



## The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice



### Victim Services Program

#### OVERVIEW

The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) established a statewide Victim Services Program (VSP) in 1997 after an amendment to the South Carolina Constitution. This amendment mandates that victims of juvenile crime must be informed of their constitutional rights and be included in the juvenile justice process. DJJ's Victim Services Program operates within the Division of Community Services' Office of Community Justice. A victim program coordinator administers the VSP and is responsible for the overall planning, management, and evaluation of services to victims.

#### DJJ's STATEWIDE VICTIM SERVICES

DJJ is committed to balanced and restorative justice for individuals who are impacted by juvenile crime, especially the victims. The balanced and restorative justice model builds safe and healthy communities by providing a variety of effective interventions programs for juveniles and numerous statewide services to victims. These services not only give victims justice but also help in the recovery process.

Victims of juvenile crime receive:

- Contact prior to DJJ's issuing a recommendation to the solicitor to divert, prosecute, or any other action.
- Information regarding any post-adjudicatory hearings.
- Notification of the release of a juvenile (charged as an adult) on bond from the Juvenile Detention Center.
- Notification when a juvenile is being transferred to a less secure facility or to the Department of Mental Health.
- Notification in the event of an escape.
- Advocacy.
- Referral to community resources.

#### A WELL-TRAINED STAFF

An essential ingredient of effective justice for victims of juvenile crime is a staff well-trained in victims' issues. All new staff, including community

specialist, are routinely trained in victim services. This one day training emphasizes elements of restorative justice. As a result of statewide domestic violence training in the spring of 2000, staff focus more attention on domestic violence prevention and intervention.

#### VICTIM IMPACT CLASS

Juveniles also receive training in victim empathy. Victim impact classes are designed to sensitize and educate the juvenile offender about the trauma associated with victimization. The goals of this training are to prevent re-victimization and to incorporate the many principles of restorative justice. Juvenile offenders are involved in a variety of activities that seek to repay victims through community service, restitution, and handmade products that are donated or sold. The proceeds go to victim organizations.

#### RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY SERVICE

Crime damages people and relationships. Justice should be about repairing harm; therefore, juveniles are given the opportunity to repair harm and give back to the community by participating in VSP sponsored restorative community service projects. Juveniles are allowed to donate their artwork, crafts, and participate in fundraising activities that benefit crime victims.

Identified below are other key components of DJJ's Victim Services Program.

- Juvenile crime victims are given the opportunity to serve as speakers on victim impact panels. These panels allow victims to tell offenders face-to-face how their crimes have impacted their lives.
- The Internet Victim Information System (IVIS), a computer system that allows victims to access juvenile offender information through the Internet. IVIS also allows input of victim information and case activity. The benefit of the system is the automated phone notification of victims. Additionally, the collection of data is an important factor of the work done by DJJ staff. The collection of statistical information is incorporated to assess and evaluate levels of

services to victims. During fiscal year 2008-2009, 16,654 contacts were made to victims and \$357,228 in restitution was collected and paid to victims of juvenile crime, juvenile offenders performed 83,910 hours of community service.

- **The Comprehensive Assistance In Response to Employees (C.A.R.E.)** program provides peer support services to DJJ staff who are on-the-job victims of juvenile crime. Staff selected to be C.A.R.E. peer supporters attend the day-long, mandatory Peer Support Training sponsored by DJJ's Victim Services Program

A major component of building a restorative justice system requires involvement from crime victims, ordinary citizens, and community groups. To find out how you can help please call the number listed below.

### VICTIM SATISFACTION

In May 2009, 450 crime victims across South Carolina were surveyed to determine their level of satisfaction with the juvenile justice system. Victims were asked to rate their overall experience with the system. Nearly 70% percent of the victims surveyed rated their satisfaction at a five (on a scale of 1-most negative to 5-most positive).

### PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Victims of juvenile crime who have been helped by DJJ's Victim Services Program provide the best evidence of the program's effectiveness. Here, are comments from past victim/survivors of juvenile crime.

"As a victim/survivor of a juvenile crime, I am very excited about the Victim Services Program at DJJ. As you might imagine, juvenile crime involves so many complicated issues due to the offender's age and need for rehabilitative services."

~Lynn Eargle

"The C.A.R.E. program has been an asset to me, and I greatly appreciate your care and concern. It is obvious that the C.A.R.E. program is where the heart of the agency lies."

~Scott Wagner

"Being allowed to participate on the Victim Impact Panel has given me the opportunity to share my experience with the hope of helping offenders understand the harm they cause."

~Georgette Clemons

### How to Reach South Carolina's Victim Services Programs

Abbeville	(864) 459-5096
Aiken	(803) 641-7735
Allendale	(843) 584-4751
Anderson	(864) 260-4041
Bamberg	(803) 245-5184
Barnwell	(803) 259-7114
Beaufort	(843) 525-1351
Berkeley	(843) 761-8194
Charleston	(843) 740-1649
Cherokee	(864) 487-2564
Chester	(803) 377-8104
Chesterfield	(803) 623-2378
Clarendon	(803) 435-8587
Colleton	(843) 549-1509
Darlington	(803) 393-5641
Dillon	(803) 774-4147
Dorchester	(843) 832-0398
Edgefield	(864) 445-8138
Fairfield	(803) 635-1140
Florence	(803) 665-3080
Georgetown	(843) 546-8723
Greenville	(864) 241-1252
Greenwood	(864) 229-6648
Hampton	(843) 943-4296
Horry	(843) 248-1895
Jasper	(843) 726-5666
Kershaw	(803) 432-9171
Lancaster	(803) 285-9447
Laurens	(864) 984-2518
Lee	(803) 778-2368
Lexington	(803) 359-5526
Marion	(803) 431-1110
Marlboro	(803) 479-2961
McCormick	(864) 445-8138
Newberry	(803) 276-8243
Oconee	(864) 638-9537
Orangeburg	(843) 260-4041
Pickens	(864) 878-7560
Richland	(803) 253-4078
Saluda	(864) 445-8138
Spartanburg	(864) 585-5181
Sumter	(803) 778-2368
Union	(864) 429-1640
Williamsburg	(803) 354-9143
York	(803) 327-2046

**For additional information, please contact us at (803) 896-9544.**  
**[www.state.sc.us/djj](http://www.state.sc.us/djj)**

The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age. THE FOLLOWING OFFICES HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED TO HANDLE INQUIRIES REGARDING THE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES: Title IX –Inspector General's Office – 803-896-9595 Title II & 504 – Special Education Office – 803-896-8484.