



POLICY STATEMENT
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Department of
Corrections

Policy Subject: Victim Services		Policy Number: 1.2.1
Date of Issue: August 10, 2026	Authority: Signature on File Dr. Laurel R. Harry	Effective Date: August 24, 2026

I. AUTHORITY

The Authority of the Secretary of Corrections to direct the operation of the Department of Corrections is established by Sections 201, 206, 506, and 901-B of the Administrative Code of 1929, 71 P.S. §§61, 66, 186, and 310-1, Act of April 9, 1929, P.L. 177, No. 175, as amended.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all facilities operated under the jurisdiction of, or conducting business with the Department of Corrections, Department employees, volunteers, contract personnel, visitors, and inmates.

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department to ***work as collaborative partners with the Office of Victim Advocate, who has*** established and maintains services to victims of crime to include victim registration and notification, inmate release input and scheduling, victim/inmate dialogue, victim awareness education classes, impact of crime education for inmates, and an Inmate Apology Bank.

IV. PROCEDURES

All applicable procedures are contained in the procedures manual that accompanies this policy document.

V. SUSPENSION DURING AN EMERGENCY

In an emergency or extended disruption of normal facility operation, the Secretary/designee may suspend any provision or section of this policy for a specific period. ***Victim registration and notification are legislatively mandated and shall need to proceed in a timely fashion.***

VI. RIGHTS UNDER THIS POLICY

This policy does not create rights in any person nor should it be interpreted or applied in such a manner as to abridge the rights of any individual. This policy should be interpreted to have sufficient flexibility to be consistent with law and to permit the accomplishment of the purpose(s) of the policies of the Department of Corrections.

VII. RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

A. Release of Information

1. Policy Statement

This Policy Statement is public information and may be released upon request.

2. Procedures Manuals, Appendixes, and Attachments (if applicable)

The related procedures manuals, appendixes, and attachments (elements) for this policy are public information and are releasable upon request unless designated by the Department as confidential. Confidential elements are not public information and shall not be released in entirety or in part, without the prior approval of the Secretary/designee. Procedures manuals or other elements which are not further restricted, may be released to any Department employee on an as needed basis.

B. Distribution of Policy

1. Public and General Distribution

The Department of Corrections policy and procedures shall be distributed to the members of the Central Office Executive Staff, all Facility Managers, and Community Corrections Regional Directors on a routine basis. Distribution of confidential procedures to other individuals and/or agencies is subject to the approval of the Secretary of Corrections/designee.

2. Distribution to Staff and Other Government Agencies

All Department policies and related elements, that are not further restricted, shall be available to all Department members. It is the responsibility of those individuals within the Department receiving policies through general distribution, to ensure that each employee expected or required to perform the necessary procedures/duties has access to the policy and procedures. Distribution of

confidential policies or elements to other government agencies is subject to the approval of the Secretary/designee.

VIII. SUPERSEDED POLICY AND CROSS REFERENCE

A. Superseded Policy

1. Department Policy

1.2.1, Victim Services, issued November 3, 2014 by former Secretary John E. Wetzel.

2. Facility Policy and Procedures

This document supersedes all facility policy and procedures on this subject.

B. Cross Reference(s)

1. Administrative Manuals

- a. DC-ADM 009, News Media Relations
- b. DC-ADM 812, Inmate Visiting Privileges

2. ACA Standards

- a. Adult Correctional Institutions: 5-ACI-5F-06, 5-ACI-5F-07, **5-ACI-5F-08**
- b. Adult Community Residential Services: 5-ACRS-7F-05
- c. Correctional Training Academies: None



PROCEDURES MANUAL
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Department of Corrections

Policy Subject:

Victim Services

Policy Number:

1.2.1

Date of Issue:

August 10, 2026

Authority:

Signature on File
Dr. Laurel R. Harry

Effective Date:

August 24, 2026

Release of Information:

Policy Statement: The Policy Statement is public information and may be released upon request.

Procedures Manuals, Appendixes, and Attachments (if applicable): The related procedures manuals, appendixes, and attachments (elements) for this policy are public information and are releasable upon request unless designated by the Department as confidential. Confidential elements are not public information and shall not be released in entirety or in part, without the prior approval of the Secretary/designee. Procedures manuals or other elements which are not further restricted, may be released to any Department employee on an as needed basis.

Procedure Development: All required procedures shall be developed in compliance with the standards set forth in this manual and/or the governing policy. These standards may be exceeded, but in all cases, these standards are the minimum standard that must be achieved. In the event a deviation or variance is required, a written request is to be submitted to the appropriate Executive Deputy Secretary/Regional Deputy Secretary and the Bureau of Standards, Audits, Assessments, and Compliance for review and approval prior to implementation. Absent such approval, all procedures set forth in this manual must be met.

**1.2.1, Victim Services Procedures Manual
Table of Contents**

Section 1 – Victim Registration and Notification

A. Responsibilities	1-1
B. Facility Responsibilities	1-4
C. Victim Comments	1-5
D. Media Inquiries.....	1-5

Section 2 – Office of Victim Advocate Management System (VANS)

A. Information Technology Responsibilities.....	2-1
--	-----

Section 3 – Victim Offender Dialogue Program for Victims of Violent Crime

A. Responsibilities	3-1
B. Dialogue Set Up	3-2
C. Dialogue.....	3-3
D. Restrictions	3-4

Section 4 – Victim Awareness Education Classes (Formerly Act 143 of 1998)

A. Identification of Inmates	4-1
B. Victim Awareness Classes [61 Pa. C.S. §6137(f)].....	4-1
C. Documentation.....	4-2
Classroom Consent Form.....	Attachment 4-A

Section 5 – Impact of Crime Classes for Inmates

A. Curriculum.....	5-1
B. Class Size	5-1
C. Use of Outside Presenters	5-1
D. Offender Selection Criteria	5-1
E. Staff Instructor Selection Criteria.....	5-2
F. Staff Instructor Responsibilities	5-2
Impact of Crime Class Survey	Attachment 5-A

Section 6 – Inmate Apology Bank (IAB)

A. Responsibilities	6-1
B. Restrictions	6-2
C. Special Circumstances.....	6-2

Section 1 – Victim Registration and Notification

A. Responsibilities

In accordance with **18 P.S. §11.101, et seq., P.L. 882, No. 111 of 1998**, as amended, **victim** comments and personal information shall be kept confidential and any records pertaining to the victim shall be kept separate from the inmate file. Information regarding victim enrollment and participation in the program shall also be kept confidential.

1. Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA)

- a. Under **18 P.S. §11.101, et seq. P.L. 882, 111 of 1998**, as amended, it is the responsibility of the District Attorney (**DA**) to notify ***the Office of Victim Advocate, on behalf of the victim for personal injury rights crimes if the offender is sentenced to a State Correctional Institution. The Office of Victim Advocate*** shall notify crime victims of their right to participate in the post-sentencing process.
- b. Registration is voluntary and confidential. It is accomplished by ***the DA forwarding the victim's information to the Office of Victim Advocate either via the DA/OVA victim registration portal, or by the OVA registration form submitted via USPS or via email.***
- c. The registration database for the OVA shall be housed within the OVA and maintained by the OVA and ***the Public Safety Delivery Center Information Technology (PSDC IT)***. The OVA Management System shall be confidential. Only OVA staff ***shall*** have access. All other access shall be approved by the OVA.
- d. In accordance with **18 P.S. §11.101 et seq., P.L. 882, No. 111 of 1998**, as amended, the victim is responsible for notifying the OVA of address and telephone changes. Notification may be ***made*** in writing, via electronic means, or by ***telephone***.

2. Notification to Registered Victims¹

All notifications to registered crime victims shall be facilitated by the OVA. The victim shall be notified in writing within three working days for the following unless otherwise noted. The victim shall be notified by regular mail ***or electronic means*** for all notifications.

- a. ***Justice Reinvestment Initiatives (JRI) related events such as eligibility, placement, and release within the State Drug Treatment Program (SDTP), Short Sentence Parole (SSP), and Boot Camp.***
- b. Transfer of the Inmate

¹ 5-ACI-5F-06, 5-ACRS-7F-05

- (1) ***Upon reception to the Department of Corrections.***
- (2) Upon transfer of custody of the inmate to an authority other than the Department. This does not apply to Authorized Temporary Absences (ATAs).
- (3) Upon approval of an inmate's transfer to a Community Corrections Center (CCC)/Community Contract Facility (CCF) for **SDTP**. The notification shall include the location and bed date.
- (4) ***Upon transfer to SDTP, including changes to the inmate's program status, completion of program, or failure of the inmate to complete the SDTP resulting in expulsion and the inmate's return to a facility.***
- (5) Upon transfer to a **Boot Camp**. Notification shall include anticipated arrival date, transfer date, anticipated date of graduation, changes in the inmate's program status, and approximate length of stay at the Boot Camp.
- (6) Upon failure of the inmate to complete the Boot Camp program and the inmate's return to a facility.
- (7) Telephone notification within 24 hours of the transfer due to a commitment to a mental health facility operated by the Department of Human Services under **§302 or §304 of the Mental Health Procedures Act. 50 P.S. §§ 7302 and 7304.**

NOTE: Notification is not required for other internal Department moves including transfer to the Department's Mental Health Unit and the Forensic Treatment Unit, and temporary transfer to county/state/federal courts, hospitals, or escorted leave.

c. Sentence Issues

Upon modification of sentence as it relates to a change in the place of confinement for medical or humanitarian reasons.

d. ***Parole Processing***

- (1) ***Notification of upcoming parole interviews and victim rights associated with the parole process.***
- (2) ***Notification of Board Decisions***
- (3) ***Notification of Recommits***
- (4) ***Notification of Release***

e. Death

1.2.1, Victim Services Procedures Manual
Section 1 – Victim Registration and Notification

Upon the death of the inmate, the facility shall notify OVA within two working days of the inmate's death by calling 1-800-563-6399 or emailing **PM-OVA**.

f. **Escape and Recapture**

- (1) For SCIs, the Facility Manager/designee shall notify the **Operations Monitoring Center (OMC) and the Management Operation Center (MOC)** upon confirmation of escape/recapture from an SCI. The **OMC and the MOC** shall immediately contact the OVA on-call staff person at **the OVA On-Call Phone number**, as well as the **OVA Director of Victim Services** and provide specifics of the incident. The following information shall be provided:
 - (a) name and **title** of the person making the report;
 - (b) inmate's name;
 - (c) inmate's Department number;
 - (d) location of SCI; and
 - (e) type of occurrence (escape or recapture).
- (2) For **SDTP** residents at CCC/CCFs regarding the failure to return/walk away from a CCC/CCF, the CCC/CCF staff shall immediately **notify** the **MOC** 24/7 unit (24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week) and provide specifics of the incident. **The MOC shall immediately notify the OVA on-call staff person at the OVA On-Call phone number, as well as the OVA Director of Victim Services and provide specifics of the incident.** The following information shall be provided:
 - (a) name and **title** of the person making the report;
 - (b) inmate's name;
 - (c) inmate's Department number;
 - (d) location of CCC/CCF; and
 - (e) type of occurrence (escape or recapture).
- (3) OVA staff are responsible for providing current on-call schedules to the **appropriate points of contact within the OMC and the MOC.**

g. **Board of Pardons Process**

When an inmate applies for commutation and/or clemency, OVA shall conduct research and outreach to register and notify all victims of relevant milestones in the pardons process.

3. Training²

- a. The OVA shall coordinate and provide victim services training to designated staff involved in victim issues. ***Designated staff includes:***
 - (1) ***Department of Corrections Staff;***
 - (2) ***Field Services Staff;***
 - (3) ***County level staff in victim services, the District Attorney Offices, and probation; and***
 - (4) ***any other additional stakeholders as needed.***
- b. The OVA shall ensure that the established training curriculum includes the following topics:
 - (1) specific services available to crime victims;
 - (2) changes in laws impacting victims;
 - (3) ways of gaining access to the services;
 - (4) confidentiality of victim information;
 - (5) ways for registered victims to communicate complaints and other concerns;
 - (6) program evaluation measures, which include victim input regarding the effectiveness of services and ways for them to make suggestions regarding policies and practices intended to assist crime victims; and
 - (7) ***trauma informed care and vicarious traumatization.***
- c. The OVA shall conduct public outreach to increase victim and community awareness regarding the availability of victim services through the Department.

B. Facility Responsibilities

1. The facility is responsible for notifying the OVA of any change in the status of an inmate that requires victim notification as outlined in this manual.

² 5-ACI-5F-07

2. The Facility Manager/designee shall name a designee to be the facility contact for the OVA and serve in their absence for the purpose of receiving victim comments and other victim related issues.³

C. Victim Comments

1. ***When notified of upcoming parole reviews, the registered victim is informed of their post sentencing rights and their opportunities to provide input.***
 - a. ***Input can be provided in the form of written, verbal, other media formats, and/or in person victim testimony.***
 - b. ***Comments received verbally shall be summarized.***
2. ***In addition, when OVA notifies the registered victim of upcoming Board of Pardons processes, the victim is apprised of their rights and their options for providing input into that decision-making process.***
 - a. ***Input can be provided in the form of written, verbal, other media formats and/or making a public statement before the Board of Pardons either by their voice or by the voice of an advocate within OVA.***
 - b. ***Comments received verbally shall be summarized.***
3. ***The OVA shall receive all comments and shall provide those comments to the Pennsylvania Parole Board or the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons.***
4. ***Registration and victim comments shall be treated as confidential per 18 P.S. §11.101, et seq., P.L. 882, No. 111 of 1998, as amended.***

D. Media Inquiries

To ensure accurate and appropriate responses, all inquiries by the media regarding victim issues shall be handled in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 009, “Media Relations.”**

³ 5-ACI-5F-07

Section 2 – Office of Victim Advocate Management System (VANS)

A. Information Technology Responsibilities

The **Public Safety Information Technology Delivery Center (PSDC IT)** shall be responsible for ensuring that the necessary computer equipment is available to Department employees that use **management systems** for data maintenance and data retrieval.

1. The **PSDC IT** shall:

- a. develop, maintain, and enhance the **Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) Management System (VANS)**, and shall be custodians of the data;
- b. ensure adequate safeguards are in place to prevent unauthorized access to the confidential victim file;
- c. ensure information on the following inmate movements can be transferred automatically into **VANS**:
 - (1) escape;
 - (2) recapture;
 - (3) death;
 - (4) **Justice Reinvestment Initiatives (JRI) related events, including:**
 - (a) **State Drug Treatment Program (SDTP);**
 - (b) **Short Sentence Parole (SSP);**
 - (c) **Boot Camp;**
 - (5) **Parole Processing:**
 - (a) **Dockets;**
 - (b) **Board decisions;**
 - (6) **Sentence Changes;**
 - (7) **Reception;**
 - (8) **Recommits;**
 - (9) **Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) Related Events**

- (10) ***Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) Requests to connect document information; and***
- (11) ***All Other Areas Applicable.***

2. Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA)

The OVA shall be responsible for approving security clearances for personnel using the ***specific functionality in Captor to assist with the on-call process and notification to the OVA.***

Section 3 – Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) Program for Victims of Violent Crime¹

A. Responsibilities

1. The Office of Victim Advocate's (OVA) responsibilities for initiating the dialogue shall include the following:
 - a. responding to all requests by crime victims for VOD;
 - b. providing the crime victim with information on Department policies and procedures on VOD;
 - c. providing the selected facilitators with information on the Department's policies and procedures on VOD; and
 - d. contacting the facility designee to schedule a preparation meeting between the inmate(s) and the facilitator(s).
2. The crime victim shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. if they are interested in dialogue, contacting the OVA directly; and
 - b. working with the assigned facilitators as selected by the OVA.
3. The **VOD Coordinator(s)** shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. contacting the inmate(s) in writing to request that the inmate(s) **participate in the** crime victim's request for dialogue;
 - b. meeting with the inmate(s) to discuss the victim's request for dialogue, explore the inmate(s) interest and appropriateness for dialogue, and present the following information:
 - (1) the inmate's participation is voluntary;
 - (2) the inmate shall not receive any credit toward parole, commutation, or pardon for their participation. Participation shall not affect the inmate's facility status;
 - (3) refusal to participate shall not be used against the inmate in application for parole, commutation, or pardon and shall not affect the inmate's facility status;
 - (4) consent to participate by the inmate shall initiate a facility screening for appropriateness for dialogue; and
 - (5) the inmate shall comply with this policy on VOD.

¹ 5-ACI-5F-08

- c. if the inmate consents to or declines participation, the **VOD Coordinator(s)** shall inform the **victim**.

4. Psychological Recommendations

- a. The facility LPM/designee shall interview the inmate for appropriateness, based on the individual's emotional stability.
- b. Following the interview, the LPM/designee shall make a recommendation to the facility designee regarding the inmate's appropriateness.
- c. The facility designee shall review the recommendation of the facility LPM/designee and forward it to the Facility Manager/designee making a recommendation regarding the appropriateness of a meeting and the location for the meeting to take place.
- d. The Facility Manager/designee shall review the recommendation of the facility designee and approve/disapprove the meeting and the location of the meeting.

B. Dialogue Set Up

- 1. The OVA shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. obtaining the necessary criminal background checks on all parties involved in the dialogue;
 - b. providing ongoing assistance to the crime victim and the facilitators as requested;
 - c. being the repository of any and all Department documentation regarding the dialogue;
 - d. monitoring all phases of the implementation of this policy;
 - e. informing the Facility Manager/designee if a support person will be present for the victim and inmate dialogue; and
 - f. informing the Facility Manager/designee if the crime victim decides to withdraw from the process.
- 2. The crime victim's responsibilities shall include the following:
 - a. agreeing to meet with the facilitator prior to the actual dialogue; and
 - b. abiding by all of the rules of the facility, to include a clearance check prior to the actual dialogue.
- 3. The facilitator shall be responsible for the following:

- a. meeting with both the inmate(s) and the crime victim separately for preparation for the dialogue; and
 - b. scheduling any preparation meetings with the inmate through the **VOD Coordinator(s) and** VOD designee.
4. The facility designee shall be responsible for the following:
- a. informing the inmate of the voluntary nature of participation and all other procedures outlined in this policy; and
 - b. if the inmate is deemed appropriate/inappropriate for dialogue or decides to no longer participate in the process, the facility designee shall, through the Facility Manager/designee, notify the OVA.

C. Dialogue

1. Facility Responsibilities
 - a. The Facility Manager/designee shall name a VOD designee to be the facility contact for the OVA VOD Coordinator. The VOD designee shall assist in scheduling inmate meetings with facilitators, finding an appropriate meeting room, and being available on the day of the face-to-face meeting to ensure all needs are met.
 - b. The facility shall provide a comfortable, secure location within the facility for the meeting. The primary location for meetings can include but is not limited to, the Visiting Room area using an Attorney Visiting Room, Non-Contact Visiting Room, or Multi-Purpose Room, whichever is appropriate.
 - c. The facility shall schedule the dialogue during regular business hours.
2. The crime victim(s) shall comply with all rules of the facility during the dialogue session.
3. The facilitator shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. complying with all rules of the facility while conducting the dialogue;
 - b. being present during the entire dialogue;
 - c. offering debriefing to the victim(s) after the dialogue and making any necessary referrals through the OVA;
 - d. offering debriefing to the inmate following the dialogue; and
 - e. documenting to the OVA that the dialogue took place.
4. The OVA shall be responsible for the following:

Coordinating necessary logistical requirements with the facility designee before the actual meeting takes place.

D. Restrictions

1. No minor children (under the age of 18) shall be eligible for dialogue with an inmate under the jurisdiction of the Department.
2. Capital Case inmates in Phase II and Phase III and Disciplinary Custody (DC) status inmates shall not be eligible for mediation. Administrative Custody (AC) status inmates shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. ***AC status inmates participating in specialized Security Level 5 (SL5) programs, such as the Behavior Management Unit (BMU), Intensive Management Unit (IMU), Secure Residential Treatment Unit (SRTU), and Special Management Unit (SMU) shall not be eligible for consideration until reaching Phase 2 of their program.***
3. An inmate or their agent may not contact victims of crime in an attempt to solicit participation in dialogue.
4. Meetings held with the facilitator and/or the actual dialogue shall not be counted as official visits in accordance with Department policy **DC-ADM 812, "Inmate Visiting Privileges."**
5. The Facility Manager/designee and/or the Director of the OVA shall have the authority to terminate the dialogue at any time.

Section 4 – Victim Awareness Education Classes (Formerly Act 143 of 1998)

A. Identification of Inmates

The facility Records Office is responsible for identifying inmates who have committed a crime of violence pursuant to **42 Pa. C.S. §9714(g)** as amended and for informing the Education School Principal of the name and number of the inmate.

B. Victim Awareness Classes [61 Pa. C.S. §6137(f)]

1. The Education School Principal of each facility's school, under the direction of the Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services (DSCS), is responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of Victim Awareness Education Classes.
2. Instructors
 - a. The Facility Manager/designee is responsible for approving staff within the facility's Education Department to provide instruction to inmates identified as requiring Victim Awareness Education Classes, pursuant to **61 Pa. C.S. §6137(f)**.
 - b. Instructors shall follow the standard Department lesson plans for conducting Victim Awareness Education Classes.
 - c. Instructors must participate in training developed by the Department's **Corrections Education Office** prior to teaching Victim Awareness Education Classes.
3. Inmate Scheduling
 - a. The Education School Principal/designee is responsible for scheduling the number of Victim Awareness Education Classes to be conducted. However, a minimum of one Victim Awareness Education Class shall be scheduled for each calendar quarter, if there are inmates meeting the criteria.
 - b. Whenever possible, inmates required to attend Victim Awareness Education Classes shall be scheduled for Victim Awareness Education Classes within the first year following commitment to the Department.
 - c. The classes shall be provided prior to the inmate's processing for parole and/or Community Corrections Center (CCC)/Community Contract Facility (CCF) placement consideration. The inmate shall not be referred to a CCC/CCF or paroled until the class is completed.
 - d. If a backlog of eligible inmates exists, priority shall be given to inmates closest to their anticipated release date.

- e. In the event that an inmate fails to attend or complete a scheduled class, it is the inmate's responsibility to apply for rescheduling by completing a **DC-135A, Inmate's Request to Staff Member**, and sending it to the Education Counselor.

C. Documentation

1. The Education School Principal/designee shall:
 - a. ensure the inmate and the inmate's counselor are notified when the inmate is scheduled for Victim Awareness Education Classes; and
 - b. meet with each scheduled inmate to review the **Classroom Consent Form (Attachment 4-A)** and to have the inmate sign a copy of the form.
2. The Victim Awareness Education Class teacher is responsible for completing the bottom portion of the **Classroom Consent Form** to indicate each inmate's completion, failure to complete, and/or refusal to attend the required Victim Awareness Education Class. ***This form should be sent to the*** Education School Principal/designee.
3. The Education School Principal/designee shall ensure that an inmate's required participation and involvement in Victim Awareness Education Class is properly documented in the inmate's automated **DC-47C, Education and Training Cumulative Record**, indicating whether the inmate successfully completed, failed to complete, and/or refused to participate in the required Victim Awareness Education Class. This information shall be noted under the heading Victim Awareness Education Class.

Section 5 – Impact of Crime Classes for Inmates

A. Curriculum

1. ***The Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) develops the curriculum to be used in the impact of Crime Classes across the institutions.***
2. The OVA shall approve any changes to the curriculum/videos.
3. The OVA shall approve any use of the curriculum/videos outside of the facility.

B. Class Size

Classes shall run from 20 to 30 hours with a recommended class size of 15 to 20 participants. Each facility shall determine the length of the classes, number of times per week, etc., based upon the availability of space, other work assignments, and the curriculum.

C. Use of Outside Presenters

1. Instructors shall attempt to supplement the curriculum by using local victim service agencies and victims/survivors for personal presentations when possible.
2. ***Instructors, and the institution, shall make every effort to use Zoom or other appropriate technology applications for virtual appearances, to accommodate speakers who cannot travel either due to weather or personal circumstances.***
3. The OVA shall develop a selection process for victim/survivor presenters and a procedure for victims/survivors entering the facility including a briefing and debriefing before and after their presentations.
4. The OVA shall approve any speaker not affiliated with a victim service agency.

D. Offender Selection Criteria

1. Sign up shall be voluntary on the part of the inmate with support from the unit management treatment staff.
2. Each inmate shall be oriented by the class instructor in order for them to understand the guidelines and expectations of the program.
3. Inmates who participate in this program shall have sufficient incarceration time left on their sentence to complete the program as scheduled.
4. Department instructors shall review the inmate's case file history in an attempt to select a diverse group of mixed offenses, group affiliations, and lengths of sentence.

5. The inmate shall not receive any credit toward parole, commutation, or pardon for their participation. Participation shall not affect the inmate's facility status. The inmate cannot have any misconducts in the past 12 months.

E. Staff Instructor Selection Criteria

Each Facility Manager/designee shall nominate staff to be instructors for the Impact of Crime Classes for inmates using the following guidelines:

1. the instructor staff member shall be a permanent employee of the Department;
2. the staff member shall volunteer to participate as an instructor;
3. the staff member shall complete the required training for the Impact of Crime Classes developed by OVA; and
4. listed below are guidelines for the selection of instructors:
 - a. assertive, **challenging**, and able to assist inmates in getting at their own attitudes and beliefs regarding crime and victimization;
 - b. able to keep discussions on track, not being diverted so that the inmate moves the discussion away from serious subjects because they are uncomfortable or do not know how to deal with their feelings and **try** to blame others for their behavior;
 - c. able to understand the conflicting attitudes of both inmates and victims, but not allowing the inmate to rationalize or justify crime in any way;
 - d. practiced in using experiential learning (inmate participation) through written work, discussion, activities, and exercises that facilitate learning in the classroom;
 - e. able to assist or direct inmates whose own victimization is disclosed or revealed in the classroom, by ensuring that the student is appropriately referred to counseling staff. **THIS IS NOT A THERAPEUTIC MODEL, BUT AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL;** and
 - f. able to debrief inmates and make referrals if problems or issues occur (to the inmate).

F. Staff Instructor Responsibilities

1. The instructor shall provide the OVA Impact of Crime Class Coordinator with a schedule prior to the class starting.
2. The instructor shall provide the OVA Impact of Crime Class Coordinator with a list of any victim speakers used during the course of the class as well as their contact information.

1.2.1, Victim Services Procedures Manual
Section 5 – Impact of Crime Classes for Inmates

3. At the conclusion of the class, the instructor shall provide the OVA Impact of Crime Class Coordinator with a list of the names and numbers of all inmates who have completed the class. ***In addition, the instructor shall read the script at the beginning of the survey*** as well as ***distributing and collecting*** the Impact of Crime Class Survey (Attachment 5-A).
4. ***The instructor shall return the surveys to the Office of Victim Advocate.***

Section 6 – Inmate Apology Bank (IAB)

A. Responsibilities

1. The Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) shall:
 - a. respond to all requests from crime victims regarding the IAB;
 - b. respond to all requests from inmates regarding the IAB;
 - c. provide all crime victims with information on the IAB;
 - d. provide all facilities with information on the Department's policies and procedures on the IAB;
 - e. contact the OVA facility designee to ensure they have all the IAB program flyers and handouts;
 - f. review all apology letters for appropriateness before being forwarded to victims;
 - g. send the apology letter back to the inmate if it is deemed to be inappropriate. The inmate shall have the opportunity to rewrite an appropriate letter to be included in the IAB;
 - h. keep all received apology letters on file to be included in the IAB;
 - i. notify the registered crime victim that an apology letter has been received from the inmate and ask the victim if/how they wish to receive it; and
 - j. notify the inmate that the victim has chosen to read the inmate's apology letter. This is at the victim's request and does not happen with every letter.
2. The facility shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. contacting the OVA for information and updates about the IAB;
 - b. displaying IAB program material throughout the facility and having it be accessible for all inmates; and
 - c. having a general understanding of the IAB to include:
 - (1) inmate participation is voluntary;
 - (2) the inmate shall not receive any credit toward parole, commutation, or pardon for their participation. Participation shall not affect the inmate's facility status;
 - (3) letters are mailed directly to the OVA; and

- (4) guidelines are provided by OVA to help inmates in the letter writing process.
- 3. The crime victim shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. contacting the OVA directly to register if interested in the IAB;
 - b. advising the OVA of how the victim wishes to receive the letter (mail, email, read over the phone) and determine:
 - (1) if/when they view the apology letter; and
 - (2) if the inmate is to be informed that the letter was requested, received, and/or read by the victim.

B. Restrictions

- 1. If the victim has an active Protection from Abuse (PFA) **or a Cease Communication Order**, the OVA shall hold the apology letter until the PFA expires. If the victim is still interested in receiving the letter at that time, the letter shall be forwarded to the victim.
- 2. An inmate or a third party shall not contact the crime victim in an attempt to notify them of the IAB or send their apology letter directly to the victim.

C. Special Circumstances

If an apology letter is delivered to a victim and they indicate a desire to reply to the inmate in writing, they shall do so only if done in conjunction with and permission by the OVA. OVA shall review the letter from the crime victim for appropriateness before forwarding the letter to the prison. OVA shall contact the inmate's counselor to let them know a letter is coming and the letter shall be sent directly to the counselor who shall then deliver the letter to the inmate. This is a one-time letter exchange and shall not be interpreted as a lifting of the formal "no contact" restriction with the victim on the part of the inmate.

1.2.1, Victim Services Procedures Manual
Glossary of Terms

Facility – A State Correctional Institution (SCI), Motivational Boot Camp, Community Corrections Center (CCC), Training Academy, or Central Office.

Facility Manager – The Superintendent of a SCI, Commander of a Boot Camp, Director of a CCC, or Director of the Training Academy.

Forensic Treatment Center – The forensic psychiatric hospital operated by the Department. The unit is located at SCI Waymart, and its operation is guided by the Regulations for Inpatient Forensic Psychiatric Hospitals, Chapter 5333 of Title 55, published by the Office of Mental Health.

Furlough – An officially approved absence from a CCC/Community Contract Facility (CCF) for a defined period to a specific location.

Inmate Apology Bank (IAB) – The IAB was created for victims of crime who have an interest in receiving an apology letter from the inmate in their case. Victims often wonder whether or not the inmate has taken responsibility and/or is sorry for their criminal actions. Likewise, inmates sometimes seek to put into words acceptance of fault, responsibility, and/or pain caused by their actions. They may wish to write a letter of apology to the victim(s) of their crime. However, if they are incarcerated in a SCI, the Department prohibits inmates from directly contacting their victims. The IAB allows for the letters to be written and received without violating the Department rules.

Mental Health Unit – A housing area or group of cells designated for inmates confined in a facility-based mental health unit licensed by the PA Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health.

Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) – Created by the Victim Advocate Law, Act 8 of the 1995 Special Legislative Session on Crime. The purpose of the OVA is to represent the rights and interests of crime victims before the **Pennsylvania Parole Board** and the Department of Corrections. In addition, the OVA provides notification to crime victims of the potential for inmate release and opportunity to provide testimony, notification of the inmate's movement within the correctional system, referrals for crime victims to local programs, basic crisis intervention and support, general information on the status and location of the inmate as allowed by law, and notification of the expiration of an inmate's maximum sentence or date of execution, if applicable, as well as preparation of a victim who chooses to witness an execution.

State Drug Treatment Program (SDTP) – An alternative sentencing program provided by the Department that treats eligible inmates who have been sentenced under the **JRI2 (Justice Reinvestment Initiative 2) Act (Act 2019-115)**.

Victim – A person or family member of a person who suffers harm or death from another person or is deceived or cheated by another person.

Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) Program – A victim-initiated program. ***This restorative justice program*** serves as an opportunity for the victim to ask questions about the crime, tell the inmate how it affected their lives, and express their feelings directly to the inmate. Furthermore, the process empowers the crime victim to hold the inmate directly accountable.