

VOCA Service Definitions

Assistance in Filing Compensation Claims

Assistance in Filing Compensation Claims includes identifying and notifying crime victims of the availability of compensation, referring victims for further assistance to another local program or the PA Crime Victims Website for on-line applications, providing assistance with application forms and procedures, obtaining necessary documentation, checking on claim status, and advocacy.

Criminal Justice Support/Advocacy

Criminal and Juvenile Justice Support/Advocacy includes support, assistance, and advocacy provided to victims at any stage of the criminal or juvenile justice process, to include post-sentencing services and support. Included in this definition are transportation and accompaniment to criminal and juvenile justice offices and court and child care or respite care to enable a victim to attend court.

NOTE: Activities that are directed at prosecuting an offender and/or improving the criminal or juvenile justice system's effectiveness and efficiency, such as witness notification, expert testimony at trial, and victim/witness protection activities are ineligible activities under VOCA guidelines.

Crisis Counseling

Crisis Counseling refers to specialized in-person crisis intervention, emotional support, guidance, and counseling provided by counselors, mental health professionals, or peers. Such counseling may occur:

- At the scene of a crime;
- Immediately after a crime;
- At the first in-person contact between a counselor and victim includes meeting the victim in an emergency room, at a police station, at a district attorney's office, etc.; or
- During in-person contact for the duration of the crisis experience.

Emergency Financial Assistance

Emergency Financial Assistance refers to locating emergency loans and petty cash, assistance in filing for losses covered by public and private insurance programs (including Workman's Compensation, unemployment benefits, welfare, and Medicare), and payment for taxis, food, emergency shelter, clothing, and emergency safety measures, that includes activities such as boarding up victims' broken windows, and replacing/repairing locks destroyed in the commission of a crime.

Emergency Legal Advocacy

Emergency Legal Advocacy refers to actions directly connected to family violence cases that are taken to ensure the health and safety of the victim. This includes filing Protection From Abuse orders, injunctions, elder abuse petitions, child abuse petitions, and other protective orders. Assistance with filing for emergency custody/visitation rights is eligible only if directly connected to a family violence case.

NOTE: Criminal prosecution or the employment of private attorneys for non-emergency purposes, such as

custody disputes or civil suits, are ineligible activities under VOCA guidelines.

Follow-up Counseling

Follow-up Counseling refers to specialized in-person and telephone individual emotional support, empathetic listening, and guidance for other than crisis reactions after the victimization that is designed to meet the needs of crime victims.

Info and Referral (In-person)

Information and Referral refers to in-person contact with victims to identify services offered and support available by subgrant projects and other community agencies.

Other - Case Management

Case Management refers to working with a victim to examine the impact of the crime; identifying needs; developing a plan of services and resources required to respond to the victims' needs.

Other – Hotline

Refers to crisis counseling provided by telephone to provide emotional support, guidance, and counseling. Contact is initiated by a victim through the agency's hotline.

Other – Public Presentations

Refers to presentations that are made in schools, community centers, or other public forums, and are designed to identify crime victims and provide or refer them to needed services. (Count the number of presentations provided, NOT the number of individuals who attended the presentations.)

Personal Advocacy

Personal Advocacy refers to assistance with addressing the immediate practical problems created by the victimization. This includes acting on behalf of the victim with other service providers, securing childcare for counseling or other appointments that pertain to the victimization, and providing transportation that assists the victim with attending appointments relevant to the victimization.

Shelter/Safe House

Shelter/Safe House refers to offering specialized short-term and long-term housing and related victimization support services for victims and members of their families following a victimization.

Support Groups

Group Treatment/Support Groups refers to the coordination and provision of supportive group activities. This category includes self-help, peer, social support, drop-in groups, and community crisis intervention in a group setting designed specifically for crime victims. See Counseling, et al.

Telephone Contact Info & Referral

Telephone Contact/Information and Referral refers to telephone/hotline contact with victims during which time services and available support are identified. Calls during which counseling is the primary function are considered Follow-Up Counseling.

Therapy

Therapy refers to specialized, intensive professional psychological/psychiatric treatment for individuals, couples, and family members that is designed to meet the needs of crime victims. This includes the evaluation of mental health needs, as well as the actual delivery of psychotherapy.

NOTE: Therapy is a service that can only be provided if a licensed therapist is a paid staff member or consultant with the agency.