to crime victims only when an offender is being moved to a less secure degree of incarceration, another notifies only in the case of predatory offenders, and a third provides offender status only, with no information about offender housing location. Three (3) DOCs specifically noted that they provide this information only upon victim request.

- **Restitution management and collection.** Nearly 90% of the responding state-level DOCs reported that they collect and process restitution payments or were developing a program to do so. This includes 38 state DOCs (79%) with current

programs plus five (5) DOCs with programs in development. The DOC in Guam also provides this service. Respondents in two (2) DOCs noted that other agencies manage the restitution process. In three (3) DOCs, restitution collection occurs only if the offender is in a work release program or on parole.

A key issue that surfaced in the data again relates to which entity initiates the provision of services. Here, three (3) DOCs noted that restitution services are provided only if they are court ordered, and another DOC provides this service only if requested to do so by the victim.

- **Assistance for victims when threatened by an offender.** Special services for victims who have been threatened by an offender were reported by 88% of DOCs, including five (5) DOCs where this service was in development. A total of 37 state-level DOCs, plus some regions of the Correctional Service Canada and the DOC in Guam, were providing such services at the time of the survey.

These services appear to center on notification of changes in offender status and location, as well as resource referrals. One state without a special program for victims who have been threatened does provide an updated photograph of the offender in these cases.

- **Garnishment of inmate work program wages for restitution.** In 75% of the responding DOCs, the agency has a program for garnishing inmate work program wages for restitution. This includes 31 DOCs with programs under way, plus another five (5) DOCs with programs in development, as has the DOC in Guam. Restriction of this program to a subset of inmates, primarily offenders on work release, was frequently noted. Garnishment is dependent on a court order or inmate agreement in at least two (2) states.
- **Victim services related to executions.** Fifty-eight percent (58%) of responding DOCs provide special victim services related to executions, including 23 DOCs with current programs and

five (5) with programs in development when the survey was conducted. Twelve (12) of the reporting states and the Correctional Service Canada do not impose capital punishment, and their DOCs have no need to provide this type of assistance. One additional DOC does not have a formal program of this type but accommodates special needs as requested. In another DOC, victim assistance related to executions is provided by the paroling authority. The specific nature of the assistance provided was not covered by the survey questionnaire.

- **Use of a victim advisory council or other formal means for input from victims/victim advocates.** This area of assistance was showing the greatest growth at the time of the survey, with 14 DOCs expecting to have a new victim advisory council or other mechanism in operation soon, for a total of 71% of responding DOCs. These agencies were joining the 20 DOCs and the Correctional Service Canada that already had programs in operation.

Victim advisory councils are typically intended to obtain crime victim input for use in shaping DOC policy and practice. Two (2) state DOCs have a partnership with another agency's program to provide for this type of victim input.

- **Other services for crime victims.** Many DOCs indicated that they provide additional services for crime victims. Examples include:
  - ~ Advocacy in violation hearings;
  - ~ Bilingual interpretation;
  - ~ Tours of correctional facilities, speakers, and public comment advocacy programs;
  - ~ Accompaniment to parole hearings;
  - ~ Safety assistance, such as aid in stopping unwanted communications from inmates, safety planning and support during offender re-entry, and statewide referrals, educational materials, and help with questions about safety planning;
  - ~ An apology repository;

- ~ Outreach services, especially to traditionally underserved victims and victims with barriers to receiving services; and
- ~ Programs for DOC staff, such as victim sensitivity training, special services for staff who are victims of assault or other violations, and victim awareness and sensitivity training.

Survey data lack clarity on whether some specific services are provided automatically to crime victims or only upon request. This distinction was not clearly specified in the survey wording and, while noted by some respondents, may not have been volunteered by all respondents when appropriate. Regarding notification, for example, it is unknown how many of the notification programs that were reported are dependent upon victim request and how many may be proactively provided by the DOC. Different victims of crime may have different preferences about receiving notification and other services from the corrections system. The solution in some DOCs is a voluntary “victim registry” that generates notification information for those who request it. Similarly, it is not known how aware crime victims may be of available DOC services or what steps are being taken to help make victims aware of them.

**Location of victims services.** For different DOCs, services for victims of crime may be managed and delivered out of the central office, regionally around the state or other jurisdiction, or at all or most institutions throughout the system.

- The most common pattern is for victim services to be administered through the central office (30 DOCs, or 63% of responding states).
- Fourteen (14) DOCs, or 29%, provide victim services through a combination of centralized and regional or field efforts. Some of the regional services are staffed by community and victim liaisons, rather than DOC staff.
- Eight (8) DOCs, or 17% of those responding, and the Correctional Service Canada offer victim services at all or most institutions.

**Use of technology in victim services.** A variety of technologies are currently used to support DOCs’ victim services. State-by-state data on the use of major technologies are presented in Appendix B.

- Web sites are very commonly used to provide information about DOC services for crime victims (96% of DOCs).
- Web sites are used to provide notification of offender status, release dates, and other information in 27 DOCs (56%) and Canada. In Montana, this includes full case information. In several locations, victims can register online for notification services. The Kansas DOC has developed the capability for personalized web pages for crime victims that provide information specific to the relevant offender. In some other systems, offender information is available online but is not used for victim notification purposes.
- Victims have toll-free telephone numbers for contacting 34 DOCs (74%) and the Correctional Service Canada.
- Automated telephoning systems are used to notify crime victims of offender status in 25 DOCs, or 52% of those responding.
- Remote video- or audio-conferencing services are used for victim interviews, testimony, etc., in 12 DOCs, or 25%.
- Fewer agencies (12%) are using web technologies to gather victim input and impact statements.

At least six (6) DOCs have automated systems that generate written notices on offender status or release for persons certified to receive the information. The Wisconsin DOC offers a confidential online message center for victims, encrypted e-mail communications, and an online center for victims to update their contact information and notification preferences in real time.



## **Communications with Staff, Crime Victims, and Other Stakeholders**

Provision of effective victim services requires the DOC's victim services administration to maintain clear and timely communications with victims and concerned persons in and outside the DOC. NIC's survey examined the types of outreach and information-sharing strategies that are being used for three stakeholder audiences:

- Corrections agency staff;
- Victims of crime and their families; and
- Lawmakers and policy-setting commissions, victim advocacy groups, and the general public.

Sample items provided by survey respondents have been added to the NIC Information Center library collection. They include training materials, newsletter articles, brochures, and other materials. Some DOCs provided examples of materials for non-English speakers.

### **Communications with corrections agency staff.**

Most responding DOCs (nearly 90%) indicated that they have developed some type of material targeted for correctional staff and addressing victim-related issues. Most often, these include policies and procedures (69% of DOCs) and/or training materials (60% of DOCs). Significant numbers of agencies convey information to staff in the form of newsletter articles and awards or other recognition. The full data are presented in Table 4.

DOC-developed training materials are directed toward a wide range of audiences, such as:

- Correctional officers and institutional staff, especially in new officer orientation;
- Parole and probation officers and community supervision agents;
- Victim assistance personnel; and
- Social workers, psychologists, case managers, teachers, etc.

The content presented in these materials includes vision and mission statements for victim services, overviews of victims' rights, discussions of victim impact and the role of correctional staff in working with offenders, and descriptions of agency services. The North Carolina DOC offers a voluntary certification program for victim service providers, and DOCs in other states develop materials to support crime victim service coalition meetings and other training events.

**Table 4. Victim-Related Communications Developed for DOC Staff**

	State-level DOCs Providing
Policies and procedures	33 (69%)
Training materials	29 (60%)
Newsletter articles	19 (40%)
Staff awards or other recognition	9 (19%)
None of the above	5 (10%)

**Communications with victims of crime and their families.** All responding DOCs but one (1) have developed resource materials targeted toward crime victims and/or their families. Print and online communications are each provided by more than 80% of DOCs, and nearly 40% of DOCs have developed items in languages other than English. Summary data are presented in Table 5, page 9.

- **Printed materials**—Eighty-eight percent (88%) of DOCs reported that they have developed print materials for crime victims and their families. Examples include victim services handbooks, brochures, forms, and posters. The content often emphasizes victims' rights and provides information on the victim services available from the DOC and how to access them. Other items describe correctional services and processes such as parole consideration and explain how crime victims can contribute. Bookmarks, posters, and greeting cards are provided by the Nebraska

DOC, in addition to a newsletter and a victim handbook.

**Table 5. Communications with Crime Victims and Their Families**

	State-level DOCs Providing
Printed materials	42 (88%)
Web-based information on services	40 (83%)
Materials for non-English speakers	18 (38%)
Special events	17 (35%)
Other	9 (19%)
None of the above	1 (2%)

- **Web-based information**—Forty (40) DOCs, or 83%, indicated that they use the World Wide Web to provide information on corrections-based services to victims and their families. Web sites are often used to provide comprehensive information about the agency’s victim assistance program as well as to share specific resources, assistance request forms, and instructions. Some Web site content is the same or similar to the material shared in print form.

Some examples of corrections agency web sites with sections focusing on victim services include:

- ~ In Mississippi, [http://www.mdoc.state.ms.us/Victims\\_Services.htm](http://www.mdoc.state.ms.us/Victims_Services.htm)
- ~ In New Hampshire, <http://www.state.nh.us/doc/victim.html>, including a prison system overview at <http://www.state.nh.us/doc/timeinprison.pdf>
- ~ In North Carolina, <http://www.doc.state.nc.us/victimservices/>
- ~ In Pennsylvania, <http://www.pbpp.state.pa.us/ova/site/>
- ~ In Wisconsin, <http://wivictimsvoice.org/>

- **Materials for non-English speakers**—Nearly 40% of responding DOCs have prepared resources in languages other than English that are related to victim assistance programs. Examples include VINE materials, brochures, and descriptions of victims’ rights and available DOC services. The North Carolina DOC has developed a safety planning guide and brochure with information concerning common victim reactions to crime. The Florida DOC offers materials in Spanish and Haitian Creole; the Mississippi DOC offers a victim services brochure in Spanish, and the Alaska DOC provides resources in Russian, Spanish, and Central Yupik. The Montana DOC has obtained materials targeted to Native American women from the National Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Additionally, the DOC in Rhode Island offers a telephone help line for non-English speakers. Interpretive services are offered by the DOC in California.

- **Special events**—About one-third of DOCs (29%) coordinate special events related to victim services. These often center on National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, observed each year in April. Examples of DOC-sponsored activities include special awards, a moment of silence for victims, fundraising activities, and a biennial crime victims fair. In addition, the South Carolina DOC has sponsored a Stop Violence Against Women 2002 program. The Iowa DOC hosts a writing workshop for crime victims, offenders, and community members. The Mississippi DOC is actively involved in planning an annual retreat for survivors of homicide victims. The North Carolina DOC holds an annual coloring contest using a coloring book designed to heighten family awareness of available victim services.
- **Other**—An additional outreach mechanism in some DOCs is speaker referrals for victim support groups and community groups. Other DOCs provide workshops for survivors.

**Communications with legislatures, commissions, victim advocacy groups, and the public.** Most DOCs (85%) develop materials focusing on victim services for outside audiences. Communications for these groups are mainly delivered through the agencies' web sites (83% of responding DOCs). Seven (7) DOCs indicated that their web sites are their only channel for communicating with outside groups on victim issues.

Press releases related to victim issues or services are developed by about half of the DOCs (46%). In lesser numbers, DOCs are hosting special events (33%) about crime victim issues; these include many of the same activities hosted for crime victims and their families. Other DOCs are developing resources for non-English speakers (25%), which may also show overlap with items developed for victims and their families. Fewer agencies are developing specialized communications for these groups, such as special reports or white papers (19%) and public service announcements for radio or television (15%). A summary of communications for outside, non-victim audiences is provided in Table 6.

**Table 6. Communications with Legislatures, Commissions, Advocacy Groups, and the Public**

	State-level DOCs Providing
Web-based information on services	41 (85%)
Press releases about victims issues and services	22 (46%)
Special events	16 (33%)
Materials for non-English speakers	12 (25%)
Special reports, white papers, etc.	10 (19%)
Public service announcements for radio/television	7 (15%)
Other	11 (23%)

Several DOCs described other forms of outreach used with these audiences, such as newsletters, brochures, handbooks, and training resources. For example, the Michigan DOC provides informational articles to

prosecuting attorneys. The Delaware DOC produces annual reports on the status of its compliance with the state's Victims' Bill of Rights.

## **Inmate Programming Related to Victim Issues**

Roughly 80% of DOCs offer offender programming related to victim issues in at least one secure institution. The specific content of these programs was not reviewed through the NIC survey, but some program materials provided by survey respondents are available from the NIC Information Center.

Program types offered by the most agencies include:

- Programs focusing on victim empathy and/or providing victim impact education, available to inmates in 73% of DOCs;
- Programs coordinating restorative/reparative work by offenders on behalf of victims and/or communities, under way in 62% of DOCs; and
- Programs offering victim-offender mediation or dialog, if requested by the crime victim or the victim's family or survivors, available in 52% of DOCs.

Table 7, page 10, summarizes survey responses on whether DOCs provide several key types of offender programs related to victim issues. A state-by-state listing of these services can be found in Appendix C.

**Delivery of inmate programs.** Offender programs related to victimization may be delivered by DOC staff, by staff of other government agencies, by volunteers or staff from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or by teams representing two or more of these sources. For most of the program categories reviewed, the programs tend to be delivered by in-house staff. The most common pattern diverging from this was to team in-house staff with volunteers or staff provided by NGOs. Many states use volunteer victims—and sometimes, inmate volunteers—to aid in providing these services.

■ **Victim awareness and victim impact programs.**

Offender programs that focus on victim empathy and victim impact education are provided in 35 DOCs (73%) and the Correctional Service Canada. The intent of these programs is to sensitize inmates to the harm they have inflicted on their victims and their victims' families and thereby reduce their likelihood of victimizing others in the future.

Most often, victim impact programs are delivered by in-house program staff (28 DOCs). They may work alone (14 DOCs) or in combination with others, including NGO staff or volunteers (13 DOCs), personnel from other government agencies (4 DOCs), visiting victim speakers, contract staff, and/or inmates. One state DOC respondent noted that this program is provided by the parole board.

**Table 7. Focus of Offender Programs Related to Victim Issues**

	State-level DOCs Providing
Victim impact education/empathy	35 (73%)
Restorative/reparative work benefiting victims or communities	30 (62%)
Victim/offender mediation/dialog	25 (52%)
Inmates' personal histories of victimization	16 (33%)
Family group counseling (victim's and offender's families jointly)	7 (15%)

■ **Restorative/reparative programs.** Thirty (30) state-level DOCs, or 62%, and the Correctional Service Canada manage programs that involve inmates in restorative or reparative work on behalf of specific victims and/or communities. More than half of DOCs with these programs (17 DOCs) use in-house staff to manage them. Five (5) DOCs use a combination of volunteers and in-house staff to manage their programs. In three (3) DOCs, programs are managed solely by volunteers or staff from NGOs.

■ **Victim-offender dialog and mediation programs.**

Programs offering a mediated discussion between the crime victim or victim's family and the inmate offender are available in roughly half the responding DOCs (25 agencies, or 52%) and the Correctional Service Canada. These programs are intended to provide a safe setting for the victim or family to describe to the offender the impact of the crime, to learn more about the offender's perspective on how and why the crime occurred, and for the victim or family to be offered a meaningful apology for the crime. Bilingual interpretation in the context of victim/offender mediation is offered by the California DOC.

Mediation and dialog programs are more likely than other victim-related programs to involve staff from outside the DOC. Only five (5) DOCs provide these services using only in-house staff. Ten (10) DOCs use volunteers or staff from NGOs to conduct these sessions. In two (2) DOCs, programs are delivered by staff of another state agency. For example, the state of Delaware has a Criminal Justice Council that carries out these services.

■ **Programs addressing the victimization history of offenders.**

Studies show that a high proportion of prison inmates have experienced victimization through partner abuse or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse during childhood or adolescence. Sixteen (16) DOCs, or 33% of those responding to the NIC survey, offer programs that include a focus on the victimization history of offenders. Half of these agencies (7) deliver the programs using in-house staff, three (3) DOCs use only NGO staff, two (2) DOCs offer the programs using DOC staff and staff from another government agency, and two (2) DOCs use in-house staff plus NGO personnel.

Respondents noted examples of programs where the offender's past victimization is addressed, such as a drug treatment program, anger management classes, and domestic violence programs for women that deal with past abuse and aim to prevent future abuse.

- **Family group counseling programs.** Seven (7) DOCs, or 15%, offer family group counseling involving victims' and offenders' families. In two (2) state-level DOCs and the Correctional Service Canada, the program is entirely provided by NGO staff or volunteers. The remaining four DOCs use inhouse and NGO staff. One DOC indicated this service is provided only in some cases rather than being generally available.

## **Evaluations of DOC-Based Services for Crime Victims**

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DOCs were asked whether they have a process to evaluate the effectiveness of their services for victims of crime. Twenty-one (21) of the responding state DOCs (44%) as well as the Correctional Service Canada affirmed that they use some form of program assessment. In at least one DOC, new methods for program evaluation are now being implemented.

In some cases, these evaluations focus on data that track the extent to which victim services are used. The New York DOC, for example, has prepared a statistical summary of the agency's victim notification program, reviewing elements such as notification requests related to violent felonies and rates of VINE participation. Other agencies conduct surveys and other self-report evaluations that track client satisfaction with victim services.

**Use of surveys.** More than 75% of the DOCs that conduct victim services evaluations use some form of survey. Depending on the focus, these questionnaires are variously given to victims, victim advocates, service providers, attendees at parole hearings, institutional representatives, and, in some cases, inmates.

Examples include an annual client satisfaction survey in the Rhode Island DOC and random surveys of victims who attend parole hearings in Louisiana and West Virginia. The Maine DOC uses a questionnaire to ask how victims feel they were treated by correctional staff. In California, the DOC surveyed persons who accessed victim services during a 6-week period; data were presented in a customer service report and

used to "modify, add and improve services as necessary." The New Hampshire DOC gave satisfaction surveys to randomly selected victims of crime; responses suggest that the DOC's victim services have had "generally good results."

**Other approaches to evaluation.** Agencies described some other methods for evaluating their services for crime victims:

- Focus groups are used in the Colorado DOC.
- Pre- and post-test evaluations are given to Tennessee inmates who attend victim impact panels to assess any change in their levels of empathy for persons victimized by crime.

No agencies reported conducting any formal evaluation of the impact of victim services programs on victim safety and well-being. For example, a study could examine re-victimization rates among victims who have or have not received victim services. Similarly, no agencies reported an effort to formally track the extent to which inmate programming on victim issues may help reduce recidivism rates among released offenders.

## **Outside Funding for Corrections-Based Victim Services**

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The survey explored four issues related to grant funding for victim services:

- Whether the DOC has received grant funding to support services for victims of crime in the state ("yes" in 27 responding DOCs, or 56%);
- Whether the period of the grant award was currently under way as of January 1, 2004 ("yes" in 22 DOCs, or 82% of those that have received grant funding);
- Whether the DOC has continued or expects to continue to fund the program or service after the conclusion of the award period ("yes" in 15 DOCs, or 56% of those with grant funding); and

- The scope of victim services projects being conducted with the support of grant funding.

Table 8 summarizes the data in brief.

**Table 8. Outside Funding for Victim Services**

DOCs Receiving Grant Funds for Victim Services	DOCs with Active Funded Projects, Jan. 1, 2004	DOCs Planning to Continue Services After Award Period
27 (56%)	22 (82% of those funded)	15 (56% of those funded)

**Sources of outside funding for corrections-based victim services.** By far, the most common source of grants for DOC-based victim services is Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding administered by the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S.

Department of Justice. Fourteen (14) of the 27 DOCs that have received outside funding, or 52%, received it via the VOCA program. Federal aid has also come from Byrne grants, administered by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, as reported by three (3) DOCs.

State agencies that provide funding for victim services have included the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Governor in Texas, the Attorney General's Office of Victim Services in Arizona, the Oregon Department of Justice, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

DOCs have also received support for victim services from non-governmental grant sources including the United Way and other unspecified organizations. NIC was cited as a source of non-funding support by several responding agencies.

**How funding is used.** DOCs are most often using outside funding to create and maintain a victim services staff position or an entire victim services unit. Other major uses are training staff for victim service-related positions and obtaining or developing materials needed to operate a victim services office.

Grant funding is sometimes used for multiple purposes.

- The New Hampshire DOC received full funding through a VOCA grant for two victim services staff positions and partial funding for victim/offender dialog services.
- In North Carolina, the DOC used Byrne funds to create a position for an Hispanic outreach specialist and translator.
- The California DOC received NIC help in bringing in consultants to train volunteer facilitators for a mediation program.

Other specific uses of grant funding include:

- Outreach programs, especially for underserved clients;
- Developing systems for obtaining victim impact statements;
- Creating victim-offender mediation programs;
- Hosting and coordinating conferences; and
- Hosting and coordinating special events aimed toward the prevention of violence against women.

**DOC assumption of program funding.** Continued support by the DOC after the cessation of grant funding was an important area of investigation in this survey. Of the 27 DOCs that reported receiving initial grant funding, 15 (or 56% of those funded) indicate that they have continued or will continue to operate their victim service programs after outside funding has ended.

- In North Carolina, DOC services for victims began with one staff member in 1998 and have grown through grant funding to an office of five full-time employees. Positions are now paid for by the DOC.

Some DOCs reported that the question of continuation funding has yet to be answered. However, at least five (5) DOCs rely solely on VOCA funding for continuation of their victim services projects and do not expect that they will be funded by the DOC.

- The Mississippi DOC respondent noted that the agency has grant funding for just one victim services position, and its victim caseload has grown to over 1,600 persons.

### **Agencies' Interests and Needs**

The NIC survey questionnaire also invited respondents to offer comments on their agencies' interests and their training or organizational needs related to victim services. Many DOCs noted a need for staff training on topics related to crime victims:

- Specialized training about victim issues for all service and administrative staff;
- Training about how to achieve and maintain victim empathy, without losing professional detachment;
- Training on strategic planning, leadership, and professional development related to victim services;
- Training to share ideas for expanding the agency's victim outreach services;
- Training to develop effective wrap-around services that maximize victim safety when high-risk offenders return to the community; and
- Strategies for victim empowerment.

Several respondents sent specific suggestions for actual or potential training methods to support victim services:

- One agency suggested the need for 2 to 3 days of "immersion training" in victim issues, in which presenters would work with staff at all DOC loca-

tions to help them "see why crime victim services are their business, too." The survey respondent further noted that many correctional staff "still think of themselves as 'inmate people,' and we are, but we're also more— or ought to be."

- In Iowa, the DOC hosts victim issues trainings throughout the year, including sessions at the Iowa Correctional Association conference and 3 days of victim training for coordinators and backups in each prison.
- Respondents from the DOCs in Ohio and South Carolina suggested that NIC provide training for all staff who work with victims of crime.
- Another state DOC would like to host a conference with other post-conviction agencies such as parole, county corrections, the state's criminal history systems board, and the state office for victim assistance. Its aim would be to create an effective network of public, non-profit, and private agencies to ensure shared understanding of mandated victim services processes as well as of available services.
- The Ohio DOC suggested a need for national training on services for families who witness executions.
- The New Hampshire DOC described NIC training about corrections-based victim services as "invaluable" and stated that "expanding such training and technical assistance to staff of correctional institutions and probation/parole is critical to further improve efforts at assuring that victims' rights are honored and enforced."

A number of non-training issues were also identified by survey respondents:

- One agency suggested the need for assistance in setting up systems to track restitution.
- Another DOC would like ideas on types of restitution or reparative work to be performed by offenders on behalf of victims and communities.

- An agency suggested the need for assistance on how to bring victims' and offenders' families together during the re-entry process.
- The Washington DOC suggests development of a mechanism for national consultation as states develop their victim service programming.

**“Services for victims—what works?”** Several respondents commented on services and strategies they have found particularly effective in their work on behalf of victims. Examples include:

- Liaisons between victims and the DOC, such as by creating the position of “victim assistance representatives”;
- Development of safety plans for victims;
- A drop-in center for victims to meet the staff of the DOC, parole, and the Office of Victim Services;
- Victim impact classes as part of pre-release programs for inmates;
- Efforts that focus on specific issues, such as sex offenders or family violence (including a discussion of parenting skills);
- Support to children of incarcerated parents;
- Greater use of victim/offender dialog programs;
- Wrap-around programming;
- Victim impact panels; and
- Developing an effective volunteer base.

### **The Future of Corrections-Based Services for Crime Victims**

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Responses to this survey provide important data for understanding the current “state of the art” in victim services. For the future, several DOCs noted an interest in expanding their own services for crime

victims or increasing their reach into other areas of corrections.

- One DOC seeks to extend victim services into parole offices and other facilities.
- The New Jersey DOC is currently reevaluating its role in victim services during offender reentry.

Survey responses also highlighted an array of considerations that could help DOCs improve future services for crime victims. Particularly important among them are:

- Helping DOCs to share specialized victim services materials (especially translated materials) and event plans with agencies in other states;
- Adding language interpretation and outreach components to existing programs;
- Expanding programs to include wrap-around services for victims and offenders, more victim/offender dialog, and more use of formal victim liaison positions;
- Expanding victim services to include the child victim—children of either victimized or incarcerated parents (who, in many ways, bear a heavy burden of crime);
- Developing ways for victim services staff to share strategies and information on obtaining grant monies for specific projects; and
- Focusing on the need for more empirical methods of program assessment, including evaluations of what specific aspects of victim services are the most effective from the victim’s perspective and also from an offender outcomes/recidivism viewpoint. ■



## Appendix A. Services Provided to Crime Victims by DOCs

	Notify: Offender Status/Location	Notify: Hearings/Release	Manage Restitution	Garnish Inmate Wages	Assist if Threatened	Assist During Executions
Alabama	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alaska	✓	✓	✓			N/A
Arizona	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arkansas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
California	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Colorado	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Connecticut	✓	✓			✓	✓
Delaware	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D.C.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Florida	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hawaii	(No survey response)					
Idaho	✓	✓			✓	✓
Illinois	(No survey response)					
Indiana	✓	✓				
Iowa		✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Kansas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kentucky	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Louisiana	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Maine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Maryland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Massachusetts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Michigan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Minnesota	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Mississippi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Missouri	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Montana	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Nebraska	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nevada	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Hampshire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
New Jersey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Mexico	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New York	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
North Carolina	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
North Dakota	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Ohio		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oklahoma	✓	✓	✓			✓
Oregon	✓	✓			✓	
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rhode Island	✓	✓	✓		✓	N/A
South Carolina	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
South Dakota	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Texas	✓	✓			✓	✓
Utah	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Vermont	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Virginia	(No survey response)					
Washington	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Wisconsin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Wyoming	✓	✓	✓	✓		
U.S. BOP	(No survey response)					
Corr. Svc. Canada	✓	✓			✓	N/A
Guam		✓	✓	✓		

## Appendix B. DOCs' Use of Technology to Support Victim Services

	Web Site: Info. on Services	Web Site: Notification	Web Site: Impact Statements	Remote Conferencing	Automated Telephone Notif.	Toll-Free Number for Victims
Alabama	(No use of supporting technology indicated)					
Alaska	✓				✓	✓
Arizona	✓	✓			✓	✓
Arkansas	✓	✓			✓	
California	✓					✓
Colorado	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Connecticut	✓	✓				✓
Delaware	(None of these technologies in use)					
D.C.	✓				✓	
Florida	✓	✓			✓	✓
Georgia	✓	✓			✓	✓
Hawaii	(No survey response)					
Idaho	✓	✓			✓	
Illinois	(No survey response)					
Indiana	✓	✓				✓
Iowa	✓	✓		✓		✓
Kansas	✓					✓
Kentucky	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Louisiana	✓			✓		✓
Maine	✓					✓
Maryland	✓	✓			✓	✓
Massachusetts	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Michigan	✓	✓			✓	✓
Minnesota	✓	✓				✓
Mississippi	✓	✓	✓			✓
Missouri	✓				✓	
Montana	✓	✓			✓	✓
Nebraska	✓	✓			✓	✓
Nevada	✓			✓		✓
New Hampshire	✓					✓
New Jersey	✓	✓				✓
New Mexico	✓	✓				✓
New York	✓	✓			✓	✓
North Carolina	✓				✓	✓
North Dakota	✓			✓		✓
Ohio	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Oklahoma	✓					✓
Oregon	✓				✓	
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Rhode Island	✓				✓	
South Carolina	✓	✓			✓	✓
South Dakota	✓	✓	✓			
Tennessee	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Texas	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Utah	✓				✓	
Vermont	✓					
Virginia	(No survey response)					
Washington	✓					✓
West Virginia	✓			✓	✓	
Wisconsin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wyoming	✓					
U.S. BOP	(No survey response)					
Corr. Svc. Canada	✓					✓
Guam	(No use of supporting technology indicated)					

### Appendix C. Focus/Format of Inmate Programs Related to Victim Issues

	Victim-Offender Mediation/Dialog	Family Group Counseling	Restorative/ Reparative Work	Victim Impact Education	Offenders' History of Victimization	No Related Inmate Programs
Alabama	✓					
Alaska				✓		
Arizona		✓	✓			
Arkansas				✓		
California	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Colorado			✓	✓		
Connecticut	(No information available)					
Delaware	✓		✓	✓	✓	
D.C.						✓
Florida						✓
Georgia	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Hawaii	(No survey response)					
Idaho						✓
Illinois	(No survey response)					
Indiana	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Iowa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kansas	✓			✓		
Kentucky				✓		
Louisiana	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Maine	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Maryland				✓		
Massachusetts			✓	✓		
Michigan			✓			
Minnesota	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mississippi	✓		✓	✓		
Missouri			✓	✓		
Montana	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Nebraska	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Nevada			✓	✓	✓	
New Hampshire	✓	✓		✓		
New Jersey			✓	✓	✓	
New Mexico	✓					
New York	✓		✓			
North Carolina						✓
North Dakota	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ohio	✓		✓	✓		
Oklahoma					✓	
Oregon				✓		
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Rhode Island						✓
South Carolina				✓		
South Dakota	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Tennessee	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Texas	✓		✓	✓		
Utah	✓		✓	✓		
Vermont			✓			
Virginia	(No survey response)					
Washington	✓		✓	✓		
West Virginia			✓	✓	✓	
Wisconsin	✓		✓	✓		
Wyoming				✓		
U.S. BOP	(No survey response)					
Corr. Svc. Canada	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Guam	✓	✓		✓	✓	

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