

# Crime Victim Compensation

## QUARTERLY

Issue #4

2010

### I N S I D E

- VOCA Cap Repeats From Last Year; Comp. Grants Are Secure
- National Conference in Chicago Brings Together 49 States
- NACVCB Officers and Board Elected
- Maryland Provides Weekly Staff Training
- Nevada Saves Big on Medical Bills
- Strategic Plan Unveiled

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF CRIME VICTIM  
COMPENSATION BOARDS

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## Future Funding is Big Concern For Victim Compensation Programs

**M**ore than a few compensation programs are nervous about the future: Will sufficient funding be available to support a full range of benefits for the nation's crime victims? A recent survey by our Association finds that close to 50% of the states are nervous that they may face budget shortages within the next three years. Managers say that as they look ahead, increasing claims, increasing costs, and continuing state budget pressures may mean they won't have enough money to meet demand.

While there are plenty of unknowns to consider — the ultimate fate and impact of national health reform being perhaps the major one — many programs recognize that growing caseloads and still-escalating medical costs mean they'll need more funding eventually.

Based on survey results, we estimate that budget issues in from five to ten state compensation programs have resulted in either a backlog of adjudicated but unpaid claims, or a dramatic cutting of benefit levels. Alabama's program now pays medical bills at 30% of the billed amount, and Minnesota pays 50% of billed charges. Washington state recently had to cut substantially some of the benefits it pays, and dropped its overall maximum to \$50,000.

The federal share of overall payments to victims from state compensation programs has remained static for the past seven years, at 60% of whatever the state pays out in state funds each year. Without taking into account the states' administrative burden in operating the programs, this means that the federal VOCA grants provide about 37% of the funding for benefits to victims, while states contribute 63%. There is no current expectation that the federal share will in-

crease (and VOCA funding for assistance programs also may stay at current levels (see page 3)).

Compensation managers also remain uneasy that continuing pressures on state budgets overall may lead to transfers of funds from their programs. This already has happened in a

number of states, with the loss of \$80 million from California's compensation program to the general treasury being the most dramatic example. State budget problems also may mean cuts in personnel, which create stress in programs trying to pay claims promptly. Most states need more staff, not less, to process claims efficiently. Programs also may find more difficulty in upgrading claims-management software, which may mean even more problems. All in all, for many states, the future is uncertain at best.

**Fully 50% of states responding to the NACVCB survey said they may face budget shortfalls within 1-3 years**

# President's Message

**I**t's an honor and a privilege to serve as the Association's President, and I want to thank the membership for your support. I also want to thank Deb Rice for her leadership as President during the past two years. She made an outstanding contribution to the continuing growth of our organization. I'm also fortunate to be serving with four outstanding people on the Executive Committee: Gene McCleskey, Cletus Nnanabu, George Gutierrez, and Ethel Douglas Ford. We also have a great Board of Directors, and I'll be working closely with all of them as we move forward.

One of my major priorities as President is to involve more people in the work of our organization, and to give everyone an opportunity to provide input. I want each of you to know that your opinion matters, and that we will listen and respond to your ideas and concerns. You can communicate with us at any time, by contacting me, our executive director, or any of our officers. It's very important to me that we all feel connected to this Association, and my primary goal is to carry out your wishes.

We've just developed, with the help of our Board and Executive Committee, a new Strategic Plan that will guide us in the next two years. The Plan is detailed in this newsletter, and it will be the blueprint for our activities and initiatives. As the Plan describes, we intend to use our Website to improve our communication and our informational resources. We're going to develop conferences that will prove to be even bet-

ter ways to share and learn from each other. We want to provide more mentoring to our newer managers, as well as to others who need advice and expertise in improving their programs. We're going to emphasize the development of meaningful relationships with

other national organizations in victim services and law enforcement. And we're going to ask you to help evaluate our work as we go along. All of these efforts will take many people engaging with each other to achieve our goals. I look forward to your active participation.

Compensation programs today exhibit a great deal of diversity. Some are well-funded, while others struggle financially. Some are sufficiently staffed, while others need more personnel to perform their work effectively. Some have excellent claims-management systems that help them work efficiently, while others need a technological boost. Despite these differences, though, we all share a common goal, which is to see all victims in America get the help they

need, not only from compensation programs, but also from other types of victim services. With this goal always in mind, I pledge that the Association will do all it can to assist state compensation programs to gain sufficient resources, and to work as promptly and fairly as they can, to help as many victims as possible. Please join me in this work — I know we will need your help to achieve our objectives. I hope you have a very successful 2011!

— Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb

Make sure to  
check out the  
new  
NACVCB  
Strategic Plan  
beginning on  
page 6!

## Association Officers

**President:** Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb (Georgia)  
**1st Vice President:** Gene McCleskey (Texas)  
**2nd Vice President:** Cletus Nnanabu (Washington)  
**Treasurer:** George Gutierrez (Idaho)  
**Secretary:** Ethel Douglas Ford (South Carolina)

## Board of Directors

Virginia Woodward (KY) Julie Nauman (CA) Janet Kennedy (MS) Cheryle Hall (WV)  
Laura Banks Reed (DC) Kristy Ring (NM) Suzanne Breedlove (OK) Gwen Roache (FL)  
Bryan Nix (NV) Gary Scheller (UT) Rebecca Shaw (OR) Janelle Melohn (IA) Deb Rice (ME)

# 2011 VOCA Cap Uncertain As Congress Adopts “CR”

## *Compensation Grants Secure at 60% of State-Dollar Payout*

The FY 2011 VOCA spending cap imposed by Congress is uncertain, as Congress recently enacted a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government funded at current levels, rather than pass new appropriations bills. The CR runs through March 4, 2011, and at that point Congress will determine whether to move on new appropriations bills for FY 2011, or simply adopt another CR.

If the cap remains at last year's level of \$705 million, compensation grants to states will remain unaffected, since there is plenty of money within the cap to give each state a grant equal to 60% of what the state spends in state dollars in benefits to victims. State assistance grants also will remain at about last year's levels.

There had been some hope that Congress would raise the cap to \$820 million this fiscal year, providing substantial increases in VOCA assistance funds.



## National Crime Victims' Rights Week

April 10 -16, 2011

*“Reshaping the Future, Honoring the Past”  
is the theme for this year’s National Crime  
Victims’ Rights Week in April 2011.*

*Many compensation programs will be  
joining with their colleagues in victim ser-  
vices at various events and activities held  
during this annual initiative dedicated to  
raising awareness about victims’ issues.*

## Officers & Board Members Elected at Annual Meeting

*The Association elected its five officers and four  
members of its Board of Directors at the annual Busi-  
ness Meeting at the National Training Conference in  
Chicago.*

*Our officers, serving terms from 2010-2012, are the  
following:*

**President:** Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb (Georgia)

**1st Vice President:** Gene McCleskey (Texas)

**2nd Vice President:** Cletus Nnanabu (Washington)

**Treasurer:** George Gutierrez (Idaho)

**Secretary:** Ethel Douglas Ford (South Carolina)

*New Board members serving three-year terms are:  
Gary Scheller (Utah), Janelle Melohn (Iowa), Rebecca  
Shaw (Oregon), and Julie Nauman (California).*

*In addition, the officers chose Virginia Woodward  
of Kentucky to fill the vacancy created by Ethel Ford’s  
becoming Secretary; Ethel had one more year in her  
term as a Board member, and the officers are empow-  
ered by the Constitution to appoint replacements.*

### **National Training Conference 2011**

***Our annual training conference will be conducted next year in conjunction with the  
National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, with the support of the  
Office for Victims of Crime. We’ll announce a site and time soon!***

# 180 Participants From 50 States Join Forces in Chicago to Share Strategies

**M**ore than 200 people from 49 states, D.C. and the Virgin Islands participated in the 2011 National Training Conference in Chicago, September 27—

October 1, making it one of the biggest conferences the Association has ever held. Thanks to generous support from the Office for Victims of Crime in the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, participants enjoyed outstanding speakers and productive discussions over the course of the three-and-a-half-day gathering.

Our theme, “45 Years of Crime Victim Compensation,” marked the progress compensation programs have made since 1965 and highlighted challenges they’ll face in the coming years. The outgoing Association President, Deb Rice, and newly elected President Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb led an opening session that provided perspective on where programs have been and where they’re going. This theme was furthered by the ensuing discussion moderated by OVC Director Joye Frost on the HOPE III project — now re-named “Vision 21” — which aims to create a new blueprint for the future in victim services. Distinguished representatives of the four organizations that OVC is calling on to do this work presented their thoughts and listened to input from our membership.

Many experts shared their ideas in presentations throughout the conference. Michael Sullivan of the Illinois A.G.’s Office spoke about use of the Internet for child pornography, and his colleague Sarah Migas talked about cyberbullying and sexting. Dr. Dean Younce described dental treatment for violent injuries involving the teeth and face, and Dr. Cameron Crandall provided insight on handling claims involving complicated medical care. Psychiatrist Frank Ochberg spoke eloquently on how violent-crime victims must “cope with cruelty,” and author Bill Jenkins gave us his perspectives as a parent who lost his 16-year-old son to murder.

Management issues were covered extensively. Anne Seymour and Herman Millholland discussed the differences in the generations represented in to-

day’s workforce. Pat Tedesco gave us numerous practical pointers for attracting and retaining key talent. Robert McMillan was joined by several compensation managers who have implemented “business process planning,” and together they detailed how to analyze workflow and create greater efficiency. NACVCB Vice President Gene McCleskey led a workshop on forecasting and budgeting, and OJP’s Michael Williams helped us understand how to administer VOCA grants. Managers of large states held their own roundtable to focus on the special challenges inherent in supervising large numbers of staff and accounting for sizable sums of money.

Board members in compensation programs held their own roundtable, as did the claims processors attending the conference. Several workshops on determining contributory-conduct cases tried to explicate legal principles behind those types of decisions. Sessions on sexual assault victims, international crime victim compensation, human trafficking, Native American victims, and cultural competency helped build core knowledge for staff and decision makers.

Other workshops on outreach, restitution recovery, and forensic-exam payment procedures addressed practical ways to improve program performance in these areas.

Conferees worked together in two general sessions to close the conference, one that tried to define elements in the “modern compensation program,” and another that explored the future in crime victim compensation. Notes from these sessions, as well as outlines from many presentations, can be found in the members-only section of the Association’s website, [www.nacvcb.org](http://www.nacvcb.org).

The Association is very grateful to the Illinois Court of Claims and the Illinois Attorney General’s Office for helping us plan and host the conference. To all those who participated so actively, and who gave of their expertise and experience in leading workshops, we express our sincere thanks. We’re already working on the agenda for the 2011 conference, and our goal is to build on this year’s success!

**National Training  
Conference  
Chicago  
1965—2010  
45 Years of  
Victim Compensation**

## Maryland Revamps Processes; Provides Extensive Training

Maryland Compensation Director Cortney Fisher has led a successful effort to revamp her office's procedures, with the help of "stakeholders" in victims services throughout the state. The process began with an intensive two-day "kaizen" meeting earlier this year in which people from outside the program joined management and staff to identify problems and establish priorities for action. A thorough examination of every step in the path that a claim takes, from intake to final decision, was made by everyone in the kaizen (a Japanese term for many people working together to accomplish a common goal). Seventeen action items were identified to improve the program. Then people both in and outside the program were enlisted to work on various issues, with timetables for accomplishing goals. These action items included training staff on crime victimization, trauma reactions, and legal principles; developing curriculum on compensation for law enforcement and victim services; improving the program's claims-management software; developing new policies and procedures and including them in a revised claims manual; revising procedures on how staff works with the program's decision-making board; reconsidering the use of background checks on claimants, and the need for information on immigration status; seeking funding for a victim-service provider position in the program; purchasing a sign for the office and improving its physical space; rotating hearings around the state; and developing a policy to guide staff in greeting walk-in claimants. All of these goals were accomplished in the time period between April and October of this year.

One important aspect of the revitalization of the program has involved weekly trainings offered to staff and others interested in attending. Among the topics covered were thanatology (the grief process); open meetings law; working with clients with PTSD; stalking; neuropsychology of trauma; the administrative procedures act; communication and teambuilding; stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, and their impact on service delivery; dynamics of sexual assault and domestic violence, as well as relevant statutes; psychosocial aspects of catastrophic injury; restitution; elder abuse; and contributory conduct. Cortney plans to continue the trainings in 2011 on a less-intensive basis.

## Nevada Saves Huge Amounts in Satisfying Victims' Claims

*Nevada's Victims of Crime Program fully satisfied \$36.5 million in benefits for victims in FY 2010 while paying out only \$7.9 million, through various cost-savings mechanisms. Most of the savings came via the program's intensive medical bill review and cost-containment strategy, which involves a sophisticated software application operated by a vendor contracted to the program.*

*Nevada's compensation program satisfied \$33 million in hospital and medical bills with only \$5 million of program spending last year. Through bill review, the program covered \$28.9 million in hospital bills with only \$3 million in payments — an astonishing \$25.9 million savings. Other medical bills were cut in half, from \$4.5 million to \$2.1 million. Dental and counseling bills were reduced by almost three-fourths. Substantial savings also were found from claimant requests for lost wages and funeral bills.*

*The program's work is described in its 2010 Biennial Report, found on the program's Website at [http://www.voc.nv.gov/News\\_Reports.htm](http://www.voc.nv.gov/News_Reports.htm)*

# State News And Developments

## Many States Seek Better Software, Survey Shows

About half of state victim compensation programs either want to make significant improvements to their current claims-management software or are looking for entirely new databases, according to a recent Association survey. The other half of the states say that they are satisfied with their current systems.

The survey asked three questions: the level of satisfaction with a program's current claims-management software system; whether the system was developed by a state-government IT staff outside the compensation program itself, or by a commercial vendor, or in-house by the program's own staff; and whether the system could be made available to other states. Fifty percent of the states used commercial vendors, but these were mostly local companies, and only a handful of vendors were identified as being able to market to other states.

For more information on potential vendors to contact, and compensation managers who could share their experiences with various software products, contact the Association's executive director at 703-780-3200 or at [dan.eddy@nacvcb.org](mailto:dan.eddy@nacvcb.org).

# NACVCB Adopts Strategic Plan To Guide Work for Next 2 Years

*The Association's Executive Committee and Board of Directors have combined forces to create a Strategic Plan to guide our work and activities for the next two years. The plan was developed over the course of four months, during which the officers and board were asked to determine what priorities and goals the Association should have in order to best serve the interests and needs of its membership. The work was guided by nationally known consultant Anne Seymour, who co-authored a strategic planning textbook for the Office for Victims of Crime in the U.S. Department of Justice, and who has worked with numerous states and victims organizations in creating strategic plans.*

*The plan includes a mission statement and vision statement. It details goals, objectives, tasks, activities, responsibilities, and due dates for each major activity area. The goals and objectives follow in this article.*

*While many of these activities involve work the Association has been doing for many years, this is the first time a formal "plan" with measurable goals and objectives has been developed. Newer features include a more focused effort to provide "mentoring" to new managers; an effort to make the NACVCB Website a more valuable resource for information and ideas; and an emphasis on developing meaningful relationships with other national groups in victim services and law enforcement.*

*The NACVCB Strategic Plan is a living document; it will be evaluated and "tweaked" as we go through the next two years. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please share them with us. Contact Association President Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb at [Shawanda.reynolds-cobb@cjcc.ga.gov](mailto:Shawanda.reynolds-cobb@cjcc.ga.gov) or Executive Director Dan Eddy at [dan.eddy@nacvcb.org](mailto:dan.eddy@nacvcb.org).*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards is to provide leadership, professional development and collaborative opportunities to our members to strengthen their capacity to improve services to crime victims and survivors.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

We share a vision of working together so that every victim compensation program is fully funded, optimally staffed, and functioning effectively to help victims cope with the costs of crime.

**Goal # 1: Improve the NACVCB website to serve as a centralized resource for members to share information and resources, and to promote leadership development and networking.**

**Objective # 1: Provide vital and useful information via the NACVCB website to strengthen members' capacity to serve victims, focusing on best practices and promising ideas.**

**Objective # 2: Seek recommendations from Board members and other Association members for other key resources to be included in the website.**

**Objective # 3: Update and evaluate the effectiveness of the NACVCB website, using recommendations and input from Board members and Association members.**

**Goal # 2: Make full use of the expertise and experience of Association members to support their efforts to improve the administration of their programs and to enhance their capabilities to better serve victims and survivors of crime.**

**Objective # 1: Create a strategy to mentor new managers and to provide expertise and experience on an ongoing basis to all Association member programs.**

**Objective # 2: Respond to member inquiries on an ongoing basis, providing requested information and technical assistance, and sharing relevant information with all Association members.**

**Objective # 3: Implement a national conference agenda that will meet the training and networking needs of members.**

**Objective # 4: Hold regional conferences that will meet the training and information needs of Association members.**

**Goal # 3: Develop partnerships with the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators and other national victim assistance organizations to promote awareness of victim compensation; to gain information on how to improve compensation services; and to support activities at the national level to improve resources and services for crime victims.**

**Objective # 1: Develop strategies for Association Officers, Board members and the Executive Director to network with allied national victim assistance and criminal justice organizations.**

**Objective # 2: Be aware of and proactively participate in legislative and VOCA rule changes at the Federal level.**

**Goal # 4: Review and evaluate the Strategic Plan; revise and update as necessary to meet its goals.**

**Objective # 1: Review and evaluate the Strategic Plan on a twice-a-year basis.**

**Objective # 2: Revise and update Strategic Plan as necessary.**

*National Association of  
Crime Victim Compensation Boards*

# *Training Calendar*

# *2011*

The Association plans a National Training Conference and two Regional Conferences for the Spring of 2011.

Because of delays beyond our control in working out details for the National Training Conference, which will be held in conjunction with the Office for Victims of Crime and the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, we don't have a final location and date to announce yet. Information will be sent to all compensation programs as soon as it is available.

Southern-Eastern Regional  
Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida  
May 2-4, 2011

(site and date remain tentative until further notice)

Western Regional  
Site and date to be determined,  
dependent on timing and location  
of National Conference