

State of Vermont Strategic Planning Guide  
Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)  
Victim Assistance Program  
2015

VERMONT CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIM SERVICES  
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## OVERVIEW

In response to the unprecedented increase in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Victim's Assistance Program funding, the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS or "The Center") has initiated a strategic planning process to determine the most pressing needs facing crime victims in Vermont, as those needs adhere to current [VOCA Regulations](#). This strategic planning guide is intended to be a dynamic document to be updated and informed by emerging best practices, research and input from allied professionals in the crime victim services field in Vermont. The guidepost for Vermont's strategic plan will be the [Vision 21 "Transforming Victim Services" Final Report](#). Vision 21 was a massive four year strategic initiative, commencing in 2013 and conducted by the United States Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), the federal agency charged with implementing the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Vision 21 systematically evaluated the state of victim services nationally, and thus set a trajectory for each States' evolution of crime victim service programming. Through these federal lenses, Vermont's strategic planning process will identify the victim populations and services in greatest need of more resources and the most judicious use of the new VOCA funding. These needs will fall under one of two broad categories; 1) filling gaps in existing programs or 2) supporting new pilot programs and/or organizations not currently funded under VOCA.

## ASSUMPTIONS

On December 16, 2014 President Obama signed a bill that raised the National Crime Victim's Fund cap from \$745 million to \$2.36 billion, and this bill was subsequently authorized by the United States Congress. This has resulted in an increase of Vermont's VOCA Assistance Formula Grant allocation from \$1.3 million to \$4.2 million for FFY 2015. Whether or not this level of funding will be sustained will have serious implications for Vermont's strategic planning process. If this is only a one or two time increase, the type of projects that can be considered will be temporary, or pilot projects that will generate a certain level of insecurity among the staff and programs receiving the new funding. A strategic plan that is founded on sustainability envisions vastly better outcomes for victim service programming. A sustainable plan foresees stable staffing, real opportunity for longitudinal programmatic performance evaluations,

meaningful institutional change, and most importantly Crime Victims who encounter an unbroken system that advocates for their rights and needs. While the Crime Victims Fund is in excess of \$10 billion and still growing, future appropriations at this level are not guaranteed.

Another factor which will impact this funding cycle is the requirement that the VOCA grant be spent in four years. As of the date of this application (7/2/2015) Vermont has obviously not received its official FFY 15 award letter from the federal government. This award when received will be predated to October 2014. Some of Vermont's awards to sub grantees will have a start date of July 1, 2015 (Vermont's fiscal year start date). However, many of Vermont's FFY 2015 VOCA sub awards will be informed by this strategic planning process and will result from the Vermont's VOCA RFP to be released next spring. Thus, the second wave of Vermont's FFY 2015 VOCA subgrants will have a start date of July 1, 2016. Unless there is a change in the duration of the grant cycle from the Federal government, the second wave of sub awards will have to be expended in three, not four, years.

One other federal "moving target" to this strategic planning process is the anticipated revision of the VOCA regulations. Vermont's plan will need to be flexible enough to accommodate any new rules that may take precedence over Vermont's decisions.

#### STRATEGY and PROCESS

The first stage of Vermont's strategic planning process involved the creation of the structure to best evaluate the unmet needs facing crime victims. To inform this process the VCCVS has convened a consortium of VOCA Assistance Stakeholders. The Stakeholders have been selected based on their experience, representation from a wide breadth of victim services organizations, and reputations as champions for victims in Vermont. (See Appendix A) VCCVS will also reach out to its numerous partner organizations that provide services to crime victims to inform this process. (See Appendix B). To facilitate this process the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services has engaged the expertise of [Flint Spring Associates](#), whose senior partners are certified Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) trainers. They will use the RBA framework and tools to help VCCVS collect, manage, analyze and utilize data to crystalize the strategic plan to determine the wisest use of the increased VOCA funding.

The process of determining the greatest unmet needs facing crime victims, and thus the most judicious use of the new VOCA funding, will involve gathering input from allied professionals, information from literature review, and state and national resources. The Center will thoughtfully craft data collection instruments that are targeted to specific victim service organizations and victim populations. The information that will be available to this planning process through literature review, data collection and conversations or focus groups with stakeholders is potentially limitless. Crafting purposeful, targeted questions, specific to the intended victim service groups that are centered on the ultimate goal of identifying the greatest unmet needs facing crime victims in Vermont will keep the process on track. Mapping of current VOCA subgrants and other victim services will be compared to statistical information relating to Vermont's geographic regions to help the plan coalesce.

When the evidence is gathered to justify the conclusions regarding the areas of greatest need, the Center will either augment existing grant programs, issue new non-competitive grants to new organizations or create competitive solicitations. This process will evolve through three phases 1) Research (through the fall of 2015), 2) Review and Planning (through the fall of 2015 and winter 2016), and 3) Implementation (spring 2016).

#### FFY 2015 VOCA FUNDING COMMITTED THUS FAR

The Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services has budgeted approximately \$2,500,000 of Vermont's anticipated \$4,249,812 VOCA award, leaving approximately \$1,700,000 for new initiatives. Some of Vermont's FFY 15 VOCA subgrants were level-funded. The Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (The Network) programs received a two-fold increase in their awards from the previous year, a decision based on the fact that Network programs have lost over 25 positions in the past 5 years. The Vermont Department of State's Attorneys' Victim Assistance Program also received a large, \$536,866 increase in their VOCA award.

### OVC's new Performance Measurement Tool

Concurrent with the increased VOCA funding, OVC is implementing new performance measure requirements for subgrantees and state granting agencies. These performance measures will be collected by OVC in a new on-line grants management system, the Performance Measurement Tool (PMT). Throughout the development process of creating the questions for this tool, OVC has been inclusive and transparent in soliciting input from the states. In turn, VCCVS has asked its VOCA subgrantees for feedback. Through the numerous revisions of the PMT tool OVC has been responsive to the suggestions that Vermont and other states have provided. Nevertheless, when the final PMT comes off the presses, all of our current and future VOCA sub-grantees will need to make serious administrative adjustments to accommodate these new reporting requirements. The Network programs provide direct services to a large percentage of Vermont's VOCA clientele. The Network has recently implemented its own new data collection system called Osnum. The Network programs just completed a year of beta testing with their own performance measures (unrelated to the VOCA PMT performance measures). When the new PMT is released, the Network will require approximately three months to adapt their software to accommodate OVC's requirements. Likewise, the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services is working with the Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, who are also in the process of creating a new data collection instrument (not just for VOCA). They are also aware of the upcoming changes, and the implications it will bring to the design of their system. It is reasonable to expect that these, as well as our smaller VOCA subrecipients, will require some funding from the VOCA increase to accommodate the new reporting requirements.

The VCCVS is in dire need of a grants management system and has created an extensive check-list delineating its requirements. A portion of this new funding will certainly be allocated to purchasing an efficient system that will have a user-friendly interface with our VOCA subgrantees for the purpose of VOCA PMT reporting. The VCCVS intends on soliciting bids for

this system in the summer of 2015 and making a final decision by fall 2015. The VCCVS Finance and Grants Managers will then train VOCA sub grantees on the new system via webinars.

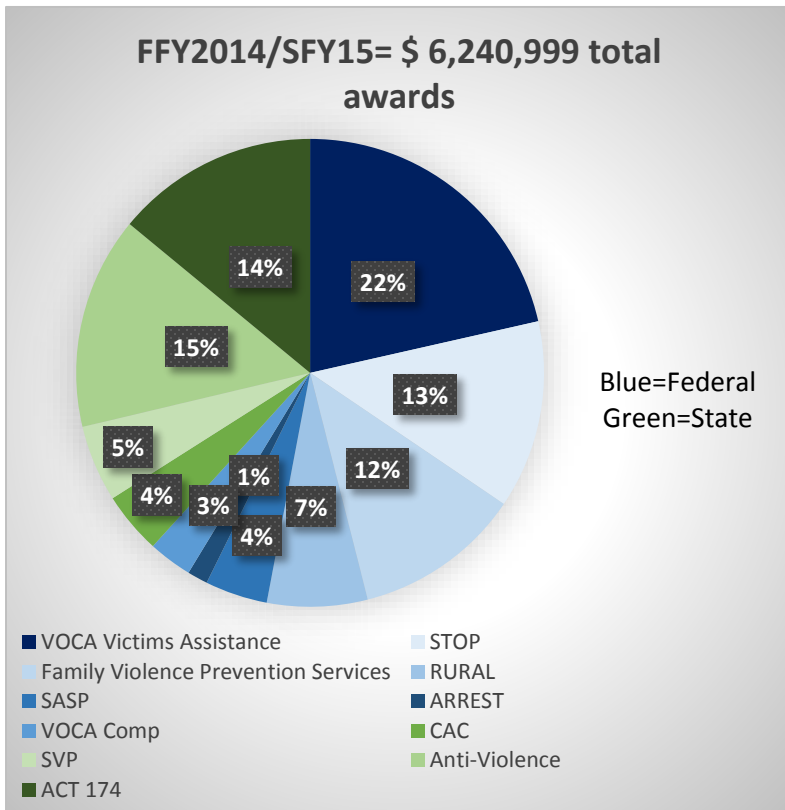
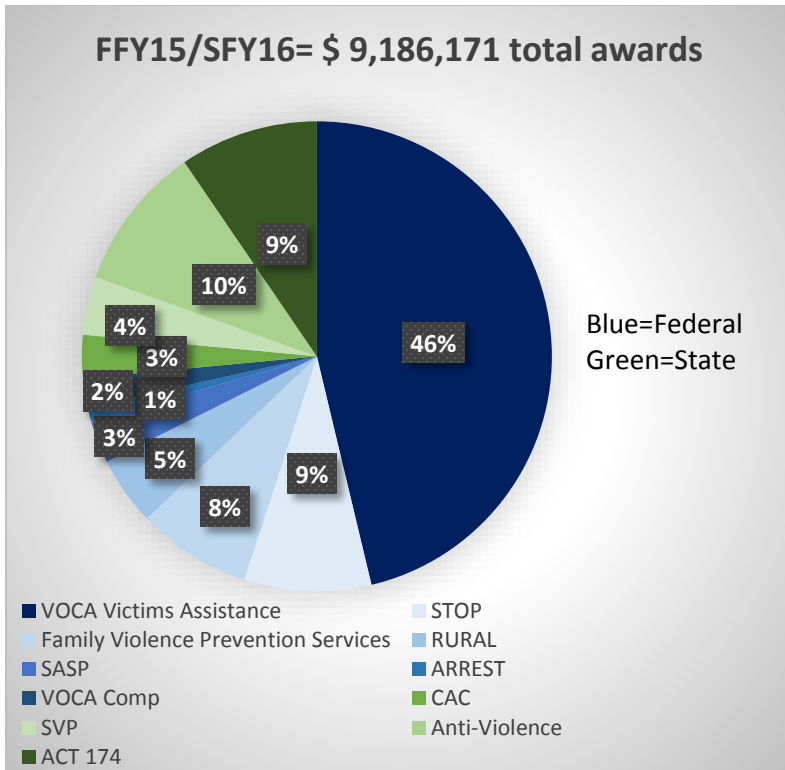
VCCVS is also considering creating a new position with the increased VOCA administrative funding to oversee and coordinate the State's Attorneys' Victims' Assistance Program.

#### OTHER POTENTIAL PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE NEW VOCA FUNDING

Clearly, the ultimate direction for the issuance of new grant awards will be informed by the strategic planning process. However, there are areas that the VCCVS staff already know need greater support as a result of its ongoing dialogues with other statewide agencies. These will be areas of special concern as the strategic planning process evolves.

The urgency to provide legal services to crime victims again came to light in a VCCVS survey conducted in spring 2015. 200 law enforcement professionals, prosecutors and advocates were asked the open-ended question, "What are greatest unmet needs facing crime victims?" Many of the respondents indicated "legal services." The VOCA increase will provide an opportunity to build upon the "low-bono" wrap-around legal services network for crime victims that was initiated in 2014 but unable to develop into fruition for lack of funding. There are twenty Community Justice Centers in Vermont and this funding could potentially help them to build capacity at a time when Vermont's Diversion Programs are actively seeking to channel cases away from the criminal justice system. The gaps in services in Vermont's Child Advocacy Centers will also be reviewed during this process. Some of Vermont's children must travel as far as two hours to find a pediatric SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner). Financial exploitation of the elderly is also a pressing concern.

Given the seemingly fathomless needs facing Victim Services, the greatest challenge will not be in determining what new areas to provide funding to, but which of the many worthy areas in need will not receive funding despite this unprecedented increase.



What the VOCA increase means to Vermont

The FFY 15 increase in VOCA funding to Vermont (from \$1,339,087 to \$4,249,812) dramatically changes the overall distribution of Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS) grant programming allocations.

Even prior to FFY 15, VOCA represented the largest piece of the VCCVS “grants pie” providing 22% of the funding distributed to VCCVS subgrants. With the increase in funding, that portion jumps to 46%.

It then follows that this increase in federal funding also increases the overall ratio of federal to state grant allocations. Previously, federal grants accounted for 62% of the “grants pie” compared to 74% post increase.

This may have serious implications on VT’s VOCA Match requirement, pending review of VOCA subgrantees’ organizational budgets.

APPENDIX A

VOCA PLANNING TEAM

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VT Children's Alliance

**Amy Farr**  
AG Victim Advocate

**Ed Paquin**  
Disability Rights VT

**Karen Tronsgard-Scott**  
VT Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

**Karen Vastine**  
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**Michael Benvenuto**  
VLA – Elder Law Project

**Susan Cherry**  
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**Willa Farrell**  
Diversion

**Virginia Renfrew**  
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**Judy Rex**  
Center for Crime Victim Services

**Gene Nelson**  
Center for Crime Victim Services

**Donna Reback and Joy Livingston**  
Flint Springs Associates



APPENDIX B

**Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services**  
Allied Organizations

VT Bar Association  
VT Court Administrator's Office  
VT Department of State's Attorney's and Sheriffs  
VT Department for Children and Families  
VT Department of Corrections  
VT DCF Economic Services  
VT Adult Protective Services  
VT Diversion Programs  
VT Attorney Generals' Office  
US Attorney's Office  
VT Department of Public Safety  
VT Women's Commission  
VT Human Rights Commission  
VT Secretary of State's Office – Safe at Home  
Program/Address Confidentiality  
VT Legal Aid  
VT Center for Independent Living  
Disability Rights VT  
Green Mountain Self Advocates  
Deaf Vermonter's Advocacy Services  
Vermont Communication Support Project  
Safe Space at VT Pride Center  
VT Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Spectrum Youth and Family Services  
Burlington Parallel Justice  
Global Learning Partners  
Association of Africans Living in VT  
VT Refugee Resettlement Project  
VT Interpretation and Referral Service  
VT Network Against Domestic Violence &  
Member Programs  
Vermont Children's Alliance – Child Advocacy  
Centers  
VT Network of Community Justice Centers  
Vermont Supervised Visitation Programs  
UVM Women's Center  
UVM Child Welfare Training Partnership  
VT Restorative Justice Consortium  
South Royalton Legal Clinic  
Have Justice Will Travel  
VT Network Legal Assistance Project

**VCCVS List of Advisory Boards**

VT Council on Domestic Violence  
SANE Advisory Board  
Law Enforcement Advisory Board  
Child Fatality Review Commission  
Domestic Violence Review Commission  
Children's Justice Act Task Force  
VT Human Trafficking Task Force  
Scaling Up Restorative Justice Work Group

**VCCVS Internal Programs**

Victim's Compensation Program & Sexual  
Assault Program  
VT Restitution Unit  
VT Victim Assistance Program  
Community Engagement and Training - VT  
Victims Assistance Academy

APPENDIX C RESOURCES

1. Federal Resources

- a. [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#)
  - i. [National Crime Victimization Survey](#)
- b. [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)
  - i. [Uniform Crime Report](#)
- c. [National Archive of Criminal Justice Data](#)
- d. [Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics](#)
- e. [National Institute of Corrections](#)
- f. [OJP's Crime Solutions Evidence Based Program/Practice Data Base](#)  
*(\*Note: Crime Solutions lists all types of justice programs not just direct victim services)*

2. State of Vermont Resources

- a. [Vermont Crime Report](#)
- b. [Vermont Crime On-Line](#)
- c. [Vermont Department of Corrections](#)
- d. [Vermont Agency of Human Services](#)
- e. [Vermont Directory of Criminal Justice Service Providers](#)
- f. [Vermont Victim Services Resource Directory](#)
- g. [United States Census: Vermont Quick Facts](#)

3. Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services Resources

- a. Current Surveys/Studies
  - i. Victims Compensation Satisfaction Survey
  - ii. Vermont VOCA Assistance Satisfaction Survey
  - iii. VCCVS Community Engagement and Education Dept. Satisfaction Surveys
  - iv. Victims' Compensation Initiative –*Serving Crime Victims with Disabilities*
  - v. Vermont Self-Assessment: *Law Enforcement, Prosecution and Advocacy Working Together for Survivors of Domestic Violence*
- b. Databases/Lists
  - i. Victims Compensation Program Database (Crime Victims)
  - ii. Salsa Labs Database
  - iii. Current VOCA and non-VOCA sub grantees

4. Other Resources

- a. Existing programmatic standards for all categories of sub grantees
- b. Literature Review

APPENDIX D Allowable VOCA Costs

ALLOWABLE VOCA COSTS

Adapted from Steve Derene's (Exec. Dir. NAVAA's) PowerPoint  
2014 VOCA National Training Conference Boston

Allowable Costs

Final Program Guidelines: Federal Register, Vol. 62, No. 77 Tuesday, April 22, 1997: [VOCA Regulations](#) (pages 19607-19621) \*\*\*\*NOTE: NEW REGULATIONS ANTICIPATED TO BE RELEASED DECEMBER 2015\*\*\*\*

Services

- Respond to emotional and physical needs of crime victims.
- Assist primary and secondary victims of crime to stabilize their lives after a victimization.
- Assist victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system.
- Provide a measure of safety and security.

Definition of "Crime Victim"

*"For the purpose of the VOCA crime victim assistance grant program, a crime victim is a person who has suffered physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm as a result of the commission of a crime."*

Allocation within States

- States have sole discretion for determining which organization will receive funding, and in what amounts, as long as the recipients meet the requirements of VOCA and Program Guidelines. (omitted in proposed regulations)
- Mandate to re-compete at least every five years

VOCA Program Funding Strategy

States are encouraged to develop a funding strategy which considers:

- ◆ Range of victim services through the state and within communities;
- ◆ The unmet needs of crime victims;
- ◆ Demographic profile of crime victims;
- ◆ Coordinated, cooperative response of community organizations
- ◆ Availability of services through the criminal justice process;
- ◆ Extent of other available funding sources

Funding Strategy

States are encouraged to expand into new service areas as needs and demographics change

Some states:

- ◆ Use VOCA funds to stabilize services by continuously funding selected organizations
- ◆ End funding after several years
- ◆ Limit the number of years

## Administrative Cost Provision

- May retain up to 5% of each year's grant for "administering" grant at state grantee level
- No match required
- Used to "expand, enhance and/or improve the state's previous level of effort at the state level and to support activities and costs that impact the delivery and quality of services to crime victims throughout the state."

## Admin: Grant Management

- a) Staff salaries and benefit and consultant fees.
- b) Attend OVC-sponsored and other relevant technical assistance meetings.
- c) Monitor, provide technical assistance and evaluate VOCA subrecipients.
- d) Purchase equipment for state grantee (technology)
- e) Train VOCA direct service providers
- f) Memberships
- g) Program audit costs
- h) Indirect costs at federal rate (omitted)

## Admin: Delivery/Quality of Services

- a) Develop strategic plans, conduct surveys and needs assessments.
- b) Improve coordination efforts
- c) Training to organizations that assist victims and allied professionals (*omitted*)
- d) Purchase, print and/or develop publications.
- e) Develop protocols, policies and procedures that promote systemic changes
- f) Train victim service agency managers (*omitted*)

## Conduits

- State may use administrative funds for "conduits" to assist in selecting qualified sub recipients and/or reduce state's administrative burden
- Conduits do not relieve state grantee from ultimate programmatic and financial responsibility

## Sub grantee Eligibility Requirements

- Public or Nonprofit organization
- Financial Support
  - Record of effective services-non-VOCA financial support
  - New programs-substantial non-VOCA financial support
- Match
  - 20% total project cost
  - 5% total project costs-Native American Tribes/organizations (*no match*)

## Sub grantee Eligibility Requirements

1. Volunteers (unless waived)
2. Promote community efforts to aid crime victims
3. Help apply for compensation benefits
4. Maintain civil rights information
5. Service to Victims of Federal Crimes
6. No charge to Victims for VOCA funded services
7. Confidentiality

## Eligible Organizations

- Criminal Justice Agencies
- Religiously-Affiliated organizations
- State Crime Victim Compensation Agencies
- Hospitals and Emergency Medical Facilities
- Others
  - Mental Health, child/adult protective services, legal services, public housing
  - State grantees, up to 10%

## Ineligible Recipients

- Federal Agencies
- In-Patient Treatment Facilities

## Allowable Costs for direct Services

1. Immediate Health and Safety-Response to immediate emotional and physical (excluding medical care)
2. Mental Health Assistance
3. Participation in Criminal Justice Proceedings
4. Forensic Examinations
5. Necessary and Essential Costs to Provide Direct Services
6. Special Services (eg. Advocacy)
7. Special Services. Personnel Costs.
8. Restorative Justice

## Other Allowable Costs/Services

1. Skills Training for Staff
2. Training Materials
3. Training Related Travel
4. Advance Technologies
5. Contracts for Professional Services
6. Operating Costs
7. Supervision of Direct Service Providers
8. Repair/Replacement of Essential Items
9. Public Presentations

## Non-Allowable Costs/Services

- Lobbying and Administrative Advocacy
- Perpetrator Rehabilitation and Counseling
- Needs Assessments, Survey, Evaluations, Studies
- Prosecution Activities
- Indirect Organizational Costs
- Property Loss
- Most Medical Costs
- Relocation Expenses
- Administrative Staff Expenses
- Development of Protocols, Interagency Agreements
- Sending Individual Crime Victims to Conferences
- Exclusive Crime Prevention Activities

*\*\*\*Note: Equipment is an allowable cost federally, that is currently not approved for the Center for Crime Victim Services sub grantees, as there are other sources (state funds) available to sub grantees for equipment.*

APPENDIX E: VERMONT CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIM SERVICES (VCCVS) FY 15 VOCA FUNDING STRATEGIC PLAN GUIDE LOGIC MODEL

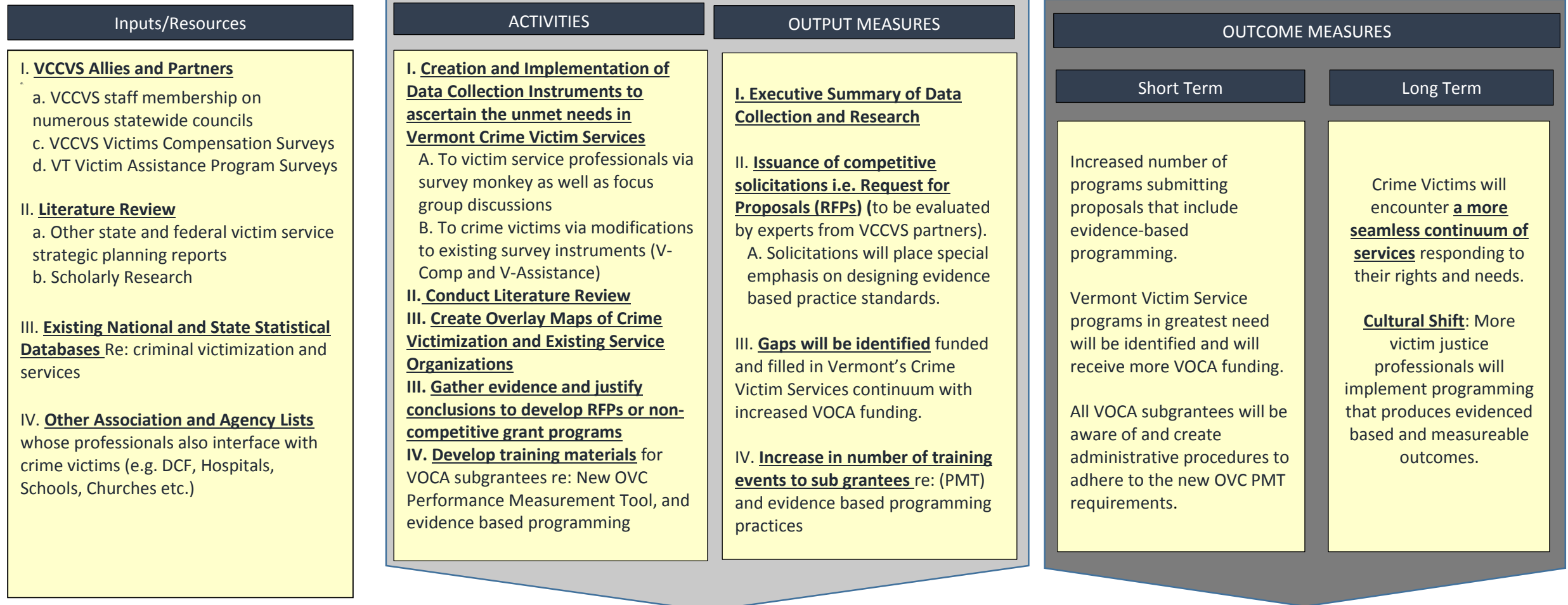
**To design and implement a strategy to determine the most judicious use of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Assistance funding.**

RESPONSIBILITY

*Through this process the VCCVS shall stay true to its vision of joining with victims, survivors, and those who interact with victims and offenders to provide, sustain, and support a collaborative system of direct services across Vermont that is comprehensive, victim-centered, trauma-informed and accessible to all diverse populations. The Center will also work to hold offenders accountable for the harm they have caused victims and communities.*

GOAL

To create a dynamic strategic planning process regarding victim service programming in Vermont in order generate the evidence required for the proper stewardship of VOCA Assistance formula grant funding. The conclusions from the research and data attained through this process will inform the specific Vermont subgrants to be made with the increased VOCA funding. Subgrants may be non-competitive in nature, or may be issued through new Request for Proposals (RFPs).



DEVELOPMENT: TO 11/2015

PLANNING 11/2015-2/2016

IMPLEMENTATION 3/2016-6/2016

MAINTAINENCE 7/2016-ONWARD