

MICHIGAN CRIME VICTIM SERVICES COMMISSION

Commission Members

- ♦ Cpl. Robin Hornbuckle -Chair
 - ♦ Thomas Clement, J.D. ♦ Jeff Getting, J.D.
 - ♦ Karen Gray Sheffield ♦ Toluope Sonuyi, M.D.
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Chairman Green
Anderson House Office Building
S-1086 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

May 12, 2025

RE: Impact of Crime Victims' Rights Sustaining Grants

Dear Chairman Green and Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Health Members,

The Crime Victim Services Commission (Commission) is grateful to hear that the Subcommittee on Public Health is reviewing the critically important funding that supports Michigan crime victims. The Commission recognizes the inherent need to sustain the Crime Victim's Rights Fund at sufficient levels to carry out its constitutional and statutory duties for crime victims of Michigan. The Commission also stresses the vital importance of VOCA Victim Assistance Funding for crime victims across Michigan.

As you know, the Commission is a five-member Governor-appointed commission. Its members consist of a practicing attorney, a county prosecutor, a law enforcement officer, a member of the medical profession and a community-based victim advocate. By statutory requirement, it is a bipartisan commission (not more than three members shall be from the same political party). The Commission oversees the reimbursement of eligible crime victim compensation expenses to innocent victims of crime who suffer a personal injury. It is the state entity charged with overseeing a wide range of funding, including the Crime Victims Right's Fund and services for victims of crime, with the goal to promote services that protect and enhance the health, safety, dignity, and rights of victims of crime throughout the state. The Commission is administratively housed within the Division of Victim Services in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). Please note that the positions and rationale of the Commission does not necessarily represent the views of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services or any other body.

The Commission believed outlining different funding sources and the critical impact of the Crime Victims' Rights Sustaining Grants could be helpful when this committee discussed crime victim services and programming.

Critical investments by the Michigan Legislature to create the **Crime Victims' Rights Sustaining Grants** in 2024 and continued the investment in 2025, have helped keep crime victim compensation, crime victim rights services, and victims' assistance service programs fully funded. In FY 25, \$30,000,000 was allocated to the Crime Victims' Rights Sustaining Grants with general funds. In order to maintain services at the existing level an additional \$20,000,000 will need to be invested in the FY 26 budget.

These investments were immediately necessary due to two significant funding shortfalls:

- **Federal Victim Assistance Funding (VOCA)** is a federal formula grant that is awarded to Michigan annually to support victim assistance services statewide. Funding levels are based on post-conviction fines and fees collected from the prosecution of federal crimes. Michigan's federal VOCA awards have steeply declined in recent years.
- **Michigan Crime Victim Rights (CVRF)** is a state restricted fund that was created to support crime victim rights services in Michigan. Revenues into the fund are generated from post-conviction assessments collected from state prosecutions (\$130/felony violation; \$75/misdemeanor or ordinance violation). The fund's primary purpose is to support crime victim rights services required by the William Van Regenmorter Crime Victim's Rights Act and the Michigan Constitution, with excess funding directed to Crime Victim Compensation in Michigan. Revenue into the fund has steeply declined since 2019 dropping from over \$20,000,000 annually to around \$11,000,000 annually.

In response to these significant funding shortfalls the Michigan Legislature allocated funding for Crime Victims' Rights Sustaining Grants in 2024 and 2025 to maintain the below lifesaving services in Michigan.

Crime Victim Assistance (VOCA)

The Crime Victims Assistance program (VOCA) provides federal and state dollars in subgrants to local public and non-profit agencies that engage in direct services to crime victims in the community. VOCA Victim Assistance funding supports over 120 victim service organizations in Michigan providing critical services to victims of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, human trafficking, and more. These organizations are primarily 501(c)(3) organizations but also include grants to Tribes and other units of government. These organizations include Child Advocacy Centers, Rape Crisis Centers, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Programs, Domestic Violence Shelters/Services Providers, Human Trafficking Service Providers, Legal Services for Victims, Elder Abuse, and more.

FY 24 data

- 147,527 victims served including 18,563 children
- 65,125 crisis calls
- 284,327 nights of shelter including 149,326 nights of emergency housing for children
- 238,036 nights of transitional shelter, including 155,244 nights of transitional housing for children
- 9,687 child forensic interviews

Crime Victim Compensation

Michigan's Crime Victim Compensation Program helps crime victims and their families, recover from the financial costs of crime. It is a payer of last resort and covers out of pocket losses caused by a crime including medical care, counseling, funeral expenses, crime scene clean up, grief counseling, residential security, relocation expenses, transportation, loss of earnings or support, and other necessary services not paid by other sources. In August of 2023, Public Acts 77 and 78, sponsored by Representatives Slauch and Kahle, went into effect, greatly expanding the MI Crime Victim Compensation statute to increase access to the program and increase the aggregate award cap. Since those amendments took effect, the number of victims receiving compensation and reimbursements has nearly doubled.

FY 2024 data

- 1,308 victims received compensation (79% increase over the number of victims served in 2023 and a 91% increase over the number of victims served in 2022)
- 2,324 sexual assault survivors received sexual assault medical forensic examinations (SAFE Examinations)

- \$8,883,445 awarded to support compensation and SAFE examinations. (97% increase over award levels in 2023 and 99% increase over award levels in 2022)

Crime Victim Rights Services

Crime Victim Rights Program grants are available to prosecutors' offices in Michigan. Eligible grantees provide comprehensive notification, information, and assistance addressing victim rights throughout the criminal justice process, as established by the William Van Regenmorter Crime Victim's Rights Act of 1985 and the Michigan Constitution. Funding also supports MI-VINE, which provides free, confidential, 24-hour notice regarding offender custody status for victims, their families, and the general public.

FY 2024 data

- Grants to 83 Michigan prosecutor's offices
- 85,319 victims served
- 73,267 individuals registered to receive notifications through MI-VINE

The Commission supports securing the additional funding required to sustain these lifesaving services in Michigan at whatever means necessary and possible, including receiving general funds appropriated from the state legislature.

Thank you for your time and interest in funding the needs of crime victims in Michigan. Please contact Gail Krieger, Director of the Division of Victim Services at KriegerG@michigan.gov if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Michigan Crime Victim Services Commission