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# Implementation Plan: Strategies to Reach California's Underserved Crime Victims



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Office of Justice Programs**

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This report was developed by Mindy Fox, Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board Deputy Executive Officer for California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP); Christie Munson, CalVCP Processing Branch Manager; Robin Foemmel Bie, LCSW, CalVCP Resources Branch Manager, and Ava Watson, CalVCP Program Development and Analysis Manager.

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## Introduction

In 2013, the California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP) of the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board was awarded the Crime Victim Compensation Program Initiative grant from the Office for Victims of Crime. With this grant CalVCP conducted research and data analysis to produce Baseline Data, Needs Assessment, and Gap Analysis Reports. The synthesis of the Baseline Data Report and Needs Assessment Report findings resulted in the identification of unmet needs and barriers resulting in gaps in compensation and victim services that are described in the Gap Analysis Report. The fourth grant deliverable is an Implementation Plan that outlines strategies to close the identified gaps and make strides to meet the unmet needs of victims. CalVCP sought and was awarded a second year of funding to engage in these strategies. By addressing the gaps, CalVCP will increase awareness of and access to compensation and victim services and begin to eradicate barriers faced by crime victims across the state.

## Gaps in Accessing Compensation and Victim Services

CalVCP identified the following unmet needs and barriers:

- Crimes are sometimes unreported in underserved communities due to fear of law enforcement, retaliation, deportation, and safety concerns. Shame and blame can also contribute to underreporting. The lack of a crime report is often a barrier to eligibility and compensation.
- Only some of the underserved communities across California are reached by victim services. Victim advocates and trauma-informed victim and community services must be accessible to communities to be effective. Advocates provide the human connection, which is the key to victims accessing services.
- CalVCP needs to evaluate benefit types and limits to determine if the financial needs of victims are being fully met. For example, the current funeral and relocation benefit limits were reported to not fully cover the losses of many victims. Additionally, transportation expenses or wage loss due to attending medical, mental health, and other crime related appointments are not covered benefits.
- Claimants who speak a language other than English need to receive linguistically and culturally appropriate communications. Approximately 43% of California residents speak a language other

than English at home. CalVCP currently has program fact sheets in multiple languages, but only sends correspondence to applicants in English or Spanish.

- Enhanced collaboration is needed between CalVCP, the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), and other state and local victim service agencies to increase access to appropriate services for underserved communities throughout California.
- Advocates, service providers, community-based organizations, and others who assist victims need continual training and up-to-date information about CalVCP. When training and education about victim compensation is institutionalized, more victims will receive help.
- California has experienced a decline in system-based advocates over the last decade, leaving a gap in victim services. This prevents all victims from accessing compensation and victim services.
- CalVCP needs to make technological improvements to enhance the efficiency and accessibility of victim compensation service delivery.

## Strategies to Close Gaps

CalVCP developed three objectives with corresponding strategies to improve awareness, access, and efficiency of compensation delivered to crime victims. The objectives include increasing responsiveness and quality of service delivery through translating CalVCP documents into multiple languages; training, collaboration, and outreach to service providers and professionals in the field of victim services; and utilizing information technology solutions.

Objective 1: Increase awareness, accessibility, and responsiveness through translation of CalVCP materials

Strategy 1.1: Translation of CalVCP Application, Principle Brochure, and Correspondence

California is one of the most diverse states in the nation and continues to grow in diversity due to immigration. More than 25% of the residents living in California are foreign-born, and nearly 43% of residents speak a language other than English at home. The need to communicate in an individual's preferred language is essential. CalVCP will translate the program application, principal brochure, and frequently utilized correspondence in 13 languages identified as widely used in California: Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, East Armenian, Farsi, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Punjabi, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

In addition to being linguistically appropriate, it is critical that CalVCP's communication is culturally appropriate in order to reduce barriers to seeking help and encourage underserved victims of crime to participate in the program. CalVCP will create a communication plan to announce the availability of linguistically and culturally appropriate materials to stakeholders who work with groups that speak the aforementioned languages. Additionally, CalVCP will provide training for internal staff regarding the use of translated materials and provide guidance on translating documents for victims whose preferred languages were not identified for advance translation.

#### Timeline for Translation Implementation

CalVCP entered into contract with a translation firm in March 2015 to translate the CalVCP application, brochures, and the most frequently used letters. It is anticipated that all the translated materials will be integrated into CalVCP processes and made available on the CalVCP public website by spring of 2016.

Objective 2: Increase awareness, accessibility, and quality of service delivery through training and outreach to advocates, service providers, law enforcement, and medical personnel

Strategy 2.1: Conduct two regional conferences for system based and community based organization advocates, service providers, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and medical personnel

Findings from the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis Reports point to the need for a collaborative, culturally-informed force of victim advocates, service providers, and compensation staff to reach the most vulnerable and underserved crime victims and meet their needs.

CalVCP will host two regional conferences titled "Strategic Collaborations for Reaching the Underserved Victims of Crime". The Northern California Conference will be held on September 23, 2015 at the University of California, Davis Conference Center. The Southern California Conference will be held on October 8, 2015 at the University of California, Los Angeles Covel Commons. The sessions at both conferences will include:

- Findings on Underserved Victim Populations in California
- Innovative Strategies for Reaching Marginalized Victim Populations
- Making the Criminal Justice System Accessible to Underserved Victims

- Reaching Underserved Victims
- Vicarious Trauma and Self-Care
- Building Collaboration and Partnerships with Providers of Victim Services
- Breaking Down Barriers to Accessing CalVCP Benefits
- Victim Keynotes: Elizabeth Smart (Northern) and Azim Khamisa (Southern)

Strategy 2.2: Partner with the University of California, Davis (UCD) to conduct a training conference for Law Enforcement (LE)

CalVCP will partner with UCD to conduct a two day training conference April 11-12, 2016, with a possible second date in San Diego in November 2016, titled “Leave No Victim Behind”. The goal of the conference is to help LE better understand the communities they serve and close existing gaps between LE and the community. CalVCP will present Compensation Program Initiative grant findings and additional subject matter experts will present on underserved populations with similar themes to CalVCP’s two regional conferences as described in strategy 2.1.

Strategy 2.3: Develop and implement a Collaboration Plan

The Needs Assessment Report highlighted the need for enhanced coordination and collaboration between CalVCP, the California Office of Emergency Services, and other state and local victim service providers. As a result, CalVCP is developing a Collaboration Plan that outlines key stakeholders, activities and milestones to foster collaboration and partnerships to better serve victims.

Collaboration Plan activities are the following:

- Conduct outreach presentations to the Boards at the California Department of Consumer Affairs that license services providers in an effort achieve joint messaging regarding CalVCP to licensees.
- Maintain and strengthen relations with advocates at Victim Witness Centers, community-based organizations, Family Justice Centers, and victim service providers to increase utilization of CalVCP.
- Increase connections and collaboration opportunities with victim service providers to promote awareness and participation in CalVCP.

- Identify key stakeholders and create a partner database to maintain contact information and send periodic announcements and updates to community based organizations and other victim services professionals to increase access to victim compensation.
- Provide tools and materials to CalVCP satellite offices to enable uniform outreach to community based organizations.
- Invite subject matter experts to provide quarterly Trauma-Informed Services Workshops for CalVCP staff and stakeholders in order to enhance understanding of issues affecting victims of crime.

#### Timeline for Collaboration Plan Implementation

A Project Charter detailing the objectives, project leads, and teams will be finalized in the fall of 2015. The project leads will develop time task plans for each objective and define all activities and resources. All implementation activities will be completed or underway by early fall 2016 and will be on-going, as appropriate.

Objective 3: Increase accessibility and quality of service delivery through innovative information technology solutions

Strategy 3.1: Provide web-based eLearning training courses for victim witness advocates, community-based advocates, mental health professionals, and medical personnel

The Gap Analysis Report revealed that California's diverse population has limited awareness of, and sometimes access to, the benefits available from CalVCP. Advocates, mental health professionals, medical personnel, and first responders require consistent and frequent training on CalVCP to increase access to and awareness of compensation. CalVCP will create web-based eLearning training courses that are interactive and encompass adult learning principles to address this gap.

Five (5) self-paced web-based eLearning training courses will be developed by an eLearning contractor with curriculum content provided by CalVCP subject matter experts. The Contractor will develop the web-based eLearning training courses for the following audiences, for the specified lengths:

- General Public/All External Stakeholders: 10 minutes
- Mental Health Professionals: 90 minutes
- Medical Personnel: 60 minutes

- Community-Based Advocates: 2 hours
- Victim Witness Advocates: 4 hours

#### Timeline for eLearning Implementation

A Request for Offer (RFO) was posted July 2015 to solicit a contractor to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the five (5) web-based eLearning courses. The contractor will complete the activities listed above within twelve (12) months.

The courses will be placed on the CalVCP website sequentially and all courses will be launched by fall 2016. Communication plans for each web-based eLearning training course will be developed and executed as each course is launched.

#### Strategy 3.2: Disseminate education materials to external stakeholders

Only 37% of the victims interviewed for the Needs Assessment Report recalled being given either verbal or written information from first responders about their rights as victims and about CalVCP. Turnover in the field of first responders and victim services can be high; therefore, it is important for CalVCP to create convenient and easy to access information that can quickly educate a victim service provider about compensation. CalVCP will create audience specific toolkits containing information regarding compensation and victim services. The targeted audiences may include, but are not limited to: Family Justice Centers, first responders, Victim Witness Centers, governmental agencies, and community-based organizations. These toolkits will have audience appropriate brochures, fact sheets, first responder cards, posters, and contact information for additional resources.

#### Timeline for Dissemination of Educational Materials

In the summer and fall of 2015 CalVCP will update brochures and outreach materials and develop a dissemination plan for the updated materials. In the spring of 2016 CalVCP will execute the dissemination plan.

### **Evaluation of Identified Strategies**

CalVCP will hire an objective third party evaluator to measure the outcomes of strategies implemented in the second year of this grant. Outcomes of the following activities will be evaluated:

- Translation of CalVCP Application, Principal Brochure, and Correspondence
- Occurrence of Two Regional Conferences
- Implementation of the Collaboration Plan activities
- Launch of Web-based eLearning training courses
- Dissemination of education materials

The third party evaluator will complete a comprehensive evaluation to measure the effectiveness of achieving increased awareness of and improved access to CalVCP with the following objectives:

Objective 1.1: Measure and evaluate participation by the underserved and stakeholders with CalVCP.

Objective 1.2: Measure and evaluate utilization of CalVCP enhanced benefits enacted to address unmet needs.

Objective 1.3: Compare and evaluate the Baseline Data Report findings to CalVCP applications filed for 2016 reported crimes.

## Summary

Research findings from the first year of the grant identified barriers to accessing compensation and unmet needs of victims. This plan outlines innovative and effective strategies to address those barriers and needs. Using a collaborative approach in conjunction with available technology, CalVCP will increase awareness of and access to compensation and victim services.