

OUTREACH AND ADVOCATE EXCHANGE

SOUTH CAROLINA ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE South Carolina Crime Victim Services Division



Fourth Quarter
April - June 2021

Milestones Reached

By Director Burke Fitzpatrick

On July 1st, the Crime Victim Services Division in the Office of the Attorney General will be four years old. Back in 2017 new legislation gathered state victim of crime services together and put them in a single agency, achieving a goal long-sought after by the provider community. The question is: have the lives of victims of crime in South Carolina been improved from this consolidation? I submit that the answer is an unequivocal **yes**.

As the first (and only) director of the division, I readily admit I am completely biased in evaluating our progress over the last four years.

But, I can back up my enthusiasm. Let's take the grant programs for instance. Prior to 2017 there was a perception that agency leadership over the VOCA and VAWA grants was unfocused and unresponsive to victim advocates and others in the field. While the actual grants staff were, and is, held in high esteem, the top leadership had other priorities. That changed when the programs were moved to Attorney General Alan Wilson's office. He has given unreserved support to the division from the very first day and every day since. Today, we're in a good place with the subgrantees we serve.

The same goes for our departments of compensation, the Ombudsman's office and our provider certification department. By every measure of productivity, such as caseload, processing times, and standards improvement, state victim services are much improved compared to where they were four years ago. That's not to say we plan to coast along. Improvements in our grants management system and our compensation claims system are sorely needed but are now within reach. I am confident that, with the team we have in place, we will get there.



DID YOU KNOW?

July:

Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

UV Safety Awareness Month

August:

Minority Donor Awareness Month

Psoriasis Awareness Month

September:

Cholesterol Awareness Month

Sepsis Awareness Month

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Get the Word Out! Rent, Utilities, Moving/Homelessness Assistance Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)

Deputy Director Veronica Swain Kunz

Crime Victim Ombudsman

Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

[https://
www.healthline.com/
health/juvenile-
rheumatoid-arthritis](https://www.healthline.com/health/juvenile-rheumatoid-arthritis)

[http://blog.arthritis.org/
news/juvenile-arthritis-
awareness-month](http://blog.arthritis.org/news/juvenile-arthritis-awareness-month)

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), previously known as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, is the most common type of arthritis in children. Each year at this time, we commemorate the estimated 300,000 children and their families in the United States who face the everyday challenges of living with juvenile arthritis (JA) and related diseases.

Juvenile arthritis is an umbrella term used to describe the many autoimmune and inflammatory conditions or pediatric rheumatic diseases that can develop in children and teens. Arthritis is a long-term condition characterized by stiffness, swelling, pain in the joints. An estimated 300,000 children in the United States have a form of arthritis. Some children have arthritis for just a few months, while others have arthritis for several years. In rare cases, the condition can last a lifetime.

One of the most challenging cases we have come across occurred last Christmas, at the height of the pandemic.

A woman and her four children, all of whom were under ten years old, were staying at a shelter for survivors of domestic violence when the shelter had a COVID outbreak. Everyone who did not test positive for COVID was moved to a hotel. A few days later, the shelter workers transported her to a hotel in another county where she could be closer to her grandmother since she had no transportation. (Turned out, Grandma was in poor health and could not assist her family.) SCVAN paid for the hotel where the family could quarantine until they could be sure they didn't spread the virus to a new place. During their stay, all five of these already desperate and displaced people came down with COVID and were very sick. Can you imagine being cooped up in one small room with four sick kids, and you are very sick yourself? Thankfully, the VSPs in the local non-profit and law enforcement agencies pulled together and brought them food, diapers, medicine and some things to keep the children occupied. When she finally recovered, she moved into a camper which was parked in her Grandma's driveway. The situation was truly dire, but this was the best we could do ... we thought.

Today, we received a call from a man whose wife, the family breadwinner, was killed by a drunk driver last year. He was severely injured in the crash and has been unable to work. He is not receiving any disability funds, and is depressed. His criminal case will not be heard for at least another year due to COVID, and he is months behind on his rent. We were thrilled to tell him we have help available for him!

Each of us can probably think of similar situations we know about where people become "homeless" when a disaster hits. We are used to thinking of "homeless" people as those folks literally living on the streets, but people are considered to be homeless when they are bunking up with family members or friends, or are living in hotels.

Federal CARES Act funding has been allocated to help people who are "homeless" or are in danger of becoming homeless: **The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program.** After speaking to people giving out these ESG funds, *they fear they will not be able to give away all the money they have!* I immediately thought to tell you Service Providers about the ESG Program, knowing you can, and will, help many people who are struggling right now.

The ESG Program provides funding to:

- prevent families/ individuals from becoming homeless, and
- rapidly rehouse homeless individuals and families

Homeless Prevention

Housing relocation and stabilization services and rental assistance to prevent the individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter. Assistance generally consist of rental assistance, paying back rent (rental arrears), rental application fees, security deposits, advance payment of last month's rent, utility deposits and payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair. There are no income qualifications.

Rapid Re-Housing

Housing relocation and stabilization services and rental assistance to help individuals or families living in an emergency shelter *or another temporary place* to move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

(continued on page 6)



UV Safety Awareness Month

[https://www.va.gov/QUALITYOFCARE/education/UV Safety Awareness Month.asp#top](https://www.va.gov/QUALITYOFCARE/education/UV%20Safety%20Awareness%20Month.asp#top)

Summer has arrived and while the sun is shining bright it's a golden time to highlight July as UV Safety Awareness Month!

We all love to take in those warm summer rays, but everyone must remember to protect their skin and eyes from the damaging effects of the sun.

The sun emits radiation known as UV-A and UV-B rays. By learning the risks associated with too much sun exposure and taking the right precautions to protect you and your family from UV rays, everyone can enjoy the sun and outdoors safely.

To minimize your risk with sun exposure, be sure to cover up, stay in the shade, choose the right sunscreen and use the right amount of sunscreen. By taking the proper precautions and following this advice you and your loved ones can enjoy the sun. If you are having any problems after being in the sun, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider.

Enjoy the outdoors this summer and remember to protect your eyes and the skin you're in!



VOCA, VAWA and SVAP Update

by Deputy Director BJ Nelson

Department of Crime Victim Assistance Grants (DCVAG)

The Department of Crime Victim Assistance Grants (DCVAG) has been working on evaluating applications for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and the State Victim Assistance Program (SVAP) grant funds. This year, South Carolina's FFY2021 VOCA award is \$17.2 million, which is a significant decrease from the \$25.9 million we received in 2020 and the \$34.7 million received in 2019.

As a result of cautious management of the VOCA program in recent years, some unobligated funds are available as well to help mitigate this federal decrease. South Carolina's FFY2021 VAWA award will be \$2.4 million which is basically the same as the FFY2020 award. SVAP's award is anticipated to be approximately \$600,000.

After the Department completes its "staffing" process of reviewing each individual application, recommendations will be written and presented to the Public Safety Coordinating Council for final review and approval sometime in August. We anticipate awards being announced in September.



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

VOCA

VAWA

SVAP



Minority Donor
Awareness Month

[https://
www.donatelife.net/
nmdam/](https://www.donatelife.net/nmdam/)

National Minority Donor Awareness Month is a collaborative initiative of Donate Life America (DLA), Association for Multicultural Affairs in Transplantation (AMAT), Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOP), Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP) and National Kidney Foundation (NKF) to save and improve the quality of life of diverse communities by creating a positive culture for organ, eye, and tissue donation. Outreach activities during this month include events to provide donation education, encourage donor registration and promote healthy living and disease prevention to decrease the need for transplantation.



Trying to Understand the Why of Crime Victim Compensation

by Deputy Director D. Scott Beard

Department of Crime Victim Compensation (DCVC)

Chalk this article up to Pandemic brain or moments of introspection, but I have spent some of my aging gray matter contemplating why we do what we do. Put another way, why does our society - through our government - provide special financial benefits to citizens of our state who have been victims of crime?

I think the heart of why we devote significant resources to help crime victims is because of how our criminal justice system is set up. Crime victims are a very unique class of individuals in our criminal justice system. They are the injured party and yet they are not a party to the criminal case.

The Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution reads as follows: *In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to*

have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Nowhere in this Amendment or any other Amendment to the United States Constitution are crime victims and their rights in the criminal justice system mentioned. So basically the state through the court system is the party that prosecutes the case and the alleged offender is the other party - as the defendant.

Essentially by giving the state the responsibility for prosecuting crimes in concert with law enforcement who charge the crimes, the state is saying to the victims, "Hey victims, We Got your back. On behalf of society we're going to take the responsibility of protecting you, and then when you are injured or killed by crime, we will prosecute the offender."

But what happens when the state doesn't protect its citizens? What happens when restitution is not requested, ordered, or enforced? What happens when the victim loses their job, their house or their savings because of a crime that the state took the responsibility for?

This is where I come full circle in my contemplation and suggest that society started taking responsibility for the victims who suffer due to a failure by the criminal justice system to protect them or to enforce restitution when the state created crime victim compensation.

Crime victim compensation is an imperfect solution. The number of victims and their needs far outweigh the agency's ability to compensate them. But it is a recognition of a responsibility by our society that this unique population deserves special consideration and respect for the losses they incurred on our watch.

Every Crime Victim Matters





AUGUST

Psoriasis Awareness
Month

Psoriasis
Awareness Month

[https://
www.consumerhealthd
igest.com/health-
awareness/psoriasis-
awareness-
month.html](https://www.consumerhealthdigest.com/health-awareness/psoriasis-awareness-month.html)

Awareness Month is a public health and awareness campaign sponsored by the National Psoriasis Foundation for educating the public, raising awareness and dispelling myths about the disease. Psoriasis is a chronic, non-contagious, genetic autoimmune disease that causes red, scaly patches on the skin. It can also crack, itch and bleed. It is actually the most common among all the autoimmune diseases in the United States and it affects approximately 7.5 million people in the US.

The main goal of the public health and awareness campaign is to raise awareness, encourage research and advocate for better care for individuals who have psoriasis. It is also for educating the public about the disease and dispelling myths about it.

DCVC Community Outreach

By Assistant Deputy Director Ethel Douglas Ford

Department of Crime Victim Compensation (DCVC)

Hospital /Urgent Care Training

DCVC has compiled a list of hospitals and urgent care facilities statewide and emailed/faxed our training hospital flyer. We are in the process of coordinating a virtual training for those facilities that responded.

During the virtual presentation, DCVC will explain the program process and procedures, eligibility requirement, and review services that may or may not be considered by the program. Also, DCVC will answer any billing and payment questions that the agencies may have and provide various agency contact information.

In an effort to assist DCVC regarding notifying hospitals/urgent care facilities statewide of the compensation program, services and benefits, please contact your local hospital/urgent care facility and request that they contact our office for a free 2 hour presentation.

DCVC Contact Person:
DCVC Outreach Coordinator,
Mrs. April Staten at
astaten@scag.gov.

Future DCVC Training

All training noted below will be conducted via zoom.

SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition

Conference Date: June 4, 2021
North Charleston, SC

My Sister's House

Conference Date: June 9, 2021
Charleston, SC

McLeod Health

Conference Date: July 15, 2021

Anmed Health

Conference Date: July 22, 2021

Beaufort Memorial

Conference Date: July 22, 2021

Prisma Health

Conference Date: July 27, 2021

DCVC Basic Core Training for SCCADVASA

Conference Date: August 3, 2021

For additional information call 803-256-2900 or visit [http://
www.sccadvasa.org](http://www.sccadvasa.org)

Regional Pee Dee Coalition

Conference Date: August 10, 2021

Julie Valentine Center

Conference Date: September 1, 2021

SC Network of Children's Advocacy Center

Conference Date: October 20, 2021

DCVC Basic Core Training for SCCADVASA

Conference Date: November 16, 2021

For additional information call 803-256-2900 or visit [http://
www.sccadvasa.org](http://www.sccadvasa.org)





National Cholesterol
Awareness Month

National Cholesterol Awareness Month

https://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/cholesterol_education_month.htm

Children, young adults and older Americans can have high cholesterol. High cholesterol usually doesn't have any symptoms. As a result, many people do not know that their cholesterol levels are too high. High cholesterol can be controlled through lifestyle changes or if it is not enough, through medications. It's important to check your cholesterol levels. High cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.

September is National Cholesterol Education Month, a good time to get your blood cholesterol checked and take steps to lower it if it is high. National Cholesterol Education Month is also a good time to learn about lipid profiles and about food and lifestyle choices that help you reach personal cholesterol goals.

Get the Word Out! Rent, Utilities, Moving/Homelessness Assistance Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)

Deputy Director Veronica Swain Kunz

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payment of last month's rent, utility deposits and payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, Assistance consists of rental assistance, rental arrears, rental application fees, security deposits, advance housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair. There are some income limitations, which have been "relaxed" recently so more funds can be spent.

These funds are not just for crime victims. Any individual can apply. There are also incentives for landlords.

Four agencies across the state are handling these funds. Please check below for the agency assigned to your county:

LOWCOUNTRY CONTINUUM OF CARE (COC)

SERVES - Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton and Jasper

CONTACT INFORMATION
8084 Rivers Avenue Suite 200
North Charleston, SC 29406
Phone: 843-737-8357
<https://lowcountrycoc.org/hp-1>

UNITED HOUSING CONNECTIONS (UHC)

SERVES - Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Saluda, Spartanburg and Union.

CONTACT INFORMATION

135 Edinburg Court, Suite #201
Greenville, SC 29607
(864) 241-0462
Email:
UpstateCoC@uhcsc.org
<https://www.unitedhousingconnections.org/>

MIDLANDS AREA CONSORTIUM FOR THE HOMELESS (MACH)

SERVES - Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Chester, Fairfield, Newberry, Lancaster, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, York

CONTACT INFORMATION

1818 Blanding Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 733-5400
Email: midlandshomeless@gmail.com
<https://www.midlandshomeless.com>

PEE DEE REGION EASTERN CAROLINA HOUSING ORGANIZATION (ECHO)

SERVES - Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg

CONTACT INFORMATION

407 Broadway Street
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
(843) 213-1798
Email: frontdesk@echousing.org
<https://echousing.org>

SPREAD THE WORD!

Please give us a call if you have any difficulty in your area. We are in touch with the Office of Economic Opportunity which oversees these funds and may be able to help.

Crime Victim Ombudsman
803-734-0357
CVO@SCAG.gov





Summer is Here

Every Summer Has A Story

Author Anonymous



**Contact Information
for Publisher/Editor:**

Ethel Douglas Ford, CPM
Assistant Deputy Director
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: 803.734.1704
Fax: 803.734.1708

eford@scag.gov

www.sova.sc.gov



HAPPY

SUMMER

