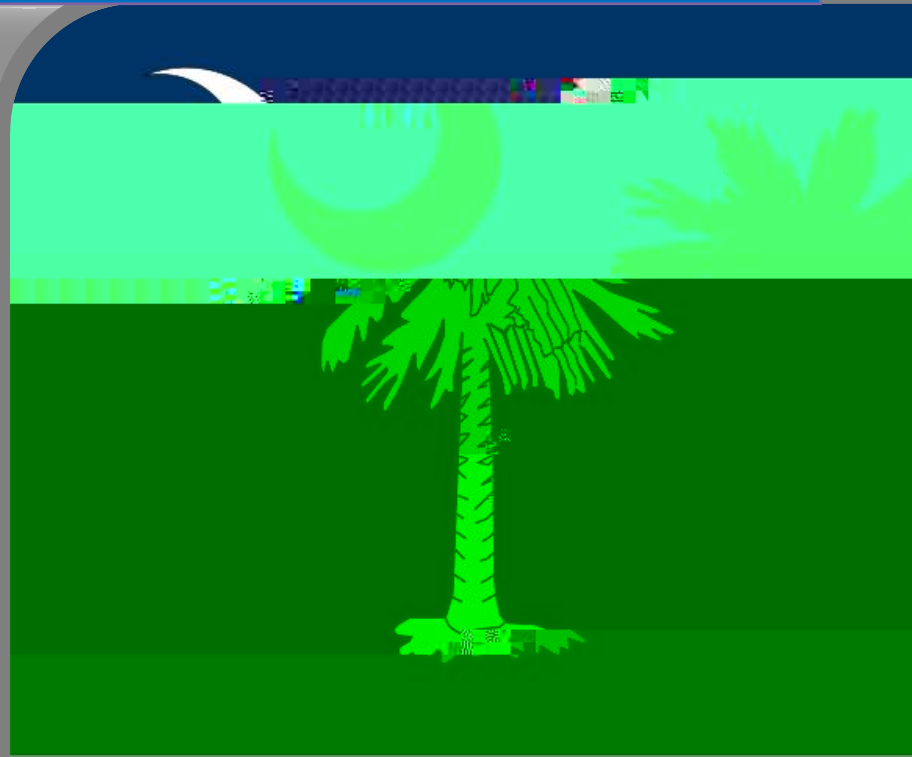


Governor's Office of the Crime Victims



DP (US)

Ombudsman

As I reflect back on FY 2012, two words come to mind, Frustrated and Active. I stepped into the job of Crime Victims Ombudsman mid-way through the fiscal year. While I was comfortable with handling the complaints from victims of crime, I had a lot to learn, especially as it related to the creation of the Office of Victim Services Education and Certification (OVSEC).



As the year progressed, I found that the complaints were not new. Victims were still not being notified of bond hearings and guilty pleas. Victims did not have the chance to confer with the prosecution and some were not treated with dignity and respect. During the course of my inquiries, I began to think about how, if any, OVSEC information might be of assistance. I realized that the creation of this office meant that the field of victim services was validated but, more importantly, it was a valuable resource in assessing the complaints from crime victims.

In the past, the questions I asked regarding complaints were: who was responsible, what happened and why. Now the questions are: who is responsible, what happened, why and what role (if any) did the victim assistance program play. Just like any other licensed professional, victim service providers are held to a high standard, and if the field is to earn respect for its contributions to the criminal and juvenile justice systems, it must also strive to reach and maintain this high standard.

As the CVO, I must consider this role because there should be trained advocates in every county and in every discipline: law enforcement, solicitor's office, detention centers. These complaints are happening on their watch and regardless of fault; the question after every complaint is what can we, as advocates and members of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, do to make it better?

In South Carolina, I have met and seen some of the brightest and best advocates in the field of victim services, so I know that better is possible. I believe the resources and the talent are there to ensure crime victims make their journey through the criminal justice system as smoothly as possible.

In that spirit, I look forward to working with you towards the betterment of victim services in South Carolina.

Debbie Depra Curtis
Crime Victims Ombudsman

Governor's Office of the Crime
Victims Ombudsman



STAFF

Debbie Depra Curtis
Director

Lena Grant
Program Assistant
CVO

Alexander Wilson
Program Assistant
CVO

Leslie Sims
Program Assistant
OVSEC



Mission

The mission of the Office of the Crime Victims Ombudsman CVO is to ensure that victims of crime are served justly, equitably and fairly by the South Carolina Criminal Justice System and its victim service organizations. Additionally, the Office of the Crime Victims Ombudsman through its Office of Victim Services Education and Certification (OVSEC) program provides oversight of training, education and certification for victim service providers.



Vision

The vision of the CVO is to provide crime victims and members of the criminal justice system a fair and equitable solution for every complaint including viable sanctions for violations of the SC Victims Bill of Rights. It is also the vision of the CVO/OVSEC program to become a centralized, efficient and primary source of education and training oversight for victim service providers in South Carolina.

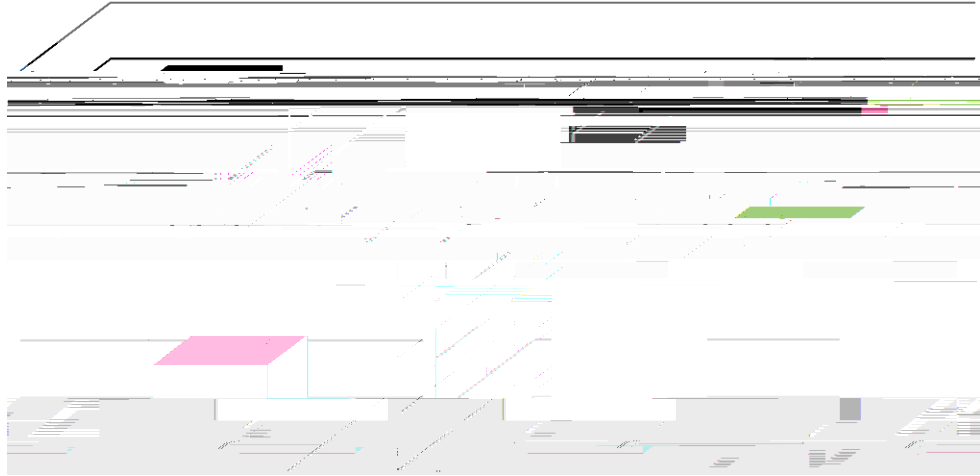
U.S. CVO Complaint Section

General Overview
How Complaints Are Handled in the CVO

The p

Most questions and concerns from victims of crime are

Fiscal Year 2012 Statistics



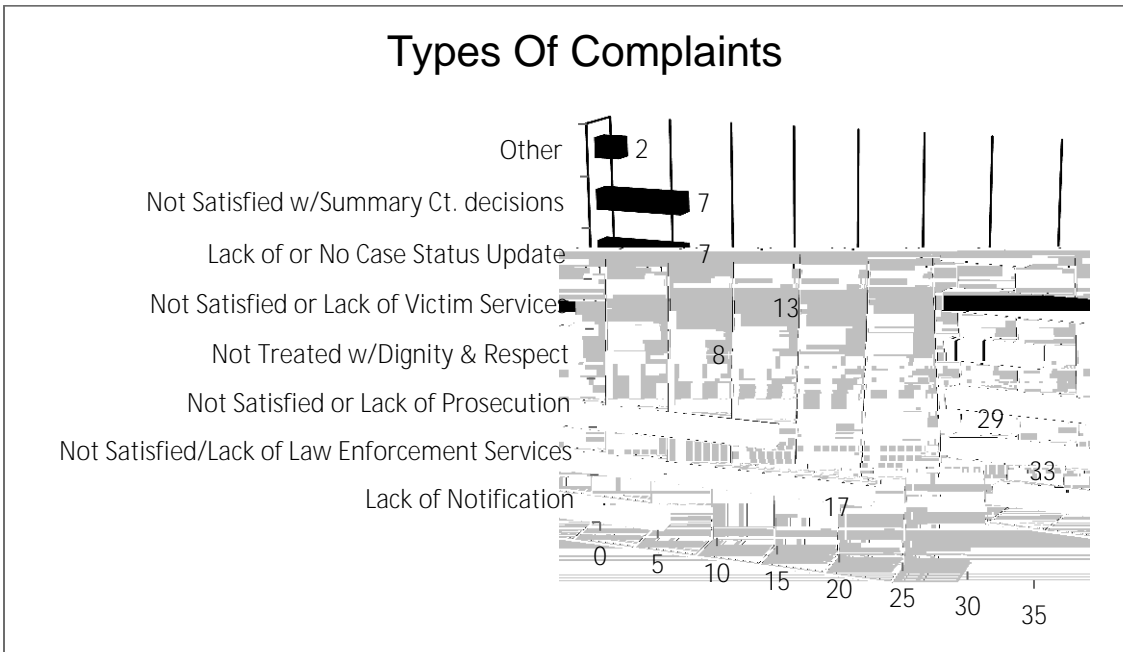
A crime victim may file a complaint against any entity, individual and/or victim service programs in the criminal and/or juvenile justice systems.

Law Enforcement: All Sheriffs Departments
All City and Town Police Departments
All Campus Public Safety/Police Departments

Solicitor: All Solicitors and their staff
**All City Prosecutors and their staff

Summary/Municipal Courts: All Magistrate and Municipal Judges, their clerks and staff

State Agency: Any state agency mandated by law to provide victim services, i.e. Attorney General's Office, Department of Corrections



The number of **complaints** per fiscal year is almost always more than the number of **formal cases opened** by the CVO because a victim(s) may have several complaints for the same situation and only one case is opened by the CVO. For example, a victim may have a complaint about not having been notified by a magistrate about a bond hearing and, depending on the outcome of the bond hearing, the victim may also complain about not having been notified by the jail about the defendant's release. One case would be opened but with two complaints against two separate agencies.

Of these complaints, 55 were unfounded, 15 were not justified, 15 were founded and 10 were dismissed. The guidelines for each of the dispositions are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Founded | The reported acts or part of the reported acts occurred. |
| Unfounded | The acts did not occur or the acts did occur but were within the scope of authority for that individual, agency or entity. |
| Not Justified | There was insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the reported acts occurred. |
| Dismissed | The case was withdrawn due to lack of victim participation. |

Types of Complaints

The following cases are examples of the 4 types of possible resolutions in formal complaints.

- I. A minor victim was severely beaten by 2 defendants. The victim's father was notified about the preliminary hearing for defendant A. He was not notified of the preliminary hearing of defendant B. Defendant B's charges were dismissed at the preliminary hearing. The victim's father wanted to know why he wasn't notified of the preliminary hearing.

Cases were opened against law enforcement and the summary court.

An inquiry revealed that summary court did not notify the victim because they did not receive the victim contact information from law enforcement.

Relevant Law

S.C. Constitution, Article I, Section 24 (A) (3)

A To preserve and protect victims rights to justice and due process regardless of

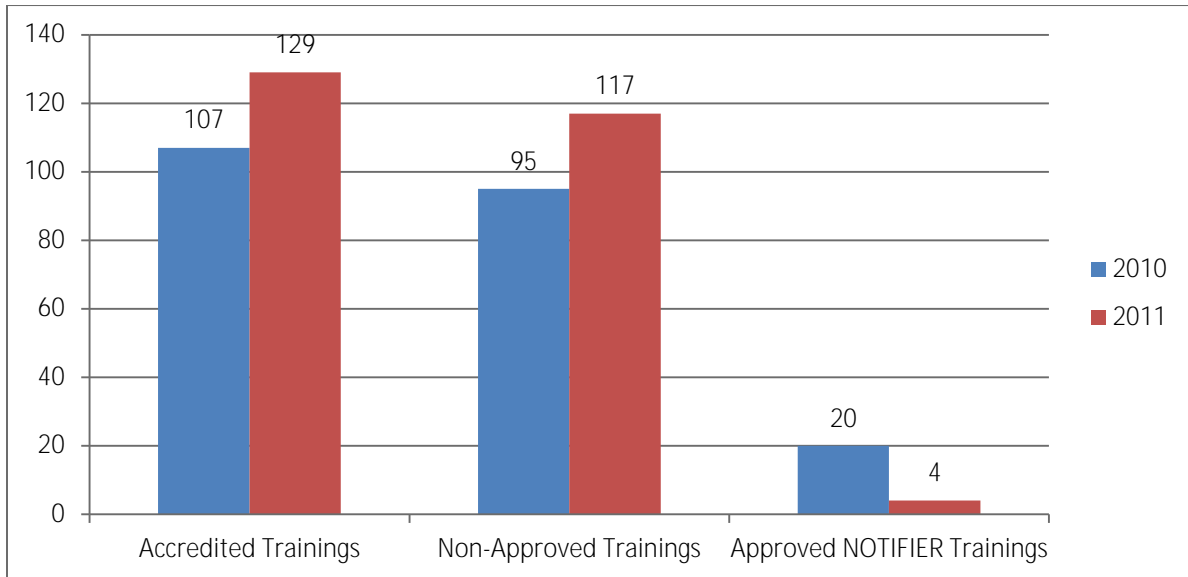
Victim Service Providers

In calendar year 2011, the number of active victim service providers rose to 1074 from 976 the previous year. Comparatively, the number of active VSP s who did not complete the mandatory 12 hour training rose to 197 from 187 the previous year.

Notifiers/Support Staff

In 2011, there were 920 total active Notifiers/Support Staff. 701 of them did not comply with training requirements and get their mandatory 2-

The main reason notifiers and support staff were not able to comply with the mandate was that only 4 notifier/support staff trainings were conducted in 2011.



We in the Office of the Crime Victims Ombudsman welcome any feedback comments concerns or questions regarding this annual report and/or the services we provide. Please feel free to contact us at any time. Our information is listed below:

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