From Anecdote to Evidence: Prioritizing Research and Data Collection

2019 VOCA National Training Conference
August 14, 2019
Session Goals

- Get excited about progress and potential for building the evidence base for victim services
- National vision for victim data - update on the VSSRP
- State data innovations: VOCA/SAC partnerships
- Uses of VOCA funds for data collection and analysis and evaluation
- CVR tools and resources to help your staff and sub-awardees
OVC’s Vision and Commitment

• Importance of ROI and filling long-standing gaps in the field

• Building the Evidence Base
  • Quantitative and qualitative information
  • Formula and discretionary grant programs
  • Critical projects and partnerships, e.g. CVR

• Acknowledging tensions surrounding data, and supporting translation for meaningful application in the field
BJS Victim Services Statistical Research Program

Efforts To Gather Data on VSP

- National Census of VSP (NCVSP)
- National Survey of VSP (NSVSP)
- Ongoing Frame Development
- Victim Service Providers (VSPs)
- NCHS Hospital Survey
- Law Enforcement Survey
- Prosecutor Survey
VSSRP

• How many providers exist and what does the field look like: organizational structure, types of services offered, crime types served, staffing considerations, funding sources, VSP concerns

• Victim services in hospitals

• Services in homeless shelters; victims with disability status

• Combining these sources with victimization data to for the first time ever address key questions such as, *How does the geographic distribution of VSP staff in a state/city compare to crime distributions and other indications of need?*
NCVS Redesign and Subnational Program

• New demographic variables added in July 2016
• Expanded current household income response categories
• Ability to fill gaps in knowledge about service use; satisfaction with police; enhanced understanding of consequences of victimization
• Increased capacity to measure other crime types
• More complete picture of crime and safety at the local level
Who Experiences Violent Victimization and Who Accesses Services?

Findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey for Expanding Our Reach
VOCA-SAC Partnership Projects States

- Idaho
- Iowa
- Maine
- Vermont
UTILIZING DATA AND PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE DECISION-MAKING

VOCA-ISAC PARTNERSHIP
NICOLE FITZGERALD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AUGUST 14, 2019
Presentation Agenda

• Briefly describe the Council
• Describe the VOCA-ISAC Partnership
  • Problem Identification
  • Study Design
  • Preliminary Findings
  • Next Steps
• Victimization and Victim Services Report
Organization Chart

GOVERNOR BRAD LITTLE

COUNCIL MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NICOLE FITZGERALD

GRANTS/CONTRACTS OFFICER
KIMBERLY CONKLIN

GRANTS OPERATIONS ANALYST
ANGELA WISSEL

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
SANDRA SHEA
Our Work

**GRANTS**
- Funding
- Training

**VICTIM SERVICE ENHANCEMENT**
- Biannual Victimization & Victim Services Report
- Core Services

**SAFETY & RESILIENCE CONFERENCE**
- Annual multi-disciplinary conference
- POST, MCLE, CEU credit

**OFFENDER INTERVENTION**
- Minimum Standards
- Monitoring

**PARTNERSHIP**
- Building Partnership Project
- VOCA-ISAC Grant
“WE HAVE TO TRAVEL TO SPOKANE . . . WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY 150 MILES AWAY BUT BEING A RURAL COMMUNITY WE MAKE IT WORK.”

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY LOCATED IN NORTH IDAHO
For context . . .
The Problem

Idaho Crime Victims Compensation Program is overwhelmed with requests for payment of forensic interviews.

- Are forensic interviews being used more often?
- How, Why, Where, and By Whom are forensic interviews being performed?
- What is the average cost?
Tableau Dashboard

Crime Victim Services in Idaho
An Overview of State and Non-Profit Assistance Programs

Select Crime Type:
- Child Physical Assault

Select Year:
- 2017

Child Physical Assault Victimization Rates

Rate per 1,000 Residents

Sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation; United States Census Bureau
Preliminary Findings

Children under the age of 18 accounted for 71% of the sexual assault victims known to law enforcement in Idaho between 2012-2017.

While the number of child sex assault victims known to LE decreased by 11%, other sectors have experienced substantial increases:

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Between FY2012 and FY2018, DHW saw a 26% increase in the number of child sexual abuse cases where the Department’s services were required.
Preliminary Findings

The Suspected Driver

- Medicaid policy change in 2015

Large increase in child forensic interviews/exams claims did not occur until 2017

- 96% of claims were from one of the four accredited Child Advocacy Centers (2015-2018)
Preliminary Findings

17% of responding agencies reported trouble accessing at least once within the last year

- Driving distance to the nearest site
- Backlog

Main source of funding for forensic interviews

- Crime Victims Comp – 39%
- Agency operating budget – 36%
- Grant funding, usually VOCA – 25%
Preliminary Findings

Despite agencies allocating operating budgets or grant funds:

- More than 25% did not know the cost of an average forensic interview
- Only 42% supplied the number of forensic interviews the agency performed

More Research

- Victim Service Gaps
Solutions

Track and Compile Data
Cost and frequency of providing forensic interviews.

Coordinate Funding Streams
State-level agency leadership should coordinate and target funding efforts.

Increase Rural Access
Explore options statewide to alleviate the travel distance, backlogs, and LE – related time in transport to interviews.
“I wish there had been counseling, group therapy, a person to give me attorney information to file a divorce.”

Respondent to a question regarding services the victim wished had been offered.

Biannual Report

2016 Crime Victims in Idaho Report
- Conducted by Boise State University
- Principal Investigator: Lisa Growette Bostaph, PhD
- Funded by ICDVVA
- 28 recommendations

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- Implementation of 28 recommendations from 2016 report
- availability of victim services
- the level and breadth of services offered
- usage and satisfaction of services by crime victims
- data that identifies high need locations, crime types, specific services, and barriers to direct ICDVVA funding priorities
- data that identifies what types of assistance is needed for victims to access and receive services
- develop recommendations for equitable access to and types of services in rural and frontier areas of the state
- develop recommendations for educational and training gaps and opportunities at a regional and/or local level across the state
- Subsequent data reports biannually thereafter
THANK YOU

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Improving Victim Service Planning and Implementation of Legal Services in VT

VOCA-SCA PARTNERSHIP
The Vermont Legal Partnership for Crime Victims

Made up of 7 non-profit organizations:

- Legal Services Vermont (Intake)
- Vermont Legal Aid
- Disability Rights Vermont
- Have Justice Will Travel
- The Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
- The South Royalton Legal Clinic at Vermont Law School
- The Vermont Bar Association

Est. August 8, 2016 as a direct result of addressing Vermont’s most urgent needs for crime victims in the state as identified in the VOCA strategic plan.
The Center has set aside $500,000 in VOCA funds for this initiative.

CCVS subgrants with all of the agencies within VLP to ensure that victims’ rights are enforced and if needed, they obtain legal representation in the aftermath of their crimes.
VOCA-SAC Partnership Objectives

PROMOTE AND EXPAND DATA COLLECTION BEYOND THE OVC PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT TOOL (PMT).

IMPROVE VICTIM SERVICE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE AREA OF LEGAL SERVICES.

IDENTIFY TRENDS AND GAPS IN THE USE OF LEGAL SERVICES TO ENSURE THAT THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS ARE MET, AND OUTCOMES ARE IMPROVED.
Method

CRG partners met with all members of the VLP Network and CCVS

Identified the data currently being collected by the PMT

Identified additional data and performance measures needed for measuring impact and efficiency

Developed an agreement for ongoing data collection and analysis for legal services for victims
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**Proximal Outcomes**

- Information on where referrals are coming from is to see if the Legal Services of Vermont are making most referrals as intended.
- Client outcomes achieved:
  - Likert Scale developed for tracking achievement of client outcomes.
- Clients Satisfied:
  - Client satisfaction survey delivered, recorded, & reviewed by VLP
- VOCA PMT alerted that the PMT doesn’t track legal services well. Recommend update to PMT or data dictionary developed for legal services data entry.

**Distal Outcomes**

- Client outcome(s) achieved.
- Clients are satisfied with outcome(s) of case.
- Clients are satisfied with the treatment received from the VLP partners.
Preliminary findings:
Number of Victims Served Since 2016

Approx. 4,000 victims served since 2016
Types of Crime Ranked
Types of Legal Assistance
Preliminary Findings

- Partners have diverse funding streams and thus required to collect data for their reports.
- Partners expressed dissatisfaction with the PMT as it lacks several key elements needed in order to represent a summary of the work of the VT Legal Partnership.
- PMT accurately collects advocacy services, but not legal services (i.e. data point whether the attorney accompanied the victim to court).
Preliminary Findings

The VLP partners are capturing legal services data in each of their databases and spreadsheets.

If a VLP partner is unable to take the case, the referral is forwarded from the VBA to a private attorney. This either eliminates gaps in services if all cases are successfully placed or makes gaps in services difficult, if not impossible, to capture.

The PMT has not been updated to capture legal services and this is a source of frustration for partners.

Unique individuals cannot be counted. Because of their various needs it is possible that they are referred to multiple partner agencies for services. There is no link back to a unique client identifier.

Attorney-client privilege and client confidentiality create an information sharing issue.

The definition of a positive outcome is not always clear, e.g., a delay in eviction versus no eviction.

The lists of legal outcomes for victim clients are long and very complicated. Too many outcomes or performance measures can weaken or dilute the outcome for the client and may not accurately convey whether or not the client outcome was achieved.

A client satisfaction survey with the Likert Scale is the simplest and most effective strategy for measuring performance and outcomes.
Recommendations

1. Update the PMT (the powers that be!) or find a way for the VLP to share legal services performance measures and outcomes with federal funders so the depth and breadth of services are acknowledged and collected. As an alternative, create a data dictionary so that lawyers understand where to put the legal services data.

2. Partners should collect data on: source of referrals, referral date, and the Likert Scale for achieving client outcomes.

3. Create or identify common questions for the client satisfaction survey for use by the VLP partners. Client satisfaction is a superior performance indicator and a way to determine if the client ultimately has a feeling of being “better off.”
Policy Implications

The data collected can only be used in a limited capacity.

Additional victim-related research needed.
What have we learned about the partnership

- Identified areas of improvement in the data collection and analysis process
- Additional research is needed
- Opportunities to collaborate and analyze how improved data can help decision making
VOCA Funding support for RDE

Administrative funds:
- Needs assessments and surveys
- Program assessments and evaluations
- Grant management/data systems
- Other data analysis and information gathering
When have questions or obstacles kept your state from conducting needs assessments, program evaluations, data analysis, etc?

Let’s discuss!
Building evidence: Fundable sub-awardees activities

- **Technology**: collect good data while enhancing direct services;
- **Administrative time**: improve statistics, conduct needs assessments, etc.
- **Program evaluation**
Building evidence: Crafting RFPs

• Language that **encourages applicants** to
  • **Use applicable data** in outlining the problem
  • **Think about the evidence** supporting their proposal
Sub-awardees

What have you done, or what ideas have you had, to encourage sub-awardees to think about using data or other evidence?
Thank You

www.victimresearch.org
Contact Librarian@victimresearch.org
TA@victimresearch.org
Twitter @VictimResearch
YouTube Center for Victim Research
Facebook CenterVictimResearch
LinkedIn Center-for-Victim-Research
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- Additional research is needed
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