

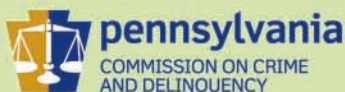
Making a difference for victims ...  
*every day*



THE OFFICE OF VICTIMS' SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

*State Fiscal Year 2007/2008*

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
Edward G. Rendell, *Governor*



PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION  
ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY  
Walter M. Phillips Jr., Esq., *Chair*



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Ms. Rebecca Shaver • *State Executive Director, Mothers Against Drunk Driving*

Ms. Donna VandeMortel • *Director, Crime Victim Assistance Program, Cumberland County*

Honorable William Harvey Wiest • *Judge, Court of Common Pleas, Northumberland County*

Ms. Louise B. Williams • *Victim/Survivor; City Council President, City of Lancaster*



### VSAC's Vision

The VSAC envisions a society that accepts the responsibility of meeting the diverse needs of all crime victims/survivors by acknowledging that they were harmed and by marshalling the resources necessary to help victims rebuild their lives.



### VSAC's Mission

The purpose of VSAC is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and to assure that the voices, needs and perspectives of all crime victims/survivors will be considered in the development of services, services standards, policies, funding priorities, legislation and outcomes.

## Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



## PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Walter M. Phillips, Jr., Esq.  
Chairman

Michael J. Kane, Esq.  
Executive Director

Governor Edward G. Rendell  
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Members of the General Assembly  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Dear Governor Rendell and Members of the General Assembly:

Victim advocates work with individuals, families and the community-at-large to address the traumatic impact of crime. Hotlines, support groups, individual counseling, compensation assistance and accompaniment to court are some of the services available to victims in every county of Pennsylvania.

This report highlights the work of the Victims Compensation Assistance Program and the 180 victim service programs funded by the Office of Victims' Services (OVS). It also summarizes the efforts of OVS to carry out its mandate in an efficient, innovative and collaborative manner.

We are pleased to share with you a statement from the federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) that "the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does an excellent job in implementing its compensation and victim assistance programs." In addition, OVC identified the standards that all funded victim service programs in Pennsylvania must follow as a promising practice.

While charts and statistics supply a summary of the services provided as well as our increased efficiency in responding to requests for compensation, it is the survivors' stories that speak to the heart of the work happening every day in large and small communities across Pennsylvania. When victims of crime experience human kindness in the midst of trauma, healing begins. The possibility of hope for the future is planted.

Assisting victims of crime is rewarding yet challenging work. It grows more and more challenging as funds are cut. There are fewer staff available to respond to increasing requests.

We have provided you with a snapshot of our accomplishments and challenges. However, this report cannot adequately describe the sensitivity, kindness and respect with which these services are delivered. On behalf of those who provide these services, we are pleased to present you with the 2007/2008 Annual Report.

Sincerely,

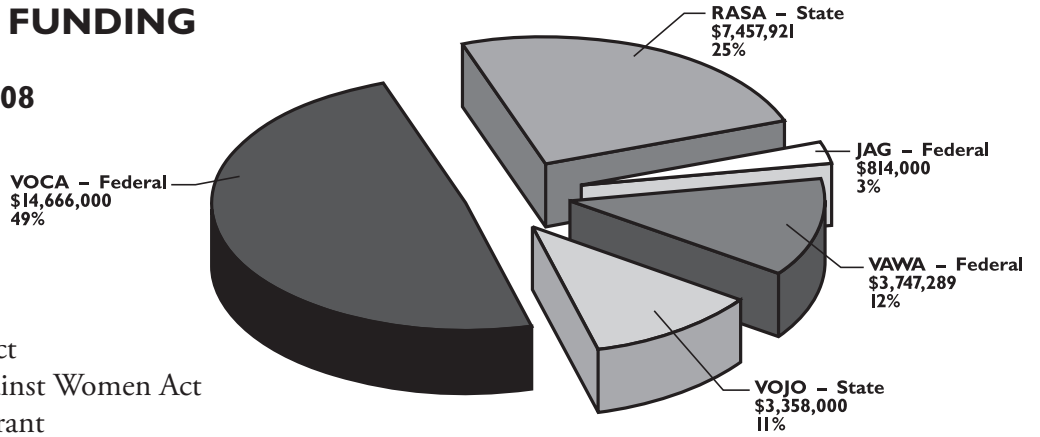
Reverend Dr. Anne K. Ard  
Chair  
Victims' Services Advisory Committee

Beverly J. Horn  
Director  
Office of Victims' Services

P.O. Box 1167, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1167  
Toll-Free: (800) 692-7292  
Web Site: [www.pccd.state.pa.us](http://www.pccd.state.pa.us)

# VICTIMS' SERVICES FUNDING

State Fiscal Year 2007/2008  
Total: \$30,043,210



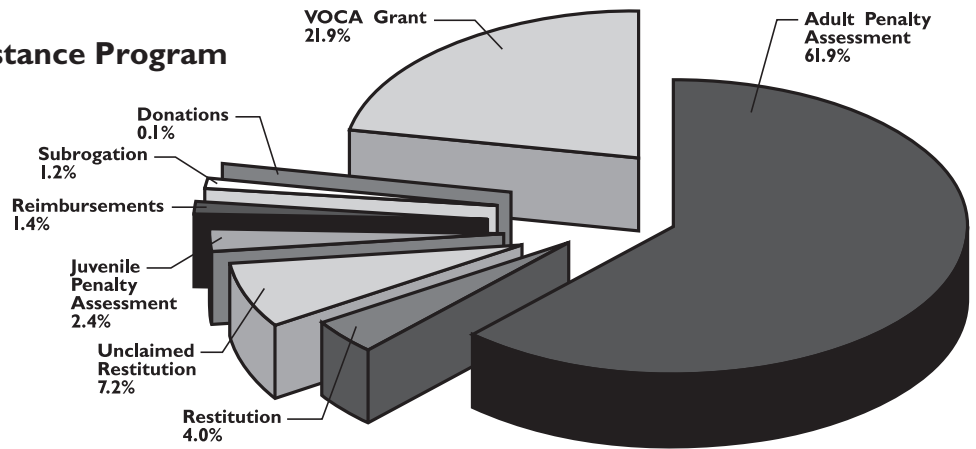
## KEY

- VOCA** Victims of Crime Act
- VAWA** STOP Violence Against Women Act
- JAG** Justice Assistance Grant
- VOJO** Victims of Juvenile Offenders
- RASA** Rights and Services Act

This chart reflects the total amount awarded to PCCD by funding stream to support both statewide and county projects and administrative expenses for each. PCCD may distribute these funds in single or multi-year grants.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS

Victims Compensation Assistance Program  
State Fiscal Year 2007/2008  
Total: \$16,593,278



**Adult/Juvenile Penalty Assessment:** Imposed upon a criminal defendant or juvenile (either convicted, placed in a diversionary program, a consent decree or an adjudication).

**Restitution:** A court-ordered payment from a defendant to the victim for injuries or losses as a result of the crime. If the compensation program has made an award to a victim, restitution payments must be paid directly to the compensation fund.

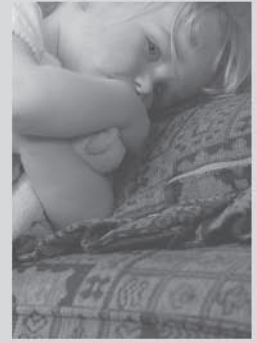
**Unclaimed Restitution:** Court-ordered restitution that the offender has paid, but the victim has not claimed is deposited by the county into the state general fund. These funds are then deposited by the state treasurer into the compensation fund, on or before June 30 of each year.

**Reimbursements:** Any money returned to the program.

**Subrogation:** An amount reimbursed to the compensation program when a crime victim receives an award through litigation or an insurance settlement or reimbursement. The compensation fund is entitled to this money by law, when an award has been previously made.

**Donations:** Received for the fund.

**VOCA Grant:** From federal fines, penalty assessments and bail forfeitures (60 percent based upon prior year payout).



## Funding Cuts Hurt Victims

Over the past five years, major funding sources related to victim services have decreased. One key funding source for programs is Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) money. VOCA money is acquired from federal criminal fines, assessments and penalties. No tax money is used.

In 2007, Pennsylvania's VOCA allocation was \$14.6 million, a decrease of 7.2 percent since 2002. The funding decrease, coupled with rising costs and 19 percent inflation in the same time period, presents a precarious operating situation for victim service agencies.

In a 2007 needs assessment, victim service providers in the Commonwealth indicated that:

- 20 percent of programs have waiting lists for services
- 16.5 percent have discontinued certain programs
- 22 percent have implemented hiring freezes
- 31 percent have decreased or eliminated staff
- 33 percent have decreased participation in community collaborations

The challenges at the Alice Paul House in Indiana, Pa., include a waiting list to help clients obtain Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders and inadequate staff to accompany victims to court hearings — a right afforded to victims under state law.

“The number of requests for service has not decreased even though our ability to address them immediately has decreased,” said Lou Ann Williams, Executive Director of the Alice Paul House. “Being in the position of saying ‘I’m sorry, there is no one available to see you today,’ is not something any of us are happy doing.”

Citizens Against Physical, Sexual and Emotional Abuse Inc. (CAPSEA), serving Elk and Cameron counties, is also facing critical staffing deficits.

“We absolutely cannot lose any more staff with the number of people seeking service every day!” said Billie Jo Weyant, Executive Director. “CAPSEA, along with other programs throughout Pennsylvania, provide life-saving victim services and shelter to victims and children. Any further funding cuts will certainly endanger the lives of many residents throughout the Commonwealth.”

## Making a Difference for Victims ... Every Day

*The lasting impact of victim services is, in many ways, immeasurable. Victim services help victims, survivors, and their family and friends to begin the journey toward healing — no mathematical value can be assigned to that emotional journey. However, we would like to share with you the measurable impact victim services has in Pennsylvania, and the difference it makes for victims ... every day.*

### What can \$28.2 million do?

Provide free services to **440,886 victims, witnesses and significant others** through 241 agencies across the Commonwealth. OVS distributed over \$28.2 million in state and federal funding to provide critical resources to enhance victims' services, increase awareness of victims compensation, provide direct services to victims and implement victims' rights in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

*For a further breakdown of statistics by county, please go to [www.pccd.state.pa.us](http://www.pccd.state.pa.us) and look under the "What's New at PCCD" section.*

### Training ensures optimal service for victims

Training is a critical component of providing the best services to victims. Last year, **1,575 advocates** from **66 counties** received training through OVS efforts.

- More than **200 advocates** from 34 counties participated in online training.
- Under the Training and Technical Assistance Project, **643 advocates** were trained, including more than **300 advocates** participating in the Pennsylvania Pathways for Victim Services conference.

### Achieving Safety for Battered Women

*Our advocate received a call from a local hospital with a new referral. The client requested that the advocate come see her at the hospital. When the advocate walked into the room, she saw a woman who was anxious and fearful. The advocate reassured the woman that she was there to help in any way possible. The advocate explained the agency's domestic violence services and that the services are free and confidential.*

*After discussing her options, the woman decided to file a Protection From Abuse (PFA) order and seek shelter for herself and her children. She needed to act quickly because her abuser was on his way back to the hospital to pick her up. Within minutes, she left the hospital in a taxi, filed the PFA at the courthouse, and picked up her children and took them to a shelter.*

— from a domestic violence center  
funded by OVS

## Reaching out in many languages

As Pennsylvania's population becomes more diverse, OVS recognizes the importance of serving victims who may not speak English. A key effort in this area is the Language Line Translation Service. In FY 07/08:

- The service received **75 calls**. The average call lasted **9.2 minutes**.
- The service assisted callers speaking **Spanish, Portuguese, Bengali, Mandarin, Bulgarian and Vietnamese**.

## More than \$12 million helps victims financially

The Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) paid **\$12,282,897** to or on behalf of crime victims. VCAP strives to ease the emotional and physical aftermath of crime by working to help relieve the financial impact of the crime. VCAP made 270 emergency awards totaling \$176,127.

## VCAP staff expedites claim turnaround

More than **7,620** compensation claims were received in FY 07/08, an increase of more than **200 percent** since FY 98/99. VCAP continually strives to increase the efficiency of claims processing. Average turnaround time for a compensation claim this year was **7.96** weeks.

## DAVE System makes it easy for victims

DAVE, Dependable Access for Victimization Expenses, is VCAP's Internet-based automated claims processing system. In FY 07/08, **768** victims used DAVE to file a claim or check the status of a claim online. Claims were checked **9,377** times online last year.

## Protecting Older Adults from Fraud

*A congressman referred an 89-year-old female to us who had been a victim of a fraud. The victim had shared her bank account number with a male who phoned her from Washington, D.C. Later, a female phoned, urging the victim to share personal information. Eventually, \$780 was withdrawn from the victim's accounts. She was so upset, she did not file a police report out of fear.*

*We visited her home and later asked the Victim Assistance Officer to visit her home and take a police report although it had been six months since the incident occurred. We helped the victim complete a claim form and sent the claim to the Victims Compensation Assistance Program, and the claim was paid.*

— from a victim services program  
funded by OVS



## System Instantly Notifies Victim of Inmate's Release

When the perpetrator of a crime is incarcerated, victims have a certain peace of mind. When a perpetrator leaves jail, victims can become anxious and concerned for their continued safety.

The Pennsylvania Victim's Bill of Rights provides that victims have the right to be notified when the perpetrator leaves jail, whether by release, transfer or escape. Such notification gives victims the opportunity to take any precautions they believe are necessary.

The Pennsylvania Statewide Automated Victim Information Notification (PA SAVIN) service provides phone or e-mail notification to a victim about any change in status of an inmate in a **county** prison. PA SAVIN is run by a software system that is directly connected to the jail.

Information is downloaded every 15 minutes so victims are notified almost immediately. Before the implementation of PA SAVIN, notification was a multi-step process that was less timely and left room for human error.

Notifications are free, prompt, confidential and made 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anyone — victims, family, community members and lawmakers — can register to receive PA SAVIN notifications.

“Every victim loses a sense of being in control,” said Adrienne Bowermaster, Cumberland County Victim Assistance Officer, at the launch of PA SAVIN in Cumberland County. “SAVIN will not only give back to the victims some peace of mind, it will enable them to regain control over their lives.”

Erie County was the first to go online with PA SAVIN. Tod Allen of the Crime Victim Center of Erie County notes that victim registrations for notification have more than doubled since PA SAVIN was implemented. Allen said victims have reported reduced anxiety because of the quick notification and that the project has increased collaboration between the prison, the district attorney's office, probation/parole, the police and victim services.

PA SAVIN is a joint project with the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Institute and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. PA SAVIN is funded by a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance within the U.S. Department of Justice. PCCD has been awarded a \$500,000 contract to expand notification to include offender movement within **state** correctional institutions. The project extension will serve to develop a seamless process of victim notification in the Commonwealth.

*For a complete listing of where PA SAVIN is available, please go to [www.pacrimevictims.state.pa.us](http://www.pacrimevictims.state.pa.us).*



## PA SAVIN Empowers Victims

*For more than a year, Julie McKelvey has endured stalking and harassment from a former employee. This is her story, shared at Cumberland County's SAVIN launch.*

I, like all victims, have had my life turned completely upside down and until recently, I never really understood what people go through when they become a crime victim.

What I learned early on is that my life looks completely different when Jim Capozzoli is out of jail versus when he is behind bars. When he is behind bars, my family and I go about our lives as we always have and feel safe to go anywhere and do anything.

When he is released from prison, however, my life, my family's life and the lives of many of my employees completely change. I begin locking the doors of my car, my home, my office. I change my driving patterns, my work hours, my business function

locations. My employees are immediately notified and many people go into defense mode until he violates again and is put back behind bars.

When he is behind bars, I feel safe and when he is not, I don't. For this reason, it is imperative that I am both prepared and informed as to his whereabouts at all times. Under the old system of notification, I was called sometimes right before

he was released and sometimes after he had already been released. There were times I did not get the call telling me he was getting out because I did not pick up my phone, which I never do unless I recognize the phone number.

The SAVIN program is invaluable to me and to

every victim because we will always know when there is any movement with a prisoner and we will have at least some notice if they are being released. This will give us time to make the inevitable arrangements in our lives and to do what we need to do to ensure our safety to the best of our ability.

I am very dependent on e-mail for my business so notifying me in this way, in addition to my phone, will

ensure that I get the message that he has been released. I can also register my father who lives in North Carolina, my managers in different parts of the state and my assistant who can immediately notify employees.

**I am grateful for PA SAVIN, because all crime victims, including myself, can begin to feel a sense of empowerment instead of helplessness.**



## Technology Enhances Communication and Service Delivery

Technology plays a critical role in providing services and information to victims, as well as supporting and communicating with victim service providers. The Office of Victims' Service (OVS) continuously strives to maximize technological resources to better serve victims and advocates.

### **Alleviating the financial hardship of crime**

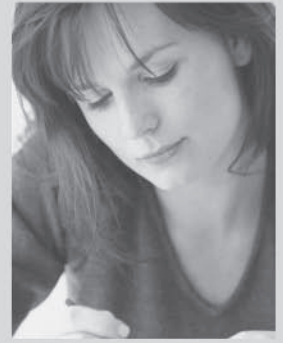
DAVE, Dependable Access for Victimization Expenses, is the Victims Compensation Assistance Program's Internet-based automated claims processing system. Initially, only victim service providers were able to file claims online. In July 2007, Pennsylvania became the first state in the nation to let victims file online. An average of one claim is filed each day by a victim.

Victims are able to file a claim or check the status of a claim from home, a library or anywhere they have Internet access. While filing a claim with the help of a victim advocate is ideal, direct filing is very helpful for victims who may not be able to travel to a victim service provider.

DAVE helped reduce the processing time for a compensation claim by 9 percent last year, providing quicker relief of the financial hardship caused by crime.

### **Accessing compensation information with one call**

With a call to the Integrated Voice Response (IVR) telephone system, claimants can check the status of a compensation claim, verify that all required documents have been submitted and determine if a check has been sent. The IVR is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, giving claimants the convenience of accessing their claim information when it best fits their schedule.



### **Managing grants online**

Egrants is a tool that victim service providers use to manage their grants online, from application to close-out. Each year, OVS manages more than \$54 million in grants through the Egrants system.

Egrants streamlines the grant application process and significantly reduces paperwork. The system provides easy, real-time access to all grant data and allows agencies to collect and manage project performance data online. Automatic notifications alert grant managers when a new task requires their attention.

In 2007/08, OVS began to incorporate its monitoring of agencies into the Egrants system, further streamlining the monitoring process.

### **Web training produces better results at lower cost**

The training of victim service providers is an integral part of ensuring that victims of crime receive the care, attention and services they need. Attending training can be a challenge for agencies with limited budgets, small staffs and little time to spare.

To help address time and budget constraints, OVS launched its online training program in 2007. From October through June 2008, OVS held 29 online training sessions on a variety of topics.

Advocates receive the same quality training from OVS without having to leave their offices. Some of the benefits of online training are:

- The average attendee of an online training will save nearly \$300 per training because mileage, meals, parking, tolls and lodging expenses are eliminated.
- Training time is decreased by one-third, due to having a co-presenter answer questions online in real-time, versus an in-person trainer stopping the training to answer questions.

- Data indicates attendees of online training increase their knowledge by an average of 77 percent.

### **Providing information with the click of a mouse**

Victims of crime and victim service providers can access important information with just the click of a mouse. OVS has designed a web page ([www.pacrimevictims.state.pa.us](http://www.pacrimevictims.state.pa.us)) where victims can find help in their county, access the Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP), learn about and register for PA SAVIN, read the Victim's Bill of Rights, get information about the Survivor Speakers' Bureau and access links to other sources of assistance. The site's language feature can translate the page into French, German, Spanish and Italian.

On OVS's web page for victim service providers, advocates will find training and networking opportunities, information on practice standards, and the latest information about victims compensation. Advocates can also access the Egrants system and find other helpful resources.

### **Keeping advocates informed**

Every two weeks, OVS distributes an electronic newsletter to more than 1,000 victim service providers. The e-newsletter delivers timely information on training, programs, resources and grants to providers across the Commonwealth.

The e-newsletter has streamlined the communications of OVS, condensing individual communications into a bimonthly resource that providers have come to anticipate and use. The implementation of the e-newsletter has saved more than \$13,000 in printing and mailing costs.

## Bureau Gives Survivors a Voice

- Who can make a high school student pay attention?
- Who can help an incarcerated individual understand the pain his crime caused?
- Who can encourage a juvenile to make better choices in the future?
- Who can compel community members to join forces and support victims of crime?

*Being a member of the Survivor Speakers' Bureau helps build my strength, through sharing my story, and gives me hope of returning to the person I once was.*

(Nancy, survivor of homicide)

### Survivors of crime telling their stories.

The Office of Victims' Services created the Survivor Speakers' Bureau (SSB) to give survivors of crime a voice to share their stories and to educate diverse audiences on the impact of crime.

*I speak in hopes of encouraging would-be offenders to think again, and to encourage communities to be cautious.*

(Cheryl, survivor of sexual assault)

Twenty-eight survivors of crime participate in the SSB. Last year, they fulfilled more than 30 speaking engagements at state and federal correctional institutions, high schools, community events and more.

Survivors are available to speak at educational programs, victim impact panels, advocate trainings and legislative hearings, as well as with the media.

*If I change one person's outlook, that is a huge deal ... one by one we are helping increase awareness of sexual assault!*

(Jayme, sexual assault survivor)

"Having speakers from the Survivor Speakers' Bureau come in is an important part of our program," said John Morningstar, Youth Development Counselor Supervisor at Youth Forestry Camp #3. "It helps the kids see things from a victim's perspective and, in many ways, think of their own behavior and why they are here."

"Some of the kids may have been victimized, too," he added. "The survivor speakers help them see themselves as survivors who can step out and help someone."



## Survivor Finds Healing Through Speaking

When Beth Docherty was 15 years old, she was passionate about music. She had dreams of going to Julliard and pursuing a career in music.

When Beth Docherty was 15 years old, she was also raped. Repeatedly. By the high school band director who had become her mentor.

Beth recalls that the abuse started with benign comments and flirting. Young and naïve, she felt apprehensive but flattered. After all, she'd been taught to respect adults — to be wary of strangers but not of teachers. The abuse escalated to include death threats, manipulation by guilt and tearful apologies. The abuser went so far as to befriend Beth's father, causing her nothing but complete devastation.

When the band director started flirting with her younger sister, Beth knew she had to tell someone. With her trusted Girl Scout leader at her side, Beth found the courage to tell her parents, who were horrified and completely supportive. Beth pressed criminal charges against her abuser, who had a history of abusing young girls. He was sentenced to 30–70 years behind bars.

As a member of the Survivors Speakers' Bureau, Beth has found healing in speaking about her journey. "Every time I stand up and share my story, more of me is healed," she said.



"There is a stigma surrounding sexual abuse. People don't want to talk about it or hear about it," she continued. "Speaking helps break the isolation a violent crime causes and individuals are able to heal."

At one speaking engagement, Beth was overwhelmed when she received a standing ovation from more than 200 people. "It

wasn't about the standing ovation," she said. "It was about their response and the connection we made. I feel that by telling my story, I'm helping to dissipate the stigma surrounding sexual abuse. I hope that people who hear my story will talk to their children and their nieces and nephews and tell them that it's not OK for teachers or other grown-ups to touch them inappropriately, and that if something feels wrong, the child needs to tell someone."

Now a research chemist, Beth continues to pursue her passion for music as a member of a community symphony and a rock-and-roll band. She is also working with Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) on a project to equip health care providers to better serve survivors of sexual abuse.

"We want to bridge the gap and create a safe place for survivors to go," she said.

## Governor's Victim Service Pathfinder Awards

The Governor's Victim Service Pathfinder Awards recognize programs and individuals who have made notable contributions to the field of victim services. In 2007, the first Outstanding Student Activist Award was given. The award recognizes a student 23 years or younger who is making a visible contribution and impact upon the victim services movement in Pennsylvania.

Jenna Oyler received the 2007 award. Jenna was sexually abused by her stepfather from ages 5 to 12. Now 18, Jenna has transformed into a survivor who tells her story to help

keep children safe from potential predators and to help other victims find hope and comfort.

Jenna has become a staunch youth activist. She helped script and perform an educational socio-drama at several conferences. She is a member of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape's youth advisory board, Rallying Youth Organizers Together (RYOT) Against Rape. As a member of RYOT, Jenna works with other teen activists to bring messages about the realities of sexual violence to their peers and adults in Pennsylvania and in other national venues.



*(l-r) Beverly J. Horn, Director, OVS; Julie Hohney, Human Service Specialist, Department of Public Welfare; Jenna Oyler; Carol Lavery, Victim Advocate, Office of the Victim Advocate*

## Standards Help Ensure Access to Quality Services

For Pennsylvania to remain a recognized leader in victims' rights and services, it must have accomplished victim advocates in every county. Our vision is to ensure that quality, consistent and reliable services are available in all 67 counties in the Commonwealth.

To achieve this, the Victims' Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) and the PCCD have adopted 28 practice standards to guide victim service agencies as they provide direct services to victims, work with external

entities such as the media and the court system, and manage the agency's administrative issues. These standards expand upon the previous standards for victim services.

The standards were developed with significant input from victim service providers across the Commonwealth, and reflect the need for services to be accessible to victims regardless of educational level, mental or physical ability, or fluency in English.





**Victims Compensation Assistance Program**

717-783-5153  
800-233-2339  
717-787-4306 (fax)

**Victims' Services Program**

717-783-0551  
800-692-7292 (PA only)  
717-772-4331 (Fax)

**Michael J. Kane, Esq., Executive Director**  
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency  
P.O. Box 1167  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1167

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