

# Crime Victim Compensation QUARTERLY

Issue #3

2009

## INSIDE

- **VOCA News**
- **Larry Tackman Wins Distinguished Service Award**
- **Collaboration Between Comp. and Assistance Explored**
- **Mass-Casualty Response: Preparation is Key**
- **Alaska's Dramatic New Poster**
- **National Conference: Chicago, Sept. 27—Oct. 1, 2010**

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF CRIME VICTIM  
COMPENSATION BOARDS

DEBORAH SHAW RICE,  
*President*

SHAWANDA REYNOLDS-COBB  
*First Vice President*

H. GENE McCLESKEY  
*Second Vice President*

CLETUS NNANABU  
*Treasurer*

GEORGE GUTIERREZ  
*Secretary*

DAN EDDY  
*Executive Director*

## National Conference Brings Together 300+ Participants from All States

**R**ecord numbers of participants joined in three days of discussions on a broad range of issues at this year's National Training Conference in Washington, D.C., September 30th to October 2nd. Celebrating 25 years since the passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA), state administrators of compensation and assistance grant funds explored joint concerns and focused on improving their own programs.

A large number of federal officials, including staff from the VOCA-administering Office for Victims of Crime in the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, also were on hand.

Highlights included a "conversation" with Judge Lois Haight, one of the pioneers of the movement to seek federal support for victim services. Working within the Reagan Administration in the early 1980s, Judge Haight directed a Presidential Task Force that did the fact-finding and consciousness-raising necessary to make victim funding a priority. A remarkably bipartisan effort in Congress resulted in the passage of VOCA less than two years after the Presidential Task Force's Report. Initially giving just \$23 million in compensation grants to 36 states (the other states didn't have compensation programs yet) and \$41 million to support victim assis-

tance programs, VOCA's Crime Victims Fund has grown to provide grants of nearly \$200 million to compensation programs and \$400 million for victim service programs.

Other highlights of the conference included several management-training sessions; a two-part discussion of contributory conduct issues; and workshops on advocacy in compensation programs, claim-processing problems and solutions, medical

and dental compensation claims, forensic-exam payments, compensation-claim denials, revenue recovery, developing an effective annual report, managing long-term care and support, and collaboration between compensation and assistance programs. Participants also explored issues related to

human trafficking, Americans victimized abroad, cultural diversity, VOCA grant management, domestic violence, Native American healing ceremonies, gang violence, crime victims in the military, the "new workforce," victims of federal crime, Internet threats to children, victims of international terrorism, and "resilience strategies" for people working in the victims field.

A big thanks to our partners at NAVAA and the Office for Victims of Crime; and to our members for participating so actively!

25 Years of Serving  
Crime Victims:  
Celebrating VOCA  
National Conference  
Washington, DC  
Sept. 30-Oct. 2

# President's Message

*I hope you enjoyed our National Training Conference! With record numbers of people attending, from both compensation programs and VOCA assistance agencies, we had some wonderful discussions on a wide variety of issues. I hope it proved productive for you and your staff, and we thank everyone who participated so actively during our three days together in D.C.*

*I want to thank Steve Derene, executive director of the organization we partnered with for this conference, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, as well as our conference assistant, Gillian Nevers. And of course, we're grateful for the work of our own executive director, Dan Eddy.*

*Let me also express our appreciation to D.C. Compensation Director Laura Banks Reed and her staff for helping out so handily with logistics. Our planning committee deserves a lot of credit, and I want to say a very heartfelt thanks to OVC for providing us with the financial support to make this conference possible. I also want to thank Charles Moses and Amy Callaghan from the Office of Justice Programs for explaining the Recovery Act reporting issues for us.*

*It was good, as always, to reconnect with old friends and to meet victim services professionals who have joined compensation and assistance programs more recently. We had a moving and inspirational opening session, and it was a pleasure and privilege to have lunch with, and to hear the remarks of, Judge*

*Lois Haight, who did so much to make federal funding through VOCA a reality. I also enjoyed meeting my own program's past and present OVC grant monitors, Brad Mitchell and Shadine Stultz, and I want to thank them, and Toni Thomas, and all the other OVC staff who work so hard on our behalf.*



*I hope you also enjoyed D.C. and the beautiful weather we had there. I took a brisk walk up to the zoo and had the good fortune to catch a few glimpses of the baby gorillas and the elephants. I enjoyed the opportunity to network with my colleagues from other states in the various restaurants in the vicinity of our hotel. I hope we all can keep our communication up with each other in the coming year, until we meet again either at one of our Regionals in the Spring, or our National next year in Chicago.*

*Our hearts go out to the victims of the Ft. Hood attack, and their families. Gene McCleskey, the victim compensation manager in Texas, is on top of things there. He is a career military officer himself, and has done a great deal of training on the base.*

*We welcome several new Association Board members (see our list below), and thank our outgoing Board members, Janice Carmichael, Gary Scheller, and Avis Lane, for their service.*

*We look forward to another great conference next year in Chicago!*

*— Deb Rice*

## **Association Officers**

**President:** Deborah Shaw Rice (Maine)

**1st Vice President:** Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb (Georgia)

**2nd Vice President:** Gene McCleskey (Texas)

**Treasurer:** Cletus Nnanabu (Washington)

**Secretary:** George Gutierrez (Idaho)

## **Board of Directors**

Ethel Ford (SC) Marie Bibus (MN) Judy Farley (RI) Janet Kennedy (MS) Cheryle Hall (WV)  
Laura Banks Reed (DC) Kristy Ring (NM) Suzanne Breedlove (OK) Gwen Roache (FL)  
Bryan Nix (NV) Julie Tennant-Caine (WY) Tony Vidale (AZ) Frank Henderson, Jr. (KS)

# VOCA Cap-Raising Bill Makes Progress in Congress

VOCA's cap may be rising over the next several years, if efforts by some of Congress's leading legislators succeed. While compensation grants from OVC will not be affected directly (the 60% formula for calculating compensation grants will not change), dramatically increasing victim assistance grants to states will result, and more victim services will be funded. This should result in increased numbers of compensation claims — which may require Congress to think again about raising the compensation-grant percentage.

"The Crime Victims Fund Preservation Act of 2009," S. 1340, passed unanimously through the Senate Judiciary Committee, co-sponsored by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Mike Crapo (R-ID). It now will move on to the full Senate for consideration. Meanwhile, a companion bill, H.R. 3402, was introduced by Representatives Ted Poe (R-TX) and Jim Costa (D-CA), co-chairs of the Congressional Crime Victim Rights Caucus.

The bill intends to free up for state expenditure more of the money deposited from federal criminal fines into VOCA's Crime Victims Fund. If Congressional appropriators follow the direction of the bill — and this would be necessary, in order for the bill's purposes to prevail — then the VOCA cap will rise 23% per year, reaching a maximum of \$1.6 billion in FY 2014. The VOCA cap for FY 2010 is likely to be approximately \$700 million (Congress has yet to determine the cap for this fiscal year).



**National Training Conference**  
**45 Years of Crime Victim Compensation: 1965—2010**  
**September 27 - October 1, 2010**

## Welcome!

*Mel Wilson is the new director of the Utah Office of Crime Victim Reparations. Mel served as an elected county attorney for nearly 20 years, during which time he established a children's justice center, battered-women's shelter, advocacy center, and a drug court.*

*Larry Barker now heads the South Carolina State Office of Victim Assistance. A therapist with more than 25 years of experience helping victims of domestic violence and other traumatic events, Larry served most recently as the Director of Administration for South Carolina's governor.*

*Janelle Melohn has just begun serving as the director of victim compensation for Iowa's Office of Attorney General. Janelle previously ran Iowa's VINE statewide victim notification system.*

*Virginia Woodward is the executive director of the Kentucky Crime Victims Compensation Board. She has served as executive director of the Governor's Office for Boards and Commissions and the Kentucky Commission on Women, as well as president of the Kentucky Women's Political Caucus.*

## Larry Tackman Wins NACVCB Distinguished Service Award

*Recognizing an individual with a long and outstanding career in victim compensation and services, the Association bestowed its annual Distinguished Service Award on New Mexico's Larry Tackman. Larry served as the Association's President for two years, and as an officer and Board member for many other years. In New Mexico, he directed both victim compensation and victim assistance efforts in the state, constantly striving for better ways to maximize resources, increase outreach and effectiveness, and serve victims in the best manner possible. Congratulations to Larry and best wishes in future endeavors — we understand he's looking toward retiring in the near future!*

# Compensation and Assistance Colleagues Talk Collaboration

**M**eeting in a session at the recent *National Training Conference in Washington*, compensation program managers and staff joined with VOCA assistance administrators to explore ways that their programs can collaborate to serve victims better.

Both compensation and assistance professionals agreed that collaboration was a worthy and necessary effort. Beyond simply helping more victims, collaboration helps maximize resources, and promotes greater efficiency in allocating those resources. Compensation programs can benefit by getting more referrals from victim service programs, as well as more expert help in ensuring that applications are completed fully and accurately. Assistance programs also can gain by referrals from compensation programs that recognize other services may be better suited to meeting certain victims' needs.

Participants in the session mirrored the 50-50 distribution of agencies in the states that either (a) handle only victim compensation, with a different agency in the state administering VOCA assistance grants; or (b) have responsibility for both compensation and assistance within the same office. While participants agreed that having a "joint" agency might offer certain advantages in promoting cooperation between compensation and assistance, they also said being in separate offices should be no bar to effective collaboration.

Some compensation and assistance managers schedule quarterly meetings of all "players" in the system, including representatives from domestic violence and sexual assault programs, drunk-driving and child-victim advocates, and law enforcement and prosecution-based programs. Issues can be aired at these sessions, and solutions found that are satisfactory to all involved — or will at least involve everyone in the process and the exchange of ideas.

Some VOCA assistance managers have asked their compensation counterparts for ideas and input in designing appropriate questions when making site

visits to VOCA subgrantees. In other words, does a compensation manager have a thought about how the assistance administrator could monitor compliance with the VOCA requirement that assistance be provided to victims in filing applications? In addition, is there a way that VOCA assistance administrators can compare, for each subgrantee, the number of victims served with the number of victims who have been referred to compensation? And can there then be a followup to see how many claims actually were filed by the victims who have been "referred" or assisted with compensation information?

Another important area is training of subgrantees: Some state VOCA assistance administrators require subgrantee organizations to send staff to be trained on a variety of issues relating to providing victim services,

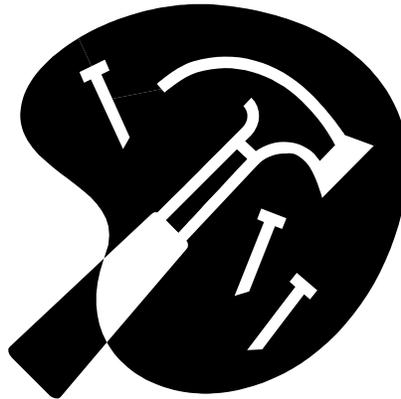
with compensation being one important part of that agenda. Florida takes it a step further and requires each VOCA assistance subgrant program to designate a compensation specialist. Compensation-trained advocates are encouraged to stay in contact with the compensation program to ask questions and resolve problems. Some programs may fast-track claims that have the help of an advocate, because the claim itself is more complete, and because questions about the claim can be answered quickly. Decisions on claims

may be copied to the advocate as well as the victim.

Compensation programs have found it effective to attend and train at conferences and other sessions hosted by VOCA assistance administrators and victims groups supported by VOCA.

Compensation programs also have found it helpful to victims — and the VOCA assistance subgrantees that serve them — to provide referrals to services within the victims' locality. This can be especially useful when the victims' needs won't be served by what the compensation program can pay for. It's also beneficial to compensation staff to be trained on trauma and victimization, so they can communicate better with victims.

Working together always produces better results!





# VIOLENT CRIME CAN AFFECT ANYONE

If you have been a victim of crime, the Violent Crimes Compensation Board may be able to help with medical, counseling, relocation and other expenses.

**CALL 1-800-764-3040**

**VIOLENT CRIMES COMPENSATION BOARD**

**HELPING INNOCENT VICTIMS PICK UP THE PIECES**

[www.state.ak.us/admin/vccb](http://www.state.ak.us/admin/vccb)

# Virginia Comp. Director Shares Mass-Casualty Experiences

**A**s a result of Virginia being the scene of several high-profile mass-casualty events since 2001, including the September 11th attack on the Pentagon, the Beltway Sniper murders, and the Virginia Tech shootings, Compensation Program Director Mary Vail Ware has a wealth of experience and insight to share. She was asked to share her expertise recently at the Office for Victims of Crime's recent "Mass Casualty and Violence at Home and Abroad" conference in Arlington.

Mary Vail began by noting that the mass-violence incidents in Virginia are only some of the many that have happened across the country in recent years, including the Oklahoma City bombing, and 40 school shootings, including the murders at Columbine High School. Compensation programs in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California, and Massachusetts mobilized to do what they could to compensate and assist victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Oklahoma and Colorado compensation staff were deeply involved in responding to the high-profile mass murders in their states.

All of these types of mass-casualty events result in a highly charged atmosphere, with intense media coverage and multiple governmental agencies and private entities involved. Crime victim compensation must find its most appropriate and effective role in this difficult setting, Mary Vail said.

In providing financial assistance to victims and families for medical bills, funeral expenses, counseling, and other expenses, victim compensation programs must coordinate with other funding agencies to ensure resources are maximized. It's important to use local victim/witness assistance programs, as well as any Family Assistance Centers that are established, to work with victims and families. Compensation programs also can provide technical assistance and support to institutions, such as universi-

ties, dealing with mass violence.

Preparation is paramount, Mary Vail said. One of the most important outcomes of all the tragic incidents in Virginia was the passage of a state law that directs all localities in the state, as well as colleges and universities, and elementary, middle and high schools, to include in their emergency response plans a requirement that they immediately contact the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF), as well as the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), which handles VOCA assistance money for the state, when mass violence occurs. The emergency response plans also require that current contact information for victims be provided to the victim compensation program. This

enables the compensation program to deploy assistance rapidly, as needed, to the right people. In the meantime, the victim compensation program has become part of the state's emergency response team, and participates regularly in "tabletop exercises" and planning sessions.

"The immediate response defines the event for victims and the public," Mary Vail emphasizes. In her experience, the immediate after-

math of a mass-casualty incident is a time of chaos and confusion, and preparation and planning can be key to moving forward quickly and correctly. Family members of individuals at the crime-event location will begin to flock to the scene, and many well-meaning — and some not-so-well-meaning — people also will be attracted. One of the immediate needs is for responders to establish a place to verify who belongs, to ensure that all on site are "credentialed," and to provide services and information. A Family Assistance Center often is set up. The right people must manage the interaction between victims, responders, and the press. "Families should have a safe, confidential place to gather to receive services and information," Mary Vail says. "If possible, victims should be paired with a trained and experienced advocate."



*Virginia state law now says that Emergency Response Plans for localities, colleges, and schools “shall include the requirement for a provision that the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund be contacted immediately to deploy assistance in the event of an emergency as defined in the emergency response plan when there are victims as defined [as mass-casualty victims], as well as current information for both.”*

Mary Vail says responders, including compensation program managers, should understand that the needs of crime victims are very different from individuals that survive other types of disasters. She warns that experience has shown that individuals who are not experienced with victims of crime should not provide direct services. And “taking care of our own” is never a good plan, Mary Vail says, even though schools and other institutions often insist that their own people can handle mass violence response. “Wounded serving wounded is not constructive for either party,” Mary Vail says. A school counselor, for example, can’t expect to pick herself up from under her desk and provide adequate ongoing aid to others who also have been traumatized.

First responders cannot provide ongoing services without relief, Mary Vail stresses. “Working in teams is critical,” she says, “and debriefing and support services are not a luxury, they are a necessity.”

The institutions or entities where the mass violence has occurred — a university, for example — must prepare immediately for an influx of money and donations, and must build consensus on how it will be managed. Compensation programs, too, must decide how to treat “charitable contributions” that benefit victims and their families, when calculating awards.

Finally, Mary Vail says, “Do not resist the urge to do what’s right.” For Mary Vail and her staff, this has meant an unfortunately all-too-frequent need to respond immediately and effectively to mass violence in the state.

Association Executive Director Dan Eddy joined Mary Vail Ware to provide some other thoughts about how compensation programs can respond.

## **Mass-Casualty Conference Draws Victim Professionals and First Responders to Discuss Issues**

*The Office for Victims of Crime’s first “Mass Casualty and Violence at Home and Abroad” conference drew a diverse and committed group of professionals in victim services and law enforcement, as well as many other individuals and officials touched*

*recently by incidents of mass violence. The conference goal was to share experiences and knowledge about how to respond to victims, survivors, and communities affected by these incidents.*

*Suzanne Breedlove Heckmaster, director of the Oklahoma Crime Victim Compensation Board, was among the many speakers. She shared her experience responding to the Murrah Building bombing in 1995, with a focus on the types of services that helped bring a sense of justice to hundreds of survivors.*

*Other compensation managers attending the conference included Frank Henderson, Jr., of Kansas; Rebecca Shaw of Oregon; Laura Banks Reed of D.C.; and Jennifer Day of Ohio.*



# 2010 National Training Conference

Chicago  
September 27 – October 1

*The nation's crime victim compensation programs meet next year in one of our most exciting cities to discuss how to meet the many challenges facing managers and staff in providing financial assistance to crime victims. The conference will feature a full agenda of workshops for compensation program managers, claims processors, Board members, and other key staff. More details will be made available early next year.*

*Crime Victim Compensation  
45 Years  
1965—2010*