

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency | Office of Victims' Services

VOJO FUNDING STREAM

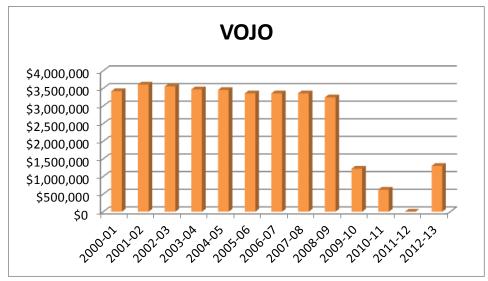
Victims of Juvenile Offenders

History

Act 86 of 2000 established rights and services specifically for victims of juvenile offenders, enabling victims to assert their rights and navigate the juvenile justice system in Pennsylvania. Prosecutors and courts have come to rely on victim advocates to fulfill the responsibilities imposed on them by the passage of Act 86 of 2000. This includes information about the status of police investigations, court dates, plea bargaining decisions, court accompaniment, assistance with victim impact statements, sentencing outcomes, filing for crime victims compensation and the ordering of restitution.

On average, VOJO funded programs annually provide assistance to over 60,000 victims and witnesses of juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania. The funding mechanism for these services was the state's Victims of Juvenile Offenders (VOJO) Grant Program. The VOJO Program has been historically funded through a line item in Pennsylvania's State Budget.

Historical Funding Overview – State Budget Appropriation



NOTE: The chart above does not include ARRA funds. The VOJO allocation amount for state fiscal year 2011/12 was zero; however, the Commission approved the use of \$800,000 of interest earned on ARRA Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funds along with the legislatively transferred amount of \$1 Million from the Crime Victims Compensation Fund (CVCF) to the Rights and Services Act (RASA) Fund to be used to sustain currently funded VOJO projects at a reduced rate until June 30, 2012. The state budget that was signed on July 1, 2012 for 2012/13 contained a \$1.3M appropriation to fund VOJO.

- Act 86 was passed during a period of fiscal stability when the Pennsylvania Legislature believed it could sustain a \$3.7M annual appropriation for VOJO funded programs in the State Budget.
- The economic climate of the state had deteriorated over the last several years resulting in decreased tax revenues, county budget shortfalls, and depletion of the state's "Rainy Day Fund."
- The amount of funding allocated in the Pennsylvania State Budget for VOJO since 2005 had decreased by over 62%.
- Pennsylvania had been sustaining VOJO funded programs with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (i.e. stimulus), the federal Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), and the state Rights and Services Act (RASA) Program funding as illustrated in the following chart:

	Appropriation	Budgetary Freeze	Appropriation	Available	Funding Streams Used for Shortfall			
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Freeze</u>	<u>With</u> <u>Budgetary</u> <u>Freeze</u>	For Grants	<u>RASA</u>	ARRA JAG	<u>JAG</u>	<u>Total</u>
2005	\$3,450,000		\$3,450,000	\$3,358,000				\$3,358,000
2006	\$3,450,000		\$3,450,000	\$3,358,000	\$88,849			\$3,446,849
2007	\$3,462,000		\$3,462,000	\$3,358,000				\$3,358,000
2008	\$3,389,000	\$30,000	\$3,359,000	\$3,243,000	\$115,000			\$3,358,000
2009	\$1,798,000	\$500,000	\$1,298,000	\$1,221,000	\$472,066	\$1,624,755		\$3,317,821
2010	\$718,000	\$14,000	\$704,000	\$627,000	\$12,974	\$1,635,245	\$1,042,602	\$3,317,821
2011	\$0		\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$800,000		\$1,800,000
2012	\$1,300,000		\$0	\$1,300,000				\$1,300,000
Totals					\$1,688,889	\$4,060,000	\$1,042,602	

Programmatic Overview

- All 67 counties receive VOJO funding where it is used primarily to support the salaries and benefits
 of individuals providing victims of juvenile offenders with victim rights notification and procedural
 services.
- Individual county allocations are based on a formula that take into consideration the county's population (25%), juvenile dispositions (50%) and penalty assessment collections (25%).
- Counties have the discretion to choose the structure of the delivery of VOJO services. As a result,
 VOJO funding was awarded to a mixture of 37 system-based victim/witness programs in district
 attorney's offices, 18 community-based non-profit victim service programs and 17 county juvenile
 probation offices.
- County Local Policy Boards are used to recommend the amount of funding allocated to programs providing VOJO services.
- All VOJO funded programs are monitored once every four years for programmatic and fiscal compliance and have to comply with PCCD's Comprehensive Victim Service Program Standards.