

# OCVA Advocate

OFFICE OF CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Serving as a voice within state government for crime victims and their families

## VICTIM SERVICES IN THE MIDST OF FINANCIAL CRISIS

Headlines, TV reports, revenue forecasts, statements by public figures and elected officials—all saying the same thing. “It’s going to be ugly. Really ugly. Everybody is going to hate it.” Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, “it” is the state budget for the upcoming 2009-2011 biennium.

What we do know at this early stage in the budget process is it appears direct services to victims remain intact, and no further reductions are being proposed by the Governor. We have no plans to adjust OCVA contracts at this time. However, we are in the beginning stages of the biennial budget process. In the coming months, both the House and Senate will put forth their own budgets before the final budget is decided. There will be many days ahead to learn more, plan, advocate, and finally deal with the final budget. Session ends in April, so we should have answers at least by then.

We are also about to embark on a journey of what Governor Gregoire characterizes as “transforming state government” What this means is still mostly unknown. There should be some clues in the Governor’s State of the State address, and certainly more as the 2009 Legislative Session unfolds.

We are all in this together. We are committed to the delivery of high-quality services to every victim, everywhere. InfoNet data has clearly shown an increase in service delivery by OCVA contracting agencies. We attribute at least some of this increase to the declining economic conditions. We’re confident you are aware of the increased demand as well. So, at best, we are striving to meet higher service demand with current levels of funding.

In response to this economic crisis and government transformation, we must all examine what we do, and

how we do it, to ensure we are doing the right thing the right way. If we’re not working as smart, as fast, as effectively and as efficiently as possible, we need to change.

You may be aware that OCVA, like every other unit in state government, has already reduced spending of state general funds during the current fiscal year in an effort to address the impending budget crisis deficit. So far, we have been able to mitigate those losses so our contractors have not seen a reduction in contracted amounts. We have launched two initiatives

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aimed at ensuring we are doing everything we can to be as efficient and effective as possible — and making advocates' jobs as easy as possible.

We invite you to partner with us in this effort. Here's what you can do to help:

### **Initiative 1: Best Service in the Best Way**

- Think about what are the most essential services for victims and survivors you serve. Be prepared to clearly articulate those most essential services.
- Think and talk about better ways to deliver services.
- Employ best or promising practices for primary prevention.

### **Initiative 2: Best Contracting in the Best Way**

- Think and talk about ways OCVA can make it easier for you to contract with us. Keep in mind we must still meet standards of accountability, fiscal management, and service delivery outcomes.
- Think and talk about ways you can improve or streamline your own internal processes relative to contracting, budget, and data collection.

OCVA will be working on the same topics. We must be creative and innovative. We must exhaust all possibilities in looking for ways to constantly improve contracting and enhance service delivery.

Please use the [ocva@cted.wa.gov](mailto:ocva@cted.wa.gov) main e-mail address to send us ideas and thoughts. We will review all ideas and pursue the ones with the most promise. We will hold teleconference meetings, web casts, or other methods to talk with focus and/or work groups to further develop ideas and suggestions.

As we move through this difficult budget cycle and the 2009 Legislative Session, victim advocates and policy makers will be working together, coordinating strategies and messages through the Criminal Justice Roundtable coordinated by OCVA. Members of the Criminal Justice Roundtable include Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, Crime Victims Compensation, Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates, Indeterminate Sentencing Review Board, Department of Social and Health Services, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Washington Association of Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian Ad Litem, Washington State Association of Child Advocacy Centers, Secretary of State, Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Department of Corrections.

We pledge to keep you apprised of budget challenges and solutions, proposed legislation of interest, and any other information that impacts the work we do. As this group works together to create one voice for victim services, we encourage those of you who work directly with victims of crime to communicate your ideas and suggestions as to how we can work smarter and more efficiently in these tumultuous times.

## **TIMES HAVE CHANGED, AND SO SHOULD WE**

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*BY BEV EMERY, OCVA MANAGING DIRECTOR*

I remember well that September in 1990, when I walked into the Department of Community Development (now CTED) on the first day of the existence of the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy. Both Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) and Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (WCSAP) had been in existence and funded since 1979. Similarly, the shelter and sexual assault programs had existed in Washington since the early 1970's and had been receiving state funding since 1979. At the time, it seemed like those two networks of agencies were well-established and experienced. Looking back from today's perspective, those programs were young, and so were we.

What was equally obvious is that there wasn't any organized, statewide, state-funded network of programs in Washington for victims of all other crimes. There were certainly several notable agencies funded through DSHS VOCA, such as Families and Friends of Violent Crime Victims, but not the same kind of network of funded programs as existed for victims of domestic violence and for victims of sexual assault. With this reality as the major motivation, we committed from the first day that OCVA must fill this gap and provide direct services to victims of crimes such as assault, vehicular assault, homicide, kidnapping, child abuse, hate crimes, and others.

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*(Times Have Changed, continued from page 2)*

Thus, the mission of OCVA was created as a three-legged stool: one being grant administration, one being public policy, and the third being direct services. With that in mind, I hired Steve Eckstrom as the first OCVA Coordinator of Direct Services.

Fast forward nineteen years to 2009. Look out the window, and the landscape of victim services in Washington is different. Of course, sexual assault and domestic violence shelter programs are still in place and now really do seem “more grown up.” The other part of that picture is so important. There are now Crime Victim Service Centers, providing services to victims of crimes other than sexual assault or domestic violence. For the first time in Washington history, community based services are available statewide and

are state-funded to provide services to every victim, everywhere. This is a good day.

Given this new reality and also being committed to our original philosophy within OCVA that “the best service is locally delivered service,” we have been rethinking direct services delivered by OCVA. The timing has turned out to be most fortuitous. The state is facing an unprecedented deficit for the upcoming 2009-2011 biennial budget. Like all of you, we must do everything we can to maximize funding and staff resources as well as being as efficient and effective as possible.

We believe there is and always will be a role for OCVA to play in direct services, and we are committed to that role. We think, for instance, there will always be

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## **OCVA CONFERENCE 2009 — A NEW APPROACH**

As the time for the OCVA 2009 Conference approached, our office realized the economic crisis and subsequent cutbacks in state government were going to make holding our normal conference a challenge. Rather than cancel the event and pay thousands of dollars in cancellation fees, we decided to take a different approach that would allow us to continue our conference traditions in a new way while saving money.

Rather than our normal “ala carte” series of conference workshops by dozens of different presenters, we’re using the OCVA conference this year as an opportunity to gather a series of trainings all into one, centralized location. Events such as Team Three Training, State Victim Assistance Academy, Sexual Violence Prevention, Victim/Witness Coordinator training, and Training for Cops on Intimate Partner Sexual Violence, which are normally held in a variety of locations, will all be held, along with a variety of other offerings, at the Yakima Convention Center as part of the OCVA Conference.

This approach will save money while allowing us to continue our conference tradition. OCVA will save money otherwise spent on cancellation fees, which would actually exceed the costs associated with hosting the event. Presenting agencies will save money that would otherwise be spent booking other venues. And attendees can benefit financially as well, as individuals who might otherwise attend separate trainings may now carpool to the event, enjoy free conference meals, and receive conference rates for lodging that might not be offered for

smaller, individually planned trainings in other parts of the state. Best of all, the approach will allow attendees at all of these events to enjoy the OCVA conference atmosphere, group interaction, and one centralized location.

For more details or to register for the OCVA Conference, please see our website at [www.ocva.wa.gov](http://www.ocva.wa.gov). Hope to see you for this special event!

**Mark your  
calendar!**

**OCVA Conference  
March 23—26, 2009**

**Yakima Conference  
Center**

# SHAPING OCVA PROCESSES TO SUPPORT ADVOCATES AND VICTIMS

*Victim-centered means to keep the best interest of the victim at the forefront. Victim needs take precedence over system needs, and the victim chooses what they need versus what is being offered. Dollars follow victim needs.*  
Washington State Strategic Plan for Victim Services, July 2005

Given our mission to serve the public with victim-centered services, we at OCVA are re-thinking our way of doing business to ensure we remain dedicated to putting victims and their needs first. We asked ourselves, how do we empower our staff and contractors to provide comprehensive, victim-centered services while balancing the responsibilities of administering contracts, funds and the structure necessary to perform these services?

OCVA is carefully reviewing and assessing contract and monitoring processes to ensure we are continually victim-centered. The dire budget circumstances we face, both in our communities and as a state agency, are an opportunity to be as innovative and resourceful as possible. We have the choice to react to the current economic climate with frustration, pessimism and fear or to use this as an opportunity to refine our practices to be more efficient, more user-friendly, and

more victim focused.

OCVA is seeking your input as we work together to ensure our contract and monitoring process is as stream-lined and efficient as possible, with the goal to support victim focused service providers in Washington State. Toward that end, OCVA will be conducting a survey to determine what our contractors would change about these processes if they could.

While we must continue to meet standards of accountability, fiscal management, and service delivery, we want to hear from contractors about how our practices impact advocates. How much of an advocate's time is spent on paperwork? What administrative tasks take more time than necessary? Where is time being lost that could be better spent being champions for victims?

OCVA will be seeking input from the field on many ideas like these. We want to hear from agencies about how we can make our processes easier to navigate, less time consuming, and more victim-centered. We are committed to listening to ideas and incorporating that feedback in to our work.

The survey will be sent to all OCVA contractors in February, 2009. If you do not receive a copy of the survey and are interested in participating, please e-mail Nicky Gleason at [nickyg@cted.wa.gov](mailto:nickyg@cted.wa.gov).

*(Times Have Changed, continued from page 3)*

a need to have one statewide number victims of crime can call to find out what and where services are available to them in their own community.

Similarly, we think there will always be a need for an "advocate of last resort." Taking initial calls, brokering services, picking up on trends and implications for systems advocacy or public policy remedies are all important and part of OCVA direct services. Thus, the next paragraph will outline our shift to more of an ombuds role in direct service provision.

- A toll-free telephone line will remain in place and be answered by our administrative and policy team, during business hours, as currently done.
- This team will provide crisis intervention, as needed.

- The team will determine the type of crime impacting the caller, and the location of the caller.
- The team will then transfer the caller to the appropriate local program.
- If the caller needs more than this, or has been unsuccessful in efforts to obtain service locally, the caller will be transferred to OCVA program staff with the needed crime and location expertise.

Advocacy and problem-solving:

- OCVA staff remains available for consultation on cases and/or issues.
- OCVA will continue to work with other state agencies and systems to improve responses to victims.
- OCVA will continue to do public policy work that derives from direct service issues.

# UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO IDENTITY THEFT

*In 2004, 3.6 million households, representing 3% of the households in the United States, discovered that at least one member of the household had been the victim of identity theft during the previous six months. – Bureau of Justice Statistics, Identity Theft, 2004 (2006)*

## WHAT ARE IDENTITY THEFT & IDENTITY FRAUD?

Identity theft and fraud occur when someone takes and uses another person's identifying data in a way that involves fraud or deception, usually for financial gain. Unlike fingerprints, which cannot be stolen, personal data – especially Social Security numbers, bank account or credit card numbers, telephone calling card numbers, and other valuable identifying data – can be used to profit at a victim's expense.

According to the U. S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) report ID Theft: What's It All About (2005), identity thieves use a variety of methods to gain access to your personal information. For example, identity thieves may get information from businesses or other institutions by stealing records from their employer, bribing an employee who has access to these records, or hacking into the organization's computers. Identity thieves may also rummage through your trash or the trash of businesses or dumps in a practice known as *dumpster diving*.

Some identity thieves obtain credit reports by abusing their employer's authorized access to credit reports or by posing as a landlord or employer. Others steal credit and debit card numbers as your card is processed by using a special information storage device in a practice known as *skimming*.

Other methods of obtaining identifying information include:

- Stealing wallets and purses containing identification, credit and bank cards.
- Stealing mail, including bank and credit card statements, preapproved credit offers, new checks, or tax information.
- Completing a "change of address form" to divert your mail to another location.
- Taking personal information from your home.

- Scamming information by posing as a legitimate business person or government official.

Both credit fraud and identify theft are illegal. In Washington, the improper use of financial or identifying information without consent (RCW 9.35.010) is a Class C Felony and punishable by a fine of \$500 or actual damages, whichever is greater.

Identify theft is a Class B Felony if more than \$1500 worth of credit, money, goods, services or anything else of value obtained with an attempt to commit or aid a crime (RCW 9.35.020). It is punishable by a fine of \$1,000 or actual damages, whichever is greater, and up to 20 years in prison. Identity theft is a Class C Felony if damages are under \$1,500 worth of goods or credit stolen.

*Washington ranked 13th in the nation for identity theft complaints per capita in 2007. — Federal Trade Commission, Consumer Fraud and Identity Theft Complaint Data, (2008.)*

## CRIME VICTIM SERVICE CENTERS & THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WORKING TOGETHER

In June of this year, the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) and the Washington State Attorney General's Office (AGO) teamed up to leverage resources and knowledge to create a resource for victims of identity theft and fraud. The two organizations developed a curriculum to train advocates working in the Crime Victim Service Centers across the state. During September, October and November, 10 three-hour trainings were provided to victim advocates and community partners working with victims of identity theft and fraud.

Carolyn House-Higgins of OCVA and Mary Gould of the AGO provided participants practical information about how to advocate for victims of identity theft and what resources are available to help. As a result, Crime Victim Service Center advocates are prepared to provide comprehensive services to victims of this crime. (See pages 8—9 for the number of the Crime

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Identity Theft, continued from page 5)  
Victim Service Center in your county.)

### WORKING WITH VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT

It's important to discuss possible options with identity theft and fraud victims, as opposed to providing a list of steps to be taken. Identity theft and fraud, regardless of whether the perpetrator successfully stole money, is a felony. However, victims of this crime often know the perpetrator (e.g. son, daughter, grandchild, parent, nephew, care provider, friend or neighbor) and may not want to report the crime to law enforcement for reasons of safety or to avoid the effects of a felony conviction on a loved one's criminal record.

However, a report to law enforcement may be required by certain organizations in order to "clear" the victim from the ramifications of the identity theft or fraud. In addition to discussing with victims the option of reporting criminal theft to law enforcement, the mishandling or data breach of personal information may also be reported to the Federal Trade Commission or the Washington Office of the Attorney General.

Just like any other type of crime, it's important for a victim to be able to consider and understand all options and to choose those relevant to their recovery.

### IDENTITY THEFT RECOVERY

Understanding the impact of identify theft is one more way to assist victims. There are several common emotional reactions to the crime of identity theft that include feeling:

- Helpless, powerless, overwhelmed, violated
- Withdrawn from family and friends
- Loss of financial security and/or feelings of paranoia
- Reluctance to tell others, blame themselves or feel embarrassed
- "Stonewalled" by law enforcement and the criminal justice system

### ADVOCATING FOR VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT

These are a few simple steps to put into action when advocating on behalf of a crime victim:

- Listen to the victims' experience
- Provide support
- Discuss immediate needs and options
- Talk about potential safety issues and develop a plan
- Provide an explanation of recovery options requested by the victim

There are several other additional things you can do to assist victims of identity theft. You can advocate on behalf of victims by emailing, writing, calling or going with the victim to:

- Credit Bureaus
- Law Enforcement
- Businesses
- Department of Licensing
- Social Security Administration
- Adult Protective Services
- Debt Collectors
- Crime Victims Compensation
- Landlords, Employers
- Healthcare Providers

Be sure to keep a record of all your correspondence with any one of these entities. It's best to keep notes on phone conversations including who was spoken to and when, as well as the outcome of the conversation. Send letters via certified mail with a return receipt and regularly review credit reports from each agency and financial accounts.

### DETECTING IDENTITY THEFT

Preventing identity theft is nearly impossible given the amount of information and opportunities out there, but there are a few things you can do to help deter identity theft from happening to you and the victims you work with.

If you carry a wallet or purse, only carry cards and information you use frequently. Don't keep your social security card in your wallet; keep it in a secure location in your home instead. Should your wallet get stolen, have card numbers available and know who to call in an emergency.

*An Arizona business called Identity Theft 911 issued a report that suggests **1 in 5** Washington residents became an identity theft victim in the past five years. — Washington State Office of the Attorney General, [www.atg.wa.gov](http://www.atg.wa.gov)*

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# IDENTITY THEFT & FRAUD: WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM

The following is information from the Washington State Office of the Attorney General, [www.atg.wa.gov](http://www.atg.wa.gov)

## **STEP 1: CALL THE TOLL-FREE FRAUD NUMBER OF ANY ONE OF THE THREE MAJOR CREDIT BUREAUS TO PLACE A FRAUD ALERT ON YOUR CREDIT REPORT.**

This can help prevent an identity thief from opening additional accounts in your name. As soon as the credit bureau confirms your fraud alert, the other two credit bureaus will automatically be notified to place fraud alerts, and all three credit reports will be sent to you free of charge.

### **Equifax**

P.O. Box 740241  
Atlanta, GA 30374  
800/685.1111 (Order Credit Report)  
800/525.6285 (Report Fraud)  
[www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

### **Experian**

P.O. Box 2104  
Allen, TX 75013  
888/397.3742 (Order Credit Report)  
888/397.3742 (Report Fraud)  
[www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

### **Trans Union**

P.O. Box 1000  
Chester, PA 19022  
800/888.4213 (Order Credit Report)  
800/680.7289 (Report Fraud)

## **STEP 2: REPORT THE ID THEFT TO YOUR BANK AND OTHER CREDITORS.**

Ask to speak to someone in the security or fraud department. They may advise you to close your accounts and start over with new ones. Also, ask your financial institution what procedures they require of victims whose credit cards or checks have been stolen or forged.

## **STEP 3: CONSIDER REPORTING THE ID THEFT TO THE POLICE OR SHERIFF IN THE AREA WHERE YOU LIVE.**

ID theft is a felony, and charges may be filed against the thief in the county where you live. Ask the police to make a police report and give you a copy. You will need this to help correct your credit rating.

## **STEP 4: CONSIDER REQUESTING A CREDIT REPORT FREEZE.**

A security freeze means that your credit file cannot be shared with potential creditors. A security freeze can help prevent identity theft since most businesses will not open credit accounts without checking a consumer's credit history first. You, too, will not be able to open new credit while a freeze is in place. Individuals can request that a freeze be temporarily lifted for the purpose of obtaining new credit.

## **IDENTITY THEFT RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES**

Office of the Attorney General  
1/800.551.4636  
<http://www.atg.wa.gov>

Federal Trade Commission  
1/877.438.4338  
[www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft)

Washington State Patrol  
360/534.2000  
[www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov)

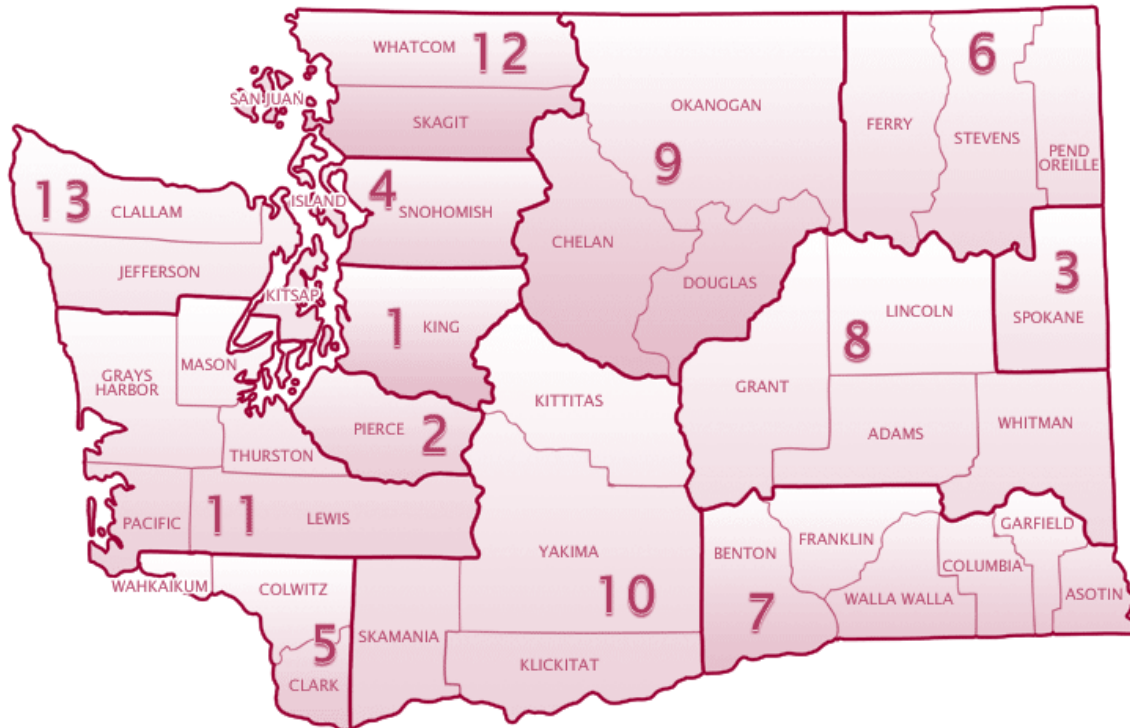
American Association of Retired Persons  
(AARP)  
800/646.2283  
[www.aarp.org/wa](http://www.aarp.org/wa)

Identity Theft Resource Center  
858/693.7935  
[www.idtheftcenter.org](http://www.idtheftcenter.org)

Credit Reporting Agencies  
[www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)  
[www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)  
[www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

Crime Victim Service Centers  
See pages 8—9 for complete list.

# CRIME VICTIM SERVICE CENTERS BY REGION



Crime Victim Service Centers (CVSCs) are coalitions of service providers who link resources to make comprehensive, culturally appropriate services available to crime victims within each region of the state. Their purpose is to provide comprehensive advocacy services to victims of crime anywhere in Washington at any time. These crimes include:

- Robbery
- Hate Crimes
- Child Abuse
- DUI/DWI Crashes
- Vehicular Assault and Homicide
- Trafficking
- Property Crimes
- Identity Theft
- Assault
- Kidnapping
- Attempted Homicide and Survivors of Homicide
- Elder Abuse
- Residential Burglary

Available services include:

- 24 - Hour Crisis Intervention
- Information and Referral
- Personal advocacy (finding requested

resources, discussion of options and victim's rights, speaking on behalf of victim if requested, etc)

- Systems Advocacy (public or private departments, agencies, businesses, etc), legal advocacy (law enforcement, criminal justice system), and
- Medical advocacy (healthcare staff, insurance companies, Medicaid/Medicare).

Services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including interpreter assistance. Any victim is eligible for services, whether or not the crime took place in Washington. No police report or prosecution is required to receive services, and all services are free and confidential.

If you or someone you know is a victim of crime, please contact an advocate at one of the local **Crime Victim Service Centers (CVSC)** listed on page 9. Each CVSC is prepared to advocate for victims of identity theft as well as other crimes. Help is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

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**Contact the Crime Victim Service Center in your region at these toll free numbers:**

**Region 1**

**KING COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**Region 2**

**PIERCE COUNTY**  
866.336.8213

**Region 3**

**SPOKANE COUNTY**  
866-751-7119

**Region 4**

**ISLAND COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**Region 5**

**CLARK COUNTY**  
888.425.1176

**COWLITZ COUNTY**  
888.425.1176

**WAHKIAKUM COUNTY**  
888.425.1176

**Region 6**

**FERRY COUNTY**  
866.373.6627

**PEND ORIELLE COUNTY**  
866.373.6627

**STEVENS COUNTY**  
866.373.6627

**Region 7**

**ASOTIN COUNTY**  
888.9 VICTIM

**BENTON COUNTY**  
888.9 VICTIM

**COLUMBIA COUNTY**  
888.9 VICTIM

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**  
888.9 VICTIM

**GARFIELD COUNTY**  
888.9 VICTIM

**WALLA WALLA COUNTY**  
888.9 VICTIM

**Region 8**

**ADAMS COUNTY**  
800.701.8385

**GRANT COUNTY**  
800.701.8385

**LINCOLN COUNTY**  
800.701.8385

**WHITMAN COUNTY**  
800.701.8385

**Region 9**

**CHELAN COUNTY**  
800.614.5117

**DOUGLAS COUNTY**  
800.614.5117

**OKANOGAN COUNTY**  
800.614.5117

**Region 10**

**KITTITAS COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**KLICKITAT COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**SKAMANIA COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**YAKIMA COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**Region 11**

**GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY**  
866.711.2826

**LEWIS COUNTY**  
866.711.2826

**MASON COUNTY**  
866.711.2826

**PACIFIC COUNTY**  
866.711.2826

**THURSTON COUNTY**  
866.711.2826

**Region 12**

**SAN JUAN COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**SKAGIT COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**WHATCOM COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**Region 13**

**CLALLAM COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**JEFFERSON COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

**KITSAP COUNTY**  
800.346.7555

# OCVA PROGRAM UPDATES

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## Sexual Assault Services

Staff with the Sexual Assault Services Program has traveled around the state to meet with programs, tribes and tribal organizations to talk about successes and challenges in service delivery, the provision of victim-centered sexual assault services, sexual violence prevention and ways to ensure a continuum of services are provided to victims and survivors.

Based on the recommendations from the Governor's Sex Offender Task Force, the Legislature approved additional funds for child-centered services effective SFY 2009. As part of this initiative, OCVA has contracted with the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (WCSAP) to provide training and technical assistance regarding child-centered sexual assault services. WCSAP will provide a statewide training on child-centered services along with training webinars, newsletters and e-mails with information and resources on child sexual abuse and technical assistance to programs regarding the provision of child-centered sexual assault services.

For more information on the Child-Centered Services initiative please contact Jeanne McCurley, Associate Director, WCSAP, [Jeanne@wcsap.org](mailto:Jeanne@wcsap.org) or Stephanie Pratt, Sexual Assault Services Program Coordinator, [stephaniep@cted.wa.gov](mailto:stephaniep@cted.wa.gov).

## Victims Of Crime Program

OCVA's Victims of Crime team is partnering with the City of Seattle and King County to create a residential program for commercially sexually exploited children. It will be located in King County, and will be available to children from all of Washington. Funding has been secured for 2 years, and the partners hope to secure funding for a permanent program.

Commercially sexually exploited youth include children victimized by pimps and by "johns" [those who both knowingly and unknowingly use minors for sexual gratification]. Children facing abuse at home, runaway youth, homeless youth, and foreign national children seeking a better life in the U.S. are all particularly vulnerable to these pimps and "johns." However, any child can be victimized in the sex industry.

OCVA recognizes that youth involved in the sex industry are victims of crime, and are not criminals. As victims of crime, these children should not be arrested or put in juvenile detention. They should be

provided services.

These services must include safety, shelter, and resources necessary for the children to recover from the trauma, avoid re-victimization, learn, work, as well as set and achieve lifelong dreams and goals.

Thus, OCVA is helping create a residential program which will meet these needs.

## Violence Against Women Program

VAWA staff at OCVA want to acknowledge and say thank you to recent STOP grant recipients for their efforts and commitment to strengthening their community's response to violence against women.

Nineteen (19) counties have strong teams and meet regularly to review issues, policies, and protocols, while twenty (20) counties are receiving ongoing technical assistance with their team development.

## OCVA Policy and Admin Program

Monday, January 12, 2009 kicks-off what is shaping up to be a grueling and fast-paced legislative session. With budget projections reaching in to the billions, new committee structures and membership, as well as it being the longer of the two legislative sessions in a biennium, policy staff are getting ready to keep you up-to-date as we move through these trying times. Be on the lookout for Legislative Reports, compiled and shared so you may follow along during the legislative process. The focus of the 2009 legislative session will be Washington's economic recession, strategies to curb the crisis, as well as the development of the 2009-2011 biennium operating budget.

The Criminal Justice Roundtable meetings have resumed for the 2009 legislative session. Hosted by the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy policy staff, these meetings are an opportunity for victim service providers to discuss and strategize about victim services and the impacts of actions taken by the legislature. This group represents a cross-section of victim service providers including state agencies, non-profits and coalitions. Roundtable members met in early January to discuss the recently released Governor's proposed budget and the impacts to victim services in Washington. Once the legislature begins, the Roundtable will meet weekly to discuss proposed legislation, monitor legislative hearings, as well as developing strategies and responses to the impending budget battle.

## RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

### **The Family Help Line** 1/800.932.HOPE (4673)

*Your secret to more confident parenting*

Nurturing and raising children can be a tough job! Between the successes and the joys can come periods of doubt and frustration. Sometimes, parents and providers just want a listening ear. Other times they may want to find a parent education class. The Family Help Line of *Parent Trust of Washington State* can help connect families with the resources they want and need.

#### **What is the Family Help Line?**

A toll-free, confidential “warm line” staffed by supportive, trained English and Spanish-speaking Parenting Coaches. Coaches listen to concerns and successes, help problem solve, and assist families in connecting to local community resources.

#### **Family Help Line Number**

1/800.932.HOPE (4673)

#### **Family Help Line Hours**

Monday – Friday ..... 9am – 10pm

Saturday & Sunday..... 10am – 6pm

#### **Other Parenting Resources Available from *Parent Trust of Washington State***

Both parents and providers can order Parenting Toolkits and other helpful resources by calling the toll-free line or by submitting an order form to Parent Trust: <http://www.parenttrust.org>

Contact *Parent Trust of Washington State* with questions or to learn more about the programs and services offered at [information@parenttrust.org](mailto:information@parenttrust.org) or by phone:

Eastern Washington 509/454.4000

Western Washington 206/233.0156

*(Identity Theft, continued from page 6)*

Many thieves target your daily mailbox to find all the information they need to open new credit cards, bank accounts, bank loans, and more. To guard yourself against mail theft, pick your mail up daily, drop your outgoing mail in a secured mailbox, and consider purchasing a locking mailbox for your home mail.

When dealing with companies or institutions where you are a customer, employee, patient, or student, be sure to ask about information security procedures, minimize the use of your social security number, and use strong passwords to protect your personal information.

Your computer can be another source of personal information for thieves. To protect yourself from hackers and spyware, keep your computer's operating system current. Maintain a firewall and an up-to-date anti-virus program. You may consider an

anti-spam filter and again, it's always a good idea to use strong passwords.

It's also important to be aware of the prevalence of “phishing,” e-mail schemes that attempt to trick consumers into disclosing personal and/or financial information by posing as companies with whom they regularly do business (e.g., AOL, Earthlink, Paypal, eBay, or a credit card issuer). Many contain links to fake “look-alike” websites loaded with actual trademarked images, which then instruct consumers to update their personal information.

Always use caution when receiving any unsolicited communication asking for personal information. Telling the difference between legitimate e-mails and phishing e-mails can be very difficult, even for experts. When in doubt, contact the business directly using a phone number or website address you know is correct.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy serves as a voice within state government for the needs of crime victims in Washington State.

**BUSINESS LINE: 1-866-857-9889**

**EMAIL: [OCVA@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:OCVA@CTED.WA.GOV)**

**WEBSITE: [WWW.OCVA.WA.GOV](http://WWW.OCVA.WA.GOV)**

BEV EMERY  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
360.725.2886  
[BEVE@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:BEVE@CTED.WA.GOV)

PEARL GIPSON-COLLIER  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
360.725.2891  
[PEARLG@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:PEARLG@CTED.WA.GOV)

GRACE CALL  
VICTIMS OF CRIME  
PROGRAM MANAGER  
360.725.2893  
[GRACEC@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:GRACEC@CTED.WA.GOV)

STEPHANIE CONDON  
SEXUAL ASSAULT  
PROGRAM MANAGER  
360.725.2889  
[STEPHANIEC@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:STEPHANIEC@CTED.WA.GOV)

JENNIFER BLAZIAN  
VAWA/DVLA PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR  
360.725.2824  
[JENNIFERB@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:JENNIFERB@CTED.WA.GOV)

KATHARINE EGAN  
TRAFFICKING COORDINATOR  
360.725.2875  
[KATHARINEE@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:KATHARINEE@CTED.WA.GOV)

CHRIS FENNO  
VAWA/DVLA PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR  
360.725.2896  
[CHRISTINEF@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:CHRISTINEF@CTED.WA.GOV)

NICKY GLEASON  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR  
360.725.2887  
[NICKYG@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:NICKYG@CTED.WA.GOV)

ANITA GRANBOIS  
VAWA/DVLA PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR  
360.725.2892  
[ANITAG@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:ANITAG@CTED.WA.GOV)

SUSANNE GUINN  
SEXUAL ASSAULT  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR  
360.725.2894  
[SUSANNEG@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:SUSANNEG@CTED.WA.GOV)

CAROLYN HOUSE-HIGGINS  
VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR  
360.725.2869  
[CAROLYNHI@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:CAROLYNHI@CTED.WA.GOV)

YVONNE KIBLER  
SECRETARY ADMINISTRATIVE  
360.725.2888  
[YVONNEK@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:YVONNEK@CTED.WA.GOV)

AMY PEARSON  
POLICY COORDINATOR  
360.725.2890  
[AMYP@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:AMYP@CTED.WA.GOV)

STEPHANIE PRATT  
SEXUAL ASSAULT  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR  
360.725.2899  
[STEPHANIEP@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:STEPHANIEP@CTED.WA.GOV)

AMANDA RAINS  
SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR  
360.725.2873  
[AMANDAR@CTED.WA.GOV](mailto:AMANDAR@CTED.WA.GOV)

The OCVAAdvocate is a quarterly publication of this office. Unless otherwise noted, articles were written by OCVA staff. Topic ideas for future issues may be sent to the address below or e-mail [ocva@cted.wa.gov](mailto:ocva@cted.wa.gov).



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Office of Crime Victims Advocacy  
P.O. Box 48304  
Olympia, Washington 98504-8304

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