

Victim Services Organizational Review

ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW PANEL

Cindy Baker, Victim Coordinator Assistant
Canadian County District Attorney's Office

Debbie Boyer, SPHR, Administrator
Oklahoma Department of Corrections - Quality Assurance and Operational Services

Allyson Carson, Victim Services Coordinator
Attorney General's Office

Kay Davis, Probation and Parole Officer II
Oklahoma Department of Corrections - Northwest District Community Corrections

Kim Weems, Victim Specialist
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Facilitation and Administrative Support

Ronnie Carrico, Administrative Assistant
Oklahoma Department of Corrections - Treatment and Rehabilitative Services Division

Cindy Gill, Administrative Specialist
Oklahoma Department of Corrections - Quality Assurance and Operational Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections Quality Assurance System ensures the continuous review and evaluation of operational, programmatic, and functional areas operated by the department or by a provider under contract with the department. The Organizational Review Process is the primary component of this system. This report contains the findings and recommendations of an Organizational Review Panel convened to review and evaluate the agency's Victim Services Unit.

The Organizational Review Panel, composed of internal and external subject matter experts, completed a comprehensive review of the agency's Victim Services Unit. The cornerstone of this review process was a series of customized surveys that sought input from the Victim Services unit employee; a random sampling of Oklahoma state agencies; Federal Bureau of Prisons; corrections departments from contiguous states, private companies, and various other criminal justice entities; and Department of Corrections upper management. Additionally, the panel interviewed Corrections Director Justin Jones, and Deputy Director Debbie Mahaffey to obtain information regarding unit operations, as well as input on the role, purpose, and value of the Victim Services Unit and expectations for unit operations.

Summary of Panel Findings and Recommendations

The "Desired" state resulting from this review is, "Victim Services within the Department of Corrections will act as the initial point of contact in assisting victims of crimes by: (1) providing resources or referrals to meet immediate needs; (2) ensuring the opportunity for victim notification through VINE; (3) providing the opportunity for victim/offender dialogue; and (4) educating staff and offenders regarding victim issues. Victim Services within the Department of Corrections will also collaborate with other county, state, and federal agencies to develop training, education, awareness, and information sharing initiatives."

Victim Services process measures include: (1) satisfaction with the victims' receipt of information about statutory rights, and their perception of the overall implementation of their rights; (2) delivery and quality of services provided by Victim Services; and (3) victims' perceptions of their treatment by agency staff.

Approved "Quick Win" recommendations were as follows:

- ★ Quick Win #1. Implement the Victim Information Notification Everyday (VINE) system immediately with consideration of time frames for the development of the offender COMIT system.
- ★ Quick Win #2. Once VINE has been implemented, dispose of offender files maintained by Victim Services in an appropriate manner consistent with Department of Libraries guidelines.
- ★ Quick Win #3. Reallocate the existing classified Administrative Programs Officer Level II position to an unclassified position titled Victim Services Coordinator by working with Personnel to develop a job description and factor the position.
- ★ Quick Win #4. Reallocate an existing vacant classified position within the Division of Treatment and Rehabilitative Services to assist with all activities associated with expansion of the Victim Services program. Adding a second position to the Victim Services Unit will also provide an opportunity for succession planning/replacement training. *Note: This recommendation was identified as "Needs Further Discussion." A determination regarding the need for additional full-time employees will be made following (1) the reallocation and factoring of the Administrative Programs Officer Level II position and (2) implementation of VINE.*
- ★ Quick Win #5. Establish a Victims Advisory Council, composed of internal and external stakeholders, to (1) serve as a resource in developing a strategic plan for the expansion of Victim Services and (2) provide ongoing guidance regarding program development.
- ★ Quick Win #6. Conduct a comprehensive review of the Victims Compensation Fund. The review will include an audit conducted by the agency's internal auditors as well as a review by the general counsel's office and Finance and Accounting.
- ★ Quick Win #7. Develop a strategic plan for the expansion of Victim Services to include: (1) community corrections/probation and parole victim advocacy; (2) executions; (3) offender education, awareness, and training; (4) victim/offender dialogue/mediation; (5) protecting victims from intimidation, harassment, or harm; (6) restitution advocacy; (7) staff education, awareness, and training (pre-service and in-service); and (8) community outreach and education. The strategic plan should be developed with input from internal and external stakeholders (Victims Advisory Council) and modeled after the New Hampshire Department of Corrections plan to include specific goals, objectives, time frames for completion, and

performance measures for each. Additionally, the plan should incorporate specific plans for automating associated processes, data collection, and record keeping, etc.

- ★ Quick Win #8. Work through the Deputy Director of Treatment and Rehabilitative Services to ensure compliance with OP-090215 entitled "Victim Services," by requiring each facility and district to identify a staff member to serve as a victim services liaison for each facility and district and ensuring these field liaisons fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in policy. Provide an education/awareness segment for upper management to reinforce compliance with policy and to ensure a consistent approach to addressing victim issues. Develop and deliver an orientation/training program for field victim services liaisons which must be completed once identified to serve in that capacity.
- ★ Quick Win #9. Work in partnership with the agency's Executive Communications Administrator to develop a victim services public education/awareness "tool kit" to include printed publications (brochures, handbooks, etc.), PowerPoint presentations, video, etc. Content must be approved by the Deputy Director of Treatment and Rehabilitative Services. Utilize this information in community outreach and staff/offender education/awareness efforts. Additionally, provide this "tool kit" to field victim services liaisons for their use in local education and awareness and training activities.
- ★ Quick Win #10. Work in partnership with the agency's Executive Communications Administrator, as well as internal and external stakeholders, to review the existing web-site for opportunities for improvement to ensure it provides information sufficient to meet the needs of victims.
- ★ Quick Win #11. Revise existing employee performance appraisals for Victim Services coordinator to include "meets standards" measurements.

Approved recommendations were as follows:

- ★ Recommendation #1: Implement an Impact of Crime on Victims Program.
- ★ Recommendation #2: Using the Deschutes County Juvenile Justice Client Evaluation Form as a model, develop and implement a Victim Satisfaction Survey as a means of measuring victim satisfaction and gathering data for the continuous improvement of Victim Services. The survey will be made available in several formats to enhance participation. Formats should include written format, availability on the agency's web page via a link, and e-mail distribution via SurveyMonkey.com. Survey results will be reviewed by the Victim Services Coordinator and may be reviewed by the Advisory Board and field liaisons in making ongoing improvements to Victim Services.
- ★ Recommendation #3 (modified version of Quick Win #8): Work through the Deputy Director of Treatment and Rehabilitative Services to ensure compliance with OP-090215 entitled "Victim Services," by partnering with each facility and district to recruit a staff member who is willing (voluntarily and based on expressed interest) to serve as a victim services liaison for each facility and district and coordinating with these field liaisons in the fulfillment of their responsibilities as outlined in policy. Provide an education/awareness segment for upper management to seek recruits, reinforce compliance with policy, and seek assistance in ensuring a consistent approach to addressing victim issues. Develop and deliver an orientation/training program for field victim services liaisons, once identified, which must be completed prior to serving in that capacity. Meet with field liaisons quarterly or biannually to provide training, presentations from outside speakers, etc., and to work on activities associated with Victim Services program development and delivery.
- ★ Recommendation #4: Establish a toll free line for out-of-state callers.
- ★ Recommendation #5: As part of the program expansion effort previously recommended in Quick Win #7, employ a "wrap around service" philosophy by partnering with the agency's transition coordinators to ensure victims interests are represented in the reentry process.
- ★ Recommendation #6: Revise Standard Operating Procedures once VINE has been implemented and as needed thereafter. Ensure these procedures are reviewed and approved by the appropriate chain of command prior to publication or utilization of their names on the procedures.
- ★ Recommendation #7: review publications and training curriculum on an annual basis to ensure information is up-to-date and accurate.