



A Community Response Manual

The Victim's Role in Offender Reentry

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FOREWORD

The U.S. Department of Justice created the Reentry Partnership Initiative (RPI), which sponsors include the National Institute of Justice, Corrections Program Office, and the Executive Office of Weed and Seed. The RPI is an effort to enhance public safety and offender accountability as the nation faces the return to communities of nearly 600,000 state and federal prisoners released from institutions each year.¹ RPI focuses on close collaboration among key partners, such as institutional and community corrections, local law enforcement, social service agencies, and community organizations, to address the challenges presented by the return of offenders from jail, residential programs, or prison into the community. Also, although not discussed specifically in this document, offenders returning to their home states via an interstate transfer also should be considered as a population to address in reentry initiatives.

As a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) recognizes the importance of ensuring the victim's voice is included within the offender reentry process and, thus, supported the development of this manual as a component of its Promising Practices and Strategies in Probation and Parole Project. Through the project, an effort was made to determine the extent to which victims are being involved in reentry processes and to identify barriers and develop solutions for overcoming obstacles to victim involvement.

Through the development of this manual, the project seeks to:

- Involve and educate community members in reentry partnerships that are victim-centered and reflect victims' most salient needs and concerns, and engage them in meaningful partnerships with criminal and juvenile justice professionals, victim assistance personnel, and allied professionals.
- Enhance the capacity of reentry partnerships to promote victim and community involvement and safety.
- Offer promising practices and related resources that are worthy of replication for reentry partnerships.

The development of this manual commenced in late 1999, with the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) Victim Issues Committee serving as an advisory council to its development and implementation. Key project activities included the following:

- Extensive literature review of international, national, state, and community-based approaches to offender reentry, with an emphasis on victim assistance initiatives that can involve and engage the community.
- Development of a focus group discussion guide and implementation of a national focus group of 18 professionals — including Office of Justice Programs representatives, community corrections officials, victim advocates, crime victims, substance abuse professionals, and victim/offender programming volunteers — who offered insights into the victim component of offender reentry and helped design a national survey of APPA members.
- Distribution of a survey to APPA members that asked them to identify and prioritize what they considered to be "victims' most significant needs and concerns" when their offenders reenter the community, and tabulation of survey results.
- In-depth interviews of crime victims whose offenders are currently incarcerated, or who are (or have in the past been) under some form of community supervision.
- In-depth interviews of state correctional agency commissioners, community corrections agency directors, and corrections-based victim advocates.
- Delineation of "promising practices" based upon all data collection relevant to this project.

The American Probation and Parole Association extends its appreciation to Anne K. Seymour for serving as the author of this document. APPA also is grateful for the guidance provided by Tracy Godwin Mullins, Project Director, who assisted in editing the manual; and Melissa Hook, who conducted extensive interviews of corrections and victim service professionals and assisted with editing. Thanks also goes to Duane Ragan, OVC Project Monitor; and RPI Co-Managers Cheryl Crawford, National Institute of Justice and Phillip Merkle, Corrections Program Office within the Office of Justice Programs. Finally, the insights provided by victims of crime to this project have helped "put a face" on people who are most affected by offenders who return to the community.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR ADDRESSING VICTIM NEEDS AND ISSUES IN OFFENDER REENTRY

“Why do we have a justice system? Not because of crime. We have a justice system because someone has been hurt by a crime. We need to take into account the harm that has been done to a victim and help that hurt. To be truly effective in our criminal justice effort, we have to include the fact that a crime has harmed someone.”

*Peter Michaud, Director of Victim Services,
New Hampshire Department of Corrections*

Offender Reentry: A Victim's Perspective

The following personal and painful narrative was provided by a survivor of a horrendous kidnaping, sexual assault, and attempted murder. Since her tragic victimization eight years ago, this young woman has become a leading victim advocate and proponent of restorative justice, which focuses on holding offenders accountable for their actions, while providing services to victims and safety for the community. Her story and her insights offer credence into the significant challenges that many victims face, knowing that their offenders may someday be returned to the community.

Awakening: swollen eye lids opening to blurred vision. Through this blurred vision, I see tree branches far above me. My head feels foggy, my thoughts unclear. Where am I? What am I doing here? Intense pain begins to emanate from my head. I slowly lift my hand and touch my head. I feel something sticky, and what feels like a bird's nest, but in reality my fingers are intertwining in my hair. As I begin to grope about my head more and more, I feel something sharp and protruding. The rest of my body begins to awaken and starts to shake uncontrollably. Even though it is summer, I feel cold as if an ice storm has invaded my entire body. I reach out again touching my body and I realize I am naked. Slowly my eyesight becomes more focused. My thoughts and memory of what has happened hit me like a tidal wave. I've been raped, beaten, and left here. Tears begin to fall like a hard rain, while at the same time my hand reaches out, groping around for my clothes, anything to stop the cold shivers that rack my body. However, I only find one piece of clothing and I am not sure what it is, nor is it enough to cover up my body.

Still clutching this material, I try to sit up, but the intense pain in my head makes this almost impossible. I sit still, not moving, trying to make the pain subside, as the realization of my situation begins to surface. My eyes feel swollen, and even when I do look around it is dark. After what seems like eternity, I manage to stand and begin to stumble around. Suddenly, a young man appears. In a shaky voice I cry out, “Help me, please help me, I've been raped.” The look of shock registers immediately on his face as I stand there trying to cover up my body using the material I have in my hands. He then gives me some type of clothing and helps me put it on. He is joined by others, among them a young girl, who begins to give directions. I begin mumbling, calling out for my partner. In the background, the people discuss their plan of action. Soon waves of nausea begin to flood me and I struggle to move, knowing I am going to be sick. I begin to vomit. Just as the ambulance arrives, I hear the sound of birds chirping, announcing the coming of dawn.

Little did I know then that I had just stepped onto the path of a victim/survivor. This path was full of obstacles that I had to face. Many times I was completely unaware of the challenges I would have to meet. Reflecting upon these times when I learned to overcome

one challenge after another, drawing upon some inner strength I did not know I possessed, I now realize that these are the attributes of a survivor.

Now, eight years later, I have survived the experience of working with the criminal justice system to see my offender caught, tried, and sentenced. Today I am faced with yet another challenge, one which at the moment seems the most difficult to face: the reality of my offender's release. I began contemplating this event the moment the sentence was handed down. My thoughts went something like this: "Okay...I now have this many years to live my life. Better make the best of it." While this thought continues to dominate, the thought that follows is, "Let's not think about this right now, as I have so many years to be free from the constant fear of being stalked and possibly killed by this person." During this time I have worked hard, first of all, to make some sense of these events, recover from the trauma, and find a way to handle the fear that I face in my everyday life. I also have worked to find my new place in this world and answer the question, "What can I do to be of help, particularly to keep this kind of devastating, life-altering crime from happening to others?"

The survivor's concerns about offender reentry begin long before the offender is considered for release, perhaps even at the moment of sentencing. However, the process of addressing this issue is often one that is avoided, perhaps because of the emotional scars it re-opens and the difficult work and planning it requires. Correctional agencies should address this issue with offenders through the use of victim impact panels and focus groups, both with offenders who are incarcerated and those who have been released. These groups would enable offenders to address such questions as: Do they fantasize about and/or plan to seek revenge against those they have harmed? In what way? What are their intentions toward their victims upon release? In developing these questions and establishing such panels and focus groups, it is imperative for correctional agencies to collaborate with victim service organizations.

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

What is Offender Reentry?

The majority of offenders who are incarcerated in our nation's jails, residential programs, and prisons will eventually return to the community.² This fact alone has propelled a wide range of stakeholders — from the U.S. Department of Justice, criminal and juvenile justice and corrections officials, crime victims and those who serve them, offender advocates, and community members concerned with individual and public safety — to forge important partnerships that focus on offender reentry issues.

Partnerships that address offender reentry can provide collaborative opportunities to enhance public safety by focusing on offender accountability and successful reintegration into their families and communities; victim assistance; safety for neighborhoods and communities; and enhancing and strengthening the community supervision of offenders. Though the concept of agency and community collaboration when offenders reenter communities is not new, there is significant emphasis on providing resources and maximizing the use of existing resources that strengthen reentry partnerships at the national, state, and local levels.

The successful reentry of offenders into the community is neither a linear process, nor one that can be accomplished by a single agency. It requires collaboration and commitment from literally anyone concerned about public safety, as well as a commitment to ensuring that victims' rights are consistently enforced and victim services are consistently provided. It requires communities — including crime victims — to be open to, and involved in, partnerships that provide a wide range of opportunities for offenders to return to the community as focal members who, given the chance, can be held accountable for their actions, and be monitored and provided with supportive services to reduce their chance of recidivism and become productive and responsible members of society.

The inclusion and consideration of crime victims' rights and needs in offender management that has emerged over the past decade provides a strong foundation for reentry partnerships. When victims are visible and viable members of such initiatives, their self-identification of needs and suggestions for holding offenders accountable offer an important framework for justice professionals and, most importantly, community volunteers who have a considerable investment in preventing crime and revictimization of people who already have been hurt by crime. Crime victims can "drive" reentry partnerships as involved and respected participants, or can just as easily derail them if their needs and interests are ignored.

Many victims are eager partners in reentry initiatives. Their feelings of safety and security, control over their futures, and validation from their family, friends and neighbors that their victimization was a terrible thing over which they had no control all contribute to their reasons for joining reentry partnerships. Crime victims can voluntarily contribute to policy development; serve as advisors to create new programs and approaches that hold offenders accountable and reduce recidivism; participate in victim/offender programming; and strengthen the core of community action that is necessary for success.

When reentry partnerships are successful, the success is shared by anyone concerned with justice and public safety — crime victims, justice practitioners, community members and ultimately, offenders. Collaborative investments in offenders through rehabilitation, job training, substance abuse treatment, and victim empathy and awareness can lead to a reduction in recidivism and the prevention of future victimization. This factor alone accounts for much of the support among crime victims and those who serve them for reentry initiatives — they are eager to be active partners in initiatives that will ultimately reduce the number of crime victims in America.

Who Are the "Partners" in Reentry Initiatives?

Reentry "partners" include professionals and volunteers from the public and private sector who can assist with reentry initiatives. They may include representatives from:

- Law enforcement
- Prosecutors
- System-based victim assistance programs
- Pre-trial service
- Defense counsel
- Judiciary
- Court administration
- Probation
- Parole
- Institutional corrections
- Appellate-level case managers
- State and local public policymakers
- Crime victims
- Community-based victim service providers
- Mental health professionals
- Treatment professionals
- Public health professionals
- Faith-based organizations
- Schools
- Private sector employment
- Organizations that serve culturally diverse clients
- Civic organizations
- News media

- Community-based volunteer organizations
- Community volunteers

Throughout this handbook, participants in reentry partnerships are identified as “reentry team members,” which signifies involvement as a professional or volunteer in community-based efforts related to offender reentry. “Community reentry volunteers” are individuals who donate their time and energy to helping victims, offenders and communities throughout the reentry process.

National Survey Findings

In March 2000, the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) mailed a survey to its membership that asked them to identify and prioritize “crime victims’ rights, needs, and concerns with offender reentry.” APPA’s membership represents both executive and judicial branches of government at both the state and local level. A summary of survey data that reveals what victims indicate they are most concerned about or in need of when their offenders reenter the community is highlighted below.

Need or Concern	Percentage
Information about whom to contact if victim has concerns	75%
Notification of offender location	75%
Notification of offender status	65%
Protective or “no contact” orders	64%
Input into conditions of release (Victim Impact Statement -VIS)	33%
Financial/legal obligations	29%
Information about referrals	22%
Offender programming that creates awareness	19%
Input into interstate compact	16%
Input into conditions of community service	15%
Victim/offender programming (mediation)	12%

These survey findings have led to this document’s emphasis on processes that address victim notification, involvement, and protection in reentry partnerships. Survey respondents also provided insight and ideas regarding “promising practices” for victims throughout the reentry process that are included throughout this document.

Purpose of this Document

This document highlights promising practices and strategies that address victims’ rights, needs, and concerns when their offenders are released into the community, and provides opportunities for offenders to be held accountable and to be successfully reintegrated into the community. In this handbook, the role of the community receives considerable emphasis. The goal is to offer practical suggestions regarding how reentry partners can become involved in assisting victims whose offenders are released — or preparing to be released — to the community. While community members are the primary audience for this handbook, justice and victim service professionals also comprise an important target audience.

The handbook begins by addressing strategies for involving community members and victims in reentry partnerships. The issue of how community is defined is addressed, along with a discussion of how community members can provide assistance to victims, in the following major areas: support, advocacy, liaison services, and public awareness. Afterward, the role of the community specific to the implementation of

victims' core rights in the offender reentry process — notification, protection, victim impact, and restitution — is articulated in the next four sections. Each core right is defined and then followed by specific recommendations for community members that support the efforts of both system- and community-based victim advocates in assisting victims and providing individual, personalized liaison services to victims of crime. The final section of the handbook describes additional promising practices to consider when addressing victim involvement in offender reentry initiatives. Appendices are included to provide supplemental information on issues discussed within the document.

STRATEGIES FOR INVOLVING COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND VICTIMS IN REENTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Defining “Community”

The concept of community is neither easily defined nor simple to grasp within the context of offender reentry. While many people tend to think of “community” as a physical place and space, it is just as often created by relationships that people build, beginning with one-on-one and emerging into groups of varying sizes that share a common bond and mutual interests.

In reentry partnerships, collaboration is required between four key existing communities, which include:

- Victims or those who provide support and services to victims.
- Offenders or advocates for offenders.
- Individuals and agencies that implement venues for justice and community safety.
- Persons who are affected by an offender's reentry into their neighborhood.

The first two “communities” — victims and offenders — are in many instances isolated from more traditional communities, such as families and friends. There is often shame, blame, and guilt involved, as well as a lack of acceptance and understanding.

The justice system, as the third “community” in reentry partnerships, is bonded not only by profession, but by a desire to improve public safety. Myriad innovations over the past decade in offender management and treatment, victim assistance, and community involvement provide an apex from which offender reentry partnerships can emerge.

Finally, the communities into which offenders will be released – which are often the same community in which the offender's victim resides — have a vital stake in reentry partnerships. Joseph Lehman, Commissioner of Corrections in Washington state, observes that “the community must own justice.” It is only with this sense of ownership that reentry partnerships can succeed.

In “The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace,” author M. Scott Peck, M.D., explains “the true meaning of community:”³

“If we are going to use the word meaningfully, we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to ‘rejoice together, mourn together,’ and to ‘delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own’.”

Peck further identifies inclusiveness as an essential component of community. “The great enemy of community is exclusivity. Groups that exclude others because they are poor or doubters or divorced or sinners or of some different race or nationality are not communities; they are cliques — actually defensive bastions against community.”⁴

Peck notes that “for most groups it is easier to exclude than include. Inclusiveness is not an absolute. Long-term communities must invariably struggle over the degree to which they are going to be inclusive. Even short-term communities must sometimes make that difficult decision.”⁵ Communities, he notes, must have “an appreciation of differences . . . instead of being ignored, denied, hidden, or changed, human differences are celebrated as gifts.”⁶

According to Peck, “a second characteristic of community is that it is realistic:

. . . Because a community includes members with many different points of view and the freedom to express them, it comes to appreciate the whole of a situation far better than an individual, couple, or ordinary group can. Incorporating the dark and the light, the sacred and the profane, the sorrow and the joy, the glory and the mud, its conclusions are well rounded. Nothing is likely to be left out. With so many frames of references, it approaches reality more and more

closely. Realistic decisions, consequently, are more often guaranteed in community than in any other human environment.”⁷

Contemplation is another essential element of community. Peck believes that “among the reasons that a community is humble and hence realistic is that it is contemplative. It examines itself. It is self-aware. It knows itself.”⁸ He identifies the essential goal of contemplation as “increased awareness of the world outside oneself, the world inside oneself, and the relationship between the two.”⁹

Finally, Peck offers that a sense of community must be “a safe place:”

“There is no such thing as instant community under ordinary circumstances. It takes a great deal of work for a group of strangers to achieve the safety of true community. Once they succeed, however, it is as if the floodgates were opened. As soon as it is safe to speak one’s heart, as soon as most people in the group know they will be listened to and accepted for themselves, years and years of pent-up frustration and hurt and guilt and grief come pouring out. And pouring out ever faster. Vulnerability in community snowballs. Once its members become vulnerable and find themselves being valued and appreciated, they become more and more vulnerable. The walls come tumbling down. And as they tumble, as the love and acceptance escalates, as the mutual intimacy multiplies, true healing and converting begin. Old wounds are healed, old resentments forgiven, old resistances overcome. Fear is replaced by hope.”¹⁰

Inclusive. Realistic. Contemplative. A safe place. Peck’s combined assertions of what defines a community offer a fairly accurate description of what should be considered core elements of reentry partnerships. These core elements highlight the issues and needs that are often identified with the four stakeholder communities involved in reentry partnerships. Perhaps most significantly, they offer a perspective of the value of different perspectives that reentry partners bring to the table of justice and community safety.

The Role of Community Members in Supporting Victims Throughout the Offender Reentry Process

It has been said that the community can play a significant role in supporting the victim, should the offender reenter the community. However, I would have to say in all honesty that I could never live in the same community with a man who tried and nearly succeeded in killing me. I would feel deeply betrayed if the community that did so much for me at the time were to accept this potential killer to live amongst us. Therefore, the only role I could see the community playing in this regard is to refuse to allow him back into this community and to assist in writing and/or testifying in front of the parole board regarding their concerns about his release. By doing so the community helps to validate the victim’s experience.

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

For many violent crime victims, the thought of living in the same community as the person who caused them such terrible harm and deep psychological trauma is foreboding. Reentry partnership professionals and volunteers must accept this factor and find ways, to the degree possible, to honor the victim’s wishes. This may mean establishing a geographic “safe zone” perimeter around the victim (for example, in California it is 30 miles from the victim’s place of residence), and developing strict conditions of supervision that center on the victim’s need for safety. Yet in some states (such as Texas), unless there are extraordinary circumstances (which can include victim safety), the offender upon release from custody must return to the county of residence or the county where the crime was committed. As such, the need to balance the rights and needs of victims with statutory requirements and the rights and needs of offenders becomes important.

One of the most significant roles community members can have is to understand victim trauma, and how it can translate into myriad needs that should be addressed by reentry partnerships. Daniela Usurin,

Victim Resources Coordinator of the Domestic Violence Unit for the Westchester County (NY) Department of Probation and Corrections, explains that “the community should be educated as to victims’ needs and issues. One of the most difficult barriers to overcome is the fact that most people do not understand what happens at the time of victimization. Few people in the community have the courage to ask what victims need and, when they do, sometimes they re-victimize the victim and cause more harm.”

The most accurate understanding of victims’ traumatic reactions resulting from crime can only come from speaking to victims, hearing their stories, and appreciating their experiences. As one sexual assault survivor noted: “There needs to be a move toward getting the victim involved because working with them, and really listening to them — they are the experts. We are the ones who have been through it. We are the ones with the experiences.”

Can the Community Have a Role in Determining and Meeting Victims’ Needs?

“If victims and offenders understand that people in their communities are paying attention — that the community has a vested interest in making sure that the reentry process goes smoothly — it could change the whole dynamic. Victims would be less vulnerable, offenders would be more responsible, and the community would be looking out for its own people, actively engaging in maintaining a safer and healthier culture.”

*— Melissa Hook, Writer and Victim Advocate,
Mercersburg, Pennsylvania*

Most justice and victim assistance professionals wholeheartedly embrace the concept of an increased community role in victim assistance. But as Reginald Wilkinson, Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, observes: “Flexibility is necessary. It is important to find out who needs help and who wants help. Every situation is different and, as such, it’s important not to get locked into a structured program that ignores the details of the situation.”

Denise Giles, Director of Victim Services for the Maine Department of Corrections, concurs with Wilkinson, and notes that community support and involvement should be the victim’s choice. She suggests to say to the victim, “Your offender is being released into the community. How can we assist you?” Because of privacy issues, the community should not be involved (in helping the victim) even if there are safety issues, unless the victim says so. The best thing that the community can do is to provide the offender with opportunities to become involved in the community and to allow the victim to have input if the offender is to complete community service. Leadership should come from community-based victim service providers who have experience with and sensitivity to victims’ needs.”

The importance of community involvement focused on victim safety was articulated by Peter Michaud, Director of Victim Services for the New Hampshire Department of Corrections:

“It is important that the community has a process in place to assure to the best of its ability that victims and survivors are safe when their offenders reenter. Part of the process includes a means of understanding from victims’ perspectives what safety needs they have. An effective process will include safety, collaboration, and assessment. Fundamental to the process is the availability and easy accessibility of information relevant to offender release (within the constraints of the law).”

Michaud offers the Interbranch Council in New Hampshire — a criminal justice council made up of judges, law enforcement, parole and probation agents, public defenders, a mental health specialist, and victim advocates — as a promising practice. The council has encouraged each county in the state to form a county-based team that would mirror Interbranch activities, which are to meet monthly to assess county criminal justice needs and how the community can improve its health. “A natural segue of the county team would be to take note of offender reentry and to take on the victim’s concerns,” Michaud said.

Some victim advocates feel that community members have not only an opportunity, but an obligation to assume a leadership role in supporting victims through reentry processes. Usurin emphasizes:

“The community not only should have a role, but should be a leading participant in determining and voicing victims’ concerns and issues. The victim has in many instances sustained revictimization by acts of commission or omission through different agencies, and should not be put in another situation where their needs are not recognized, met, nor voiced by the appropriate entities. A victim is almost always excluded from the process as if she or he is asking for unreasonable services, whereas in her personal experience they are rarely unreasonable. They want to be heard, they want someone to provide emotional support, and to have someone listen to their side of the story. The community must also have a role in determining victims’ concerns because they are aware as to what services are available and how they can be obtained, their delivery and who the players are. A community should be available to identify what services are missing, what can be done to remedy the situation, and what alternatives are possible to serve the victim as well as the offender.”

There are four major roles that community members have in providing assistance to victims:

1. Support
2. Advocacy
3. Liaison services
4. Public awareness

In this section, “reentry support team member” signifies a volunteer who is trained to provide supportive services to victims throughout the reentry process.

Support

The concept of “victim support” has its foundation in the age-old concept of listening, expressing concern, and providing assistance if requested from someone in need. Ellen Halbert, Director of the Victim/Witness Division of the District Attorney’s office in Travis County, Texas, says that existing “good neighbor policies” can contribute significantly to meeting victims’ needs relevant to offender reentry:

“Community members can provide enormous emotional support by a regular phone call to victims to find out what they need. Neighbors, as good, old fashioned people acting in a neighborly way, can offer to keep an eye out for them; they can assist in fixing window and door locks and adding lights to the outside of the house. They can, as a neighborhood, work out a safety plan for the victim, identify people that victims can call if they are afraid, and establish people who will touch base regularly with the victim. They can create an aura of safety around a victim by helping them stay connected with the neighborhood.”

Giles says that “the greatest help communities can provide to victims when their offenders reenter is to acknowledge crime victims in the community, and to educate the public as to victims’ needs.” In Maine, town meetings are an excellent venue for addressing topics of this nature. Through town meetings, Giles has helped implement community forums that address the release of sex offenders into the community. The town meetings are collaborative efforts that include law enforcement, a sex offender specialist, the town manager, representatives from the sexual assault agency, and victim advocates.

Usurin says community members should not create a separate level of service and support but, rather, integrate into existing efforts in a collaborative manner. “As the offender reenters the community, the victim should be given the opportunity to voice the need to feel safe,” she said. “Communities should be available to provide ample safety nets so that the offender does not have an opportunity to re-offend. The community should be able to coordinate services already in place so as not to duplicate services and create unnecessary

red tape in the service delivery. The community should be able to create a streamlined network so that victims can voice needs and will not get lost at some point in the process.”

In providing support to victims, community members can:

- Volunteer for local victim assistance agencies, which often provide comprehensive training about the rights and needs of victims.
- Be aware of and educated about the range of victim assistance and social services available in the community, and be prepared to provide guidance to the victim in accessing such services.
- Facilitate focus groups and conduct surveys of crime victims to help determine their most significant issues and concerns that can then be applied to the community- or neighborhood-based reentry initiative.
- Ask a victim if he or she has any needs that can be met by a reentry support team member.
- Work with victims to identify basic needs that can be met by community volunteers, such as food and shelter, transportation, and child care.
- Ask if the victim is interested in attending counseling or support group sessions; if “yes,” offer to provide transportation and/or accompany the victim, upon request.
- Help the victim develop a list with complete contact information (24 hours a day, seven days a week) of family members, friends and neighbors who can be called on to provide support and assistance.
- Review the “Safety Checklist for Victims of Crime” included in Appendix A with the victim, and help facilitate any activities that apply to the victim, upon request and as needed.
- Help the victim distribute information about the offender — including a current photograph and conditions of supervision, such as “noncontact” orders — to those closest to the victim who are identified in conjunction with the reentry partnership’s victim support network.
- Coordinate neighborhood watch or “cocooning” activities to take into consideration any concerns a victim may have for his or her safety and well-being.
- Ensure that local law enforcement agencies — including police, probation, and parole — are aware of the victim’s status and concern, and encourage (and participate in) increased surveillance on offenders who may pose a threat to a victim’s safety.
- Support and participate in cross-training initiatives that share information, protocols, and resources among law enforcement, criminal and juvenile justice, victim assistance and allied professionals, as well as community volunteers.
- Call or write the victim on anniversary dates of the crime, which can be particularly traumatic for some victims.

Advocacy

All the data collection involved in the preparation of this document supported the role of community members as “advocates” for victims’ rights, needs, and concerns. It is crucial to understand how “advocacy” differs from other reentry partnership services. Six basic principles common to all forms of advocacy, as defined by J.E. Knitzer, are as follows:

1. Advocacy assumes that people have, or ought to have, certain basic rights.
2. Advocacy assumes that rights are enforceable by statutory, administrative, or judicial procedures.
3. Advocacy efforts are focused on institutional failures that produce or aggravate individual problems.
4. Advocacy is inherently political.
5. Advocacy is most effective when it is focused on specific issues.
6. Advocacy is different from the provision of direct services.¹¹

In the United States today, there are more than 30,000 laws that define and protect victims’ rights. Constitutional amendments in 32 states often strengthen victims’ basic statutory rights and, in some states, provide for measures of compliance. However, many laws are not enforced uniformly, and victims sometimes have few remedies available to enforce their rights.

Reentry partnerships should examine existing victims' rights laws related to their safety and participation throughout reentry processes. Compliance with victims' rights laws is a major concern to ensure that measures are in place to facilitate uniform implementation of victims' rights throughout reentry processes, and to provide remedies to victims whose rights have been ignored or violated. Victim Advisory Councils at state adult correctional agencies may provide an appropriate liaison for this activity. Community members can support review of and, if needed, revisions in existing state victims' rights laws.

The World Wide Web has simplified the process of tracking existing laws and pending legislation relevant to victims' rights and services. There are three helpful resources to guide community members in their roles as advocates for victims:

- Most state's web sites, as well as state legislature's web sites, include web pages that are specific to existing and pending laws. Some states offer summaries of such laws, while others make the full text available in electronic formats. These can be utilized to examine laws in the state, as well as laws and pending legislation in other states that can be considered for replication.
- The Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice provides timely updates on critical issues affecting victims' rights and services. These "Critical Issues Updates" can be accessed at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/new/ciupdate.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime publishes "public policy updates" that address key federal and state victims' rights issues twice a month. These can be accessed at www.ncvc.org/law/news/news.

In providing advocacy to victims, community members can:

- Volunteer to conduct legislative research that examines existing state laws relevant to victims' rights and services, and identifies any gaps specific to reentry partnerships that should be filled.
- Volunteer to conduct web-based research of promising practices in victims' rights laws in other states that can be considered for replication.
- Conduct interviews and/or focus groups of victims to receive their input and suggestions regarding victims' rights laws specific to offender reentry.
- Provide support to entities, such as Victim Advisory Councils, that are responsible for developing new, or revising existing laws relevant to victims' rights and services.
- Contact legislators to support pending legislation that can strengthen victims' rights and services.
- Offer to testify at legislative hearings on victims' rights issues to emphasize the existence and value of community support.
- Participate in public awareness activities that highlight new legislative initiatives, such as press conferences or writing letters to the editor.

Liaison Services

Reentry partnerships have myriad stakeholders representing the public and private sectors, as well as the community. Such collaborative initiatives must rely on people who can serve as liaisons to crime victims in order to keep them informed, involved, and to the degree possible, safe during reentry processes.

Most experts feel that victim service providers should serve as the principal liaison to victims throughout reentry processes. Ohio's Wilkinson says that "community-based victim services and corrections should develop a liaison to assist victims as offenders reenter. Most victim services focus on the 'front-end' (of the justice system), and down the road 20 years, no one is paying attention to the victim's needs when the offender is released. The information is available, but no one acts on it."

Gary Hinzman, Director of Community Corrections for the Sixth Judicial District in Iowa, says that "victim advocates in corrections can be the liaison between individuals, community service providers, and neighborhood associations to focus their attention on the needs of victims when their offender reenters. Procedures should be established that facilitate communication among groups." Hinzman also notes that "corrections needs a strong victims' advocate presence" that can be supported by community volunteers.

Public Awareness

If crime victims are not aware of rights and services available to them as their offenders prepare to enter the community, they will not access them. Through media relations, community outreach, and public education, victims — as well as community members — can be educated about available help and support.

Reentry partnerships can benefit from the development of a public awareness plan that incorporates outreach to victims of crime. The components of such a plan can include:

- Creation of a slogan that emphasizes victims' needs and interests relevant to offender reentry, such as "Safety First" or "Keeping Offenders, Communities, and Victims Crime-free."
- Development of a roster of key print and broadcast media (including editorial boards, news directors, reporters, and public service directors) at the local level, and cultivation of personal relationships with the principals to keep them informed of the progress of the reentry partnership.
- Observance of national commemorative months and weeks that honor victims and those who serve them, such as National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) in April, and Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) in October. Several excellent resource guides are available free to help generate public awareness during these special periods, and throughout the year. The NCVRW Resource Guide is available from the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center, (800) 627-6872; and DVAM Resource Guides are available from the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, (800) 537-2238.
- Sponsorship of reentry partnership web sites that provide regular updates on activities, and recruitment of community volunteers to support victims and work with reentering offenders.
- Development of list serves, user groups, or web-based message boards that maintain regular contact with key community volunteers, and provide opportunities and ideas for victim assistance.
- Publication of regular newsletters for partnership members.

To generate public and victim awareness about reentry partnerships and their activities specific to victims, community members can:

- Develop and update media rosters (including names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, and web site addresses).
- Help develop and maintain a web site for the reentry partnership.
- Write articles about victim assistance and services that probation, parole, corrections, victim services, and other allied justice and community organizations can publish in their newsletters, journals, or other publications.
- Develop list serves, user groups, or web-based message boards for the partnership that include victims and those who serve them.
- Join community coalitions that work together to promote victim-related commemorative weeks, and make sure they have access to the free resource materials noted above.
- Submit opinion pieces to print and broadcast media — including letters to the editor, opinion/editorial columns, and broadcast editorials — that highlight the victim component of offender reentry.
- Involve the media. Both the concept and practical applications of reentry partnerships are in the public interest. A public awareness plan for reentry partnerships needs involvement from the media. While reentry partnership volunteers can fulfill many "media outreach" roles, it is also a good idea to seek a print or broadcast journalist as a volunteer member of the partnership. The input of a media professional can improve efforts to educate and involve community members in this important public safety initiative and provide important avenues for news coverage of key activities and events sponsored by the partnership.

The following section of the manual discusses the first of four core victims' rights in the offender reentry process — victim notification.

Victims' Rights in the Reentry Process: Victim Notification

Notification of pending release should occur with as much advance notice as possible, i.e., six months to a year. For even if the pending release does not occur in this time frame, my family and I have time to prepare. I need information, not just on the status of the offender, but about his mind set, his intentions, his mental health status, and his future plans . . . Where will he be living? What kind of work will he be doing? Who will be supervising him? This is the kind of information I need upon which to base my decisions. If the offender is a sex offender, as in my case, additional information is relevant as well: for example, has the offender's DNA sample been entered into the DNA database bank? Recently, I discovered that this information may be available if the victim writes a letter to the Department of Corrections and it is determined that the victim's right and need to know this information outweigh the offender's rights. But victims who ask for this information should not have to write a letter defending their right to receive it! Rather, it should be provided as part of the victim's core right to information and notification.

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

The core victims' right to notification is critical to involving victims throughout the entire justice process, and informing them of rights and services that are available to them. Often called "the threshold right"¹² from which all other victims' rights and services emanate, victim notification takes on added importance within the context of offender reentry.

The National Center for Victims of Crime has identified 59 possible rights to notification of victims of hearings and events throughout the complete criminal and juvenile justice processes. Thirty-nine of these rights directly apply to offender reentry projects, which are highlighted in Appendix B. Most notable are victims' rights to notification of offenders' status and location; of victims' rights to participate in hearings and events relevant to offenders' case status; and rights of notification relevant to receiving restitution, and information and resources that can contribute to a victim's sense of safety and security.

Victim notification processes must consist of truly collaborative efforts to ensure not only that victims remained informed and involved, but that their wishes and concerns that become evident through notification processes are heard and shared by agencies with responsibility for offender custody and supervision. For example, if a victim's request for notification of parole violations is solicited and received, but not documented in the case file, then the victim will lose the opportunity to provide input to, attend, or participate in any revocation proceeding. This negates the victim's input, poses possible safety issues for that victim, and violates the law.

Reasons for Victim Notification

Notification laws, policies, procedures, and programs, as identified by Seymour serve ten important purposes for crime victims and witnesses.¹³ They:

1. Inform victims of the scope and breadth of services available to them from the justice system, as well as from community-based victim assistance programs.
2. Link victims to information about enforcing their other core rights, including participation, victim impact statements, protection, restitution, and information/referrals.
3. Empower victims with vital information that allows them to know the status and location of their alleged or convicted offender.
4. Enable victims to make informed decisions as to how they can prepare for release hearings, as well as for offenders' potential or eventual release.
5. Inform victims about criminal justice and corrections officials whom they can contact for information about rights and services.

6. Provide victims with information, resources, and specified professionals who can help them address issues related to personal safety and security.
7. Ensure that correctional agencies are in compliance with constitutional and legislative mandates specific to victims' notification rights.
8. Increase the number of options that victims can pursue related to the status and location of their offender.
9. Give victims a measure of control over their lives, and the crucial decisions they must make as they seek to reconstruct their lives in the aftermath of crime.
10. Inform victims of opportunities available to them to improve national and community approaches to justice and victim assistance.¹⁴

Guidelines for Victim Notification Throughout the Offender Reentry Process

There are 22 guidelines that can enhance victim notification processes and services throughout the offender reentry process:

1. The victim of the offense, as well as family members and close friends who comprise the victim's support system, should be eligible for notification.
2. Victim notification forms and outreach materials should be available in multiple languages that reflect the cultural diversity of the community or state in which victims reside.
3. Supportive services should be made available that provide notification information and assistance to victims with disabilities, or victims who are illiterate (such as TDD or TTY telephone lines, and victim education information on audiotape or videotape).
4. Reentry community volunteers should offer support to victims who enroll for notification. A "dual notification" to the victim, as well as the reentry volunteer, can ensure that a supportive person is available, should the victim endure any emotional reactions to the notification.
5. The full range of victims' rights to notification should be explained to victims so that they can request specific notifications based upon their needs. A list of the range of victim notifications specific to offender reentry — derived from the National Center for Victims of Crime — is included in Appendix B.
6. Victims should be notified about major changes in offender status — such as release, violations, or return to custody — as much in advance of the change in status as possible. For predictable changes in status, a 60-day advance notice is recommended.
7. State notification laws sometimes preclude some victims from being notified, i.e., in cases with multiple victims where only one offense was tried, resulting in a conviction. Correctional agency policies should ensure that any victim who wishes to be notified of an offender's status will receive this information.
8. Victims should be able to register for notification at any point throughout the criminal or juvenile justice process, including the reentry process.
9. Victims should be able to "opt in" or "opt out" of notification services at any point throughout the criminal or juvenile justice process.
10. The victim notification enrollment process should be streamlined to the degree possible, with victims provided with the opportunity to enroll at one entry point for multiple notifications. The multi-agency pressure-sensitive forms utilized in Arizona for pre-conviction and post-conviction notification are included in Appendix C.
11. Victim notification forms should include:
 - Inmate identifying information.
 - Requestor's name and contact information.
 - Requestor's relationship to the victim (including "self").
 - Information about the types of notification for which the requestor is eligible.

- Information about other rights relevant to notification, i.e. the right to submit an impact statement at parole or other release hearings.
 - Information about the confidentiality of the victim's request to be notified.
 - Information about how the requestor can "opt out" of the notification program, if he or she so desires.
 - Contact information for further information or assistance from the correctional agency.
 - Notification to the requestor about his or her responsibility to keep the correctional agency informed of any change of address or contact information.
12. Victims who request to register via telephone, in person, or through a third party (such as a district attorney or community corrections official) should be provided with an enrollment form to facilitate documentation of the request, and to ensure that they know what services they can expect as a result of their enrollment in the program.
13. Victims should be provided with information about what specific types of notification mean. For example, the California Youth Authority (CYA) notification forms include a novel approach that clearly delineates the type of information the requestor will receive:

Asking for this Notification	Will Get You this Information
Annual review hearings	Date, time, and location of hearing where offender's progress during the past year will be reviewed. May result in change of Parole Consideration Date.
Escape and recapture	Immediate notification of date and time of escape or recapture (<i>You must provide a phone number where you can be reached</i>).
Parole consideration date and any changes	Month and year of projected release of offender.
Parole consideration hearings	Date, time, and location of hearing where release to parole will be considered.

14. Staff or volunteers should be designated to provide victims with notification about offender status.
15. Victims should be informed about exactly how notifications will be made, i.e., personal phone contacts, automated phone contacts, letter, or personal visit.
16. If notifications are sent via mail, victims should be advised to expect a letter that has the justice agency's watermark on the envelope (this can help them mentally prepare for opening such a letter).
17. If notifications are sent via an automated telephone system, victims should be given the option of "dual notification" that provides the exact same notification phone call to a victim advocate or trained reentry volunteer, who can then provide support as needed.
18. Upon request from the victim, his/her request for notification should be kept confidential from the offender and his/her counsel.
19. For written notifications, letters should be developed that are victim-sensitive and offer ongoing support and referrals for services. A sample victim-sensitive victim notification letter is included in Appendix D.
20. Victims' rights to notification should be incorporated into the public awareness and community outreach materials of reentry initiatives, including but not limited to:
- Informational brochures (either general brochures about the reentry initiative, or victim-specific brochures about the victim component of offender reentry).
 - Opportunity to enroll in notification programs through the victim impact statement (please refer to the model VIS included in Appendix H).

- Inclusion of victim notification information and resources in state victim assistance rosters.
 - To the degree possible, correctional agencies should have toll-free numbers for victims to contact for notification information and registration.
 - Media and public outreach campaigns relevant to offender reentry should incorporate information about victim notification rights (including press release, public service announcements, opinion/editorial columns, and newspaper advertisements).
 - Any newsletters or other community outreach tools that address offender reentry should include information about victim notification and how to access this right.
21. Correctional agencies and reentry partnerships should include information about victims' rights to notification, and how to access this right and related services, on their web sites.
 22. Reentry community outreach and training initiatives should include brief, basic information about victims' rights to notification.

The Role of Community Reentry Volunteers in Victim Notification

Community reentry volunteers can:

1. Request and attend training programs co-sponsored by correctional agencies and victim service providers that address victims' rights to notification; the types of notification relevant to reentry programs; and how such rights can be implemented in a multidisciplinary manner.
2. Become informed enough about notification to provide advice and referrals to victims at any point throughout the reentry process.
3. Offer to serve as the recipient of "dual notification" so that a "cocoon of support" can be immediately provided to victims, upon request and as needed.
4. Assist the victim with any needs that emerge from notification of his or her rights, such as delinquent restitution payments or any issues related to the victim's safety.
5. Offer to accompany the victim and attend hearings relevant to the offender's status to provide support and assistance, upon request from the victim.
6. Provide translation services to victims who do not speak English (if notification resource information is not available in multiple languages).
7. Offer to read notification information to victims who are illiterate, and assist them with enforcing any rights or accessing any services.
8. Assist with community efforts to publicize victims' rights to notification through the media, public forums, victim education programs, or other venues.
9. Maintain regular contact with institutional, community corrections, and victim assistance professionals to see if the victim needs any support or services.
10. Provide any input from the victim that results from providing assistance and support during notification processes to relevant justice or reentry professionals, when permission is received from the victim to do so.
11. Organize and serve on a "Community Victim Services Committee or Council."

Raven Kazen, Director of Victim Services for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, suggests that there may have been cases where victims either opted out of their notification rights, or were unaware that they existed (also resulting in no official notification request). Kazen says, "If there is a legitimate concern by the community for the safety of the community or victim when a potentially dangerous offender is reentering, and even though the victim chooses to not be part of the scenario, action on the part of a 'Community Victim Services Committee' to ensure safety is also a good idea." Such a committee could be comprised of volunteers whose responsibilities include monitoring and responding to offenders who are perceived to pose a potential threat to their existing victims, potential victims, or the neighborhood or community to which they are being released.

Victims' Rights in the Reentry Process: Victim Protection

What are my concerns regarding my core rights as a victim/survivor relevant to the issue of offender reentry? Ensuring my safety and that of my family is, and should always be, first and foremost. Discussing my safety concerns with local law enforcement and the community should occur long before the offender is released. Answering such questions as, "How exactly will I be protected and by whom?" and "What can I and the community do, not only to keep me safe, but working toward my feeling safe?" is paramount.

Whether actual or perceived, all fears about offender reentry need to be addressed. I have known victims of violent crime who believe, as I do, that their perpetrators are a danger to society and should serve the maximum sentence. Whether this is a perceived fear or an actual one may not be able to be determined; however, those who claim it is a perceived fear may be gambling, not only with the victim's life, but with the lives of other members of society as well. Victims are the ones with the experience and therefore should always be considered the "experts," especially when it comes to addressing their own victimization.

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

The voices of victims shed considerable light on their safety and security needs; they are, indeed, the "experts" who should be continually consulted about personal protection concerns.

A longstanding hypothesis that is supported, to a great extent, by victimology research is that victims who have concerns about their safety and security — at any point throughout justice processes — are less inclined to want to actively participate as witnesses, and as people hurt by crime who need and are deserving of support and services. As such, victim safety is paramount to increase not only the reporting of crimes, but active participation in seeking justice by victims.

Reentry partnerships should provide opportunities for crime victims to:

- Feel comfortable in reporting and talking about any issues related to their safety and security.
- Feel validated that their input relevant to personal safety and security is important, valued and a significant component of both the reentry process and overall public safety.
- Receive ongoing information about the case and offender status that can enhance their feelings of safety.
- Have designated individuals — such as corrections professionals, victim advocates, or community volunteers — with whom the victim can have ongoing contact regarding their safety needs.

Victim Safety Throughout Justice and Reentry Processes

Significant research findings relevant to victims' concerns about safety and security include the following:

- There are two principal types of fear that victims are subject to: 1) Actual fear, where during the commission of the crime or in subsequent contacts, the victim is threatened by the offender or his/her acquaintances; and 2) Perceived fear, which results from the trauma of victimization, and causes some victims to feel fearful — of the offender, the justice system, people and things that remind them of the crime, etc. — even when there has been no direct or implied threat.
- Victims do not always express their feelings of fear or concerns for their safety. This finding should lead justice officials, victim advocates, and reentry community volunteers to develop protocols that ask victims: "Do you have any concerns for your safety and security, or that of your family and friends?"
- Information about the status of the case, and status and location of the offender, is paramount to addressing victims' safety needs.
- Victims' rights that inform and involve victims throughout the criminal and juvenile justice system — particularly notification, victim impact statements, and protective measures — can add to victims' feelings of safety and security.¹⁵

Clearly, victims' safety and security concerns relevant to reentry do not begin when their offender is being considered for release back into the community. Rather, a comprehensive approach starts at the scene of the crime, and continues throughout the justice and reentry "continuum of care."

Assessing Victim Safety

The "Promising Practices and Strategies for Victim Services in Corrections" project identified 20 questions to help assess victims' concerns about safety and security.¹⁶ The specific questions have been revised to address reentry initiatives and expanded with guidelines and recommendations that are specific to offender reentry programs:

1. During the commission of the crime or subsequently, was the victim directly threatened, intimidated, or harassed by the offender or his/her acquaintances?
Victims may have fears resulting from threats from the offender. This information can be ascertained through:
 - Law enforcement reports.
 - Victim testimony during hearings and trials.
 - Pre-sentence investigation reports.
 - Victim impact statements.
 - Direct interviews with victims at any stages throughout the justice and/or reentry processes.
2. Whether or not a victim was directly threatened, does she/he have any concerns about safety and security (if so, what are they)?
While this information can be determined at any point throughout the justice process, it is important to include this question in the victim impact statement (for sentencing, parole or reentry). Victims should be reassured that any concerns they have about safety are important to disclose and helpful in the reentry planning process.
3. Has the victim been informed of his/her core rights (notification, protection, restitution, victim impact statements, compensation, and information/referral)? Does the victim have any questions regarding how to implement these rights?
Victims should be given the opportunity to "opt in" or "opt out" of enforcing any of these core rights at any point throughout the justice and reentry process. Justice officials, victim advocates, and community members can all play a significant role in explaining core rights and how to implement them.
4. Has the victim been given the opportunity to identify concerns about personal safety and security (through assessments or victim impact statements)?
Victim assessments can take place prior to sentencing, parole release hearings, and/or through the offender reentry process, and can include a specific victim impact statement. While key elements of victim assessments should include this list of 20 questions, core components should address:
 - Documentation of any contact from the offender during the commission of the crime (or thereafter) that constitutes intimidation, harassment, or threats of harm.
 - Specific delineation of the victim's safety concerns, i.e., for self, family, co-workers, or others.
 - Solicitation of recommendations from the victim regarding actions the justice system and community can take to enhance his or her feelings of safety and security (including input into conditions of release/reentry for the offender, as described below in number 5).
 - Assistance in developing a safety plan (see "Victim Safety Checklist" in Appendix A).
 - Provision of contact information – 24 hours a day, seven days a week – for victims who feel they are in imminent danger.
5. In probation and parole cases, has the victim been given the opportunity to provide input into conditions of supervision that would enhance his/her feelings of safety and security (through pre-sentence or pre-parole investigations, and/or victim impact statements)?

Standard conditions of supervision that are specific to victims' needs and concerns throughout reentry processes are included in Appendix E. Furthermore, reentry programs should develop "release of information" forms for offenders to sign that allow for specific information — such as "conditions of release and community supervision" — to be shared with their victim(s), the victim's advocate, and any community members who have responsibility for monitoring offenders in the community, or providing support to their victims (a sample "Release of Information" form is included in Appendix F).

6. Has the victim been provided with information about victim compensation which, in many cases, can help pay for counseling and other out-of-pocket expenses to cope with the trauma of victimization?

While many justice officials and victim service providers share responsibility for notifying violent crime victims about their right to compensation, it should never be assumed that victims have been provided with this vital information. Most states adhere to guidelines for victim compensation applications, most notably: the victim must report the crime to law enforcement within a prescribed period of time (usually 72 hours); cooperate with law enforcement and prosecutors; and submit a timely application to the state compensation program (generally within one year from the date of the crime). A brief summary of victim compensation requirements and benefits is included in Appendix G.

7. Has the victim been informed about confidentiality protections to ensure that his/her input and location will not be divulged to the offender, or his/her counsel, if the victim chooses? Does the victim want to enforce or waive this right?

Many victims will choose not to participate in justice and reentry processes if they are not guaranteed confidentiality of their contact information and, in some cases, their requests to enforce their statutory or constitutional rights. Throughout reentry processes, efforts must be made by justice system, victim assistance, and community representatives to provide for victim confidentiality, upon request from the victim.

8. Has the victim been informed of his/her responsibility to keep criminal and juvenile justice and correctional agencies up to date on his/her contact information (telephone, e-mail, and address)? Does the agency have that current information on file?

The lack of current victim contact information often poses a significant barrier to ongoing victim involvement in justice and reentry processes. A collaborative multi-agency effort must begin with law enforcement, with the responding officer not only asking the victim for a primary and secondary point-of-contact, but also verbally repeating the information back to the victim to ensure its accuracy. At every juncture throughout the justice process, victims should be notified (verbally and in writing, if possible) about their responsibility to notify the proper authorities (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, courts, probation, or reentry personnel) about any change in address, telephone number, or e-mail.

9. Has the victim been provided with the name and telephone number of the key personnel at agencies and/or work sites that supervise or detain the offender (jail, detention, probation, prison, or parole)?

Victims often express frustration at their inability to "get to the right person" relevant to their cases and concerns. The "right person" for the purpose of reentry can include:

- Institutional or community corrections victim services personnel.
- Designated victim service representatives at correctional work sites (for whom a portion of their job responsibilities includes making sure that victims have a point-of-contact for information and referrals 24 hours a day, seven days a week).
- Victim information and referral rosters available at all reentry work sites that simplify the process of providing referrals for support and assistance.

- The probation or parole officer who is supervising their offender (or in reentry cases where officers have not yet been assigned, the director of the agency or reentry initiative).
 - Community members in the reentry partnership who want to provide support and assistance to victims.
10. Have victims been advised to call “911” in cases of emergencies when they feel their safety is at risk?
All reentry professionals and volunteers, as well as relevant victim outreach materials, should advise victims about the importance of calling “911” in cases of emergency.
11. Has the victim been advised of actions to take when any occurrence causes him/her to be concerned about safety or security?
The range of actions that victims should take when they have safety concerns include, but are not limited to:
- Contacting appropriate justice, victim assistance, or community reentry professionals or volunteers to identify their concerns.
 - Documenting, to the degree possible, the incident or activities that gave them cause for concern.
 - Implementing any activities in their safety plan (see Appendix A) to augment their immediate safety.
12. Does the victim want to be kept updated about the status of the case, and status of the offender when she/he is detained, incarcerated, or under any form of community supervision?
A comprehensive reentry initiative should provide opportunities for victims to “opt in” and/or “opt out” of case status notification — including the status and location of the offender — at any juncture throughout the criminal justice process.
13. Has the victim been provided with assistance in developing a personal safety plan?
Such assistance can be provided by victim advocates, community corrections officials, and/or community volunteers, utilizing the “Victim Safety Checklist” included in Appendix A as a foundation for such a plan.
14. Have any law enforcement or justice officials offered to conduct a “security check” of the victim’s home and/or office to enhance the physical security of either site?
Most law enforcement agencies can provide a security review for victims’ homes and work sites, and offer recommendations to enhance their physical safety. Community members can assume an important role in helping victims implement any recommendations, such as replacing locks; providing answering machines for victim’s homes, or cell phones pre-programmed to “911” for 24-hour use; locating guard dogs through the local animal shelter; helping victims to develop varied, alternate routes to-and-from work; and any other measures to enhance victim safety and security.
15. Has the victim been offered the opportunity to participate in victim/offender programming — such as victim/offender meetings or dialogue or family group conferencing — that can help determine an offender accountability plan that takes into consideration the victim’s safety needs?
Guidelines, resources, and references for victim/offender programming for reentry initiatives are included in the “Promising Practices” section of this manual.
16. Has the victim received information about possible sanctions for offenders who violate protective orders or, in any manner, intimidate or harass the victim?
A victim’s sense of security can be enhanced by knowing the range of sanctions that can be implemented against any individual — such as the offender or his/her colleagues — that pose a threat to his/her safety. As a matter of policy, reentry initiatives should take extreme caution in either swiftly and surely implementing such sanctions, or providing a detailed explanation to victims in cases where sanctions are not taken or warranted. This can address victims’ perceptions and frustration that offenders who violate their conditions of supervision “get off easy.”

17. Is regular contact maintained with victims who have expressed safety concerns?
Victims must have a strong connection to community and corrections liaisons, as well as a victim advocate, to ensure that reentry initiatives address their ongoing safety issues. A designated community volunteer can be available on-call to victims, and make periodic contacts to simply see how they are doing.
18. Can the reentry initiative offer interventions — or referrals for and/or coordinated approaches to interventions — if a crisis occurs?
A “coordinated response” should involve justice and correctional agencies, victim service providers, and community volunteers. Victim advocates, in particular, are usually qualified to provide crisis response services when a need has been identified (either by the victim, or by a member of the reentry team).
19. Does the agency have protocols that provide for notification to victims if they appear to be in imminent danger?
Any indication of words or actions by the offender that constitutes a threat to the victim should be immediately addressed by professionals responsible for offender reentry supervision, with immediate notification of both the incident documentation and agency response provided to the victim. This information allows the victim to take necessary precautions to enhance his/her safety, as needed.
20. Has the victim been advised that his/her safety cannot be guaranteed, but rather efforts will be made to ensure his/her safety, to the degree possible?
Despite best collaborative efforts, it is not possible to guarantee a victim's safety. All communications with victims — both verbally and in writing — should emphasize this important fact.

The Role of Community Reentry Volunteers in Victim Protection

In a successful reentry partnership, community volunteers can be the “backbone” of efforts to promote victim safety. They can:

1. Be trained in victim trauma and how victims' emotional well-being affects their feelings of safety.
2. Help victims identify and document their safety issues for supervision and surveillance officers.
3. Help victims document safety concerns that can be addressed in offenders' conditions of supervision.
4. Work with supervision and surveillance officers to ensure that perceived violations of conditions of supervision are identified, documented, and addressed immediately.
5. Help victims develop safety plans.
6. Offer to provide “safe harbor” to any victim who feels the need to leave his or her home or place of employment due to safety concerns.
7. Secure and organize volunteers to help victims who need to relocate due to threats of intimidation, harassment, or harm. For example, this service is provided to battered women in Lincoln, Nebraska, by nonviolent juvenile offenders who are supervised by responsible adult mentors from the Lincoln Action Program; 210 “O” Street; Lincoln, NE 68508.
8. Upon request from the victim, help create a “cocoon of support” of neighbors and friends that helps the victim feel safe, prevents further revictimization, and validates the victim's safety and security concerns.
9. Volunteer to be a 24/7 on-call support person for victims who experience crises, and serve as a liaison for victims to the agency with responsibility for supervising the offender.
10. Ensure that the victim is aware of his/her core statutory or constitutional rights, and provide assistance — as needed — to implement them.

The next section of this manual addresses the third core victims' right in the offender reentry process — defining victim impact.

Victims' Rights in the Reentry Process: Defining Victim Impact

I learned two things very early in my career as a deputy sheriff in Southern California. First, young people at-risk received very little, if any, attention or services from government or from community organizations. Second, victims of crime received no services, were isolated from the justice system, and were seldom provided with any information unless they were needed as a witness. I also learned that, except for law enforcement officers, criminal justice system practitioners - including judges - seldom had an opportunity to learn about the short-term or long-term impact of crime on victims and on their families. Yes, for some victims, crime is a minor inconvenience, though for others the impact is devastating and far reaching.

I left the sheriff's office to go to work for the probation department. In 1972, I was appointed Chief Probation Officer for Fresno County. I learned that Juvenile Court Judge Kenneth Andreen had invited victims to court so they would know what was going on and so they could be included to some degree in the process. When I learned this, my well thought-out reaction was - wow! This made me flash back to the burglary victim that was afraid to leave her home because she was afraid the burglar would return. No one had told her that the burglar had been arrested, pled guilty, and been sentenced to jail.

By 1975, the Fresno County Probation was providing services to victims and was providing victim impact statements to the courts separate from the pre-sentence report. This was before the victim impact statement became an element of the pre-sentence report and before victims were allowed to appear in court to make a statement.

The Fresno effort that resulted in services to victims and the victim impact statement was a collaborative effort that included support from two senior probation officers, a local minister, and the public defender.

— James Rowland, Chief Probation Officer, Napa County, CA

Twenty-five years ago, collaboration between justice professionals and community members resulted in the creation of one of the most powerful tools for defining victim impact in the cadre of victims' rights and services: the victim impact statement (VIS). The "voice of the victim" is necessary to achieve justice that takes into consideration how people are hurt by crime — physically, financially, and emotionally. The VIS must be incorporated into a continuum that listens to the victims' voice prior to sentencing or adjudication, at any hearings relevant to an offender's potential release from incarceration or detention, or at any parole or probation revocation hearing. The information garnered from VIS can help in developing an offender's reentry case plan, and provide reentry team members with crucial insights into a victim's needs and concerns.

Victim Impact Statement Overview¹⁷

A victim impact statement is a written or oral description that describes the physical, financial, and emotional effects a crime has on an individual victim, family, and where appropriate and permitted, a neighborhood or community. VIS are used by probation agencies to prepare pre-sentence investigation (PSI) reports for the court; for judicial consideration at the time of sentencing; and by paroling and correctional authorities as they make decisions regarding the classification of incarcerated offenders, and/or the release of the offender from custody.

Who is Allowed to Submit a Victim Impact Statement?

Normally, victims and surviving family members of homicide victims submit VIS. However, some states allow the victim or a family member to appoint a victim representative to submit a written or oral VIS on their behalf. Victim representatives can include criminal and juvenile justice system-based victim assistance

personnel, family friends, community-based victim assistance advocate, or any other person the victim or family members feel will represent their best interests.

It is important to be familiar with state laws and agency policies that determine who can submit a VIS, as they vary significantly among jurisdictions and, sometimes, among agencies within a specific jurisdiction.

Types of Victim Impact Statements

There are currently nine types of victim impact statements utilized by courts and correctional agencies in the United States:

1. *Written VIS*, accepted either in a written statement/letter from the victim, or on a designated VIS form.
2. *Oral VIS* (also known as “allocution”), where the victim addresses the sentencing court or paroling, commutation, or clemency authority.
3. *Audiotaped VIS*, which are utilized when the victim is unable to attend a hearing involving VIS, or is fearful of facing the offender.
4. *Videotaped VIS*, which are utilized for the same purposes as audio taped VIS.
5. *Closed-circuit television VIS*, which provide victims who want to testify in person at their offender’s parole or other release hearing, and in the presence of the offender, an increased measure of personal safety, especially victims of gang violence or witness intimidation, sexual assault or child victims.
6. *Child VIS*, which feature a format that is designed especially for children that allows them to provide impact information they can easily understand and control. The Child Protective Act of 1990 passed by Congress allows child victims to deliver VIS in federal courts prior to sentencing in formats commensurate with their age and cognitive development. This statute — which can easily be applied to court and parole hearings in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories — that depict the effects of the crime. A sample child/parent VIS resource package can be found in the publication *Impact Statements: A Victim’s Right to Speak, a Nation’s Responsibility to Listen*, developed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the National Center for Victims of Crime, and American Prosecutors Research Institute.¹⁸
7. *Teleconferenced VIS*, which are especially applicable for out-of-town victims, and/or victims with disabilities. This approach has been utilized by the state probation/parole departments in both North Carolina and South Carolina to ease the process of victim allocation for youthful offender parole hearings.
8. *Community impact statements*, utilized in federal cases involving drugs and/or gang activities, in which representatives from affected neighborhoods are invited to submit written VIS, or oral testimony at community meetings, about how crime, drugs, and gangs affect the quality of life in their homes and neighborhoods (additional information is included in the “Community Impact Statement” sub-section of this section).
9. In Wisconsin, a member of the adult paroling authority will travel, upon request, to a victim’s home to obtain the victim impact statement through direct allocution. This process provides convenience to victims who might otherwise be unable to travel to parole hearings.¹⁹

Model Victim Impact Statement

A model VIS²⁰ was developed in 1999 following a series of focus groups involving juvenile court judges, juvenile justice professionals, and victims of juvenile offenders. It is developed within a restorative justice framework that is victim-centered and focuses on offender accountability, and has been revisited and revised based upon input from community corrections, court, and victim assistance professionals. It is easily adaptable to any jurisdiction’s laws or agency policies. This model VIS, as well as “VIS Resource Package for Dissemination to Victims” — which has been adapted for probation and parole agencies — is included in Appendix H.

Integrating Victim Impact Statement Issues into Preentry and Reentry Offender Casework

In 1999, the California Youth Authority developed a checklist for utilizing victim information — much of which can be elicited from VIS — in casework with offenders.²¹ While VIS information can be useful throughout the incarceration of offenders, it becomes particularly useful as correctional agencies prepare them for reintegration into the community. There are many venues — including individual or group counseling sessions, treatment programs, and “Impact of Crime on Victims” classes — in which the “victim’s voice” can have a powerful impact on offender accountability and rehabilitation.

- Compare the offender’s version of the offense with the victim’s statement and other information in the pre-sentence investigation report.
- What information is the offender omitting?
- What information does the offender need to learn about the impact of the crime on the victim?
- Was the victim physically injured?
- Did the victim require medical attention, counseling, or hospitalization?
- Is the victim afraid, or does the victim have any concerns for his/her safety and security?
- Is the offender aware of his/her primary victim? Secondary victims? Others who may have been affected by the offense?
- What issues do you believe the victim would like to have the offender address?
- What behavior(s) would the victim want the offender to change?
- Keep the offender focused on the ways victims are affected — financially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Educate offenders about the “longevity” of the impact of crime on victims and the community.
- Focus on what offenders are responsible for; and to whom they are accountable.
- Is the offender verbally and/or physically harming others?
- Is the offender’s behavior indirectly a continuation of disregard for the rights of others?
- Does the offender owe the victim restitution?
- How can the offender be reminded of these obligations?
- Does the offender understand the purpose and value of restitution?
- Remind the offender that he/she can pay voluntary restitution.
- Remind offenders of the importance and value of community service and “giving back.”
- Encourage community service to be served in a way that heals the harm to the community affected by the crime.
- Encourage the offender to write a letter of apology that addresses the fact that the offender recognizes the impact the crime has had on the victim (such letters should only be given to the victim if it is desired; otherwise, it can be maintained in the offender’s case file).

Such information should only be utilized with express permission from victims, who are often willing to have their VIS information used to help hold their offenders accountable for their actions.

Victim Impact Statements and Offender Reentry

The core right of testimony provides the opportunity for the victim to have input into decisions regarding the offender’s parole. At parole board hearings, the victim should not have to appear in front of the offender. The victim should not be required to state that the information is confidential when giving testimony to the parole board. Rather, the parole board should ask the victim, “Would you like this information to be kept confidential?” Likewise, the victim should be allowed to have some choice about where the offender is placed. And, finally, the victim and the victim’s family should be given the opportunity to seek counseling regarding offender reentry and be provided the financial means to do so.

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

The VIS is perhaps the most valuable tool to help reentry initiatives understand a victim’s needs and concerns. Paroling authorities, reentry supervision teams, and community volunteers can all benefit from understanding and validating the victims’ perspective. The following chart provides guidelines for utilizing information garnered from the model VIS described earlier in this section for the purposes of reentry case planning and supervision.

Information from the VIS	How to Utilize for Reentry Supervision
Description of the offense and its impact on the victim and his/her family.	<p>Offers a comparison to the offender’s version of the offense.</p> <p>Provides the reentry team with comparative information about how the victim was affected at the time of the offense, and at the time the offender is being released to the community.</p> <p>May offer insights into potential offender behaviors that should be closely monitored.</p> <p>Addresses the “domino effect” of crime and how it affects not only the victim, but his/her family and friends.</p>
Information on the emotional impact of the crime on the victim.	<p>Can help offenders understand the psychological consequences of crime (something they may not have considered to this point).</p> <p>Points out the emotional impact of crime can be long-term in nature, affecting victims and their loved ones years after the offense occurred.</p> <p>Can help identify victims who may need counseling or emotional support that can be provided through reentry initiatives.</p>
Description of the physical impact the crime on the victim.	<p>Addresses how the physical impact of crime can affect the victim’s entire life and livelihood.</p> <p>Points out the physical effects of violence can be long-term and even permanent.</p> <p>Can detail lifestyle changes the victim has had to make as a result of the offense.</p>
Outline of the financial impact of the crime on the victim.	<p>The financial consequences of crime are seldom obvious to offenders.</p> <p>Can help hold offenders financially accountable for their actions.</p> <p>Can contribute to the development of a fair restitution payment schedule.</p> <p>Can ensure that court orders for restitution are enforced and carried through the reentry process.</p>
Understanding of victims’ safety and security concerns.	<p>Can contribute to specific conditions of release that enhance the victim’s feelings of safety and security.</p> <p>Can point out the need for a supportive network of reentry volunteers for victims who have safety concerns.</p> <p>Can help in the development of a safety plan for the victim.</p>
Victims’ input into what they would like to see happen with the offender.	<p>Gives insight into the victim’s wishes, should the offender be released.</p> <p>Can contribute to specific conditions of release that address the victim’s most salient needs.</p>

Information from the VIS	How to Utilize for Reentry Supervision
Whether the victim is receptive to victim/offender programming.	Provides an opportunity for the victim to choose to participate in mediation/dialogue, family group conferencing, community conferencing, or other approaches that involve face-to-face interactions with the offender. Such programming can be coordinated among the supervising agency, victim services, and reentry volunteers.
Victims' opinions on community service for the offender.	Provides creative ideas into community service that is visible, viable, and perhaps helpful to crime victims or victim assistance programs. Validates the victim's choice into this condition of supervision. Gives offenders the opportunity to "pay back" their community in ways that can be meaningful to them, as well as their victims.
Description of other needs and concerns the victim may have.	May provide information about the victim's needs and concerns that are not addressed elsewhere in the VIS, and that are applicable to the offender's reentry case plan.
Whether (and how) the victim would like to receive notification of offender status.	Provides a direct link between the supervising agency and the victim. Can involve reentry community volunteers in supportive roles that help the victim address issues related to notification of violations, etc.

Community and Neighborhood Impact Statements

In June 1995, the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Wisconsin created a Drug Victim Initiative that informs and empowers neighborhood residents in communities affected by drugs and the crime that often accompanies drug sales, abuse, and use. It provides victim and witness services for individuals and neighborhoods victimized by drug dealers and distributes informational and educational resources to residents advising them about cases, and their rights as crime victims and as witnesses. This includes the opportunity to submit written or oral VIS community policing or community probation officers.

Community/neighborhood impact statements (CNIS) can utilize questions similar to those asked on VIS to determine the impact of either acute or chronic crimes on neighborhoods in which they occur. They can also be expanded to ask for input from community members in a neighborhood to which an offender is being released. For example:

- Do community members have any specific concerns about the offender's reentry into the neighborhood?
- What type of information does the community need to feel safe?
- Are any community members interested in participating in activities that monitor the offender's behavior, in conjunction with reentry partnerships?
- Are any community members interested in working one-on-one with offenders to help them find and maintain employment, participate in community work service projects (that can be identified by the neighborhood), and maintaining compliance with conditions of supervision, i.e., attending treatment programs, paying restitution, etc.?
- Are any community members interested in participating in activities that would create a "cocoon of support" around neighbors who might be particularly vulnerable?
- Does the neighborhood — through watch programs or civic groups — want to assign a volunteer liaison to offender community supervision or victim assistance agencies?

The CNIS can fulfill an important role in reentry partnerships by ascertaining community members' concerns, seeking their input regarding the impact of reentry on their neighborhood, and providing opportunities for neighborhood involvement in both victim- and offender-related programs and issues.

The next section discusses the fourth core victims' right in the offender reentry process — victim restitution.

Victims' Rights in the Reentry Process: Victim Restitution

There was no restitution ordered in my case. I would like to see that rectified retroactively and changed so that my offender is required to reimburse the Victims Compensation fund. Instead of the excuse I have heard ("He has no money"), begin by taking his tax earnings and garnishing his wages, even those he is currently making in prison.

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

One of victims' greatest frustration is the nation's systemic failure, in general, to implement victim restitution programs and processes that work. While victims at the federal level and in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories have the statutory and, in some states, constitutional right to restitution, these rights more often than not fall by the wayside. The lack of staffing and resources, as well as automated restitution management systems, along with the often erroneous belief that "offenders can't afford to pay," combine to result in what has been termed "the black hole of victims' rights."

In "Promising Practices and Strategies for Victim Services in Corrections," Seymour summarized the importance of victim restitution within a restorative justice context, which has significant implications for reentry partnerships:

When victims suffer considerable monetary losses as a result of crime, the laws in most states require that offenders be ordered to reimburse them for their financial losses related to the criminal or delinquent act. When restitution orders are not ordered nor enforced, it is America's victims and taxpayers who bear the financial burden that belongs to offenders.

Restitution efforts can be truly effective only if they are clearly and convincingly a priority for criminal and juvenile justice agencies. The development of an effective restitution management program should be approached with serious commitment and an eye on long-term results. Agencies charged with the assessment, ordering, and management of restitution should first understand the barriers to successful restitution collection and work to surmount such barriers. They should develop a mission statement and clearly-stated policies and procedures to guide program implementation. Successful restitution programs demonstrate a high degree of interagency collaboration, and it is essential that the responsible group works closely with other stakeholders, including crime victims.

Ultimately, the fulfillment of restitution obligations comprises a tenet of restorative justice that encompasses efforts among offenders, victims, and communities to repair the harm caused by crime. While restitution cannot begin to fully compensate for the harm victims and the community have endured, it is a "good faith" effort by offenders to "right their wrongs" and to accept responsibility.

Restitution is also a strong measure of the effectiveness of America's criminal and juvenile justice systems. When citizens assess whether or not the justice systems are accomplishing their missions, restitution is an important evaluation criterion. As such, not only should offenders be accountable for victim restitution, our justice systems should be held equally accountable for the enforcement of restitution orders.²²

Promising Practices in Victim Restitution

In recent years, collaborative projects involving crime victims, service providers and community corrections officials have resulted in significant improvements in restitution management, as well as the development of model programs, policies, and practices to enhance victims' restitution rights. In 2000, the American Probation and Parole Association and Victims' Assistance Legal Organization (VALOR), with support from the Office

for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice, developed a *Compendium of Promising Practices for Restitution*. The following promising practices are derived from research conducted in conjunction with this project, the “Promising Victim-Related Practices and Strategies in Probation and Parole” project, and the “Promising Practices and Strategies for Victim Services in Corrections” project:²³

1. Passage of omnibus restitution legislation that: mandates victim impact statements and assessments of victims’ financial losses; mandates restitution in all cases unless there is a finding that there is no victim with a pecuniary loss; automatically makes restitution a “final civil judgment” that remains in effect until paid in full; ensures that restitution orders operate as a lien on all real and personal property; ensures for joint liability among defendants; funds a restitution manager or collections manager; establishes procedures for failure to pay restitution; and authorizes immediate sanctions for persons on parole who fail to pay restitution (Colorado — a summary of House Bill 1169 can be obtained at www.state.co.us/gov_dir/leg_dir/00digest/criminal.)
2. Creation of Victim Advisory Councils or restitution-specific advisory councils — consisting of victims and those who serve them, and representatives from justice agencies and the community — to guide the development and implementation of restitution programs.
3. Designation of full-time probation employees to an internal collections team that includes caseload designations based upon offenders’ level of compliance with restitution orders (Maricopa County Arizona Adult Probation Department among others).
4. Development of progressive intermediate sanctions to obtain and maintain offenders’ compliance with court-ordered financial obligations (Maricopa County Adult Probation Department among others).
5. Implementation of automated collections software programs that help manage restitution collections, disbursements, and record keeping, and interface with justice and correctional agencies that have responsibility for restitution management (Maricopa County Arizona Adult Probation Department, Florida Department of Corrections, and Utah Department of Corrections, among others).
6. Passage of state laws and implementation of correctional agency policies that allow a percentage of offenders’ trust accounts to be automatically applied to restitution obligations (California Youth Authority, California Department of Corrections, and Montana Department of Corrections).
7. Development of a centralized, state-level restitution fund to which inmate deposits from trust accounts and wage garnishments are made, and then disbursed to victims (California Department of Corrections and State Board of Control).
8. Creation of a Joint Venture Program in partnership with private industry that provides jobs within institutional corrections settings, with a prescribed amount of wages (in California, 20 percent) automatically deducted to fulfill victim restitution obligations (California Department of Corrections).
9. Creation of restitution centers that serve as a reentry center for inmates, and maintain the following objectives: public safety, payment of restitution, inmate employment and productivity, development of skills, defrayment of court and custody costs, and generation of financial support for offenders’ families (California Department of Corrections, Los Angeles Restitution Center).
10. Creation of programs that use private firms and Internet locator services to track down “lost” victims for whom restitution has been collected (Tarrant County Texas Community Supervision and Corrections Department and California Youth Authority).
11. Making restitution a mandatory condition of parole release and supervision (either carrying out restitution orders issued by a judge at sentencing, or authorizing the paroling authority to order restitution if any financial losses are documented by the victim).
12. Providing assistance to crime victims in documenting their losses for the purposes of restitution (a checklist is included in Appendix H).
13. Providing restitution informational brochures for victims that explain restitution rights, how to implement them, and how to enforce restitution as a civil judgment.

14. Conducting restitution classes for offenders that help them understand their obligations as a component of offender accountability and repairing the harm that is caused by crime (California Youth Authority).
15. Development of victim assessment and evaluation tools that provide victims with the opportunity to give feedback on how restitution was handled in their cases, along with suggestions for improving such processes.

The Role of Community Reentry Volunteers in Victim Restitution

Community reentry volunteers can:

1. Become familiar with their state's restitution laws to understand the policies and procedures that guide restitution management, as well as potential barriers to the collection and disbursement of restitution.
2. Work with reentry partnership members to assess current restitution laws and agency policies, and introduce legislation or policy revisions as needed (utilizing the many models incorporated in the APPA/VALOR "Compendium of Promising Practices for Restitution" as a reference guide).
3. Ensure that victims with whom they are working have written information that explains their restitution rights and how to enforce them.
4. Provide assistance to victims in documenting their losses for restitution.
5. If the victim has not been provided the opportunity to request restitution, or if restitution was not ordered in cases involving pecuniary losses, serve as a liaison to the corrections or reentry partnership authority to facilitate restitution.
6. Talk to victims about the realities of restitution. Inform victims that often offenders have a multitude of financial obligations when they reenter society. Be realistic when explaining and discussing restitution so as not to raise false expectations and place the victim in a situation where they are re-victimized.
7. Serve as a liaison between the victim, supervising officer, and offender in responding to delinquent or nonexistent restitution payments.
8. Provide support to offenders in budgeting and money management that can enhance their capacity to fulfill restitution obligations.
9. Provide regular reminders to offenders with whom they work about the importance of paying restitution obligations on time and in full.
10. Ensure that any victim/offender programming in which they are involved, such as mediation/dialogue or victim awareness classes, addresses important issues related to victim restitution.
11. Volunteer to organize or serve on a restitution-specific advisory committee for the reentry partnership.

The following section provides brief descriptions of additional promising practices to consider when determining how to improve victim involvement in offender reentry processes.

PROMISING PRACTICES FOR REENTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Correctional agencies need to develop more collaborative relationships, not only with victims, but with victim service providers as well. And they need to be held accountable for actions that place victims at risk. This is much more likely to happen if a relationship has been established with victim service providers. Victims of an offender who is about to be released should be contacted by a victim service provider and/or law enforcement officials often and asked, "How are you doing? Is there anything that can be done to help you in this transitional process? What are your safety and informational needs, and how can we meet them?"

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

Throughout the development of this manual, its many contributors emphasized the importance of involving crime victims and those who serve them in reentry partnerships. They also expressed a belief that offender reentry processes should not begin at the time an offender is being returned to a community from a prison or jail. Rather, there was strong consensus that reentry planning should begin at the time the offender is sentenced or adjudicated to an institutional corrections setting; that victim input is vital to offender case planning and management while incarcerated, as well as when offenders are reentering the community; and that the community must have a vital role in providing support and services to victims and offenders in the preentry and reentry processes.

While the concept of "offender reentry" is not new, few programs have been developed that specifically address "the victim component of offender reentry." However, many promising practices have been developed within the context of victim assistance and the philosophy of restorative justice that can be easily applied to offender reentry partnerships.

This section will provide some general information on the philosophy of restorative justice and then highlight some promising practices to consider when implementing approaches that involve victims in offender reentry initiatives.

Guiding Principles and Values of Restorative Justice

During the last few years, there has been a great move to address offenders through the concepts of restorative justice. These concepts include the belief that crime creates obligations to make things right. Restorative justice involves the victim, the offender and the community in search of solutions which promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance.²⁴ There is some interesting work taking place using the principles of restorative justice in the process of parole and offender reentry. In Canada, these types of programs are entitled "transformative parole." There is also a Victim-Offender Mediation Program in Wisconsin that is oriented toward these principles.

I believe that in some cases, such as those involving nonviolent offenders, restorative justice programs like Victim-Offender Mediation may work. However, the concept of restorative justice has not existed long enough to be use such practices in parole determinations for violent offenders. There is not enough history, nor empirical data, nor any guaranteed assurances for victims' long-term safety. I, for one, would not want to gamble on this approach, nor risk my safety or that of my family. While I believe victims should be given every possible option when it comes to making choices, at this point in the restorative justice process, the risk of the victim's safety, security, and peace of mind is too great. In my particular case, I would not wish to meet with my offender under any circumstances, because I would not be able to trust his word, nor would I want to

demonstrate any of my concerns. In addition, he would learn a great deal of information about me, and might see my intentions as fear or weakness. Instead of feeling empowered, I would feel vulnerable.

— *Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault*

Some reentry partnerships include restorative justice principles as a foundation for many of their goals and activities. However, the feelings of the survivor noted above point to the need for extreme caution in victim/offender programming within reentry partnerships. Care must be taken to avoid “the rush to restorative justice,” that is, prioritizing victim/offender meetings and interactions before victims’ basic needs and rights are addressed.

While there are many practical applications of restorative justice, it is important that such practices be based upon a shared set of principles and values. In a 1996 national teleconference on restorative justice sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections, participants offered seven basic principles of restorative justice upon which stakeholders can begin to evaluate existing efforts and create new approaches to justice practices:

- Crime is an offense against human relationships.
- Victims and the community are central to justice processes.
- The first priority of justice processes is to assist victims.
- The second priority is to restore the community, to the degree possible.
- The offender has personal responsibility to victims and to the community for crimes committed.
- The offender will develop improved competency and understanding as a result of the restorative justice experience.
- Stakeholders share responsibilities for restorative justice through partnerships for action.²⁵

The Mennonite Central Committee also developed “signposts” for victim involvement in restorative justice that have significant implications for reentry partnerships:²⁶

“We are working toward appropriate victim involvement when . . .

1. *Victims and victim advocates are represented on governing bodies and initial planning committees.*

If victims are central to the process of justice in restorative justice theory, then they and their advocates need to be included in the early stages of program design. Their inclusion in the process of development highlights the program’s commitment to crime victims and the sensitivities that need to be addressed so as not to re-victimize. Determining subtleties of program design that ensure safe and welcoming messages to injured crime victims is an expertise that victims and their advocates can offer. This important view can assist in enhancing the quality of a program and sense of ownership in the program from the victim’s perspective. It also sends a strong message of inclusion to the victim services community.

2. *Efforts to involve victims grow out of a desire to assist them, not offenders. Victims are not responsible to rehabilitate or assist offenders unless they choose to do so.*

The present system of justice is fundamentally a business designed for processing offenders. The concern for offenders is important, and it is appropriate for them to benefit by participation, but we must be careful never to use victims primarily as a way to benefit or otherwise deal with offenders; that should not be the reason for victim involvement in restorative justice. (Conversely offenders should also never be used for the sole benefit of victims.) Similarly, victims should not be pressured to feel that rehabilitation of offenders is their responsibility. In reality, victims often are concerned to know that someone is taking responsibility for the rehabilitation and even the welfare of offenders, and some may choose to take on that concern themselves. However, it should not be presumed to be their responsibility.

3. *Victim safety is a fundamental element of program design.*

Whether working with crime victims in the immediate aftermath of an incident or years later, all interventions must first and foremost recognize victims’ safety and security needs, both physical

and emotional. The manner in which program services are delivered should reflect sensitivity to this and offer victims an opportunity to identify and articulate their personal safety needs. Victims must be free to express their natural human responses to the crime; including anger, rage, and need for vengeance, without judgement, and with understanding of their pain.

A number of processes can ascertain whether a victim has concerns about safety and security:

- Specific questions asked by law enforcement at the scene of the crime and during the investigation.
- Specific questions asked by prosecutors and victim/witness staff about safety that can result in issuance of protective orders for victims who are frightened.
- Inclusion of a question relevant to victim safety and security on the victim impact statement, with the victim's response utilized by the court, community corrections, and/or parole.
- Inclusion of questions relevant to victim safety and security in all assessments conducted by victim assistance and mental health professionals across the continuum of victim assistance.

4. *Victims clearly understand their roles in the program including potential benefits and risks to themselves and offenders.*

Prepare victims for program participation by providing them with as much information as possible about their role in the process, what to expect, and the known risks and benefits to themselves and to offenders. Victims should be informed of any benefits to offenders the program offers and particularly what, if any, benefits offenders will receive from victim participation. It is appropriate for offenders to benefit from victim participation, but efforts must be made to reduce, if not eliminate, any unwanted surprise outcomes for victims.

5. *Confidentiality is provided within clear guidelines.*

Victims' right to privacy must always be protected; their experiences, including their post-crime experiences, must be treated with sensitivity and respect because of the intense personal nature of the experience. Victims should choose when, what, and how information is disclosed about them and their experience. They should also be informed about any rules and regulations regarding confidentiality under which the program operates.

6. *Victims have as much information as possible about the case, the offense and the offender.*

To meet basic needs for information and to personalize the experience of justice for both victim and offender, restorative justice seeks to maximize the exchange of information between victim and offender, whether directly or indirectly. Victims may or may not choose to engage in face-to-face dialogue with offenders — or there may be other reasons why it is inappropriate or impractical — but victims usually have a variety of informational needs regarding offenders that can be addressed.

7. *Victims can identify and articulate their needs and are given choices.*

The opportunity to identify their own needs and make choices about how they are addressed can empower victims. Thus opportunities for choices should be maximized; programs must be careful not to fall into a litany of rigid, scripted options. Certainly victims must be the gatekeepers as to if and when a direct encounter takes place.

8. *Victims' opportunities for involvement are maximized.*

Since a core element of victim trauma is disempowerment, restorative justice programs should provide as many opportunities as possible for victims to be involved in their cases, as well as the program as a whole. There should be as few limitations on participation as possible.

9. *Program design provides referrals for additional support and assistance.*

Crime victims may have additional needs that cannot be met by the program. While they should not feel obligated to offer comprehensive services, programs should be familiar with additional community services for victims and routinely make those referrals. A strong working relationship with other victim service agencies in the community will make the transition for additional assistance for the victim much smoother.

10. *Services are available to victims even when their offenders have not been arrested or are unwilling or unable to participate.*

If victims are central to the process of restorative justice and their needs are the starting point, then the justice system cannot simply offer services when offenders are identified and/or arrested; to the extent possible, justice systems must provide services and options for victims when their offenders are not known. To do otherwise perpetuates the offender-driven nature of the system.”

Programs based on restorative justice principles share a common foundation with offender reentry partnerships: they include victims as primary stakeholders; require high levels of community involvement; and provide opportunities for offenders to become productive, law-abiding members of the community.

Promising Practices

The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project

The extensive literature review conducted by this project identified a London (U.K.) model that involves community members in preventing revictimization of their neighbors, which is described in detail in this section.

In the late 1980s, a collaborative community-based initiative was developed in a high-crime neighborhood of London. The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project was a demonstration project of the London Home Office Police Department Crime Prevention Unit. It focused on a neighborhood with 2,280 dwellings that had experienced nearly twice the rate of domestic burglaries as identified by the National British Crime Survey.

As described in “The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project: Phase II:²⁷

The first task of the project team was to generate information necessary to guide a crime prevention initiative. Apart from consultation with relevant local groups, systematic information gathering came from structured interviews with three categories of respondents: domestic burglary victims, neighbors of domestic burglary victims, and convicted burglars. Victim responses described the dwelling, occupancy patterns of the victim, and fine detail about the burglary and its circumstances. Neighbor interviews identified similarities and differences between victimized houses and the most obvious alternative targets. Burglar interviews gathered information of three types: the first concerned general techniques and target selection in relation to all burglaries committed; the second dealt with specific target choice and technique in relation to a specified burglary; and the third concerned burglar motivation and what led up to the burglary.

The data yielded from these interviews found that:

- Burglary was local, with 85 percent of detected burglars traveling less than two miles to commit their offenses, and less than one mile distance traveled in 63 percent of cases.
- Factors that seem to deter burglary included signs of occupancy, dogs, and high visibility point of entry (despite this, 70 percent of points of entry were visible to passersby).
- Both victims and neighbors were able to recognize points that were most vulnerable to burglars. Reasons included low actual or apparent occupancy, attractive property, and victim lifestyle.
- The chance of a second or subsequent burglary was more than four times as high as the chance of a first burglary. Thus, a burglary flags the significant probability of another burglary.

The Kirkholt Project focused on prevention of repeat victimization as its primary crime prevention strategy. Forrester, Frenz, O’Connell and Pease, noted that “victim support has been an emerging theme of criminal justice in the last decade, and there is a case for saying that the best support a victim can be given is the avoidance of further victimization.”²⁸

In an examination of repeat victimization and its implications for crime prevention, Farrell and Pease identified certain advantages of the goal of “the prevention of revictimization” as an attractive general crime prevention strategy, including:

- Attention to dwellings of people already victimized as having a higher “hit rate” of those likely to be victimized in the future.
- Preventing repeat victimization protects the most vulnerable social groups, without having to identify those groups as such, which can be socially divisive....
- Repeat victimization is highest, both absolutely and proportionately, in the most crime-ridden areas, which are also the areas that suffer the most serious crime. The prevention of repeat victimization is commensurately more important the greater an area's crime problem.
- The rate of victimization offers a realistic schedule for crime prevention activity. Preventing repeat victimization is a way of “drip feeding” crime prevention, i.e., an analogy created to suggest that targeting repeat victimization is more practically viable — it is spread through time, and hence less labor intensive and easier to maintain.²⁹

A further assessment about addressing repeat victimization suggests the need for more information and formal training on the concept of “mechanisms,” which is defined as “a statement about how the proposed activity or tactic will develop the crime reduction required.” In an example involving a probation officer's capacity to protect the victim of an offender on his or her caseload, the “mechanism” is a long causal chain that might run along the following lines: “We want to protect the victim and we know that 80 percent of offenders go back to the same victim and repeat their offense, so if we believe that a particular offender is involved, it may be worthwhile approaching the probation officer with responsibility for that offender, and asking him or her to keep a close watch for further offending.”³⁰

The Cocoon Neighborhood Watch

According to Forrester, et al, “the most publicized element of Kirkholt nationally has been cocoon neighborhood watch. Residents of the six or so houses or flats contiguous with a victimized dwelling were asked to look out and report on anything suspicious around the burgled home to prevent repeat victimization. If they agreed to participate, they were provided with security uprating. ... These cocoons took on a life of their own as foci of more conventional home watch schemes, and we have consistently regarded them as the nucleus of, rather than a substitute for, community organization.”³¹

A key element of the project was the removal of coin meters for electricity or gas, which were a self-identified target among burglars. The community-wide removal of an obvious crime target was assessed as an important factor in the overall success of the initiative.

Community support was identified by the Kirkholt Project as a key element of the first phase of the initiative. Project workers visited the homes of burglary victims, offering support and providing referrals to agencies that could assist them. In due course, project workers took over from local law enforcement the security surveys, identification of valuables, and establishing cocoons.

The Kirkholt Project team included representatives from Manchester University, law enforcement, probation, victim support services, and housing. Community volunteers represented community groups, statutory agencies, schools, churches, attorneys, and local residents. Volunteers became involved as Home Watch Coordinators (“cocoon coordinators”), and as members of the Crime Prevention Group, which were eventually merged into the Kirkholt Community Crime Prevention Group. In addition to home watch and cocooning activities, the group has evolved to address quality of life issues in the community, such as littering and animal control.

Findings from the Kirkholt Project

- Forrester, et al report that the rate of burglary in Kirkholt fell to 40 percent of its pre-initiative level within five months of the start of the program. Repeat victimizations fell to zero over the same period, and did not exceed two in any month thereafter.

- Interviews conducted by Forrester, et al of Home Watch participants who had been involved for an average of 14.5 months found that 64 percent of people said they were as enthusiastic as they were at the outset of the project, and 32 percent were now more enthusiastic.
- Nearly 90 percent of participants thought that the burglary problem had either “improved” or were “much improved” as a result of the project, with perception of improvement highest among those who had lived there longest.
- A detailed cost-benefit analysis found that, despite the investment of considerable time by those involved, the project resulted in considerable cost savings.³²

Attributes of the Kirkholt Project

An intensive follow-on evaluation of the Kirkholt Project identified ten key factors that are important to consider for replication of this initiative in other communities.³³ The evaluation found that Kirkholt was:

1. Conceived and undertaken as a well-resourced demonstration project, which lent financial support and credibility to the initiative.
2. About developing crime prevention measures in high crime areas.
3. About tackling high crime areas that are clearly circumscribed and that can be treated as identifiable communities.
4. About the removal of highly attractive targets (coin meters), which had rendered the area a popular one with burglars in which such “money boxes” could be confidently expected.
5. About carefully diagnosing the particular crime problems and tailoring responses to them, with ongoing data collection and input from victims and their neighbors utilized to inform developments and frame responses of the project.
6. About developing an effective interagency response to crime, which included a strong physical presence in the community; ongoing analysis provided by academia members of the team; and an extensive cadre of community volunteers.
7. About harnessing the community to protect itself from crime (through cocooning). Kirkholt was not the sort of neighborhood that has traditionally provided fertile ground for neighborhood watch programs, making the 90 percent overall household participation rate even more impressive.
8. About focusing on multiple victimization and reducing it, with crime prevention resources provided to victims and their neighbors, and data analysis contributing to reduction of specific risks of crime.
9. About clarity of initial research, clarity of crime prevention methods tailored to research findings, and clarity of leadership in implementing measures — resulting in unusually clear planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation.
10. About burglary prevention and was offense specific, with the additional benefit of the community joining together to address other quality-of-life issues.

Can This Strategy Be Applied to Other Communities and Offenses?

The collaborative approach of preventing revictimization and garnering community support for crime prevention and victim assistance through cocooning has been applied in other London neighborhoods. For example, in the early 1990s, there were increasing cases of racial harassment and attacks in the East London Estate, involving primarily offenses against Somali and Bengali families. The “lessons learned” from the Kirkholt Project provided a foundation for recommendations of preventive strategies to reduce further crimes of racial harassment and attacks, and included the following components:

- A revictimization prevention worker to protect multiple victims from repeat attacks by setting up safety plans for victims and a system of “cocooning” and support networks for victims with their neighbors or friends.
- A detached offender worker to protect multiple victims through work with offenders.
- The establishment of case work panels with victims and relevant agencies to develop a joint strategy to reduce attacks through more effective preventive actions and the identification of perpetrators.

- English classes for women (with creche facilities) to encourage them to report incidents, reduce their isolation through improved communication, and improve their feelings of safety.
- Immediate response alarms to be placed in homes (or shops) to improve the feelings of safety of multiple victims, and to indicate that the police are treating the problem seriously.
- Interpreting services to be made available to the police and local housing authority to improve detection and prevention, and to offer a better service to non-English speaking victims.
- Home Beat Officers to be assigned to the estate to improve community relations with the police service, and to improve feelings of safety of the tenants and, in particular, the most vulnerable.
- Full police investigations of all racial incidents.
- Encouragement to victims and witnesses to come forward by offering safe alternative accommodation and support to overcome fears of retaliation.
- An inter-agency Racial Incidents Panel to promote a coordinated prevention strategy to reduce racial attacks.
- Local housing authority action to be taken against perpetrators.
- A flexible allocations policy so that more resilient ethnic minorities (i.e., English speakers without very young children) are offered flats in areas of the estate more prime to attacks.
- Development of a local authority policy to protect those vulnerable to repeat attacks and harassment, and to secure properties particularly prone to crime.
- Identify “significant” and sympathetic whites who live and work on the estate to be seen with, and to support, the Bengalis and Somalis.³⁴

Other demonstration projects in London have embraced the lessons of Kirkholt to address bullying and domestic violence; the latter initiative draws strength from Kidd’s research that shows “innocent bystanders would get involved in victimization if they were empowered to do so.”³⁵

Applying Kirkholt Theories and Practices to Offender Reentry Partnerships and the Victim’s Role in the United States

The outcomes of the Kirkholt Project – based upon extensive data collection, analysis, and evaluation – hold great promise for offender reentry partnerships. Some of the hypotheses that can be developed from both the initial project and attempts to replicate it in other London communities, and for other types of more violent crime, include the following:

1. Implementing an approach that considers victims’ interests and needs provides a “spoke in the wheel” of collaborative crime prevention and neighborhood safety efforts. By providing initial and ongoing support to the victim (in the form of crisis response, supportive services from professionals and the neighborhood, development of safety plans, and a focus on the prevention of further victimization), reentry partnerships can validate the victim’s experience and enhance their feelings of security and community.
2. A focus on prevention of future victimization can protect vulnerable social groups without identifying them, i.e., people who live in high crime neighborhoods; who have already and/or recently been victimized; or who work in small businesses that have heavy foot traffic and exchange of monies.
3. The concept of “cocooning” can help put “unity back into community” by involving neighbors in their collective destiny. When individuals in a small group share a stake in that group’s success, opportunities for bonding and mutual group support dynamics are more likely to occur.
4. When community members are provided with opportunities to get involved in crime prevention, victim assistance, and developing collaborative approaches that affect their security and quality of life, they are likely to take them.
5. When community members are offered viable support and/or services (such as security checks of their homes or offices) at the same time the victims that need support are offered assistance, it can serve as an added incentive for their participation, and validation of their need to be safe as individuals before the community can truly be safe.

6. Reentry partnerships can be enhanced through community education and outreach that emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activities or crime, in order to reduce further incidents from occurring.
7. The identification of environmental or social elements that increase the likelihood of crime occurring — such as poor lighting, lack of home security apparatuses, or lack of structured activities for youth after school hours — can help reentry partnerships “target” areas that can be addressed in a concerted, focused manner.
8. Reentry partnerships require the leadership and involvement of many stakeholders, including but not limited to: justice officials, victim assistance professionals and volunteers, academia, the legal community, housing officials, the faith community, community and civic organizations, and community and neighborhood volunteers. Community support for such initiatives is vital to success.
9. Casework for reentry partnerships must address the needs and concerns of not only offenders, but victims and members of the community as well. Coordination and ongoing, open lines of communication contribute to a sense of “partnership” that is key to the success of reentry initiatives. Information provided by the victim and the community can be compared to information offered by the offender to ensure its accuracy and efficacy.
10. “Joint strategies” developed in a collaborative manner, involving all key stakeholders, are more effective than those developed by an individual, or by people who have little stake in the outcomes.
11. Rapid response by members of reentry partnerships to issues or incidents identified in the community of concern sends a strong message that people’s concerns are important and deserving of immediate attention.
12. Attention must be paid to provide inclusive support and services to victims, offenders, and community members who are diverse by culture, race, ethnicity, age, and geography. In providing services that are culturally-, age- and location-competent (including mentors who share a similar background with those being served), reentry partnerships can increase not only their outreach efforts, but the involvement of people who might otherwise feel alienated.
13. Any people served by the reentry partnership who appear to be vulnerable — due to prior victimization, age, ethnicity, or geography — should receive expanded “cocoon” services that incorporate more “eyes and ears” to watch out for, and respond to, their needs and concerns. Victims’ vulnerability can be determined through the initial assessment processes that are conducted by law enforcement and victim assistance.
14. Data collection and analysis that involve key stakeholders — most notably contact with victims, their neighbors and friends, offenders and those who supervise them, and justice officials — can help establish a baseline from which all reentry initiatives can emerge. Initial research and evaluation efforts will result in not only problem identification, but collaborative problem solving suggestions from those most affected by crime and victimization.
15. Program evaluation must be a strong, continual effort of reentry partnerships, with new data utilized to guide and revise, as needed, further program implementation.

The “lessons learned” from the Kirkholt Project have been applied to the model programs, policies, and guidelines for community involvement that are highlighted throughout this manual.

Victim Advisory Councils

Many corrections professionals who are spearheading reentry partnerships emphasize the need to have a strong corrections-based victim assistance program (in both institutional and community corrections), and a strong Victim Advisory Council. Nearly all states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons have victim services programs; over half of state correctional agencies have Victim Advisory Councils; and increasingly, community corrections agencies and county-level criminal justice coalitions are implementing Victim Advisory Councils.³⁶

As described by Seymour, a Victim Advisory Council can serve a variety of purposes:

- Make recommendations for program development and implementation to the department.
- Contribute to expanded victim outreach efforts.
- Coordinate victim services with allied criminal justice, state-level, and community-based agencies, and serve as liaisons to these professions.
- Enhance public education about victims' rights and services in corrections.
- Develop curricula for in-service training, educational efforts directed toward victim service providers, and cross-training programs with allied justice and victim service professionals.³⁷

In addition, within the context of offender reentry partnerships, Victim Advisory Councils can:

- Serve as a correctional agency's liaison on victim issues and concerns to reentry partnerships and programs.
- Help create and implement processes that incorporate victims' needs and concerns into offender classification (within institutions) and risk assessments (prior to reentry) tools.
- Help an agency's victim services program staff identify and document victims' needs and concerns (including the need for community support for victims) relevant to offender reentry.
- Help develop policies and practices for victim/offender programming, and coordinate with the reentry partnership to obtain community members who can be trained as facilitators and program support volunteers.
- Develop training programs for reentry partnership participants and volunteers.

A sample policy statement on Victim Advisory Councils/Committees, developed by the Association of State Correctional Administrators, is included in Appendix I.

Considering Victims' Needs When Assessing Offenders' Risk

"Corrections needs a culture change. The word is not out there yet that victims need to be considered at the time of offender release."

*— Reginald Wilkinson, Director
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction*

In July 2000, the Offender Accountability Act was implemented in the state of Washington. This new law gives authority to the Department of Corrections (DOC) to change how it monitors offenders when they leave custody, and instructs them to establish partnerships with crime victims, law enforcement, and community members to address victim/offender risk concerns upon reentry. In addition, new sentencing laws in Washington give the DOC the authority to mitigate risk by imposing conditions on the offender to do certain things, refrain from doing certain things, and to receive increased post-release supervision.

The Washington DOC utilizes the Level of Services Inventory — Third Generation (LSI) risk assessment instrument that takes into consideration the offender's propensity to reoffend in the context of the original harm caused to the victim; the circumstances and the community into which the offender will re-enter; and the treatment and mental health status of the offender. The assessment seeks to determine the likelihood of reoffense and the risk to the victim.

Priority has been given by the DOC's assessment to violent crimes; it focuses on high risk offenders and guarantees a credible level of supervision. They assess:

- All Level 3 sex offenders.
- All violent offenders (predators) who have cultivated relationships with victims of the purpose of harming them.
- All violent offenders who attack vulnerable victims (such as victims with mental or physical disabilities).
- All hate crime offenders.
- All offenders who continue to threaten their victims, including all second-offense domestic violence felons (who are considered by the DOC to be "high risk" offenders).

Offender assessments for both classification and reentry purposes should take into consideration victims' rights, interests, and needs. Much of this information can be culled from pre-sentence investigations, victim impact statements, and subsequent contact with victims to obtain their input while their offenders are incarcerated, as well as the reentry process. In "Considering Victim Issues in Offender Classification and Assessments," Weston and Seymour identified a series of questions that should be addressed:³⁸

- Did the offender know the victim?
- Does the offender know where the victim lives?
- Was the offense committed at the victim's home or place of business?
- Did the offense involve personal violence, or threats of violence?
- Was the case highly publicized? (some cases are designated as "high profile" so that the strong interest of the community and media is noted).
- Was the offender under the influence of alcohol or other drugs prior to or during the commitment of the offense?
- How has the offender accepted responsibility for his/her offense?
- Do probation or court documents include any indication of remorse from the offender for the harm he or she has caused?
- To whom should the offender be held accountable, i.e. who may have suffered harm as a result of his/her actions?
- Victim(s)?
- Victims' family members, friends, or coworkers?
- A business, its employees and customers (if the offense was committed against a workplace)?
- The neighborhood in which the offense was committed?
- Arresting officers (there are some cases where there is an indication that the arresting officers were injured, but no charges filed; or charges filed, but arresting officer is not "treated" as a victim relevant to notification. Offers for enrollment in notification can be made after reviewing the case).
- Judges and district attorneys (there are some cases where the offender makes threats, and judges and district attorneys ask for notification for themselves personally, not for purposes of officially tracking the case).
- The offender's family, including any dependents?
- Professionals and volunteers responsible for the offender's supervision, detention, and/or rehabilitation?
- How can the offender be held accountable to any individuals or entities identified in the previous question?
- Has the offender been involved in any disciplinary behavior that relates to the committing offense (i.e. the offense is an assault, and the offender has been involved in prison fights).
- Has the offender assaulted or battered jail/prison/facility staff?
- Has the offender been diagnosed with any mental health issues?
- Will the offender be assigned to any mandatory programs or counseling related to the offense?
- Has the agency's victim services division received any contacts or specific requests from the victim? If so, did these contacts include any information that can be utilized for case and/or reentry planning?
- Has the agency's victim services division received any letters/petitions from victim advocacy groups?
- Has the victim requested to be notified of the offender's case status and location?
- Has the victim expressed an interest in attending case review/parole hearings?
- Has the victim requested that, upon release, the offender be placed a specific distance from the victim?
- Did the victim report any actual or perceived threats from the offender, either at the time of or subsequent to the commission of the crime? If so, what action has the victim taken (i.e., restraining order, moved, changed jobs, etc.)?
- Is there a stay away/restraining/protective order currently in place?

- Has the victim requested that the offender and his friends or family refrain from contacting him/her and/or family members and friends?
- Has the victim submitted a victim impact statement that identifies the physical, emotional, and financial effects of the crime?
- Has the victim recommended or been given the opportunity to recommend activities that could help hold the offender accountable, and assist with his/her rehabilitation (i.e. treatment programs, victim awareness programming, community service, restitution payments, etc.)
- Would the offender benefit from mandated community services hours?
- Has the victim inquired about the offender's progress or lack of progress?
- Does the offender owe any financial/legal obligations, including restitution and child support?
- Is the offender aware of his/her financial obligations?
- Has the offender made any effort to pay toward his/her financial obligation?
- Can a portion of the offender's trust account and earnings be deducted to fulfill financial/legal obligations?
- Is there a mechanism for the offender to voluntarily pay restitution?
- Has the victim requested an apology from the offender? Can this be facilitated by the supervising agency (see page 51 for more information on offender apologies)?
- Has the offender expressed an interest in apologizing to the victim?
- Has the victim been given the opportunity to consider meeting with the offender, and/or has the victim requested a meeting with the offender? Can this be facilitated by the supervising agency, or a community-based agency involved in a reentry partnership?
- Would the offender benefit from a "mentoring volunteer" from the community who can provide support and encouragement during his/her incarceration, and as he/she prepares to reenter the community?

Community volunteers can have a crucial role in helping victims and offenders once an assessment has been conducted. Throughout this publication, numerous activities have been highlighted that offer support and services to victims from community members. In addition, the concept of "community mentors" for offenders is gaining wide acceptance. Mentors can be "the eyes and ears" of correctional agencies who have supervisory responsibilities for offenders reentering the community and serve as liaisons to victim advocates who are providing support to their victims.

Joseph Lehman, Commissioner of the Washington DOC, says "success will come from evolving risk management personalized to the offender and the victim at a much higher level. Corrections' job in the community is to go into the neighborhood and understand the risk factors based on who the offender is, the circumstance(s) into which he or she will move, his or her relationship to the victim, and who the victim is."

*"Impact of Crime on Victims" Programs*³⁹

"Impact of Crime on Victims" (IOC) classes were initiated in 1985 by the California Youth Authority, the nation's largest agency that detains juvenile offenders. Classes are now in all CYA institutions, and have since been replicated in more than 30 other states and at the federal level. Applications for the IOC program include forums for adult and juvenile offenders, both nonviolent and violent, in diversion, probation, incarceration, detention, parole, and offender reentry settings.

In a program abstract written by IOC founder Sharon English, former Assistant Director for Prevention and Victim Services for CYA, and Martie Crawford, Program Director of the Riverside County (CA) Victim/Witness Program, guidelines for developing an educational IOC model were offered:

"In CYA, no new funds were allocated for the classes, but resources were redirected. Redirected means that budgeted education funds were reassigned to conduct this class, instead of another course. This course, however, includes a number of the other educational activities such as analyzing problems, spelling, writing, and reading. The difference is the subject of the matter."⁴⁰

The following sections provided by CYA describe the course, provide organizational information, give examples of the curriculum and offer some practical tips and caution.

Course Description

The objectives for students of the IOC course are to:

- Explore how they view the rights of other people.
- Raise their awareness of the long-term impact of their actions.
- Recognize their own possible victimization as children and how that abuse might impact them today.
- Provide opportunities to help them become nonabusive parents, and good spouses/partners.
- Discuss their tendency to depersonalize the people they injure.
- Consider how they are accountable for the crimes they committed.

Subjects taught in a victim awareness class should address victims' rights and span a range of crimes, including property, domestic violence, sexual assault, drug, gang violence, homicide, robbery, and child abuse. In these classes, offenders should not be separated by offense type, since the goal is for all offenders to learn about the far-reaching effects of crime.

The course must be experiential with a variety of activities, including the use of visual aids such as videotapes with study guides, television newscasts of programs, guest speakers, notebooks with articles, scenarios and exercises, and role-playing opportunities. Of these activities, visits by actual victims prove to be the most important experience. Nothing can replace or substitute for hearing from a parent whose child was killed, or a burglary victim who is still afraid to be in his/her own home.

The only substitute for an actual victim could be a victim services advocate, one who has worked with several victims can relate the stories of the people he/she has helped. Most people do not understand the tragedies of crime or the related financial and emotional costs. Consider this example: The fiancée of a bride-to-be is stabbed to death just weeks before their marriage, and all deposits for the wedding and celebration are nonrefundable. Besides that, the young woman has no rights as a victim, since she is not the "next of kin." This type of real-life story can make more of an impact on a delinquent youth than the horrible, sensational stories that even habitual offenders find repulsive. For that reason, instructors in this course should use everyday news stories on television and in the newspapers to give material involving ordinary people.

Another good exercise is to have offenders assess and write about what they think they owe to their victims.

Instructor/Facilitator Selection

The instructor/facilitator must be able to:

- Confront delinquent youth or adult offenders regarding their attitudes and beliefs, in an assertive manner that encourages maximum self-examination and minimizes defensiveness.
- Understand the conflicting attitudes of both offenders and victims.
- Use experiential (student participation) teaching techniques to facilitate offender learning in the classroom.

The instructor/facilitator must:

- Be trained by victim service advocates. Do not attempt to teach this course without advanced preparation.
- Stay on target with victims of crime issues. This is not a course on the general causes of delinquency, nor is it a course on other offender needs such as housing, employment, or gangs. It is often too easy for offenders or staff to focus on the many other societal problems and neglect the personal responsibility of each individual for his/her situation. This is not a course on philosophy (i.e., are fish victims?), and is not a course on natural disasters (i.e., victims of hurricanes).
- Not victimize the offender.

Resources to Develop the "Impact of Crime on Victims" Program

A comprehensive teachers' manual and students' curriculum has been developed by CYA. In addition, the Office for Victims of Crime provided support to CYA and MADD for a "training-for-trainers" session in IOC and victim impact panels in 1996, from which many resources and trained course facilitators emerged. Additional information about how to plan and implement an IOC class in probation or parole settings is available from the California Youth Authority, Office of Prevention and Victim Services, 4241 Williamsborough Drive, Suite 214, Sacramento, CA 95823; (916) 262-1392.

Accountability Boards

In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, an Accountability Board to work with parolees has been established in the community's Neighborhood Center. The board was initiated through a partnership between the Victim Advocate for the Sixth Judicial District and the parole officer assigned to neighborhood-based supervision.

The board reviews behaviors of the parolee in the neighborhood that may not be consistent with program standards. Community Corrections Director Gary Hinzman notes that "this may not be new crimes, but behaviors that are not acceptable to community standards. It could include harassment, failure to pay financial and legal obligations, or other community infractions."

"For example, an offender may accidentally drive over a neighbor's fence and ignore responsibility. The parole officer can have the parolee appear before the Accountability Board to obtain a just outcome. Perhaps in the case of the fence, the offender would be required to fix the fence or do other community service."

Adjunct to Accountability Board activities, Hinzman believes that individuals and neighborhood block watch associations can be active in supporting victims. "They should contact the victim through the victim advocate, listen to victims, and ask how they want to go through the offender reentry (process)," he says.

Hinzman also says that Accountability Board members should visit offenders before they move into the community, and that parole officers should require offenders to research the community into which they will be moving to understand "what the reception will be, and what will be expected of them."

Hinzman says the original design of the Accountability Boards provides for referrals from parole officers who are familiar with the cases. As time evolves, it may be an advantage to let members of the neighborhood complete community impact statements in the neighborhood center (see the description of Community and Neighborhood Impact Statements in the "Victims' Rights in the Reentry Process: Defining Victim Impact" section of this document). Additional information on Accountability Boards also can be obtained by contacting the Sixth Judicial District Department of Corrections; 951 29th Avenue, SW; Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404; phone: (319) 398-3675; fax: (319) 398-3684.

Community Accountability and Support Groups

In Red Wing, Minnesota, the juvenile correctional facility has developed the CONNECTIONS program based upon its philosophy of restorative justice. This conferencing approach is designed to help detained youth reintegrate into their home communities, and can be readily adapted to reentry partnerships that address adult offenders, their victims, and communities.

As described by Restorative Justice Coordinator Kelly Pribyl:

"After a youth has been adjusted to the facility and becomes serious about Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing programming, he can be recommended as a candidate for the CONNECTIONS program. The resident youth is screened for appropriateness, and a relationship of trust begins to develop between the youth and facilitator. With the youth's input, a list of community members is developed. Each person on the list has been impacted by the youth's behavior, or has had a significant influence in the youth's past.

Individuals on the list are contacted and asked to be part of a Community Accountability and Support Group (CASG). The list can contain persons from every area of the youth's life, including

victims, family members, probation officers, teachers, police officers, business people, private citizens, peers, cultural representatives, correctional staff, members of the faith community, etc.

Once all the parties are contacted and met with, and once their interest and willingness to meet is determined, a CASG is convened, and the youth meets in the community with this group.

Depending on the youth, his status, community, and parole plan, he will participate in one to four (or more) community meetings. A one-word description of the goals of each meeting would be:

Meeting One: Accountability.

Meeting Two: Transition.

Meeting Three: Support.

Meeting Four: Celebration.

. . . The CONNECTIONS program is constantly evolving to accommodate participants' needs. One such need is to provide adequate support for victims. We are working to build strong links with victim service providers so we can have community victim advocates at each meeting.

The purpose of the meetings is not only to focus on the crime that brought the youth to Red Wing, but also to take a look at his life and problems preceding the crime. These issues are addressed along with other elements that will make his eventual transition to the community easier. Meetings provide a safe environment to talk about a lot of big issues that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to address . . .

Partnering with the community is a very important element, and we work with whatever resources are available. If the community already has a restorative justice program in place, the local model can be used and, if they choose, they can run the meeting. Community ownership is essential. We want this to belong to the community so they will take pride in it, offer their support, and continue working with the youth long after we are out of the picture."⁴¹

Since the CONNECTIONS program began in 1998, 19 youth and more than 250 community participants in 15 communities across the state have been served. For additional information about the CONNECTIONS program, please contact Restorative Justice Coordinator; Minnesota Correctional Facility; 1079 Highway 292; Red Wing, Minnesota; 55066; phone: (651) 267-3600.

Victim-Sensitive Parole Revocation Processes

In 1999, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) joined in a partnership with the

Wisconsin Department of Justice Victim Services Division to address victims' concerns about parole revocation. Often in such cases, the supervising agency is dealing with the victim of the original offense resulting in incarceration, as well as the victim of the alleged offense that may result in revocation. Sensitivity is needed to ensure that the rights and needs of all victims are addressed through the revocation process.

The DOC published three excellent handbooks specific to parole revocation processes from the perspectives of parole agents, victims, and offenders. They include:

- A guide for parole agents for conducting victim-sensitive investigations and revocation hearings. This includes:
 - Tips for communicating with victims, including special considerations for child victims.
 - Preparing victims for hearings.
 - Arranging the hearing.
 - Presentation of testimony when victims recant.
 - Presentation of testimony without the victim present.
 - Presentation of hearsay evidence.
 - Victim notification of case outcomes.
 - Community resources for victim assistance.
- A guide for victims that explains the revocation process. This includes:
 - Explanation of subpoenas.
 - Tips for testifying.

- Victim/witness intimidation.
- Special considerations for child victims.
- Hearing waivers.
- Victim/witness advocacy assistance available to support victims.
- A handbook for offenders which describes:
 - The parameters of probation/parole supervision.
 - Conditions of supervision.
 - Revocation.
 - Offender programming that may benefit them.

Informational Resources for Victims

It is only by asking victims about their concerns that correctional agencies can hope to know what is needed to promote the safety of victims and society in general. Correctional agencies also need to create more user-friendly and educational opportunities for victims. Educational opportunities can take many forms: providing information on offender programs such as the sex offender program, teaching and demonstrating how sentence calculations work, explanations about how the system works, and does it work the same for every violent offender? What about offenders who have mental health issues?

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

Information about the criminal justice process — including post-sentencing and offender reentry processes — is vital to victims' involvement in such processes, as well as to their sense of empowerment and security. Reentry partnerships can help victims navigate what is often a complex and frustrating process, providing them with basic information about definitions of terms and descriptions of post-sentencing processes in which rights and services are available to victims.

Two web sites offer excellent basic information for victims that can be easily adapted to different jurisdictions:

- The Missouri Organization for Victim Assistance (MOVA) provides both a “glossary of terms” and “description of criminal procedures” on its web site: www.mova.missouri.org/cjindex.htm.
- The Wisconsin Department of Justice Victim Services Division provides a detailed “glossary of terms” on its web site: www.doj.state.wi.us/cvc/.

The American Probation and Parole Association offers a *Handbook for Crime Victims* on diskette that can be adapted to fit jurisdictional needs (contact the American Probation Association at P.O. Box 11910; Lexington, Kentucky 40578-1910; (859) 244-8203; appa@csg.org).

A comprehensive roster of criminal and juvenile justice, correctional agencies, and victim assistance web sites — updated each year by the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization and Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice — is included in Appendix J.

Restorative Community Service

Historically, community service has played an important role in corrections as a sanction to hold offenders accountable for their actions, and to “pay back” the community in some way for the harm that is caused by crime. In the past decade, the concept of “restorative community service” has taken hold in many corrections agencies and communities. Restorative community service is visible, viable, and allows victim input into the types of service that is performed. Increasingly, it is also being utilized to directly benefit organizations that provide services and support to victims of crime.

Many institutional and community corrections agencies have implemented restorative community service; some have become “annual events” that provide services and/or raise funds for victim assistance programs. Examples include the following:

- The Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections sponsors an annual “Angola Break-in” fund raiser that benefits the Baton Rouge Area Crisis Intervention Center, the Crime Victims Reparation Fund, and the Inmate Education Fund. Held at the 18,000 acre Louisiana State Penitentiary (LSP), the first year’s event consisted of a 5-K relay, an individual run, and a one-mile fun run. The second year featured a modified poker run with motorcycles from the department headquarters in Baton Rouge to LSP.
- An LSP organization called the “Toy Shop” made and donated rocking chairs to a local library, and the library and children’s ward at the local hospital.
- The LSP’s Juvenile Awareness Program combined a staff-guided tour of the prison, issues-related skits written and performed by inmates, and on-on-one conversations between inmates and at-youth risk who participate in the program. The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Diversion Program has made the Angola trip a mandatory part of release from that program.
- In Sandusky, Ohio, the community service program allows offenders to work off their fines at a rate of \$7 per hour. With prior approval from the victim, some offenders have made donations to the charity of the victim’s choice in the name of the victim.
- A licensed pharmacist under the supervision of the Stark Regional Community Correction Center in Ohio was convicted of forging drug documents. He performed 500 hours of community service at the free clinic in the neighborhood in which he had sold drugs.
- At CYA’s Dewitt Nelson Youth Correctional Facility, an annual silent auction of art and shop projects created by the wards is held to benefit victims.
- CYA wards also makes and sales holiday wreaths, with the proceeds going to local victim service organizations near the institutions. In addition, the handmade wreaths are also donated to local victim service organizations, with a letter from a ward stating who they are, the offense they committed, and how they want to begin restoring justice by donating the wreath.
- CYA wards at the Preston Youth Correctional Facility knit, crochet, and sew garments and blankets for premature infants born at four local hospitals. They also sew satin burial gowns trimmed in lace for preemies who don’t survive.
- The annual “Corrections on Canvas” art shows — sponsored by the New York Department of Correctional Services — have raised more than \$34,000 that is donated to the Crime Victims Board. In 2000, plants grown by inmates in horticulture programs at three institutions were sold, with all proceeds going to the Crime Victims Board.
- In the Wisconsin Department of Corrections Division of Adult Institutions, inmates have made teddy bears for local domestic violence shelters and law enforcement agencies; crocheted scarves and lap Afghans for the Salvation Army and interfaith care givers; knitted hats, mittens, baby blankets, and gloves for abused children; created the layout and design for a brochure for a regional domestic violence shelter; constructed Braille books for visually impaired children; and made monetary donations to a funeral fund for homicide victims.
- In California, annual inmate fund raisers held in conjunction with National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW) each April benefit local victim service organizations in communities where the institutions are located. More than \$300,000 raised last year — through food sales, walk-a-thons, sporting events, crafts fairs, recycling, and other activities — benefitted both community- and system-based victim assistance programs.
- Youthful offenders from the Idaho Youth Ranch escorted Alzheimer’s patients from a local retirement center and their families for a day at the Western Idaho State Fair.
- Inmates from the Maryland Correctional Institution in Hagerstown participated in an annual Thanksgiving dinner that feeds the region’s most needy residents, cooking and processing approximately 1,000 turkeys that fed 20,000 people.⁴²

To facilitate comprehensive approaches to restorative community service, correctional agencies can:

1. Seek input from crime victims about their recommendations for community service through the pre-sentence investigation reports or victim impact statements.
2. Collaborate with victim service agencies to identify needs that can be met through restorative community service in environments that do not jeopardize the safety of either victims or agency staff (NOTE: The examples listed above can be utilized as a foundation for brainstorming new community service approaches).
3. Develop service projects that provide ongoing support to victim assistance programs, either through fundraising or work service.
4. Develop outreach that helps both victims and offenders understand that community service is being utilized as a tool not only for offender accountability, but also for supporting victim assistance initiatives.
5. Develop outreach that informs the community of the many benefits and outcomes of restorative community service.⁴³

The Role of Community Members in Restorative Community Service

Community members who live in neighborhoods to which offenders are being released can support restorative community service initiatives by:

- Asking victims for whom they are providing supportive services if they have any specific recommendations about community service that can directly benefit the victim, support victim service organizations, or serve the community in meaningful ways.
- Serving as a liaison to victim services agencies to identify any needs they have that can be met by restorative community service (with an emphasis on victim and agency safety).
- Canvassing the neighborhood(s) to which offenders will be reintegrated to identify any needs that can be met by restorative community service.
- Supervising community service work crews, or soliciting other neighborhood volunteers to do so.

A sample letter to victim service agencies that explains and offers restorative community service opportunities is included in Appendix K.

Offender Apologies

The issue of offender apologies was raised by respondents to APPA's national reentry survey conducted in 2000, focus group participants, and corrections leaders who were interviewed for this project. Offender apologies to their victims and others whom they have harmed have great potential, but also great peril, within a restorative justice framework. Apologies are often construed as complimentary to accountability and remorse. Yet for many people who have been harmed by crime, apologies without a context of full acceptance of responsibility, and a true understanding of the emotional, physical, and financial losses caused by the offense, are meaningless.

In 1999, Seymour and English developed guidelines for correctional agencies to consider relevant to offender apologies:

- They should never be isolated as a "quick fix" for what the offender did. A parole board member who tells the offender to "turn around and apologize to your victim" is not helping the offender, and potentially harming the victim.
- Offenders should never be forced to give apologies, and victims should never be forced to accept them.
- Prior to any consideration of apologies, an offender's casework planning should clearly identify the harm that was caused. Offenders should be given the opportunity to address, "How can I 'right the wrong' I have done?", and clarify what "remorse" means to him or her personally.
- Offenders should be made aware that an apology is "more than saying you are sorry," with an emphasis on actions — progress in accepting responsibility, developing empathy for their victims, and learning skills to prevent their violent behavior from re-occurring — speaking louder than words.

- Victims should be provided with the opportunity to “opt in” or “opt out” of opportunities to receive an apology from their offender. For example, when victims’ receive initial notification of their rights, a statement can be included such as:

“The (correctional) agency provides opportunities for offenders to address the harm they have caused their victims, and be accountable for their crime(s) that hurt you. If your offender successfully completes programming to recognize his/her responsibility for hurting you and wants to express personal remorse, would you be interested in receiving a written apology? The apology letter will be facilitated by our agency — with no direct contact between you and the offender and complete confidentiality of your contact information — unless you specify otherwise.”

- All apology letters sent to victims should be reviewed and screened by agency staff to ensure that they are in no way harmful to the victim.
- Measures must be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the victim’s contact information (unless a direct, in-person apology from the offender is requested by the victim).
- Offenders should expect, and correctional agencies should offer, nothing in return for an apology to the victim, i.e. “forgiveness” or greater consideration for a reduced sentence or early release.
- An alternative practice within restorative justice programming is to have the offender write the apology letter and, if the victim is not interested in receiving it, simply including it as part of the record in the offender’s case file.⁴⁴

Correctional agencies should develop policies that guide the implementation of offender apologies within the larger context of restorative justice, case work planning, and rehabilitative programming (utilizing these recommended guidelines as a framework). A sample letter to victims about the apology letter process, along with a sample cover letter to enclose with offender apology letters that victims agree to accept, is included in Appendix L.

VICTIMS AND THE OFFENDER REENTRY PROCESS: SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

What my family and I seek more than anything else is peace of mind. Having, in a sense, been served with my own life sentence, my family and I must find a way to live out our lives in peace. I do not want to concern myself with this issue for the rest of my life . . .

— Survivor of a kidnapping, sexual assault, and assault

For far too many victims, the trauma of victimization and concerns about both their personal safety and offender accountability equate to the “life sentence” described by this survivor. It is important to always remember that individual lives are irrevocably altered by senseless violence. The “voice of the victim” has a powerful impact on reentry process and all reentry stakeholders. Victims’ voices should be guiding forces in developing and implementing reentry partnerships that consider and include victims’ rights, needs, and concerns as a priority. Justice professionals must seek ways to ensure victims’ feelings and concerns are listened to and validated at every point of the justice process, and particularly when offenders return to the community. There is both the opportunity and the obligation to utilize victims’ concerns as the very foundation of reentry partnerships.

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APPENDIX A

Safety Checklist for Victims of Crime

This “checklist” is intended to serve as a general guide for a wide range of issues relevant to victim safety and security. Not all items on the checklist will be necessary for, nor requested by, all victims.

- ✓ Notification of the status of the offender.
- ✓ Notification of the location of the offender.
- ✓ Provided with the opportunity to provide input into conditions of the offender's release, including “no contact” or “stay away” orders.
- ✓ Provided written documentation of the conditions of the offender's release.
- ✓ Provided with the opportunity to have the offender sign a “consent form” to share information about his/her status and compliance with conditions of release.
- ✓ Provided with the option to have the offender reside a specified distance from the victim's home.
- ✓ Receipt of contact information for the supervising agency/officer.
- ✓ Receipt of the name(s) and contact information for law enforcement officers who patrol the victim's neighborhood or area around the work site.
- ✓ Receipt of a roster of victim services, accessible in person, by phone, e-mail, or the Internet.
- ✓ Support in developing a victim-specific roster of telephone numbers for emergency assistance, counseling and support, and/or information about the status of the offender.
- ✓ Advised to document, in detail, any incidents that comprise intimidation, harassment, or threats of harm.
- ✓ Offered a free cell phone that automatically (and only) dials “911” in cases of emergency.
- ✓ Advised to call “911” in cases of emergency, 24/7.
- ✓ Provided with an answering machine and advice to dial “*69” or any other numeric combinations that can trace telephone calls.
- ✓ Provided with assistance in obtaining “caller ID” services from the local telephone company.
- ✓ Advised to have designated friends or community members to call for support, 24/7 (multiple contacts are advised).
- ✓ Advised to keep copies of important documents, such as birth certificates, drivers license, a will, insurance papers for home, apartment or car, etc., relevant to the victim and his/her children.
- ✓ Advised to keep an extra prescription of medication that is needed to maintain the health and well-being of the victim and his/her family.
- ✓ Provided with assistance in developing a “safety plan” for home and place of employment.
- ✓ Advised to have co-employees screen calls at work.
- ✓ Provision of “safety check” provided by law enforcement for home and place of work.
- ✓ Assistance in obtaining a home security system, as needed and upon request.
- ✓ Provision of any recommendations to improve the safety of the home or place of work by community volunteers.
- ✓ Provision of a designated neighbor or friend to whose home the victim can come, 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week, as needed (multiple sites and routes are recommended).
- ✓ Advised to always check the back seat of the car, and underneath and around the car, when entering it.

- ✓ Advised to always ask for escorts to the car at work (from co-employees or security personnel) and at home (from neighbors and community volunteers).
- ✓ Provided support to distribute a current photograph of the offender to persons whom the victim designates (along with conditions of release, upon request from the victim).
- ✓ Provided with guidance in developing multiple, alternate routes to work and other locations that the victim regularly visits.
- ✓ Advised to vary daily schedules to avoid patterns.
- ✓ Advised to make additional sets of keys for the car, home and office.
- ✓ Advised to maintain cash on-hand in cases of emergency.
- ✓ Advised to maintain a suitcase full of basic necessities in case of emergency.
- ✓ Advised to maintain a post office box if there are concerns about safety and security.
- ✓ Advised to never leave mail in a home or work site mail drop that can be easily accessed.
- ✓ Provided with assistance to physically move from a home or work site to a new location, upon request and as need by the victim.

APPENDIX B

Thirty-Nine Possible Rights to Notification that Directly Apply to Offender Reentry Initiatives

Victims' Statutory Rights to Notice Relevant to Offender Reentry¹ 39 Rights, Hearings, and Events

Notification of Rights:

- Right to compensation.
- Right to restitution.
- Right to notice of events and proceedings.
- Right to attend proceedings.
- Right to be heard at proceedings.
- Right to protection from offender.
- Right to information on how to request or exercise the above rights.
- Right to information on how to obtain information about case status.
- Right to the name and telephone number of contact person in the system.
- Right to referrals to victim assistance.
- Right to an explanation of the legal process and/or court proceedings.

Notification of Hearings — Rights to Attend and Participate in:

- Post-sentencing hearings.
- Appellate Proceedings.
- Probation revocation hearings.
- Probation modification hearings.
- Temporary release hearings.
- Parole hearings.
- Parole revocation hearings.
- Parole modification hearings.
- Pardon/commutation proceedings.
- Hearings on defendant's competency to stand trial.
- Hearings on defendant's release from mental institution.
- Canceled or rescheduled hearings.

Right to Notice of the Following Events:

- Convicted offender's request for DNA testing.
- Filing of an appeal.

¹ National Center for Victims of Crime, *Victims' Statutory Rights to Notice: 59 Rights, Hearings and Events*, National Center for Victims of Crime, Arlington, VA, 2000.

- Outcome of appeal.
- Earliest possible release date for incarcerated offender.
- Probation of offender.
- Probation revocation/reinstatement of suspended sentence.
- Furlough.
- Work release.
- Transfer from one prison facility to another.
- Change of security status.
- Parole.
- Parole revocation.
- Pardon/commutation of sentence.
- Escape.
- Recapture.
- Death of offender.

APPENDIX C

Sample Multi-Agency Pressure-Sensitive Forms (used in AZ for pre-conviction and post-conviction notification)

Post-Adjudication Notification Request

This form is designed for use by state and county offices in Arizona which have responsibility under state Constitution and law to provide post-adjudication services to crime victims. Following the disposition of a juvenile, this form must be completed as soon as possible by a victim who wishes to receive post-adjudication notice when the...

Disposition Result is Commitment to the AZ Dept. of Juvenile Corrections

As a victim of crime, you have the right, upon request, to receive notice of all appellate proceedings, all post-adjudication release proceedings, including all conditional liberty proceedings and certain conditional liberty modification proceedings. You have the right to receive notice of the decisions arising out of these proceedings (outcome), and you have the right to be informed of the juvenile's release from confinement, the juvenile's escape or the juvenile's death, as well as the right to request not to receive mail from the confined juvenile.

Instructions For Requesting Post-Adjudication Notice

There is no single agency with responsibility for notifying victims of all post-conviction matters. Rather, different agencies are responsible for providing you with notice upon your request.
To request notice, you or your lawful representative:

1. must complete Section B of the attached form;
2. separate the form pages from one another;
3. return (mail) the forms to each responsible notifying agency which is indicated at the bottom of each page (remember to include a separate attachment, if applicable, with the form copy sent to the Dept. of Juvenile Corrections);
4. retain (keep) the blue copy for your future reference.

IF YOU ARE NOT REQUESTING POST-ADJUDICATION NOTICE, YOU DO NOT NEED TO RETURN THIS FORM.

Definitions

A lawful representative is a person who is designated by the victim or is appointed by the court to act in the best interest of the victim. Only one person, a victim or his/her lawful representative, may receive the notifications subject to this request.

An appellate proceeding means a review of a lower court's decision (ruling) before the State Court of Appeals, the State Supreme Court, a Federal Court of Appeals or the United States Supreme Court. A victim's request for notice must be sent to the County Attorney's office.

Post-adjudication release means placement on conditional liberty/parole, work furlough, community supervision, or any other type of discharge (completion of commitment) from the State Department of Juvenile Corrections. A victim's request for notice must be sent to the State Department of Juvenile Corrections.

TO ENSURE THAT YOU RECEIVE ALL REQUESTED NOTIFICATIONS BEFORE AN EVENT OR PROCEEDING OCCURS, YOU MUST COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM TO ALL NOTIFYING AGENCIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Rev - January/2000

Disposition Result Is Commitment to AZ Dept. of Juvenile Corrections Date Rec'd: _____ IR #: _____

POST-ADJUDICATION NOTIFICATION REQUEST

SECTION A: To be completed by the agency providing form to victim. (PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

JUVENILE NAME: _____ DOB: _____
LAST FIRST M.I. Month / Day / Year

JOLTS FILE #: _____ J #: _____ PETITION DATE: _____
Month / Day / Year

COUNT(S)/TYPE(S)/DATE(S) OF OFFENSE(S): _____

DISPOSITION DATE: _____ VIOLATION OF PROBATION? (check if yes)
Month / Day / Year

COURT-ORDERED MINIMUM CONFINEMENT: _____

VICTIM/LAWFUL REPRESENTATIVE NAME: _____

SECTION B: To be completed by the victim / lawful representative. (PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

① VICTIM NAME: _____ Date of Birth: _____
MR./MS. LAST FIRST M.I. Month / Day / Year

② Read the three statements to the right. If one of the statements is true or applicable, check the corresponding box and print your name and relationship to victim on the line below (this is how agencies that receive this form know you are the lawful-representative victim). If none of the statements are true, skip the line below and complete the rest of the form.

The victim has designated me as the lawful representative.
 The victim is a minor child and I am a parent, an immediate family member, or a legal guardian.
 The victim is incapacitated (severely disabled) or deceased.

AWFUL REP.: _____ Relationship to Victim: _____
MR./MS. LAST FIRST M.I.

③ If the juvenile is incarcerated in the AZ Dept. of Juvenile Corrections, you have the right to request that the juvenile not send you, members of your family, or members of the victim's household, mail. If the juvenile sends you or your family or household members mail after you have made this request, you or the members of your family or household have the right to report the incident to the AZ Dept. of Juvenile Corrections for sanctions against the juvenile.

I request not to receive mail from the juvenile whose name appears above.
 Other members of my family and/or household also request not to receive mail from the juvenile
[Note names/addresses of these family/household members on a separate sheet of paper and enclose it when you mail the completed pink form copy to the AZ Dept. of Juvenile Corrections.]

④ SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: (MONTH / DAY / YEAR)
VICTIM/LAWFUL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ APT. #: _____
NUMBER & STREET OR P.O. BOX #

_____ CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE (include area code): Home () _____ Message () _____ Work () _____

***** NOTE: ONLY ONE PERSON MAY RECEIVE POST-ADJUDICATION NOTIFICATION *****

By completing and returning this form to the below listed address, you are requesting notice of the following:

- Modifications to the terms of conditional liberty, if the modification will affect the juvenile's contact with you or your safety, or if the modification affects restitution or the juvenile's secure care status
- Hearings scheduled to consider the juvenile's release from confinement in the custody of the Dept. of Juvenile Corrections, including all conditional liberty revocation or termination hearings, as well as the results of such hearings.
- The juvenile's release from secure confinement related to the disposition for the offense(s) in which you were a victim

RETURN THIS FORM TO:

AZ DEPT. OF JUVENILE CORRECTIONS
 Attn: Victims' Rights Coordinator
 1624 W. Adams
 Phoenix, AZ 85007
 (602) 255-1098 / 1-800-387-3062

Dept. of Juv. Corrections Use Only

PRESS HARD - YOU ARE MAKING 5 COPIES

P057463

VICTIM REQUEST FOR, OR WAIVER OF, PRE-CONVICTION AND/OR PRE-ADJUDICATION RIGHTS

<p style="text-align: center;">Who is A Victim?</p> <p>You are considered a victim if the offense committed against you is a felony, or a misdemeanor involving a physical injury, the threat of physical injury, or a sexual offense.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 <<FORM USE>></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Initial Contact</td> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> By Phone/Mail</td> <td style="border: none;">DATE: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Victim-Initiated Change(s)</td> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> In Person</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Contact	<input type="checkbox"/> By Phone/Mail	DATE: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Victim-Initiated Change(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> In Person	
<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Contact	<input type="checkbox"/> By Phone/Mail	DATE: _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> Victim-Initiated Change(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> In Person						

2 <<CASE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION>>

REPORTING AGENCY: _____ Phone #: _____

Reporting Officer(s): _____ Report/Citation ID #: _____

Location: _____ Report/Citation Date/Time: _____

Offense/Type of Crime: _____

3 <<ARREST / DETENTION STATUS >>

<input type="checkbox"/> SUSPECT NOT IN CUSTODY <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> KNOWN _____ ADULT _____ JUVENILE SUSPECT #1 _____ SUSPECT #2 _____ SUSPECT #3 _____ <small>If an arrest/detention in this case is made, you will be notified at the earliest opportunity. If you are not notified of an arrest/detention within 30 days, you may obtain case status information by calling the law enforcement agency indicated in Box 2 above.</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> SUSPECT CITED AND RELEASED/REFERRED ADULT _____ JUVENILE _____ SUSPECT #1 _____ DOB _____ SUSPECT #2 _____ DOB _____ SUSPECT #3 _____ DOB _____ COURT _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____ <small>If a citation is issued, the accused may appear at any time prior to the date and time shown.</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> SUSPECT IN CUSTODY - ADULT INITIAL APPEARANCE: SUSPECT #1 _____ DOB _____ SUSPECT #2 _____ DOB _____ SUSPECT #3 _____ DOB _____ COURT _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____ CUSTODIAL AGENCY: _____ <small>The adult suspect in custody will appear in court for an Initial Appearance within 24 hours of arrest.</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> SUSPECT IN CUSTODY - JUVENILE DETENTION HEARING: SUSPECT #1 _____ DOB _____ SUSPECT #2 _____ DOB _____ SUSPECT #3 _____ DOB _____ DETENTION CENTER: _____ <small>The juvenile suspect in custody will appear for a Detention Hearing at the county Juvenile Court or Detention Center within 24 hours of detention, but may be released at any time prior to this hearing.</small>
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4 <<VICTIM OR VICTIM'S LAWFUL REPRESENTATIVE>>

A. Who was the crime or offense committed against?
 Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

B. Are you the victim / lawful representative? (CHECK BOX THAT APPLIES)

Yes, the crime was committed against me. I am the Victim.

Yes, because one of the following applies to me. I am the victim's **Lawful Representative**. (CHECK ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/> The victim has designated me as his/her lawful representative	<input type="checkbox"/> The victim is minor child and I am a parent, an immediate family member or legal guardian
<input type="checkbox"/> The victim is incapacitated (severely disabled) or deceased	<input type="checkbox"/> The victim is a legal entity (corporation, partnership or business).

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____
Victim's Lawful Representative

C. How can you be contacted?

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Apt: _____

Home Address (if different): _____ Apt: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ Other number(s) where I may be reached: _____
 (Work) _____

<p>D. <input type="checkbox"/> I REQUEST my rights in this case. OR <input type="checkbox"/> I WAIVE (DECLINE) my rights in this case.</p> <p>I understand that I must keep my mailing address and phone number current with the agency or court responsible for providing my rights. Failure to do so can mean that my rights are waived. I also understand in order to make any changes to the information supplied on this form, I must contact the appropriate agency or court.</p> <p>Victim or Lawful Representative Signature / Date: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><small>(FOR REPORTING AGENCY USE ONLY)</small></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> REQUEST / WAIVER exception per A.R.S. § 13-4405(B) and § 8-386(B)</p>
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NOTES / COMMENTS:

APPENDIX D

Sample Victim-Sensitive Notification Letter

Agencies need to develop “merge letters” for every possible point of notification to victims. While the technical process of developing automated letters is quite simple, the development of *victim sensitive language* is a bit more challenging. The National Center for Victims of Crime developed the following sample letter that can be adapted for various types of victim notification:¹

Dear Mr./Ms. [Name]: :

Thank you for registering for victim notification services from the [state/name of agency]. I am very sorry that you were victimized, and assure you that my Department and staff will do everything we can to assist you.

You will receive notice of [list types of notice that the victim is eligible for here].

We have determined that the prisoner's earliest possible release from confinement, which might include [list here — *intensive supervision, parole, supervised community confinement, etc.*] is [month/day/year], based upon information known at this date, and assuming current laws and policies remain in effect during [his/her] sentence.

It is important that you notify the Department of any change in your address, telephone number, or other relevant contact information, so that we can notify you in an efficient manner. I have enclosed a card with the Department's address, as well as our toll-free telephone number for the Department's Victim Services Program.

If the Department can provide you with additional information, answer any questions, or offer referrals to victim services in our state, please contact [name], [title] in our Victim Services Program at [area code/telephone number].

I appreciate your consideration of this information, and hope we can continue to meet your needs as much as possible.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
Director/Commissioner of Agency

¹ Created by the National Center for Victims of Crime and published in T. M. Godwin, A. Seymour, A.H. Crowe, and B. Macgargle, *Promising Victim-Related Practices and Strategies in Probation and Parole*, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 1999.

APPENDIX E

Standard Conditions of Supervision Specific to Victims' Needs and Concerns

Sample Conditions of Supervision Relevant to Crime Victims

- Release of information relevant to conditions of supervision and/or violations of such conditions to the victim, upon request from the victim.
- Obey all laws.
- Cannot possess weapons.
- Participate in any offense-specific treatment program deemed appropriate by the supervising agency, with victim input (i.e., substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, etc.).
- Participate in victim/offender programming that reinforces offender accountability, such as victim awareness classes.
- Consider participation in victim/offender programming, upon request from the victim, that involves direct contact with the victim, such as dialogue or family group conferencing (this condition should always be *voluntary* on the part of the offender).
- Upon request from the victim, no contact with the victim, his or her family, and others designated by the victim.
- Restrictions on movement and location (specifically those that involve contact with potentially vulnerable populations, such as children, elderly persons, or persons with disabilities).
- Make full restitution to the victim(s).
- If there is no restitution order, be provided with the opportunity to make voluntary restitution to the victim(s) or a victim assistance program designated by the victim.
- Pay fines and fees that support victim assistance programs, including victim compensation.
- Submit to warrantless search and seizure.
- Do not use alcohol and/or other drugs.
- Submit to random alcohol and other drug tests.
- Pay for the cost of urinalysis.
- Submit to polygraphs.
- Perform restorative community service as recommended by the victim or victim surrogate (such as a victim assistance agency).
- No Internet access (or agreement to intensive monitoring of computer activities)
- Electronic monitoring.
- Intensive supervision.

Additional Conditions for Inter-Familial/Family Violence Cases¹

- No further abuse.
- Pay child support and restitution.

¹ A. H. Crowe, (with P. Wack and P.J. Schaefer), *Intervening in Family Violence: A Resource Manual for Community Corrections Professionals*, American Probation and Parole Association, Lexington, KY, 1996, p. 204.

- Pay attorney fees for victims.
- Abide by all court restrictions and directives.
- Supervised child visitation and/or public drop-off/pick-up point.
- Cooperation with child/adult protective services.
- Release of information to third parties, as appropriate.

APPENDIX F

Sample Release of Information Form for Sharing Victim Information

Name of Victim: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I acknowledge that _____ explained to me that information I discuss
(Advocate's Name)
with the crimes victim advocates may be shared with the assistant district attorneys and advocates in the crimes unit, law enforcement, court personnel, office staff, probation and parole agents, pre-sentence writers, Department of Human Services and Crime Victim Compensation.

The information shared will be for the purpose of assisting with the investigation and prosecution of the matter involving:

(Defendant's name or description of assault if defendant is not known).

Signature of Victim

(Relationship to above, if other than victim)

Date

APPENDIX G

Summary of Victim Compensation Requirements and Benefits

Crime Victim Compensation¹

- In 2000, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands operated victim compensation programs.
- Compensation programs provide financial assistance to victims of nearly every type of violent crime including rape, robbery, assault, sexual abuse, drunk driving, domestic violence, and survivors of homicide victims. The programs pay for expenses such as medical care, mental health counseling, lost wages, and, in cases of homicide, funerals and loss of support. With a few exceptions, however, they do not cover lost, stolen, or damaged property. Most programs cover a basic core of offenses, although eligibility requirements and specific benefits of compensation programs vary somewhat from state to state.
- State programs have established limits to the maximum benefits available to victims that typically range from \$10,000 to \$25,000, although a few states have lower or higher maximums.
- Each state has eligibility requirements that victims must meet to qualify for compensation benefits. While eligibility requirements vary from state to state, virtually all programs require victims to:
- Report the crime promptly to law enforcement. Seventy-two hours is the standard, although a few programs have shorter or longer periods. Nearly all states have “good cause” exceptions applied liberally to children, incapacitated victims, and others with special circumstances.
- Cooperate with police and prosecutors in the investigation and prosecution of the case.
- Submit a timely application to the compensation program, generally within one year from the date of the crime. A few states have shorter or longer deadlines, and most have the ability to waive these deadlines for exceptional circumstances. Children are generally excepted from timely filing requirements.
- Victims are required to provide other essential information as needed by the program, and they generally are not eligible for compensation if the victimization giving rise to the claim resulted from the claimant's own criminal activity or significant misconduct.

Additional References:

(For a roster of state victim compensation programs and contact information)
National Association of Crime Victims Compensation Boards
P.O. Box 16003
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703) 370-2996 (Phone-Fax)

¹ Office for Victims of Crime, *New Directions from the Field*, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 1998, chapter 14.

APPENDIX H

Model Victim Impact Statement

The model VIS¹ was developed in 1999 following a series of focus groups involving juvenile court judges, juvenile justice professionals, and victims of juvenile offenders. It was developed within a restorative justice framework that is victim-centered, and that focused on offender accountability. It has been revisited and revised based upon input from community corrections, court, and victim assistance professionals, and is easily adaptable to any jurisdiction's laws or agency policies.

1. *Describing the Offense and Its Impact:* The concept of “describing the offense” has been promoted by numerous community corrections officials, who believe the victim’s version of the offense is critical to compare to that which the alleged or convicted/adjudicated offender has described. In some cases, offenders may minimize or deny their level of participation in a crime, or the facts of the case as determined by the investigation and prosecution. In order to hold offenders fully accountable, the victim’s description of the offense is essential.
By asking victims in the first question to describe not only the offense, but “how it affected you and your family,” a wide range of responses can be elicited. This open-ended question addresses the problem described by one victim, who said: “In completing my impact statement, I felt like I was being asked to pound square pegs into round holes.” By not limiting the victim’s response up-front, the agency soliciting the VIS is likely to obtain the victim’s unadulterated perspective, and a description of the impact that is most salient to the victim.
2. *Emotional Impact:* The first “specific” question on the VIS asks about the emotional impact on the victim before eliciting information about the physical or financial impact. Some victims find it insulting that the court or paroling authority would primarily focus on the financial, as opposed to the emotional impact of the crime. Victims should be afforded ample space to express how the crime has personally affected them from an emotional or psychological standpoint. Family members or friends of homicide victims should be given ample space to describe the deceased’s personal characteristics and how the loss of the person killed has affected their lives.
3. *Physical Impact:* For personal crimes, the victim impact statement should seek information regarding the physical injuries the victim may have suffered as a result of the crime. Victims should have space and opportunity to describe the type and degree of injury, how long the injury lasted or is expected to last, the amount of pain and/or modifications to lifestyle experienced as a result, and any medical treatment required thus far and anticipated for the future.
4. *Financial Impact:* When seeking financial impact from victims, the VIS should seek detailed information about the cost of the crime. Victims should be given the opportunity to list all past, current, and expected future costs associated with the crime or offense. Victims also should be asked to provide information about any portion of the costs that have been covered by insurance, crime victim compensation, and any other source. The victim impact statement should clearly and readily allow for a calculation of restitution to the victim. For VIS at parole, an additional question should ask whether restitution was ordered at the time of sentencing and, if so, the status of that order.
5. *Safety and Security Concerns:* Since victimology research indicates that victims do not always express their fears related to the crime or alleged/convicted/adjudicated offender, it is important to ask, “Do you have any concerns about your safety or security?” through the VIS process. When victims are given the opportunity to express such concerns, the court or paroling authority can consider specific measures — such as “no-contact” orders — that can offer an increased measure of security to victims and their loved ones. If an offender is being considered for release from incarceration, victims should also be asked about things that can be done to make them feel safer, in the event that she/he is released.

¹A. Seymour, “Model Victim Impact Statement”, Justice Solutions, Washington, D.C., 1999.

6. *“What Do You Want to Happen Now?”*: It is important to clarify that this question is not designed to “tell the justice authority what to do,” but rather to receive important input into what the victim thinks would be fair and appropriate. This is considered a “parameter” question for victims, i.e. if a victim wants the offender paroled to another country, the victim advocate or justice official can explain the range of possibilities of community placement and supervision, based upon state law.
7. *Victim/Offender Programming*: In many jurisdictions, criminal and juvenile justice agencies (often in partnership with community-based programs) offer opportunities for victims to meet with offenders in a facilitated, structured meeting or dialogue. For some victims, mediation/dialogue programs provide an occasion to ask questions about what prompted the offender’s decision to commit the offense, and to choose the victim as a target. Mediation/dialogue programs have proven to be successful in increasing victim satisfaction with the justice process; developing conditions of sentencing or adjudication that hold offenders accountable; and increasing the likelihood that restitution orders will be paid. The VIS question relevant to victim/offender programming should only be asked *if the victim has been provided with comprehensive information* — in writing and verbally — about the specifics of victim/offender programming, and what it can do to enhance the victim’s reconstruction of his or her life in the aftermath of crime.
8. *Recommendations for Community Service*: Most sentences and adjudications that result in community supervision of offenders include a requirement for community service. Many jurisdictions now provide victims with the opportunity to:
 - Review the jurisdiction’s list of potential community service placements, and select a placement from pre-approved sites.
 - Request direct service from the offender to the victim (this approach is utilized primarily in lower level and nonviolent offenses, particularly when the offender is a juvenile). Liability issues must be addressed prior to allowing for direct service to victims. In Pennsylvania, for example, the commonwealth provides for a statewide insurance policy that covers community service placements of all juvenile offenders.
 - Recommend community service that will improve the victim’s neighborhood or community, i.e., cleaning up the neighborhood park or removing graffiti from freeway overpasses near the victim’s home.
 - Recommend service that benefits a victim service organization, i.e., distributing posters for victim-related commemorative weeks around the community, cutting red ribbons for the local MADD chapter, or joining a victim organization’s speakers bureau to give presentations to the community about the impact of crime.
9. *“Anything Else?”*: The VIS should end its series of questions by asking the victim, “Is there anything else you would like to tell the court/paroling authority?” The victim can include any final thoughts or address any issues that were not covered in their answers to the previous questions.
10. *Notification of Offender’s Post-Conviction/Adjudication Status*: In jurisdictions that allow the victim to be notified of the offender’s post-conviction/adjudication status, the victim impact statement should ask the victim to what extent he or she wishes to be notified of these developments, i.e. parole consideration, probation or parole revocation, correctional placement, or early release in to the community through work release programs or furloughs. The statement should not assume that all victims will want to be involved or notified.

Victim Impact Statement Resource Package

This Resource Package was developed by Victim Advocate Anne Seymour (Justice Solutions: Washington, D.C. 2001) to provide guidelines for courts and correctional agencies that are responsible for implementing victims' right to an impact statement. It should be revised, as needed, to reflect both state law and agency policies in your jurisdiction.

Some of these resources have been adapted from *Victim Impact: A Victim's Right to Speak, a Nation's Responsibility to Listen* written by Janice Harris Lord and Ellen Alexander, and published by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice in 1994.

Special thanks is extended to Bob Wells, a Senior Instructor with the Behavioral Science Division of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, for his assistance in drafting and editing this document.

Special thanks is also extended to the Honorable Ted Todd, Judge, Fifth Judicial District in Indiana for providing an overview of what courts consider in the adjudication of youthful offenders.

Electronic versions of this Resource Package are available via e-mail: Please specify "Word" or "Word Perfect" in your request.

Sample Cover Letter for Victim Impact Statement

This letter can be adapted for criminal and juvenile courts, as well as for adult and juvenile paroling authorities.

"Dear Mr./Ms. :

(Name of agency) is committed to helping crime victims, and providing services and support to people in our community who have been hurt by crime. We are sorry that you were victimized, and are grateful for your participation in the criminal/juvenile justice process. Your involvement and input are vital to promoting individual and community safety, and to holding your offender accountable for the harm she/he has caused.

One of your most important rights as a victim of crime is the opportunity to tell the court how you and your loved ones have been affected by the crime. Your completed "victim impact statement" ensures that your voice is heard as part of the justice process.

It is important for the court to understand the nature of the offense, and its impact on you and your loved ones – emotionally, physically, and financially. Your victim impact statement will also give the court valuable information that can be used to hold the offender accountable, and to promote safety for you and for our community.

I have enclosed a resource package that describes the process for completing the victim impact statement process. Any additional information you think is important for the court should be provided as an attachment to your victim impact statement.

We are grateful for your continuing support to the criminal/juvenile justice process. If you have any questions about completing your victim impact statement, or would like information about services for victims in our community, please contact (name) at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you very much.

Enclosures: *Suggestions for Completing Your Victim Impact Statement*
Victim Impact Statement Form (questions)
"Documenting Financial Losses" Checklist

1. What Is a Victim Impact Statement and How Is It Used?

Victim impact statements provide an opportunity for your voice to be heard by our justice system. When completed, it is an important document that describes how the crime has affected you and your loved ones, and provides input into how the court can best hold the offender accountable for the harm she/he has caused.

As a crime victim, you have the opportunity to use this victim impact statement to describe how this crime affected you and others close to you. This statement has space for you to:

- Describe the crime and its physical, emotional, and financial effects on you and your loved ones.
- Discuss any concerns you may have about your safety and security.
- Address any changes in your life you may have experienced since the crime occurred.
- Offer suggestions for a resolution that is fair, and provide information that will give the offender the opportunity to take responsibility for actions that caused you harm and loss.
- If the defendant pleads guilty or is found guilty after trial, your impact statement will help the judge understand how this crime has affected you and those close to you.

Suggestions for Completing Your Victim Impact Statement

Filling Out This Statement Is Voluntary

You do not have to fill out a victim impact statement. However, it may be helpful to the judge when he or she decides what sentence the defendant should receive, and/or whether or how much the defendant may have to reimburse you for expenses you have paid or owe because of this crime. If the judge orders the defendant to pay you restitution, there is no guarantee that the defendant will be able to pay the entire amount. However, a court order for the full amount of your losses is an important component for victims to pursue civil remedies for all of the financial losses associated with this crime. Whether or not you choose to submit a victim impact statement is a decision made by you and your family. It is a voluntary right that you have as a victim of crime.

1. Suggestions for Completing Your Victim Impact Statement

The following suggestions and the attached victim impact statement form are offered only as a guide. Please answer as many questions as you wish. If you need more space, you can use additional pages and simply attach them to the form when you return it.

Only you know how to best describe the effects this crime has had on you and those close to you. We realize it may be difficult to describe in words how this crime has affected you, your family and friends. However, your input is vital to determining a sentence that is fair and just, and holding the offender accountable for the harm she/he caused you. The questions that follow are designed to help you and your family complete this important process.

Some victims have found it helpful to write a rough draft of their statement before completing the final statement. If you should need any assistance in completing your victim impact statement, please feel free to contact my office for assistance at (telephone number).

If you would like to tell the court about the *emotional impact* of this crime, you may wish to consider:

- How this crime has affected your lifestyle or those close to you.
- How your feelings about yourself or your life have changed since the crime.
- How your ability to relate to others has changed.
- Any counseling or other support you have obtained to help you cope.

If you or your family members were injured, you may wish to tell the court about the *physical impact* of this crime. You may wish to describe:

- The specific physical injuries you or members of your family suffered.
- How long your injuries lasted or how long they are expected to last.
- Any medical treatment you have received or expect to receive in the future.
- How your physical injuries have affected your lifestyle, i.e. ability to work, enjoy recreational pursuits, etc.

It is very important for the court to understand how this crime has affected your ability to earn a living and how it has affected you financially. If you have paid or owe any money for bills because of this crime, please fill out the *financial impact* section of the statement. It is important to be as accurate and complete as possible when listing your costs because this information will be used by the prosecutor, probation officer and judge to help them determine what restitution the defendant must pay to you.

We have included a separate checklist to help you describe and document the types of financial losses you may have endured, or will be faced with in the future. It is important to be as complete as possible in describing your financial losses, as this information will be used by the probation department/paroling authority and provided to the judge/paroling authority for determining restitution. *Restitution* is the possible payment by the defendant to you for any financial losses you may have suffered as a result of this crime.

3. Who Has Access to Your Victim Impact Statement?

Your statement will become an official court document after it is given to the court, and will become part of the defendant's permanent file. The judge, prosecutor, and probation officer will read your statement. In addition, prison and parole officials may read your statement if the defendant is sentenced to a prison/detention term.

The defendant and the defendant's attorney will also be able to read what you have written. They may even be able to ask you questions about your statement in court. *However, the defendant will not be able to see your address and telephone number because you are not asked to put them on your statement.*

Add in applicable jurisdictions: You also have the right to speak to the judge at the time of sentencing. If you would like to do so, please contact our office immediately so we can facilitate your oral statement to the court.

Add in applicable jurisdictions: You also have the right to give your victim impact statement in the form of an audio or video tape, or via teleconference if traveling to the sentencing hearing imposes an undue burden on you. If you would like to pursue any of these options, please contact our office immediately for further information and assistance.

Add in applicable jurisdictions: The information you provide in your victim impact statement can be utilized to help the offender understand how his/her criminal/delinquent actions have affected your life. While your personal contact information *will not be revealed*, the information you provide about victim impact — with your permission — may be integrated into offender casework to address personal accountability and victim empathy issues.

4. Crime Victim Compensation

If you are a victim of a crime involving violence or resulting in personal injury, you may be able to receive financial help from the Crime Victim Compensation Program. This program can pay you back for certain out-of-pocket expenses for physical or emotional injuries received as a direct result of a crime. These expenses may include medical bills, counseling costs, funeral bills, and lost wages and support. This is *not the same as restitution*. You may be able to receive money to help you with some of your medical bills even before you go to court.

You can file for benefits immediately following the crime even if no arrest has been made. If you would like more information about the possible benefits available, or how to apply for victim compensation, please contact our office for assistance, or contact the (state victim compensation program) directly at (address; telephone number; e-mail; and web site).

For Help With Your Victim Impact Statement

Please return your completed impact statement to our office within (#) days. If you have any questions while writing your impact statement or if you would like to speak to the judge at sentencing, please contact our office immediately so we can help set this up for you. If our office can help you in any way at all, contact us at: (name of agency; address; telephone number; and/or e-mail.) If you need more space to answer any

of the following questions, or if you have additional information that is not addressed by these questions, please use as much paper as you need, and simply attach these sheets of paper to this impact statement. Thank you.

4. *Other Information That the Court Considers in Adjudication Decisions (for juvenile cases)*

The following considerations are important to the court, and are all helpful in developing a profile of the youthful offender, and what may or may not be an appropriate disposition in a particular case.

- Victim impact statement.
- Nature of the offense and extent of the juvenile's involvement.
- Age of both the juvenile and the victim(s).
- Educational records of the juvenile.
- Work record of the juvenile.
- Juvenile's support system (family, close friends [both adult and peers], any religious affiliation, any other group affiliations, school, and work).
- Juvenile's health (mental health, physical health, substance use/abuse)
- Juvenile's attitude (toward this offense and victim[s], and toward his/her community)
- Offender's prior involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Victim Impact Statement*

1. Please describe how this offense has affected you and your family.
2. What was the *emotional impact* of this crime on you and your family?
3. What was the *financial impact* of this crime on you and your family?
(NOTE: ADD "PHYSICAL IMPACT" FOR PERSONAL CRIMES.)
4. What concerns do you have, in any, about your safety and security?
5. What do you want to happen now?
6. Would you like an opportunity to participate in victim/offender programming (such as mediation/dialogue or victim impact panels) that can help hold the offender accountable for his/her actions? (NOTE: Only utilize this question if such programs are in place, and ensure that the victim has written resources that fully describe such programs.)
7. If community service is recommended as part of the disposition or sentence, do you have a favorite charity or cause you'd like to recommend as a placement?
8. Is there *any other information* you would like to share with the court regarding the offense, and how it affected you and your family?

____ Please check here if you would like to be notified about the status and outcome of this case.

* Allow as much space as is needed to complete the victim impact statement.

Documenting Losses for Victim Restitution²

To ensure accurate and complete restitution orders, you are required to document your losses in writing for the court or paroling authority. The following considerations can help you document your out-of-pocket expenses and projected future expenses:

- Employer statements (letters or affidavits) that document unpaid time off from work you took as a result of injuries from the crime, or involvement in justice processes.
- Documentation of any workers compensation claims submitted and/or claims payments received.
- Copies of bills for services directly related to your financial recovery from the crime.
- Any receipts for items or services.
- Documentation that estimates the value of stolen property.
- Photos of valuables that were stolen.
- Copies of any documentation often provided by local law enforcement agencies (i.e. records of serial numbers, photos, etc.) that are intended to aid you in the recovery of stolen property.
- Any law enforcement records that indicate the status of your stolen property (i.e. property recovered, recovered but damaged, etc.)
- Copies of your applications to and/or copies of checks received from the state victim compensation fund.
- Copies of insurance claims and related correspondence between you and your insurance company, as well as copies of any checks you have received to cover losses.

Immediate Losses

During the presentence investigation, you should be asked to report information about your losses by completing or updating a financial worksheet, and providing documentation as described above.

The range of these losses can include the following:

Medical Care

- Emergency transportation to the hospital.
- Rape kit examinations that are not immediately paid by a third party.
- All expenses related to the hospital stay, including the room, laboratory tests, medications, x-rays, HIV testing in cases involving the exchange of bodily fluids, and medical supplies.
- Expenses for care provided by physicians (both inpatient and outpatient) medication and medical supplies.
- Fees for physical or occupational therapy.
- Replacement of eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other sensory aid items damaged, destroyed or stolen.
- Rental and related costs for equipment used for any physical restoration, i.e. wheelchairs, wheelchair ramps, special beds, crutches, etc.

Mental Health Services

- Fees for counseling or therapy for you and your family members.
- Any costs incurred as a result of your participation in support or therapy groups.
- Expenses for medications that doctors may prescribe to help ease your trauma following the crime.

Time Off From Work

- To repair damage following property crimes.
- To attend or participate in court or parole proceedings.
- To attend doctors' appointments for injuries or mental health needs directly resulting from the crime.

² Anne K. Seymour, Promising Practices and Strategies for Victim Services in Corrections, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 1997. and Tracy M. Godwin, Anne K. Seymour, and Brett Macgargle, Promising Victim-Related Practices and Strategies for Probation and Parole, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 1999.

Other Expenses

- Crime scene cleanup.
- Costs of replacing locks, changing security devices, etc.
- Expenses related to child or elder care when you have to testify in court.
- Relocation expenses.
- Fees incurred in changing banking or credit card accounts.

Projected Expenses

Victimization often results in injuries or losses that are long term in nature. While it is not possible to accurately document such projected expenses, it is possible to document expert opinions as to future financial obligations you might incur as a direct result of the crime.

You should be advised to seek documentation (a letter or affidavit) from professionals who are providing you with medical or mental health services that offers an estimate of your future treatment needs, as well as related expenses. Such costs can include:

- Long-term medical treatment.
- Physical or occupational rehabilitation or therapy.
- Mental health counseling or therapy.
- Time that must be taken off from work to receive any of the above services.

The justice professional responsible for assessing your restitution needs should provide this documentation to the court or paroling authority.

APPENDIX I

Sample Policy Statement on Victim Advisory Councils/Committees¹

Policy Statement	
SEAL	Name of State and Department or Division or Agency

Policy Subject: Victim Advisory Committee/Council	Policy Number:
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Date of Issue:	Authority (Signature Line)	Effective Date:
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I. Authority

Cite the authority of the Commissioner/Director of Corrections and Code Sections related to victim services. Also cite legislative mandates or Executive Order instructions.

II. Purpose

This policy will establish a Victim Advisory Committee/Council (VAC), comprised of crime victims (including DOC staff who have been victimized on-the-job) and representatives of state and local victim assistance programs and coalitions. The VAC will provide support to the Office or Division for Victim Services (OVS) in developing policies, programs and protocols relevant to victim assistance, and serve as a DOC liaison to the state's victim assistance and allied justice professional communities.

III. Applicability

This policy and the implementation procedures apply to the Commissioner/Director and the OVS.

IV. Definitions

Office or Division for Victim Services: Oversees the implementation of programs, procedures, and policies to ensure that the rights of victims of the DOC's offenders are enforced. Serves as the primary contact between the DOC and other state and local victim assistance programs, including non-profit and community-based programs. Is responsible for all matters related to information, registration, notification, impact statements, restitution distribution, protection from harassment and harm, referral to support programs, advocacy for under-served victims, and accompaniment to hearings. Assists in the development of the Victim Impact programs for offenders and consults on the training of correctional staff on general victim issues, as well as issues specific to offender programs. Also assists with recruiting

¹ A. Seymour and S. English, *Corrections-based Victim Services Policy Manual*, Association of State Correctional Administrators and the Office for Victims of Crime, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 2000.

crime victim-related volunteers to participate in the classes or programs. Provides staff support and coordination to the Victim Services Advisory Committee, and to staff responsible for preparing for and responding to incidents of workplace violence and staff victimization.

Core Victims' Rights: Including notification; restitution; protection from intimidation, harassment, or harm; victim impact statements; and victim information and referral.

Crime Victim or Survivor: Any person who has been directly or indirectly affected by a criminal act committed by the offender sentenced to the DOC.

Crime Victim Coordinator: Staff members in outlying areas appointed to work with the OVS personnel on crime victim issues or cases in addition to his or her regular duties.

Victim Advisory Committee/Council: A group of crime victims, victim advocates, and/or victim service providers from across the jurisdiction appointed by the Commissioner or Director. Serves in an advisory capacity to assist in the development of programs within the DOC related to crime victims, and as a link to other victim and allied professional contacts in the jurisdiction.

Victim Impact Classes: Educational efforts to assist offenders in understanding the harm they have caused and how to prevent destructive behavior in the future. Can be presented in a classroom setting or living unit setting. Classes utilize a standard curriculum distributed by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime modeled after the California Youth Authority program.

Victim/Offender Programming: All other victim-centered programs such as impact panels, general assembly programs, restorative community service, and victim/offender mediation or dialogue. These other efforts should have separate policies.

Victim Service Providers: Professionals or volunteers who provide services and assistance through system-based programs (such as law enforcement, prosecution, juvenile or criminal courts, and probation/parole), and community-based programs (such as rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs and shelters, child advocacy centers, general victim assistance centers, and victim support groups, among others).

V. Policy

It is the policy of the DOC to seek input from crime victims and service providers to guide the development of policies, programs and protocols for assisting victims and witnesses of crime. The DOC VAC established by this policy will provide ongoing guidance to the department and its OVS to ensure the provision of comprehensive, quality services to victims and witnesses of crime.

VI. Procedures

A. Duties of the VAC

The principal duties of the VAC are to offer guidance and support to the DOC, Commissioner/Director, OVS and other divisions in all matters related to victim/witness assistance, including program and policy development and implementation.

The issues addressed by the VAC should include, but not be limited to:

1. Upon request from the OVS, reviewing and making recommendations about the DOC's existing policies and programs related to victim/witness assistance, and offering recommendations for new policies and programs that can improve the DOC's services to victims and witnesses.
2. Providing guidance on the DOC's implementation of core victims' rights, including: notification; restitution; protection from intimidation, harassment or harm; victim input; and information/referral services.
3. Providing input into and support for public policy development and implementation related to crime victims and witnesses, and DOC victim assistance.

4. Assisting in the development and implementation of victim/offender programming, including (*cite all that apply: "Impact of Crime on Victims" classes; victim impact panels; victim/offender dialogue or mediation; family group conferencing; community conferencing; or restorative community service*).
 5. Reviewing all DOC resources relevant to victims and witnesses, including victim outreach and education resources, internal staff training curricula, and training curricula for external audiences, for victim sensitivity and applicability.
 6. Providing guidance to the DOC about how to enhance outreach and services to traditionally underserved victim populations, including (*cite all that apply: victims with disabilities; victims of color; non-English speaking victims; victims in rural/urban jurisdictions; staff victims, etc.*).
 7. Providing guidance to the Director and OVS about protocols, policies and programs related to workplace violence and staff victimization.
 8. Serving as the DOC's liaison to crime victims, victim service providers, criminal and juvenile justice officials, and allied professionals on matters related to victim services.
- The VAC may establish sub-committees within its structure to focus specifically on any of the issues noted above in a more in-depth manner.

B. VAC Size

The VAC shall exist of a maximum of (#) members (*NOTE: It is a good idea to have an "odd number" of VAC*). (#) members constitute a quorum for meeting and voting purposes.

C. VAC Selection

VAC members shall be selected and appointed by the Commissioner/Director of Corrections. A Chair shall be (*elected by the VAC members/appointed by the Director/Commissioner*) annually at the VAC meeting held during the first quarter of the (fiscal/calendar) year, and shall serve for (*length of term*).

The Director of the OVS will serve as the Director's/Commissioner's liaison to the VAC, and keep him/her apprised of the VAC's efforts through quarterly memoranda that include summaries of minutes of VAC meetings.

D. VAC Composition

Members of the VAC will reflect the diversity of the state's population of crime victims and service providers by (*cite all that apply: type of victimization or victim services; age; gender; culture; geographic location; and sexual orientation*).

The following shall have one voting membership on the VAC:

1. State victim assistance coalition.
2. State coalition against domestic violence.
3. State coalition against sexual assault.
4. State coalition against child abuse and exploitation.
5. State office of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.
6. State coalition of families of homicide victims (such as Parents of Murdered Children).
7. A DOC staff member who has been victimized in the line of duty.

Efforts will be made to include the following as voting members of the VAC:

1. Community-based, not-for-profit victim service providers.
2. Law enforcement-based victim/witness assistance program.
3. Prosecution-based victim/witness assistance program.
4. Probation-based victim/witness assistance program.
5. Juvenile justice system-based victim/witness assistance program.

E. Term of Office

1. The term of office shall be (#) years. Beginning on the effective date of this policy, (*initial terms should be staggered so that all members' terms of service do not expire at the same time*).

2. VAC members may recommend to the Director/Commissioner the termination of a VAC member who misses two consecutive meetings without notifying the VAC.
3. VAC members may recommend to the Director/Commissioner the termination of a VAC member for just cause.

F. Compensation

Membership on and participation in the VAC is voluntary. VAC members shall receive no remuneration for their services, but may be reimbursed for their expenses according to *(cite policy or directive)*.

G. Frequency and Location of Meetings

The VAC shall physically meet at least twice annually, with additional meetings scheduled as needed, at the Central Office of the DOC. VAC meetings can be held at alternative locations with prior approval from the Commissioner/Director.

H. Documentation

A written agenda shall be prepared by the VAC Chair for each meeting, and disseminated to VAC members at least 30 days prior to each meeting. Each agenda shall provide opportunities for participant introductions, Old Business, and New Business.

Agenda items may be submitted to the VAC Chair by VAC members, the Commissioner/Director, or the Director of OVS.

The VAC Chair or his/her designee shall provide minutes of VAC business, which consists of a summary of all business, including sub-committee reports. OVS staff may provide clerical support to facilitate the development of VAC meeting minutes, as needed and upon request from the VAC Chair. The minutes shall be disseminated to VAC members, the Director of the OVS, and DOC Commissioner/Director within 60 days of the meeting.

I. Voting Privileges

Only appointed VAC members or their designees shall have voting privileges. "Designees" are determined by submitting proxy information for approval from the VAC Chair prior to any meeting at which the VAC member will be absent.

VII. Special Conditions

In an emergency situation or extended disruption of normal institutional operation, any provision or section of this policy may be suspended by the Commissioner or Director or his/her designee for a set period of time.

VIII. Superseded Policy and Cross References

Cite any policy or state that there are no previous policies.

Note any cross references to other policies, manual sections, or codes.

If the DOC is adhering to, or seeking Accreditation from the American Correctional Association, cite the applicable sections. These are usually found in the Social Services, Academic, Assessment, and Placement provisions.

APPENDIX J

Comprehensive Roster of Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Correctional Agencies, and Victim Assistance Websites¹

Accessing Information: OVC Resource Center and Other Services

Victims' Resources In the Information Age

The advent of information technologies, especially the enormous growth of the Internet, has changed the way in which information about crime victims' issues is being made available to researchers, advocates, and practitioners. Today, victims and victim service providers can instantly access an enormous amount of information specific to their needs, including the latest research findings, statistical reports, program descriptions, grant and funding sources, evaluations on victim issues, promising practices, and referrals to professional organizations in the victim-serving community.

For victims and victim service providers, information access begins with the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center (OVCRC), a component of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS). Established by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), U.S. Department of Justice, OVCRC is your primary source for crime victim information. OVCRC is accessible 24 hours a day through the NCJRS World Wide Web Justice Information Center and Fax-on-Demand where menus provide information and publications from all Office for Justice Program (OJP) agencies — Office for Victims of Crime, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and Bureau of Justice Assistance—as well as from the Office of National Drug Control Policy. In addition to the Web site, victim assistance professionals can benefit by taking advantage of various online services, such as the Justice Information (*JUSTINFO*) Electronic Newsletter, e-mail inquiries, the Conference Calendar Database, and the Online Ordering Store. NCJRS also has highly trained information specialists to personally answer questions and direct individuals to the best resources available. Furthermore, NCJRS offers allied professionals an opportunity to be placed on their mailing list to receive up-to-date information via the *NCJRS Catalog*. Together with online services, Fax-on-Demand, and personal assistance, NCJRS and OVCRC can help victim advocates *know more* to better serve the needs of victims of crime.

Accessing Ncjrs and OVCRC Online

To contact NCJRS, call 800-851-3420. NCJRS Online can be accessed in the following ways:

NCJRS World Wide Web Homepage. The homepage provides NCJRS information, and links to other criminal justice resources from around the world. The NCJRS Web page provides information about NCJRS and OJP agencies, grant-funding opportunities, full-text publications, key-word searching of NCJRS publications, access to the NCJRS Abstracts Database, the current *NCJRS Catalog*, and a topical index. The address for the NCJRS Homepage is <<http://www.ncjrs.org>>.

NCJRS On-line Ordering System. Publications, videos, and other materials that pertain to criminal justice, juvenile justice, and drug control policy can now be ordered at any time. The online store is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at <<http://puborder.ncjrs.org/>>.

Justice Information (JUSTINFO) Electronic Newsletter. This free, online newsletter is distributed to your Internet e-mail address on the 1st and 15th of each month. *JUSTINFO* contains information concern-

¹ Office for Victims of Crime, *National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide*, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 2001.

ing a wide variety of subjects, including news from all Office of Justice Programs (OJP) agencies and the Office of National Drug Control Policy; criminal justice resources on the Internet; criminal justice funding and program information; and announcements about new NCJRS products and services. To subscribe, send an e-mail to <listproc@ncjrs.org> with the message *subscribe justinfo [your name]*.

E-Mail: Information and Help. Users requiring technical assistance or having specific questions on criminal and juvenile justice topics can send an e-mail to <askncjrs@ncjrs.org>. To place an order for publications, users may send an e-mail to <puborder@ncjrs.org>.

Other NCJRS Electronic Information Services

Fax-on-demand. NCJRS has established a “fax-on-demand” service that allows the user to obtain copies of selected NCJRS documents directly through their own fax machine, using a toll-free telephone number. To access the fax-on-demand menu, simply call 1-800-851-3420, and follow the prompts.

CD-ROM and Online Access to the Abstracts Database. Users with CD-ROM capability can also obtain the NCJRS Abstracts Database on CD-ROM. This disc features citations and abstracts of more than 140,000 criminal justice books, research reports, journal articles, government documents, program descriptions, program evaluations, and training manuals contained in the NCJRS Research and Information Center library collection. The disc also contains search software that supports retrieval, using any combination of words to search individual fields or all fields globally. The disc can be searched using “free text” methods, or in combination with the National Criminal Justice Thesaurus. In addition, the NCJRS Abstracts Database is available on the NCJRS Homepage at <http://www.ncjrs.org/database.htm>.

Victim-Related Internet Sites

Crime victims and victim service providers have witnessed a remarkable growth in the amount of information available to them, through the continued development of the Internet—especially the World Wide Web. Now, victim-serving agencies and advocacy organizations have the ability to reach around the corner or around the world with information about new issues, services, and promising practices designed to improve the welfare of victims of all types of crime. In an effort to present the most comprehensive and timely information available through this vast medium, the Office for Victims of Crime has substantially revised its World Wide Web homepage. OVC encourages crime victims and victim service providers alike to visit this comprehensive resource, located at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>.

Many other agencies and organizations are now providing victim-related information through the World Wide Web. The following is a list of sites on the Web that contain information on selected crime victimization topics. Please note that this list is intended only to provide a sample of available resources, and does not constitute an endorsement of opinions, resources, or statements made therein.

Federal Agencies/Resources

Bureau of Justice Assistance	http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA
Bureau of Justice Statistics	http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention	http://www.samhsa.gov/csap
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment	http://www.samhsa.gov/csat
Centers for Disease Control	http://www.cdc.gov
Community-Oriented Police Office (COPS)	http://www.usdoj.gov/cops/
FBI Uniform Crime Reports–Statistical Data	http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/crime/
Federal Judicial Center	http://www.fjc.gov/
GovBot Database of Government Web sites	http://ciir.cs.umass.edu/ciirdemo/Govbot/index1.html
Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention	http://www.edc.org/hec/
National Archive of Criminal Justice Data	http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD/home.html

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information	http://www.health.org/
National Domestic Violence Hotline	http://www.ojp.gov/vawo/newhotline.htm
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov
NCJRS Justice Information Center	http://www.ncjrs.org
National Institute of Corrections	http://www.nicic.org/
National Institute of Justice	http://www.ncjrs.org/nijhome.htm
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism	http://www.niaaa.nih.gov
National Institute on Drug Abuse	http://www.drugabuse.gov
National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse	http://www.nmchc.org
Nonprofit Gateway	http://www.nonprofit.gov
Office of Justice Programs	http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov
Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention	http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org
Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)	http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/
Office of National Drug Control Policy Information Clearinghouse	http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov
THOMAS: Federal Legislation	http://thomas.loc.gov
U.S. Department of Education Campus Security and Safety	http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/index.html
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Grantsnet	http://www.os.dhhs.gov/progorg/grantsnet/index.html
U.S. Department of Justice	http://www.usdoj.gov
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center on PTSD	http://www.ncptsd.org
U.S. Parole Commission	http://www.usdoj.gov/uspc/parole.htm
U.S. Supreme Court	http://www.supremecourtus.gov
Violence Against Women Office	http://www.ojp.gov/vawo/

National Victim-related Organizations

American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law	http://www.abanet.org/child/
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children	http://www.apsac.org/
Anti-Defamation League	http://www.adl.org/hate-patrol/main.html
Child Abuse Prevention Association	http://www.capa.org
Child Abuse Prevention Network	http://child.cornell.edu
Childhelp USA	http://www.childhelpusa.org
Child Quest International	http://www.childquest.org/
Child Welfare League of America	http://www.cwla.org
Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS)	http://www.nationalcops.org
Family Violence Prevention Fund	http://www.fvpf.org/
Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community	http://www.dvinstitute.org
Mothers Against Drunk Driving	http://www.madd.org
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	http://www.missingkids.org
National Center for Victims of Crime	http://www.ncvc.org
National Center on Elder Abuse	http://www.gwjapan.com/NCEA/

National Children's Alliance	http://www.nncac.org
National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information	http://www.calib.com/nccanch
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence	http://www.ncadv.org
National Coalition of Homicide Survivors	http://www.mivictims.org
National Commission Against Drunk Driving	http://www.ncadd.com
National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association	http://www.nationalcasa.org/
National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center	http://www.musc.edu/cvc/
National Fraud Information Center	http://www.fraud.org
National Insurance Crime Bureau	http://www.nicb.org
National Organization for Victim Assistance	http://www.try-nova.org
National Sexual Violence Research Center	http://www.nsvrc.org
National Victim Assistance Academy (OVC)	http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/assist/vaa.htm
National Victim Assistance Academy (VALOR)	http://www.nvaa.org
National Victims Constitutional Amendment Network	http://www.nvcan.org
National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center	http://www.violenceagainstwomen.org
Neighbors Who Care	http://www.neighborswhocare.org
Parents of Murdered Children (POMC)	http://www.pomc.com
Safe Campuses Now	http://www.uga.edu/~safe-campus/
Security on Campus	http://www.campussafety.org/
Victims' Assistance Legal Organization (VALOR)	http://www.valor-national.org

National Criminal and Juvenile Justice- and Public Policy-Related Associations

American Correctional Association	http://www.corrections.com/aca
American Correctional Health Services Association	http://www.corrections.com/achsa/
American Jail Association	http://www.corrections.com/aja
American Probation and Parole Association	http://www.appa-net.org
American Prosecutors Research Institute	http://www.ndaa-apri.org
Association of State Correctional Administrators	http://www.asca.net
Balanced and Restorative Justice Project	ssw.che.umn.edu/rjp
Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice	http://www.cjcj.org
Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking	http://www.ssw.che.umn.edu/rjp/default.html
Center for Sex Offender Management	http://www.csom.org
Community Anti-drug Coalitions of America	http://www.cadca.org
Community Justice Exchange	http://www.communityjustice.org
Community Policing Consortium	http://www.communitypolicing.org
Correctional Education Association	http://www.metalab.unc.edu/icea
Council of State Governments	http://www.csg.org
Institute for Law and Justice	http://www.ilj.org
International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators	http://www.iaclea.org/
International Association of Chiefs of Police	http://www.theiacp.org
Join Together to Reduce Substance Abuse	http://www.jointogether.org
Justice Policy Institute	http://www.cjcj.org/jpi

National Association for Community Mediation	http://www.nafcm.org/
National Association of Attorneys General	http://www.naag.org
National Association of Counties (NACo)	http://www.naco.org
National Association of Drug Court Professionals	http://www.nadcp.org
National Association of Police Organizations	http://www.napo.org
National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse	http://www.casacolumbia.org
National Center for State Courts	http://www.ncsc.dni.us
National Conference of State Legislatures	http://www.ncsl.org
National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics	http://www.search.org
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges	http://www.ncjfcj.unr.edu/
National Criminal Justice Association	http://www.sso.org/ncja/index.htm
National District Attorneys Association	http://www.ndaa.org
National Governors Association	http://www.nga.org/
National Indian Justice Center	http://www.nijc.indian.com/
National Institute for Dispute Resolution	http://www.crenet.org/
National Judicial College	http://www.judges.org
National Juvenile Detention Association	http://www.corrections.com/njda/top.html
National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center	http://www.nlectc.org
National League of Cities	http://www.nlc.org
National Mental Health Association	http://www.nmha.org
National Network of Violence Prevention Practitioners	http://www.edc.org/HHD/NNVPP/index.html
National Organization for Black Law Enforcement	http://www.noblentnl.org
National Sheriffs' Association	http://www.sheriffs.org/
Office of Correctional Education	http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/OCE/
Police Executive Research Forum	http://www.policeforum.org
Police Foundation	http://www.policefoundation.org
Restorative Justice Project	http://www.fresno.edu/dept/pacs/rjp.html
Southern Poverty Law Center	http://splcenter.org
State Justice Institute	http://www.statejustice.org
Victim Offender Mediation Association	http://www.voma.org/

State-level VOCA Victim Assistance Agencies & Crime Victim Compensation Programs

Alabama	http://www.agencies.state.al.us/crimevictims/
Alaska	http://www.dps.state.ak.us/vccb/htm/
Arizona	http://www.dps.state.az.us/voca/
Arkansas	http://www.ag.state.ar.us/
California	http://www.boc.cahwnet.gov/victims.htm
Colorado	http://cdpsweb.state.co.us/ovp/ovp.htm
Connecticut	http://www.jud.state.ct.us/
Delaware	http://www.state.de.us/cjc/index.html
Florida	http://legal.firn.edu/victims/index.html
Georgia	http://www.ganet.org/cjcc
Hawaii	http://www.cpja.ag.state.hi.us
Idaho	http://www2.state.id.us/iic/index.htm

Illinois	http://www.ag.state.il.us/
Indiana	http://www.state.in.us/cji/
Iowa	http://www.state.ia.us/government/ag/cva.html
Kansas	http://www.ink.org/public/ksag/contents/crime/cvcbrochure.htm
Louisiana	http://www.cole.state.la.us/cvr.htm
Maine	http://www.state.me.us/ag/victim.htm
Maryland	http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/cicb/
Mississippi	http://www.dfa.state.ms.us/
Missouri	http://www.dolir.state.mo.us/wc/dolir6f.htm
Montana	http://www.doj.state.mt.us/whoweare.htm
Nebraska	http://www.nol.org/home/crimecom/
New Hampshire	http://www.state.nh.us/nhdoj/index.html
New Jersey	http://www.state.nj.us/victims/
New Mexico	http://www.state.nm.us/cvrc/
New York	http://www.cvb.state.ny.us/
North Carolina	http://www.nccrimecontrol.org/vjs/
Ohio	http://www.ag.ohio.gov/crimevic/cvout.htm
Oklahoma	http://www.dac.state.ok.us/
Oregon	http://www.doj.state.or.us/CrimeV/welcome1.htm
Pennsylvania	http://www.pccd.state.pa.us/
Rhode Island	http://www.state.ri.us/treas/vcfund.htm
South Carolina	http://www.state.sc.us/governor/
South Dakota	http://www.state.sd.us/social/cvc/
Tennessee	http://www.treasury.state.tn.us/injury.htm
Texas	http://www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/victims.htm
Utah	http://www.crimevictim.state.ut.us/
Vermont	http://www.ccvs.state.vt.us/
Virginia	http://www.dcjs.state.va.us/victims/index.htm
Washington	http://www.wa.gov/lni/workcomp/cvc.htm
West Virginia	http://www.legis.state.wv.us/coc/victims/main.html
Wisconsin	http://www.doj.state.wi.us/cvs/cvc.htm
Wyoming	http://www.state.wy.us/~ag/victims/index.html

Federal and State Corrections

Federal Bureau of Prisons	http://www.bop.gov
Alaska Department of Correction	http://www.correct.state.ak.us/
Alabama Department of Corrections	http://www.agencies.state.al.us/doc/
Arizona Department of Correction	http://www.adc.state.az.us:81/
Arkansas Department of Correction	http://www.state.ar.us/doc/
California Department of Correction	http://www.cdc.state.ca.us/
Colorado Department of Correction	http://www.doc.state.co.us/index.html
Connecticut Department of Correction	http://www.state.ct.us/doc/
Delaware Department of Corrections	http://www.state.de.us/correct
Florida Department of Correction	http://www.dc.state.fl.us/
Georgia Department of Correction	http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/
Hawaii Department of Public Safety	http://www.hawaii.gov/icsd/psd/psd.html
Idaho Department of Correction	http://www.corr.state.id.us/
Illinois Department of Correction	http://www.idoc.state.il.us/

Indiana Department of Correction	http://www.ai.org/indcorrection/
Iowa Department of Correction	http://www.doc.state.ia.us/
Kansas Department of Correction	http://www.ink.org/public/kdoc/
Kentucky Justice Cabinet	http://www.jus.state.ky.us/
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice	http://www.cole.state.la.us/
Maine Department of Correction	http://janus.state.me.us/corrections/homepage.htm
Maryland Department of Correction	http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/doc/
Massachusetts Department of Correction	http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/doc/
Michigan Department of Correction	http://www.state.mi.us/mdoc/
Minnesota Department of Corrections	http://www.corr.state.mn.us/
Mississippi Department of Corrections	http://www.mdcc.state.ms.us/
Missouri Department of Corrections	http://www.corrections.state.mo.us/
Montana Department of Corrections	http://www.state.mt.us/cor
Nebraska Department of Correctional Services	http://www.corrections.state.ne.us/
Nevada Department of Corrections	http://www.state.nv.us/inprog.htm
New Hampshire Department of Corrections	http://www.state.nh.us/doc/
New Jersey State Department of Correction	http://www.state.nj.us/corrections
New Mexico Department of Correction	http://www.state.nm.us/corrections/
New York State Department of Correctional Services	http://www.docs.state.ny.us/
New York City Department of Correction	http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/doc/
North Carolina Department of Correction	http://www.doc.state.nc.us/
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction	http://www.drc.state.oh.us/
Oregon Department of Correction	http://www.doc.state.or.us/
Oklahoma Department of Correction	http://www.doc.state.ok.us/
Pennsylvania Department of Correction	http://www.cor.state.pa.us/
Rhode Island Department of Correction	http://www.doc.state.ri.us/
South Carolina Department of Correction	http://www.state.sc.us/scdc/
South Dakota Department of Correction	http://www.state.sd.us/corrections/corrections.html
Tennessee Department of Correction	http://www.state.tn.us/correction
Texas Department of Correction	http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/
Utah Department of Correction	http://www.cr.ex.state.ut.us/home.htm
Vermont Criminal Justice Services	http://170.222.24.9/cjs/index.html
Virginia Department of Correction	http://www.cns.state.va.us/doc/
Washington State Department of Correction	http://access.wa.gov/
West Virginia Division Of Corrections	http://www.state.wv.us/wvdoc/default.htm
Wisconsin Department of Correction	http://www.wi-doc.com/
Wyoming Department of Correction	http://doc.state.wy.us/corrections.html

State Coalitions and Related Resources

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services	http://www.connsacs.org/
Iowa Organization for Victim Assistance	http://www.netins.net/showcase/i_weaver/iowa/
Michigan Crime Victim Rights	http://www.gop.senate.state.mi.us/cvr/
Missouri Victim Assistance Network	http://mova.missouri.org/
Safe Horizon (New York City region)	http://www.safehorizon.org/
South Carolina Victim Assistance Network	http://www.scvan.org/
Texans for Equal Justice	http://www.tej.lawandorder.com/index.htm

Other Victim Resources

Action Without Borders — Nonprofit Directory	http://www.idealists.org
Alliance for Justice	http://www.afj.org
American Humane Association	http://www.americanhumane.org
APA — American Psychological Association	http://www.apa.org/
Battered Women's Justice Center	http://www.law.pace.edu/bwjc
Cecil Greek's Criminal Justice Page	http://www.fsu.edu/~crimdo/law.html
Children's Institute International	http://www.childrensinstitute.org/
Communities Against Violence Network (CAVNET)	http://www.asksam.com/cavnet/
The Compassionate Friends	http://www.compassionatefriends.com/
Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence	http://www.caepv.org/main.htm
Elder Abuse Prevention	http://www.oaktrees.org/elder
International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies	http://www.istss.org/
International Victimology Website	http://www.victimology.nl/
Jewish Women International	http://www.jewishwomen.org/
Justice for All	http://www2.jfa.net/jfa/
Michigan State University Victims and the Media Program	http://www.victims.jrn.msu.edu
National Coalition of Homicide Survivors	http://www.mivictims.org/nchs/
National Organization on Male Sexual Victimization	http://www.malesurvivor.org
National Parent Information Network	http://www.npin.org
Out of the Blue (Domestic Violence in the Jewish Community)	http://hometown.aol.com/blue10197/index.html
Post Trauma Resources	http://www.posttrauma.com
Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network	http://www.rainn.org/
Rape Recovery Help and Information	http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/2402/
Safe Campuses Now	http://www.uga.edu/~safe-campus/front.html
Search Yahoo for Victims' Rights	http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Crime/Victims__Rights/
Sexual Assault Information Page	http://www.cs.utk.edu/~bartley/saInfoPage.html
The Stalking Victim's Sanctuary	http://www.stalkingvictims.com/
Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation	http://www.stephanieroper.org
Survivors of Stalking	http://www.soshelp.org
Victim Assistance Online	http://www.vaonline.org
Violence Policy Center	http://www.vpc.org
Workplace Violence Research Institute	http://www.noworkviolence.com/
<i>Legal Research/Resources</i>	
Findlaw	http://www.findlaw.com/
State Law and Legislative Information	http://www.washlaw.edu/
U.S. Supreme Court Decisions	http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/
<i>Media</i>	
American Journalism Review Newslink	http://www.newslink.org/
Criminal Justice Journalists	http://www.reporters.net/cjj
News Index	http://newsindex.com
Newspapers Online	http://www.newspapers.com
Public Relations Society of America	http://www.prsa.org

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APPENDIX K

Sample Letter to Victim Service Agencies Explaining Restorative Community Service Opportunities

Dear (Name of Director):

The (name of agency) is committed to holding offenders accountable for their crimes and providing them with opportunities to repair the harm they have caused in meaningful ways to both their victims and their community. An important component of this initiative is "restorative community service" that improves our community while, at the same time, provides a direct connection between the offender and community safety and well-being.

Your agency and the victims you serve may have needs that can be met by restorative community service performed by offenders under community supervision, or even those that are incarcerated. Such projects must, of course, have a strong emphasis on victim and community safety, and in no way pose a threat to either's need for protection. However, in many communities across the nation, offenders have sought to "pay back" their victims and communities in measures that do not, in any way, pose a threat to individual or community safety.

I have attached a list of restorative community service ideas that have been compiled by the "Promising Practices and Strategies for Victim Services in Corrections" Project sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice. I would like you to review this list as a basis for discussing potential restorative community service opportunities that can provide support and services to your agency's efforts to serve crime victims.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss restorative community service projects that: could benefit your agency; provide services to victims without jeopardizing their safety and security; or benefit our community into which offenders are being reintegrated. You can reach me at (telephone number and e-mail) to further discuss potential projects.

I appreciate your consideration of this request, and hope we can develop projects that address the needs and interests of victims and offenders in our community.

Sincerely,

DIRECTOR OF AGENCY
or VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY LIAISON

Enclosure: List of restorative community service project ideas

APPENDIX L

Sample Letter to Victims About the Apology Letter Process¹

Dear Mr./Ms. :

The (name of) agency would like to thank you for participating in the juvenile justice process. Your participation is critical to holding the youthful offender accountable for his/her actions, and your time and input are valued by both our agency and the juvenile justice system in (county).

As part of the youth's disposition and accountability, we try hard to help him/her understand the impact his/her offense had on you and your family. Our ultimate goal is for the youth to accept responsibility for his/her actions, to develop some sensitivity to the harm she/he caused his/her victim, and to feel remorse for his/her delinquent actions.

As such, part of our casework process encourages the youth to think about the harm s/he caused, and write a letter of apology to you. We work closely with our youthful offenders to ensure the appropriateness of such a letter, to the degree possible, including use of language and the context in which the letter is written. As each victim's experiences are unique, each victim may have personal beliefs or feelings about what constitutes an acceptable apology.

If you would like to receive the apology letter, you can contact me at (area code/telephone number), and I will arrange to forward it to you (it will arrive in an envelope with our agency's watermark). If you do not want to receive the apology letter, I will make sure a copy goes into the youthful offender's case file to reflect his/her efforts to be held accountable for his/her actions.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact me at (area code/telephone number).

Sincerely,
Director of Agency or
Volunteer Community Liaison

¹This letter was created by Anne Seymour, Sharon English and Jill Weston, Justice Solutions, Washington, D.C.

Sample Cover Letter for the Youthful Offender's Apology Letter²

Dear Mr./Ms. :

Thank you for agreeing to receive the apology letter written by the youthful offender in your case. It is enclosed for your review.

It is our agency's goal to do whatever we can to help youthful offenders understand the detrimental impact their delinquent acts have on their victims, and to want to express remorse and be held accountable for their actions. This apology letter is an important component of this process.

While each victim's experience is unique, many victims find the apology letters can present thoughts or feelings that may be new or reoccurring. We encourage you to prepare yourself in a way that is best for you prior to reading the letter. In addition, please seek assistance and/or support after reading the letter, if necessary. It is our sincere hope that this process is more helpful than hurtful to you.

I appreciate your consideration of this apology letter, and your continued willingness to participate in our community's juvenile justice process. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Director of Agency or
Volunteer Community Liaison

Enclosure: Apology letter

² This letter was created by Anne Seymour, Sharon English and Jill Weston, Justice Solutions, Washington, D.C.