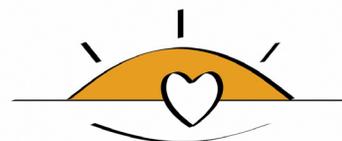


BIENNIAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

October 1, 2009 ~ September 30, 2011

Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

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



OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES
Focusing on a brighter future



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF
BARBARA M. QUINN
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

231 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106

January 13, 2012

Senator Eric D. Coleman, Co-Chair
Representative Gerald M. Fox, 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, 2009 through September 30, 2011. 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 'Barbara M. Quinn'.

Barbara M. Quinn, Judge
Chief Court Administrator

BMQ: bb

C: Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers
Hon. Patrick L. Carroll, Deputy Chief Court Administrator
Joseph D. D'Alesio, Executive Director, Superior Court Operations
Linda J. Cimino, Director, Office of Victim Services

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Office of Victim Services

Focusing on a brighter future

Overview

The Office of Victim Services (OVS) has a long and proud history of providing supportive services, financial assistance, and information to victims from the scene of the crime to the release of an inmate convicted of a crime.

Legislatively enacted by Public Act 78-261, OVS has evolved from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, whose sole service was to provide compensation to victims, to a multi-faceted agency that not only provides direct services to victims of crime, but provides funding to community-based nonprofit agencies to assist in meeting the evolving needs of crime victims.

During this biennium, OVS administered several federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants (ARRA) to ensure that programs and services continued to be responsive to the myriad needs of crime victims:

- ∞ The ARRA Victim Compensation grant allowed OVS to provide, in a timely manner, economic support to 27 crime victims who lost a family member to homicide.
- ∞ The ARRA Victim Assistance grant provided additional funding to current victim service providers allowing them to maintain or expand existing services. Expansions included additional advocate staffing in 3 domestic violence dockets, additional counseling services to victims of child abuse and sexual assault, and weekend hours for support groups for victims of domestic violence.
- ∞ The ARRA Violence Against Women and Justice Assistance grants provided funding to establish the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners program, which provides timely, patient-centered care and standardized forensic evidence collection to sexual assault victims who present at participating hospitals.

Mission:

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



For the past 32 years, OVS has assisted thousands of crime victims and their families along their journey from crime victim to survivor. This biennial report outlines the activities, accomplishments, process improvement initiatives, and new programs undertaken to better meet their needs.

Statistics and service overviews only provide one glimpse into OVS. Within the pages of this biennial report are quotes from surveys, letters and thank you notes from victims, survivors, and service partners who interacted with OVS staff, benefited from the services offered, or attended OVS trainings. Their words reflect the quality of the services provided and the value the services hold for crime victims.

Social Networking: Changing the Rules

Office of Victim Services Hosts Day-Long Conference

By Heather Collins, Court Planner I

*Excerpt from the Superior Court Operations Weekly Update
October 12, 2011*

Office of Victim Services Director Linda J. Cimino and her staff hosted an innovative day-long conference which focused on the evolution of social networking sites. The conference, on September 27, was attended by more than 200 victim advocates, prosecutors and law enforcement representatives from across the state.

The conference, “Social Networking: Changing the Rules,” was funded by a grant from the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and featured speakers of national and international prominence in their fields. Two distinct training tracks were offered to participants: one for advocates and the other for prosecutors and law enforcement personnel. However, both groups shared sessions on social networking and victim safety.

Cynthia Fraser, a Washington, D.C.-based technology safety specialist, spoke to the attendees in the morning in a presentation entitled, “Addressing Perpetrator Misuse and Victim Safety as Social Networks Evolve.” The keynote address focused extensively on the ability of perpetrators to track their victims through the victim’s online use in social media such as Facebook, Digg, MySpace and others. Ms. Fraser offered practical tips on how to be discrete in the name of safety.

Jayne Hitchcock, survivor of cyber stalking and an author and internationally recognized cyber bullying and cyber crime expert, was the luncheon keynote speaker. During Ms. Hitchcock’s presentation which was titled “The Wild, Wild Web: Knowing the Basics for Online Investigations,” she shared the facts of the cyber stalking she endured and ways to identify malicious e-mails.

In the afternoon, Dr. Mike Ribble, who serves as the technology director for a Kansas school district and



has authored two books, spoke about “Digital Citizenship: Using Technology Appropriately.” Dr. Ribble talked about how the online world creates an anonymity that can sometimes make people careless or mean.

The break-out sessions, which began in the morning and concluded in the afternoon, provided information to enhance the attendees’ advocacy and investigation skills relating to social networking.

Ms. Fraser’s topic for the break-out session she facilitated for victim advocates was “Keeping Up with Social Networks: How Advocacy Agencies Can Effectively Support Survivors.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven D. DeBrotta of the Southern District of Indiana facilitated the prosecutors and law enforcement break-out session, where Attorney DeBrotta discussed the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases involving Internet social networking. Atty. DeBrotta’s expertise includes prosecuting computer crimes against children; he is the chair of the Project Safe Childhood Task Force and the Special Emphasis Coordinator for child exploitation cases. The Project Safe Childhood Task Force is a DOJ-funded project that combines law enforcement, community action and public awareness with a goal of reducing the incidence of sexual exploitation of children.

The conference, which was a year in the planning and coordinating by the Office of Victim Services, was a tremendous success.

OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES HOSTS DAY-LONG CONFERENCE



Advisory Council for Victims of Crime

Overview

According to Section 54-203 (b) (11) of the Connecticut General Statutes, “The council shall recommend to the Office of Victim Services program, legislative or other matters which would improve services to victims of crime and develop and coordinate needs assessments for both court-based and community-based victim services.”

The Advisory Council (Council) is comprised of representatives from victim populations including, but not limited to, survivors of homicide victims, family violence victims, sexual assault victims, victims of drunk drivers, and assault and robbery victims, the chief victim compensation commissioner, and members from the judicial and executive branch agencies involved with victims of crime.

Council members are appointed by the Chief Justice for a 4-year term. The time frame of this biennial report spans two different Councils. A new Council was convened in September 2010.

The Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III, and Steven Eppler-Epstein served as co-chairs for the 2006-2010 Council and as co-chairs for the 2010-2014 Council.

During this biennial period, the Council discussed and provided input on:

- ∞ OVS Compensation Program Victim Satisfaction Survey
- ∞ Police information form
- ∞ The Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund
- ∞ Victim rights related legislation
- ∞ OVS programs



The Council heard presentations on the following topics:

- ∞ The Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification program
- ∞ The Gail Burns-Smith Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners program
- ∞ Retail Workplace Violence Prevention Project
- ∞ Remembering Maggie: Living Beyond Abuse in Our Lives, and
- ∞ The Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division Alert Notification/GPS Pilot Program

Members 2010-2011

Co-Chair Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III
Deputy Chief Court Administrator

Co-Chair Steven Eppler-Epstein, Esq.
Low Income Victims of Crime

Joseph W. Bibisi, Esq.
Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner

Chester Brodnicki
Child Victims

Antonia Cordero, D.S.W.
Academia

Laura Cordes
Victims of Sexual Assault

Janice Heggie-Margolis
Victims of Drunk Drivers

Kevin Lawlor, Esq.
Division of Criminal Justice

Daniel F. Lewis
Department of Correction

Karen Jarmoc
Victims of Domestic Violence

Kimberly Joyner
Judicial Branch

Robin Montgomery
Law Enforcement

Susan Omilian, Esq.
Survivors of Homicide Victims

Rocco Tricarico
Victims in Non-English Speaking Communities

Jan VanTassel, Esq.
Victims with Disabilities

Others who served during this biennium:

Nancy Kushins
Victims of Sexual Assault

Erika Tindill, Esq.
Victims of Domestic Violence

Members 2009-2010

Co-Chair Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III
Deputy Chief Court Administrator

Co-Chair Steven Eppler-Epstein, Esq.
Low Income Victims of Crime

Fernando Betancourt
Victims in Non-English Speaking Communities

Joseph W. Bibisi, Esq.
Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner

Larry Bostrom
Survivors of Homicide Victims

Chester Brodnicki
Child Victims

Cheryl Burack
Victims of Robbery and Assault

John Duffey
Department of Correction

Janice Heggie-Margolis
Victims of Drunk Drivers

Nancy Kushins
Victims of Sexual Assault

Kevin Lawlor, Esq.
Division of Criminal Justice

Jo-Ann Miller, Esq.
Judicial Branch

Neil O'Leary
Law Enforcement

Erika Tindill, Esq.
Victims of Domestic Violence

Jan VanTassel, Esq.
Victims with Disabilities

Others who served during this biennium:

Lawrence L. D'Orsi
Judicial Branch

Lisa Holden
Victims of Domestic Violence

Agnes Maldonado
Victims of Domestic Violence

New Initiatives

Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners

Overview

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) program, named after the late Gail Burns-Smith, a pioneer in the field of advocating for sexual assault victims, trains sexual assault forensic examiners (SAFE) to provide prompt and compassionate care and standardized forensic evidence collection to sexual assault victims 13 or older who present within 72 hours of the assault at a participating hospital.

The program utilizes a collaborative approach to provide a victim-centered response to sexual assault victims and can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The SAFE program launched on December 2, 2010, on a limited basis and became operational 24 hours per day, 7 days a week in April 2011. For the time period, December 2, 2010, to September 30, 2011, SAFEs responded to 122 requests from participating hospitals. At the end of this biennium, 30 SAFEs were participating at various levels within the program.

Legislation and Funding

Section 49 of Public Act 09-03 authorized OVS to establish and implement a sexual assault forensic examiners program under the advisement of a 12-member committee created by Section 47 of the Public Act. Section 48 of the Public Act outlined the duties and responsibilities of a SAFE. The legislation became effective October 6, 2009.

The program is funded by two American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 grants: the Violence Against Women Act, which ends December 31, 2011, and the Justice Assistance Grant that ends February 28, 2013.

SAFE Advisory Committee

The SAFE Advisory Committee (Committee) began meeting shortly after being constituted and advised on the hospitals to be included in the program; the content of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), signed by the hospitals and the Judicial Branch; the equipment provided to each hospital; the training curriculum; and input regarding ongoing issues. The Committee disbands June 30, 2012.

Participating Hospitals

In 2010 and 2011, 6 hospitals located in central and eastern Connecticut entered into MOAs with the Judicial Branch to serve as SAFE sites. Hospitals utilize an on-call system to dispatch a SAFE from the program and a sexual assault advocate from the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services. The advocate focuses on the emotional and informational needs of the victim, while the SAFE performs the forensic examination and collection of evidence.

CASE RESPONSE BY HOSPITAL

Hospital	% Case Response
Hartford Hospital	34
Hospital of Central Conn. New Britain Campus	20
St. Francis Hospital	16
Windham Hospital	11
Middlesex Hospital	11
Manchester Hospital	8

Equipment

During this biennium, the Committee recommended that the SAFE program utilize locked compact refrigerators to maintain the chain of custody for the sexual assault evidence collected, GynoCarts to convert a bed or stretcher into a gynecological exam space, and LED forensic light sources to aid in the detection of forensic evidence. The Committee also recommended that the program utilize the latest digital technology, Secured Digital Forensic Imaging (SDFI) Telemedicine, which provides high-resolution digital forensic imagery, encryption and storage of the images in a safe vault, and secure transfer of the images over the Internet to authorized recipients. This technology will be implemented in the next biennium.

Training Program

Quinnipiac University's School of Health Sciences was awarded a contract through a competitive grant process to provide a SAFE training program for registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and physicians to perform specialized forensic examination services to victims of sexual assault.

The 98 hour course, offered on-line with 3 onsite classes, covers a range of topics including:

- ∞ Dynamics of sexual assault and roles of sexual assault forensic examiners
- ∞ Normal anatomy and physiology and evaluation of the sexual assault patient
- ∞ Male sexual assault
- ∞ Drug facilitated sexual assault
- ∞ Legal considerations and the criminal justice system

During this biennium, 4 training sessions were held at Quinnipiac University with a total of 33 students completing course requirements.

SAFE Advisory Committee Members

Linda J. Cimino
Office of Victim Services, Judicial Branch

Maureen Platt Temchin, Esq.
Division of Criminal Justice

Candida Fusco, RN, MSN, SANE
Connecticut Chapter of International Association
of Forensic Nurses

Zoe Casey, M.D.
Connecticut College of Emergency Physicians

Michelle Cruz, Esq.
Office of the Victim Advocate

Regina Owusu, RN, BSN, MPH
Department of Public Health

Marielle Daniels
Connecticut Hospital Association

James Thomas
Department of Public Safety

Robert J. Hoffman
Connecticut Police Chief Association

Several individuals' knowledge and expertise have been invaluable to the SAFE Advisory Committee including Audrey Courtney, APRN; Anna Doroghazi, CONNSACS; Michelle LaBonte, RN; Patti LaMonica, RN; Nicholas Cimmino and Martin Libbin of Judicial Branch, Legal Services; Dr. Nina Livingston; Lisa Secondo and Kelly Sinko of Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Unit; Dr. Gregory Shangold; Sharon Tarala, Department of Public Health; and Karen Zott, RN.

Laura Cordes
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services

Joy Reho
Division of Scientific Services
Department of Public Safety

Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification

Overview

Section 54-235 of the Connecticut General Statutes authorized the Judicial Branch to implement a Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN) program. To accomplish this requirement, the Judicial Branch entered into a contract with Appriss, a Louisville, Kentucky based company, to provide CT SAVIN through VINELink, a searchable Web site, and 24/7 access to Appriss victim service representatives (VSR).

OVS and the Judicial Branch Information Technology Division serve as liaisons with Appriss in the development of CT SAVIN. OVS also maintains the user information and local resources found on VINELink, and utilizes VINEWatch, an administrative tool provided by Appriss, to compile statistical data and assist victims with registrations.



Although anyone can search CT SAVIN for information, the focused population is crime victims who have an offender in the criminal justice system. Access to CT SAVIN is available through the Judicial Branch or the OVS Web site by clicking on this icon.

CT SAVIN provides information when the following events occur:

- ∞ Upcoming court events
- ∞ Notice of probation violation
- ∞ Change in bail
- ∞ Sentence reduction
- ∞ Case transferred to juvenile court
- ∞ Case disposition
- ∞ Case entered in error
- ∞ Case severed
- ∞ Probation violation decision
- ∞ Case jurisdiction transfer
- ∞ Defendant failed to appear
- ∞ Appeal of verdict

Crime victims can use the VINELink Web site (www.vinelink.com) or call 1-888-846-3428 to register to receive notification in English and Spanish of changes in offenders' criminal cases by phone (land line or cell), e-mail, or TTY.

To provide access to information and to ensure the registrant receives telephone notifications, the telephone notifications are sent every 30 minutes unless the notification call is forwarded to voice mail, then the calling pattern moves to every 2 hours for 48 hours or until the notification is confirmed (registrant enters their personal identification number (PIN)). If the calling pattern concludes without the registrant entering their PIN, the notification will be counted as not deliverable. E-mail messages are sent once and do not require the registrant to enter their PIN.

CT SAVIN launched on August 26, 2010, with registrants and viewers having access to information regarding offenders with court cases.

SITE SEARCH ACTIVITY

Quarter	Phone (VSR)	VINEWatch	VINELink (CT SAVIN)
August – September, 2010	26	200	2,496
October – December, 2010	75	329	8,309
January – March, 2011	81	398	7,922
April – June, 2011	67	504	9,752
July – September, 2011	96	274	8,730
Totals	345	1,705	37,209

ACTIVITY BY TYPE OF NOTIFICATION

Quarter	Phone Events Made		Phone Events Confirmed		E-mail Events Delivered		TTY Events	
	To VSR	Out	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
August – September, 2010	49	261	64	8	200	1	0	0
October – December, 2010	197	4,278	558	159	4,129	14	0	0
January – March, 2011	244	12,912	1,351	450	11,481	30	0	6
April – June, 2011	261	17,707	1,535	690	14,495	25	0	1
July – September, 2011	255	22,034	1,600	844	16,209	6	1	3
Totals	1,006	57,192	5,108	2,151	46,514	76	1	10

ACTIVITY BY NOTIFICATION EVENTS

Notification Events	Phone Events Confirmed		E-mail Events Delivered		TTY Events	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Upcoming Court Events	4,377	1,804	39,787	48	0	8
Notice of Probation Violation	53	22	402	0	0	0
Change in Bail	72	29	569	0	1	0
Sentence Reduction	4	2	20	0	0	0
Case Transferred to Juvenile Court	3	0	3	0	0	0
Case Disposition	427	214	4,193	24	0	1
Case Entered in Error	3	0	3	4	0	0
Case Severed	6	1	41	0	0	0
Probation Violation Decision	50	17	435	0	0	1
Case Jurisdiction Transfer	43	21	407	0	0	0
Defendant Failed to Appear	55	39	585	0	0	0
Appeal of verdict	15	2	69	0	0	0
Totals	5,108	2,151	46,514	76	1	10

Stakeholders' Feedback

"I just want to thank you very much for being there for me in my time of need. It was hard enough going through everything and it was nice to know Victims Services was there for me and my son."

"After going through what I went through, it was a comfort knowing I had someone there to help me get through it."

"I appreciate the compassion shown to me from the staff at OVS at this terrible time in our life."

"As grandparents raising this child, we view this as a gift from God! Thank you so much!"

"It is a comfort to have a program as this on behalf of victims."

"[My claims examiner] was very kind to me as well as patient throughout the process when I was going through this horrible ordeal."

"It is an important healing process to compensate victims."

"Thank you for having this assistance available for victims."

"Every single encounter I had from my first phone call was compassionate, very helpful, warm, kind, in short - perfect! Also the victims advocate could not have been kinder or more helpful. Fantastic - best department I've ever worked with in Connecticut."

"Staff was extremely thorough, understanding, and conscientious of their responsibilities and our needs. [Claims examiner] was particularly calm and compassionate even when I was getting frustrated with the process due to my emotional stress and financial difficulties."

"Thank you for all the help during a difficult time. [Claims examiner] was very kind and helpful and followed through on everything."

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ∞ Wage loss calculation forms were developed to explain to claimants how salary loss was calculated by the Compensation Program.
- ∞ The practice of claims examiners facilitating discussions between claimants and insurance companies was established in an effort to assist claimants in understanding their insurance benefits and to maximize the collateral sources available to claimants.
- ∞ The deductible waiver form was amended eliminating a requirement that claimants provide a written explanation of their financial hardship.
- ∞ The form completed by police officers when a police report is unavailable was revised so that it is more concise and convenient for police department personnel to complete.
- ∞ Several internal process improvement initiatives were implemented including the development of a quality control checklist to help claims examiners identify requested, received, and pending information.

Overview

The Compensation Unit assists crime victims and family members recover from the financial impact of crime through the management of the Compensation Program.

The Compensation Program provides eligible crime victims and their families with financial assistance for unreimbursed expenses associated with medical costs, mental health expenses, lost wages, crime scene clean-up, lost wages to attend court proceedings in homicide cases, funeral expenses, and loss of support.

Compensation may not exceed \$15,000 in reimbursement for personal injury related claims and \$25,000 for survivors of homicide victims related claims.

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 statute and include:

- ∞ The costs imposed under Section 54-143 of the Connecticut General Statutes
 - \$20 per felony
 - \$15 per serious traffic offense
- ∞ \$100 application fee for pre-trial alcohol education program
- ∞ Operating a boat under the influence violation assessments
- ∞ Five percent of inmate wages
- ∞ Any restitution collected pursuant to Section 53a-30 of the Connecticut General Statutes and which is not distributed within 5 years because the victim could not be found.

The Compensation Unit receives federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Compensation funds. Fiscal administration of these funds is managed by the OVS Grants and Contracts Unit.

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

VOCA STATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2011

Number of applications received	2,174
Number of applications approved *	1,703
Numbers of applications found not eligible *	609

* Decisions on applications may occur in a different year than when they were received.

Payments by Crime Category

Homicide	\$2,790,252
Assault	2,176,849
Child Abuse	199,617
Sexual Assault	163,068
DWI/DUI	125,633
Other vehicular crimes	110,353
Kidnapping	895
Robbery with injury	660
Total	\$5,567,327

Expenses Paid by Service

Economic Support (lost wages and loss of support)	\$2,403,112
Medical/dental	1,950,247
Funeral/burial	787,256
Mental health	372,844
Other (probate court fees, attorney fees, and lost wages)	53,868
Total	\$5,567,327

The Compensation Program received 11 percent fewer claims from victims of crime in Connecticut than in the previous biennium. This decrease in the number of applications received resulted in \$906,265 less in financial assistance awarded in the 2009-2011 biennium than in the 2007-2009 biennium.

Compensation Program Activity

During this biennium, the Compensation Program financially assisted 1,431 victims of crime:

- ∞ 653 victims of assault
- ∞ 523 family members of homicide victims
- ∞ 125 victims of child abuse (includes sexual and physical abuse)
- ∞ 76 victims of sexual assault
- ∞ 31 victims of vehicular crimes
- ∞ 21 victims of DWI/DUI crimes
- ∞ 2 victims of robbery and kidnapping

Crime Type	% of Victims	% Paid
Assault	46	39
Homicide	36	50
Child Abuse	9	3
Sexual Assault	5	3
Other vehicular crimes	2	2
DWI/DUI	1	2
Robbery with injury	<1	<1
Kidnapping	<1	<1

Claimant Satisfaction Survey

In a continuing effort to monitor claimant satisfaction with the services provided, OVS mails satisfaction surveys to claimants 60 days after a determination has been made.

During this biennium, OVS mailed 1,344 satisfaction surveys with 329 completed surveys being returned, representing a 24 percent return rate.

The combined overall satisfaction with the Compensation Program for State Fiscal Years 2009-2011 reflect that 80 percent of the claimants surveyed were satisfied with the services received, which represents the same level of satisfaction expressed by claimants during the 2007-2009 biennium.

In comparison with the last biennium period, there was a 5 percent increase on the claimant's agreement that Compensation Program letters were clearly written.

Claims Review Process

Section 54-205 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes grants claimants the right to request a review of the determination decision made on their claim within 30 days from the date of the determination.

For this biennial period, victim compensation commissioners conducted 85 hearings and completed decisions on 83 hearings with 55 of the decisions affirmed and 28 reversed.

Victim Compensation Commissioners

During this biennium, the following attorneys served as victim compensation commissioners:

- ∞ Joseph W. Bibisi, chief victim compensation commissioner (Appointed by the Chief Court Administrator)
- ∞ Seth D. Feigenbaum
- ∞ Karen Fox
- ∞ Lisa K. MacDonald
- ∞ Louis A. Spadaccini

All victim compensation commissioners, appointed by the governor, are attorneys engaged in the practice of law for at least 5 years prior to their appointment.

Recovery Program

According to Section 54-212 of the Connecticut General Statutes, if a claimant brings an action against the person or persons responsible for such injury or death, OVS shall have a lien on the claimant's recovery not to exceed 2/3 of the amount paid by OVS. The recovery specialist reviews applications for the potential of recovery.

During this biennium, \$328,636 was collected on 130 files, which is a 55 percent increase from the 2007-2009 biennium.

Education and Planning Unit

Stakeholders' Feedback

Presentations

"The seniors at the Community Center would like to thank you for your fascinating workshop. They learned many things that they were not aware of and look forward to you returning for another workshop."

"Excellent training. Well informed instructors."

Police Officer Standards and Training Council

"Instructors were very professional and informative."

"Information relative to OVS tear-off sheets was very useful."

"The death notification role play was the most useful to me."

"I have a better understanding of ways to make the death notification process as easy as it can be."

Judicial Marshals

"Knowledgeable, clear, concise, and enthusiastic. Actually made me want to reconsider my career path for a few minutes, she was that good! We were lucky to have her present to us. Excellent presentation and transfer of knowledge."

"The entire program was very useful to me. It helped me appreciate/understand the OVS victim advocates and their roles in the court system."

"Most useful was learning how to treat victims of crime and where to send them if they need information."

Contractor Quarterly Trainings

"Presenter did an excellent job."

"Great training! Very helpful."

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ∞ The OVS human trafficking informational brochure was translated into 6 languages.
- ∞ Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and OVS co-sponsored its fourth *Death Notification: Delivering the News With Compassion* workshop.
- ∞ OVS launched the OVS@jud.ct.gov e-mail address.
- ∞ OVS transferred its Victim Services and Compensation Units toll-free telephone numbers from in-state only to nationwide access.
- ∞ OVS introduced the CT SAVIN presentation as a training topic in the quarterly contractor training series for staff of agencies that contract with OVS.
- ∞ OVS hosted a one day cutting-edge conference, *Social Networking: Changing the Rules*.
- ∞ Several OVS brochures and forms were revised in plain language.

Overview

The Education and Planning Unit educates the community about and promotes the awareness of the rights and concerns of Connecticut's crime victims and of OVS services, trains criminal justice system professionals, and develops materials to support education and training activities.

Community Education Activity

The Education and Planning Unit has an active community education program designed to increase the public's awareness of the rights and services available to crime victims. Community education activities include:

Focused Education to Identified Populations

During this biennial period, a presentation on the Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN) program was developed and delivered to various audiences including police officers, victim advocates, Board of Pardons and Paroles staff, probation officers, state's attorney's personnel, and Judicial Branch employees.

Presentations to the Public, Schools, and Professionals

The Education and Planning Unit presented on OVS services and victim-related topics to groups including OVS contractors and subcontractors, Judicial Branch employees, high school and college students, and community and state organizations.

During this biennium, the Education and Planning Unit provided 100 presentations to 2,247 participants.

In 2010, OVS participated in 2 Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission cross-training conferences that were offered to state and local criminal justice professionals to learn about the policies, practices, and procedures of criminal justice agencies.

At the first conference, OVS presented a workshop entitled *Victim Safety and Service Needs* that provided participants with an overview of OVS, its placement within the Judicial Branch, and the services provided to crime victims.

At the second conference, OVS collaborated with staff from the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services to present on community safety and crime reduction via successful offender re-entry.

Radio Interviews and Public Service Announcements

During this biennium, the OVS director appeared on 9 radio programs discussing crime victims' rights, available services, and the CT SAVIN program.

Each quarter this Unit released public service announcements (PSAs) describing services and providing contact information. These PSAs were released to 22 English-language radio stations and 7 Spanish-language stations.

During this biennial period, 16 PSAs tailored to specific OVS services including financial assistance, victim notification, and court-based victim advocacy were released. In April of 2010 and 2011, the PSAs included the announcement of National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

OVS Web Page

OVS posts a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the OVS Web page of the Judicial Branch Internet site. This page provides detailed information about OVS services, contact information for all OVS programs, and links to publications and Web sites related to crime victim rights and other victim related services.

Training Activity

The Education and Planning Unit provides training on the topics of victims' rights, services, and victim responses to crime to 3 primary audiences:

- ∞ Mandated audiences listed in Section 54-203 (b) (17) of the Connecticut General Statutes (judges, prosecutors, police, probation and parole personnel, bail commissioners, correction officers, and judicial marshals).
- ∞ The victim assistance community consisting of private nonprofit agencies that provide services to crime victims.
- ∞ OVS staff who provide direct and indirect services to victims of crime.

Mandated Training

OVS has participated in the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC) Recruit Training program since 1998. Information provided to recruits includes the impact of crime on victims, law enforcement's role as a first responder to victims, and death notification.

POSTC continued to schedule the OVS 4 hour training module during the third week of the 19 week training program in an effort to provide recruits with broader knowledge about crime victims and services.

MANDATED TRAINING ACTIVITY

Audience	Sessions	Participants
Judges - PreBench	2	13
Judicial Marshals - Recruits	3	121
POSTC - Recruits	7	283
Police - Other academies	1	15
Pardons and Paroles	1	16
Probation	3	87
<i>Total</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>535</i>

Victim Assistance Community Training

OVS has an important role in the delivery of training to victim assistance professionals across Connecticut. OVS's primary method of delivery to this community is through statewide training.

In November 2010, OVS and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) co-sponsored its fourth *Death Notification: Delivering the News With Compassion* workshop. Sixty 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 Education and Planning and Grants and Contracts Units conduct trainings to OVS subcontracted agency staff on the Compensation Program and a topic related to victim assistance. During this reporting period, based upon input from subcontracted agencies, the training topic *Testifying at a Trial* was continued and training on the CT SAVIN program was instituted. Nearly 160 agency staff attended these presentations.

Staff Training and Recognition

During this biennial period, 28 in-service trainings were coordinated for OVS staff, addressing topics related to specific victim populations, team building, self-care, stress management, and employee benefits.

OVS staff attended 12 Judicial Branch and 18 external trainings that included courses on leadership skill building, limited English proficiency, cultural competence, computer-based programs, domestic violence, sex offender management, elder abuse, child sexual abuse, and social networking.

During 2009, in an effort to prevent compassion fatigue, reduce stress in the workplace, and to improve morale, teamwork, and performance, OVS convened the Laughter Matters Committee that presents monthly to staff on the health benefits of laughter.

The Staff Recognition Committee, facilitated by Education and Planning Unit staff, planned 4 Staff Appreciation Days. During these events, a total of 11 OVS staff were chosen to receive staff recognition awards. The nominations are submitted by their peers and a selection committee consisting of Jury Administration staff reviewed and scored the nominations.

Materials and Correspondence

The Education and Planning Unit develops materials and correspondence 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, this Unit collaborated with subject matter experts, staff from the Judicial Branch Legal Services, OVS contractors, and members of the victim community in the revision of more than 70 forms, publications, and correspondence. The objective of the revisions is to simplify language to eliminate any potential barriers crime victims might experience when accessing OVS services.

The Education and Planning Unit also collaborated with the Materials Management Unit to recycle any copies of obsolete brochures and forms to reduce storage costs.

Grants and Contracts Unit

Stakeholders' Feedback

Quotes on the services provided by OVS funded contractors and subcontractors:

“[T]he VOCA program continues to be instrumental in the development and normalizing family relations over a difficult and trying five years ... The fact that the VOCA program came to our family at no cost during very trying times continues to be appreciated by our entire family.”

“Please accept my sincere “Thank you” for what your organization has done for me and my daughter for the past 10 months. I would like to thank all of the employees and volunteers for their help and compassion.”

“Thank you is a term that has been used so regularly that it has become common to say, but the true meaning of thanks is heartfelt gratitude and respect. Thanks deserves to be bestowed upon you for all that you have done, and especially for your kindness. ... Your support provided me with the strength to speak.”

“The staff gave us a place where we were treated with the utmost dignity, respect, and most of all gave us hope and we can now say we are survivors, no longer victims.”

“[The contractor] and [victim advocate] are doing an excellent job of helping victims and informing them of their rights. Also the support and referrals are an important part of helping victims and that is being accomplished.”

“Thanks for everything your organization does. Every action helps. Knowing you aren't alone helps. Sharing helps.”

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ∞ OVS received a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to establish and implement a Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN) program.
- ∞ Effective November 1, 2009, the Grants and Contracts Unit assumed responsibility for processing payments for the Forensic Evidence Collection program. This program reimburses hospitals for expenses related to the collection of forensic evidence and medical treatment for victims of sexual assault.
- ∞ On July 1, 2011, the Assistance to Family Members of Homicide Victims program expanded to include 3 new nonprofit victim service agencies that are providing expanded coverage throughout the state. Previously, services were limited to the Greater Hartford and New Haven areas.
- ∞ OVS issued requests for proposals for all contracts that expired on June 30, 2011. Proposals included Victim Representatives for Statewide Supervision of Sex Offender Units, Shelter Services to Victims of Human Trafficking, and federal Crime Victim Assistance.

Overview

The Grants and Contracts Unit is responsible for ensuring that all grant 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 can be provided.

Funding

OVS receives state and federal funding for the purposes of funding programs and activities that provide information, services, and assistance to victims of violent crimes and their families (See Table 1). OVS's primary source of federal funding is the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund, which provides funds for the Victim Assistance Program and the Victim Compensation Program.

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

During this biennium, OVS received grants under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for victim compensation, ongoing victim assistance programs, and start-up funding for the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners program.

OVS also received a grant from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance to implement a Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN) program in Connecticut. At the end of this biennium, OVS was awarded a second grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to enhance CT SAVIN by providing access to individuals with limited English proficiency. Activity for this grant will occur in the next biennium.

Grant funds received by OVS provided:

- ∞ Services to crime victims
OVS issued contracts totaling \$15,260,690 to nonprofit victim service agencies who provided services to 107,127 victims of crime.
- ∞ Training and technical assistance for victim service providers and others who interact with crime victims
OVS conducted 8 quarterly training sessions for service providers and provided funding for 4 statewide trainings and conferences on crime victim related issues.
- ∞ Training to service providers and the general public on the issue of human trafficking crimes and the effects on its victims
OVS contractors conducted 73 training sessions that were attended by 1,639 individuals.
- ∞ Compensation to crime victims for expenses incurred due to their victimization
See Compensation Program Activity (page 14) for description of funding.
- ∞ Reimbursement to hospitals for forensic evidence collection and forensic exams for victims of sexual assault
OVS processed payments for 2,332 forensic exams and evidence collections performed on adults and children.

Grant Funded Services to Crime Victims

Through a competitive grant process, OVS awarded funds to 43 agencies to provide services to crime victims. These agencies are located in each of Connecticut's 8 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.

Services are provided to individuals of all age ranges, races, and ethnicities. Demographic information provided for new crime victims served during this biennial period shows that the majority of victims were:

- ∞ 25 to 44 years of age (48 percent)
- ∞ Female (75 percent)
- ∞ White (52 percent)

Victim assistance programs funded with VOCA victim assistance and state appropriated funds were awarded to service providers based upon the 4 priority categories of victimization as established by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (See Table 2). The priority categories are:

- ∞ Child abuse
- ∞ Domestic violence (includes child witnesses)
- ∞ Sexual assault
- ∞ Previously underserved victims of various crimes (includes assault, robbery, hate and bias crimes, adults molested as children, intoxicated driving, elder abuse, family members of homicide victims, abuse of vulnerable adults, gang-related crimes, stalking, federal crimes, economic exploitation, and fraud)

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 (See Table 3). The largest percentage of awarded funds were for advocacy based programs, however OVS provided funding for therapy programs for adults and children, 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, or on a statewide basis through the use of regional offices. These programs provided victims with crisis counseling, safety planning, assistance with basic needs, assistance with filing compensation applications, information and referral to other social service agencies, assistance in court, and translation and interpreting services. Subcontracting agencies also worked with OVS victim services advocates.

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

compensation, he or she could receive additional therapy to be reimbursed or paid for by the Compensation Program.

OVS funded programs also provided training to service providers and the general public about human trafficking and its effects on crime victims. The purposes of the trainings were to provide information on the types of human trafficking crimes, the impact on victims of human trafficking, and how to access services for these crime victims.

On July 1, 2011, the Assistance to Family Members of Homicide Victims program expanded to include 3 new nonprofit victim service agencies that are providing expanded coverage throughout the state. Previously, services were limited to the Greater Hartford and New Haven areas.

Subcontractor Monitoring

In keeping with the responsibility to ensure that grant funds are expended in accordance with federal, state, and Judicial Branch regulations, as well as OVS policies and procedures, the Grants and Contracts Unit continued its on-site subcontractor monitoring during this biennium. Thirteen site visits were conducted during this biennium. The site visits were designed to ensure that the funded programs operate in accordance with the contract and to provide technical assistance, if needed, to the service providers.

Forensic Evidence Collection

Effective November 1, 2009, responsibility for payment for costs related to forensic evidence collection and forensic exams was transferred from the Division of Criminal Justice to OVS. Hospitals are reimbursed up to \$900 for eligible expenses related to the examination and collection of forensic evidence for adult victims of sexual assault. Forensic exams for younger victims are also reimbursed up to \$900 for eligible expenses. During this biennium, OVS reimbursed hospitals \$1,899,917 for forensic evidence collection for 660 adult sexual assault victims and 1,672 sexual assault victims who were under the age of 18.

SUMMARY OF OVS REVENUES BY FUNDING SOURCE (Table 1)
State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2009 - 2011

OVS Summary of Grant Funds Received	Total Received
Federal Awards	
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act:	
Justice Assistance	\$ 719,713
Victim Assistance	285,841
Victim Compensation	732,000
Violence Against Women	346,666
Bureau of Justice Assistance	289,700
Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance	9,402,415
Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation	2,744,000
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch	
Alternative Incarceration Program	1,479,750
Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund:	
Victim Compensation	4,050,000
Contracted Services	2,491,008
Forensic Evidence Collection (effective 11/01/09)	1,929,515
Victim Security Account	36,071
Total Grants Awarded to OVS	\$ 24,506,679

PRIORITY CATEGORY BY OVS GRANT FUNDED AGENCIES (Table 2)

Priority Category	Number of Victims Served	% of Victims Served	Expenditures*	% Expenditures
Child Abuse	8,602	8	3,318,741	22
Domestic Violence	90,326	85	7,609,471	51
Sexual Assault	5,651	5	2,600,510	17
Underserved	2,548	2	1,470,177	10
Totals	107,127	100	14,998,899	100

*Expenditures reflect total project expenditures of grant funds and subcontracting agency matching funds. Unexpended grant funds are reallocated in subsequent years for future victim services contracts.

TOP FIVE SERVICES PROVIDED BY OVS GRANT FUNDED AGENCIES (Table 3)

Type of Service Provided	Number of Victims Receiving Each Service	% of Total Victims Receiving Each Service
Assistance with Compensation	63,620	59
Criminal Justice Support and Advocacy	63,385	59
Safety Planning	60,882	57
Information and Referral – in person	57,627	54
Crisis Counseling	57,360	54

Subcontractor List SFY 2009 – 2010 and 2010 - 2011

Barnaba Institute *	Family Centers **
Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking	Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Program
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford **	FSW
Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Program	Domestic Violence Project
Charlotte-Hungerford Hospital Center for Youth and Families	Hartford Behavioral Health *
Charlotte's Place	Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Program
Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut	Human Resources Agency of New Britain
Child and Adolescent Crime Victims Assistance Program	Polish Victim Advocacy Program
Clifford Beers Clinic	International Institute
Project CATCH (Collaboration, Advocacy, and Treatment for Children)	Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking
Community Child Guidance Clinic of Manchester	Klingberg Family Centers
Victim Assistance Program	Child Abuse Treatment Services
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Mothers Against Drunk Driving, CT State Organization
Enhanced Services to Victims of Domestic Violence	Victim Assistance Program
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence	St. Francis Hospital
Services to Victims of Family Violence Court-based Program	Hartford Regional Child Abuse Support Services Program
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Survivors of Homicide
Shelter Services to Victims of Trafficking in Persons	Victim Support Service Program
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services	The Hospital of Central Connecticut
Rape Crisis Intervention Services	Victim Assistance Program
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services	United Services **
Victim Representative Services for Statewide Supervision of Sex Offenders Unit	Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Program
Connecticut Women's Consortium *	Wellpath
Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking	Child Victims Services Project
Coordinating Council for Children In Crisis	Women and Families Center
Neighborhood Victim Advocacy Program	Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking
Dixwell/Newhallville Community Mental Health Center	Yale University School of Medicine
Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Program *	Child Sexual Abuse Clinic
Domestic Violence Crisis Center **	All contracts were funded for both years, unless otherwise noted.
Esperanza, CT Project	* As of July 1, 2011, agency no longer received funding
	** As of July 1, 2011, new agency to receive funding

Victim Services Unit

Stakeholders' Feedback

“I feel very lucky to have had the assistance of [the victim advocate] throughout the entire judicial process. I would like to thank the Office of Victim Services for all of its support. I truly needed it.”

“I dealt with [the victim advocate] throughout the case and she was fabulous! She always returned my phone calls in a timely manner, was very knowledgeable, sympathetic and helpful. She made the whole experience easier and less painful. Thank you!”

“We were shepherded through the parole process by [the victim advocate] with the utmost empathy and compassion. She anticipated our concerns and most importantly, made my wife and I believe that our input was meaningful.”

“Thank you for everything you have done not only for me but also my Mom. I really appreciate how you went out of your way to come to my house. You always kept us informed. You would explain all the court jargon and make it into English for us. I trust you very much.”

“The first time I walked into your office, I knew right then and there, I would be ok. You were not only there to educate me on all the processes of the court, but also there to hug me and share my grief. I don't know how any family can get through what we went through without an advocate like you.”

“Thanks so much for taking the time and consideration to speak and listen to me the other day. You are the only person that took the time to help me understand the entire situation regarding my offender. You spoke to me on my level and were very patient with me.”

“You have been so helpful throughout all of this and your efforts are much appreciated. I think about this one case and how much you have done and then think about how overwhelming your job must be because you have so many other victims. It seems that even years later you can't break free from these cases. Thanks again.”

BIENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ∞ Victim services advocate (VSA) vacancies were filled in the Meriden GA, OVS Helpline, and the Stamford JD.
- ∞ OVS has continued to participate in the Judicial Branch Intern Program and to date has placed 8 interns with court-based VSAs.
- ∞ In July 2010, VSAs began to distribute confidential surveys to assess crime victim satisfaction with the services provided at the court and the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The survey was developed by a focus group comprised of VSAs.
- ∞ In August 2010, several VSAs volunteered to work with supervisors and personnel from the Judicial Branch Computer Systems Support to develop a case notes and statistical database program to be used by the court-based VSAs.

Overview

The Victim Services Unit serves and supports crime victims throughout the criminal justice process by notifying crime victims of their rights, referring crime victims to community services, and providing support and information.

The Victim Services Unit accomplishes these objectives by providing the following direct services:

- ∞ Victim services advocacy
- ∞ Helpline
- ∞ Protection order registry notification
- ∞ Post-conviction notification
- ∞ Board of Pardons and Paroles victim services advocacy

Victim Services Advocacy Program

The duties and responsibilities of the Victim Services Advocates (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 to be placed in court files
- ∞ 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 such victims in exercising their rights throughout the criminal justice process
- ∞ Direct victims to public and private agencies for services
- ∞ Coordinate compensation applications to OVS
- ∞ Assist victims in the processing of claims for restitution

Whether in person or by telephone, VSAs ensure that victims understand their rights at each proceeding. VSAs also accompany victims to court and support them as they present impact statements.

At the end of this biennium, 25 VSAs were assigned as follows:

- ∞ 13 Judicial District courts
- ∞ 18 Geographical Area courts
- ∞ 2 Juvenile Matters courts

COURT-BASED VSA ACTIVITY

New victims provided with services	11,910
Victims assisted with victim impact statements	7,629
Court accompaniments	5,710
Number of Notification of Rights forms provided to victims	6,690
Average number of ongoing victims provided with services in a 3 month reporting period	1,747

Helpline

OVS operates a toll-free Helpline (800-822-8428) to assist callers in obtaining information on OVS and community-based services.

The VSA assigned to the Helpline assists callers as well as victims who have cases at court locations not covered by an OVS court-based VSA. Assistance includes informing victims of their rights, helping crime victims understand the criminal justice system, and referring victims to the appropriate state's attorney or community resources.

HELPLINE ACTIVITIES

Victims assisted	4,851
Community individuals or service providers assisted	525
<i>Total Helpline calls received</i>	<i>5,376</i>

Protection Order Registry Notification Program

Public Act 02-132 established an automated registry of protective orders in Connecticut. In February 2003, the registry was enhanced by the addition of the 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 5 weeks prior to the expiration of restraining orders. The VSA answers questions, provides referrals, and informs registrants about extending restraining orders, if necessary.

PROTECTION ORDER REGISTRY NOTIFICATION ACTIVITY

Telephone calls prompted by receipt of Protective Order Registry letter	469
Referrals made from letter-prompted telephone calls	461
Protective Order Registry letters mailed to victims	59,366

Post-conviction Notification Program

In accordance with Sections 54-227 through 54-230 of the Connecticut General Statutes, OVS offers a Post-conviction Notification program. The program's goal is to provide inmate notification information to eligible individuals who have registered for the program by submitting a confidential request for notification form. Persons who may request notification are:

- ∞ Crime victims
- ∞ Parents/guardians of crime victims
- ∞ Relatives of crime victims
- ∞ Inmate family members
- ∞ State's attorneys

POST-CONVICTION NOTIFICATION ACTIVITY

Number of new victims who requested Post-conviction notification	937
Inmate status letters sent to requesters	4,662

OVS notifies registrants when an inmate has made an application to the:

- ∞ Board of Pardons and Paroles
- ∞ Department of Correction for release other than furlough
- ∞ Sentencing court or judge for a reduction in sentence
- ∞ Sentence Review Division for a review of sentence
- ∞ Sentencing court for exemption from the sex offender requirements of Section 54-251 of the Connecticut General Statutes
- ∞ Sentencing court for an order restricting the dissemination of sex offender registration

The VSA assigned to the OVS Helpline provides information about changes in the status of convicted inmates and provides referrals to registrants.

Board of Pardons and Paroles Advocacy Program

January Special Session, Public Act. 08-01, Section 14 established the placement of 2 VSAs at the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The role of the VSAs is to provide assistance to victims who appear before or submit a written victim impact statement to a panel of the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES ACTIVITY

New victims provided with services	1,686
Victims escorted to parole or pardon hearings	316
Victims assisted with victim impact statements	501

OVS VSAs work in conjunction with the Board of Pardons and Paroles to locate and assist interested victims in regard to cases in which an incarcerated inmate is being considered for parole release or an individual is requesting a pardon.

Legislative Updates

The following Public Acts, in effect during this biennium, enhanced services to crime victims and/or amended Chapter 968 Victim Services of the Connecticut General Statutes, which governs the work of OVS:

Public Act 10-36, An Act Making Minor, Technical and Conforming Changes to Certain Statutes Concerning Criminal and Civil Law and Procedure made certain technical changes to the definition of relative under Section 54-201 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Public Act 10-43, An Act Concerning Judicial Branch Powers and Procedures deleted references to OVS victim services advocates as appointed by the court since they are Judicial Branch employees (Sections 46b-122, 46b-124, 46b-138b, 54-76h, 54-76l of the Connecticut General Statutes); amends Section 54-215(a) allowing the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund to receive and spend money recovered from responsible parties or reimbursed by applicants; amends Section 54-210 (a) (4) eliminating a specific option for OVS or a victim compensation commissioner to provide low-interest loans to certain victims; amends Section 54-217 clarifying that requests for emergency awards are expedited through the process and not immediately paid.

Public Act 10-102, An Act Concerning Payment of the Costs of Forensic Sexual Assault Evidence Examinations and the Collection of DNA Samples transferred the responsibility of issuing payment to health care facilities for costs related to forensic evidence collection and forensic exams from the Division of Criminal Justice to OVS.

Public Act 10-137, An Act Concerning the Protection of, and Services for, Victims of Domestic Violence makes it easier for tenants who are victims of family violence to move by allowing them to terminate their rental agreements and not be penalized for doing so if they give the landlord at least 30 days written notice. The written notice must include, among other things, a copy of a police or court record related to the violence or a signed written statement attesting to the family violence from a victim services organization employee or agent, employees of OVS or the Office of the Victim Advocate, or a medical or other licensed professionals from whom the tenant or tenant's child sought assistance. It applies to tenants who enter into or renew rental agreements after December 31, 2010.

Public Act 10-144, An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Speaker of the House of Representatives' Task Force on Domestic Violence made a number of changes to the laws concerning family violence including enhancing existing and creating additional employment protections by prohibiting an employer from terminating, penalizing, threatening, or otherwise coercing an employee with respect to his or her employment because the employee is a family violence victim or attends or participates in a civil or criminal court proceeding related to a case in which he or she is a family violence victim. The act requires an employee who takes this leave, on request, to provide the employer with a signed written statement certifying that the leave is for a purpose authorized under the act. It also allows the employer to request that the employee provide a (1) police or court record related to the family violence or (2) signed written statement attesting to the family violence from a victim services organization employee or agent, employees of OVS or the Office of the Victim Advocate, an attorney, licensed medical professional, or other licensed professionals from whom the employee has sought assistance with respect to the family violence.

OVS MAIN NUMBER

860 263-2760

TOLL-FREE COMPENSATION

888 286-7347

TOLL-FREE HELPLINE

800 822-8428



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