

OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES
Focusing on a brighter future

BIENNIAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

October 1, 2015 ~ September 30, 2017

Submitted to the Judiciary Committee

Connecticut General Assembly

Pursuant to Section 54-203 (b) (19)
of the Connecticut General Statutes





STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF
PATRICK L. CARROLL III
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

231 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106

January 15, 2018

Senator Paul R. Doyle, Co-Chair
Senator John A. Kissel, Co-Chair
Representative William Tong, Co-Chair
Members of the Judiciary Committee

It is my pleasure to present this report outlining the activities of the Office of Victim Services for the biennium October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2017. This document is submitted in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes § 54-203 (b) (19).

I hope that you find this report helpful. Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick L. Carroll III".

Patrick L. Carroll III, Judge
Chief Court Administrator

PLC: sw

c: Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers
Hon. Elliott N. Solomon, Deputy Chief Court Administrator
Tais Ericson, Executive Director, Superior Court Operations
Linda J. Cimino, Director, Office of Victim Services

Table of Contents

Office of Victim Services	1
Victim Compensation	2
Fiscal Services	6
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners	10
Training and Outreach	13
Victim Services Advocacy	15
Quality Assurance	19
12/14 Support Services	21
Legislative Updates	22
Committees	23
Advisory Council for Victims of Crime	24

Office of Victim Services

Focusing on a brighter future

The Office of Victim Services (OVS) has a long and proud history of providing supportive services, victim advocacy, financial assistance, and information to crime victims from the scene of the crime until services are no longer required. Legislatively enacted by Public Act 78-261, OVS has progressed from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, whose sole purpose was to assist crime victims with the financial impact of crime, to a multi-faceted agency that also provides:

- victim advocacy;
- victim notification;
- training to criminal justice professionals;
- public outreach and training;
- sexual assault forensic examination services; and
- funding to community-based nonprofit agencies, who assist in meeting the myriad needs of Connecticut's crime victims.

Office of Victim Services' Mission

To provide statewide leadership and the highest quality advocacy, services, and education guided by the individual crime victim's experience.

OVS has an important role in a crime victim's journey through the criminal justice system as OVS is the one agency that can be involved with a crime victim throughout the entire process. OVS offers services directly and indirectly to crime victims while collaborating with other victim service agencies to provide seamless services.

Included in this biennial report are quotes from crime victims, survivors, and service partners who interacted with OVS staff, benefited from the services offered, or attended OVS trainings. Their words from surveys, letters, and thank you notes reflect the quality of the services provided and the value the services hold for crime victims.

Biennial Highlights

- OVS Director Linda J. Cimino was nominated by the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence to receive the Visionary Voice award for being an "effective collaborator and champion of victim-centered service models" that improved access to and expanded services for victims of sexual assault. This award is presented by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center to individuals for their creative efforts and outstanding work to end sexual violence. Director Cimino received the award in April 2016.
- During this biennium, OVS collaborated with Middlesex Community College, Corporate Media Center on the development of a series of educational and instructional on-line videos that explain OVS services and programs, the court process, and orders of protection. The videos will be produced during the next biennium.
- Public Act 17-32, An Act Concerning Human Trafficking, expanded the list of people and entities required to post a notice about services for human trafficking victims. OVS is responsible for distributing the notice to be posted. During this biennium, OVS researched contact information for the expanded list and distributed approximately 7,000 Human Trafficking posters.

Victim Compensation

Focusing on a brighter future

Overview

The Victim Compensation Program offers financial help to victims; family members of homicide, sexual assault, and domestic violence victims; child witnesses of domestic violence; and other eligible persons for certain unreimbursed expenses associated with violent crime.

The Victim Compensation Program instituted several changes to documents based on feedback from victims and community advocates that assist victims interact with the program. Examples of these changes include:

- During a conversation with a parent whose child was a victim of homicide, the parent expressed deep concern and frustration when she received the OVS Claim of Award form. The parent viewed the title of the form as insensitive and stated that nothing about the experience of losing a child was positive as referenced by the word Award. The title of the form was reviewed and changed to Claim of Compensation. The parent was informed of this change and expressed gratitude that OVS heard the concern.
- Based on a conversation with a community advocate who expressed concern about how a victim of crime should note they do not have expenses at the time of application. The community advocate suggested that OVS amend the compensation applications to include a checkbox for claimants to indicate they have no expenses at this time.
- Based on a needs assessment of primary and secondary victims applying for victim compensation, the Victim Compensation Program management, Director, and Deputy Director worked closely with the Judicial Branch External Affairs department on crafting legislation that would expand victim compensation eligibility and eliminate or reduce barriers to victim compensation. The result of this effort was the passage of Public Act 17-99, An Act Concerning Court Operations, Victim Services, Fraudulent Filings, and Transfers of an Interest in Real Property to a Trust, effective October 1, 2017. With these changes more primary and secondary victims are eligible for victim compensation.

Victim quote on the services received from the Victim Compensation Program

"My claims examiner ... was wonderful as was every other staff I interacted with! [My claims examiner] was sensitive, compassionate and re-assuring when I needed that."

Biennial Highlights

- Public Act 15-85, An Act Concerning Court Operations and the Claim Against the State of Lori Calvert allows OVS or a Victim Compensation Commissioner, on review, to exclude life insurance benefits as a collateral source.
- During 2016, Victim Compensation Program management was granted access to the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division database that tracks offenders' probation conditions. This access increases the efficiency of determining if the court ordered restitution for expenses already paid by the Victim Compensation Program and to track restitution payments for recovery efforts.

Funding

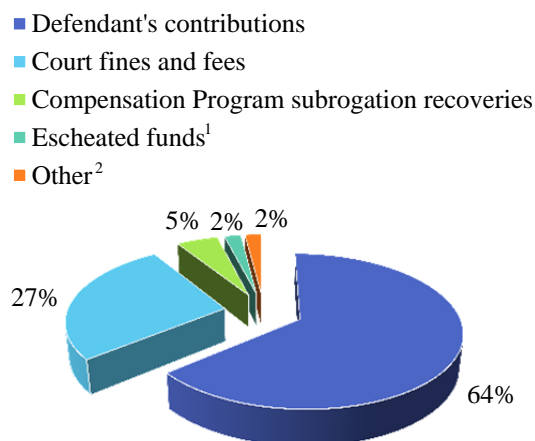
OVS receives state and federal funding to compensate eligible persons for unreimbursed crime related expenses.

The Connecticut General Assembly allocates funds from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF). Deposits into the CICF are specified in the Connecticut General Statutes and include:

- defendants' contributions (Section 54-56h);
- court fines and fees (Sections 54-143, 15-140p, 53a-217e, and 54-56g);
- five percent of inmate work-release wages (Section 18-85);
- halfway house client wages (Section 18-101); and
- escheated funds collected pursuant to Section 53a-30 (Section 54-215(b)).

CICF Contributions

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017
Total Revenues: \$7,067,623



¹Escheated funds are restitution funds collected by the Court Support Services Division that have not been distributed within five years because the victim could not be located.

²Other category includes halfway house client wages, five percent of Department of Correction inmate work-release wages, Victim Compensation Program reimbursements from court, private donations, and investment interest.

OVS also receives federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Compensation funds. Fiscal administration of these funds is managed by the Fiscal Services Unit.

The following table reflects the statistics as reported to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, in compliance with the VOCA requirements for this biennium.

VOCA State Performance Report

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

Number of applications received	2,215
Number of applications approved ¹	1,903
Number of applications not eligible ¹	284

¹Decisions on applications may occur in a year different than the year received.

Payments by Crime Type

Homicide	2,397,000
Assault	1,747,124
Child abuse	424,952
Sexual assault	301,836
DWI/DUI	129,488
Other vehicular crimes	92,551
Human trafficking	2,570
Total	\$5,095,521

Expenses Paid

Economic Support (lost wages and loss of support)	2,268,603
Medical/dental	1,436,615
Funeral/burial	666,848
Mental health	675,175
Other (replacement services, crime scene cleanup, and travel expenses)	48,280
Total	\$5,095,521

Victim quote on the services received from the Victim Compensation Program

"Everyone I have met or had communication with at OVS is extremely polite, friendly and helpful. I wish the rest of the world ran this same way."

Victim Compensation Program Activity

The Victim Compensation Program may grant victim compensation on eligible claims for unreimbursed crime-related expenses not covered or eligible to be covered by other financial sources.

Effective October 1, 2015, Public Act 15-84 directed OVS to exclude life insurance benefits as a collateral source when determining the amount of compensation allowed on a claim. Effective October 1, 2017, Public Act 17-99 allows OVS to waive health insurance as a collateral source for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse, who believe that the release of treatment information associated with a health insurance claim would cause undue harm.

Eligible crime-related expenses include the costs for medical and mental health care, lost wages, funeral expenses, and crime scene cleanup. Effective October 1, 2017, Public Act 17-99 allows victims of personal injury crimes and their relatives to be reimbursed for the costs associated with attending court proceedings.

Victim compensation claims filed by dependents and relatives of an eligible crime victim are processed as part of the crime victim's claim and may not exceed the maximum compensation allowed by state law. During this biennium, victim compensation was \$15,000 for personal injury claims, \$25,000 for survivor benefits claims, and \$2,000 for mental health counseling for non-relative child witnesses of domestic violence; however, effective October 1, 2017, Public Act 17-99 allows OVS to grant up to \$5,000 above the personal injury compensation maximum under certain circumstances for child victims. In addition, the Act also expands victim compensation, up to \$5,000 to a victim who

sought treatment as a result of an emotional injury resulting from either the threat of physical injury or death.

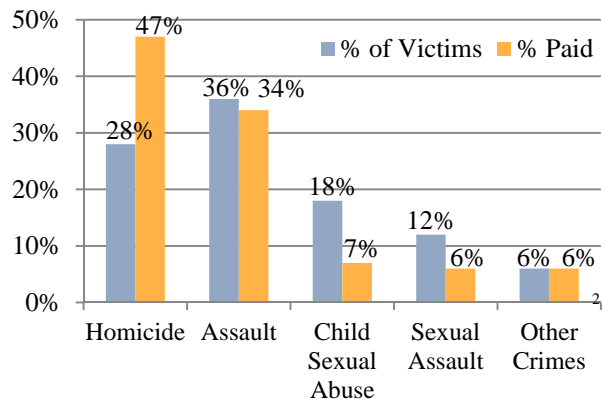
During this biennium, \$5,095,521 in victim compensation was granted on 2,182 claims for expenses associated with medical and mental health care, lost wages for personal injury victims, funeral and burial expenses, loss of support, and lost wages to attend court proceedings in homicide cases.

Payments by Crime Type

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

Total Claims Paid: 2,182

Total Paid: \$5,095,521¹



¹Payments on applications may occur in a year different than the year the application was received.

²Other crimes include DWI/DUI, other vehicular crimes, and human trafficking.

Compromised Claims

The Victim Compensation Program advocates on behalf of claimants approved for victim compensation by negotiating with medical providers to reduce the amount owed and to accept the amount to be paid by the Victim Compensation Program as payment in full.

During this biennium, claimants saved more than \$263,000 in potential expenses from the Program's efforts to compromise claims.

Filing-time Requirement

Section 54-211 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires a person seeking victim compensation to file a victim compensation

Victim quote on the services received from the Victim Compensation Program

"I was very happy with the program; there was much kindness and empathy given by all I contacted at the agency."

application within two years from the date of the personal injury or death.

OVS may grant a waiver of the two-year filing requirement if:

- the claimant was a minor at the time of the criminal incident; or
- the physical, emotional, or psychological injuries resulting from the crime prevented the claimant from filing in time.

During this biennium, 245 requests to waive the two-year filing requirement were received with 238 requests granted.

Recovery Program

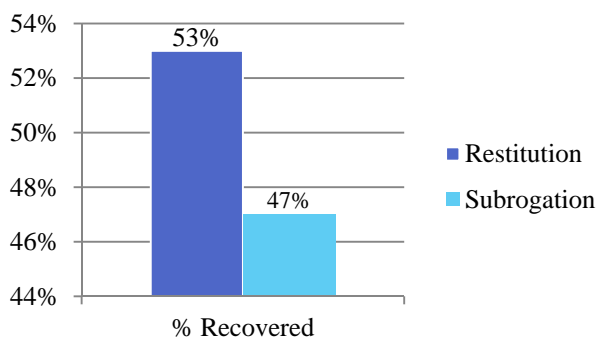
Section 54-212 of the Connecticut General Statutes allows OVS to apply a lien, not to exceed two-thirds of the amount paid by OVS, if a claimant brings an action against the person or persons responsible for such injury or death or if the claimant recovers monies from his or her own collateral sources.

Section 54-215(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes allows OVS to recover full reimbursement of the victim compensation granted if the court orders restitution to a claimant for the compensation paid, unless the court orders differently.

During this biennium, more than \$372,000 was recovered from court-ordered restitution and settlements.

Recovered Funds

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017
Total Recovered: \$372,811



Review of Determination

Section 54-205 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes grants claimants the right to request a review of the determination made by the Victim Compensation Program on their claim for victim compensation. Claimants must file the review request within 30 days from the date the determination was mailed.

Victim Compensation Commissioners

Section 54-202 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires the governor appoints five Victim Compensation Commissioners (VCC) to a four-year term to hear review requests on Victim Compensation Program determinations and to issue new determinations based on such reviews.

The following attorneys served as VCCs during this biennium:

- Atty. Joseph W. Bibisi, chief victim compensation commissioner (appointed by the Chief Court Administrator);
- Atty. Seth D. Feigenbaum;
- Atty. Lisa K. MacDonald; and
- Atty. Louis A. Spadaccini.

During this biennium, VCCs heard 20 review requests and issued 23 decisions. Fifteen of those decisions affirmed the determination made by the Victim Compensation Program, while eight determinations were reversed by the VCCs. Review determinations may occur in a year different from the year the review request was received.

The number of review requests continue to significantly decrease each biennium with this biennium period having a 66% decrease in review requests. This decrease is attributed to improved communications between claims examiners and claimants on why a claim or an expense was found not eligible for victim compensation.

Fiscal Services

Focusing on a brighter future

Overview

The Office of Victim Services (OVS) receives state and federal funding for the purpose of contracting with nonprofit and public organizations to provide information and services to victims of violent crimes and their families. Through the funding of these organizations, crime victims and their family members receive criminal justice support and advocacy, crisis counseling, therapy, group treatment and support, personal advocacy, referrals, and assistance with filing victim compensation applications.

The Fiscal Services Unit is responsible for ensuring that all grant and program specific funds distributed by OVS are expended in accordance with the grantors' guidelines, state guidelines, Judicial Branch regulations, and OVS policies and procedures, so that effective services to crime victims are provided.

Funding

OVS's primary source of federal funding is the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which provides funds for the Victim Assistance Program, the Victim Assistance Discretionary Grant Training Program, the Victim Compensation Program, and the Anti-Terrorism Emergency Assistance Program.

In addition to the federal VOCA funds, OVS receives state funding to support programs such as victim advocacy services in domestic violence dockets and sex offender supervision units, staff support for the statewide Spanish-language domestic violence hotline, counseling for family members of homicide victims, and shelter services to victims of human trafficking.

Victim quote on the services received from an OVS subcontracted agency

"Thank you for all of your support, encouragement, answering my questions and my phone calls! This has been the worst period of my life. If it were not for you, I don't know that I could have gotten through it. You encouraged me to be my own advocate. This helped me move forward. I hope to use my experience to help other women who find themselves in similar circumstances. You have a very tough job. Thanks for doing it!"

Biennial Highlights

- In 2015, OVS was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice under the Victim Assistance Discretionary Grant Training Program for activities that provide training and technical assistance for victim assistance service providers and others who work with crime victims.
- Effective July 1, 2016, the Counseling Services to Families of Homicide Victims' Program was amended to allow 10 free counseling sessions per eligible family member. Previously, the program allowed 10 free counseling sessions per victim, which was shared among family members.
- As a result of a \$16.7 million increase in the 2015 VOCA Victim Assistance Grant, OVS issued a request for proposals for services to crime victims. The additional funds were used to support 10 projects not previously funded by OVS, including services to human trafficking victims, services to victims in high crime urban areas, services to victims in rural areas, and statewide civil legal services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The funding was also used by current contractors to hire additional staff, expand program services, upgrade equipment, and for other technological needs.

Summary of OVS Revenues by Funding Source

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017

Federal Awards

Anti-Terrorism Emergency Assistance Program	\$2,795,059
Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance	46,724,195
Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance Discretionary Grant Training Program	300,376
Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation	2,347,000
Total Federal Funds Awarded	\$52,166,630

State Funds

Alternative Incarceration Program	1,282,875
Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund	
Victim Compensation	4,050,000
Contracted Services	2,014,676
Forensic Evidence Collection	1,993,351
Forensic Interview Reimbursement	200,000
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners	596,119
Victim Assistance Contracted Services	\$1,285,353
Victim Security Account	18,194
Total State Funds Awarded	\$11,440,568

Total Funding	\$63,607,198
----------------------	---------------------

Victim Assistance Program

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Program provides funding to community-based victim service agencies to provide services at no cost to crime victims and includes:

- direct services to crime victims;
- improving victim access to services; and
- increasing victim's knowledge of the criminal justice system.

During this biennium, OVS issued contracts under the Victim Assistance Program totaling \$31,206,690 to 64 nonprofit victim services agencies, who provided services to 129,224 crime victims.

These funded agencies are located in each of Connecticut's eight counties. The cities of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Stamford, and Waterbury have multiple programs that provide a variety of services to crime victims.

Types of Services Supported by Grant Funds

During this biennium, VOCA funds were used by subcontracting agencies to provide crime victims with a variety of services.

The largest percentage of awarded funds were used for advocacy based programs; however, OVS provided funding for therapy programs for adults and children, legal aid programs for legal assistance in criminal and civil courts, on-scene crisis response for child victims of crime, and translation and interpreting services for non-English speaking crime victims.

Advocacy programs provided services to victims in courts, shelters, specific towns and neighborhoods, and on a statewide basis using regional offices. These programs provided victims with crisis counseling, safety planning, assistance with basic needs, assistance with filing victim compensation applications, information and referral to other social service agencies, assistance in court, and translation and interpreting services.

OVS also awarded funding to agencies that provided free therapy services to child and adult victims of crime. These services included the initial psychiatric evaluation, individual and group therapy sessions, follow-up, referral to other services, and assistance with completing applications for victim compensation. Most of the programs offered short-term therapy, and if the victim was eligible for victim compensation, he or she could receive additional therapy to be reimbursed or paid for by the Victim Compensation Program.

Victim quote on the services received from an OVS subcontracted agency

"Thank you so much. I've been so afraid and [the subcontracted agency] has helped me already. Thank you for this program."

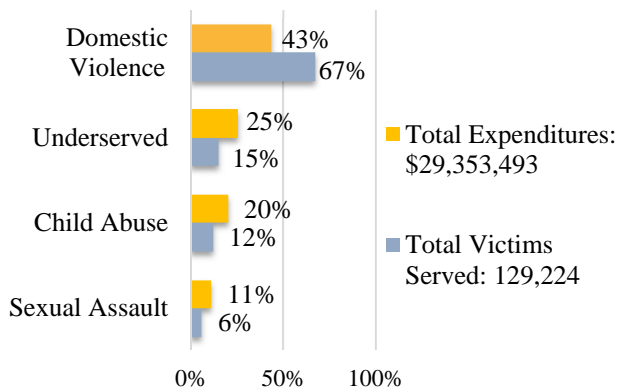
Training on Human Trafficking Crimes

OVS funded programs provided training to service providers and the public on the types of human trafficking crimes, the effect on victims, and how to access services.

During this biennium, OVS subcontracted agencies conducted six training sessions that were attended by 83 individuals.

Grant Funded Priority Categories

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017



¹Total expenditures reflect total project expenditures of grant funds and subcontracting agency matching funds. Unexpended grant funds are reallocated in subsequent years for future victim service contracts.

²Underserved represents victims of various crimes including assault, robbery, hate and bias crimes, adults molested as children, DUI/DWI, elder abuse, family members of homicide victims, abuse of vulnerable adults, gang-related crimes, stalking, federal crimes, economic exploitation, and fraud.

Forensic Sex Evidence Exams Account

The Fiscal Services Unit is responsible for processing payments to providers for sexual assault evidence examinations. Health care facilities may be reimbursed up to \$900 per case for forensic examination and evidence collection of adult and child victims of sexual assault. Providers or examiners working in conjunction with Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) or Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) may be reimbursed up to \$250 per interview for the forensic interviews of child victims of sexual abuse.

During this biennium, hospitals were reimbursed \$2,022,492 for forensic examination and collection services provided to 781 adult victims and 2,268 child victims of sexual assault. Providers working in conjunction with MDTs and CACs were reimbursed \$224,750 for forensic interviews of 898 child victims of sexual abuse.

Anti-Terrorism Emergency Assistance Program

The Anti-Terrorism Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) provides funding for services and assistance to victims and other individuals impacted by terrorism and mass violence crimes.

During this biennium, OVS was awarded \$2,297,818 in AEAP grant funding that was allocated to five agencies to continue services to individuals affected by the 12/14 tragedy. All services funded under the AEAP grant ended on June 30, 2017, and the VOCA Victim Assistance Grant funding was used to continue program services at three of the five agencies. See 12/14 Support Services page 21 for the description of funding.

Victim quote on the services received from an OVS subcontracted agency

"It felt great to finally be comfortable enough to talk about my situation for the first time ever."

VOCA Victim Compensation Program

The VOCA Victim Compensation Program supplements state funding for reimbursement to crime victims and other eligible persons for crime related expenses not covered by collateral sources. See Victim Compensation Program page 3 for the description of funding.

Subcontractor Monitoring

To ensure that grant funds are expended in accordance with the grantor's guidelines, state guidelines, Judicial Branch regulations, as well as OVS policies and procedures, the Fiscal Services Unit provides quarterly training sessions and conducts on-site subcontractor monitoring.

The quarterly trainings and site visits are designed to ensure that the funded programs operate in accordance with the contract and to provide technical assistance, if needed. During this biennium, eight quarterly training sessions were provided and 21 site visits were conducted.

Subcontractor List

(July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2017)

Anti-Terrorism Emergency Assistance Program

- ~Newtown Youth and Family Services
- ~Resiliency Center of Newtown
- ~St. Rose of Lima School
- ~Town of Newtown
- ~Wellmore

Assistance Support and Counseling Program

- ~BHcare, Inc.

Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Program

- ~Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford
- ~Family Centers
- ~Institute of Professional Practice
- ~United Services

Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking

- ~International Institute
- ~The MILLA Project
- ~Women and Families Center

Charlotte's Place - Child Abuse Program

- ~Charlotte-Hungerford Hospital Center for Youth and Families

Child Abuse Treatment Services

- ~Klingberg Family Center

Child and Adolescent Crime Victims Assistance Program

- ~Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut

Child First Program

- ~Village for Families and Children

Child Sexual Abuse Clinic

- ~Yale University School of Medicine

Child Victim Services Project

- ~Wellmore

Connecticut Survivor Care Project

- ~LOVE146

Domestic Violence Project

- ~LifeBridge Community Services

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Legal Representation Project

- ~Connecticut Legal Services

Empower Together Project

- ~Newtown Youth and Family Services

Enhanced Services to Victims of Domestic Violence

- ~Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

EsperanzaCT - Domestic Violence Program

- ~Domestic Violence Crisis Center

Hartford Regional Child Abuse Support Services Program

- ~Saint Francis Hospital

Neighborhood Victim Advocacy Program

- ~Family Centered Services of Connecticut

Polish Victim Advocacy Program

- ~Human Resources Agency of New Britain

Project CATCH (Collaboration, Advocacy, and Treatment for Children)

- ~Clifford Beers Clinic

Project S.A.V.E (Stop Abuse Violence Empowerment)

- ~Hartford Behavioral Health

Rape Crisis Intervention Services

- ~Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Recovery Services for Child Abuse Victims and Their Families

- ~Human Services Council

Sandy Hook Recovery

- ~Clifford Beers Clinic

Sandy Hook Trauma

- ~Town of Newtown

Services to Victims of Family Violence Court-based Program

- ~Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Shelter Services to Victims of Trafficking in Persons

- ~Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Statewide Domestic Violence Spanish Hotline

- ~Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Victim Assistance Program

- ~Community Child Guidance Clinic of Manchester
- ~Mothers Against Drunk Driving, CT Chapter
- ~The Hospital of Central Connecticut

Victim to Victor Program

- ~Community Mental Health Affiliates

Victim Representative Services for Statewide Supervision of Sex Offenders Unit

- ~Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Victim Support Service Program

- ~Survivors of Homicide

Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners

Focusing on a brighter future

Overview

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) Program provides compassionate, patient-centered sexual assault forensic examination services to sexual assault victims, 13 years or older, who request SAFE services at a participating health care facility within 120 hours of the assault.

The SAFE Program also provides specialized training and education to qualified health care providers to perform knowledgeable and skilled forensic examinations. These providers, known as sexual assault forensic examiners, are also trained on securing the evidence collected (chain of custody) and providing expert testimony during criminal proceedings.

The SAFE Program is named after the late Gail Burns-Smith, a dedicated community and national advocate for victims of sexual assault.

Victim quote on the services received from the SAFE Program

“My SAFE was an angel for me that awful day. I felt so unbelievably comforted by her presence and competence. I will always be eternally grateful for her in those awful first hours.”

Biennial Highlights

- In the fall of 2015, the SAFE Training Program implemented a Clinical Training Day that significantly reduced the amount of time for a SAFE student to complete the clinical competency component of the training.
- In the fall of 2015, the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center and MidState Medical Center entered into a formal agreement with the Judicial Branch to serve as designated sites for SAFE Program services.
- On January 26, 2016, the Office of Victim Services (OVS) and the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence co-hosted an event at the state Capitol to celebrate the SAFE Program’s 5th anniversary. The event, attended by more than 80 individuals was recorded by the [Connecticut Network \(CT-N\)](#).
- In December 2016, the SAFE Program launched a Web-based activation system to allow participating health care facilities to activate services online, as well as to allow SAFE Program administrators to track data in real time.
- In August 2017, the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations amended the CT 100 Sexual Assault Kit documentation. The changes were based, in part, on hundreds of sexual assault chart reviews conducted by the SAFE Program, as well as feedback from SAFEs.
- Public Act 17-99, An Act Concerning Court Operations, Victim Services, Fraudulent Filings, and Transfers of an Interest in Real Property to a Trust, allows health care professionals in nonparticipating hospitals to be trained in the care and collection of evidence from adolescent and adult victims of sexual assault. Previously, training was limited to health care providers joining the SAFE Program.

Participating Health Care Facilities

The Judicial Branch has formal agreements with certain health care facilities in the Hartford, Middlesex, New Haven, and Windham counties to serve as designated sites for SAFE Program services.

As a SAFE designated site, the health care facilities agree to:

- screen patients for eligibility for SAFE services;
- activate the SAFE Program on-call system for eligible patients;
- provide a private room for uninterrupted use by SAFEs to perform sexual assault forensic examinations and evidence collection;
- have accessible the necessary equipment and supplies for sexual assault forensic examinations;
- maintain a locked refrigerator for the evidence collected;
- provide interpreter services for sexual assault patients who are not proficient in English; and
- perform sexual assault forensic examinations and evidence collection when a SAFE is not available.

During this biennium, the following health care facilities served as SAFE designated sites:

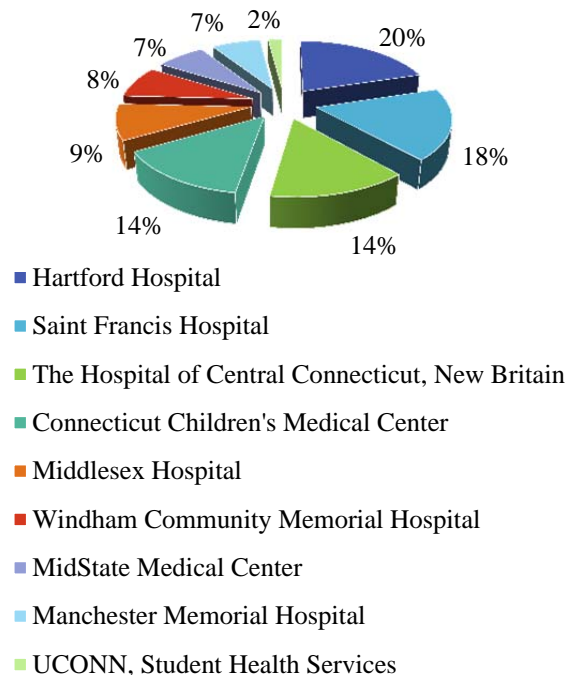
- Connecticut Children's Medical Center;
- Hartford Hospital;
- Manchester Memorial Hospital;
- Middlesex Hospital;
- MidState Medical Center;
- St Francis Hospital;
- The Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain;
- Windham Community Memorial Hospital; and
- University of Connecticut (UConn) Student Health Services, Storrs Campus.

During this biennium, the SAFE Program had responded to 432 cases at participating health care facilities.

Case Response by Health Care Facilities

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

Cases: 432

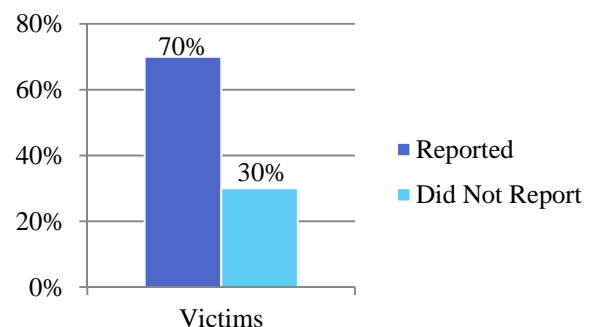


Seventy percent of the victims who received SAFE services reported the crime to law enforcement at the time of evidence collection, which is consistent from the last biennium in the number of victims reporting.

Sexual Assaults Reported Versus Not Reported to Law Enforcement at Time of Evidence Collection

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

Cases: 432



Collaborative Response

To minimize further trauma to sexual assault victims, the SAFE Program utilizes a coordinated, collaborative response for SAFE Program services.

Responding SAFEs contact a sexual assault counselor from the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence (formerly Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services) for accompaniment to the SAFE designated site.

While SAFEs conduct the medical-forensic examination and collection of evidence in a compassionate but objective manner, the sexual assault crisis counselor supports the victim's emotional and informational needs while providing a personal connection that preserves confidentiality.

Victim quote on the services received from the SAFE Program

“My SAFE was very sweet and made sure I was okay while examining me. She told me I didn't have to do anything unless I was comfortable and made sure to explain everything.”

Training

OVS provides training to qualified health care providers, which enables them to perform knowledgeable and skilled medical-forensic sexual assault examinations and to ensure the integrity, preservation, and documentation of forensic evidence.

Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) Training Program

In September 2017, the SAFE Training Program became one of four training programs to have its curriculum approved by the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) as meeting the IAFN 2015 Education Guidelines. The IAFN is an international, professional organization that provides leadership in establishing national benchmarks, standards, and best practices in forensic nursing.

In addition, the training curriculum was approved by the Connecticut Nurses Association (CNA) for 40 Continuing Nursing Education contact hours for SAFEs who successfully complete the didactic component of the training. The CNA, accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center Commission on Accreditation, awards contact hours for educational activities that meet national standards for quality continuing nursing education.

The SAFE training curriculum consists of various topics including the dynamics of sexual violence, victim response, victim advocacy services, the collection and handling of evidence, providing court testimony, as well as regulatory issues such as informed consent and confidentiality.

During this biennium, three trainings were held with 38 health care providers successfully completing all training components. These health care providers were awarded contracts with the Judicial Branch to serve as SAFEs in the SAFE Program. Currently, there are 33 SAFEs actively participating in the Program.

Health Care Facility Trainings

Trainings were conducted at both participating and non-participating health care facilities during this biennium. These training sessions were provided to emergency department staff to increase competency of care to the sexual assault patient. In addition, to facilitate a more comprehensive response, sexual assault counselors provided instruction on their role and how to access advocacy services for victims.

Quality Assurance Meetings

SAFEs are required to attend monthly quality assurance meetings, which provide continuing education, case review, program updates, and collegial discussion on current issues and practices.

During this biennium, training topics included victim services, civil protection orders, regulatory issues, law enforcement and pre-trial preparation, domestic violence, evidence collection review, sexually transmitted infection treatment, emergency contraception, and trauma-informed care.

Training and Outreach

Focusing on a brighter future

Overview

The Training and Outreach Unit is responsible for training criminal justice system professionals and educating the public on Office of Victim Services' (OVS) programs and the rights and concerns of Connecticut's crime victims. This Unit also distributes OVS printed materials to support these education and training activities and coordinates professional development activities that increase the knowledge of OVS staff.

Training

The Training and Outreach Unit provides training on the topics of victims' rights, services, and victim responses to crime to three primary audiences:

- the victim assistance community consisting of nonprofit agencies that provide services to crime victims;
- mandated audiences listed in Section 54-203 (b) (16) of the Connecticut General Statutes (judges; prosecutors; police; probation and parole personnel; bail commissioners; intake, assessment, and referral specialists; correction officers; and judicial marshals); and
- OVS staff.

Police officer quote from an OVS Police Academy Training

"Very informative and productive lesson that is relevant to my career and that I can use to better serve my community."

Mandated Training Activity

During this biennium, the Training and Outreach Unit provided 22 trainings to 744 professionals in the criminal justice system. The majority of these trainings were provided to law enforcement, primarily through the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC) Recruit Training Program. The information provided to this audience included the impact of crime on victims, law enforcement's role as a first responder to victims, and death notification.

Biennial Highlights

- OVS sponsored three statewide trainings, supported by an Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice grant, which provided information on trauma-informed care, the court process, victim notification, orders of protection, understanding the complexity associated with violent death, and self-care. More than 200 professionals attended the trainings.
- In 2016 and 2017, OVS was invited to provide trainings on the different types of orders of protection during the Roll Call at various police departments.
- In March 2017, the Connecticut State Police Training Academy incorporated the OVS Victim Sensitivity Training into its recertification courses. The Honorable John Danaher, co-chair of the Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime was instrumental in facilitating OVS's involvement in the recertification training curriculum as an effort to increase awareness to victim sensitivity.
- In 2017, OVS staff attended a three-day Community Crisis Response training to become certified as crisis responders through the National Office for Victim Assistance. This training allows crisis responders to provide critical education and emotional first aid to victims, survivors, and community members in the event of a mass casualty.

Victim Assistance Community Training

Since the late 1990s, OVS has co-sponsored the Melanie Ilene Rieger Memorial Conference Against Violence, an annual statewide conference that educates the public, criminal justice professionals, and victim service providers on the needs of crime victims in Connecticut.

During the 2016 conference, OVS offered a presentation that explained the different court orders of protection available to victims in Connecticut. During the 2017 symposium, an OVS staff member served on a panel to answer questions related to OVS programs and services.

In November 2016, OVS and Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Connecticut Chapter, co-sponsored its seventh *Death Notification: Delivering the News With Compassion* workshop.

Ninety-seven law enforcement personnel and other victim-related professionals learned techniques on delivering compassionate death notification and acquired information on managing stress and developing resilience.

Each quarter, the Training and Outreach Unit and Fiscal Services Unit provides half-day trainings on OVS services, victims' rights, victim notification, and testifying at a trial to subcontracted agencies. During this biennium, 288 staff members from subcontracted agencies attended 18 OVS trainings.

Community Education Activity

The Training and Outreach Unit offers a community education program designed to increase victim service providers and the public's awareness of the rights and services available to crime victims.

Presentations

During this biennium, community education activities included 57 presentations on OVS services and victim-related topics to 1,488 individuals from various community groups, such as sexual assault crisis centers, domestic violence programs, and senior centers, as well as high school and college students.

OVS subcontracting staff quote from an OVS subcontractor training

"Great course. Learned a lot of information and explained it in a way that was relatable. Every advocate should take this course."

Resource Tables

The Training and Outreach Unit staffed resource tables at various venues to distribute OVS materials and to raise awareness about OVS services. During this biennium, OVS provided information at 10 professional conferences, health fairs, college fairs, and other community events.

Distribution of OVS Materials

During this biennium, more than 45,000 copies of OVS materials were distributed to courthouses, law libraries, community-based programs, hospitals, and other service providers throughout the state.

Staff Development

The Training and Outreach Unit coordinates staff activities and trainings that meet OVS goals and values and develops core competencies and specialized work-related knowledge.

Staff Training

During this biennium, OVS staff attended 171 in-service and Judicial Branch trainings and 61 external trainings that included courses on leadership skill building, Limited English Proficiency, cultural competence, computer-based programs, domestic violence, sex offender management, elder abuse, and child sexual abuse.

Staff Recognition

The Training and Outreach Unit facilitates the Staff Recognition Committee, which organizes two annual staff appreciation days that promote staff engagement, personal development, teamwork, and staff recognition.

During these events, staff recognition awards were presented to six OVS staff for their dedication, exceptional service, and efforts to contribute to the OVS mission.

Victim Services Advocacy

Focusing on a brighter future

Overview

The Victim Services Unit is responsible for assisting crime victims throughout the criminal, juvenile, and civil justice process by informing crime victims of their rights and providing support and information to assist them in exercising those rights, referrals to community services, and victim notification.

Victim Services Advocacy Program

The Victim Services Unit has victim services advocates (VSAs) assigned to Judicial District courthouses throughout the state, the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BOPP), and to the Office of Victim Services' (OVS) Helpline to respond to the needs and the expanding rights of crime victims within the criminal, juvenile, and civil justice systems.

As crime victims often are not familiar with the workings of the criminal, juvenile, and civil justice systems, OVS VSAs are uniquely positioned to assist them through all of the stages of the process. VSAs serve as a liaison with court personnel and ensure that crime victims understand their rights at each proceeding, as well as accompany crime victims to court and assist with the delivery of victim impact statements.

Victim quote on services received from the Victim Services Advocacy Program

"[My husband] and I walked into a foreign environment when we entered the Court Building We didn't know what to do, but then you found us. You listened carefully to my concerns answered our many questions and guided us gently. Most importantly, you were compassionate and caring. You made a very difficult ordeal a little bit easier."

Biennial Highlights

- In October 2015, the VSAs assigned to the BOPP began providing services to victims of offenders who were under the age of 18 at the time the crime was committed and eligible for the alternative parole eligibility rules established under Public Act 15-84. See page 22 for more information on this Act.
- In 2016, a VSA received the Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury, Making a Difference Award. This award is presented to an individual whose struggle and persistence assisted in bringing about change that benefited others.
- In 2017, a VSA was honored during the Susan B. Anthony Project Sexual Violence Vigil for her collaborative work with the Child Abuse Investigation Team.
- The Victim Services Unit supports the Judicial Branch Experiential Learning Programs by presenting on victim advocacy services to new interns and serving as a workplace host. During this biennium, court-based VSAs hosted an average of five interns during each of the academic and summer sessions.
- During this biennium, the Victim Services Supervisors established regional meetings, held quarterly with court-based VSAs in the same geographical areas, to discuss victim-related issues and trends.
- During this biennium, the Victims Services Supervisors re-assessed and modified the service data being collected and its methods to better reflect the work of the VSAs, including researching computerized case management systems and developing surveys to assess victims' experiences related to the quality of advocacy services and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Court-based Advocacy Program

The duties and responsibilities of VSAs, outlined in Section 54-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes are to:

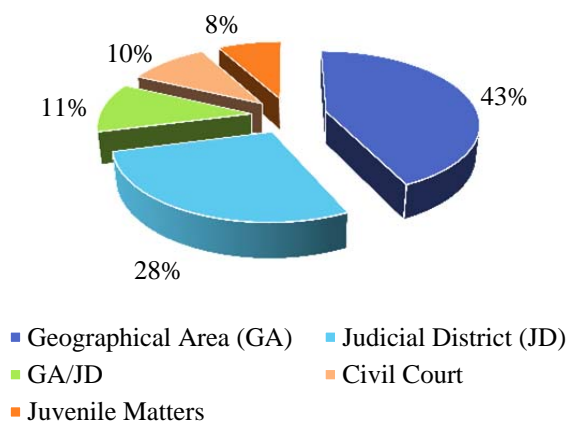
- provide initial screening of each personal injury case;
- assist victims in the preparation of victim impact statements;
- notify victims of their rights and request that each victim attest to the fact of such notification of rights;
- provide information and advice to victims in order to assist victims in exercising their rights throughout the criminal justice process;
- direct victims to public and private agencies for services;
- coordinate victim compensation applications to OVS; and
- assist victims in the processing of requesting restitution.

During this biennium, the Victim Services Unit had 33 court-based VSAs, who assisted more than 32,000 new and ongoing primary and secondary victims. In addition to assisting victims through the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems, VSAs provided assistance and support to civil protection order applicants. This assistance included helping applicants file civil protection order applications and providing information and support during the process.

Court-based Advocacy Services by Location

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

Number of new and ongoing victims served: 32,126



Victim quote on services received from the Victim Services Advocacy Program

"I know this is your job but not once did you make me feel as if I or my situation was something on a list of things you had to do before you logged out. You were personable, professional, helpful, and kind."

More than half of a court-based VSA's quarterly caseload is related to the ongoing criminal justice support provided to victims of offenders who have a pending criminal case.

During this biennium, this support included assisting more than 6,500 victims with victim impact statements. Providing a victim impact statement to the court gives the victim the opportunity to speak directly to the court to explain how the crime has affected him or her. Victims often view this opportunity as valuable and empowering.

Board of Pardons and Paroles Advocacy Program

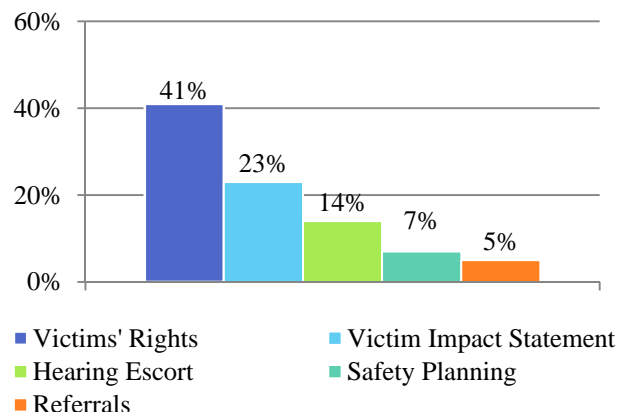
The Victim Services Unit assigns two VSAs to the BOPP, as directed under Section 54-220a of the Connecticut General Statutes, to assist crime victims during the parole and pardon process.

From October 1, 2015, through June 30, 2017, the VSAs assigned to the BOPP assisted 3,290 new and ongoing, primary and secondary victims.

BOPP VSAs Most Requested Services

October 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017

Number of victims provided with services: 3,290



Helpline

Two VSAs are assigned to the Helpline (800-822-8428) to provide callers with information on the juvenile, civil, and criminal justice systems, OVS and community-based programs and services, victim rights, victim notification, and referrals to public and private agencies. Victims also contact OVS through the OVS general email account at OVS@jud.ct.gov.

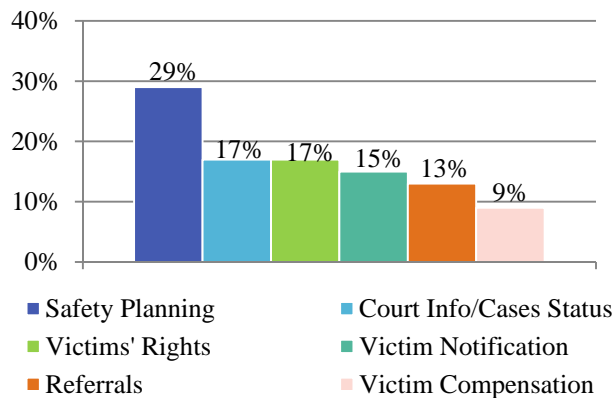
The Helpline VSAs also attend Sentence Review hearings to provide support, information, and assistance to crime victims and their family members.

During this biennium, Helpline VSAs received 6,967 calls from victims and professionals. The majority of callers requested information on safety planning, the status of a criminal case, court information, referrals to supportive services, victim rights, and victim compensation.

Helpline Most Requested Services

January 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017

Total services requested: 6,474



Victim Notification

The Victim Services Unit Helpline staff is responsible for administering three victim notification programs that inform crime victims and other registrants on orders of protection, changes to the court status of offenders in the criminal justice system and in Department of Correction (DOC) custody.

These notification programs allow crime victims to exercise their constitutional right to be informed

Victim quote on services received from the Victim Services Advocacy Program

"Thank you for supporting me and being there for me through all this, you helped me repair my strength and confidence, you have helped me heal so much. Thank you for never letting me give up and keeping me strong. Your support means more to me than words can say."

about, present at, and heard during criminal justice proceedings. These programs also serve as a valuable safety tool by informing crime victims of an offender's release or possible release from custody or when an offender absconds from prison or fails to appear in court.

Protection Order Registry Notification Program

The Protection Order Registry Notification program features automatic generation of notification letters to protected parties when protective orders terminate or five weeks prior to the expiration of restraining orders and civil protection orders.

Protected parties receiving notification are directed to contact the OVS Helpline for information on obtaining or extending restraining orders and referrals to social service agencies.

During state fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017, more than 51,000 protective order notification letters were mailed to crime victims.

Post-conviction Notification Program

Section 54-227 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires OVS and DOC to provide inmate status information to crime victims and other eligible individuals who have registered for notification.

Crime victims, parents/guardians and relatives of crime victims, inmate family members, and state's attorneys may register for notification by submitting a confidential request for notification form to OVS, DOC, or both agencies.

Registrants are notified when an inmate applies to the BOPP or DOC for a release other than a furlough, applies to the sentencing court, judge or the Review Division for a change in their sentence, or when any person requests the court change their status on the Sex Offender Registry.

Crime victims who receive notification are informed that they can make a statement to the BOPP, DOC, or court regarding the impact the crime has had on them and their opinion on or concerns about the inmate's request.

During this biennium, there were 928 new notification requests and more than 5,800 post-conviction notification letters mailed to registrants.

Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification

The Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification program (CT SAVIN) provides confidential telephone and email notifications in English, Spanish, Polish, and Portuguese on criminal justice and DOC events.

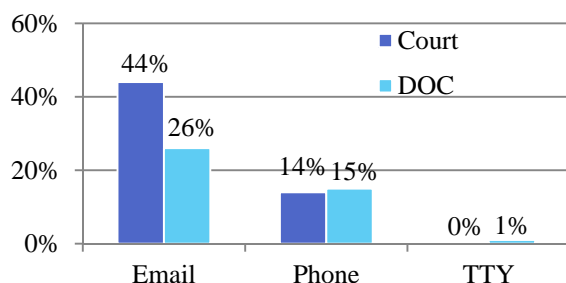
Crime victims and the public may register for notification in English and Spanish by contacting an OVS VSA at the Helpline, the BOPP, or the court, community based advocates, the CT SAVIN dedicated telephone number (877-846-3428) or by registering online at the CT SAVIN Web page accessed from www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim/.

During this biennium, there were more than 45,000 new registrations with the majority of registrants requesting to be notified by email for court-related events.

CT SAVIN New Registrations

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

Total Registrations: 45,889



Victim quote on services received from the Victim Services Advocacy Program

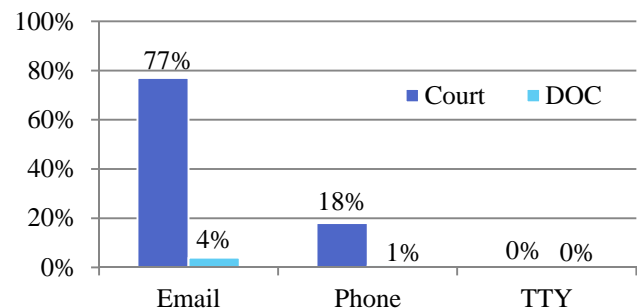
“Thank you very much for all of your help shepherding my family and me through the parole hearing process. It was good to work with you because it is so clear that you care about the people you advocate for. The support was essential through this very difficult period.”

CT SAVIN generated 282,052 notifications during this biennium, with the majority of notifications being provided by email for court-related events.

CT SAVIN Notifications

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

Total Notifications: 282,052



Notification of criminal case events include:

- upcoming court hearings;
- change in bail;
- case transfers;
- failure to appear;
- plea hearings;
- the issuance, modification, or termination of an order of protection;
- case disposition;
- probation violation and violation decisions;
- sentence reduction decision; and
- appeal filed and appeal decision.

Notification of custody status events include:

- scheduled release or release from prison, parole, and to the community;
- escaped from and returned to prison; and
- transfer to a prison in another state.

Quality Assurance

Focusing on a brighter future

Overview

The Quality Assurance Unit is responsible for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of Office of Victim Services' (OVS) programs to make recommendations to improve service delivery, to develop and monitor tools used by management that measure program activity, and to ensure that internal and external communications are written in plain and supportive language.

Quality Assurance

OVS strives to provide compassionate, victim-centered services to crime victims and their family members. To ensure that OVS is providing the best possible services, the Quality Assurance Unit:

- assists in the development of policies and procedures;
- develops computer-based tools for program and service assessment and recommends modifications to existing computer applications that track data and information;
- develops written materials for crime victims and the public; and
- assesses feedback from crime victims, their family members, and other individuals who apply for victim compensation.

OVS Vision Statement

Connecticut will be a state where all victims of crime are treated with respect and fairness and will receive comprehensive, coordinated, and victim-centered services.

Biennial Highlights

- In an effort to improve access to and increase awareness of OVS programs and services, the Quality Assurance Unit collaborated with the Judicial Branch Web Board on the revision and expansion of the OVS website, which launched in April 2016. Designed as a mobile-friendly site, the website can be viewed on any phone, tablet, laptop or desktop. It is written in plain language and contains features that improve a visitor's navigation of the site. Features include a website icon, known as a Favicon (favorite icon), which allows visitors to uniquely identify the OVS website from other websites listed in their favorites or bookmark bar; an exit button to allow victims and other site visitors to easily and quickly leave the site, as well as information on how victims may keep their internet browsing activities private.
- During this biennium, three posters were developed that provided information on victims' rights, OVS services, and the Victim Compensation Program. These posters feature a QR code that takes viewers directly to the OVS website when scanned. The victim rights and victim compensation posters also have tear-off sheets attached so that a person may take information about OVS programs. These posters were distributed, with the assistance of the Training and Outreach Unit, to courthouses, health care facilities, libraries, and other various agencies across the state.
- Public service announcements were released to 45 radio stations across Connecticut on sexual assault forensic examination services, victim compensation, victim rights, victim notification, domestic violence awareness, and civil protection orders.

Information Technology Activities

The Quality Assurance Unit values the importance of converting raw data into meaningful information that assesses services to ensure the needs of crime victims are being met as effectively and efficiently as possible.

During this biennium, the Quality Assurance Unit developed a database to track law enforcement contact information, including contacts responsible for U and T Visas, and to allow for mailing and email distributions lists for training purposes. In addition, the existing Victim Compensation Program Survey database was modified to allow management to track outreach to survey respondents who requested to be contacted, as well as modification to the spreadsheets utilized by victim services advocates to track case data.

Internal and External Communications

Newsletters

The Quality Assurance Unit assists in fostering a team environment and embraces strong internal communications so that OVS staff and Judicial Branch staff have access to current information on OVS activities and policies and programmatic changes.

To support this internal dialogue, the Quality Assurance Unit emails staff a quarterly newsletter on OVS activities and a bi-annual OVS newsletter for Judicial Branch employees, which is posted on the Judicial Branch intranet.

OVS Materials

The Quality Assurance Unit develops publications, forms, public service announcements (PSAs), and other electronic and printed materials that inform victims, the victim assistance community, and the public about the rights of crime victims and the services available to them. During this biennium, the Quality Assurance Unit reviewed and revised 35 publications and forms with several being translated in Spanish, Polish, and Portuguese.

Public Service Announcements

To promote OVS programs and services, the Quality Assurance Unit submits PSAs quarterly to

the Judicial Branch, External Affairs Division for submission to radio stations across Connecticut. During this biennium, 24 PSAs were released to 30 English and 15 Spanish-speaking radio stations.

OVS Educational Posters

During this biennium, the Quality Assurance Unit led a committee on the development of three posters that provide information on victim rights, OVS services, and victim compensation. These posters were distributed to various agencies throughout the state.

OVS Website

During this biennium, the Quality Assurance Unit collaborated with the Judicial Branch Web Board for the revision and expansion of the OVS section of the Judicial Branch external website.

The intent of the revision was to create a more user-friendly experience for site visitors and to expand the information on OVS services and programs available to victims, their family members, criminal justice professionals, victim service professionals, contracted agencies, and the public.

Highlights of the revision include:

- a new tab control, titled Victim, which allows victims and site visitors to quickly access the OVS site from the Judicial Branch home page; and
- parallel tab controls on the OVS home page that separates OVS programs and services

Victim Feedback

Victim Compensation Program Surveys

Since 2002, OVS has been measuring different aspects of a claimant's experience with the Victim Compensation Program by surveying the individuals requesting victim compensation.

During this biennium, 1,794 surveys were mailed with 307 surveys being returned, representing a 17% return rate. The combined overall satisfaction reflected that 89% of the respondents were satisfied with the Victim Compensation Program services and 93% agreed their claims examiner was courteous and helpful.

12/14 Support Services

In respect and to support the healing process of the victims, the families of the victims, and the Newtown community, the Office of Victim Services (OVS) refers to the tragedy that occurred on December 14, 2012, at the Sandy Hook Elementary School as 12/14.

During this biennium, OVS continued to respond to the emotional and financial needs of the victims, family members of the victims, first responders, and the Newtown community. This response included monitoring contractor activities to ensure agencies that received federal funding complied with contract and funding guidelines and regulations, as well as providing victim compensation to victims and family members who were directly impacted.

Grant Funding

OVS monitors the activities of contracted agencies, which were awarded federal funding for the continuation of services to the Newtown community. The U.S. Department of Justice, Anti-Terrorism Emergency Assistance Program grant that was awarded in 2013 to provide services to those affected by 12/14 ended on June 30, 2017. The Office for Victims of Crime, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Victim Assistance grant funding is being used to continue program services provided by the Clifford Beers Guidance Clinic for their Sandy Hook Recovery Team, Newtown Youth and Family Services, the Resiliency Center of Newtown, and the Town of Newtown.

Victim quote on the services received from an OVS contracted agency

“Thank you for helping to secure treatment for myself and later for my wife. We are both remaining in treatment and doing better because of it.”

Biennial Highlights

- More than \$112,000 was awarded in VOCA grant funds to the Clifford Beers Guidance Clinic to provide trauma-informed mental health services to the students, parents, and staff of the Sandy Hook Elementary School under its Sandy Hook Recovery Team program.
- The Town of Newtown was awarded more than \$442,000 in VOCA grant funds for the Sandy Hook Trauma Recovery initiative. This program provides care navigation services and non-traditional trauma interventions for primary and secondary victims. This funding was also used to assist the Town in funding the Recovery and Resiliency Team, which was funded under a Department of Justice grant that ended in 2016.
- Newtown Youth and Family Services was awarded more than \$592,000 in VOCA grant funding to support its Empower Together Program. This program provides trauma-informed education to any senior, adult, teen, or child affected by mass violence, domestic or dating violence, sexual assault, homicide, elder abuse, child abuse, physical assault, bullying, or other crimes.

Legislative Updates

The following Public Acts, enacted during this biennium, modified the services offered to crime victims by the Office of Victim Services (OVS) and/or amended Chapter 968 Victim Services of the Connecticut General Statutes, which governs the work of OVS.

Public Act 15-2, An Act Implementing Provisions of the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2017 Concerning General Government Provisions Relating to Criminal Justice (*June Special Session*) requires OVS to notify victims registered with the Board of Pardons and Paroles about parole hearings, to notify victims and the public about how victims can register for parole hearing notices, and to provide notice or seek to locate victims and family members of certain crimes.

Public Act 15-84, An Act Concerning Lengthy Sentences for Crimes Committed by a Child or Youth and the Sentencing of a Child or Youth Convicted of Certain Felony Offenses requires the Board of Pardons and Paroles to notify certain agencies, including OVS, when a person, who was under the age of 18 at the time the crime was committed and sentenced to more than 10 years in prison becomes eligible for parole. The notification must be provided at least 12 months prior to the parole hearing.

Public Act 15-85, An Act Concerning Court Operations and the Claim Against the State of Lori Calvert allows OVS, or a Victim Compensation Commissioner on review, to exclude life insurance benefits as a collateral source when determining the amount of victim compensation to grant on a claim.

Public Act 15-195, An Act Strengthening Protections for Victims of Human Trafficking allows OVS, under certain circumstances, to waive the victim compensation two-year application filing requirement for minors who are victims of human trafficking.

Public Act 16-71, An Act Concerning Human Trafficking expands who must post a notice about services for human trafficking victims, including publicly and privately operated highway service plaza hotels, motels, similar lodgings, and businesses that offer materials for sale or promote performances for adult audiences, and persons who hold certain on-premises consumption permits for the retail sale of alcohol. OVS distributes the notice on behalf of the Office of the Chief Court Administrator.

Public Act 17-32, An Act Concerning Human Trafficking expands the list of people and entities that are required to post a notice about services for human trafficking victims and imposes a penalty for violations. OVS distributes the notice on behalf of the Office of the Chief Court Administrator.

Public Act 17-99, An Act Concerning Court Operations, Victim Services, Fraudulent Filings and Transfers of an Interest in Real Property to a Trust expands victim compensation to a victim who suffered emotional injury from the threat of physical injury or death and received treatment; it allows OVS to order victim compensation an additional \$5,000 above the maximum \$15,000 to certain child victims; increases the time frame from 72 hours to 120 hours in which a victim of sexual assault who did not report the alleged crime to police can go to a health care facility for a sexual assault examination and evidence collection; allows OVS to exclude health insurance as a collateral source, in certain circumstances; and requires health care providers and its agents to halt the debt collection process when notified by OVS that the debtor has a pending victim compensation claim. This Act is effective October 1, 2017.

Committees

During this biennium, Office of Victim Services (OVS) staff served on the following committees, councils, and multidisciplinary teams.

Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations is responsible for reviewing and revising the Technical Guidelines for Health Care Response to Victims of Sexual Assault and the design of the sexual assault evidence collection kit. Director Linda J. Cimino, member.

Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision Connecticut State Council is charged with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision, a formal agreement between member states that seeks to promote public safety by systematically controlling the interstate movement of certain adult offenders. Deputy Director Valina Carpenter, member.

Interstate Compact for Juveniles Connecticut State Council is the rule-making authority of the Interstate Compact for Juveniles and has the statutory authority to enforce compliance between signatory states to promote the welfare protection of juveniles, victims, and the public by governing the states' supervision of juveniles and the return of runaways, absconders, escapees, and juveniles who have fled prosecution. Deputy Director Valina Carpenter, member.

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee examines intimate partner homicides to identify systemic gaps and barriers to service and to recommend coordinated community responses that will enhance the safety of victims and accountability of batterers. Director Linda J. Cimino, member.

Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children oversees the need for greater coordination of Multidisciplinary Team agencies involved in the investigation, intervention, and prosecution of child sexual abuse and serious physical abuse cases. Victim Services Supervisor (VSS) Koren Butler-Kurth, member and co-chair and VSS Mary Kozicki, member of the Victim Services Workgroup.

Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) multidisciplinary teams that respond to the needs of victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. Several OVS victim services advocates are members of HART.

Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) coordinate the prompt investigation and prosecution of suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to reduce the trauma of any child victim and to ensure the protection and treatment of the child. Several OVS victim services advocates are members of their local MDTs.

Special Committee on Sex Offenders established by the Connecticut Sentencing Commission for compliance with Special Act 15-2, which required the Commission to investigate Connecticut's current system of assessment, management, treatment, and sentencing of sex offenders. The Special Committee of Sex Offenders undertook a comprehensive two-year study of the issues and submitted a report to the Sentencing Commission in 2017. Director Linda J. Cimino, member.

Victims' Rights and Enforcement Advisory Commission established by Governor Dannel P. Malloy, the Commission was charged with reviewing policies, services, and crime victims' rights in the state and to make recommendations for compliance and enforcement of constitutional and statutory rights of crime victims. Director Linda J. Cimino, governor appointed member.

Trafficking in Persons Council is responsible for determining what services are available to human trafficking victims and how to best coordinate a response. Director Linda J. Cimino, member.

Advisory Council for Victims of Crime

Overview

The Advisory Council for Victims of Crime (Council), created under Section 54-203 (b) (11) of the Connecticut General Statutes, consists of members from the judicial and executive branch agencies, who are involved with victims of crime; the chief Victim Compensation Commissioner; and members representing various victim populations.

Council members, appointed by the Chief Justice to a four-year term, are charged with recommending to the Office of Victim Services (OVS) programs, legislation, and other matters that would improve services to crime victims. The Council is statutorily required to meet at least six times per year and to report its findings and activities annually to the Judicial Branch Chief Court Administrator.

During this biennium, the Council held 11 meetings at which victim-related services, issues, and trends were discussed, including OVS state and federal funding sources, OVS programs and services, legislative initiatives that would improve or affect services to crime victims, and trauma-informed service response. In addition, Council members provided presentations on their respective agencies' victim-related services and initiatives, including trauma-informed care services, domestic violence screening at health care facilities, and victim notification.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

(2014-2018 Term)

Co-Chairs

Honorable John A. Danaher, III
Litchfield Judicial District, Judicial Branch

Susan M. Omilian, Esquire
Survivors of homicide victims

Academia

Antonia Cordero, Associate Professor
University of Connecticut, School of Social Work

Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner

Joseph W. Bibisi, Esquire

Child Victims

Chester Brodnicki, LCSW (resigned 2016)
Steven Hernandez, Executive Director
Commission on Women, Children and Seniors

Community-based Mental Health Services

David Lawrence-Hawley, Director
Klingberg Family Center

Domestic Violence

Karen Jarmoc, Chief Executive Officer
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Drunk Driving

Janice Heggie-Margolis, Executive Director
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Executive Branch

Brian Austin, Jr., Executive Assistant State's Attorney
Office of the Division of Criminal Justice

Karen Martucci, Acting Director of External Affairs
Connecticut Department of Correction

Judicial Branch

Melissa Farley, Esquire, Executive Director
External Affairs

Low Income Communities

Deborah Witkin, Deputy Director
Connecticut Legal Services

Municipal Law Enforcement

Robin Montgomery, Chief of Police (resigned 2016)
Brookfield Police Department

Thomas J. Wydra, Chief of Police
Hamden Police Department

Non-English Speaking Communities

Mui Mui Hin-McCormick (resigned 2017)
Lucia Goicoechea-Hernández, Senior Special Projects
Coordinator
Commission on Equity and Opportunity

Sexual Assault

Laura Cordes, Executive Director
Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence

ADMINISTRATIVE

860-263-2760

VICTIM COMPENSATION

888-286-7347

HELPLINE

800-822-8428



Office of Victim Services
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109
www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim