

# The Unmet Needs of Crime Victims in Vermont

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING SERVICES THROUGH THE  
VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT (VOCA)

A Needs Assessment Conducted by  
Flint Springs Associates

*Presented to the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services February 2016*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Introduction**

The Crime Victims Fund was established in 1984 with the passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Since its inception, VOCA has helped countless victims recover from the aftermath of crime. The fund provides Compensation for Crime Victims which can include medical costs, funeral and burial costs, mental health counselling, lost wages, relocation expenses and loss of support; as well as Victim Assistance which can include crisis intervention, emergency shelter, emergency transportation, counseling, and criminal justice advocacy.

After a decade of level funding, on December 16, 2014 President Obama signed a bill that was subsequently authorized by Congress that raised the National Crime Victim's Fund cap from \$745 million to \$2.36 billion. 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. In response to the unprecedented increase in VOCA Victim's Assistance Program funding, the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS or "The Center") initiated a strategic planning process to determine the most pressing needs facing crime victims in Vermont, that are available for funding under the current [VOCA Regulations](#). In that vein, the Center contracted with Flint Springs Associates (FSA) to design and conduct an assessment of crime victims' needs. A series of structured group interviews, followed by a survey were carried out with representatives of key stakeholder groups serving victims of crime.

### **Key Findings**

Findings from the survey prioritized most urgent needs for crime victims as follows:

- Housing Supports and Services for Victims
- Expanded number and types of Victim Advocacy Services and Programs
- Expand and offer more specialized legal services to victims of crime (such as specialized representation, Ombudsman)
- Supports and services to underserved populations
- Health related supports and services

### **Recommendations**

While housing support and services were rated as an urgent need, the increase in VOCA funding does not provide enough funding to address this problem in any meaningful or lasting way. With that in mind, the recommendations in the report address the following two general areas of need for crime victims:

- Expansion of the number and types of victim advocates available to adult and child victims of crime including victims from traditionally under-served populations such as elders, people with disabilities, New Americans and the LGBTQ community.
- Creation of a centralized legal network for victims of crime which would offer information, assessment of legal needs, legal advice and representation.

## FULL REPORT

### **Introduction**

The Crime Victims Fund was established in 1984 with the passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). It is financed by fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders, and gifts, donations and bequests by private parties, not from tax dollars. Since its inception, VOCA has helped countless victims recover from the aftermath of crime. VOCA has been a catalyst for the evolution of our justice system's legal policies by providing victims with rights of inclusion at every step of the criminal proceedings. The fund provides Compensation for Crime Victims, which can include payment of medical costs, funeral and burial costs, mental health counselling, lost wages, relocation expenses and loss of support; as well as Victim Assistance which can include crisis intervention, emergency shelter, emergency transportation, counseling, and criminal justice advocacy.

In 2000 Congress established a cap on the Crime Victims fund, yet over the years the fund continued to grow. After a decade of level funding, 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. 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") initiated a strategic planning process to determine the most pressing needs facing crime victims in Vermont, as those needs adhere to current [VOCA Regulations](#).

During the fall of 2015 and into the winter of 2016 the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services VCCVS reached out to victim service professionals throughout the state to listen and learn from them to help determine the funding priorities for the VOCA increase. In all, there were 74 individuals who participated in the focus groups. Those focus groups helped to fine tune the questions for the subsequent survey, in which 361 allied professionals participated. VCCVS wishes to acknowledge the time that so many individuals have given to this project and express our gratitude for their collective wisdom which was essential in crystalizing the results of this needs assessment.

### **VOCA Needs Assessment Methodology**

In order to determine how best to distribute increased allowable funding from VOCA, the Vermont Center for Crime Victims Services (VCCVS) contracted with Flint Springs Associates (FSA), a Vermont consulting firm ([www.flintspringsassociates.com](http://www.flintspringsassociates.com)) to design and conduct a needs assessment. The assessment activities took place in two phases:

Phase 1: Structured group interviews with invited representatives of key stakeholder groups

Phase 2: Statewide survey of key stakeholders

**Phase 1: Who was interviewed?** Between October and December 2015, FSA conducted seven structured group interviews with the following stakeholders (see Appendix A for detailed list of participants):

- Legal services representatives from:
  - Vermont Legal Aid
  - Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
  - Vermont Bar Association
  - Vermont Domestic Violence Council
  - South Royalton Legal Clinic
  - National Crime Victims Bar Association
  - Vermont Attorney General's Office
  - Disability Rights Vermont
  - Have Justice Will Travel
- Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence Victim Program Directors
- Criminal/Restorative Justice Program staff from:
  - Community Justice Centers
  - Diversion Programs
- Child Advocate Programs including:
  - Child Advocacy Centers
  - Special Investigative Units
  - Guardians ad Litem
  - Department for Children and Families
  - Victim Assistance Program
- Advocates for marginalized and/or underserved populations including:
  - Disability Rights Vermont
  - Vermont Center for Independent Living
  - Area Agencies on Aging
  - Community of Vermont Elders
  - Association of Africans Living in Vermont
  - Vermont Refugee Resettlement Council
  - PRIDE
  - Outright Vermont

**What did we want to learn?** The structured group interviews aimed to identify for any victim of crime:

- What services victims of crime need that they aren't getting?
- Who/what type of crime victim isn't getting needed services and why?
- What service gaps currently exist?
- How can the needs of crime victims be met?
  - Are there better ways to do what we're doing?
  - Are there innovative or new ways to serve victims?
  - In terms of current services, what might need to be expanded?

In addition, the interviews with advocates for marginalized and/or underserved populations dug deeper to understand:

- What are the service needs for each group as result of being victims of crime?
- What challenges does each group face in getting those services and why?
- What can be done to help victims gain entry to victim services without reporting to law enforcement?
- Should capacity be built within the existing victim services programs to serve special populations **or** should services for victims be created within existing places/agencies dedicated to serving each specific population (e.g., AAA, VCIL, Refugee Resettlement, etc.)?

In order to identify key themes emerging from the interviews, FSA conducted content analysis on responses given in each of the seven structured group interviews and drafted a summary of key themes which emerged from the interviews.

**Phase 2: *Survey methodology:*** The content analysis findings informed the development of survey questions. FSA drafted the survey questions, then reviewed and refined those questions with VCCVS staff. Using its Survey Monkey account, FSA designed a survey and conducted a pilot test. Feedback from the pilot was incorporated into a final version of the survey (attached in Appendix B).

In late December 2015 VCCVS distributed the survey, through its e-mail list, to the full population of advocates and service providers from each of the stakeholder groups interviewed. The Center requested a response to the survey by January 8, 2016. Upon the close of the survey, FSA analyzed responses, drafted a written summary and met again with VCCVS staff to review the findings towards determining how best to distribute VOCA funds to address the most urgent needs of victims of crime.

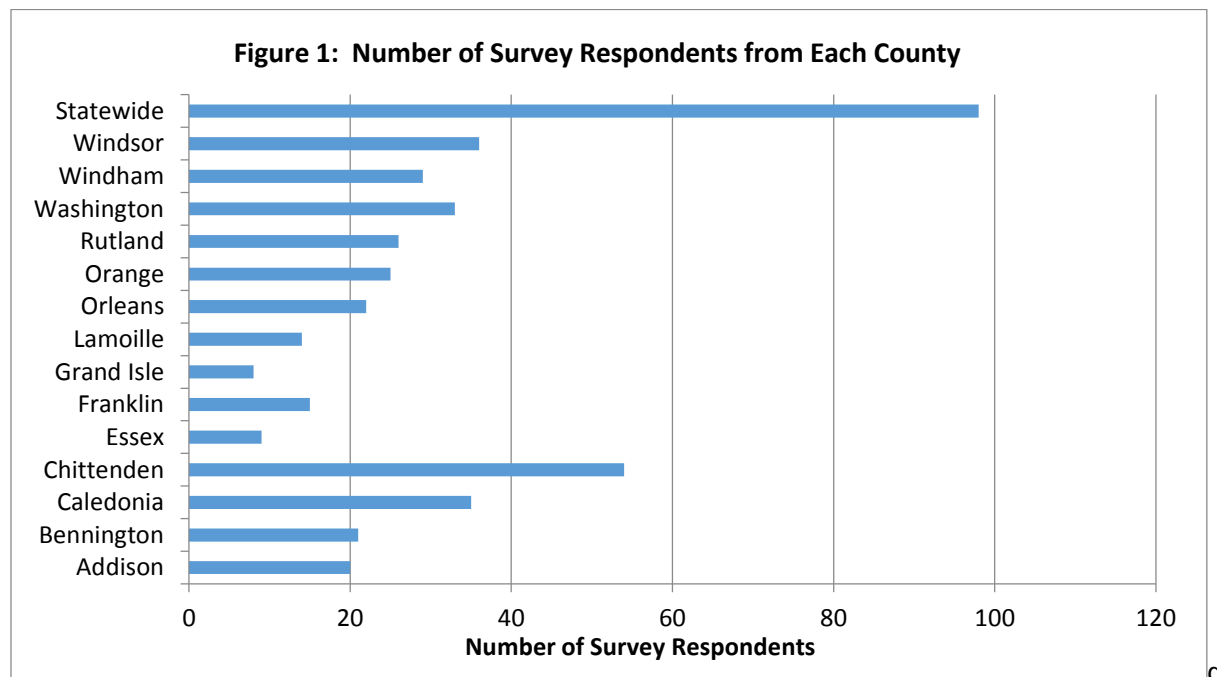
**Description of Survey Respondents**

Surveys were distributed to 1500 persons representing the full population of advocates and service providers from each of the stakeholder groups interviewed; 361 persons responded representing a 24% response rate.

The survey asked respondents **which county their organizations served**. All Vermont counties were represented, and approximately one-quarter of respondents worked in organizations serving the full state.

**Table 1: Geographic Regions Served by Respondents' Organizations**

Area Served	Number of Respondents	% of sample
Addison	20	6%
Bennington	21	6%
Caledonia	35	10%
Chittenden	54	15%
Essex	9	2%
Franklin	15	4%
Grand Isle	8	2%
Lamoille	14	4%
Orleans	22	6%
Orange	25	7%
Rutland	26	7%
Washington	33	9%
Windham	29	8%
Windsor	36	10%
Statewide	98	27%

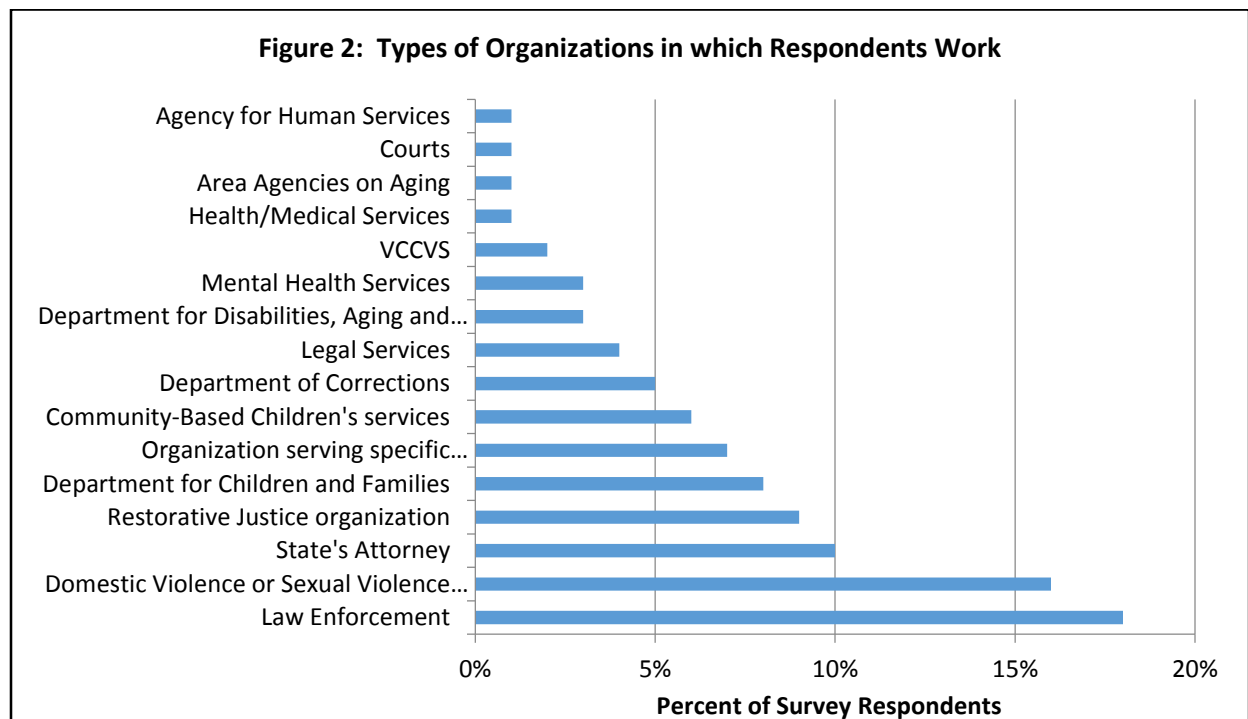


The survey then asked, “Which of the following best describes the organization in which you work?” Law Enforcement and Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Programs accounted for 34% of all respondents.

**Table 2: Types of Organizations in which Respondents Work**

Types of Organizations	Number or Respondents	% of Total Number of Respondents
Law Enforcement	66	18%
Domestic Violence or Sexual Violence Program	59	16%
State's Attorney	37	10%
Restorative Justice Organization	33	9%
Department for Children and Families	30	8%
Organization Serving Specific Populations	27	7%
Community-Based Children's Services	21	6%
Department of Corrections	19	5%
Legal Services	16	4%
Department for Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living	12	3%
Mental Health Services	10	3%
Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services	7	2%
Health/Medical Services	5	1%
Area Agencies on Aging	5	1%
Courts	4	1%
Agency for Human Services	3	1%
Other	6	2%
Total	360	100%

**Figure 2: Types of Organizations in which Respondents Work**



The survey asked: **“Are you a victim advocate -- that is, someone whose primary role is to provide direct services to victims of crime (this does not include attorneys)?”**

One-quarter of respondents (n=90, 25%) identify as victim advocates. Most Victim Advocates (VA) worked in Network programs (42%) or the State’s Attorneys (24%).

**Table 3: Types of Organizations in which Victim Advocates Work**

Type of Organization	Number of VAs	% of total VA
Domestic Violence or Sexual Violence Program	37	42%
State's Attorney	21	24%
Restorative Justice organization	7	8%
Community-Base Children's services	5	6%
Organization serving specific populations	5	6%
Department for Children and Families	3	3%
Department of Corrections	3	3%
Law Enforcement	3	3%
Department for Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living	2	2%
Courts	1	1%
Health/Medical Services	1	1%
Legal Services	1	1%
Mental Health Services	0	0%
AAA	0	0%
VCCVS	0	0%
AHS	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	89	100%

**Responses to Prioritizing Questions**

The survey sought to understand what types of supports and services for victims were perceived by respondents as most urgently needed. A series of questions were presented to respondents which were categorized by the following types of services:

- Victim Advocacy Services and Programs
- Housing Supports and Services for Victims
- Legal Services for Victims
- Supports and Services to Victims in Underserved Populations
- Health Related Supports and Services for Victims

Within each of the above categories, respondents were presented with a list of specific services and/or supports and asked to rank order them by urgency of need where a rank of “1” represented the most urgent need.



The following section summarizes findings within each category and indicates:

- The average of the priority ranking for each service or support (average ranking of urgency) -- the lower the average ranking score (closest to “1”), the more urgent the need.
- The rank order most frequently assigned to each service or support (most frequent ranking score) listed for each category
- Whether or not there were significant differences<sup>1</sup> in the average rankings between regions in the state (for example, did respondents from one region score the support as more urgent than respondents from other regions in the state?) Regions included:
  - Northwest (Chittenden, Franklin and Lamoille counties)
  - Northeast Kingdom (Caledonia, Essex and Orleans counties)
  - Central (Addison, Orange and Washington counties)
  - South Central (Rutland and Windsor counties)
  - Southern (Bennington and Windham counties)
  - Statewide
- Whether or not there were significant differences in ranking depending on the respondents’ type of organization. Analyses only included organizations with at least 10 survey respondents.

Overall rankings

Survey respondents were asked to rank broad categories of crime victim needs in order of urgency. Housing supports and services emerged as the most urgent need for victims of crime (see Table 4) and was followed by the need to expand the number and types of victim advocates in Vermont.

**Table 4: Priority Rankings of Broad Categories of Crime Victim Services and Supports**

<b>Crime Victim Services and Supports</b>	<b>Average Ranking of Urgency</b>	<b>Most Frequent Ranking</b>
Housing supports and services for victims	2.3	1
Victim advocacy: expand the number & types of advocates in VT	2.8	1
Legal services: expand and offer more specialized services to victims of crime (such as specialized representation, Ombudsman)	3.1	2
Supports and services to underserved populations	3.2	4
Health related supports and services	3.6	5

One significant difference emerged between respondents in different regions of Vermont on rankings of broad categories of victim services and supports – respondents from the Northwest region were more likely than respondents from other regions to perceive an urgent need for services to victims from

<sup>1</sup> Significant differences are based on statistical tests which determine whether a difference between scores is by chance or actually represents a reliable and consistent difference between those scores. The statistical test used in these analyses was ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) – where there was a significant difference, the ANOVA results are presented, including F and p values.

underserved populations (Table 5). In rankings of the other broad categories, no significant differences were found based on the region the respondents' organizations served.

**Table 5: Average rankings by Region of Vermont**

Region of Vermont	Victim Advocacy	Housing supports and services	Health related supports and services	Services to underserved populations ( $F_{(5,322)} = 2.9$ , $p < .01$ )	Legal Services
Northwest	2.9	2.4	3.6	2.9	3.3
NE Kingdom	2.6	2.3	3.7	3.3	3.0
Central	2.7	2.2	3.6	3.6	2.9
South Central	2.9	2.1	3.3	3.7	3.0
Southern	2.8	2.3	3.2	3.3	3.2
Statewide	2.9	2.4	3.7	3.1	2.9
Total	2.8	2.3	3.6	3.2	3.1

Significant differences were present in respondents' average rankings for each of the broad categories based on the type of organization in which they worked (see Table 6). For example, respondents in children's services organizations were most likely to rank victim advocacy services as most urgent; respondents providing domestic violence and sexual violence victims' services ranked housing as the most urgent need; and, organizations that service specific populations ranked services for underserved populations as most urgent.

**Table 6: Differences in Priority Rankings by Respondent's Type of Organization**

Organizations with at least 10 respondents	Victim Advocacy $F_{(9,295)} = 2.3$ $p < .01$	Housing $F_{(9,295)} = 4.8$ $p < .001$	Health related $F_{(9,291)} = 1.9$ $p < .05$	Underserved populations $F_{(9,290)} = 3.8$ $p < .001$	Legal Services $F_{(9,293)} = 4.4$ $p < .001$
Restorative Justice organization	2.6	3.2	3.8	2.7	2.6
Children's services	<b>1.9</b>	2.6	3.3	3.4	3.6
Department for Children & Families	2.7	2.0	3.6	3.3	3.4
Department of Corrections	2.3	2.4	3.4	3.6	3.3
Department of Aging & Independent Living	3.2	2.6	3.6	2.6	2.8
DV and SV programs	2.9	<b>1.6</b>	3.9	3.4	3.2
Law Enforcement	2.6	2.3	3.3	3.5	3.3
Legal Services	3.7	2.4	4.3	3.0	<b>1.6</b>
Serving specific populations	3.3	2.4	3.8	<b>2.1</b>	3.5
State's Attorney	2.7	2.4	3.6	3.5	2.8
Total	2.8	2.3	3.6	3.2	3.1

Housing

Table 7 shows that respondents ranked emergency housing for victims of domestic violence and their children as most urgent.

**Table 7: Priority Ranking of Housing Services and Supports for Victims of Crime**

Housing	Average Ranking of Urgency	Most Frequent Ranking
Emergency housing that provides safe space 24/7 for victims of domestic violence and their children	1.4	1
Safe housing for homeless and runaway youth who have been victimized	1.9	2
Paid overnight staff at domestic violence shelters	2.7	3

There were no significant differences between respondents’ rankings of housing needs based on the regions of Vermont their organizations served. However significant differences in rankings did emerge between respondents from different types of organizations. As shown in Table 8, DAIL staff were most likely to see the need for emergency housing for victims of domestic violence and their children, while restorative justice workers were most likely to see the need for safe housing for homeless and runaway youth who have been victimized.

**Table 8: Differences in Average Rankings of Housing Services for Victims of Crime by Type of Organization**

Organizations with at least 10 respondents	Emergency housing for victims of DV & their children $F_{(9,297)} = 3.9, p < .001$	Safe housing for homeless and runaway youth who have been victimized $F_{(9,294)} = 2.9, p < .01$
Restorative Justice organization	1.8	<b>1.5</b>
Community-Base Children's services	1.8	1.6
Department for Children and Families	1.4	1.9
Department of Corrections	1.3	1.9
Department of Aging & Independent Living	<b>1.1</b>	2.1
DV or Sexual Violence Program	1.3	2.1
Law Enforcement	1.3	2.1
Legal Services	1.3	1.9
Organization serving specific populations	1.5	1.9
State's Attorney	1.3	1.9
Total	1.4	1.9

Victim Advocacy

As Table 9 shows, respondents identified child and youth advocates in Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence programs, and embedded victim’s advocates in police departments as the two most urgently needed victim advocacy services. Third most urgent was Victim’s Advocates at Child Advocacy Centers.

**Table 9: Priority Rankings for Victim Advocacy Services and Supports**

Victim Advocacy Services or Programs	Average Ranking of Urgency	Most Frequent Ranking Score
Child and youth advocates at Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence programs	2.3	1
Embedded victim's advocates in police departments	2.5	1
Victim's Advocates at Child Advocacy Centers	2.8	3
A dedicated person to help victims through the Community Justice Center and Diversion process	3.3	4
Advocates specifically for children experiencing bullying	4.1	5

No statistically significant differences were found in average rankings of Victim Advocacy items across regions of Vermont. Significant differences did exist between respondents from different types of organizations in average rankings for four of the five victim advocacy services (see Table 10). Respondents from domestic violence and sexual violence programs and legal services were most likely to see an urgent need for child and youth advocates in domestic violence and sexual violence programs. Respondents from children’s services organizations saw the need for victim’s advocates at Child Advocacy Centers as most urgent, and restorative justice staff said a dedicated person to help victims through the community justice and diversion process was most needed.

**Table 10: Differences in Average Rankings for Victim Advocacy Services by Type of Organization**

Organizations with at least 10 respondents	Child and youth advocates at DV & SV programs F (9,298) = 4.0, p<.001	Victim's advocates in police depart F (9,296) = 3.4, p<.001	Victim's Advocates at CACs F (9,292) =5.1, p<.001	Person to help victims through CJC & Diversion F (9,292) = 4.9, p<.001
Restorative Justice	2.9	2.8	3.2	<b>2.1</b>
Children's services	2.7	3.2	<b>1.8</b>	3.5
DCF	2.1	2.6	2.6	3.9
Department of Corrections	2.6	2.2	2.9	2.9
DAIL	2.7	<b>1.8</b>	3.3	3.2
DV or SV Program	<b>1.7</b>	2.2	3.4	3.7
Law Enforcement	2.1	3.0	2.5	3.5
Legal Services	<b>1.8</b>	2.5	3.1	3.2
Serving specific populations	2.2	<b>1.9</b>	3.2	3.5
State's Attorney	2.4	2.2	2.4	3.6
Total	2.2	2.5	2.8	3.4

Legal Services

Respondents were presented with eight types of legal service that victims of crime might need. As shown in Table 11, the needs identified as most urgent included a centralized legal resource for victims of crime, legal advocacy for victims of sexual violence.

**Table 11: Priority Rankings of Legal Service Needs for Victims of Crime**

Legal Services	Average Ranking of Urgency	Most Frequent Ranking
Centralized legal resource for victims of crime with toll free number to call for information and legal advice, assessment of legal needs, referral to legal representation (including funding for attorneys).	3.7	1
Legal advocacy for victims of sexual violence, including sexual trafficking	3.7	1
Representation of victims at each stage of the criminal process: including subpoenas, deposition, and communicating with State's Attorney	3.8	3
Legal representation to address a range of issues facing victims including access to funds, Power of Attorney, financial exploitation, control over finances, property, and life decisions	4.1	2
Legal representation for custody of children	4.3	5
Specialized attorneys with expertise in areas such as disabilities and elders to assist prosecutors with cases	4.9	5
Victim's Ombudsman to ensure that all state systems uphold victims' rights.	5.6	8
Increased capacity to provide supervision and training for Guardians Ad Litem	5.6	8

Underserved Populations

When asked about the most urgent needs for victims from underserved populations, respondents ranked culturally competent case managers and increased staff capacity to serve victims from underserved populations as top priorities (see Table 12).

**Table 12: Priority Rankings for Services to Crime Victims from Underserved Populations**

<b>Underserved populations</b>	<b>Average Ranking of Urgency</b>	<b>Most Frequent Ranking Score</b>
Culturally competent case managers to assess victim's needs, develop a plan, and connect victims to needed services	2.7	1
Increase staff and capacity to serve victims who are elders, persons with disabilities, new Americans and LGBTQ youth and adults	2.6	2
Increase capacity for Area Agencies on Aging to serve elders who are victims of crime and address financial exploitation and fraud	3.1	5
Outreach and education for victims tailored to their specific population (e.g., elders, new Americans, LGBTQ youth and adults)	3.2	4
Services for victims of human trafficking (both labor and sexual)	3.3	5

Significant differences appeared between respondents from different regions on three of the services for underserved populations (see Table 13). Respondents serving the Northwest region identified services for victims of human trafficking as most urgently needed.

**Table 13: Differences in Average Rankings of Services to Crime Victims in Underserved Populations by Region**

<b>Region of Vermont</b>	<b>Increased capacity among AAAs to serve elder victims</b> F <sub>(5,334)</sub> = 3.0, p<.01	<b>Outreach and Education for specific population</b> F <sub>(5,336)</sub> = 2.6, p<.05	<b>Services for victims of human trafficking (both labor &amp; sexual)</b> F <sub>(5,339)</sub> = 3.1, p<.01
Northwest	3.5	3.5	<b>2.9</b>
NE Kingdom	2.6	3.5	3.6
Central	3.2	<b>2.9</b>	3.5
South Central	3.3	3.1	3.2
Southern	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>	3.8
Statewide	3.2	3.3	3.3
Total	3.1	3.2	3.3

Health

As shown in Table 14, respondents identified the following two health needs as most urgent for victims:

- The availability of Certified SANE staff on a 24/7 basis in all Vermont hospitals
- Mental health services for child victims and witnesses

**Table 14: Priority Rankings for Health Services to Victims of Crime**

<b>Health Services for Victims of Crime</b>	Average Ranking of Urgency	Most Frequent Ranking
Certified adult and pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) available 24/7 in Vermont hospitals	1.9	1
Mental health services for child victims and child witnesses of violence	1.8	2
Mental health services for adult victims of crime	2.2	3

No significant differences were found between rankings from respondents from different regions in Vermont in average rankings of health services.

Training Needs

Survey respondents were asked to identify types of training that persons working with crime victims most urgently needed. As shown in Table 15, the need for training in trauma-informed practices, and understanding the issues involved for DCF-involved youth, were ranked as highest priority.

**Table 15: Priority Rankings of Training Needs to Support Victims of Crime**

Training Needs	Average Ranking of Urgency	Most Frequent Ranking
Trauma informed practices	2.4	1
Understanding issues for Department for Children and Families involved youth (due to being victims or victimizing others)	2.9	1
Understanding issues for victims of crime with disabilities	3.4	4
Understanding issues for elder victims of crime	3.7	5
Cultural competency and issues facing new Americans (e.g., criminal charges may have negative impact on victims' lives)	4.2	6
Cultural competency regarding LGBTQ youth and adults	4.3	6

Rankings of training needs related to cultural competency around New Americans and DCF involved youth were significantly different across Vermont regions (see Table 16). Respondents serving the Northwest region were most likely to see an urgent need for cultural competency training regarding new Americans, and least likely to see a need for training on DCF involved youth.

**Table 16: Differences in Average Rankings of Training Needs by Region of Vermont**

Region of Vermont	New Americans $F_{(5,339)} = 7.0, p < .001$	DCF involved youth $F_{(5,340)} = 2.5, p < .05$
Northwest	3.5	3.2
NE Kingdom	4.8	2.8
Central	4.9	2.8
South Central	4.0	2.4
Southern	4.4	2.6
Statewide	4.0	3.3
Total	4.2	2.9

Significant differences also emerged between respondents working for different types of organizations in their rankings of needed training (see Table 17).



**Table 17: Differences in Average Rankings of Needed Training by Type of Organization**

<b>Organizations with at least 10 respondents</b>	<b>LGBTQ</b> F <sub>(9,295)</sub> = 3.6., p<.001	<b>Trauma informed practices</b> F <sub>(9,298)</sub> = 4.2, p<.001	<b>DCF involved youth</b> F <sub>(9, 298)</sub> = 2.2, p<.05	<b>Elder Victims</b> F <sub>(9,295)</sub> = 5.5, p<.001	<b>Disabilities</b> F <sub>(9, 297)</sub> = 3.0, p<.01
Restorative Justice organization	4.4	2.4	2.8	3.8	3.5
Community-Based Children's services	4.3	<b>1.5</b>	2.6	<b>4.4</b>	3.9
Department for Children and Families	4.1	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	4.1	<b>4.2</b>
Department of Corrections	4.5	2.0	2.6	3.6	3.5
Department for Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living	<b>5.1</b>	3.5	3.6	<b>2.0</b>	2.3
Domestic Violence or Sexual Violence Program	3.7	2.2	3.2	<b>4.4</b>	3.5
Law Enforcement	4.5	3.2	2.5	3.3	3.3
Legal Services	<b>5.2</b>	2.9	3.4	3.2	2.7
Organization serving specific populations	<b>3.5</b>	2.8	3.5	4.2	3.4
State's Attorney	4.7	2.1	3.2	3.3	3.0
Total	4.3	2.4	2.9	3.8	3.4

Providers Needing Training

Focus group participants identified specific providers who might benefit from additional training. The survey asked respondents to rank order the providers' most needing training. Rising to top priority were training on community resources to law enforcement personnel and prosecutors, and for court personnel on Relief from Abuse Orders (see Table 18).

**Table 18: Priority Rankings of Providers that Need Training to Serve Victims of Crime**

<b>Providers Needing Training</b>	<b>Average Ranking of Urgency</b>	<b>Most Frequent Ranking</b>
Training to law enforcement and prosecutors about community resources for victims	2.2	1.0
Training court personnel to promote consistent responses to victims seeking Relief from Abuse Orders	2.3	1.0
Training mental health providers on how to work with domestic violence victims	2.6	3.0
Training for community-based victim's advocates on criminal procedures	2.8	4.0

No significant differences in ranking what types of providers need training emerged based on the regions respondents served. There were significant differences in how respondents ranked the types of providers who most urgently need training based on the types of organization in which they worked. (see Table 19).

**Table 19: Differences in Average Rankings of Providers Needing Training by Type of Organization**

<b>Organizations with at least 10 respondents</b>	<b>MH providers on DV</b> $F_{(9,297)} = 4.9,$ $p < .001$	<b>Court Personnel on RFA</b> $F_{(9,297)} = 3.7,$ $p < .001$	<b>Law enforcement &amp; prosecutors on resources</b> $F_{(9,295)} = 5.0,$ $p < .001$	<b>Community victim's advocates on criminal procedures</b> $F_{(9,296)} = 3.6,$ $p < .001$
Restorative Justice organization	3.3	2.4	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.5</b>
Community-Based Children's services	3.0	2.3	2.2	2.6
Department for Children and Families	2.3	2.0	2.5	3.2
Department of Corrections	2.3	2.6	2.1	2.9
Department for Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living	3.0	2.0	<b>1.5</b>	3.5
Domestic Violence or Sexual Violence Program	2.3	2.0	2.5	3.2
Law Enforcement	<b>2.2</b>	2.5	2.8	2.5
Legal Services	2.8	<b>1.8</b>	2.3	3.1
Organization serving specific populations	2.5	3.2	<b>1.6</b>	2.7
State's Attorney	3.1	2.2	2.2	<b>2.5</b>
Total	2.6	2.3	2.3	2.8

## Recommendations

These recommendations were developed by the VT Center for Crime Victim Services (Center) after analyzing the information generated from the focus groups of stakeholders and the results of the survey, and then integrating that information into our knowledge and understanding of how services to crime victims are delivered in Vermont.

The cost of implementing these recommendations statewide far exceeds the available increase in VOCA dollars. It is the Center's intention to engage in a competitive application process that targets these areas of need and gives communities and programs the opportunity to propose innovative and cost-effective programming to best meet these needs. The Center will be strategic in awarding the new VOCA dollars to ensure equitable geographic distribution of funds throughout Vermont.

### Housing

Emergency housing for victims of crime that provides a safe space 24/7 was rated as one the most urgent needs in the survey. However, the magnitude of this need and the cost of funding emergency shelter/housing 24/7 points to a more systemic housing crisis that the state of Vermont should address through a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach. The increase in VOCA funding cannot provide a solution to this problem in any meaningful, lasting way.

### Victim Advocacy

Expanding the number and types of Victim Advocates in Vermont was also rated as one of the most urgent needs in the survey. The list of recommendations below are in line with VOCA regulations which require a certain percentage of VOCA funds to be earmarked for domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and crime victims from traditionally under-served populations.

Expand the number of child and youth advocates within domestic and/or sexual violence programs and concurrently expand DCF's Family Services domestic and sexual violence consultant capacity to achieve more statewide coverage.

Provide funding opportunities to law enforcement agencies to hire victim advocates to provide advocacy to crime victims, including assistance with applying for victim's compensation.

Provide additional funding to Child Advocacy Centers to build capacity within those programs to become fully accredited through the National Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers.

Provide funding for culturally competent case managers to work with crime victims from traditionally underserved populations such as elders, people with disabilities, New Americans and LGBTQ youth.

Fund services for victims of Human Trafficking in the Northwest region of the state.

Vermont's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program is currently coordinated by a 28 hour/week Clinical Coordinator. Funding should be expanded to allow for a full-time Clinical Coordinator who can recruit and train additional pediatric and adult SANEs to improve 24/7 availability of SANEs in Vermont hospitals.

Identify regions in Vermont where there is a shortage of trauma-informed mental health services for child victims of domestic and sexual violence and develop capacity within victim service programs to provide those services.

Provide funding opportunities to Community Justice Centers to replicate the Parallel Justice Model increase support and services to crime victims.

### Legal Services

At all of the focus groups, stakeholders raised the need for legal services specifically tailored for crime victims involved with the criminal and/or civil justice process. The survey ranked it as the second most urgent need after housing and victim advocacy.

Currently, there are a number of different organizations providing legal services to victims of crime: Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, Vermont Legal Aid, Disability Rights Vermont, South Royalton Legal Clinic, Have Justice Will Travel and the Vermont Bar Association. One key recommendation is for these entities to collaborate and create a centralized legal network for victims of crime which would offer information, assessment of legal needs, legal advice and representation.

**Appendix A**  
Focus Group Participants

<b>Legal Services</b>	
Individual	Organization
Art Banks, Esq.	South Royalton Legal Clinic
Michael Benvenuto, Esq.	Vermont Legal Aid (Elders)
Nancy Breiden, Esq.	Vermont Legal Aid (Disability Law Project)
Carolyn Hanson, Esq.	Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Heather Holter, Coordinator	Vermont Council on Domestic Violence
Michele Olvera, Esq.	Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Jerome O’Neil, Esq.	President National Crime Victim’s Bar Association
Lindsey Owen, Esq.	Disability Rights Vermont
Bob Paollini, Esq. Exec. Dir.	Vermont Bar Association
Sandy Paritz, Esq.	Vermont Legal Aid (Poverty)
Barbara Prine, Esq.	Vermont Legal Aid (Disability Law Project)
Wynona Ward, Esq.	Have Justice Will Travel
<b>Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence</b>	
Individual	Organization
Cathleen Wilson Barkley, Exec. Dir	HOPEWorks
Linda Campbell, Exec. Dir.	Project Against Violent Encounters (PAVE)
Kelly Dougherty, Exec. Dir.	Women Helping Battered Women (WHBW)
Bobbie Gagne, Exec. Dir.	Sexual Assault Crisis Team (SACT), Washington
Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, Exec. Dir.	WomenSafe
Linda Ingold, Exec. Dir.	Safeline
Meg Kuhner, Exec. Dir.	Circle
Sara Kunz –Robinson, Special Initiatives Coordinator	Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Elisa Lucozzi, Advocacy Program Manager	Umbrella
Peggy O’Neil, Exec. Dir.	WISE
Roxie Rivard, Newport Site Mgr.	Umbrella
Karen Tronsgard-Scott, Exec. Dir.	Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Vickie Sterling, Exec. Dir.	Women’s Freedom Center
Chani Waterhouse Assoc. Dir. Member Program Support	Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
<b>Disability and Elders</b>	
Individual	Organization
Jocelyn Hard, Advocate	Disability Rights Vermont
Odessa Kilby, Exec. Dir.	Champlain Valley Agency on Aging
Virginia Milkey, Exec. Dir.	Community of Vermont Elders (COVE)
Ed Paquin, Exec. Dir.	Disability Rights Vermont

Focus Group Participants Continued

Community Justice Centers (CJCs) and Diversion Programs	
Individual	Organization
Willa Farrell, Director	Vermont Court Diversion Program
Catherine Kalkstein, Exec. Director	Washington County Diversion Program
Brian Keith, Exec. Director	Caledonia Diversion Program
Kym Anderson, Exec. Director	CJC, Randolph
Christine Aquino, Exec. Director	CJC, Hartford (White River)
Rain Banbury, Advocate	CJC, Burlington
Lisa Bedinger, Exec. Director	CJC, South Burlington
Yvonne Byrd, Exec. Director	CJC, Montpelier
Susan Cherry, Exec. Director	CJC, St. Johnsbury
Nina Curtis, Exec. Director	CJC, Franklin-Grand isle
Jill Evans, Exec. Director	CJC, Essex
Eliza Ferree, Exec. Director	CJC, Winooski
Anneke Hol, Exec. Director	CJC, Burlington
Carol Plante, Exec. Director	CJC, CJC, Hardwick
Barbra Shaw-Dorso, Victim Liaison Coordinator	CJC, Burlington
Clark Sheldon, Advocate	CJC, Burlington
Johannes Wheeldon, Executive Director	Vermont Community Justice Centers
LGBTQ	
Individual	Organization
Julia Berberan, Advocate	Safespace
Kim Fountain, Exec. Director	Safespace/Pride Center
Jenna Lee, Advocate	Safespace
Melissa Murray, Exec. Director	Outright Vermont
Amanda Rohdenburg	Outright Vermont
Children and Youth	
Individual	Organization
Ellie Breitmaier, Director Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit	Vermont Department for Children and Families
David Kennedy, Program Manager	Office of the Vermont Court Administrator, Guardian Ad Litem Program
Marc Meteyer, Grants Program Manager	Vermont Special Investigative Units
Jennifer Poehlman, Esq. Executive Director	Vermont Children’s Alliance
Karen Vastine, Principal Assist. to the Commissioner	Vermont Department for Children and Families
Priscilla White, Child Victim Treatment Director	Vermont Department for Children and Families

Focus Group Participants Continued

Children and Youth	
Individual	Organization
Wendy Boyce, Victim Advocate	Franklin County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Becky Curtis, Victim Advocate	Essex County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Courtney Hudgens, Victim Advocate	Addison County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Deb James, Victim Advocate	Addison County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Patrina Lingard, Victim Advocate	Windham County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Tammy Loveland, Victim Advocate	Bennington County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Kelsey McDonald, Victim Advocate	Rutland County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Nietra Panagoulis, Victim Advocate	Chittenden County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Meghan Place, Victim Advocate	Rutland County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Daron Raleigh, Victim Advocate	Windsor County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Naomi Roche, Victim Advocate	Rutland County State’s Attorneys’ Office
David Sicard, Victim Advocate	Grand Isle County State’s Attorneys’ Office
Kelly Woodward, Victim Advocate	Franklin County State’s Attorneys’ Office
New Americans Refugees and Immigrants	
Individual	Organization
Judy Dickson, Esq.	Vermont Refugee Resettlement
Michelle Jenness, Esq.	Association of Africans Living in Vermont
Amila Merdzanovic, Director Field Office	Vermont Refugee Resettlement
Thato Ratsebe, Associate Director	Association of Africans Living in Vermont

## Appendix B

### VOCA Survey

Thank you for taking 10-15 minutes to respond to this survey. It has been prompted by an increase in FFY 15 VOCA assistance funding, which can be applied to a variety of direct victim services. As the steward of this fund, the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services is conducting a strategic planning process to determine the areas of greatest unmet needs. Your thoughts are very important to us and will remain anonymous. If you have questions, contact [Gene.Nelson@CCVS.Vermont.gov](mailto:Gene.Nelson@CCVS.Vermont.gov).

Please respond **no later than January 8, 2016**.

#### 1. What county does your organization serve?

- Addison
- Bennington
- Caledonia
- Chittenden
- Essex
- Franklin
- Grand Isle
- Lamoille
- Orleans
- Orange
- Rutland
- Washington
- Windham
- Windsor

Statewide



2. Which of the following best describes the organization in which you work?

- Restorative Justice organization (such as Community Justice Center, Diversion)
- Community-Base Children's services (such as Child Advocacy Center, Supervised Visitation)
- Courts
- Department for Children and Families
- Department of Corrections
- Department for Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
- Domestic Violence or Sexual Violence Program
- Health/Medical Services
- Law Enforcement
- Legal Services (including attorney in private practice)
- Mental Health Services
- Social Justice Organization serving populations such as persons with disabilities, elders, new Americans, LGBTQ youth and adults, among others
- State's Attorney
- Other (please specify)

3. Are you a victim advocate -- that is, someone whose primary role is to provide direct services to victims of crime (this does not include attorneys)?

- Yes
- No

4. Below is a list of possible **victim advocacy** services or programs. Please rank in order of urgency, from #1 as most urgent to #5 as least urgent. Note: you may only assign a number once, for example, #1 can be assigned solely to one category.

<input type="text"/>	Embedded victim's advocates in police departments
<input type="text"/>	Child and youth advocates at Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence programs
<input type="text"/>	Victim's Advocates at Child Advocacy Centers
<input type="text"/>	Advocates specifically for children experiencing bullying
<input type="text"/>	A dedicated person to help victims through the Community Justice Center and Diversion process

**The following three questions regard supports and services for victims of crime - these supports and services are divided into three categories.**

5. For services to **underserved populations**. Please rank in order of urgency from #1 as most urgent.

<input type="text"/>	Culturally competent case managers to assess victim's needs, develop a plan, and connect victims to needed services
<input type="text"/>	Increase capacity for Area Agencies on Aging to serve elders who are victims of crime and address financial exploitation and fraud
<input type="text"/>	Increase staff and capacity to serve victims who are elders, persons with disabilities, new Americans and LGBTQ youth and adults
<input type="text"/>	Outreach and education for victims tailored to their specific population (e.g., elders, new Americans, LGBTQ youth and adults)
<input type="text"/>	Services for victims of human trafficking (both labor and sexual)

6. For services relating to **housing**, please rank in order of urgency from #1 as most urgent.

<input type="text"/>	Emergency housing that provides safe space 24/7 for victims of domestic violence and their children
<input type="text"/>	Paid overnight staff at domestic violence shelters
<input type="text"/>	Safe housing for homeless and runaway youth who have been victimized

7. For services relating to **health**, please rank in order of urgency from #1 as most urgent.

<input type="text"/>	Certified adult and pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) available 24/7 in Vermont hospitals
<input type="text"/>	Mental health services for adult victims of crime
<input type="text"/>	Mental health services for child victims and child witnesses of violence

8. Here is a list of **legal services**. Please rank in order of urgency, from #1 as most urgent.

<input type="text"/>	Centralized legal resource for victims of crime with toll free number to call for information and legal advice, assessment of legal needs, referral to legal representation (including funding for attorneys).
<input type="text"/>	Increased capacity to provide supervision and training for Guardians Ad Litem (GAL)
<input type="text"/>	Legal advocacy for victims of sexual violence, including sexual trafficking
<input type="text"/>	Legal representation to address a range of issues facing victims including access to funds, Power of Attorney, financial exploitation, control over finances, property, and life decisions
<input type="text"/>	Legal representation for custody of children
<input type="text"/>	Representation of victims at each stage of the criminal process: including subpoenas, deposition, and communicating with State's Attorney
<input type="text"/>	Specialized attorneys with expertise in areas such as disabilities and elders to assist prosecutors with cases
<input type="text"/>	Victim's Ombudsman to ensure that all state systems uphold victims rights.

9. Please rank the following broad categories of crime victim needs in order of urgency, with #1 being most urgent. Refer to the previous questions for more detailed lists of needs within each category.

<input type="text"/>	Victim advocacy: expand the number and types of advocates in the state
<input type="text"/>	Housing supports and services for victims
<input type="text"/>	Health related supports and services
<input type="text"/>	Supports and services to underserved populations
<input type="text"/>	Legal services: expand and offer more specialized services to victims of crime (such as specialized representation, Ombudsman)

10. Training needs were often identified. Please rank in order of urgency, from #1 as most urgent.

<input type="text"/>	Cultural competency regarding LGBTQ youth and adults
<input type="text"/>	Cultural competency and issues facing new Americans (e.g., criminal charges may have negative impact on victim's lives)
<input type="text"/>	Trauma informed practices
<input type="text"/>	Understanding issues for Department for Children and Families involved youth (due to being victims or victimizing others)
<input type="text"/>	Understanding issues for elder victims of crime
<input type="text"/>	Understanding issues for victims of crime with disabilities

11. Focus groups identified specific providers who might benefit from additional training. Please rank in order of urgency from #1 as most urgent.

<input type="text"/>	Training mental health providers on how to work with domestic violence victims
<input type="text"/>	Training court personnel to promote consistent responses to victims seeking Relief from Abuse Orders
<input type="text"/>	Training to law enforcement and prosecutors about community resources for victims
<input type="text"/>	Training for community-based victim's advocates on criminal procedures

12. Anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your valuable input!