

VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

2012-2013
ANNUAL REPORT



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

Montgomery County, Maryland
2012-2013 Annual Report
Advocating for the Victims of Crime

MISSION STATEMENT

To support Montgomery County's commitment to serving victims of crime and their families, including rape, domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide survivors, adults molested as children, terrorism, hate violence, robbery, driving while intoxicated (DWI), vehicular manslaughter, assault, battery, burglary, arson, larceny, stalking, carjacking, purse snatching, harassment, vandalism and bullying.

MANDATE

The Board must periodically

- review available services and facilities for victims and their families
- determine needs of the victim and family services/programs
- submit at least one report annually to the County Executive and County Council on the progress of programs to victims and their families along with the actions needed to improve those programs
- make recommendations for appropriate allocation of funds in accordance with agreed upon priorities and consideration of financial resources

The Board also assists the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services in the development of the Annual Victim Services and Families Plan, and acts as a local advocate for victim services programming.

Montgomery County Code -- Art. VII, Section 24-56.

Visit Our Website:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov.vasap
www.vasap.org (Click on Advisory Board)

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MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS, Judith Whiton, Sorell Schwartz & Sylvia Fisher

Dear County Executive Leggett and County Council:

In this report of the Victim Services Advisory Board (VSAB), we are pleased to report that we continue to make important strides in meeting the mandate laid out for us in the Montgomery County Code. Our all-volunteer board has worked tirelessly to advise policy makers and administration officials on legislation, policy and best practices that are of benefit to victims of crime in Montgomery County. Our 2012-2013 priorities have been focused on a broad range of issues including, but not limited, to:

- **Transitional and Permanent Housing for Domestic Violence (DV) Victims**
- **Restoration of Trauma Services Staff to Previous Levels of Services**
- **Restructuring the current County Compensation Fund to allow for higher reimbursement for crime victim related losses**
- **Fundraising for the Victims Compensation Fund**
- **Support of all-volunteer, non-profit: Court Watch Montgomery**

Additionally, the Board has spent a significant amount of time identifying and advocating for certain budget priorities amidst this most recent budget crisis. Our advocacy has been, and will continue to be, premised on the notion that the offices within our county and our county's government should be provided with adequate funding to serve the community.

To determine the impact of major budget cuts on County programs that provide services to crime victims, we have conducted interviews of various affected departments and compiled the results for this report. While we understand that the need for victim services will never fully be met due to the financial constraints we face in today's economy, the need for consistent quality in those services must be met.

As we move forward, our board will continue to work to the best of our ability on the aforementioned priorities. Additionally, will carry on the task of providing both you and the County Council with recommendations on how we can meet the needs of victims and their families in Montgomery County. On behalf of the Board, we would like to say that it has been our pleasure to serve the community in this capacity, and we thank you for this opportunity to share our report with your office.

Sincerely,

Judith Whiton, Sorell Schwartz & Sylvia Fisher

Co-Chairs, Victims Services Advisory Board

MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP 2013

MEETINGS

The Board meets the fourth Thursday of each month, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Office of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, 1301 Piccard Drive, Fourth Floor Conference Room, Rockville, Maryland 20850. The Board does not meet in August and combines its November and December sessions into one meeting. All meetings are open to the public.

MEMBERSHIP

Amy Bills
Adrian Black
Stephanie Di Iorio
Sylvia Fisher (co-chair)
Esther Greene
Yumiko Ito
Inga James
Louise Kauffmann

Yolanda O'Neal-Banfield
Jose Ortiz
Parker O'Shea
Rosemary Pascarella
Anita Pinto
Sorrel Schwartz (co-chair)
Judith Whiton (co-chair)
Alicia Williams

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP

Ellen Alexander (Montgomery County Police)
Nadja Cabello (HHS)
Deborah Howard (HHS)
VACANT (Office of Public Defender)
George Simms (SAO)

VSAB FY2013 AND ONGOING PRIORITIES

- 1) **Transitional and Permanent Housing for Domestic Violence (DV) Victims is a critical need, necessary to ensure continuity of safety and life stabilization for this physically and psychologically vulnerable population.** DV victims leaving the Betty Ann Krahne Center (BAK) face significant challenges that place them at risk for negative outcomes. These include the high cost of living in the county, lack of education and vocational skills, and physical/emotional effects of complex trauma, among others. Clients remain at BAK about 6 months (beyond the prescribed 2-3 months) because transitional housing options are unavailable. Those unable to transition to a “safer living condition” are provided temporary hotel housing (< than 7 days), which poses dangers to the DV victims; they cannot be protected from victimizers, and are unable to receive needed services/supports. In the first half of FY13, 77 clients were moved from BAK, ten of them to a motel.
- 2) **Restoration of Trauma Services Staff to Previous Levels of Services.** The *Abused Persons Program* and the *Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program* serve crime victims, particularly victims of domestic violence and violent crimes, by providing assistance within the District and Circuit Courts, therapeutic intervention, and guidance in applying for victim compensation. Due to ongoing cuts, services of both the therapists and victim assistants are critically compromised. The *Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program* has lost a total of 45 hours weekly of victim assistance services due to these cuts. The consequences are: (1) delays in processing of compensation cases for crime victims; (2) reduced court coverage in both Circuit and District Courts where crime victims seek (a) immediate assistance and relief from their crime victimization; and (b) connections to ongoing clinical and victim assistance services.
- 3) **Restructuring the current County Compensation Fund to allow for higher reimbursement for crime victim related losses.** Currently the County Compensation Fund, which can expedite paying claims from County residents, is capped at \$2,500. Victims must apply to the State Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) for the remainder of their reimbursement, which may take an indeterminate length of time. Compensation requests submitted to the CICB have historically been beset by delayed processing and limited funding, resulting in a lack of consistent claim approvals for crime victims. Despite improvements in claims processing, the number and complexity of state-wide claims and challenging eligibility requirements, the timeliness of reimbursement of crime victims for their losses has not substantively improved.

4) **Ongoing VSAB Priorities.** Additional priorities that represent ongoing and episodic opportunities for VSAB include the following items.

- Bullying in the schools
- Human trafficking
- Judiciary and exacting court costs against defendants
- Marriage letter

Action items for these items were undertaken and/or completed based upon the size of board membership. Priorities that were not fully addressed in 2012-2013 represent priorities that will be the subject of ongoing efforts for VSAB in 2013-2014.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Reviewed all victim service private and county providers for service delivery mission goals, needs and gaps which includes the following programs: HHS Trauma Services: Abused Persons Program and Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program, Sheriff's Office Family Justice Center, Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Crime Rights Foundation, State Attorney's Office, Betty Ann Krankhe Domestic Violence Center and Montgomery County Police Victim Witness Unit.
- Produced annual reports on board activities.
- Fundraised \$ 15,500 in two of the last three fiscal years for the County's Crime Victim Compensation Fund.
- Testified in front of the County Council on policy needs and funding gaps.
- Supported the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Court Watch and members researched various models of court watch.
- Through fundraising for the Crime Victims Compensation Fund, the board assisted qualifying crime victims with reimbursement of crime victim related losses.

MAJOR ISSUES

TRANSITIONAL/PERMANENT HOUSING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS LEAVING THE BETTY ANN KRAHNKE CENTER (BAK)

Finding transitional housing and/or a system for prioritizing domestic violence victims' access to long-term housing has been the Victim Services Advisory Board's (VSAB's) top priority in FY 2013 and 2014.

BAK Discharge Challenges

In 2013 the VSAB was briefed on the situation at the BAK by Terri Bennet, Senior Administrator, HHS Behavioral Health Crisis and Victim Services.

She advised us that victims and their families leaving the Betty Ann Krahne Center (BAK) face significant challenges in transitioning to independent living and avoiding re-abuse. All high risk victims, they suffer from some degree of trauma-related effects and the necessity for keeping them from unsafe contact with their abusers is paramount. Unfortunately, there is no system for prioritizing access to low-cost housing for these victims, nor are there provisions for hard to place families with significant discharge challenges who require on-going services before they can transition to long-term housing.

This is what makes the current situation at the BAK untenable. This 54 bed facility is intended for emergencies and a short terms stay to provide for safety and case management services to help rehabilitate traumatized victims so they can attain the goal of a "safer living condition." An ideal stay is 60 days. BAK clients unable to transfer to a "safer living condition" are provided temporary hotel housing (less than 30 days), which poses dangers to the DV victims; they cannot be protected from their abusers and are unable to receive needed services/supports. In the first half of 2013 77 clients were moved from BAK, 10 of them to motels. The FY 14 budget for one hotel was already 80% depleted at the time of VSAB's first briefing on this issue.

More worrying, the shelter must keep especially vulnerable victims and their families beyond the BAK recommended stay of 2-3 months because they are not equipped to make a transition out of the BAK. They often stay up to 5-6 months, which causes the shelter to get backed up. Thus, when high lethality victims fleeing domestic violence come for help they too have to be put in hotels, the worst possible situation for them.

Permanent Housing

Domestic violence victims leaving the BAK do not qualify for precedence for permanent low-cost housing. The average wait is one year for a housing voucher and the one point allowance that domestic violence victims were previously afforded has been discontinued. Some of these victims might also have a legacy of legal problems such as bad credit or unresolved criminal charges resulting from attempts to defend themselves from their abusers. Their records must be clear for 3 years before they will be considered eligible for housing. Further, other housing programs in the County are not available to them. They do not qualify for permanent supportive housing services which require a documented disabling condition. Although often suffering from mental illnesses related to domestic violence; such as depression, substance abuse, PTSD. They also do not meet the criteria of “persistent mental illness” that would qualify them for McKinney grant housing. Often with no alternative but living with a relative or friend, with constant moves to avoid their abusers, even the most resilient of these victims are at risk for homelessness or returning back to abusers.

It is even more difficult for those with significant discharge challenges that preclude them leaving the BAK after a 2-3 month stay. Often these include lack of education, vocational skills, and the physical and emotional effects of complex trauma. These most vulnerable victims often have several young children. The high cost of living in Montgomery County and the costs of child care, coupled with low level job skills make them vulnerable to chronic homelessness. They are also at a higher risk for returning to their abusers because of their housing needs and fear of having their children taken away as a result of homelessness. These families continue to require in-house services, monitoring, and emotional support that are not currently available in the County. A gap in services that has, as noted, backed up the shelter and will likely continue the cycle of violence if appropriate transitions are not available to them.

Finding adequate housing is a unique challenge facing domestic violence victims that cannot be resolved by paying for more expensive hotel facilities or by securing another shelter. To close the services gap some sort of transitional housing is required that would afford these victims an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves and transition to permanent housing. To ensure their long-term safety, shelter clients should be prioritized for access to long term housing.

Actions:

Based on the above findings, the VSAB began to explore the options available for both transitional and permanent housing in its general meetings and set up a task force to meet with County leaders to discuss possibilities for transitional housing and strategies for obtaining it. We met with HHS representative Dr. Raymond Crowell, Chief of Behavioral Health Services, to review BAK discharge challenges and to suggest a model based on the one provided by Ms. Bennett and inspired by St. Ann’s in Prince George’s County:

A transitional housing program for young female-headed households that will help break the cycle of violence and dependency by providing DV victims with a) support/case management services b) time to build needed life skills (e.g. education, GED, vocational, parenting) c) increased trauma recovery and empowerment; and 4) resolution of housing barriers (e.g. legal problems,

identifying appropriate long term housing). Such a program would provide service for 1 year, with 3 month extensions, as needed, to achieve progress toward individual growth.

This would probably cost about \$500,000 to start up, a cost that the County might defer by applying for bond funds to be used for capital projects in Annapolis. Dr. Crowell suggested looking at abandoned townhouses on Fleet Street in Rockville, owned by the County and currently under consideration for rehabilitation, at empty school buildings via MCPS or unused buildings on Montgomery County parklands. The two properties on Fleet Street, under the jurisdiction of David Dice of the Department of General Services, seemed the best possibility. Dr. Crowell also suggested we speak with Nadim Khan, Chief, Special Needs Housing DHHS. We met with Dr. Khan and Sara Black, Senior Administrator, Housing Stabilization Services, to review the County's policies on homeless and priorities for the homeless. We subsequently met with David Dice.

Two of the Fleet Street townhouses have since been secured for transitional housing and are currently earmarked for domestic violence victims and their families. The Department of General Services will rehab these homes sufficient to house as many as 4 families transitioning from the BAK as a pilot project. But there is no budget for service/support or aggressive case management and the families cannot be moved until case management is in place. The continued focus of the VSAB will be on advocating for getting case management funds for the families in these two houses, including office space for the case management staff, estimated at approximately \$100,000.

The longer term issue of permanent housing remains and the Board will continue to focus on eligibility criteria for permanent housing for domestic violence victims. Meetings have already taken place with Chuck Short, Special Assistant to the County Executive (January, 2014), in an effort to develop a plan for prioritizing domestic violence victims in the housing pipeline. Mr. Short identified a number of strategies to pursue including (1) the possibility of working with housing advocacy groups and constituencies in the county to identify approaches to secure properties at low cost and rebuilding these properties which would be earmarked for domestic violence victims and their families; and (2) potentially collaborating to develop a housing voucher program for domestic violence victims and their families.

Board members will also reach out to the County's Veterans Board, who secured 40 Veterans Affairs supported housing vouchers from the federal government, to find out their strategies for securing this housing. We plan to follow up with other county leaders, from MCCH to see how the voucher system is structured, applying lessons learned to DV vouchers and housing alternatives, and meet with Councilman Leventhal, who currently heads up the homeless initiative in the Council. We hope our coordinated efforts might result in making a case to the State of the need for a voucher system prioritizing domestic violence victims in Montgomery County.

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSTION BOARD

Last year, it was reported in the Victim Services Advisory Board's 2010-2011 Annual Report that the State's primary mechanism, Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB), for paying/reimbursing crime victims' for bills incurred as a result of a crime (psychological, disability,

medical, funeral bills, lost wages and other out-of-pocket expenses) had suffered unprecedented financial hardship resulting in a substantial backlog of unpaid claims. Many of these backlogs belonging to crime victims in Montgomery County. The Victim Service Advisory Board made assisting in securing additional funding for CICB one of its top priorities.

The Board is pleased to share that under the guidance of a new CICB Executive Director, the Fund is once again solvent. Backlogged claims have now been processed. There is no need to ask for a legislative increase to the current fines and fees that are court-ordered and received by CICB. This monumental task was accomplished in several ways:

- CICB is a “payer of last resort” meaning that all other avenues of payment (e.g. health and car insurance) must be exhausted before CICB can consider paying a claim. The routine practice of verifying insurance policies and payments has resulted in lower duplications of payments from insurance streams and CICB to hospitals and other medical suppliers.
- CICB now routinely negotiates claims with medical providers, further reducing the amount the Fund pays out for each claim-as much as 60% off the original bills.
- Additionally, CICB originally decided that it would require that every crime victim apply to the State’s Medical Assistance (MA) program and would only allow claim submissions once the crime victim was denied MA benefits. While this sounds like a fair business practice, this requirement posed several problems:
 - Would require victims to complete and submit additional claims that are burdensome to complete, especially when known in advance that the victim would not meet the eligibility requirements.
 - The MA program requires proof of citizenship or documents of legal entry, a practice that would discourage undocumented innocent crime victims from applying for rightful benefits out of a fear of detection and deportation.
 - The requirement that **ALL** crime victims apply to the MA program would considerably bog down the current MA application process. Resulting, in longer decision times before submission to CICB and providers paid.

Board members worked with CICB to correct the issues that would result from requiring every victim to apply for MA. A compromise was reached and those crime victims that are undocumented or those crime victims with private insurance do not have to apply with MA before submitting a CICB claim. Additionally, claims examiners housed within CICB will have access to the MA eligibility database to conduct initial eligibility screens to reduce the number of non-eligible claims sent to MA for review – considerably reducing the potential back log that the **ALL** crime victim requirement would have as originally proposed.

The Board looks forward to other opportunities to collaborate on with CICB in the coming year to address any evolving issues as it relates to timely compensation for Montgomery County's crime victims.

FUNDRAISING

Throughout the year, the Board explored various venues by which funds could be raised for the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund (CVCF). The Fundraising committee of the Board will continue to explore ways to raise additional monies for the fund. The law that governs the Montgomery County Crime Victims' Compensation Fund allows 10% of monies collected to be spent to advertise and hold fundraising events.

Currently, the Board is exploring the viability of gathering victim stories to develop a fundraising letter to be distributed to board members' associates. This effort includes the collection of information about victims' services in the County, so this information can be distributed at fairs, public meetings, and by means of pamphlets. This effort is currently underway, along with additional efforts to identify opportunities for fundraising on behalf of the Montgomery County Crime Victims' Compensation Fund.

COURT WATCH MONTGOMERY

The VSAB continues to support the work of Court Watch Montgomery (CWM), an all-volunteer non-profit organization seeking to promote best practices in the court system that will ensure the short and long-term safety of domestic violence victims who seek legal protection for themselves and their children.

In its October 2011 report on protective order hearings in the County's two District Courts, CWM identified several areas where process could be improved based on nationally recognized best practices. The report highlighted the importance of increasing victim safety, enhance offender accountability, and ensure that both parties understood the protective order process. The basic recommendations are recapped below as are the findings from the follow-up report of June 2012 resulting from an additional six months of monitoring:

1. To avoid unwanted contact and the potential for harassment or assault, judges should use "staggered exits/victim first," delaying the respondent in court and allowing the petitioner to leave the courthouse and reach her transportation safely. Use of staggered exits improved from being utilized 15% of the time in the 2011 report to 70% of the time in the 2012 report.
2. To increase offender accountability and avoid violations, Judges should tell each respondent that violation of an order is a crime, each victim to call the police if a

violation occurs, and respondents must turn in their firearms for the duration of a protective order. CWM's second report noted some progress on this recommendation.

3. Pursuant to Court Watch's recommendation that a uniform introduction be made by each judge at each protective order docket to inform both parties of their legal options and help them understand the process. The District Court produced an audio introduction in English and Spanish that is played at the beginning of each domestic violence docket.
4. To increase understanding of individual orders and reduce violations, judges should reiterate the provisions of each order and allow parties to ask questions to ensure they understand. Judges should also open a line of questioning with petitioners wishing to dismiss their cases to insure they are not in danger. Following the first report, District court judges more routinely went over orders, but judges did not increase their frequency of questioning dismissing Petitioners.

In September 2012, CWM began monitoring Circuit Court protective order hearings. Findings from this year of reporting ending in September of 2013 indicate the same issues exist in the Circuit Court as in District (1) Staggered exits were used properly only 75% of the time (2) In almost half of the cases (46%) judges did not warn respondents it was a crime to violate an order and over half the time (3) (55%) did not tell them to turn in firearms. Basic introductions to the docket were made only 13% of the time. CWM has recommended that Circuit Court judges utilize the same best practices recommended for District Court judges. As well, Circuit Court judges might benefit by the use of an audio such as the one produced by the District Court.

Court Watch Montgomery continues to monitor both District and Circuit Court protective order hearings. Its next report will look at how the Circuit court handled issues involving children: emergency custody, visitation, and emergency family maintenance in the same 225 cases reported on in November of 2013.**

***for copies of reports, please visit www.courtwatchmontgomery.org*

BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Board supports Montgomery County's commitment to serving victims of crime. Victim services contribute to health, mental health, and safety within the community. They are part of the County government's fundamental responsibilities and should be a priority in the next fiscal year.

Overall, victim services have absorbed severe budget cuts even as the County population continues to increase. The decrease in funding and staffing levels has had a negative impact on many services for crime victims.

The Board has identified the following budgetary priorities:

1. Abused Persons Program

- a. Increased staffing for clinical services and restoration of victim assistance to pre-cut levels.
- b. Need for permanent and transitional housing for Domestic Violence victims exiting the Betty Ann Krankhe shelter.

2. Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program

- a. Restoration of clinical and victim assistance staffing to pre-cut levels.

3. Betty Ann Krahne Center

- a. Additional nursing care.
- b. Need for permanent and transitional housing for DV victims.

4. Montgomery County Police Department

- a. Reinstatement of one victim coordinator lost position.

5. State's Attorney's Office

Additional prosecutors for economic crimes committed against vulnerable adults.

6. Family Justice Center

- a. Provide support for services for families at risk for domestic violence.

In addition we would like to call the attention of the County Council to the impending issue of federal funds. Sequestration has had, and is projected to continue having, a deleterious effect on grants that fund personnel costs. The estimated 5% reduction has had an impact on personnel costs and can potentially create in some positions the necessity to RIF personnel. The consequence of this would be the loss of services to crime victims if no other funds are available to replace this lost revenue.

SUMMARY OF VSAB INTERVIEWS WITH VICTIM-SERVING PROGRAMS

BACKGROUND

During the past year, VSAB members conducted interviews with representatives from eight victim services agencies and organizations in Montgomery County. The purpose of the interviews was to (1) gain a clear, in-depth understanding of the range of services available to victims of violence (2) identify strengths and areas of need within local programs, and (3) solicit suggestions for how the Victim Services Advisory Board could help local agencies and organizations sustain and scale-up their programs.

SCOPE OF INTERVIEWS

The interview focused on the populations served by each program, types of services offered, programmatic strengths and areas of need, challenges, and ways VSAB can help programs advance their goals. Each interviewee was asked the following questions about his/her program:

- *What does your program do? Whom do you serve?*
- *What funds do you have at your disposal?*
- *How many people do you serve?*
- *What are your program's strengths? What is your program doing well?*
- *What is your program's greatest need?*
- *What do you think needs to change in terms of services or public policy?*
- *If you had a wish list what would be on it? If you had additional funding, what would you do with it?*
- *What are new opportunities or initiatives you are pursuing?*
- *What are challenges your program faces?*
- *How can the Board help you in its capacity as an advisory committee to the Montgomery County Council and Executive?*
- *What are your priorities for victims in the county?*
- *How have recent budget cuts impacted your program's ability to provide services to crime victims?*

➡ *Do you use volunteers and if so how many, and in what capacity?*

STRENGTHS

Agencies and organizations serving victims of violence in our county are involved in remarkable and innovative efforts to combat domestic violence, sexual assault, bullying, stalking, child abuse, elder abuse, and other forms of violence. The eight programs explored through VSAB interviews collectively serve tens of thousands of people each year. Some key strengths identified both within programs and within the community include:

- ➡ Competent, experienced, and dedicated staff.
- ➡ Improved community awareness of abuse and violence.
- ➡ County emphasis on systems change, or addressing the “bigger picture” of violence in our community.
- ➡ Integration of services at the Family Justice Center.
- ➡ Coordination between the County Police, the Office of the State’s Attorney, VASAP, and other agencies.
- ➡ Breadth of services, e.g., counseling for family members of homicide victims and tutoring for survivors of domestic violence.
- ➡ Effective fundraising strategies.
- ➡ Responsiveness to victims.
- ➡ Professionalism among staff members.

NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

The majority of the programs are struggling to meet the needs of a higher volume and increasingly diverse population of victims. Furthermore, the increase of Internet crimes has presented new challenges for law enforcement, victim service providers, and prosecutors. Better community awareness of local resources is to be celebrated, but it has also presented a challenge for programs because they must serve a larger number of victims with funding sources that can be flat, declining, or unstable. Interviewees identified the following major program needs:

- ➡ Additional personnel and volunteers, such as trilingual therapists (including those fluent in American Sign Language), more prosecutors, staff to fill evening and weekend hours, forensic medical care providers, volunteer advocates, and others
- ➡ Additional and stable funding sources, particularly to address losses due to the economic and grant cuts
- ➡ Better collaboration and coordination across programs serving victims of domestic violence

- Enhanced community outreach and awareness.

Table 1: Areas of Need in Local Victim Services Organizations

Agency/Organization	RESOURCES			ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT		
	Materials and Supplies	Funding/Fundraising	Additional and Specialized Personnel	Policy	Community Outreach	Advocacy to County and State Gov't
Family Justice Center			X		X	
Betty Ann Krahne Center Shelter	X	X			X	X
Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program		X	X	X		X
State's Attorney's Office		X	X		X	
MCPD Victim Assistance Unit	X	X	X		X	X
Abused Persons Program		X	X		X	X

HOW VSAB CAN HELP

Interviewees described the various ways that VSAB can support them, principally through advising the County Council and Executive. Specific suggestions include:

- Advocate for the reinstatement of lost positions in agencies providing victim services within the County.
- Support requests for additional funding, for everything from reimbursement for expenses incurred to program expansion.
- Be an independent voice to the County Council on policy, budget and legislative changes needed to improve victim and victim family services.
- Emphasize the need for resources to meet agencies' mandates—programs need funding to do what they are required by law to do.
- Advocate for more coordinated and effective policies, such as more stringent consequences for offenders and policies that support a victim-friendly environment. It was noted that some regulations create complications for families being served by the new Family Justice Center.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

VSAB is grateful to the representatives of these organizations for offering their time in participating in interviews. Interviewees' ideas and input are valuable to VSAB as the Board identifies its priorities for 2014 and beyond.

- Hannah Sassoon, Director - Family Justice Center
- Susan Ward, Director - Betty Ann Krahne Center
- Nadja Cabello, Director, Deborah Howard- Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program, Abused Persons Program
- George Simms - State's Attorney's Office
- Ellen Alexander, Director - MCPD Victim Assistance Unit

ATTENDANCE AT EXTERNAL MEETINGS & TRAININGS

Outside Meetings Attended by VSAB Members: 2012-2013

- Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (Quarterly Meetings)
- HHS Quarterly Leadership meetings
- County Executive Meetings with Boards and Commissions
- Council HHS Committee Hearings with Boards and Commissions
- HHS Director, County Budget Presentation
- Family Justice Center
- Safe Silver Spring
- Montgomery County NOW

GUEST SPEAKERS 2012-2013

Throughout the period from January 2012 through December 2013, various victim services experts made insightful educational presentations to the Board.

- January 2012 – Stefan LoBuglio, Chief of the Pre Release Center, provided a detailed presentation of Montgomery County's three correctional facilities, Pre-Trial, Detention and Pre-release, and provided board members with an in-depth tour of the Pre-Release facility.

- ➡ December 2012 – Vivian Levi and Susan Ward, gave a presentation on the services provided by the Betty Ann Krahne Shelter and its current needs.
- ➡ March 2013 - Dr. Raymond Crowel, Chief of Behavioral Health Services, presented an overview of Behavioral Health Services current activities and challenges.
- ➡ June 2013 - The Honorable Kathleen Dumais gave an update on the 2013 Maryland legislative session.
- ➡ July 2013 - Terri Bennett, Senior Administrator, Crisis Intake and Trauma Services, BHS, presented an update on the rationale for transitional housing for certain domestic violence victims leaving the BAK.
- ➡ October 2013 - Bunnie Gordon, Executive Director of Victims in Need (VIN) presented a summary of how VIN helps domestic violence and sexual assault victims by providing immediate assistance for such needs as cab rides and clothing.
- ➡ December 2013 - Loretta Garcia, of the Human Rights Commission Hate Violence Committee provided an overview of the Hate Violence Committee's public education and complaint process and process for reimbursing victims of hate crimes.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Nadja S.P.Cabello and Deborah Howard are the staff support for the Board.