

Victim Advocacy

Strengths, Limits and Effects

By

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Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mentor Janice who runs when she sees me headed to her office, who kinda tricked me into doing an unpaid internship again even if I sorta wanted to do it anyway.

And to my sister, Leeza who may have had to spend a couple of nights up past her bedtime to help me proofread this.

Abstract

When you think of the criminal justice system, you think of law enforcement, lawyers, and judges. However, there is another group of people who are not talked about often but are just as important. This group is called victim advocates. Although this group has been within the criminal justice system for around 50 years, victim advocates are still not widely known. Victim advocates are the main point of contact for victims, providing them with resources, court event information, explanations of rights, and how the criminal justice system works. I will further explore this topic through interviews with different advocates and those who work with them, statistics, and my personal experience as an intern within the criminal justice system. I will use the information I gathered to bring awareness to the strengths and limitations a victim advocate can provide, as well as to how this department continues to grow and adapt.

Introduction

I never planned to do an internship with Marion County's Victim Assistance (VAD), especially not twice. I first did an internship with VAD back in April of 2024 - September 2024. I then returned to do another internship in 2025 from April to the beginning of October. I returned to my internship to understand further of what a victims advocate could do for the juvenile sector in the county. I knew I wanted to focus my thesis on what I have learned in my first time around in the internship but also apply the knowledge I have gained along with the knowledge I would gain due to focusing the second internship on Juvenile Justice. Following the conclusion of my second internship, I applied for and got a temp job with VAD as a victim advocate and as of June 2026, I am still working and gaining more experience and knowledge at VAD.

To show some of the work I have done during my internship, I added an 8-week journal from the start of my internship in April 2025 till the end of May 2026. This journal is more detailed than I typically do, because I wanted to ensure I explained my role as an advocate and what I do efficiently.

I have provided a very small timeline to highlight some key dates that have impacted the roles of victim advocates including the date the role was created and why. Following the history, I will talk about the strengths that victim assistance has and how it benefits the victims through their hard time. Following that, I will talk about the limits of victim assistance, how it affects victims and what could be improved for them. To end, I

will be highlighting the effects that victim assistance had on a smaller scale by focusing on how victims who worked with Marion County Victim Assistance have felt about the services they had received through the county. This information was compiled through surveys that advocates do at the closing out of cases, a case closes when a defendant is either found guilty or pleads guilty and is sentenced. These surveys range from the time frame of January 2024 - June of 2026. These surveys focus on three questions that pertain to the services that victim assistance provided and if the victim felt they received those services. I have also included quotes from victims that were on the survey in all three sections to build off of.

Literature Review

History

There have always been victims of crime but in 1974, it was apparent those victims needed someone to advocate for them. "Victimology in the 1970s helped to buttress what the public already knew – that crime was at unacceptably high levels and its victims were neglected" (Lee, S). Victims who feel neglected by the system are less likely to want to help the system. "One individual who helped transform this problem into a reformed system was Donald E. Santarelli, Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) in 1974. He had read the then-new research by Frank Cannavale that documented this stunning finding: the largest cause of prosecution failure was the loss of once-cooperative witnesses who simply stopped helping a justice system that was indifferent to their most basic needs" (Lee, S). 1974, was when the National Organization of Victim Assistance was created to help with victims feeling neglected by the system. "By the end of the 1970s, many states had at least a few victim assistance programs, and 10 states had networks of programs. There grew a common understanding of the basic elements of service: crisis intervention, counseling, support during criminal justice proceedings, compensation and restitution. LEAA continued to promote victim assistance through its state block grants and

established the first National Victim Resource Center in 1978” (Lee, S). As the programs began the impact they have grown which increased the programs growth. “In 1980, NOVA incorporated the growing demand for victims to have legitimate access to the justice system into a new policy platform on victims' rights and the initiation of a National Campaign for Victim Rights, which had as its core, a National Victims' Rights Week, endorsed and implemented in 1981 by President Ronald W. Reagan” (Lee, S). Victim rights are different from state to state; they are rights that victims can request. “In the four years after the publication of the *Final Report*, the Office of Justice Programs and the Office for Victims of Crime worked closely with outside groups, notably NOVA, to implement the recommendations. States began receiving VOCA funds in 1986, training programs for justice professionals were disseminated widely, standards for service for victim programs were developed, and regional training for victim service providers was offered across the Nation” (Lee, S). Funds are what make victim services, training and programs accessible. “In 1995, OVC first supported the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) sponsored by the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization. The NVAA includes a research-based 40-hour curriculum on victimology, victims' rights, and myriad other topics; as of 2003, 2,000 students from every state and territory, as well as from seven other nations, have graduated from the NVAA. In 1998, OVC co-funded the first State Victim Assistance Academy in Michigan. Subsequently, OVC has funded an additional 18 State Academies. In 1999, Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania,

Texas, and Utah received first-year funding. In 2002, Arizona, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, and Oregon received first-year funding. In 2003, Georgia, Illinois, and New York received first-year funding. In 2004, California, Minnesota, South Carolina, and Tennessee received first-year funding. “Even though change can be slow when expanding on a subject not pursued often it can expand.

System Based Advocacy

There are two different types of advocates, community based and system based. This paper will be talking about system-based advocates. “System-based advocates often similarly see their role as assisting victims in making their own informed decisions. Yet a more prominent aspect of this process for system-based advocates will often be to address any barriers to the victim’s participation in the law enforcement investigation and criminal prosecution” (Lonsway pg. 25). System based advocates are typically part of the district attorney office as a specific division dedicated to victims. “Because every agency has different resource opportunities and challenges, it is important to first thoughtfully and strategically define the type of employee who will fill the victim advocate role. Victim advocates can range from a college graduate to a fully trained and licensed therapist. While many offices cannot employ social workers or highly credentialed individuals to serve in the advocate role, it is important that at a minimum the victim advocate receives training described below and later in this paper, that includes being trauma-informed and victim-centered. Advocates must also receive

training on or research themselves what local community service providers exist in order to make meaningful referrals. Finally, advocates must be specially trained on the various local, state, or federal claim programs to which victims can apply for reimbursement or support.” (Prior pg. 12) While every advocate may have different educations, advocates receive training on how to help victims and what tools they have at their disposal. “[J]urisdictions should elect a primary advocate who will be responsible for handling a majority of the case from beginning to end. In this scenario, it is important to explain to the victim that if the primary advocate is unavailable, another highly qualified and trusted advocate will step in without making the victim feel like he or she is being passed around” (Prior pg. 14). Primary advocates want victims to know they can talk to any other advocate if they are unavailable so their needs can be met. “We are required to protect the confidentiality and privacy of persons receiving services. We shall not disclose any personally identifying information or individual information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through our program; or reveal individual client information without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent of the person or in the case of an un-emancipated minor, the minor and the parent or guardian or in the case of persons with disabilities, the guardian) about whom the information is sought. Consent shall not be given by the abuser of the minor, a person with disabilities, or the abuser of the other parent of the

minor” (VAD pg. 30). Due to system-based advocate working with prosecution there is a level of confidentiality applied to it.

“Advocates serve as a survivor’s guide through the justice system, navigating the process of connecting to resources and compensation, while also working closely with law enforcement and prosecutors at all stages of a case.” (De La Rue) Each county has different resources available to victims but there are resources available. “Victim services include a wide range of help for victim-survivors, including hotlines, legal advocacy, economic assistance and compensation, emergency and transitional shelter, crisis intervention, and short-term treatment such as psychotherapy and support groups. Yet fewer than one in three victim-survivors report receiving help including financial, medical, and mental health assistance, and in 2022, only 9 percent received assistance from a victim services provider” (Wright). There are wide ranges of different types of victim services but if victims don’t know about them how can they use them. “The bureaucracy that is the judicial system often leads victims to feeling as though their needs are not being met, or at the least, their needs are not a priority. This bureaucracy also creates barriers that make it difficult for advocates to get support in place. There are many forms to complete, and hoops to go through. As a result, the support or compensation often comes many months later. For many advocates, these bureaucracies consumed a lot of their already overtaxed days and affected their ability to provide other supports to crime victims.” (De La Rue) Not knowing about services is

not the only hindrance a victim faces, the system they are supposed to rely on is also behind. "This would include reducing paperwork requirements or minimizing forms and making access to funds happen more quickly...Frequently advocates carry a case load between 400 and 700 cases a year, making it impossible to provide the level of relationship building and care needed."(De La Rue). The over-working and paperwork involved when helping victims decreased the amount of time provided to victims by advocates.

Internship

Week one- April 1, 3, 4

I want to start my journal off by stating, I completed an internship with Marion County Victim Assistance in 2024 but I am returning for 2025 to get my practicum credits but I am focusing on the Juvenile side of victim advocacy this time around.

Janice, my supervisor, just advised me to get familiar again and go with other advocates to Grand Juries or other court events. Within 30ish minutes of being in the office, Pami the boss, asked how comfortable I would be to go to the Annex courthouse. I said I would be nervous but if needed I could handle it. Luckily, another advocate was able to go. Shortly afterwards, I went with Jennifer to some Grand Juries. The first Grand Jury was Spanish speaking, which wasn't the most helpful in getting a refresher on what is said in GJ. I will say, I did miss the waiting of GJ which may sound weird but during the time of waiting for the next case to be called or jurors to deliberate it is fun to talk to the officers and attorneys who are also waiting for their case to be called in. You can learn a lot during those moments.

Besides GJ, I also got a lot of phone calls from victims who were wanting case updates or needing resources or both. When I got my first call, I was nervous because I hadn't talked to a victim in 6 months but having the headset on and getting that call

transfer from Sam (VAD front desk receptionist) made me click right into the advocate roll again.

Another fun essential item I completed this week was that I had to re-due my CJIS training so that I could have CJIS clearance, which is what allows me to use eProsecutor and eCourts.

The rest of the week was spent taking phone calls and getting reacclimated to VAD again.

I also got an intern/volunteer panel on Thursday at 4 for the incoming interns and volunteers. At this time, I would be answering questions and such.

Week two - April 8, 10, 11

This week, I started my Juvenile training. I met ADVOC Erik at the Juvenile department on Tuesday morning. Unfortunately, at this point, I still did not have my badge to gain access. Luckily, I have Erik's number to text to get into the building. The juvenile training was to learn/watch the explanation. The first thing that happens every morning is to check for any in custody, which then means looking at the case and seeing if there is a victim to call. Once that is verified, you call the victim, notify them the Youth is in custody, and provide any information you can. Following that, you get the day's docket, which is a sheet with all of the court events and times on it. You use Epros to pull up each case and see if a victim is coming in or needing updates post-event. Erik and I then headed over to Court room 1 which is called Juv 1 around 8:50. This morning there were no victims coming in person for any court events, but one victim did want to appear via phone. When a victim wants to appear via phone, we use a specified phone number depending on if the event is in Juv 1 or Juv 2. From there, we then give a specific code that matches with the time of the event. In Juvenile court, each court event is typically 10 minutes or less, which allows for the special codes to work. Juvenile is different than at the annex. At the Annex, we inform the courts if a victim wants to appear via phone and provide the court with their number, so when the case is called, the court will call the victim. At Juvenile, the victim has to call into the courts themselves for their hearing. After texting the victim the code, we headed to Juv 1 to watch the

court events for the morning. Most of the Juvenile docket is completed by 10 am and any special events are afterwards, which typically refers to anything longer than 10 minutes.

Around 10am the docket was completed so we headed back to the office to go over the events. The court event I saw that day was a detention hearing and settlement conference (Setc). In juvenile court, there is a different language used than adult court. So, a settlement conference is a status conference. A detention hearing only occurs when a juvenile is in detention after they are released, the meetings are mostly Setc. I will also mention in one of the hearings an adjudicatory hearing was set which means a trial was set. The other court events we talked about were probation termination hearing, set-aside, and relief of registration.

- Probation termination is a hearing that discusses the youth ending probation. When a youth asks for this, his attorney sends a letter to the district attorney's office.
- Set-aside is a hearing where a youth asked for his judgement to be set-aside which means he would not have a record.
- Relief of registration is when a youth asks to not have to register on the sex offender list. This process is typically done alongside a set-aside hearing. When a Relief or Registration is filed by the Youth attorney, after it is filed, the DDA informs VAD (Victim assistance) who will reach out to the victim in the case which depending on the

age of the victim could be the parent. The advocate would then explain the process of relief and what it entails. The advocate would then ask for the victim or their parents' opinion on the matter. If they do not object, the advocate would inform the DDA but if they do object, the advocate would still reach out to the DDA and inform them on the matter, then they would inform the victim or the parents that a hearing will be set where they have the right to provide a statement to the court. At the hearing, the defense attorney would argue first as to why the Youth should have relief; during this they are allowed to call witnesses. Then the DDA would argue as to why relief should not be granted during this time the Victim and or parents provide time to read their statements. The judge, after listening to both attorneys, would take a look at the statute. The judge follows the statute and will make his decision based on this.

Depending on the rights a victim has requested, a call would be made to them informing them of the hearing and if they have an opinion on the matter. Victims do have a right to attend these hearings and provide a statement.

After learning about the different hearings and going over different documents, we went through my Ad Hocs which are tasks assigned by the case manager to complete. Some of my Ad Hocs were related to probation termination. Erik and I looked through them and I watched him make the calls. I would end up making calls on my own. At 4pm we got the docket for the next day and we went through and made use of the cases where victims were contacted and informed.

On Friday, I had more training with the ADVOK Katrina. Which was similar to Tuesday -- more watching and learning and then making a few calls of my own.

At the office, I did my initial meeting with Janice and Dr. Arimoto, along with two of the new interns, Diana and Katie. Following the meeting, I worked on Rights and Restitutions. Which means, I call victims on the list and depending on what is needed I inform them of their rights, the next court event and answer any questions they may have, and if they have restitution due to the crime I will get the restitution information to provide to Ashley(the restitution ADVOK). After completing that, I went down to the second floor with Jancie to get my badge so I could get into the Juvenile office next week due to being solo.

Week three - April 15, 17, 18

On Tuesday, I had my first solo day at the Juvenile office. It didn't start out so great, I was a couple of minutes late due to it being 8 minutes away from where I have worked prior. It also didn't help that my key card was not working, which meant I was even later, but I was at my desk by 8:10. My first solo day wasn't too chaotic. There was one in custody, so I only had to make one phone call that morning to notify the victim. I did not have any victims appearing in-person on Tuesday, but I did have a victim who wanted the conference code texted to them. Unlike an adult court, where the court staff will call victims who want to appear via phone. In Juvenile, as the advocates, we provide the phone number to call depending on if the event is in courtroom one or two. Then, we provide a code depending on the time the event is taking place. After the events have concluded, I will call the victims for each of the cases and provide updates along with updating the cases on our spreadsheet reflect the next court date, what the event is and any notes regarding if the victims were notified, if they plan to appear in person or they don't want to contact to name a couple of the notes. Around 11 am, I headed back to the VAD office. I spent the rest of the afternoon taking phone calls from victims and working on DV ORD, which are Outreach forms. The forms have a list of services on the back, and as advocates, we are supposed to call the victim and if there is no note stating it is ok to leave a voicemail, then one cannot be left. But if the victim answers, we will provide information on the case, typically this means informing them

of future court events and what they mean. We also explain and go over their victim rights and file out a VRRF (Victim Rights Request Form). I was also asked to cover reception for an hour and then later in the day for 20 minutes. Covering reception for the lunch hour is typically boring, few calls come in, and because I need to be available to answer any incoming calls, I can't make any of my own calls for my cases.

On the 15th, I had my on-call shift which means from 8:30am until the next day at 8:30am, I could be called to assist a victim at the hospital. This also means that my phone had to be on unless I was in the courtroom then it needed to be on vibrate. On this day, I did not get called out.

Later in the week, I filled out my 3rd CVC application. CVC is the crime victim compensation. Typically, we advise victims to have our office fill it out and file it for them because by doing that, we, the advocates, can upload certain files like police reports (which do have to be redacted) to the CVC portal while a case is still open. I helped the parent of a victim fill out the application, and because I was filling out the application, I had to read every part to them.

Week four - April 22, 24, 25

Before Tuesday, I knew I would have one victim coming in person for a settlement conference. Well, when I got into work, I got a message from Karina about two other cases where victims will be coming in person. So instead of meeting one person, I was meeting three. I was very nervous! I have met victims in person at other court events, but I have not done it at the juvenile court yet. I did manage to survive. The one downside to so many victims coming in for the morning is that there was not enough buffer between meeting with them and the court event. That being said, one of my cases did close. I felt very stressed dealing with three victims back-to-back, but once I got back to the office. I took a breath, then got ready to make phone updates to the other victims regarding their court events that happened that morning.

Later that day, we got an email regarding a case from back in 2008 where the youth is requesting relief of registration, so we the VAD office were asked by the DDA to find out if the victim has an objection. The fun part of this task was that there was not a listed victim on the case file due to it being so old but after reading the judgement on the case, we figured out it was an officer who was injured. From there, I asked Sam (the receptionist) to please run a TLO which means something, but Sam looks up the person's contact info. From there, I attempted to call the officer but got his voice mail. I did leave a brief message. I also completed my JJIS training which would allow me to use the same program as the PO (probation offices). After watching the video, I was still

confused on how it works so I tried asking my fellow juvenile advos, and they informed me they don't even use JJIS so that was a bust.

When I went into the office on Thursday, I found out that the officer called me back on Wednesday when I was not in the office, so I tried calling that day but got voicemail again. I would later contact him on Friday and inform him what was going on and get his opinion on the matter, which means does he object or not regarding the relief of restitution.

On Friday this week, I asked Robyn, the legal secretary for the Juvenile office, how to use JJIS. She was able to show me what she can do on it, but she advised me it is easier to just ask the PO for the information.

I should prefer this but every morning, when I get into the Juv office, I check which cases on the docket have victims and if those victims have been notified. If the victim has not been notified, then I will call them and inform them of the morning court event. I will also check the notes on our spreadsheet to see if a victim wants notifications. Most mornings, I will watch the court events due to a basic rule of thumb to not call victims till around ten. So, I will watch court events then go back to the office and call the victims from those court events and provide them with what happened during the event and when the next event will occur. Typically for Setc they happen once a month, detention hearings on the other hand have to happen every 10 days

unless there is a specific reason for it. This is due to there being a rule that a juvenile can't just stay in detention while the case is ongoing if there are other placement options.

Week 5 - April 29 May 1, 2

I had my first Juvenile trial at 2 pm. I have not had much contact with the victim and her mom, but I did call the prior week to see if trial prep was wanted. That day would be the first time since week two that I would be at Juv all day. That being said, for the trial, I met the victim and her mom around 1:30. I talked with them for a bit, explained how it would go, and just talked with the victim. After talking for a bit, DDA O'Donnell came out and led us to a side room from Juv 2. When the trial began, I sat in the room with the victim and drew up a rough layout of the courtroom to let her know what it would look like and who would be in there. After about 20 minutes of talking, DDA O'Donnell came in and said it was time for her to testify. I got to see that part of the trial. After she was done, we went back into the room, and due to how emotional the whole process was, I just talked and asked her questions about other things to get her mind off the trial. After talking for a bit, her mom came back in and said "over, let's go". Due to the stress of the situation, I was not going to keep them any longer than needed. I made a note for myself to call the victim's mom in a couple of days to go over and post-trial questions or concerns. In total, the trial was only 44 minutes, even though 3 hours were reserved for it. After the trial was complete, I worked on DV ORDs ((Domestic Violence Outreach form)).

With Thursday being my short day, I did not get as much done. I called one victim to inform them of a detention hearing that morning. There were no in-person victims

this morning, so I spent part of the morning just watching the different detention hearings and settlement conferences. After watching the court events, I went back to the office to update the victims on the cases, inform them of the next court date, explain what happened at the event, and answer any questions they may have. If their victim rights have not been done yet, I will ask if they have time to go over them. After completing the calls and updating the spreadsheet, I will work on more DV ORD.

On Friday, there was a release hearing scheduled. It was really interesting to see this type of event because I have not been able to see one before. It was also really interesting because before the hearing, Robyn, who is the legal secretary, printed five hundred pages of discovery for DDA O'Donnell and PO Beach to present to the judge as their argument against why the youth shouldn't be released. So, like a detention or settlement conference, the PO opens the case, but unlike the other hearing, they then pass the floor to the DFA (defense attorney), where the DFA will begin calling in witnesses to testify about the youth and the progress he has made while in detention. After the DFA asked questions to the witnesses, the DDA had a chance to ask questions. After that, the DFA can question the witness again. During this time, the judge can also ask some questions. After the DFA witnesses, the DDA calls his witnesses; his only witness was the PO. Which I thought was interesting because I didn't realize the PO could be called to testify, but it does make sense based on the circumstances.

Later that afternoon, I learned that there was a different victim than I thought in regard to the 2008 relief of restitution case; the victim that was awarded restitution was the city of Salem. Which then led me to messaging Janice about whom to contact regarding the city of Salem. She was able to provide me with a phone number, where I contacted Gale, who handles restitution for the City of Salem. I was interested in explaining what/why I was calling due to the case being so old. After talking with Gale, I messaged the DDA on the case and informed them Gale will contact VAD when she has more answers regarding the City of Salem's stance regarding the restitution.

Week 6 - May 6, 8, 9

On Thursday, there was a unity breakfast at the detention facility. This was awesome to participate in because I got to see a bit of what the detention facility looks like, which is true, and to be told it is similar to what I have seen of juvenile facilities. The unity part of the breakfast was due to it being with the PO and other detention staff. I was informed by others that last year, when this occurred, the court staff, like judges and staff, were invited, but this year they were not. After breakfast, I didn't have any victims coming in that morning, but advocate Karina was meeting with two victims plus their mom for a court event. Part of the reason for that was that Karina is one of the Spanish-speaking advocates, and the victims' mothers were Spanish-speaking.

On Thursday, I was also scheduled to be on-call. This means making sure my phone is on the ringer and my person for the next 24 hours, except when I am in the courtroom, then I have it on vibrate. Around 5 pm that night, I was called out. I was kind of nervous due to not having done this in about 8ish months. I completed the call around 7:30 and headed back home. Every call I have been on is different, and each victim has different needs or wants during the call. When on-call, we have a bag that holds two sweatsuits, two bags of toiletries, two pairs of flip flops, four packets (2 English, 2 Spanish), other potential resources, and a 9-1-1 phone. On this call, I provided a packet, which has resources regarding the CJ system, CHS (Center for Hope and Safety), a pamphlet regarding restraining orders, along with a VAD business card.

Week 7 - May 13, 15, 16

On Tuesday afternoon, I had my first GJ (Grand Jury) in about 8 months. I was able to introduce myself to the victim and his mom as their advocate on the case. I was also able to go over the GJ process and what to expect. I went over the victim's right request form. If events are on Epros at the time of the GJ, I will inform the victim of the next court event, which is typically an Arraignment or a plea. If they plan to appear in person or over the phone, I make a note to let the Annex court advocate know.

I also want to note that before going to GJ, I would read over the notes of the case, to check to see what resources a victim may need. Resources could include a restitution sheet and a restitution pamphlet, a CVC pamphlet (Crime Victim Compensation), a CHS (Center for Hope and Safety) pamphlet, a Victim's Rights pamphlet, a Criminal Justice System pamphlet, 2-1-1, and NWHS (Northwest Human Services). These are the most common resources I provide at the Grand Jury. There is a pamphlet wall as well in the Grand Jury room, so if, while talking with a victim, I could provide them with a pamphlet related to their needs.

When meeting a victim at GJ and/or calling them before the GJ, I inform them of the date, time, and location. I will provide a summary of the process. I inform them that they will be providing a testimony in a separate room with 8 other people. 7 of those people will be jury members who are members of the public, along with the DDA. I

inform them that their only task is to tell the truth and that I don't know if there is an answer. I inform them they may have to answer some questions from the Jury, but to wait for the DDA to motion if it is ok to answer those questions. I will ask if they have any further questions or need clarification.

On Thursday, the office was unusually crowded, due to a recent homicide case. Homicide cases are interesting with victim assistance due to those cases being sensitive. Janice is the only advocate to manage those cases, besides certain cases with Spanish-speaking victims. It was interesting to watch the preliminary hearing. DDA O'Donnell, during the hearing, requested a waiver hearing. The waiver hearing is a time for the DDA to present evidence to a judge to have the case waived to adult court. From what I learned, it is very unlikely that the case would end up being waived due as most juvenile cases they are sent to be waived don't meet the requirements to be waived.

On Friday, there were only 2 cases on the docket and no victims to call, so I spent time working on my R&R(Rights and Restitution) sheet. When doing my R&R calls, I got a Spanish speaking victim that was not listed as Spanish speaking, so I asked them to hold for the interpreter and dialed Language Line (LL). Using LL, I was able to go over the victim's rights with the victim and inform them of what has occurred in the case.

Week 8 - May 20, 22, 23

This week was fairly slow. I mostly spent this week calling victims before or after court events to inform them of what happened. So I will use this page to give a detailed summary of my day.

Every morning, I come into the office, and I check my email to see if any in-custody (IC) has happened. IC can be youths that have been taken into custody due to being found committing a crime, due to a warrant that was put out on them due to missing a court event or check-in with their PO (Probation officer), or a probation violation. If there are any IC, I would look up the case using ePros (eprosecutor), check to see if there are any victims listed. From there, I would call the victim and inform them of the detention hearing that will be occurring that morning. I would also inform them of their right to appear in person, over the phone, or not at all, and that they can receive an update after the event. If the case is a probation violation, I would first check the victim's rights and see if they have requested their right to be notified about critical stages. If they have checked that correctly, I would call and inform them of the morning court event and what it means. If the rights were not checked, I would make a note as to why a call was not made. After making all the calls I need to make in the morning, I will see if there are any victims appearing in person. If victims are appearing in person, I would head over to the court a few minutes early to meet with them or wait until the court staff sends a message informing me they have checked in.

If no victims are appearing that morning, I will typically go and watch the court events that are happening that morning. Most of the court events that occur are settlement conferences and detention hearings. The court events in the morning are typically ten minutes or less, which means if an event starts later, then everything gets put behind. Detention hearing and settlement conference are very similar; the only difference is for detention hearing, the Youth is still in custody, so part of the hearing is talking about placement options for the Youth. But both events typically talk about what needs to happen next in the case. The DFA (Defense attorney) may be waiting for an evaluation (having seen Juvenile courts events for about 2 months now, evaluation can take a bit of time to occur) or needs to look over evidence with the youth.

After the court events are complete, I will head back to the office and do follow-up calls with victims. I will inform them of what occurred during the court event, answer any questions they may have, inform them of the next court date, ask if they plan to appear in person or would like to appear over the phone, last I would see if they need any resources the most commonly asked one is restitution. Which then leads me to explain how CVC (crime victim compensation) works and how restitution works. Restitution requires the victim to send the receipts of the stolen, damaged, or injured property caused by the youth and the cost of it. I would provide them with the juvenile restitution email. From there, I would send an email to whatever DDA was assigned to that case to inform them that a victim will be sending an email for restitution. After

completing the call, I will write my notes regarding the call and mark the services I performed in Epros. I will then update the case on Google Sheets to mark the next court event date and what it is.

After completing the calls, I will work on ad hoc tasks (tasks assigned by case managers typically reaching out to victims), DV ORD (Domestic Violence Outreach form), or R&R (Right and Restitution)

INTERN TIME SHEETName: 1224Month: April 2025

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
4/1	8	12			4
4/3	2:30	5			2.5
4/4	8	12	1	5	8

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
4/8	8	12	1	5	8
4/10	8	11:30			3.5
4/11	8	12	1	5	8

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
4/15	8	12	1	5	8
4/17	8	11:30			3.5
4/18	8	12	1	5	8

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
4/22	8	12	4	5	8
4/24	8	11:30			3.5
4/25	8	12			4
4/29	8	12	1	5	

Total Monthly Hours 69

INTERN TIME SHEETName: 122yMonth: May 2025

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
5/6	8	12			4
5/8	8	12	5:30	7:30	4 6
5/9	8	12			4

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
5/13	8	12			4
5/15	8	11:30			3.5
5/16	8	12	1	5	8

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
5/20	8	12			4
5/22	8	11:30			3.5
5/23	8	12			4

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
5/24	8	12			4
5/29	8	11:30			3.5
5/30	8	12			4

Total Monthly Hours 58.5

INTERN TIME SHEET

Name: Izzy Month: June 2025

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
6/3	8	12			4
6/5	8	11:30			4
6/6	8	12			4

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
6/10	8	12			4
6/12	8	12			4
6/13	8	12			4

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
6/17	8	12	1	5	8
6/20	8	12			4

Date & Day	Time In	Time Out	Time In	Time Out	Total
6/24	8	12	1	5	8
6/26	8	12	1	5	8
6/27	8	12			4

Total Monthly Hours 56

History

1970-1990

1974: DOJ focus turned towards helping victims using victim advocates

Families and Friends of Missing Persons was organized in 1974 in Washington state by survivors of homicide victims. The initial purpose was simply to provide support to others whose loved ones were missing or murdered. It later evolved into an advocacy group as well. (Lee, S)

1975: National Organization for victim assistance was created

1985: Federal funds made available for victims

The development of the OVC/NOVA Model Victim Assistance Program

Brief in 1986-1988 served as a management tool for programs. It articulated eight basic services that programs should provide: crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy, support during criminal investigations, support during prosecution, support after case disposition, crime prevention, public education, and training of allied professions. (Lee, S)

States were also moving rapidly to institutionalize victim assistance

through funding legislation and the development of program networks. Bills of rights were adopted in every state by 1990; at

present, 32 states have adopted constitutional amendments, and there are more than 32,000 statutes that define and protect victims' rights nationwide. By the end of the 1980s, more than 8,000 victim service programs were in operation. (Lee, S)

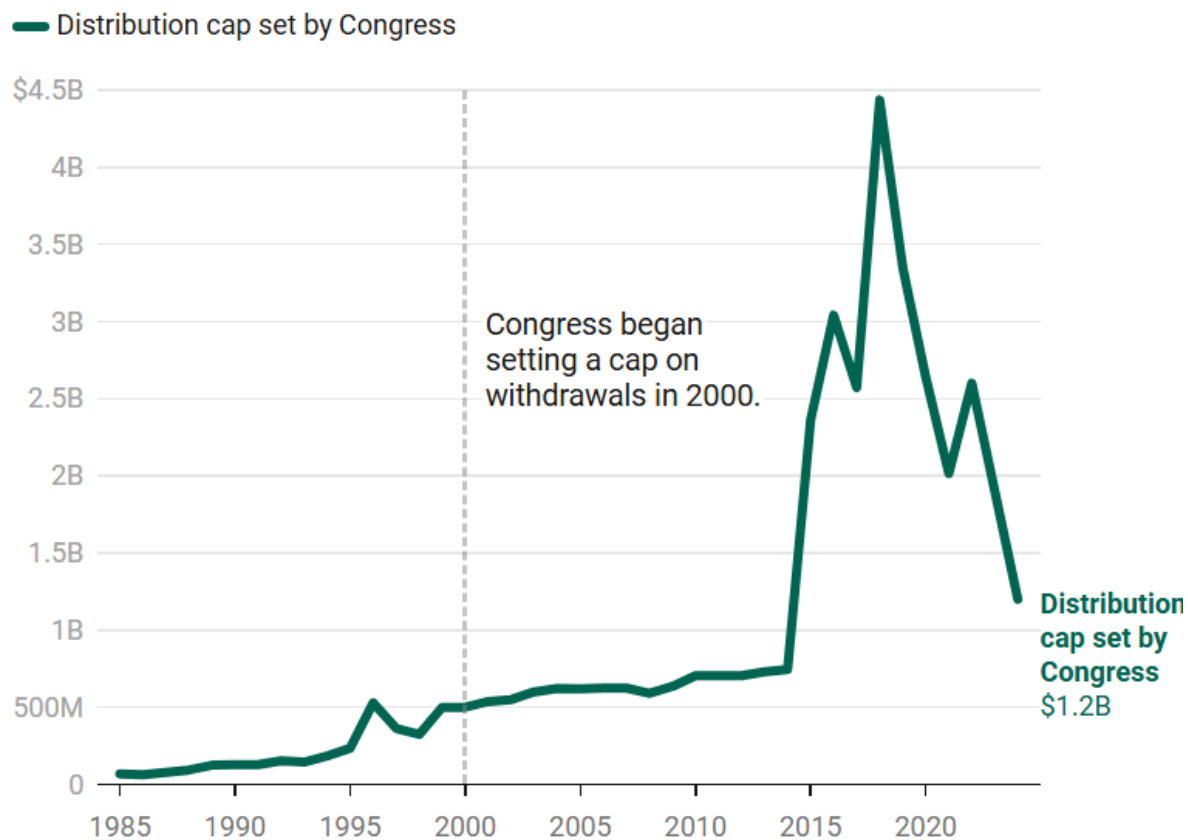
2000 to today

On November 4, 2008, California voters approved Proposition 9, the Victims' Bill of Rights Act of 2008: Marsy's Law. Marsy's Law is named after a twenty-one-year-old who was murdered on November 30, 1983. Marsy's family was not notified that the individual who killed their daughter was released on bail. Not only were they not notified, but their family was not granted any opportunity to state their opposition to his release from custody. (Prior pg 5)

2018: Federal Funding decreasing

Many of these organizations and agencies now expect to have to close locations, lay off staff and cut back on services. (Shutt)

Image shows funding from 1985-2024 (Shutt)



Strengths

The reason Victim Advocacy was created in the 1970's was because prosecution found that victims were becoming reluctant to cooperate with prosecution when trial came to be. So, the goal of system-based advocacy is to be a bridge for victims to connect to the criminal justice system and get a better understanding of their rights pertaining to their case. "Victim advocates play a pivotal role in collaborating with various entities within the legal ecosystem, including law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, judges, and social service providers. This collaboration is rooted in the belief that a collective effort is required to ensure fair and just treatment for survivors. Advocates act as intermediaries, bridging the gap between survivors and these stakeholders." (Lee, M). Many victims of crime do not realize the rights, resources or assistance they can access as victims. Many victims when they report a crime are not provided with information on what is next. Marion County Victim Assistance does a couple of different things to reach out to victims of crime to inform them of their rights, resources and court events. The main source of reaching is mail. Not only do victims get sent mail notification of all court events related to their cases, they are also sent a first rights packet which includes information about their rights as a victim, a form they can fill out and a way for the Victim Assistance office to respect the rights they have chosen. Other things included in the packets are brochures about the criminal justice system and VISOR which is a website that shows the custody status of Oregon inmates. A victim

continues to receive mail notification throughout their case and after if the mailing address we have is still current. If mail is returned due to invalid address, it is added to a pile. I will address more about having invalid mail handled in the next section, Limits.

Having different ways for victims to connect with services helps victims know their options. For Marion County, the options for victims to receive assistance from VAD would be to contact us either in-person or via phone Monday-Friday 8-5. Because this is a service-based advocacy and it is tied with the DDA office, advocates do not have the capability to be on-call 24/7. There are other resources that do have hotlines that are 24/7 and we advise victims to contact Law Enforcement regarding any crimes. While there are no advocates who can answer the phone 24/7 providing assistance. We do have advocates on-call everyday to provide assistance to victims of sexual assault and there are specific advocates who are dispatched to assist with homicide cases.

Many governmental bodies have developed laws, compensation programs, and other support to better meet the needs of crime victims (Elder Justice Initiative). In Oregon there is a program called CVC, Crime Victim Compensation. While this program does have specific requirements, most of the funding for this program is to help with medical both physical and mental. While victims can apply by themselves, as advocates we encouraged them to have us help them apply. This is to help the process speed up due to it taking 3-6 months for the case to be received. An added benefit is an advocate can provide redacted police reports to CVC with the DDA permission, this can help

speed up the process for victims to get approval for funding. As advocates we will advise victims to have us do the application on their behalf with them either over the phone or in person to go over the application with them line by line. Outside of CVC, there are other programs throughout Marion County, one of those is the DV grant, this is a grant that victims of Domestic Violence can receive to help them in a couple of different ways, from help paying for housing either where they currently live or a new home, help with moving cost and other things. Some of the other organizations we will advise victims for help with housing is NWHS (North West Human Services) this program can help in a couple of different ways, they have programs for homeless services, emergency financial assistance and more depending on each victim's needs. A resource that is commonly provided to victims is 2-1-1, which is a catch all of every need a victim might need, from financial to medical.

Limits

One of the first limits I think of when it comes to victim assistance, is notification. A victim receives notifications one of two ways, via mail, phone call or both. Why this is a limit is due to victim assistance getting their information to contact victims from police reports. If a victim is transient and does not have a phone, there is no way for them to receive mail notification or to receive a call from victim assistance to receive information about the criminal case or resources.

Because there are more criminal cases than there are advocates. To make sure victims are informed of their rights, Marion County's Victim Assistance sends out a first rights packet, which includes a VRRF (Victim rights request form), pamphlet on victim rights, VISOR (Victim Information System in Oregon). The main issue with mailing things to victims is the mailing address that is used comes from police reports, most officers are getting the information from drivers' licenses or looking for victim names using their database. How this affects victims is when the address that VAD sends the mail to may be incorrect. Due to not having the capacity to have advocates handle returned mail, it could become very backlogged. Thankfully in the last couple of years there was an individual who wanted to volunteer with VAD a couple of hours a week. This volunteer would take the time to call victims whose addresses are incorrect and attempt to get a new one. Due to there being a backlog, if a victim does not know to reach out to VAD, they may be disconnected from the case if they do not have an assigned advocate. In an

improved world the best solution would be to have more advocates who could assist with updating mail notification.

I am going to use a quote from a victim that was provided on the survey sheet, “in future having an advocate present when victims are providing statements. Feels like words were twisted by officers (understands not something we handle); appreciate advocate during case” Analyzing this statement from a victim brings up some interesting points along with some questions. Was the victim requesting an advocate present when provided her statement to provide her support or to help her not say too much. I do not know what kind of case this victim had but due to experience with many different types of cases and victims, I would wager that this is a Domestic Violence victim and unfortunately it is not uncommon for them to want to recant or withdraw their statement after the fact. Moving past why the victim may have wanted an advocate present does not negate the fact that there is not enough seen need for on-call advocates to go with Police officers to take victim statements. Because regardless of why the victim may have wanted an advocate present does not negate that having an advocate meet with victims with Law Enforcement would help victims realize there are other people to provide support and assistance. Along with providing victim support when reporting, this could also be a time to provide victims with pamphlets instead of having to wait for them in the mail. This victim addressed a limit that she faced when dealing with law enforcement and wanting an advocate to help her during this time.

Victim services groups say that the demand for help has continued to surge. Some anticipate the grant process to become even more competitive (Shutt). In Marion County there is already a competitive nature to applying for and receiving funding. We advise victims to try calling and getting approval for grant or funding at the beginning of the month when those funds renew, but for some victims if the crime happens in the middle of the month, it can be difficult for victims to have to wait for funding to become available. While grants for funding to help victims are becoming harder to get both for system-based advocates and community advocates to provide to victims. System based advocates are also not receiving enough grants to hire advocates, that's why Marion County VAD really appreciates the time that both volunteers and interns do because they can help with the workload of the fulltime and temp advocates. Which means helping more victims know their victim rights and assisting them with understanding the criminal justice system.

Another major limit for victims is language. "For instance, victims were fearful of how their immigration status or English language proficiency, among other factors, would interact with their status of being a victim of a crime." (De La Rue) In the Marion County DA office, advocates use a resource called Language Line to communicate with victims who do not understand English. While language line is a great resource to communicate with victims there are issues when it comes to more uncommon languages. There can be times when the needed interpreter is not available, which

means a victim cannot speak to an advocate to get the help they deserve. When victims call into victim assistance wanting help, they may not understand when the front desk places them on hold, then when they get transferred to an advocate to help, the time it takes for language lines to get connected and to get the correct interpreter, they hang up because they don't understand an interpreter is coming.

Effects

The best way to explain the effects of victim assistance is to use the information collected from surveys conducted by advocates asked to victims. These surveys happen at the conclusion of a case and are voluntary. These surveys are completed by Marion County Victim Assistance. These Surveys were conducted over the period of 2 years; the purpose of these surveys is to get a better understanding of the services provided by VAD to victims to see what improvements can be made. This data is also collected and used for the purpose of funding, VAD manager uses these surveys for grant funding, the surveys show why victim advocates are important in regard to helping victims know their rights, information about the criminal justice system and getting resources.

These surveys conducted asked 3 questions that are listed below, the three questions asked only to pertain to the information that victim assistance provided.

I do want to make note that there are gaps of data on the chart due to unknown reasons for a period of time, surveys were not being prioritized by advocates, to help fix and address this problem. VAD managers made it a priority for Case Managers to assign surveys to advocates at the closing of cases. By having the Case Managers handle assigning surveys, there is a higher guarantee they are completed.

5- Strongly Agree
4-Agree
3- No-Opinion
2-Disagree
1-Strongly Disagree

1. As a result of the information I received from the Victim Assistance Program, I better understood my rights as a victim of crime.

	April-Jun 2026	Jan-Mar 2026	Oct-Dec 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	April-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2024	April-Jun 2024	Jan-Mar 2024
5	16	13	1	4	8	9	15	8
4	4	6	0	0	1	1	4	2
3	2	3	1	0	2	1	0	0
2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

2. The information given to me by the Victim Assistance Program helped me better understand the criminal justice system as it related to my case

	April-Jun 2026	Jan-Mar 2026	Oct-Dec 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	April-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2024	April-Jun 2024	Jan-Mar 2024
5	15	12	1	4	7	8	15	7
4	5	7	0	1	4	1	3	3
3	4	2	1	0	0	2	0	0
2	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. The services provided by this program helped me make informed choices about my situation

	April-Jun 2026	Jan-Mar 2026	Oct-Dec 2025	Jul-Sep 2025	April-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2024	April-Jun 2024	Jan-Mar 2024
5	13	13	1	4	7	8	15	7
4	7	6	0	1	4	2	3	2
3	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

While many victims did strongly agree or agree with the 3 above statements, there are victims who either had no opinion, disagreed or strongly disagreed. There could be many factors that tie into why a victim was displeased with the services provided by victim assistance.

Quotes by victims

- "I felt out of the loop and I do feel like you guys always offered help even if I felt like there was no help. I appreciated it"
- "They didn't contact me enough to help me with the case"
- "A little more contact would have been better. Staff was very friendly and eager, but knowing the case in front of them and having answers to specific questions I asked would have been more helpful"
- "Extremely retraumatizing and didn't appreciate being passed along between so many DDAs and did not feel supported emotionally or informationally throughout the process"
- "Wonderful to work with"
- "Victim advocate was very faithful to share information timely"
- "Everyone was great; advocate was great and help provide update and resources like CHS"
- "Appreciated the hospitality and phone calls; appreciated that people will listen"

The above quotes are all additional comments victims choose to provide on the survey.

These are not all of the comments that were provided on the survey. While some comments are expressions of gratitude towards the services provided. Others would have liked more. And in my opinion, negative comments are better because it shows what needs to be improved on. Advocates are not perfect, but they do try their best, but their best could be affected by being overwhelmed with cases, phone calls and other tasks that need to be done. There are days where I manage to call 2 of my victims because I spent time helping victims who were not assigned to an advocate who also needed help. Unfortunately, there are days like that, but it also relies on the advocate to manage their time correctly and call their victims in a timely manner after court events and before the next court event.

Regardless of the strengths of victim assistance or the limits, the main goal and the purpose of victim assistance is to provide victims with knowledge on the criminal justice system, notification of court events and their victim rights. Along with helping them find resources or apply for grants as needed.

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