

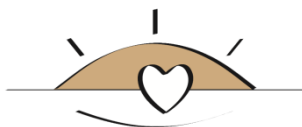
Connecticut Judicial Branch  
OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES  
**BIENNIAL ACTIVITIES REPORT**

October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013

Submitted to the Judiciary Committee

Connecticut General Assembly

*Pursuant to Section 54-203 (b) (18)  
of the Connecticut General Statutes*



OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES  
*Focusing on a brighter future*



*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.*



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF  
PATRICK L. CARROLL III  
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

January 15, 2014

231 CAPITOL AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CT 06106

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, 2011 through September 30, 2013. This document is submitted in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes § 54-203 (b) (18).

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

Sincerely,

Patrick L. Carroll III, Judge  
Chief Court Administrator

PLC: bb

C:

Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers  
Hon. Elliott N. Solomon, 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

The Office of Victim Services (OVS) has a long and proud history of providing supportive services, financial assistance, and information to crime 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 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;
- ☞ sexual assault forensic examination services; and
- ☞ funding to community-based nonprofit agencies, who assist in meeting the myriad needs of Connecticut's crime victims.

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

"I am and will always be very appreciative of the support and services my mother and I have received from your office. The services your office provides and the people we have interacted with both recently and over the years have been without exception professional, compassionate and comforting. Thanks again for your support and services and all that you do."

*~ Comment received from a victim assisted by OVS staff*

Because statistics and service overviews only provide one glimpse into OVS, 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

- During 2012-2013, OVS staff and the Advisory Council for Victims of Crime participated in Affinity Diagram exercises to identify the most critical issues facing OVS in the next three to five years. In 2014, OVS management will begin the process of creating action plans from a relations diagram developed to identify cause and effect relationships among key issues.
- Public Act 12-1, June Special Session, adds one member from OVS to serve on the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations.
- In May 2013, an Office for Victims of Crime fellow met with OVS management and several OVS subcontracted agencies to develop an in-depth profile of the victim assistance and compensation efforts and innovative practices implemented, as well as the challenges facing Connecticut.
- Five victim services advocates were hired to fill vacant positions located at the Bridgeport Geographical Area (GA) court, Central Office Helpline, New Haven Juvenile Matters court, New London GA court, and the Stamford Judicial District/GA court.

# Response to the Sandy Hook Elementary School Tragedy

In the morning hours of December 14, 2012, 20 year-old Adam Lanza forced his way into the Sandy Hook Elementary School, taking the lives of 20 children, six educators, and wounding two school staff members. Earlier that morning, Lanza had also taken his mother's life at the Newtown home they shared.

Immediately following news of the tragedy, OVS coordinated response efforts with state, federal, and community-based agencies, and mobilized staff to the Family Assistance Center (FAC), established by the American Red Cross in Newtown, to provide information on OVS financial resources. OVS staff provided more than 100 hours of coverage at the FAC until its closing on December 31, 2012.

OVS staff contacted the treating hospital, local funeral homes, local faith-based establishments, and school administrators to distribute information and/or customized victim compensation applications. OVS staff also obtained a list of direct victims and students enrolled at the Sandy Hook Elementary School for outreach efforts and as a cross-reference tool to identify applications received.

The OVS director worked closely with Judicial Branch administrators and Town of Newtown administrators on a federal grant application to secure funding under the U.S. Department of Justice, Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program for Crime Victim Assistance Grant. The intent of the grant funds is to reimburse several community-based organizations, various municipalities, including Newtown and the Connecticut State Police for the costs incurred in the provision of crisis intervention services, victim related law enforcement support, and the relocation of Sandy Hook Elementary School students to a new school.

The OVS Compensation Unit has an integral role in providing services to the victims, family members, and others impacted by this tragedy through the management of the Victim Compensation Program, the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program, and the administration of the Immediate Needs Fund, a collaborative effort between OVS, the United Way of Western Connecticut, and the Newtown Rotary Club Foundation (See Compensation Unit, pages 5-9).

In addition, Compensation Unit staff also attended several informational-community meetings at various locations in Newtown to provide information on the programs and services available to families of the victims, parents of the children who attend Sandy Hook Elementary School, school personnel, and first responders.

As the victims, family members of the victims, first responders, and the Newtown community move forward in their recovery from the emotional and financial effect of this tragic and senseless crime, OVS will continue to respond to their needs.

OVS staff would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the following individuals and Judicial Branch departments for their support in OVS's response to this tragedy: Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers; Chief Court Administrator, the Honorable Barbara M. Quinn; Deputy Chief Court Administrator, the Honorable Patrick L. Carroll III; Executive Director of Superior Court Operations Joseph D'Alesio, Esq.; the Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime; staff from the Commission on Official Legal Publications; External Affairs; Judicial Information Systems; and the Legal Services Department.

# Compensation Unit

## Overview

The Compensation Unit is responsible for receiving and determining applications for victim compensation to provide eligible crime victims, family members of homicide, sexual assault, and domestic violence victims, non-relative child witnesses of domestic violence, and other eligible persons with financial assistance for certain unreimbursed expenses associated with violent crime.

## Victim Compensation Program

The Compensation Unit may award victim compensation on eligible claims for unreimbursed crime-related expenses not covered by other collateral sources. Eligible crime-related expenses include the costs associated with medical and mental health care, lost wages, funeral expenses, and crime scene cleanup. Awards may not exceed \$15,000 for personal injury claims and \$25,000 for survivor benefits claims, with the claims of dependents and relatives processed as derivatives of the crime victim's claim.

OVS has a statutory right to recover two-thirds of the compensation paid from monies a claimant receives as a direct result of the crime. If the court orders restitution to the claimant for expenses paid by the Victim Compensation Program, OVS is entitled to receive full reimbursement, unless the court orders differently.

Claimants who disagree with the determination issued by the Compensation Unit have a statutory right to request a review of the determination by a victim compensation commissioner (VCC).

## Biennial Highlights

- Legislation passed that expanded victim compensation to family members of domestic violence (Public Act 11-152) and non-relative child witnesses of domestic violence (Public Act 12-114).
- Public Act 12-133 allows OVS or a VCC to consider the disclosure of an alleged sexual assault or risk of injury to a minor to certain professionals outlined in statute in lieu of a police report or police findings. This Public Act also eliminated the requirement that claimants must have a \$100 minimum of out-of-pocket costs before compensation may be considered, the elimination of the \$100 deductible from the total amount of compensation awarded, and extended OVS's rights to recover two-thirds of the compensation awarded from settlements a claimant receives from his or her own collateral sources.
- OVS was named as the administrator of the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program, which financially assists certain professionals who suffered a mental or emotional impairment as a result of their response or scheduled response to the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy.
- OVS collaborated with the United Way of Western Connecticut and the Newtown Rotary Club Foundation to serve as the administrator of the Immediate Needs Fund, which provides financial assistance to certain persons affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy.

“What a wonderful group of people. Everyone that I spoke to were so wonderful and supportive and went out of their way to help us. We were really doing badly in every way. Very depressed, emotional and it took a [toll] on us financially. If victim services did not help us when they did, we would have never been able to get out of it. I can't and my family cannot thank you enough. You truly saved us.”

*~ Comment received from a Victim Compensation Program survey.*

## Funding

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

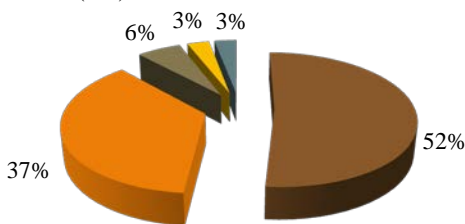
The Connecticut General Assembly allocates funds from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF). Deposits into the CICF are specified in the Connecticut General Statutes and include:

- ☞ defendants' contributions (Section 54-56h);
- ☞ court fines and fees (Sections 54-143, 15-140p, 53a-217e, and 54-56g);
- ☞ 5% of inmate work release wages (Section 18-85);
- ☞ halfway house client wages (Section 18-101); and
- ☞ any restitution collected pursuant to Section 53a-30 that is not distributed within five years because the victim could not be located [Escheated funds] (Section 54-215(b)).

### CICF Total Revenues: \$6,391,864.44

October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013

- Defendants' contributions (52%)
- Court fines and fees (37%)
- Compensation Program subrogation recoveries (6%)
- \*Escheated funds (3%)
- \*\*Other (3%)



\* Escheated 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.

\*\*Other category includes halfway house client wages, 5% of Department of Correction inmate work-release wages, Compensation Program reimbursements from overpayments, private donations, and investment interest.

The Victim Compensation Program 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, 2011–September 30, 2013

Number of applications received	2,552
Number of applications approved *	2,194
Numbers of applications found not eligible *	350

\* Decisions on applications may occur in a year different than received.

### Payments by Crime Category

Homicide	\$2,847,362
Assault	2,158,880
Child Abuse	192,118
Sexual Assault	132,057
DWI/DUI	125,090
Other vehicular crimes	164,569
Robbery with injury	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,620,181</b>

### Expenses Paid by Service

Economic Support (lost wages and loss of support)	\$2,366,048
Medical/dental	1,994,546
Funeral/burial	812,661
Mental health	368,107
Other (attorney fees, crime scene cleanup, and travel expenses for court proceedings)	78,819
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,620,181</b>

The Compensation Unit received 17% more applications from victims of crime than in the previous biennium. This increase in the number of applications received resulted in \$52,854 additional financial assistance awarded in the 2011-2013 biennium than in the 2009-2011 biennium.

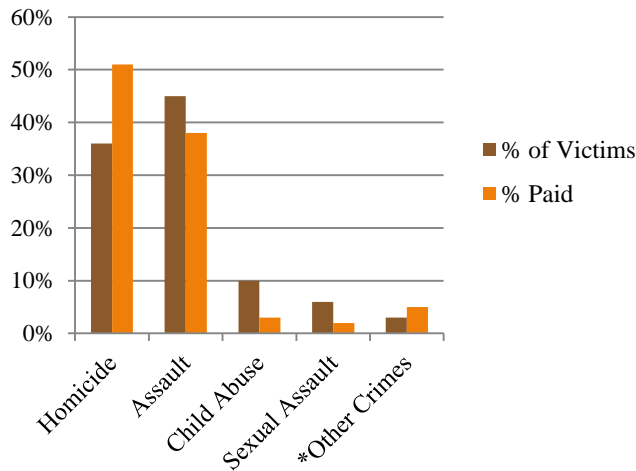
## Victim Compensation Program Activity

### Compensation Awarded

During this biennium, the Compensation Unit awarded compensation on 1,425 claims for expenses associated with medical and mental health care, lost wages for personal injury victims, lost wages to attend court proceedings in homicide cases, funerals, and loss of support.

### Victims and Payments by Crime Type

October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013



\*Other crimes include DWI/DUI, other vehicular crimes, and robbery with injury.

### Filing time Requirement

Section 54-211 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires a person seeking victim compensation to file a victim compensation application within two years from the date of the personal injury or death. This section also allows OVS to grant a waiver if the claimant meets certain criteria.

During this biennium, the Compensation Unit received 183 applications requesting waivers of the two-year filing requirement and granted 174 waiver requests.

### Compromised Claims

The Compensation Unit advocates on behalf of eligible claimants 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.

“I think the program is great. Thanks for helping me and my family in our time of need and saddest time in our lives.”

~ Comment received from a Victim Compensation Program survey.

During this biennium, Compensation Unit staff successfully compromised more than \$450,000 in expenses on behalf of claimants.

### 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 Compensation Unit 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

The governor appoints five VCCs for a term of four years to hear requests for a review of the determination and to make a determination on the claimant’s application based on such review. VCCs are attorneys engaged in the practice of law for at least five years prior to their appointment.

During this biennium, the VCCs heard 80 review requests and issued 80 decisions. Fifty-two of those decisions affirmed the determination made by the Compensation Unit, while 28 determinations were reversed by the VCCs.

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. Karen Fox (retired May 2013);
- ☞ Atty. Lisa K. MacDonald; and
- ☞ Atty. Louis A. Spadaccini.



## 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 two-thirds of the amount paid by OVS.

Public Act 12-133 extended OVS's rights to recover two-thirds of the compensation awarded from settlements a claimant receives from his or her own collateral sources.

During this biennium, \$337,778 was collected on 301 files, which is a 3% increase from the 2009-2011 biennium and a 130% increase in the number of files for which OVS received recovery funds.

## Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program

Special Act 13-1 named OVS as the administrator of the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program (Program) and directed OVS to accept applications on or after April 1, 2013.

The Program provides immediate financial help for emergency responders, medical and mental health professionals, and Sandy Hook Elementary School employees who suffered a mental or emotional impairment as a result of their response or scheduled response to the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy.

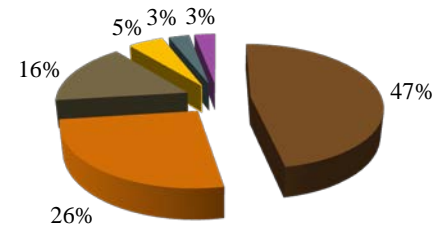
[The claims examiner] "helped me through my worst time in my whole life with compassion. She is wonderful."

*~ Comment received from a Victim Compensation Program survey.*

Eligible persons can receive financial help for unreimbursed wages from their employment or volunteer service and payments for related medical and/or mental health expenses that are not covered by health insurance or any other financial resources. Financial assistance cannot exceed 52 weeks of benefits, and applications must be filed with OVS no later than June 30, 2014, with benefit payments ending on August 31, 2015.

## Applications Received by Category

April 1, 2013–September 30, 2013



- Sandy Hook Elementary School Teacher/Paraprofessional (47%)
- Police Officer/Firefighter (26%)
- Sandy Hook Elementary School Employee (16%)
- Volunteer Police Officer/Firefighter (5%)
- Medical Professional (3%)
- Volunteer Auxiliary Police Officer/Firefighter (3%)

Applicants must provide an opinion written by a licensed medical professional providing mental health services that documents the mental or emotional impairment, which prevented the applicant from doing his or her job or volunteer service or required medical, surgical aid, hospital, or nursing services.

OVS's implementation of the Program included developing an application, letters and forms to communicate with and request information from applicants, the development of a database to track applications, policies and procedures to guide the processing of applications, and the reassignment of a Judicial Branch employee to process claims.

The Public Act requires OVS to determine applications within 10 days of receipt or within 10 days of receiving the required information. The Act allows an applicant to request a review of the determination with a VCC and requires OVS to assign the case to a VCC within three days of receipt. The VCC must hold the hearing within 20 days of receiving the case and issue a determination within 20 days of the hearing.

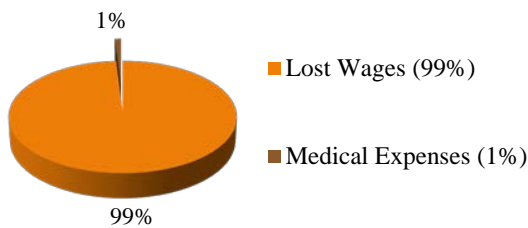
During the six-month period, 58 applications were received; 20 applications were approved for payment with the remaining applications pending a determination and/or submission of eligible losses.

The Compensation Unit has met the statutory deadlines to respond to requests for financial assistance, and has not received any requests for a review of the determinations issued.

The Special Act also established the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Fund (Fund) to pay the Program’s benefits, administrative expenses, and operating costs. The Special Act directs the State Comptroller’s and State Treasurer’s offices to issue payments awarded under the Program and allows the Treasurer’s office to accept gifts, donations, and grants from public and private sources for the Fund.

From April 1, 2013, through September 30, 2013, \$218,361.08 in donations were received with \$71,294.16 disbursed to applicants as indicated in the following chart:

**Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program  
Financial Assistance by Expense Type**  
*April 1, 2013–September 30, 2013*

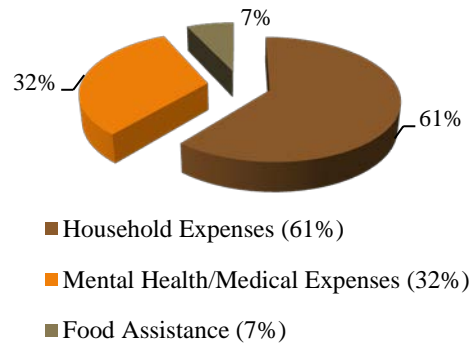


**Immediate Needs Fund**

The United Way of Western Connecticut (UWWC) and the Newtown Rotary Club Foundation (NRCF) combined donations to create a short-term Immediate Needs Fund (INF) to provide financial assistance to certain persons affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy.

The INF provides financial help with basic household expenses and groceries for individuals directly affected and experiencing a decrease in income as a result of the tragedy, including families who lost loved ones, families who have children enrolled in the Sandy Hook Elementary School, school personnel, and first responders.

**Immediate Needs Fund  
Financial Assistance by Expense Type**  
*February 6, 2013–September 30, 2013*



The INF also helps pay the costs associated with mental health care, not covered by another source, for these individuals and other persons impacted by the tragedy.

Based on the Compensation Unit’s experience with processing and determining requests for financial assistance, the UWWC and NRCF collaborated with OVS to administer the INF on February 6, 2013.

OVS management developed a method to accept and process requests for assistance and established a dedicated telephone number (1-860-990-1984) to receive such requests and to provide information and answer questions regarding the INF.

“Thank you so much for everything. It is a nice feeling to know that you are looking out for us.”  
~ Comment received from an individual who received assistance from the Immediate Needs Fund.

Compensation Unit staff works with applicants to obtain the necessary documentation before forwarding completed requests for assistance to the UWWC, the organization responsible for deciding who receives assistance and the amount of assistance provided.

At the end of this biennium, OVS received and submitted 1,233 requests for financial assistance from 129 Newtown families with more than \$557,000 in expenses paid by the INF.

# Fiscal Services Unit

## Overview

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 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. 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 advocacy 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.

The federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant that was awarded in 2010 to implement the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners program ended on February 28, 2013. As of March 1, 2013, state funding was awarded to continue the program.

OVS also utilized grant funding awarded from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance in the 2009-2011 biennium to enhance the Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN) program by providing access to individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

## Biennial Highlights

- Effective October 1, 2012, the Fiscal Services Unit assumed the responsibility of reimbursing providers or examiners working with a Multidisciplinary Team or Child Advocacy Centers for expenses related to forensic interviews of child victims of sexual abuse.
- The VOCA award was reduced by 11% due to a federal mandate that required administrative costs be prorated to all programs, including VOCA programs. OVS utilized open grants to accommodate the reduction without the need to reduce nonprofit contracts in fiscal year 2012-2013.

“[OVS funded victim advocate] has always been there for me to help with any questions, frustrations, confusion, and for comfort in times of the most unbearable emotional stress and trauma imaginable. If she did not have an answer to a question I had, she would always make certain that she researched all the resources she had and got back to me with some explanation ... and always in a timely manner. I can't say enough wonderful things about her compassion and knowledge.”

*~ Comment received on the services provided by an OVS funded contractor.*

## Summary of OVS Revenues by Funding Source

July 1, 2011–June 30, 2013

Federal Awards	
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act	
Justice Assistance	\$ 524,941
Victim Assistance	35,933
Violence Against Women	90,072
Bureau of Justice Assistance	119,200
Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance	9,493,869
Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation	2,153,000
<b>Total Federal Funds Awarded</b>	<b>\$12,417,015</b>
State Funds	
Alternative Incarceration Program	1,288,114
Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund	
Victim Compensation	4,050,000
Contracted Services	2,751,029
Forensic Evidence Collection	2,118,120
Forensic Interview Reimbursement	100,000
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners	125,000
Victim Security Account	13,055
<b>Total State Funds Awarded</b>	<b>\$10,445,318</b>
<b>Total Funding for OVS Programs</b>	<b>\$22,862,333</b>

### Program funding received by OVS provided:

#### ☞ Services to crime victims

OVS issued contracts totaling \$16,396,665 to 43 nonprofit victim service agencies who provided services to 111,828 victims of crime.

#### ☞ Training and technical assistance for victim services providers and others who interact with crime victims

OVS conducted eight quarterly training sessions for service providers and provided funding for three statewide 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 subcontracting agencies conducted 46 training sessions that were attended by 804 individuals.

#### ☞ Reimbursement to hospitals for forensic evidence collection and forensic exams for victims of sexual assault

OVS processed payments for 4,048 forensic exams and evidence collections for 3,140 adult and child victims of sexual assault.

#### ☞ Compensation to crime victims for expenses incurred due to their victimization

See Compensation Unit (pages 6 and 7) for description of funding.

### Grant Funded Services to Crime Victims

During this biennium, OVS continued to provide funding to 43 agencies to provide services to crime victims. These 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.

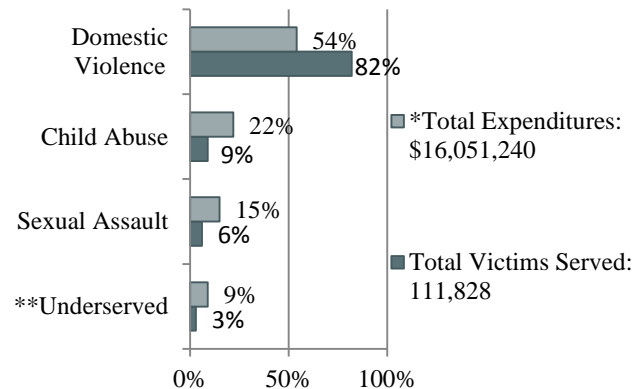
Services are provided to individuals of all age ranges, races, and ethnicities. Demographic information provided for new crime victims served during this biennial period indicates that the majority of victims were:

- ☞ 25 to 44 years of age (48%);
- ☞ female (75%); and
- ☞ white (49%).

Victim assistance programs funded with VOCA victim assistance and state funds were awarded to service providers based upon the four priority categories of victimization as established by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

### OVS Grant Funded Priority Categories

July 1, 2011–June 30, 2013



\*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.

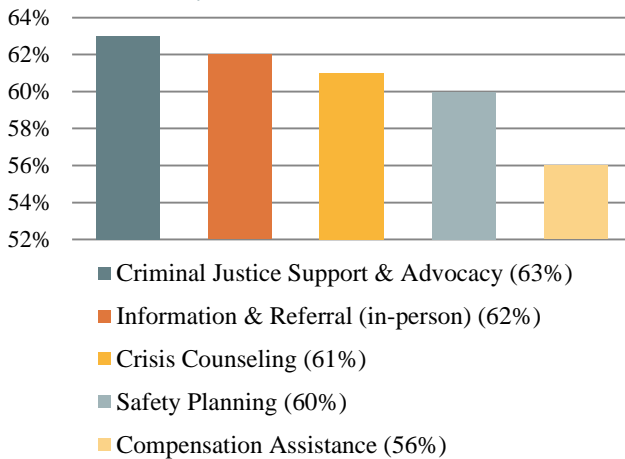
\*\*Underserved represents victims of various crimes including assault, robbery, hate and bias crimes, adults molested as children, intoxicated driving, elder abuse, family members of homicide victims, abuse of vulnerable adults, gang-related crimes, stalking, federal crimes, economic exploitation, and 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. The largest percentage of awarded funds were used 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.

### Top Five OVS Grant Funded Services

July 1, 2011–June 30, 2013



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. 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 Victim Compensation Program.

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

### Subcontractor Monitoring

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

### Forensic Sex Evidence Exams Account

The Fiscal Services Unit is responsible for processing payments for the costs incurred, not to exceed \$900 per case, by hospitals for the examination and evidence collection of adult and child victims of sexual assault, and for the costs incurred, not to exceed \$250 per interview, by providers or examiners working in conjunction with Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) or Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) for the forensic interviews of child victims of sexual abuse.

During this biennium, the Fiscal Services Unit reimbursed hospitals \$2,589,882 for forensic examination and collection services provided to 778 adult victims and 2,362 child victims of sexual assault. Providers working in conjunction with MDTs and CACs were reimbursed \$99,500 for forensic interviews of 398 child victims of sexual abuse.

“It really is a great program [Survivors of Homicide]. ... It is the only place that I ever felt that someone else knew how I was feeling. It is a good program and a necessary one because counseling is difficult to find, sometimes not covered by insurance and the meetings do have a therapeutic effect.”

~ Comment received on the services provided by an OVS funded program.

# Subcontractor List

July 1, 2011-June 30, 2013

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## Assistance to Survivors of Homicide Program

- ~ Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford
- ~ Family Centers
- ~ United Services

## Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking

- ~ International Institute
- ~ Women and Families Center

## Charlotte's Place

- ~ Charlotte-Hungerford Hospital Center for Youth and Families

## Child Abuse Treatment Services

- ~ Klingberg Family Centers

## Child and Adolescent Crime Victims Assistance Program

- ~ Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut

## Child Sexual Abuse Clinic

- ~ Yale University School of Medicine

## Child Victim Services Project

- ~ Wellmore

## Domestic Violence Project

- ~ FSW

## Enhanced Services to Victims of Domestic Violence

- ~ Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

## Esperanza, Connecticut Project

- ~ 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

## Rape Crisis Intervention Services

- ~ Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services

## 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

“I am so glad I went [to the parent support group for child sexual abuse victims]. It answered so many questions for me that I was just too upset about asking or just couldn't think about when it first happened. It is so good to have the information of who and what each person does. I know who to go to if I have questions, and it is so helpful to have everything in one place.”

*~ Comment received on the services provided by an OVS funded program.*

## Victim Assistance Program

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

## Victim Representative Services for Statewide Supervision of Sex Offenders Unit

- ~ Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services

## Victim Support Service Program

- ~ Survivors of Homicide

# Gail Burns-Smith Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Program

## Overview

The Gail Burns-Smith Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) Program trains registered nurses, advanced practiced registered nurses, and physicians as sexual assault forensic examiners (SAFEs) to provide prompt, compassionate care and standardized forensic evidence collection to sexual assault victims. The Program is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week to victims of sexual assault, 13 years or older, who request SAFE services at a participating hospital within 120 hours of the assault.

## Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) was created by Public Act 09-03 to advise OVS in the establishment and implementation of the SAFE Program until its termination in June 2012. Public Act 12-133, extended the Advisory Committee's termination date to June 2013.

The Advisory Committee's statutory membership included representatives from hospitals, forensic practitioners, sexual assault crisis service programs, the criminal justice system, and the Department of Public Health (See Advisory Committee, page 17).

"I felt that the [SAFE] examiner who did the rape kit was kind, professional and explained everything that had to be done for the rape kit. [The SAFE] made the horrible exam for the rape kit more bearable."

*~ Comment received from a sexual assault victim who accessed SAFE Program services.*

During this biennium, the Advisory Committee discussed and provided input on SAFE Program standards and requirements, funding, public outreach, patient transfers to participating hospitals, SAFEs response times, patient consent, and other various issues.

## Biennial Highlights

- In January 2012, OVS and Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services hosted a reception in honor of the first anniversary of the SAFE Program and recognized SAFE Program staff, legislators, and others for their support.
- In February 2012, the SAFE Program implemented a Secured Digital Forensic Imaging (SDFI) TeleMedicine camera system that uses the latest digital technology with online secure file storage.
- The SAFE Program was featured as a round table discussion and presentation at the Healthcare Advances in Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Assault: Developing Research, Practice, and Policy Conference in September 2012.
- The first SAFE nurse to testify as a fact witness on the evidence collected during a sexual assault forensic examination occurred in October 2012 in a New Britain Superior Court criminal case. The jury found the defendant guilty of the criminal charges.
- In June 2013, the evidence collection deadline was extended from 72 hours after the sexual assault to 120 hours after the sexual assault as a result of advances in DNA technology.

## Funding

The SAFE Program was funded by two American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 grants: a Violence Against Women Act Grant, which ended December 31, 2011, and a Justice Assistance Grant that ended on February 28, 2013. State appropriations for the remainder of the fiscal period was awarded in the amount of \$125,000. For the July 2013 to June 2015 budget cycle, \$574,800 in state funding will be allocated for operational needs and the costs associated with training nurses and physicians to participate in the SAFE Program.

## Participating Hospitals

The Connecticut Judicial Branch entered into Memorandum of Agreements with the following six acute care hospitals in the Hartford, Middlesex, and Windham counties to serve as SAFE sites:

- ☞ Hartford Hospital;
- ☞ Manchester Memorial Hospital;
- ☞ Middlesex Hospital;
- ☞ Saint Francis Hospital;
- ☞ The Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain; and
- ☞ Windham Hospital.

“Thank you for all you do. The SAFE nurse was outstanding. Made all of us feel comforted and explained everything very well.”

~ Comment received from a sexual assault victim who accessed SAFE Program services.

SAFE Program staff host quarterly meetings with hospital administrators to provide program updates and to discuss hospital orientation and educational requirements.

The participating hospitals utilize an on-call system to dispatch a SAFE nurse from the SAFE Program. The responding SAFE contacts a sexual assault advocate from the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services for a team-coordinated response.



*SAFE Program anniversary event speakers from left to right: OVS Director Linda J. Cimino, State’s Attorney Maureen Platt, CONNSACS Executive Director Laura Cordes, and Executive Director of Saint Francis Emergency Services Patti LaMonica.*

While the sexual assault advocate focuses on the emotional and informational needs of the victim, the SAFE performs the forensic examination and collection of evidence.

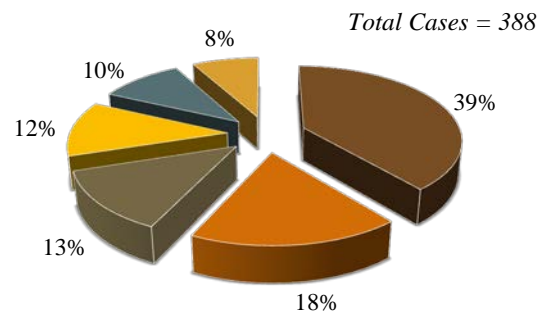
During this biennium, the SAFE Program responded to 388 cases at participating hospitals.

The majority of victims receiving services were:

- ☞ 18 to 24 years of age (31%);
- ☞ female (96%); and
- ☞ white (53%).

## Case Response by Hospital

October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013



- Hartford Hospital (39%)
- Saint Francis Hospital (18%)
- The Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain (13%)
- Windham Hospital (12%)
- Manchester Memorial Hospital (10%)
- Middlesex Hospital (8%)



## Training

The SAFE Program trains registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and physicians to perform specialized forensic examination services.

SAFE Program staff also educate law enforcement, prosecutors, and community-based sexual assault advocates on the SAFE Program and forensic services to support a coordinated, multi-disciplinary response.

### *SAFE Training*

The SAFE Program utilized grant funding to provide a hybrid seven-week didactic SAFE training course awarded to the Quinnipiac University, School of Health Sciences, through a competitive bidding process.

The training curriculum covered a range of topics including the dynamics of sexual assault, normal anatomy and physiology, evaluation of the sexual assault patient, drug facilitated sexual assault, legal considerations, and the criminal justice system.

Four trainings were offered during this biennium with 31 health care professionals successfully completing the SAFE training course offered at Quinnipiac University.

SAFES are also required to complete 15 precepted clinical exams and attend the SAFE Program Orientation, as well as orientations for each participating hospital.

To assist SAFES in meeting the clinical exam requirement, the Connecticut Judicial Branch entered into an agreement with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England to provide clinical sites for the preceptorships.

During this biennium, 31 health care professionals were awarded contracts with the Connecticut Judicial Branch to serve as SAFES in the SAFE Program.

The remaining grant funds were utilized to transfer the SAFE training course under the SAFE Program. The contract with Quinnipiac University ended, and the SAFE Program staff collaborated with the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), a national leader in forensic nursing, in the development of the didactic training curriculum. IAFN approved the OVS SAFE training course for 40 continuing nursing education credits.

### *Quality Assurance Meetings*

SAFES are required to attend monthly Quality Assurance meetings that provide ongoing education, peer review, and SAFE Program updates.

During this biennium, the meetings included information on professional development, self-care, how to testify in court, victim compensation, and legal and ethical standards.

### *Sexual Assault Advocates*

The SAFE Program and sexual assault advocates from the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services' member programs coordinate a team response to SAFE Program activations.

To facilitate an integrated response, the SAFE Program hosts training sessions for sexual assault advocates to become familiar with forensic procedures, including triage levels, methods used to conduct a forensic exam, and the elements of evidence collection.

“The SAFE did a phenomenal job during my exam. The advocate helped me through the exam by ensuring me it was alright.”

~ Comment received from a sexual assault victim who accessed SAFE Program services.

### *Law Enforcement and Prosecutors*

During this biennium, SAFE Program staff co-taught a sexual assault/rape crisis module with a certified instructor at the Police Officer Standards and Training Council.

The objectives of the training included providing recruits with information on the myths and facts about sexual assault, introduction of the sexual assault evidence collection process used in Connecticut, and the procedures to follow when an evidence collection kit is submitted anonymously. A similar training was also provided to recruits at the Hartford Police Academy.

During this biennium, SAFE Program staff also provided training sessions to law enforcement and prosecutors in the Hartford, Middlesex, and Windham counties on the topics of evidence collection, SDFI forensic images, and the role of the SAFE in court proceedings.

“The SAFE nurse was excellent and professional. [The sexual assault advocate] was excellent and kind. The police officer was ‘wonderful’ at his job.”

~ Comment received from a sexual assault victim who accessed SAFE Program services.

### Equipment

In February 2012, the SAFE Program implemented SDFI, state-of-the-art technology that provides high-resolution digital forensic imagery, encryption, and secure storage and transfer of images over the Internet to authorized recipients.

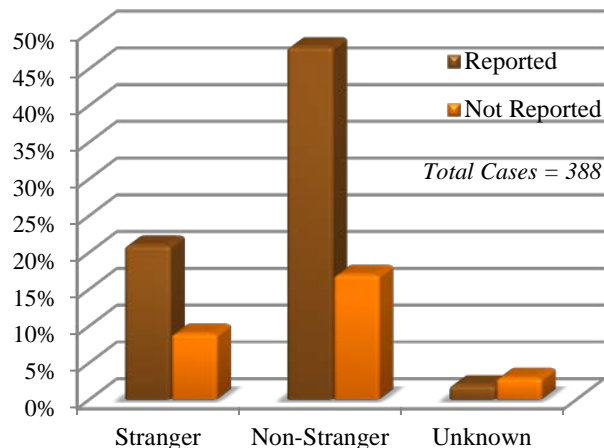
This technology provides law enforcement and prosecutors with secure access to forensic images to assist in their investigation and prosecution of sexual assault crimes.

The SAFE Program protocols require that a sexual assault victim consent to the use of the SDFI camera system during the forensic exam. During this biennium, 51% of sexual assault victims consented to the use of this technology.

The SAFE Program also utilized or provided HEPA filtered swab dryers to reduce cross-contamination and to more effectively and efficiently remove moisture from swabs containing forensic evidence.

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

October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members during October 1, 2011-June 30, 2013

### Statutory Members:

- Atty. Garvin Ambrose, Office of Governmental Accountability, Office of the Victim Advocate
- Dr. Zoe Casey, Connecticut College of Emergency Physicians
- Linda J. Cimino, Office of Victim Services, Judicial Branch
- Laura Cordes, Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services
- Atty. Michelle Cruz, former victim advocate, Office of Governmental Accountability, Office of the Victim Advocate
- Marielle Daniels, Connecticut Hospital Association
- Candida Fusco, Connecticut Chapter of International Association of Forensic Nurses
- Chief Robert J. Hoffman, Connecticut Police Chief Association
- Regina Owusu, Department of Public Health
- Atty. Maureen Platt Temchin, Division of Criminal Justice
- Joy Reho, Division of Scientific Services, Department of Public Safety
- Sergeant James Thomas, Department of Public Safety

# Training and Outreach Unit

## Overview

The Training and Outreach Unit is responsible for training criminal justice system professionals, educating the community about and promoting awareness of the rights and concerns of Connecticut's crime victims and of OVS services, distributing materials to support education and training activities, and staff development.

## Training

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

- ☞ 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);
- ☞ the victim assistance community consisting of nonprofit agencies that provide services to crime victims; and
- ☞ OVS staff.

“Most useful was the information on where to refer victims in the courthouse. I also learned how to speak with and approach victims. The language you should or should not use with victims.”

*~ Comment received on a training provided to Judicial Branch Marshals*

## Biennial Highlights

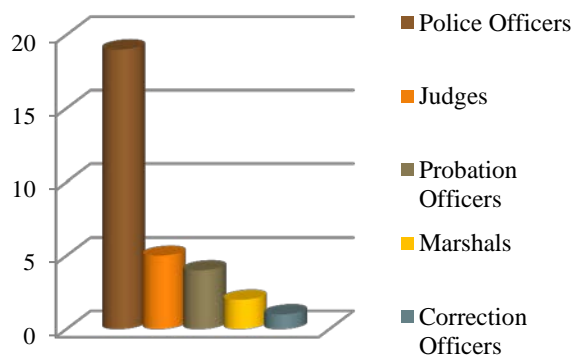
- Public Act 12-133 expanded OVS's mandated training audience to include Court Support Services Division (CSSD) Intake, Assessment, and Referral (IAR) Specialists. During 2012-2013, the Training and Outreach Unit consulted with CSSD staff to assist in the development of a curriculum tailored to the duties and responsibilities of an IAR Specialist. Trainings to IAR Specialists will be provided in 2014.
- In collaboration with the Superior Court Operations Continuing Education Unit, the Training and Outreach Unit provided Limited English Proficiency (LEP) training to OVS funded subcontractors. The training included an overview of the federal LEP requirements and various methods for ensuring that LEP individuals have equal access to services.
- The Training and Outreach Unit assisted the Department of Children and Families (DCF) with the implementation of Public Act 13-77 that required DCF to provide information to non-offending parents and guardians in child abuse investigations on OVS services and obtaining a restraining order. Two OVS publications and a Judicial Branch Family Matters publication were distributed to DCF regional offices with information on how to request additional publications.

### *Mandated Training Activity*

During this biennium, the Training and Outreach Unit provided 31 trainings to more than 1,000 professionals in the criminal justice system.

The majority of those trainings were provided to law enforcement, primarily through the Police Officer Standards and Training Council 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.

**Mandated Training Activity**  
*October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013*  
Training Sessions = 31



### *Victim Assistance Community Training*

As the state's lead agency established to provide services to crime victims, OVS has an important role in the delivery of training to victim assistance professionals across Connecticut.

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. OVS presented on victim notification at the 2012 conference and OVS services at the 2013 conference.

In November 2012, OVS and Mothers Against Drunk Driving co-sponsored its fifth *Death Notification: Delivering the News With Compassion* workshop.



*OVS Director Linda J. Cimino welcomed attendees during the 2012 Melanie Ilene Rieger Memorial Conference Against Violence Opening Ceremonies.*

Approximately, 70 law enforcement personnel and other victim-related professionals learned techniques on delivering compassionate death notification and acquired information on managing stress and developing resilience.

“Good presentation and training on how and what to do when working with victims and providing a death notification. Thank you.”

~ Comment received on a training provided to police officers

Each quarter, the Training and Outreach Unit and Fiscal Services Unit provide half-day trainings to the staff of OVS subcontracting agencies. The trainings included information on OVS services, victim rights, victim notification, and testifying at a trial. More than 125 staff from subcontracting agencies attended the presentations offered during this reporting period.

### **Community Education Activity**

The Training and Outreach Unit has 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 80 presentations on OVS services and victim-related topics to more than 2,000 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.

*Resource Tables*

The Training and Outreach Unit staffed resource tables at various venues to distribute OVS materials and raise awareness about OVS services. During this biennium, OVS provided information at 15 resource tables at professional conferences, health fairs, college fairs, and other community events.

“This training was right up my alley. The presenter not only knew what to teach but also how to teach this important and sensitive information.”

~ Comment received on a presentation provided to a community group

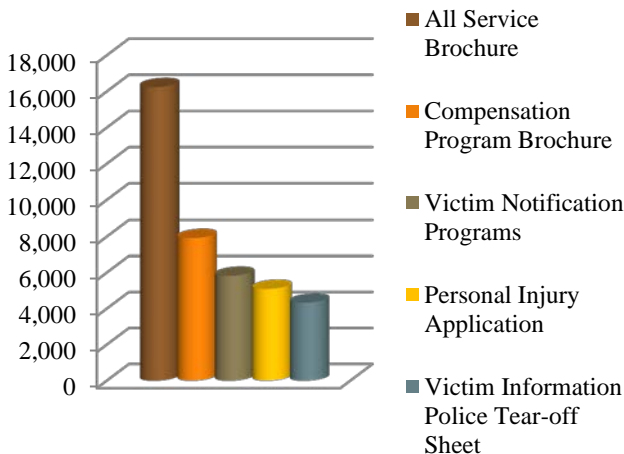
*Distribution of OVS Materials*

The Training and Outreach Unit collaborated with the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Accreditation and Auditing Unit; Court Service Center staff; and Public Information Desk staff to establish a process to monitor and track OVS brochures and forms at courthouses throughout the state to ensure the most current version of OVS materials are accessible to the public.

During this biennium, more than 46,000 copies of OVS materials were distributed to courthouses, law libraries, community-based programs, hospitals, and other service providers throughout the state.

**Top 5 OVS Materials Requested**

*October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013*



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

**2012 Staff Recognition Committee**



*From Left to Right: Mark Margolis, Effie Cotto, Sandra Lappert, Ann Marie Bonnanzio, Tina Bouchard, Sam Burrier, and Wesley Chrostowski.*

*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, presentations on the health benefits of laughter, self-care, employee benefit plans, and the Employee Assistance Program were provided. In addition, staff recognition awards were presented to nine OVS staff for their dedication, exceptional service, and efforts to contribute to the OVS mission.

# Victim Services Unit

## Overview

The Victim Services Unit is responsible for assisting crime victims throughout the criminal 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 criminal courthouses throughout the state, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and staffing a Helpline to respond to the expanding rights and needs of crime victims within the criminal justice system.

### *Court-based Victim Services Advocates*

As crime victims often do not understand the workings of the criminal justice system, OVS VSAs are uniquely positioned to assist crime victims through all of the stages of the criminal justice 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.

“The victim services programs serve a vital function for a fragile population. I appreciate the importance of having someone on your side to keep the lines of communication open in the system and to assist victims who may be emotionally besieged. In the beginning after the crime, we felt helpless and at risk. [OVS Victim Services Advocate] made sure we knew about the resources available and insisted we take advantage of those she knew would help us. Without her guidance I’m not sure how we would have made it through the first few weeks.”

*~ Comment received from a crime victim who accessed services from a court-based VSA.*

## Biennial Highlights

- The Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN) program was expanded to provide automated notifications to registered crime victims and other interested individuals on the status of orders of protection and standing criminal protective orders. The CT SAVIN home page was translated in Spanish and notifications were made available in Polish and Portuguese during this biennium.
- Seven VSAs were recognized by local Bar Associations during the 2012 and 2013 Law Day Ceremonies.
- In 2011 and 2012, four VSAs received the Mothers Against Drunk Driving victim assistance award for their dedication in providing quality services to victims of drunk driving.
- One VSA received the 2012 Polonia Business Association Order of Hussar award in recognition of the VSA’s service to crime victims as they navigate the criminal justice system.
- Since 2009, the Victim Services Unit has participated in the Judicial Branch Intern Program, which provides internships to graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in law school, paralegal studies, and other criminal justice fields. During this biennium, several court-based VSAs served as site supervisors to 18 interns.

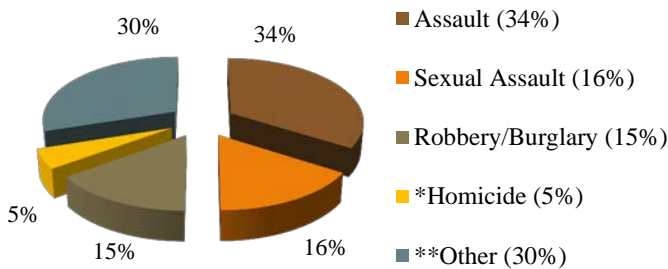
## Court-based Advocacy Program

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 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 victim compensation applications to OVS; and
- ☞ assist victims in the processing of claims for restitution.

## Court-based VSAs Services to Victims/Families by Type of Victimization

July 1, 2011-June 30, 2013



\*Includes homicides with a motor vehicle.

\*\*Other crimes may include arson, DUI personal injury, harassment, hate and bias crimes, identity theft, kidnapping/unlawful restraint, other felonies and misdemeanors, risk of injury, reckless endangerment, and stalking/threatening.

## Board of Pardons and Paroles Advocacy Program

The Victim Services Unit assigns two VSAs to the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BOPP), as directed under Section 54-220a of the Connecticut

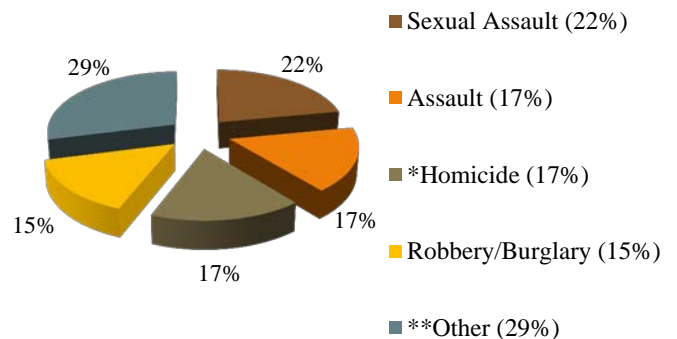
General Statutes, to assist crime victims appearing at BOPP hearings or submitting victim impact statements.

The VSAs assigned to the BOPP also provide victims with information on the parole and pardon process and referrals to social service agencies.

During state fiscal years July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013, VSAs assigned to the BOPP provided assistance to more than 650 crime victims and/or their family members.

## BOPP VSAs Services to Victims/Families by Type of Victimization

July 1, 2011-June 30, 2013



\* See Court-based VSAs Services to Victims/Families by Type of Victimization chart for the explanation on the homicide and other categories.

“Thank you so much for letting us know the outcome of the parole hearing right away! I had no idea how much it was weighing on my mind. I am so relieved! Thank you so much for helping us with this - all the communication is so incredibly important to us - I truly appreciate it!”

~ Comment received from a crime victim who accessed services from a VSA assigned to the BOPP.

## Helpline

The Victim Services Unit operates a toll-free Helpline (800-822-8428) that provides callers with information on OVS and community-based programs and services, victim rights, and victim notification. Victims may also contact OVS through the OVS general email account at OVS@jud.ct.gov.

The VSA assigned to the Helpline attends Sentence Review hearings, held the fourth Tuesday of every month except during the months of July, August, and December to provide support, information, and assistance to crime victims and their family members.

<b>Helpline Calls</b>	<b>7,317</b>
Victims assisted	6,384
Community individuals or service providers assisted	933

### Victim Notification

The Victim Services Unit is responsible for administering three victim notification programs that inform crime victims and other registrants on changes to orders of protection, changes to the status of offenders in the criminal justice system, and notice of offenders' upcoming court dates.

These notification programs allow crime victims to exercise their constitutional rights to be informed, present, and heard during all criminal justice proceedings. They 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. 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 years 2011-2013, 59,726 protective order notification letters were mailed to crime victims.

“This is an amazing program and I am so glad I participated and had an opportunity to read my impact statement in court. I felt like I was part of the process and appreciate the opportunity.”

~ Comment received from a crime victim who accessed services from a court-based VSA.



*2013 VSA recipients of the Hartford County Liberty Bell Award from left to right: Melissa Zavickas, Adriana Venegas, Olga Massa, and Robert Eccleston. (Missing from photo: Koren Butler-Kurth).*

#### *Post-conviction Notification Program*

The Post-conviction Notification Program is a collaborative effort with the Department of Correction 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.

Registrants are notified 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; and
- ☞ Sentencing court for an order restricting the dissemination of sex offender registration.

Crime victims who receive notification are informed that they can make a statement to the board, agency, or court regarding the impact the crime has had on them and any other input the crime victim would like to be considered regarding the inmate's request.



During state fiscal years 2011-2013, there were 967 new requests for notification and more than 6,600 post-conviction notification letters mailed to registrants.

Registrants may also call the OVS Helpline for more information about the inmate’s request, how to write and deliver a victim impact statement, and referrals to social services agencies. Helpline VSA assisted more than 607 registrants during state fiscal years 2011-2013.

“I could not have survived this ordeal without the support of my advocates. They knew and answered all my questions and I felt their concern so heartfelt.”  
 ~ Comment received from a crime victim who accessed services from a court-based VSA.

*Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN)*

CT SAVIN provides crime victims and interested individuals with three important features:

- ☞ information related to criminal justice proceedings that is viewable on-line or by telephone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year;
- ☞ notification of status updates (provided in English, Spanish, Polish, and Portuguese); and
- ☞ 24-hour assistance from a VINE Services Representative (1-877-846-3428).

Crime victims and members of the community interested in a specific criminal case may register to receive free, confidential notification by contacting the OVS Helpline, a VINE Services Representative, or online at the CT SAVIN Web site accessed at [www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim/](http://www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim/).

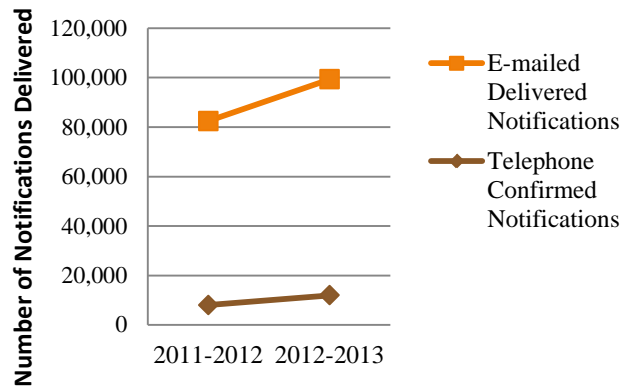
CT SAVIN provides registrants with automated telephone, TTY, and/or email notifications when the following events occur:

- ☞ upcoming court hearings;
- ☞ change in bail;
- ☞ case jurisdiction transfer;
- ☞ defendant failed to appear;
- ☞ case severed;

- ☞ case entered in error;
- ☞ case disposition;
- ☞ notice of probation violation;
- ☞ probation violation decision;
- ☞ request for sentence reduction;
- ☞ filing for an appeal; and
- ☞ submission of a decision on an appeal; and
- ☞ the issuance, modification, and termination of family violence, non-family violence, and standing criminal protective orders.

During state fiscal years 2011-2013, there were more than 25,000 new subscribers to CT SAVIN. There were also significant expansions during this period. In 2012, the CT SAVIN home page was translated in Spanish, notifications in Polish and Portuguese, in addition to English and Spanish, were offered to registrants, and notifications related to orders of protection were implemented.

**CT SAVIN Notifications**  
*July 1, 2011–June 30, 2013*



*\*This data does not include notifications made that had an invalid email address or telephone notifications not confirmed by a registrant.*

**Victim Advocate Case Information System (VACIS)**

During this biennium, the Victim Services Unit collaborated with Superior Court Operations, Computer Systems Support Division in the development of a case management system that would allow VSAs to track cases, record their workload more efficiently, and standardized how VSA case records are maintained. An initial design of VACIS was developed, which will interface with various Judicial Branch computer-based programs.

# Quality Assurance Unit

## Overview

The Quality Assurance Unit, established in July 2012, is responsible for assessing the quality of services provided by OVS staff to crime victims and makes recommendations to improve service delivery. The Quality Assurance Unit is also responsible for OVS internal and external communications.

## Quality Assurance

OVS strives to provide compassionate, victim-centered, and effective services to crime victims by offering the highest quality advocacy, financial assistance, information, and resources.

To ensure these objectives are met, the Quality Assurance Unit:

- ☞ monitors and assists in the development of policies and procedures, program standards, and performs annual audits for conformance;
- ☞ develops databases and recommends modifications to existing computer applications to record program data and information;
- ☞ develops program materials for crime victims and the public; and
- ☞ elicits crime victim feedback.

### *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

- An OVS Case Records Request policy was developed and implemented in July 2012 that established procedures for crime victims and secondary victims who request copies of OVS Victim Compensation Program or Victim Advocacy case records related specifically to their case. Records or information that are confidential under state law and nondisclosable records provided by another source are not released.
- In 2012, Quality Assurance Unit staff collaborated with the Judicial Branch Information Technology Division in the design of a user interface to allow data and information related to the Victim Compensation Program recovery process to be stored in the Claims OVS (CLOVS) application, which tracks claims for victim compensation.
- A payroll insert describing OVS programs and services was distributed in April 2013 to more than 78,000 current and former Connecticut state employees.
- During April through June 2013, a public service announcement on the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program was released to 45 radio stations across Connecticut.

### *Database Development/Application Modification*

OVS values the importance of converting raw data into meaningful information to assess services provided and the utilization of computer-based program applications to meet the needs of crime victims as effectively and efficiently as possible.

During this biennium, the Quality Assurance Unit collaborated with the Judicial Branch Information Systems (JIS), the developer of certain OVS computer-based applications to:

- ☞ expand the CLOVS application to store Compensation Unit recovery efforts;
- ☞ generate CLOVS reports that populate recovery data and processing times; and
- ☞ modified the Application Request Return Database to track the number of applications requested and returned.

The Quality Assurance Unit also developed several Microsoft Access databases to track:

- ☞ program and medical requirements of nurses participating in the Gail Burns-Smith Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Program;
- ☞ Victim Compensation Program survey responses; and
- ☞ demographics of primary and secondary victims assisted by OVS victim services advocates.

### *Policies and Procedures*

The Quality Assurance Unit worked closely with Compensation Unit supervisors during this biennium in the review and revision of Compensation Program policies and procedures and the establishment of additional standards related to the recovery process.

## **Communications**

### *Internal Communications*

OVS values the importance of fostering a team environment and embracing strong internal communications so that OVS staff and Judicial Branch staff have access to current information on OVS activities and policies and programmatic changes, as well as individual staff accomplishments and recognitions.

To support this internal dialogue, the Quality Assurance Unit issues quarterly newsletters to OVS staff and a bi-annual newsletter that is posted on the OVS Intranet site, a private network accessed by Judicial Branch employees.

### *External Communications*

The Quality Assurance Unit develops written and electronic publications and forms 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/or revised 30 publications and forms.

In addition, Quality Assurance Unit staff provided leadership to three separate letter review committees, charged with developing program correspondence that is easy to understand, supportive, helpful, and respectful.

### **The Victim Advocate Case Management System (VACIS) Letter Review Committee**

revised or developed more than 20 letters during this biennium. This Committee also created a plain language version of crime victims' constitutional rights flyer, which is provided to crime victims by OVS victim services advocates in their outreach efforts to ensure that crime victims who decide not to participate in the criminal justice process understand their rights.

### **The Victim Compensation Program Letter Review Committee**

reviews existing letters and forms generated by Compensation Unit staff to communicate with claimants seeking financial reimbursement.

During this biennium, this Committee reviewed and/or developed 55 documents, including a chart that lists Compensation Program benefits and eligibility requirements.

### The Recovery Letter Review Committee

developed and/or revised 26 documents related to the recovery process, as well as providing input on the development of Recovery data entry forms for the CLOVS application.

### Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) describing OVS services and programs were released quarterly during this biennium to 30 English-language radio stations and 15 Spanish-language stations.

During the period April to June 2013, the PSAs included information about the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program.

### OVS Web Site

OVS posts a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the Judicial Branch Internet Web site that provide detailed information on OVS services and programs and links to OVS publications and other victim related Web sites.

During this biennium, the Quality Assurance Unit and OVS Director met with the Judicial Branch Court Operations Web Board to discuss redesigning the OVS Internet Web page to apply plain language, create a more user-friendly experience, and to expand the audience to community partners, contracting agencies, and students. The Quality Assurance Unit is currently working with OVS unit supervisors on page content.

### Victim Feedback

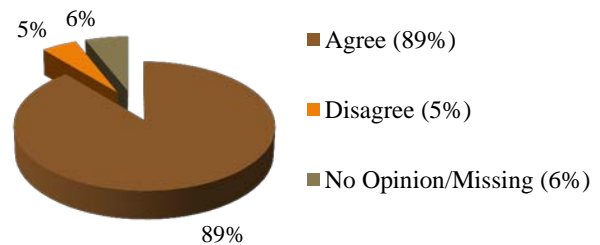
During this biennium, the Quality Assurance Unit collaborated with Compensation Unit supervisors in the revision of the claimant satisfaction survey to measure different aspects of the claimant's experience with the Victim Compensation Program, including written and verbal communication, and to elicit input on how the Program can better serve crime victims.

During this biennium, 1,299 surveys were mailed to claimants 60 days after a determination of eligibility was made on their application for victim compensation with 339 completed surveys returned.

The combined overall satisfaction reflected that 79% of claimants surveyed were satisfied with the services received by the Victim Compensation Program while 89% agreed that their claims examiner was courteous and professional.

### Victim Compensation Program Survey Claims Examiner Professionalism

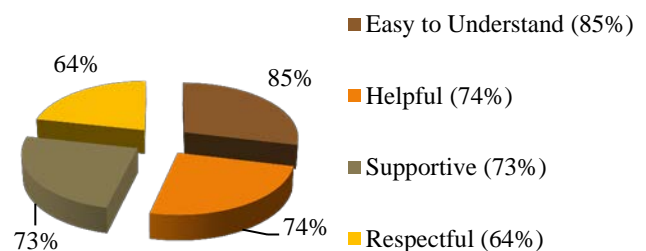
October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013  
N= 339



The survey also included an area for claimants to assess the written communication sent from Compensation Unit staff by selecting one or more options that describes the correspondence. The majority of claimants who responded found that the written communication was easy to understand.

### Victim Compensation Program Survey Correspondence and Forms

October 1, 2011–September 30, 2013  
N= 339



## Legislative Updates

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

**Public Act 11-152, An Act Concerning Domestic Violence** authorizes OVS or a victim compensation commissioner to order compensation to victims of domestic violence and members of their families.

**Public Act 12-1, June 12, 2012 Special Session, An Act Implementing the Provisions of the State Budget for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2012**, directs that charges for medical forensic assessment interviews of child sexual assault victims are paid from the Judicial Branch, Forensic Sex Evidence Exams account. The Act also adds one member from OVS to serve on the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations.

**Public Act 12-114, An Act Concerning Domestic Violence**, expands victim compensation to children witnesses of domestic violence whether or not they are related to the victim.

**Public Act 12-133, An Act Concerning Court Operations and Victim Services** authorizes victim compensation when OVS or a victim compensation commissioner reasonably concludes that (a) an alleged sexual assault crime or risk of injury to a minor occurred and (b) the personal injury was disclosed to certain individuals; eliminates the \$100 minimum loss requirement; eliminates the \$100 deductible requirement on the total amount of victim compensation determined; expands OVS's lien for reimbursement of compensation paid to someone; and extended the termination date for the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Committee from June 30, 2012, to June 30, 2013.

**Special Act 13-1, An Act Establishing the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program and Fund, Clarifying the Calculations of Survivor Benefits, and Authorizing a Waiver of the State-wide Mastery Examination Requirement for Certain Newtown Students** names OVS as the administrator of the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program and establishes a claim process and documentation requirements for OVS to determine benefit eligibility and maximum awards.

**Public Act 13-77, An Act Concerning Notice of Investigations by the Department of Children and Families** requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) when opening a child abuse or neglect investigation to notify both the child's guardian and custodial and noncustodial parents, if such notification is in the child's best interest. The notice must indicate the availability of DCF services, such as childcare subsidies and emergency shelter and include OVS programs and information on obtaining a restraining order.

**Public Act 13-214, An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault** requires probation officers to provide notice of suspected probation violations to assigned victim advocates, if the officer has the advocate's contact information. The Act also requires the chief court administrator to maintain a separate, secure room in certain courthouses for family violence victims and their advocates, if such room is available and its use practical. Additionally, this act permits a sexual assault victim to terminate a rental agreement without penalty under some circumstances and establishes a task force to study the feasibility of permitting a sexual assault victim who is not a perpetrator's family or household member to apply for a restraining order.

## Committees

During this biennium, OVS staff members served on the following committees, councils, and multidisciplinary teams, whose specific purposes related to studying or addressing a particular issue or need of crime victims in Connecticut.

**Connecticut Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision State Council:** authorizes the adoption of rules by the Interstate Commission on Adult Offender Supervision. Director Linda J. Cimino, member.

**Connecticut Interstate Compact for Juveniles 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. Victim Services Supervisor Valina Carpenter, member.

**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, make recommendations to the Chief State's Attorney, and annually review the design of the sexual assault evidence collection kit. Director Linda J. Cimino, member.

**Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee:** examines intimate partner homicides to identify systemic gaps and barriers to service 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 Susanne Pakele, member and co-chair of Victim Services workgroup.

**Multidisciplinary Team (MDT):** numerous court-based victim services advocates are members of their local MDTs; the purpose of MDTs is to advance and 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.

**Melanie Ilene Rieger Memorial Conference Committee:** responsible for planning and implementing the annual Melanie Ilene Rieger Memorial Conference Against Violence. Court Planner II Tina Bouchard, 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) 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, assault victims, and robbery victims, the chief victim compensation commissioner, and members from the judicial and executive branch agencies involved with victims of crime.

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.”

Council members are appointed by the Chief Justice for a four-year term. The Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III, and Steven Eppler-Epstein served as co-chairs during 2011-2013.

During this biennium, the Council discussed and provided input on:

- ☞ OVS Programs;
- ☞ Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund;
- ☞ Legislation that would improve or affect services to crime victims; and
- ☞ Sandy Hook Elementary School Tragedy.

The Council heard presentations on the following topics:

- ☞ The Gail Burns-Smith Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Program;
- ☞ Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking; and
- ☞ Connecticut Lethality Assessment Program.

## Members 2011-2013

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

Kevin Lawlor, Esq.  
Division of Criminal Justice

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

Brian D. Moore  
Department of Correction

Joseph W. Bibisi, Esq.  
Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner

Karen Jarmoc  
Victims of Domestic Violence

Chester Brodnicki  
Child Victims

Robin Montgomery  
Law Enforcement

Antonia Cordero, D.S.W.  
Academia

Susan Omilian, Esq.  
Survivors of Homicide Victims

Laura Cordes  
Victims of Sexual Assault

Rocco Tricarico  
Victims in Non-English Speaking Communities

Janice Heggie-Margolis  
Victims of Drunk Drivers

Jan VanTassel, Esq.  
Victims with Disabilities

**Others who served during this biennium:** Kimberly Joyner, Judicial Branch; Daniel F. Lewis, Department of Correction

OVS MAIN NUMBER

860 263-2760

TOLL-FREE COMPENSATION

888 286-7347

TOLL-FREE HELPLINE

800 822-8428



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State of Connecticut Judicial Branch  
225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109  
[www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim](http://www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim)