



Illinois Crime Victim Services Division News

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Office of the Illinois Attorney General

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Welcome to the Illinois Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division e-newsletter. In this bi-monthly publication you will find information about our programs and upcoming events. If you have any questions about our services, you can call our toll free number, 800 - 228-3368.

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Crime Victim
Services Division

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Statewide Victim Assistance

The People v. Ramsey retrial recently wrapped up in Fulton Co. The Attorney General's office was asked to assist the Hancock Co. State's Attorney's Office in the prosecution of this case. Because of this, Hancock Co. was able to utilize the AG's Statewide Victim Assistance Program and have the help of the Statewide Victim Assistance Coordinators. The assistance provided in this case included emotional support, working with victims and witnesses prior to testifying, notifying witnesses when they would be testifying, answering compensation questions, acting as a liaison between the victims and the attorneys, and providing assistance with victim impact statements. This assistance benefited everyone involved from the attorneys to the victims to the Hancock Co. victim/witness personnel.

The Office of the Attorney General provides services to crime victims and witnesses who are involved in cases that are being prosecuted by the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. Program services are available to crime victims and witnesses, assistant attorneys general, and any of the 102 state's attorneys across Illinois who have requested OAG assistance with their criminal cases.

For more information, please contact our Statewide Victim Assistance Coordinators, Nicole Petruska, at 312-814-3167 or Jennifer Brant, at 312-793-0794.

Illinois Victim Assistance Academy Update

The 3rd Illinois Victim Assistance Academy will be held March 9-15, 2008, in Bloomington. IVAA is a week-long, 40-hour intensive course of study in Victimology, victims' rights and services, and issues specific to working with victims of crime in Illinois. It is designed for persons with 2 to 5 years experience serving victims.

The first Advanced Illinois Victim Assistance Academy will be held October 16-18, 2007, in Bloomington, Illinois. The Advanced Academy is designed for persons with 8 or more years experience serving crime victims and in a supervisory or policy making position. The agenda will include topics such as exploring ways to educate victims and the ways to assert their rights; issue-spotting; the appeals process; legislative update; leadership development; case management; and serving victims with mental illnesses.

For more information, check the Attorney General's website:
<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/victims/IVAAcademy.html>
or contact Cindy Hora at (312) 814-5998 or chora@atg.state.il.us

VIS: A Victim's Voice

Victims of violent crime have the right to participate and to be heard in the criminal justice system through the use of a **Victim Impact Statement (VIS)**. A Victim Impact Statement is a written statement that describes the harm or loss suffered by the crime victim and/ or their family as a result of the crime. It is intended to give crime victims and their families a voice in the criminal justice system and allows them to participate in the sentencing of the offender by explaining to the court, in their own words, how the crime has affected them.

If you are interested in receiving a VIS template to use in your agency, please contact one of the Statewide Victim Assistance Coordinators: Jennifer Brant, at 312-793-0794, jbrant@atg.state.il.us or Nicole Petruska at 312-814-3167, npetruska@atg.state.il.us

Legislative Updates

The following is a summary of the bills and is not a reflection of an official position taken by the Office of the Illinois Attorney General.

SB0031 Sponsor Senator John J. Miller

SUMMARY: Amends the Crime Victim Compensation Act to allow for the filing of a claim within one (1) year after the criminal indictment of a person for a crime upon which the claim is based.

CURRENT LAW: Currently, the Act only allows for the filing of a claim within (2) years of the crime date.

UPDATE: SB 31 passed the Senate on February 23, 2007. It was referred to the House Rules Committee on February 28, 2007.

HB1641 Sponsor Representative Elizabeth Hernandez

SUMMARY: Amends the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act to expand the definition of "crime victim" to include both parents, legal guardians, foster parents or one adult representative of a child killed as a result of a violent crime. Adds a victim-witness specialist to the list of possible people a victim can choose to be present at all court proceedings, including proceedings under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

CURRENT LAW: Currently, the Act defines a crime victim as a **single** representative of a person killed as a result of a violent crime. Additionally, a victim has the right to have present at court proceedings an advocate or other support person; a victim-witness specialist is not specifically listed.

UPDATE: HB 1641 was read for the second time in the House on March 15.

CVR Week Recap

The Crime Victim Services Division recognized National Crime Victims Rights Week by visiting several agencies that provide a variety of services to crime victims. **Apna Ghar** assists survivors of domestic violence by providing therapy and transitional housing. Their supervised child visitation room has games, toys and activities for children of all ages. The **Chicago Children's Advocacy Center** is a one-stop place for child victims of abuse. There are medical examination rooms, interview rooms, and counseling rooms. Police officers, prosecutors, and counselors are all on-site. The **Domestic Violence Legal Clinic** provides legal representation to victims of domestic violence in civil proceedings involving orders of protection, divorce and child custody. On a tour of the **Illinois State Police Crime Lab** we learned about DNA testing, trace evidence analysis, fingerprint evidence, and the testing of controlled substances. We came away from these visits with a better understanding of the services provided to crime victims and the challenges the providers face.

Programs administered by the Crime Victim Services Division include:

The Crime Victim Compensation Program (CVC)

The Violent Crime Victim Assistance (VCVA)

The Illinois Automated Victim Notification System (IL AVN)

The Statewide Victim Assistance Program (SVAP)

The Illinois Victim Assistance Academy (IVAA)

The Illinois Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (IL SANE)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Attorney General's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner 40 Hour Training Program

June 11-15, 2007

Springfield, IL

Contact Eileen Baumstark Pratt at 866-376-7215 for registration/additional information

Investigating and Prosecuting the Abuse of Children with Disabilities

June 10, 2007 Decatur, IL

June 11, 2007 Elgin, IL

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