



Prosecuting Attorney - Local Crime Victim Compensation 11701.841.

Mission Statement

Seek the Just Result

Function

The Victim Witness Services Division provides vital support and services to victims and survivors of crime. Employees within this division help crime victims and survivors navigate the criminal justice system, and related programs, and ensure that they are treated in accordance with rights conferred through the Washington State Constitution and the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights. They also help coordinate witness participation in trial proceedings.

Trends/Events

Trends

- A steady increase in violent crime (murder, assault, rape, etc.) has resulted in greater numbers of crime victims and survivors.
- An increase in fatal drug overdose has led to more controlled substance homicide investigations which will likely result in additional murder prosecutions.
- As a result of changes to state law, juvenile offenders previously sentenced as adults are now eligible to petition the courts to be resentenced as juvenile offenders. This has and will continue to increase the workload for Victim Witness Coordinators. For example, with each resentencing petition, Victim Witness Coordinators may be required to notify each victim of the possibility that the person that sexually abused or otherwise assaulted them will be released, contrary to what they were told when the offender was sentenced years ago and prepare them for a new victim impact statement and the information that they will hear during the resentencing. Two such resentencings have occurred this year; one with one (1) victim and the other with two (2) victims. (One offender was released and we are still waiting to hear the resolution of the other one.)
- The Washington State Indeterminate Sentencing Review Board (ISRB) routinely reviews the status of incarcerated sex offenders and evaluates them for possible release into communities around the state. Each time we are notified of such a review, Victim Witness Coordinators are tasked with locating the survivor(s) as well as the original law enforcement investigator(s), arranging meetings with the deputy prosecuting attorney assigned to the case, and assisting with recommendation preparation. Review hearings occur several times per year.

- The state routinely reviews the status of individuals incarcerated following a finding that they are Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI). For each review, the VWC contacts all the survivors and original investigators, has a meeting with the DPA and assists with recommendation preparation. Clallam County currently has four people committed following a NGRI finding.
- More and more victim/survivors, in both charged and uncharged cases, require increased dedicated face time and efforts by VWC due to increased trauma and the PAO's trauma informed victim centric prosecution philosophy.
- We have noticed an increase in cases that involve multiple victims. This is something we are starting to track.
- We have experienced an increase in the number of phone calls from law enforcement who are interested in connecting victims and survivors with criminal justice services.
- We have experienced an increase in the number of inquiries from community members about criminal justice services (e.g., coordination of crime victim compensation for survivors in need of counseling, funeral expense reimbursement, etc.).

Events (first six months of 2023)

- District Court I & II have 225 victim cases from Jan-Jun 2023; total number of cases is 393.
- Juvenile Court has 33 victim cases from Jan-Jun 2023; total number of cases is 46.
- Superior Court has 153 victim cases from Jan-Jun 2023; total number of cases is 159.
- Charged one (1) murder thus far this year in a case that involves multiple survivors, each of whom is entitled to numerous services.
- Charged one attempted murder by a mother against her children. As with the previous case, this
- Presented numerous trainings for law enforcement, fire departments and community groups on topics including court process, testimony and victim rights.
- Advised law enforcement regarding multi-victim sexual assault cases.

Goals

- Continue cross training Victim Witness Coordinators.
- Create a road map for Superior Court and District Court victims/survivors and collaborate with agencies and law enforcement to distribute.
- Continue to provide victim/witness/survivor services in a trauma informed, culturally competent manner that acknowledges implicit bias.
- Continue collaboration with all branches of law enforcement, fire departments, community advocacy groups to maximize criminal justice system efficiencies.

Challenges

- The Washington State Legislature recently gave courts the authority to waive the victim penalty assessment for indigent defendants. This assessment has historically been a primary source of funding for our Victim Witness Coordinator positions. While the State Legislature appropriated funding to minimize fiscal impacts, we do not believe the funding allocated will be in an amount sufficient to offset the anticipated loss. Alternative funding will be required in order to ensure the continued provision of Constitutionally and statutorily mandated victim rights.
- The increase in violent crime is having a disproportionate impact on the already limited resource within the Victim Witness Services Division.
- Statistics do a poor job of conveying the quantity of work performed by Victim Witness Coordinators and fail to address the quality of work performed. Each victim case is touched by a Victim Witness Coordinators in one way or another. The numbers below do not reflect the non-victim cases that the VWC work with witnesses. The numbers also do not reflect cases from previous years that are still open.
- Lack of certified court interpreters.
- Uninformed criminal justice professionals and participants concerning trauma responses and ability to be trauma informed.
- In July 2023, the State Legislature imposed a requirement on prosecutor's offices in restoration of firearm rights cases. There is now a requirement that the victim's of the underlying charges which took the firearm rights away be notified of the defendant's petition to restore their firearm rights. This is a function that will fall to the Victim Witness Coordinator division. Again, they will have to locate victims from years ago and re-traumatize some that have put their cases behind them, in order to comply with this mandate by the Legislature.
- The lack of childcare resources within the community has emerged as a significant challenge for one or more employees of the office.

Workload Indicators

	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	6/30/23 Actual
Total Victims Served	879	586	244
Victims of DV	147	186	101
Adult Sexual Assault Victims	8	18	8
Child Physical/Sexual Abuse Victims	19	19	12
Services Provided: Information and Referral	961	713	320
Services Provided: Accompanying to Court	479	1075	369
Services Provided: Restitution Assistance	128	19	15
Services Provided: Criminal Justice Support	355	488	188
Services Provided: Notification of court hearings	1829	1873	524

Grant Funding Sources

1. Department of Justice (Federal)
2. Washington State Department of Commerce

Revenues

	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	6/30/23 Actual	2024 Budget
Beginning Fund Balance	79,791	9,627	28,642	11,718
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Licenses and Permits	0	0	0	0
Intergovernmental Revenues	66,351	87,687	31,407	107,858
Charges for Goods and Services	55,061	40,607	22,945	41,700
Fines and Forfeits	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Financing Sources	2,524	1,617	873	1,600
Transfers In	0	77,000	82,000	67,000
Total	203,727	216,538	165,866	229,876

Expenditures

	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	6/30/23 Actual	2024 Budget
Ending Fund Balance	9,627	28,642	67,791	26,835
Salaries and Wages	105,452	119,017	64,383	131,642
Personnel Benefits	46,595	52,394	27,725	57,477
Supplies	0	0	0	200
Other Services and Charges	34,761	971	600	2,000
Intergovernmental Services	0	0	0	0
Capital Outlays	0	0	0	0
Interfund Payments for Services	7,292	15,514	5,368	11,722
Transfers Out	0	0	0	0
Total	203,727	216,538	165,866	229,876

Staffing

	2021 Budget	2022 Budget	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
Full Time Equivalents	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00