

**The author(s) shown below used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and prepared the following final report:**

**Document Title: State Victim Assistance Academy (SVAA) Case Studies: Lessons for the Field, Final Report**

**Author(s): Caliber Associates**

**Document No.: 205172**

**Date Received: April 2004**

**Award Number: 2002-VF-GX-0001**

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# CALIBER

## **STATE VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACADEMY (SVAA) CASE STUDIES: LESSONS FOR THE FIELD**

### **Final Report**

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October, 2003

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Caliber Associates, Inc. was contracted to conduct case studies of five State Victim Assistance Academies (SVAA) for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). This executive summary includes background information on the SVAA, an overview of the case studies, a presentation of the key findings and lessons learned across the case studies, and general key findings and recommendations for future refinement, development and implementation of SVAAAs.

## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE SVAA

The increasingly complex needs of crime victims have resulted in a demand for more coordinated and multidisciplinary approaches to training victim service providers and allied professionals in the victim services field. In response to this training need, OVC funded the development of a National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) in 1995 to deliver training through a state-of-the art, intense curriculum. A few years later in 1998, OVC co-sponsored a state-level victim assistance academy at Michigan State University in its efforts to provide comprehensive, fundamental education for victim service providers, victim advocates, criminal justice personnel, and allied professionals who routinely interact with victims of crime.

Based on the success of the Michigan initiative, in 1999 OVC funded five pilot sites to establish a nationwide network of State academies proficient in meeting the foundation-level educational needs of a broad range of victim service providers and allied professionals. Using the NVAA as a framework, OVC envisioned that the SVAAAs would operate in partnership with an academic institution to develop a comprehensive, fundamental, and academically-based course of study in victim's rights and services and victimology to meet the entry-level educational needs of victim service providers, victim advocates, and allied personnel working with victims of crime. Since 1999, OVC has funded ten SVAAAs nationwide.

NIJ and OVC commissioned assistance from Caliber Associates to develop case studies of the five SVAAAs supported by OVC in Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah. The case study data are intended to provide OVC, existing SVAAAs, and the victim services field at large with recommendations on planning, implementing and sustaining successful SVAA. Specifically, the case studies report the progress each SVAA site has made in meeting the foundation-level educational needs of victim service providers and allied professionals, and whether the SVAA site has met their specific program objectives.

## **2. CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY**

Case studies of the SVAAAs were designed as a supplement to an existing evaluation Caliber conducted of the NVAA that focused, among other things, on the impact that the NVAA has had on the development of State academies. The focus of the SVAA case studies was to examine the process of planning, implementing, and sustaining a SVAA and exploring the potential outcomes of the academies on students, university partners, and the victim services field at-large. The case studies of the SVAAAs were based on a thorough review of program documents, on-site interviews/focus groups with key stakeholders from each SVAA, and telephone interviews with a sample of students from each of the academies. Specifically, methods employed were designed to answer the following questions:

- To what extent did the SVAA accomplish its goals as outlined in its strategic plan for the State academy? What useful resources may have contributed to this? What barriers, if any, hindered progress?
- To what extent have University partners incorporated victim course work into existing/new curricula or developed other related activities as a result of SVAA?
- What do faculty/trainers view as the most valuable aspect of SVAA for participants?
- How did the type and degree of diversity of student and faculty affect the course content as well as learning environments at the SVAA sites?
- To what extent has the SVAA contributed to “professionalizing” the victim services field?
- To what extent do students report a change in knowledge, attitudes, skills and abilities following SVAA participation?
- To what extent have students been able to apply what they learned (used the materials) from the SVAA in their work with victims?
- To what extent has participation in the SVAA led to greater educational/professional attainments?
- To what extent have students been able to network with other participants at the SVAA?
- How have students described the SVAA experience to other co-workers?

The next section highlights the key findings and lessons learned from each of the SVAA case study sites followed by recommendations for the victim services field at large.

## **SVAA CASE STUDY SITE SUMMARIES**

Summaries of each of the five SVAA case studies are presented below. The findings and lessons learned drawn from the case studies are based on a review of the SVAA activities and resources from 1999 to 2002. In some instances, however, data from 2003 were collected for further exploration and understanding of the SVAA site. Overall, the results of the case studies were quite promising. To date, the SVAA's have been successful in achieving the primary goal of making available a comprehensive, statewide, foundation-level, skills-based training for victim service providers, allied professionals, and volunteers who come in contact with victims of crime.

### **2.1 Colorado SVAA**

Using the funding and support provided by OVC—including the NVAA curriculum and the OVC Resource Center (OVC RC) and Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC)—the Colorado SVAA staff and its key organizational partners have planned and implemented weeklong academies annually from 2001 to 2003. As of 2003, the Academy has served approximately 118 victim service professionals and practitioners. Based on prior evaluations of the Colorado SVAA students and their supervisors, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the Spring of 2003 by Caliber, students reported feeling more confident in their abilities to serve victims, an increase in knowledge about other victim service resources and applicable laws, and an increase in their listening skills and their ability to meet the needs of the victims they serve. These results are directly in line with the goals of the Colorado SVAA, one of which is to be a resource for comprehensive, fundamental training and education for victim service providers across the State of Colorado.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Colorado SVAA has also created new working relationships between the victim services field and its university partners and within victim services organizations in Colorado. The Colorado SVAA has also facilitated several activities that may contribute to professionalizing the victim services field such as increasing student networking and educational attainment. In terms of sustainability, the Colorado SVAA has identified funding and resources that will allow it to plan for an Academy in the spring of 2004.

## **2.2 Connecticut SVAA**

Using the support provided by the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Office of Victim Services and the University of New Haven, key organizational partners planned and implemented a weeklong SVAA in 2001 and 2002. Overall the academy has served 73 victim service professionals and practitioners. Based on prior evaluations of the Connecticut SVAA, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the spring of 2003 by Caliber, students have reported learning important communication skills and new knowledge at the SVAA. Students also reported that as a result of the Academy they were more compassionate, supportive and empathetic toward victims and knew more about the work of other agencies. These results are directly in line with the goals of the Connecticut SVAA, one of which is to develop a curriculum that develops new skills and knowledge for victim service providers across the State of Connecticut.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Connecticut SVAA also impacted its academic partner and the victim services field. For example, the victimology department at the University of New Haven gained additional exposure within the university community and Connecticut SVAA materials have been integrated into the forensic nursing program at Quinnipiac College in Connecticut. These efforts have contributed to professionalizing the victim services field. Unfortunately, because of a lack of available funding in Connecticut, the SVAA was unable to offer an academy in 2003. However, the lessons learned from the Connecticut experience can be shared with the field in terms of better understanding what works and what it takes to sustain an effort such as an SVAA.

## **2.3 Pennsylvania SVAA**

With the support provided by Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, the Advisory Committee, the University of Scranton, and Pennsylvania SVAA faculty, a weeklong SVAA has been planned and implemented annually from 2001 to 2003. To date, the Pennsylvania SVAA has served a total of 106 victim service professionals and practitioners. Based on prior evaluations of the Pennsylvania SVAA, as well as telephone interviews and a focus group conducted in the spring of 2003 by Caliber, students reported an increase in their knowledge, skill and communication levels. Students also reported that as a result of attending the Academy they felt more professional and confident about their work. These results are directly in line with the goals of the Pennsylvania SVAA, one of which is to promote professional development tied to career development for victim service providers across the State of Pennsylvania.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Pennsylvania SVAA also positively impacted the victim services field. For example, Academy graduates reported that they share their experience with colleagues in the workplace, and Academy staff provide

technical assistance to other States that are interested in establishing a statewide Academy, an anticipated next step envisioned by OVC for all of the SVAAAs. There is even a push within the State of Pennsylvania to achieve certification within the victim services field.

The factors that have influenced the development and refinement of the Pennsylvania SVAA have enabled it to thrive and continue today. The Academy has the support of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the victim services field and the community at large. With continued implementations of the Pennsylvania SVAA, victim service providers in the Pennsylvania area will have a worthwhile opportunity to improve their skills and render more effective victim services provision, as well as serving as a model for other States.

## **2.4 Texas SVAA**

Using funding and support provided by OVC, the NVAA, and the Crime Victims' Institute, the Texas SVAAAs key organizational partners have planned and implemented weeklong SVAAAs annually from 2001 to 2003. Overall, the Texas SVAA has served 146 victim service professionals and practitioners during its three Academies. Based on prior evaluations of the Texas SVAA students, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the spring of 2003 by Caliber, students reported that they gained new knowledge, positively changed their attitudes towards victims, and have applied the knowledge gained by attending the Texas SVAA. A smaller number of students also reported gaining new skills and actually changing their behaviors after attending the Texas SVAA. These results are directly in line with the goals of the Texas SVAA, one of which is to offer a comprehensive, performance-based, foundation level curriculum that enhances the quality and consistency of victim services for victim service providers across the State of Texas.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Texas SVAA has also created new working relationships between the victim services field and its university partners and within victim services organizations in Texas. The Texas SVAA has also facilitated several activities that may contribute to professionalizing the victim services field such as increasing student networking and educational attainment. In terms of sustainability, the Texas SVAA has identified committed supporters and funding resources to continue its annual implementation.

## **2.5 Utah SVAA**

Using the funding and support provided by OVC—including the NVAA curriculum and OVC TTAC—as well as its key organizational partners, the Utah SVAA planned and implemented weeklong SVAAAs from 2001 to 2003. The Utah SVAA Coordinator has also responded to requests for technical assistance from Hawaii, Oregon, and Alaska and actively engaged in outreach and marketing to universities and other state and local organizations about

the Utah SVAA training activities. Moreover, the Academy Coordinator has sought mentoring from the Texas SVAA on their unique presentation style.

As of 2003, the academy has served approximately 185 victim service professionals and practitioners. Since the very first academy, students have reported a change in their attitudes towards victims and the victim services field. Based on prior evaluations of the Utah SVAA students and their supervisors, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the spring of 2003, students reported feeling more effective and empathetic when interacting with victims. After attending the Academy, students have used the knowledge and skills they learned to implement risk assessments and safety plans, conduct needs assessments, created programs and implemented policies to improve their programs. These results are directly in line with the goals of the Utah SVAA to improve the quality and availability of direct services to victims of crime by training victim service providers.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Utah SVAA has also created new working relationships between the victim services field and its university partners and within victim service organizations in Utah. The Utah SVAA has also facilitated several activities that may contribute to professionalizing the victim services field such as increasing student networking and educational attainment. In terms of sustainability, the Utah SVAA has identified funding resources that will allow them to plan for an Academy in the spring of 2004.

Key features of each of the SVAAAs are presented in the table on the following page.

### **3. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

This section presents a summary of key findings identified across SVAA sites that relate to goal accomplishment, student impact, and professionalizing the field. The section concludes with lessons learned from across the case studies.

#### **3.1 Key Findings from the Case Studies**

##### **SVAA Goal Accomplishment**

Overall, each of the sites was successful at bringing together partners with commitments to serving the needs of crime victims in their states. These partnerships have worked together to plan and implement academies that would meet the relevant training needs of the victim service providers statewide. Moreover, the partnership included and worked with a university partner

<b>KEY FEATURES OF THE FIVE SVAA CASE STUDY SITES</b>					
<b>Feature</b>	<b>Colorado</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>Utah</b>
Project Coordinator	Part-time	NA	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
Key partners	DAs Office, law enforcement, human service agencies, academia	University, judicial branch, victim services	University, Pennsylvania Commission on crime and Delinquency, State Coalitions Against Domestic Violence and Rape	State Crime Victims Organization, University, victim services stakeholders	University, law enforcement, community-based service agencies
Location of the Academy	Hotel	University of New Haven, CT	University of Scranton, PA	Sam Houston State University campus	Weber State University Campus
Average length of the Academy (in days)	5	5	5	6	5
# of Academies offered to date	5	2	3	3	3
# of students served to date	118	73	106	146	185
Average number of students per academy	24	36	35	49	60
# of students receiving academic credit	50	13	3	10	20
# of core faculty per academy	16	5	10	8	16
Use of the NVAA text as a model	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Type of evaluation conducted	Student session and overall feedback, 6-and 12-month follow-up with students and supervisors	Class evaluations, overall academy evaluation, follow-up questionnaire	Class evaluations, overall student evaluations, pre/post testing, follow-up questionnaire	Session evaluations, overall academy satisfaction survey, pre/post testing	Student session and overall feedback, pre/post testing of students, 6-month follow-up with students and supervisors

<b>KEY FEATURES OF THE FIVE SVAA CASE STUDY SITES (CONT.)</b>					
<b>Feature</b>	<b>Colorado</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>Utah</b>
Plans for a 2004 Academy	Yes, April 26 – 30	No	Yes, TBD	Yes, TBD	Yes, June 13 – 18
Availability of Academy materials	Electronic form can be completed via the COVA web site to request information, be placed on a mailing list, and receive academy application.  Hard copies available of 2002 academy application, instructor packet, and academy evaluation protocols.	Hard copies of academy evaluations available upon request.	Electronic version of application available online.  Hard copies available of course handouts.	Daily outlines and evaluation summaries are posted on the website.  Hardcopy materials are reprinted by request.	Electronic versions of the academy application available from CVR web site.  Hard copies of academy evaluation protocols, academy coordinator job description, and facilitator job descriptions available upon request.
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willing to embrace the possibility of developing a victim-focused curriculum within their university if one did not currently exist. Each site has also used the NVAA curriculum, at least as a starting point, and OVC support in their efforts to plan and implement their State Academies. In terms of sustainability, each site agrees that consistent funding and resources are significant factors to continuing the SVAA and efforts to identify and secure such funding must occur earlier rather than later in the initiative.

### **Impact of the SVAA on Student**

Another important question was the extent to which students report knowledge and skill gains, attitude and behavior changes, and how they have applied what they learned at the SVAA. Data obtained through telephone interviews conducted by Caliber with former SVAA students from each of the academies were generally positive. Approximately 70 percent of respondents reported that they had gained new skills as a result of their Academy participation, and over 90 percent described gains in knowledge. Attesting to the usefulness of this new information is the fact that the vast majority of students (approximately 80%) reported utilizing new skills and/or knowledge in their work with victims. Almost half of the students said that they had actually used the new information to implement or improve services to victims. In addition, 50 percent stated that they had used this information to implement new policies or practices. These findings are promising for the victim services field.

Positive changes in attitude and behavior were also noted by students. A majority of students reported a shift in their attitudes related to both victims and other agencies. A little over 35 percent of those interviewed said they noticed changes in their coworkers' or supervisor's attitude towards them, and about 45 percent reported other attitude changes toward their profession. When asked about changes in behavior on the job, almost 50 percent of the interviewees reported positive changes in how they performed their job.

### **Role of the SVAA in Professionalizing the Field**

An additional important question to be answered by the case studies is the extent to which the SVAA contributed to professionalizing the field. Students mentioned the many opportunities for networking that the Academy affords. This statement is reflected in the 70 percent of interviewees who reported continued contact with fellow SVAA students following the conclusion of the Academy. Almost all of those students who reported contact felt that it has been beneficial to their clients. Nearly 100 percent of previous students said that they had discussed the SVAA with coworkers and as many said that they would recommend the experience to other advocates.

Stakeholders agree that the SVAA has greatly contributed to professionalizing the field in that it provides standardized training for victim service providers across the state. This training adds credibility to what the victim service programs are trying to achieve in meeting the needs of crime victims, which is recognized by other non-victim service professionals. The issue of certification and accreditation of individual SVAAAs has also been considered by stakeholders and recommended by students. Both stakeholders and students believe this will give victim service providers an added level of standing within and outside the field.

According to stakeholders and program staff at each site, there were several critical factors that contributed to the success as well as factors which posed a challenge to each SVAA during the planning, implementation, and sustainability phases of the Academies. These are presented below.

#### **4.1 Factors Influencing SVAA Planning, Implementation and Sustainability**

##### **Success Factors—Planning**

Key factors contributing to successful planning of a State Academy included: (1) choosing collaborative partners wisely, (2) commitment of the planning committee members, (3) hiring key staff to oversee planning, (4) strong leadership from the SVAA sponsoring agency, (5) common vision shared by stakeholders, (6) consensus model of decision-making created a sense of equal partnership among the stakeholders, (7) formal needs assessments of the field to ensure the Academy is designed to meet the diverse training and educational needs, (8) development of selection criteria for faculty, university partners, and students, and (9) ongoing guidance, support, and access to resources/materials from OVC and the NVAA. Although each site had varying success with each of these factors, they were recognized across all of the academies as factors other SVAA sites should consider when planning a State Academy.

##### **Success Factors—Implementation**

For the implementation phase of the SVAAAs, the following factors were considered important for ensuring success: (1) strong academic partner well recognized within the state with expertise in victimology or willingness to embrace a victim-focused curriculum, (2) faculty and steering committee members who are committed to the Academy, (3) rotation of agency/organizational or individual representation among steering committee members, (4) appropriate site selection to accommodate the geographic challenges attendance might pose, (5) strong marketing/advertisement of the Academy and its benefits to the field, (6) availability of scholarships for students to facilitate Academy attendance, (7) diverse student body, and (8) multi-method instructional approach. Again, not all SVAAAs embraced each of these factors to

the same degree but each factor was recognized for its value to the implementation phase by most of the SVAAAs.

### **Success Factors—Sustainability**

Finally, when asked about key factors contributing to the sustainability of a State Academy, most of the sites identified: (1) commitment from steering committee and faculty beyond the grant period, (2) State and local agency buy-in to the SVAA, and (3) access to State, local, or private funding to continue the project at the conclusion of the OVC grant. All states identified sustainability as the most challenging phase of the initiative. Sustainability requires time and resources, both limited commodities. During a time of shrinking resources for victim services, it is often difficult and challenging to engage in long-term planning, especially financial planning. All of the SVAAAs reported the need for additional technical assistance from the beginning of their academy planning process with sustainability.

### **Challenging Factors—Planning**

Key stakeholders and program staff identified several factors that hindered the planning phase of the Academies. These included: (1) insufficient staff, resources, expertise, and time to conduct a thorough SVAA planning process, (2) lack of guidelines or protocols for establishing and maintaining an ongoing working relationship with local colleges and universities, including continuing partnerships after the planning phase had been completed, and (4) lack of a shared vision around the purpose of the Academy.

### **Challenging Factors—Implementation**

There were several factors that posed challenges or barriers to the implementation of the Academies. These included: (1) lack of a mission/purpose that clearly differentiates them from other state and local victim services training, (2) limitations of university partner to assist with implementation, (3) lack of strategic marketing efforts for recruitment of students and garnering support (financial, etc.) from legislators and the community at large, and (4) ineffective use of evaluation data to make modifications to the structure and content of the Academy.

### **Challenging Factors—Sustainability**

The biggest challenge or obstacle to sustainability for all sites was obtaining funding to support the Academy once OVC funding ended. Some states were faced with having to consider outsourcing the Academy to the private sector (e.g., the university partner) because of a lack of public funding. In addition to a lack of funding, poor or inadequate preparation and attention to sustaining the Academy beyond OVC funding early on in the initial planning phase of the

Academy was a problem for some. It is often difficult to think about raising funds to sustain an initiative at the same time you are planning how to spend the existing funds you have just received. This is an area where greater assistance is needed.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The section highlights recommendations supported by the results of the case studies for ways to improve the future planning, implementation, and sustainability of successful SVAAAs. Specifically, recommendations related to leadership, marketing, recruitment, technical assistance, and needs assessment and evaluation are provided to guide other states in the development of a SVAA.

### 5.1 Necessary Leadership for a Successful Academy

There were several recommendations related to the type of leadership needed to ensure a successful SVAA. These included:

- **Lead Agency.** It was clear from all of the sites the importance of identifying a strong lead agency/organization for each state academy. The lead agency should be capable of garnering support for the Academy across the state, identifying funding opportunities, and reaching out to other agencies and organizations to serve on the steering committee.
- **Partnering University/College.** Sites recognized the importance of selecting a University/College Partner that can provide access to faculty with expertise in criminal justice and victimology (if possible), offer continuing education unit (CEU) credits for participants of the Academy, support for the Academy from the administration, and if necessary, can provide the facilities for housing the Academy.
- **Steering Committee.** When establishing a steering committee, sites recognized the importance of reaching out to grassroots organizations and agencies serving unserved and underserved populations in addition to other mainstream victim service providers.

### Marketing/Recruitment

Recommendations pertaining to marketing the Academy and recruiting faculty and students are presented below:

- **Marketing Plan.** Based on the case studies, it was clear that creating a plan from the outset for marketing the benefits of the Academy to current and future stakeholders, including funding agencies, victim service organizations, faculty, and students was important to the overall success of the Academy. Marketing efforts need to target

agency directors and supervisors as well as front-line works, demonstrating the benefits to the individual student, the agency, and ultimately to the client.

- **Faculty Recruitment.** Sites reported the importance of ensuring a well-rounded core for the Academy representing both practitioners and educators to the success of the Academy. Faculty members should be representative of all cultures, gender, and the victim services field (e.g., law enforcement, medical, mental health, substance abuse counselors, domestic violence providers, clergy, etc.).
- **Student Recruitment.** According to key stakeholders, efforts to recruit participants for the Academy must be culturally appropriate and reach diverse populations, ranging from Victim Witness Coordinators to Community Advocates. Additionally, recruitment efforts should focus on the identified needs of the participants (as identified by the formal needs assessment) and how the Academy can meet those needs. Where possible, offering scholarships, especially to individuals from grassroots organizations, can increase recruitment.

## Technical Assistance

Based on the case studies, the importance of accessing technical assistance to ensure a successful SVAA was clear. Suggestions for other academies include:

- **Use Existing SVAA Resources.** Although each State has unique characteristics and features of its Academy, much of the information developed for each has utility for other states. For example, existing Academies can share planning guides, needs assessment instruments, curricula and other supporting materials (e.g., agendas, logistical plans, registration forms), and evaluation protocols with other states. Setting up a repository of these materials accessible to existing Academies as well as states wanting to start a SVAA is an important next step. Additionally, lessons learned from existing states can be shared with others through conferences, Websites, and other communication mechanisms that can facilitate networking, information sharing, and technical assistance delivery.
- **Use OVC/NVAA Resources.** It also is important for states to seek mentoring and technical assistance from OVC and the NVAA. Shadowing faculty at the NVAA, reviewing materials developed for the NVAA, and talking with the NVAA developers regarding budgeting, logistics, planning, implementation, and sustainability have been valuable exchanges for the existing SVAA's. States also recognized, however, that not all States can successfully modeled after the NVAA. It is important to have the NVAA as a resource or guide, but SVAA's need to be tailored to meet the specific needs of the victim service providers and victims in each state.

## Needs Assessment and Evaluation

The importance of conducting a needs assessment and evaluating the Academy were recognized at the outset by OVC as critical factors to the success of an Academy. Although requirements for funding, each site acknowledged the importance of basing an academy on the identified needs of the state and evaluating the academy to ensure those needs were being met. It is recommended that any state considering the development of an Academy complete the following:

- **Conduct Pre-Academy Needs Assessments.** All of the SVAAAs included in these case studies recognized the importance of conducting a needs assessment of their State to determine what the field (and who from the field) needed from a State Academy. The needs assessment should include not only the topic areas to be covered during the Academy but preferred location, length, method of delivery (interactive sessions, labs, satellite conferencing, mentoring, on-line tutorials), and anticipated outcomes (knowledge gains, new skills, change in attitudes, increased network). The results of the needs assessment, if used correctly, can greatly assist with the planning phase of the Academy.
- **Conduct Post-Academy Evaluations.** In addition to a needs assessment, each Academy should evaluate its training efforts. This is essential to determine if the Academy is in fact achieving its intended goals and objectives. Additionally, the evaluation results can be used to obtain continued support for the Academy, including financial assistance. Academies are more likely to continue to receive funding if they can demonstrate the impact of the training for the field.

The lessons learned, key findings, and recommendations from across the five SVAA case studies provide a roadmap or checklist for OVC and other states interested in creating a State Victim Assistance Academy with respect to areas to pay attention to during planning, implementation, and sustainability, as well as areas to target for additional assistance.

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### **APPENDIX A: CASE STUDY DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

### **APPENDIX B: SVAA SAMPLE RESOURCES**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Under a grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Caliber Associates, Inc. conducted case studies of the five operating State Victim Assistance Academies (SVAA) supported by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to determine the progress each has made in meeting OVC's goal of establishing a nationwide network of State academies proficient in meeting the foundation level educational needs of a broad range of victim assistance providers and allied professionals. Additionally, the case studies examined the SVAA's progress in meeting their specific program objectives. The findings and lessons learned from the case studies are intended to provide OVC, existing SVAA's, and the field with a roadmap for planning, implementing and sustaining successful SVAA's.

This report begins with the history of the SVAA, continues with an explanation of the methods used in collecting data for this report, provides detailed case studies on each SVAA site, and concludes with key findings, lessons learned and recommendations for future SVAA development. Each of the sites, although having been given parameters for developing their respective SVAA's by OVC, have similarities and differences in terms of victim services, geography, and implementation strategies. The lessons learned section identifies some of the similarities and unique differences of each site to include the factors contributing to and/or hindering success. Finally, the report concludes with recommendations for improving the planning, implementation, and sustainability of future SVAA's, as well as suggestions for other States on how to start their own SVAA's.

### **1. HISTORY OF THE SVAA**

Concerns about the increasingly complex needs of crime victims have resulted in a demand for more coordinated and multidisciplinary approaches to training victim service providers and allied professionals in the field. In response to this need, OVC first funded the development of a National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) in 1995 to deliver training through a high quality curriculum. A few years later in 1998, OVC co-sponsored the State level academy at Michigan State University in its efforts to provide comprehensive, academically-based, fundamental education for victim assistance providers, victim advocates, criminal justice personnel, and allied professionals who routinely interact with victims of crime. One of the factors in choosing an academic setting was OVC's eventual desire to implement victim assistance curricula within universities and colleges nationwide. After this partnership OVC solicited applications to assist States in developing effective strategies for establishing a State Victim Assistance Academy (SVAA). In 1999, OVC funded five SVAA's based on the Michigan State University model. Using the NVAA as a framework, the SVAA's would operate in partnership with an academic institution to develop a comprehensive, fundamental, and

academically-based course of study in victim's rights and services and victimology to meet the entry-level educational needs of victim service providers, victim advocates, and allied personnel working with victims of crime. OVC conceptualized the SVAAAs into three functional phases, which corresponded to the three years of funding. The phases and their requirements are as follows:

- **Planning phase (year one)**—Includes developing and utilizing a State-wide planning committee, partnering with an academic institution, conducting an assessment of the training needs of the victim services field within the State, providing progress reports to OVC and attending the grantee meeting, and beginning development of a State-based training curriculum.
- **Implementation phase (year two)**—Includes conducting the academy, evaluating the progress and outcome of the academy, and identifying viable funding options for continuing the academy beyond OVC funding.
- **Replication phase (year three)**—Includes refining the academy based on the results of the evaluation, conducting a second academy, and offering new SVAA sites technical assistance in developing an academy.

To support the sites in accomplishing each phase of development, OVC provided technical assistance to the sites through the grantee meeting and quarterly phone conferences, which brought together the sites to discuss challenges and successes with each phase. Additionally, technical assistance was available through the NVAA and its faculty and staff.

Since 1998, OVC has funded eleven SVAAAs throughout the country. The original five SVAAAs were established in Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah and are the focus of the case studies presented in this report.

## **2. METHODOLOGY FOR THE CASE STUDIES**

Case studies of the SVAAAs were designed as a supplement to an existing evaluation that focused, among other things, on the impact that the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) has had on the development of State academies.<sup>1</sup> The current case studies were intended to expand upon the NVAA evaluation by examining the process of planning, implementing, and sustaining a SVAA, identifying lessons learned across the sites, and exploring the potential benefits of the academies on students, university partners and the victim field at-large. Each case study encompassed a thorough review of program documents, on-site interviews/focus groups with key stakeholders from each academy, and telephone interviews

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<sup>1</sup> The final evaluation report of the NVAA entitled, "Assessment of the National Victim Assistance Academy" is available from NIJ and OVC.

with an available sample of students from each of the academies. The collection of data from multiple sources provided the team with valuable descriptive information on each site including the unique contextual characteristics that affected the development and implementation of each State academy, the outcomes of the State academies, as well as valuable lessons learned regarding the development of an SVAA. The following section of the report presents the details of each methodological facet of the case studies.

## **2.1 Questions Guiding the Case Studies**

There are two prevailing goals for this project. The first is to determine the progress of each State academy in meeting the foundation level educational needs of the victim assistance providers and allied professionals in each State. Under this general goal, the more delineated questions include:

- To what extent did the SVAA accomplish its goals as outlined in its strategic plan for the State academy? What useful resources may have contributed to this? What barriers, if any, hindered progress?
- To what extent have University partners incorporated victim course work into existing/new curricula or developed other related activities as a result of SVAA?
- What do faculty/trainers view as the most valuable aspect of SVAA for participants? What outcomes did they observe for SVAA students?
- How did the variation in students and faculty (e.g., educational background, years of experience, profession) affect the course content as well as learning environments at the SVAA sites?
- To what extent has the SVAA contributed to “professionalizing” the field of victim services?

Questions related to student outcomes also were explored to determine the potential benefit of the SVAA on the field. These include:

- To what extent do students report an increase/change in knowledge, attitudes, skills and abilities following SVAA participation? What are the major changes in students’ behaviors on the job?
- To what extent have students been able to apply what they learned (used the materials) from the SVAA in their work with victims? What new things have students done or attempted to do on the job? How has the SVAA empowered students to better serve victims? What barriers, if any, have they encountered?

- To what extent has participation in the SVAA led to greater educational/professional attainments?
- To what extent have students been able to network with other participants at the SVAA? In what way?
- How have students described the SVAA experience to other co-workers? Would (have) students recommended the SVAA to other co-workers?

Couched within these questions related to the planning and implementation of the SVAA's are the "lessons learned" from each of the State academies. This was the basis for the second goal of the evaluation: identify key findings and lessons learned across the academies and formulate recommendations to be used by other States in planning, implementing, and sustaining a State academy. Together, the results serve as a roadmap for others to learn from and follow in developing successful State-wide training efforts that provide comprehensive, academically-based, fundamental skills-building training for diverse victim assistance personnel, volunteers, and allied professionals who routinely interact with victims of crime.

## **2.2 Case Study Data Collection**

The data collection for the case studies is described below. A copy of the data collection instruments developed for this project are provided in Appendix A of this report.

### **Record Review**

A data extraction form was created to guide an extensive review of program records and extract information relevant to the planning and implementation phases of the SVAA's. Records reviewed included grant applications, progress reports, site visit reports, planning guides, mission statements, goals and objectives, meeting minutes, brochures, course materials/curricula, calendar of events, and information related to partnering university course offerings. The site team members reviewed program documents and extracted relevant data prior to the site visits. Outstanding questions, pertinent issues, and/or points of clarification were then reserved for the site visit, during which the research team validated the data collected and gathered additional data to fill in any information gaps. The team also reviewed any relevant program documents that were not available prior to the visit while on-site.

### **Pre-Existing SVAA Evaluation Data**

All of the SVAA's conducted independent evaluations of their respective academies. Evaluation activities varied in breadth and depth of data collected, and evaluation reports yielded varying degrees of information regarding outcomes for the Academies. Past and current SVAA

evaluation reports were reviewed to better determine the impact of the SVAA on students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. Furthermore, the evaluations were gleaned for information about the SVAA's content (e.g., interest level, applicability), components (e.g., lectures, activities, participant manuals), structure (e.g., design, location, room set up, cost), and trainer delivery (e.g., knowledge of subject, adaptation to different adult learning styles).

### **Site Visits**

A two-person team conducted 1½-day site visits to each of the State academies. While on-site, the team conducted in-depth interviews with the program director and/or cosponsoring agency representatives. In addition, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders who had been involved recently with the SVAA, as well as those stakeholders who had worked with the academy from its inception to get a historical as well as contemporaneous perspective of the Academy. Collecting data from multiple sources provides a broader more comprehensive perspective by which to understand the conceptualization of the academies and modifications made to the academies during implementation. These stakeholders included program staff, Advisory Board members, Academy faculty, and representatives from the University partner.

### **Follow-on Student Interviews**

The student telephone interview protocol was designed to explore, in greater depth, the impact of the SVAA on the participants and the field. The telephone survey was created electronically in Microsoft Access, to allow for easier entry of responses, to facilitate skip patterns for the interviewer, and to reduce the amount of time needed for entering data for analysis. Staff tasked with conducting the interviews was trained to ensure clear understanding of the project, familiarity with survey content and standardization in protocol administration.

The student telephone interview protocol was piloted with 3 students. The pilot tested for possible problems with using the computerized survey (e.g., skip patterns, recording and storing data). The pilot also tested for clarity and understanding of questions, item wording, and appropriateness of response categories. Additionally, the pilot was used to test for the accuracy of predicted time for completing the survey, so that respondents would be given a realistic estimate of how much time would be involved in participating in the survey. Based on feedback from these pilots, revisions were made to the protocol and script.

Contact information for 154 students was provided to the research team by the five Academy sites. Of the 154 students, 15 could not be contacted due to disconnected numbers or a change in jobs with no forwarding information. Out of the remaining 139 students, 8 declined to participate. A total of 65 interviews were completed out of the 131 possible for a response rate of 50 percent. Interviews per site ranged from 6 to 22.

Quantitative data was collected for several potential outcome areas including information gains, attitude and behavior change, networking opportunities, and resource material usage. Questions probed for specific skills and knowledge learned as well as how students incorporated this new learning into their professional lives. Students were asked about any attitudinal changes they had toward victims and other agencies as well as changes in coworkers' attitudes toward them. The topic of networking was also covered in the form of questions related to the existence of post-academy interaction with fellow students and its effectiveness. The last section of the interview protocol focused on the usefulness of Academy resource materials, specifically asking which materials students have used and in what ways. In addition to these quantitative data, qualitative responses were thematically coded for each question asked and analyzed with the corresponding quantitative data.

Findings of the analyses are detailed in each of the case studies presented in Chapters II – VI. A synthesis of the key findings and lessons learned from the case studies is provided in Chapter VII, followed by recommendations for the field and concluding remarks in Chapter VIII.

## **II. CASE STUDY: COLORADO SVAA**

## **II. CASE STUDY: COLORADO SVAA**

This case study presents a brief description of the Colorado Victim Assistance Academy (Colorado SVAA or Academy), followed by information on the planning of the Academy, its implementation, sustainability, results of past evaluations, impacts of the Academy, and concludes with a discussion on key findings and lessons learned from this site. Information used for this case study was gathered from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) FY 2001 Discretionary Grant Application; Colorado SVAA progress reports from 1999, 2001 and 2002; the Colorado SVAA 2001 planning guide; the Advisory Board meeting minutes; the 2002 Colorado SVAA Academy Manual; the 2002 instructor and student academy materials and evaluation reports. In addition to a review of the Colorado SVAA planning and implementation documents, between January – May 2003, Caliber Associates staff visited the Colorado SVAA to conduct interviews with the sponsoring agency representative, an academy staff member, and a focus group with 16 stakeholders. During the spring of 2003, Caliber staff conducted telephone interviews with a sample of 10 former Colorado SVAA students. Caliber also conducted follow-up telephone conversations with Academy staff to verify specific pieces of information and to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered overall. A review and analysis of these data form the basis for this case study on the Colorado State Victim Assistance Academy.

### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Colorado Victim Assistance Academy is a 40-hour Academy designed for individuals who are new (with two or less years' experience) to the victim services field. The Colorado SVAA is modeled on the curriculum established by OVC for use in the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA), but addresses issues unique to rural Colorado. The Academy offers the opportunity for new advocates to learn from experts and each other about quality response to victims of crime, a chance to expand their knowledge and skills, and increase their confidence in working with crime victims. The training provides basic victim advocacy training for people working in law enforcement, prosecutor's offices, probation, corrections, and non-system agencies. The Colorado SVAA seeks to guarantee victims their rights under Colorado statute, while increasing the proficiency and professionalism of victim services throughout the state.

#### **1.1 Sponsoring Agency**

In 1999, the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA) applied for and received funding from the Office for Victims of Crime to implement the Colorado Victim Assistance Academy. COVA is a nonprofit State-wide umbrella organization for victim services in the State of Colorado. It was formalized in 1989 and serves as a membership organization whose focus is to address the needs of victims of crime by providing support and education for

those agencies and individuals that serve victims. Among other things, COVA publishes newsletters; produces a State-wide directory of victim service providers; provides training on the Victims' Rights Act, vicarious trauma, and cultural competency; sponsors a 3-day State-wide conference; and monitors State and Federal legislation that affects victims of crime. As the primary training agent for victim service providers, COVA's philosophy is that training is crucial to delivering quality services to victims of crime, the development of competent professionals, and retaining those individuals in the field.

## **1.2 Goals and Objectives**

The goal of the Colorado Victim Assistance Academy is to provide a resource for comprehensive fundamental training and education for individuals who work with victims of crime throughout the State of Colorado. The Colorado SVAA is a key component to assuring that all who provide services to crime victims, have access to the training and that the training is relevant to them. Through the Colorado SVAA, COVA hopes to guarantee victims their rights while increasing the proficiency and professionalism of victims' services throughout the state.

To achieve these goals, COVA set about accomplishing the following key objectives:

- Planning and coordinating two academies each year in rural Colorado.
- Establishing and maintaining an Executive Committee and Advisory Board of coalitions, organization and systems that represent various agencies/departments, geographic locations, and diversity concerns in victim services.
- Developing additional curriculum and materials that are sensitive to the needs of victim service providers in Colorado as identified through their needs assessments.
- Developing a plan for recruiting victim service providers in need of training.
- Establishing and maintaining a partnership with an institution of higher learning that would assist in providing the Colorado SVAA access to their pool of experts on criminal justice issues, Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit, and research and technical assistance with technology issues.
- Researching and identifying various funding sources for continued support of the Colorado SVAA.

## **1.3 Faculty**

The faculty is selected from different State-wide coalitions and victim assistance providers and includes members of the COVA Executive Committee and Colorado SVAA Advisory Board. Early on, the Colorado SVAA Advisory Board members decided that they

preferred faculty with practical, rather than academic, experience. Faculty were recruited based on the following criteria:

- Expertise in a variety of victim assistance areas
- Practical experience or familiarity with victim service delivery in rural settings
- Good presentation skills
- Ability to meet the outcomes outlined for their Academy session.

This selection criteria was developed in conjunction with an adult learning theory specialist that the Colorado SVAA hired to train Academy faculty. Although potential instructors are chosen based on their practical experience and demonstrated presentation skills, the Colorado SVAA also provides training for each new faculty member. This training focuses on adult learning theory and skill building. A one-day training with an adult learning specialist was provided for the faculty prior to each academy. After the first two academies, the adult learning specialist gave the Colorado SVAA staff permission to use her material to individually train future faculty members.

#### **1.4 University Partner**

During the planning phase, COVA selected Metropolitan State College (Metro) as their university partner. Metro is an accredited comprehensive four-year institution. As an academic partner, Metro agreed to offer:

- Access to faculty with expertise in criminal justice topics
- Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits for participants who elect this option
- Expertise in designing evaluation tools through their National Research Center
- Technical assistance (i.e., distance learning, Internet capabilities and other technological assistance)
- Networking opportunities with other institutions of higher education throughout the state, particularly in rural areas.

According to the university partner and other Advisory Board members, there are no victim advocacy degree programs at any of the universities in Colorado, but Metro does have a strong human services school that offers courses on topics that victim service providers encounter. One such course offering is in domestic violence counseling as part of the human services curriculum.

## **1.5 Students**

The Academy is designed for victim service providers with two or less years' experience in the field. Preference is given to rural paid professionals; however, volunteers and Colorado metropolitan area professionals are also encouraged to apply. Students are recruited through different State-wide victim service provider organizations, through the COVA Web site and through COVA's membership mailing list. On average, the Colorado SVAA hosts 24 students per Academy location, but that number varies based on applications received and the needs of the field. For example, the applications received over the past two years have revealed that victim advocates who had been in the field longer than 2 years had not received any formal State-wide training. In addition to maintaining class limits, Academy staff also attempts to maintain professional diversity among the students it admits for each academy. Academy staff selects, as applications will allow, individuals that represent the following populations: one-third probation/prosecutor/court officials, a third law enforcement personnel, and one-third nonprofit representatives for each Academy session. This technique is intended to ensure cross-exposure and interdisciplinary training.

## **2. PLANNING**

COVA used the first OVC-funded year (FY 1999) to plan the Colorado SVAA. They started by conducting needs assessments to ensure that the training and education would be relevant and would meet the needs of victim service providers statewide. First, COVA staff interviewed Colorado service providers who had previously attended NVAA. COVA sought information on the providers' experiences at NVAA in hopes that this information would be helpful in determining how much of the NVAA model would work in educating victim service providers on the state level in Colorado. COVA staff also surveyed state victim/witness coordinators about their training needs. Later, COVA designed and disseminated two surveys to the field requesting information on the training resources, needs, and suggestions for the composition of the Academy. One of the surveys was sent to program and department directors and the second survey was sent to direct service providers. This data gathering activity assisted in building a foundation for Advisory Board member selection and developing a curriculum for the Colorado SVAA.

### **2.1 Establishing an Advisory Board**

COVA established an Advisory Board of coalitions and organizations that represented the agencies and geographic and diversity issues faced by victim service providers in Colorado. COVA invited directors of the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA) and the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) to collaborate and become a part of

the Colorado SVAA Executive Committee. An Advisory Board was formed after the COVA Executive Director and Academy Coordinator developed criteria for the recruitment and selection of Board members. This Board is composed of four members of the Executive Committee plus 14 representatives of metropolitan and rural victim service agencies, nonprofits, law enforcement, prosecutors' offices, probation, the Division of Criminal Justice, and Metro State College.

From the outset, COVA established that the Executive Committee would be used to figure out the structure of Colorado SVAA and how it would be similar and/or different from the NVAA. This process included surveying the Committee to determine what each agency could contribute and ensuring that they delivered. Agreeing on the goals and objectives was vital to guiding the Executive Committee through the planning process.

## **2.2 Developing a State Specific Curriculum**

Using the results of the needs assessments, COVA staff and Advisory Board members reviewed the NVAA curriculum to get an idea of what enhancements were necessary to address the needs of Colorado victim service providers. A review of the NVAA Academy Text revealed that the NVAA curriculum focused on the history of the criminal justice system and protocol, but was lacking in information on rural issues. The Academy Coordinator and COVA Executive Director along with experts in the field and their university partner, all agreed that the NVAA curriculum was a good base of knowledge, but that it was essential that they develop a Colorado-specific and experiential curriculum. Representatives of the Advisory Board, Academy staff, and the university partner compiled a list of topics that embraced the entire scope of victim services, but that addressed issues unique to Colorado. One aspect of the curriculum that makes the Colorado SVAA unique is their emphasis on cultural competency. According to the 2000 Census, Colorado is 24 percent minority and 75 percent white. When interviewed, Colorado SVAA staff indicated their awareness that Colorado's population is predominately white and that white females primarily staff the victim services field, but that the crime victims they serve are not predominantly white. This is the reason they make a point to present culturally sensitive topics designed to teach and open the lines of communications between the instructors and students. Stakeholders believe it is important to include culturally responsive behavior in victim services because a "cookie cutter" approach to victim services will no longer work. With these ideas in mind, the initial Colorado SVAA curriculum included the following topics:

- Criminal Justice 101 and Safety Skills
- Sexual Assault
- Death Notification
- Victim Panel

- Domestic Violence
- Historical Perspective of Victims' Movement
- Communications
- Resources and Rurality
- Victims Rights Amendment
- Child Abuse
- Victim Compensation
- Vicarious Trauma
- Trauma Response
- Cultural Considerations
- Safety Skills.

The curriculum has stayed generally the same between each academy, but the Academy staff continues to revise the curriculum to meet the changing needs of its students. Student evaluations and observations during the academy by Advisory Board members and Academy staff provided the basis for the revisions necessary to the curriculum. Based on this feedback, the 2002 Colorado SVAA covered the following topics:

- Communication
- Criminal Justice
- Resources and Rurality
- Crisis Intervention/Trauma Response
- Death Notification
- Sexual Assault
- Cultural Considerations
- Vicarious Trauma
- Domestic Violence
- Child Abuse/Sexual Assault
- Victim Compensation
- Victim Rights Amendment
- Personal Safety Skills.

### **2.3 Training and Technical Assistance**

In addition to funding, OVC offered support through its Resource Center and Training and Technical Assistance Center. OVC also provided the Colorado SVAA with a copy of the NVAA curriculum and conducted quarterly conferences and grantee meetings that brought together SVAA grantees to discuss challenges and successes in the planning and implementation of their SVAAAs.

### **2.4 Assessing the Training and Educational Needs of Colorado Victim Advocates**

As part of the planning for the Colorado SVAA, COVA conducted a needs assessment of the field. In October 1999, after receiving the OVC grant, COVA conducted interviews with Colorado service providers who attended NVAA. In January 2000, the Colorado SVAA staff

developed and disseminated a survey to State Victim Witness Coordinators. This survey requested information on the staff most in need of training (i.e., new, paid, volunteers, experienced staff or combination of the three), level of training needed (i.e., baseline (101), intermediate (201) or advanced (301)), expectations of an academy and the topics that should be covered.

In March 2000, Colorado SVAA staff developed two surveys inquiring about the training needs, training interests, training format, certification needs, and the demographics of victim services providers in Colorado. One survey was designed for and sent to 1,665 direct service providers. The second survey was designed for and sent to 333 executive and program directors and department heads. Colorado SVAA staff received 225 completed surveys from direct service providers and 89 completed surveys from directors and program heads in April 2000. Of the direct victim services professionals responding, more than half (67%) of them expressed interest in attending an SVAA academy; 58 percent had been with their organizations for three or less years; and 37 percent had worked with victims for three years or less. Executive and program directors were most concerned about the costs and staff issues involved in sending staff to a weeklong training. Moreover, 57 percent of directors reported that they believed the greatest need was for training on the 200 (intermediate) or 300 (advanced) levels and not at the introductory or 101 level. The training topic of interest to both direct service providers and directors was crisis intervention. According to stakeholders, the responses to these surveys directly influenced the focus and process for planning the Academy.

After establishing an Executive Committee, Advisory Board, and developing a state-specific curriculum, the Colorado SVAA reported they were ready to implement the Academy.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

After much planning, the Colorado SVAA held its first Academy in June 2001. In preparation for hosting the first Academy, COVA along with support from the Executive Committee and Advisory Board, performed many key activities that included:

- Developing a brochure to describe the Colorado SVAA and an application for attendance.
- Marketing the brochure and application throughout the COVA membership network.
- Selecting a site based on classroom space, access to technology, and proximity to lodging and food.
- Recruiting faculty members and students from mostly rural areas of Colorado.

COVA offered a second Academy in September 2001 to ensure that victim service providers across the state were allowed to take advantage of this opportunity.

### **3.1 Format of the Academy**

The classroom portion of the training is a 40-hour Academy conducted over five consecutive days. Each session module includes experiential exercises designed to provide skill-building and practical applications of information based on the curriculum mentioned in Section 2.2 above.

#### **Student Recruitment**

The Colorado SVAA uses various methods to recruit Academy students. COVA is well known in Colorado through their annual State-wide conference, which is held in November each year. The conference registration fee includes COVA membership, which allows victim service providers and allied professionals into the COVA membership network. The membership network includes more than 1,000 victim service providers that are notified of the Academy through COVA conference attendance, newsletters and its Web sites. COVA members are all mailed a brochure, which provides information on the upcoming Academy. Students may request an application via telephone or e-mail. The application requests such information as the student's educational background, the field they represent, the number of years the student has worked in that agency and with victims in general. The application also informs students of the time commitment necessary for completing the Academy, the registration requirements, requests an agreement that students participate in all evaluation processes, and informs students that they may receive academic credit. Students may request a partial scholarship during the application process. The scholarship is used to cover a portion of the registration fee, not to exceed \$100. Ten partial scholarships were awarded during the first and second years of the Academy. The evaluation process includes completing daily evaluations and an overall evaluation at the end of the Academy week, as well as follow-up evaluations.

#### **Student Selection**

In keeping with their goals to provide training to direct victim service providers, the Colorado SVAA targets volunteer and paid advocates, nonprofit agencies, counselors, social workers, psychologists, law enforcement officers, victim/witness personnel, prosecution and court officials, probation officers, corrections personnel and agency/program administrators for attendance at the Academy. Preference is given to paid professionals in rural areas. Students are selected through a detailed admittance process. The admittance process involves completing an admissions application, submitting an essay, providing proof that the student has completed their agency's basic department training, a letter of support from their supervisor, and a \$300

registration fee. In addition, students must complete a 40-hour self-taught preparatory course, which includes self-administered tests. Upon acceptance to the Academy, students are sent the NVAA Academy Text, which includes 38 chapters on various topics. They are required to take the quizzes at the end of each chapter and submit each quiz to the Academy Coordinator for review prior to the beginning of that year's Academy. The quizzes are used to equalize every student so that they all start the Academy with the same basic information. This allows Academy staff to concentrate on dispensing information that is specific to Colorado and its rural venues. Students may apply for Continuing Education Credit (CEU) through Metro when they apply for Academy attendance. Students must pay a \$10 fee for CEUs or \$105 for three-semester hour credits and sign in each day of the Academy to show that they have attended each session. Since the Academy has been in operation, approximately 50 students have requested and received college credit or CEUs.

### **Faculty Recruitment**

COVA selected faculty members with expertise in victim services with an emphasis on rural settings to present Academy content. The Academy Coordinator and COVA Executive Director recruited faculty with considerable assistance from the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board started with individuals whose work they were familiar with through other associations, boards, or agencies. Some had previously and continue to present at the COVA conference. Other selection factors included how long the instructor has been in the field, what the Colorado SVAA and COVA knew about their base of experience, and if anyone on the staff or Committee had seen that individual "in action." Many of these faculty members were effective after the first Academy and have continued teaching at the Academy.

After identifying prospective faculty members, the Academy Coordinator sends a letter extending an offer to teach at the Academy and an instructor application. The application requests contact information, their areas of teaching interest, a brief essay on how their presentation will address the provision of victim services from a rural perspective and among diverse populations. The application also require instructors to provide the names of two references familiar with their training skills.

For new and existing Academy instructors, the Academy Coordinator provides a packet of materials that provides information on the topic(s) instructors will be presenting, the expected outcomes, and requests copies of their presentation materials, audiovisual, and other support requirements. COVA also provides each instructor with information on the academy class. This information includes a list of the students' names, their agency, city, and the number of years in the victim services field. COVA provides this information so that the instructor has a general sense of the Academy students in order to facilitate better use of time. For example, during the

first Academy many of the instructors would ask students to introduce themselves in a round robin fashion. This introduction included their names, the agency they represented, and how long they had been with their agency, among other things. This exercise became redundant for the students by the second day of the Academy, so it was discontinued. Generally, faculty members arrive just before their sessions, debrief with the Coordinator, and make their presentations. Faculty members do not remain on site throughout the Academy, but they provide their contact information to students and make themselves available to students immediately after their presentations.

### **Site Selection**

The Advisory Board, Academy Coordinator, and COVA Executive Director work together to identify potential sites. Two academies are held each year to accommodate both the eastern and western parts of the State. Because of this logistical arrangement, it is not possible to house students in the university dorms at Metro. The Colorado SVAAAs are held at small hotels in rural areas that can accommodate this event to include lodging, ample classroom space, and access to the required technology (e.g., the Internet, audiovisual equipment). With the information provided to them by Academy staff, students reserve and pay for their own lodging.

### **Academy Schedule**

A typical Academy schedule involves introductory, welcoming, or “housekeeping” announcements at the beginning of each day. This activity is followed by a learning exercise or check-in activities before continuing with three hours of instruction. Next is a 75-minute lunch break followed by another three-hour instruction period. One 15-minute break each is provided during the morning and afternoon sessions. A skill-based learning activity is planned for the end of each session day. This learning activity lasts approximately one hour and is based on the information disseminated earlier in the day. Although scheduled, this activity may or may not take place depending on the needs of the students. At the end of the Academy week, daily and overall evaluations are collected and students graduate and receive their certificates of completion. For instructors, each day mirrors student activities with one exception. The Academy staff also builds time into the curriculum for faculty to experience an adult learning activity one hour each morning or evening of the Academy. This exercise assists in pinpointing issues that need to be adjusted, highlights weaknesses in presentations, and/or provides process time about a particularly disturbing or traumatic session.

## **3.2 Training and Technical Assistance**

OVC has continued to provide guidance and offer recommendations and assistance for support through its Training and Technical Assistance and Resource Centers. The Colorado

SVAA did not use OVC for training and/or technical assistance during implementation of the Academy.

At the end of the original OVC funding period in mid-2003, the Colorado SVAA staff sought a variety of methods for sustaining the Academy.

#### **4. SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability is one of the issues COVA considered when they decided to apply for the discretionary grant from OVC. COVA reports that it takes about \$60,000 to conduct two academies per year. Although Federal funding provided most of the funding for the program, COVA also provided in-kind support and received support from the State Division of Criminal Justice. Students are also required to pay a registration fee to attend the Academy. This \$300 fee covers the NVAA curriculum, the student binder and all written materials for classroom modules, all daytime meals, group prizes, and a completion certificate. Students pay for their own lodging, evening meals, and travel expenses.

COVA began investigating funding options to sustain the Colorado SVAA in 2002. Stakeholder interviews reveal that OVC funding would end in mid-2003. Due to good fiscal management, Academy staff was able to plan and host an Academy in April 2003 using OVC funds. COVA also expects to receive pre-awarded Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds, which will go towards planning and hosting an Academy in 2004. COVA will also seek additional funding from state-level organizations and local foundations to continue the Academy beyond 2004.

#### **5. OUTCOMES: PAST EVALUATIONS**

During each Academy, both quantitative and qualitative data is collected by Academy staff from each student about the sessions and the Academy overall. Surveys are used to gather data that will assist the Colorado SVAA in determining student knowledge gain as well as their overall satisfaction with the training, the logistics of the Academy and future topics of interest. Stakeholders interviewed report that students consistently describe positive changes in their perceptions of victims and cultural issues, an increased sensitivity toward victims, and a broader perspective and understanding of victims' rights.

##### **5.1 Evaluation Design**

The Colorado SVAA staff collects evaluation data via student and supervisor feedback forms, as well as faculty input. Evaluation designs generally include individual session evaluations, overall Academy evaluations, supervisor evaluations, and follow-up student

evaluations. A general session evaluation instrument, similar to the NVAA instrument, was created by the Academy and utilized throughout the program to gather feedback from students on individual presenters. An overall training evaluation instrument was developed and administered at the conclusion of the Academy. This evaluation covers the importance, relevance and future use of the information presented. A 6-month follow-up questionnaire was mailed simultaneously and individually, to students and their supervisors to obtain feedback on the importance, relevance and usefulness of the information presented at the Academy. Evaluation results are reviewed by the Executive Committee, Advisory Board, and Academy staff and used to continuously refine the Colorado SVAA.

### **Indicators of Success**

Both students and stakeholders alike cite indicators that point to the success of the Academy. For example, at the first Academy in 2001, faculty and staff noticed a change in the students' attitudes from the beginning of the week to the end of the week. Students expressed feeling more confident in their abilities as the week progressed. They also indicated on their evaluations that they felt more connected because they knew whom (i.e., other participants, Academy faculty and staff) to call if they need guidance on how to handle a particular situation. Just after the Academy, students e-mailed Academy staff to stay in touch and even organized an impromptu "reunion" at the COVA conference later that year. Another indicator of success was that some students from the first Academy quit their jobs after Academy attendance. They told Academy staff that the Academy helped them to realize that the victim services field was not an appropriate field for them. Giving individuals information that would assist them in their decision-making process (i.e., do I belong in victim service provision?) was one of the initial outcomes set by the Colorado SVAA. Stakeholder interviewees remarked that helping students realize their inappropriateness for the field was an indicator of success. Overall results from the 2002 academies were also positive with participants reporting an increase in knowledge that would help them better serve victims and prevent job burnout.

### **Meeting Long-Term Goals**

In 2002, the Colorado SVAA decided to collect additional long-term information about the impact of the training they were offering students. The Academy staff revised their evaluation strategy to obtain the data they needed by:

- Setting performance outcomes for the participants
- Developing instruments to assist them in collecting impact data
- Revising the evaluation instruments to reflect a connection to the learning outcomes.

The Colorado SVAA created a list of field performance outcomes that would allow the student to demonstrate competence and confidence in performing their duties as victim advocates.

Academy graduates were expected to be able to:

- Describe advocacy within the context of their field of work
- Identify and describe roles/functions of a victim advocate where a victim comes in contact with a service provider
- Identify why they do this work
- Select appropriate communication tools to support and respond to the victim's needs
- Assess situations, identify options (discuss pros and cons), and take appropriate response actions
- Recognize the assumptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes about themselves and others and how that affects their interaction with victims
- Consistently and appropriately engage victims in decision-making
- Describe symptoms of trauma and the early responses to create good health
- Identify their suitability for the role of victim advocates.

## **5.2 Evaluation Results**

Academy staff also developed surveys designed to capture data related to long-term change. These follow-up surveys requested information regarding the impact of the Academy training on its students and their organizations. The follow-up questionnaire was administered to students six months after their attendance. This survey requested that students rate how the training they received changed how they do their job or how the training helped them in their work with victims. Student responses to the follow-up survey indicated that the information received at the Academy was relevant to their jobs, and influenced their perception of victims, cultural issues, and their confidence in working with victims. According to Academy staff, students will be surveyed in six month, one year, and two year intervals in the future.

Academy staff also designed and administered a survey for the supervisors of students who attended the Academy. Of the 24 students who attended the Academy in April 2002, 9 of their supervisors responded. Supervisors reported that as a result of attending the Academy, their employees were better at providing services to victims and that the supervisors would send other staff and recommend the Colorado SVAA to other victim services supervisors.

## **6. IMPACTS: CURRENT ASSESSMENT**

To supplement data collected from previous Colorado SVAA evaluations conducted by Academy staff, a research team from Caliber Associates collected data via telephone interviews with 10 former Colorado SVAA students, 2 individual stakeholder interviews, and a focus group with 16 additional stakeholders. All data collected by the Caliber research team was collected between January and May 2003. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in analyzing the supplemental data. The findings of the analyses are presented below.

### **6.1 Students**

In May 2003, Caliber staff conducted telephone interviews with a sample of Colorado SVAA students from its September 2002 Academy. Students were asked about the impact of the Academy on them and the organizations/agencies at which they work, their knowledge and skill gain and use, changes in attitudes and behaviors, and their general experience at the Academy. Of the 22 students who had attended the Academy in September 2002, 10 were interviewed. All ten students report knowledge gain and seven report skill gain. Specifically, updated laws and statistics, resources available to them, and information on cultural diversity issues were cited as new knowledge gained. In terms of skills, students report learning to listen and interact better with victims. Students also mentioned that they have used these knowledge and skill gains to revise their marketing materials (i.e., brochures), develop support groups, and highlight the challenges of special populations (i.e., individuals with disabilities) when training their advocates.

Students also report changes in their attitudes and behaviors as a result of attending the Academy. They have demonstrated more confidence and sensitivity when helping victims. Most of the students attribute these changes to their awareness of the resources available to them from the Academy. In fact, three-fourths of the students interviewed report staying in touch with other students they met at the Academy. All report that the contact is beneficial to their work with victims because they exchange information and resources, brainstorm, and generally know whom to contact in their state for help. Half of the students report using the materials they received at the Academy in their work place. Fifty percent report using the Academy manuals (NVAA and Colorado SVAA) as sources of reference or for training materials.

Both stakeholders and students interviewed agree that networking has been one of the most beneficial aspects of the Academy. According to stakeholders, students have described it as a powerful experience. A majority (90%) of the students report that having a wide range of knowledge and experience among Colorado SVAA students was conducive to their learning. Ten percent report that this diversity among students was both helpful and interfered with their ability

to learn. This exposure was helpful because students were able to exchange knowledge and provide examples of how situations were handled. The diverse audience interfered with their ability to learn because other students did not share similar perspectives of the victim; and other students had difficulty understanding why their fellow agencies/organizations handled things a certain way (different than theirs). Stakeholders agree that obtaining a foundation on the fundamentals of how to work with victims was also valuable. Students realized, after the Academy, that the victim services field has a culture unlike other professions. There's a combination of survivors of crime, practitioners, and individuals from strictly professional backgrounds who all converge to assist victims in various ways.

One of the unique aspects of the Colorado SVAA was its acceptance of four deaf students into its September 2002 Academy. This was particularly important as it exposed advocates to the barriers that deaf people experience. It also highlighted the challenges that advocates who assist disabled individuals face. One of the students who directs a nonprofit agency for deaf victims has reported using the Colorado SVAA curriculum and materials to train her advocates.

## **6.2 University Partners**

Through its partnership with the Colorado SVAA, Metro State University has received an opportunity to explore the possibility of creating a victimology curriculum or degree program. To date, Metro has elected not to create a victimology curriculum or victim services degree program. Through its Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Metro has served a vital role in the Colorado SVAA by providing access to experts in the criminal justice field, and has also provided assistance in developing Colorado-specific text for the Academy. Stakeholders voiced their optimism that perhaps Metro's involvement and support of the Academy will generate greater interest among students in having a victimology or victim services degree program.

## **6.3 Victims' Field**

Stakeholders report feeling confident that they are meeting the needs of the victim service providers in their state based on the feedback they have received from students after the Academy. Students have kept in touch with Academy staff and continuously use COVA as a resource. Almost half (40%) of the students interviewed report there was a change in their attitude towards other agencies they work with. In fact, students indicate that they learned about the challenges other organizations face that prevents these agencies from helping victims. This has engendered a feeling of understanding from the victim advocates' perspectives because now they see other organizations (i.e., law enforcement, courts, legislators) in a positive light. Becoming aware of the specific services that other agencies can provide has been helpful as well.

Stakeholder interviewees remarked that the Colorado SVAA has a great impact on professionalizing the victim assistance field. They report a disconnect between corporate America and the nonprofit sector. Historically, nonprofit organizations have not been considered professional because they began as grassroots efforts. Because of this perception, grassroots organizations and later the victim service profession were not held to the same standard. With efforts like the Colorado SVAA, which provide accreditation and formalized training, the image of the victim services field is changing. The benefit is that victim service providers with grassroots level experience receive the skills to perform at the professional level.

Students also report that they have expanded their knowledge and skills since the Academy more than they would have had they not attended the Academy. For example, 70 percent report attending additional workshops, seminars, and trainings on topics they were exposed to at the Academy. Students also report that they have attended a few cross-trainings with other agencies/organizations to get a better understanding of what each agency/organization does.

## 7. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In addition to the interviews conducted with stakeholders and former Colorado SVAA students, the data reviewed and analyzed for this case study reveal key findings and lessons learned from the Colorado Victim Assistance Academy site. The key findings and lessons learned are grouped by factors that influenced planning, implementation, and sustainability and are presented below.

### 7.1 Factors that Influenced Planning

Stakeholders reported several factors that contributed to planning the Colorado SVAA. The key findings and lessons learned during the planning stage are:

- **Selecting the “right” collaborative partners is vital to overall the success of the Colorado SVAA.** According to stakeholders, one of the most influential decisions made during the planning stage by the sponsoring agency was wisely choosing collaborative partners. It was important to ensure that victim service provider agencies would be represented, but it was also important that the partners maintain a clear vision of the project and worked in furtherance of the goals and objectives of the project.
- **Defining and agreeing about what collaboration means to all partners involved is extremely important.** A significant factor that hindered the planning process was a lack of definition about collaborative partnerships. COVA selected agencies within the state that supported victim service providers to collaborate on this project. However, COVA believes that it became apparent very early in the planning process

that the three coalitions had different philosophies on how to implement the Academy. It was important to define and agree about what collaboration meant to all partners involved to be sure that all those involved with the effort would share a common vision for the Academy. Starting with the common vision helped decrease conflict about future plans for the direction of the Academy.

- **Establishing a lead agency for implementing and operating the academy is crucial.** Another factor that hindered the planning process initially was determining which agency would lead the effort. A divergence in opinion arose among Advisory Board members as to what agency should take the lead in managing the logistics, recruiting students and faculty, and developing the curriculum. COVA's viewpoint, which was later agreed upon by all, was that they were in the best position to manage the Academy. This viewpoint was based on their position as grantee with reporting responsibility to OVC, as well as their position as an umbrella organization with an extensive knowledge and training expertise of the victim services field.
- **The geographic makeup of the state may be key in meeting the needs of the victim services field.** One of the major challenges to planning the academy was resistance among the collaborative partners about focusing on training rural victim service providers. Even though the needs assessments indicated that training was greatly needed in the rural areas, some members of the Colorado SVAA Advisory Board opposed focusing on the rural areas. The primary reason for focusing the Academy towards rural victim service providers is due to the geographic distribution of the State. The structure of the State places Denver—the biggest city, capital, and hub of the State—right in the middle. The eastern plains to the right are flat and the foothills of the mountains are to the west. The significance of this geography is two-fold: 1) Rural victim service providers are less likely to receive training because of lack of funds necessary to travel to the hub city; and 2) since a great many of the trainings are held in Denver, rural providers get an urban spin on the training, which is not relevant to them. Also, students come away with the feeling that “this is how we do it in Denver,” which causes turf issues. In the end, the decision was made to conduct two academies each year located in rural areas at both the eastern and western parts of the state.
- **Partnering with grassroots organizations and agencies serving underserved populations is as important as established organizations and agencies.** It is important to work with lesser known and least-funded organizations because these agencies can provide another perspective into victim service needs as well as access to underserved populations like trafficking victims and people with disabilities.

## 7.2 Factors that Influenced Implementation

Stakeholders reported several factors that contributed to implementing the Colorado SVAA. The key findings and lessons learned during the implementation stage are:

- **Self-evaluation is essential.** Stakeholders conducted a State-wide needs assessment to identify training needs throughout the state. This crucial step provided them with insight into the needs of the victim service field. With this knowledge, they were able to design an appropriate curriculum to meet those needs. Evaluating at various stages of the academy was necessary to learning what improvements to make to ensure that the academy continued to meet the needs of the students and victim service field at-large.
- **Meeting the needs of the victim service field is key.** One of the hindering factors during the implementation phase was the Academy’s difficulty recruiting students from their target population. The needs assessment clearly identified rural victim service providers as needing the most training. For this reason, the Academy staff “took the training to them” and purposely located the Academy in rural areas. Despite this, some of the rural agencies were unable to send their staff to the Academy. Stakeholders report that lack of funding and staff posed the number one barrier to attendance. Some agencies indicated that they lacked the funding to send staff. Other agencies only had two staff people, so sending one person to the Academy for a week would pose quite a hardship on their agency or program. The Colorado SVAA addressed this barrier by offering partial scholarships toward the attendance fee and providing some meals for students. For some students, these measures determined whether or not they would attend the Academy.
- **Recognizing the limitations of the NVAA model is important.** Colorado SVAA stakeholders found that the NVAA perspective was too broad for them to model exactly. NVAA is a national academy that provides a general overview and is not state-specific. Colorado SVAA stakeholders found that it was important to have flexibility in fashioning their academies toward state-specific needs. One example is the decision about whether or not to use university resources (i.e., dorms, campus facilities). Although it may be essential to rely on the resources of the university partner in other states or on a national-level, Colorado SVAA stakeholders found that these same resources could be met by the community while maintaining a focus on meeting the needs of their state.
- **All states are not created technologically equal.** One of the more basic points emphasized by the Colorado SVAA is the importance of recognizing that access to technology such as the Internet, teleconferencing or distance learning activities may be limited or non-existent in some communities. This may be due to lack of funding or other support issues, but it is important to designing an academy.

### 7.3 Factors that Influenced Sustainability

Sustainability is a real issue for the Colorado SVAA. Although efforts are made to generate on-going revenues from Academy attendance by victim service providers and agencies, a decrease in operating funds could jeopardize the long-term sustainability of the Academy. The

Colorado SVAA stakeholders reported several factors that facilitated or challenged their efforts at sustainability:

- **Choosing the umbrella organization carefully is key.** One of the reasons COVA thought they were best suited to manage the Academy is that, unlike some departments/agencies with political foundations, COVA is an umbrella organization that provides quality programs and services to the field and is not under State or local government management. For example, if a State academy is managed through a State attorney general's office, they are subject to the political themes of that attorney general as well as their term limits. Therefore, the political base for the umbrella organization is very important to the academy experience because as staff and political issues change, this causes shifts in perspectives that may affect the academy. Consequently, where an academy is housed will definitely affect longevity and sustainability.
- **Forming beneficial partnerships is helpful in generating community buy-in.** Stakeholders report that connecting with organizations that have like-minded goals has also been important to receiving buy-in from the field. Stakeholders admit that quality training will always be needed, but verbalizing, requesting, and supporting this effort is what is important to maintaining such a program.
- **Maintaining a passion for quality training is necessary.** According to stakeholders, one factor that has contributed positively to sustaining the Colorado SVAA is having a passion for quality training. Stakeholders remarked that because of COVA's strong reputation for quality training, the Academy has and will continue to be successful. Part of the success can be attributed to their reputation, but another factor was making sure that the right individuals and agencies were aware of their contribution to the victim services field. This helped COVA secure Federal funding and maintains a line of open communication between Federal, State, and local level funding agencies.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This case study report chronicles the Colorado SVAA's activities and resources between 1999 – 2003 for meeting their goals and objectives. Using the funding and support provided by OVC, including the NVAA curriculum, the OVC Resource Center and Training and Technical Assistance Center, as well as its key organizational partners, the Colorado SVAA has planned and implemented weeklong SVAA's from 2001 – 2003. As of 2003, the academy has served approximately 118 victim services professionals and practitioners. Since the very first academy, students have reported a change in their attitudes towards victims and the victim services field. Based on prior evaluations of the Colorado SVAA students and their supervisors, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the Spring of 2003, students reported feeling more confident in their abilities to serve victims; an increase in knowledge about other victim service resources

and applicable laws; an increase in their listening skills and their ability to meet the needs of the victims they serve. These results are directly in line with the goals of the Colorado SVAA, one of which is to be a resource for comprehensive fundamental training and education for victim service providers across the State of Colorado.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Colorado SVAA has also created new working relationships between the victim services field and its university partners and within victim services organizations in Colorado. The Colorado SVAA has also facilitated several activities that may contribute to professionalizing the victim services field such as increasing student networking and educational attainment. In terms of sustainability, the Colorado SVAA has identified funding and resources that will allow them to plan for an Academy in the spring of 2004.

### **III. CASE STUDY: CONNECTICUT SVAA**

### **III. CASE STUDY: CONNECTICUT SVAA**

This case study begins with a description of the Connecticut Victim Assistance Academy (Connecticut SVAA or Academy), continues with an exploration of the planning and implementation phases, explores sustainability issues, impacts and outcomes of the Connecticut SVAA on students, university partners and the victims field, and concludes with key findings and a discussion of lessons learned from this site. Documents reviewed for this case study include: 2001 Connecticut State Victim Assistance Academy Planning Guide, Handbook for Planning a State Victim Assistance Academy, 2001 and 2002 Connecticut State Victim Assistance Academy Evaluation Results, Categorical Assistance Progress Reports from 9/30/99 – 6/30/02, Grant Application, OVC Site Visit Report, and 2002 Connecticut Supplement to the National Victim Assistance Academy Text. Additional data collected and analyzed for this section include: 9 in-person stakeholder interviews, 1 stakeholder telephone interview, and 6 student telephone interviews.

#### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Connecticut Victim Assistance Academy (Connecticut SVAA) offers a valuable opportunity for those in the victim services field to work, study and interact with other victim service providers in Connecticut. The Connecticut SVAA reflects a partnership between the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Office of Victim Services, the University of New Haven, victimology and criminal justice academicians, prosecutorial representatives and judicial representatives. This section describes the Connecticut SVAA Steering Committee, its goals and objectives, the faculty, University Partner, and the Academy's students.

##### **1.1 Sponsoring Agency**

The Connecticut Judicial Branch, Office of Victim Services (OVS) is the VOCA administrator for Connecticut, and is the sponsoring agency for the Connecticut SVAA. OVS has primary responsibility for the development of the Connecticut Academy, and receives guidance from a Steering Committee.

##### **1.2 Goals and Objectives**

The overarching goal of the Connecticut SVAA is to provide State specific, comprehensive, academically based, fundamental education for victim assistance providers, victim advocates, criminal justice personnel, and others who provide direct services to victims of crime. The project goals and objectives in the first two years of the grant were as follows:

- Goal 1: To develop effective strategies for creating a State Victim Assistance Academy
  - Formation of a Steering Committee
  - Charge the Steering Committee with managing the creation and implementation of the Connecticut State Victim Assistance Academy
  
- Goal 2: To develop a curriculum for the Connecticut SVAA
  - Assess existing resources
  - Identify gaps in services and knowledge to be addressed in new curriculum materials
  - Develop cohesive, multi-disciplinary foundational materials that are State-specific
  - Develop knowledge and skills framework for the Connecticut SVAA
  
- Goal 3: To plan the logistics of the Connecticut SVAA
  - Recruit, hire and train a Project Coordinator
  - Select academic partner
  - Develop private-public academic collaboration
  
- Goal 4: To develop a viable financial plan for the continuation of the SVAA
  - Market program to potential corporate partners
  - Establish competitive scholarship program
  - Assist potential participant agencies to develop private partnerships
  - Seek State pick up of initial Federal funding
  
- Goal 5: Development of a Year 1 implementation guide to be used as technical assistance for other States interested in establishing State academies; conduct Year 1 activities in a manner that is replicable
  - Identify process of organization the Steering Committee
  - Identify process of obtaining support for a Connecticut SVAA
  - Identify process of overcoming challenges to the project
  - Identify process of obtaining financial support for continuation of the Connecticut SVAA
  - Identify conclusions of training assessment and impact on project planning process
  - Identify process for developing State specific materials for Connecticut addendum to NVAA core curriculum

In the final year of the grant, the goals for the Connecticut SVAA were as follows:

- Utilize the Steering Committee in the evaluation of the 2001 Connecticut Victim Assistance Academy and the design of the 2002 Academy.
- Continue collaboration with the Academic Partner, the University of New Haven, to implement the 2002 Academy.
- Refine Connecticut Victim Assistance Academy's written promotional materials and distribution methods.
- Update and revise as necessary the Connecticut Victim Assistance Academy Supplement.
- Continue to offer technical assistance, mentoring and development of the project as a resource to other grantees.
- Ensure an ongoing funding plan that integrates tuition and funding from the Judicial Branch, State of Connecticut.

The victim's voice was an important guiding principle in the conceptualization, curriculum development, and implementation of the Connecticut SVAA. In the first Academy, there was a specific focus on the victim's point of view, and what the system can provide to victims of crime. The focus in the second Academy was on the victim's perspective (i.e., seeing the criminal justice system through the eyes of the victim) and the role of the victim advocate.

### **1.3 Faculty**

For the 2001 Academy, there were five core faculty members—two faculty members from the University of New Haven, two faculty members from Central Connecticut State University and a practitioner from the nonprofit sector. A sergeant from a municipal police department filled an adjunct faculty position. In addition to the core faculty members, approximately 17 other experts were selected to teach specific sessions in their areas of expertise. The faculty represented a diversity of academics and practitioners throughout the State, with expertise in a broad range of victim issues. The same core faculty members were selected for the 2002 Academy.

### **1.4 University Partner**

The University of New Haven (UNH) was selected as the Academic Partner in November of 2000. UNH has a comprehensive college-based victimology program with both undergraduate and graduate degrees in the area of victimology. With expertise in the

areas of training methods and materials and adult learning theory, the Academic Partner was critical in the planning and development activities of the Steering Committee (See Section 2.1).

## **1.5 Students**

In the first Academy, 41 students attended, for a faculty to student ratio of approximately 1 to 8. Students represented a diversity of ethnic and professional backgrounds, including representatives from victim advocates, law enforcement, corrections, mental health practitioners, medical examiner's office, and criminal justice divisions. Notably, one international studies student at UNH who was a probation and parole officer from the Republic of Korea was also in attendance. Six students elected to receive academic credit for attending the Academy—three students received undergraduate credit and three students received graduate credit.

Thirty-two students attended the second Academy, with a faculty to student ratio of 1 to 6. As in the first year, students for the second Academy represented a broad range of backgrounds. One significant change to the first Academy was the inclusion of volunteers, or non-paid staff, in the student pool, in the student pool. Seven students elected to receive academic credit in the second Academy—3 students received undergraduate credit and four students received graduate credit.

## **2. PLANNING**

OVS brought together a group of diverse key stakeholders to help in the planning stages of the Connecticut SVAA. As part of the planning process, a Steering Committee was established, a university partner was selected, faculty were hired, a State-specific curriculum was developed, students were selected and training and technical assistance was provided to administrative staff. This section describes each phase of the planning process that resulted in the creation of the Connecticut SVAA that began in 2001.

### **2.1 Establishing a Steering/Planning Committee**

Prior to submitting the grant application, OVS held an invitation-only Statewide meeting of service providers, victimology and criminal justice academicians, prosecutorial representatives and judicial representatives—an intentionally diverse and broad range of key stakeholders in the field of victim services—to discuss the possibility of developing a State academy. A need for, and a high level of interest in, creating a State academy in Connecticut were evident at the meeting. The decision was made to move forward with the grant application process. All of the meeting participants wrote letters of support for the

application. After the grant award was received, many of the stakeholders were invited to join the Steering Committee.

Thus, the initial Steering Committee had representatives from the Office of the Chief Court Administrator, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Office of the Attorney General, the Division of Criminal Justice, the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Inc., the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc., Survivors of Homicide, Inc., and Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Connecticut State Organization. A consensus model of management and decision-making was adopted by the Steering Committee, and, when necessary, the Academic Partner and consultants were included in the proceedings. Two subcommittees were formed to focus on specific tasks—student selection and publicity/marketing.

In interviews, stakeholders all felt that the Steering Committee was representative of the State leaders within the fields/specializations of victim services. One area that was not represented was child abuse. Stakeholders felt that this was indicative of the landscape of victim services in Connecticut rather than a lack of collaboration. Connecticut has clear, obvious leaders in all areas of victim services, with the exception of child abuse. Also lacking representation on the Steering Committee were the Department of Education, emergency medical services, and the police department.

## **2.2 Selecting a University Partner**

The Steering Committee initiated the process of selecting an academic partner by sending a request for proposal (RFP) to 43 colleges and universities in Connecticut that were considered to have the resources and facilities to support a State academy. Due to an insufficient number of responses to the RFP, a second RFP was issued with revised selection criteria. From this revised RFP, the University of New Haven was chosen as the academic partner in November of 2000.

As the Academic Partner, UNH was responsible for several critical aspects of the Academy. Responsibilities for the Academic Partner included:

- Identification of a Graduate Assistant to organize Connecticut SVAA activities
- Selection of Connecticut SVAA faculty with the Steering Committee
- Securing of dormitory and classroom space, dining facilities, food and equipment
- Arrangement of CEU (Continuing Education Units)

- Development of the Connecticut SVAA curriculum and agenda (e.g., start and end times, number of training hours, draft outline, electives, faculty, guest speakers/workshop presenters, learning objectives, core topics, impact vs. process evaluations, etc.)
- Evaluation of the Academy
- Development of the Connecticut SVAA Faculty Manual.

### **2.3 Selecting Faculty**

The Academic Partner, with input from and approval by the Steering Committee, chose faculty members each year. As noted in Section 1.2, the victim’s perspective was an important underlying principle of the Academy. To this end, it was determined that faculty members would include a diversity of academics, practitioners, as well as survivors of crime, to provide a balance of theoretical and practical information at the Academy.

Prior to each Academy, faculty members attended a 2-day meeting to distribute teaching assignments and prepare for the Academy. Faculty members were responsible for teaching sessions within their areas of expertise, and they also served as a mentor to a small group of approximately 8 students. In the first Academy, faculty members were subject to the same in-residence requirement as students. This residential mandate was removed for faculty and students in the second year. Following the Academy, faculty attended a meeting to debrief and discuss the “functionality” of the Academy (i.e., what went wrong, and what went right).

### **2.4 Developing a State Specific Curriculum**

Because OVS and the Steering Committee members regularly conduct training assessment and training events, stakeholders felt that they were knowledgeable about the current training needs within the State. Therefore, as a first step, Steering Committee members conducted a thorough review of the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) Text. It was decided that additional topics were needed to provide Connecticut-specific information.

The Steering Committee envisioned the Project Coordinator creating the Connecticut Supplement. With difficulty staffing this position, OVS entered into consulting services contracts with professionals representing the State and private university system and the nonprofit community to draft the Connecticut Supplement to the NVAA Text. This “Curriculum Writing Group” also developed teaching aids, based on the Supplement.

The NVAA Text and the Connecticut Supplement to the NVAA Text were intended to be companion documents for the Connecticut SVAA. Many of the chapters in the Connecticut Supplement include references to the related chapters in the NVAA Text. In addition, the Connecticut Supplement was intended to serve as a reference for Connecticut statistics, contact information and relevant information regarding service delivery to specific crime victim populations. While the Connecticut SVAA uses both Texts, the majority of the content for the Academy is based on the Connecticut Supplement.

The Connecticut Supplement to the NVAA Text included topics such as:

- Scope, History and Systems
- Financial Remedies and Restorative Justice
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Child Abuse
- Drunk Driving
- Homicide
- Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation
- Workplace Violence
- Funding and Evaluation
- Selecting Students

Student selection was a competitive process—modeled after the National Academy. OVS developed a mailing list of crime victim assistance professionals and allied professionals in law enforcement, health, criminal justice, mental health, and education, which was reviewed and edited by Steering Committee members. Marketing letters were mailed directly to agency directors/supervisors with requests to notify appropriate staff. Upon request, students were sent applications to be completed and submitted, including letters from applicants’ supervisors stating the significance of the training to the applicant and agency.

The Steering Committee formed a Subcommittee on Student Selection Criteria, Application Development, and Applicant Selection with the intent that this subcommittee would choose applicants. This was later modified such that OVS staff initially reviewed all applications to determine eligibility, and qualified candidates were then submitted to the Academic Partner and Steering Committee for final selection.

The Connecticut SVAA was marketed widely throughout the State, specifically noting that it was a foundational course for professionals with one to three years of experience in the victim assistance field. Many applicants who work with victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, drunk drivers and surviving members of homicide victims did not meet the acceptance criteria, and so were underrepresented in the first Academy. It

was further recognized that the targeted population for marketing was too broad. Marketing efforts were strategically narrowed in the second year to include: criminal justice professionals, victim advocates and service providers, and allied professionals with one to five years of experience working with victims in their current position.

One point of contention among Steering Committee members was whether or not to accept volunteers as students of the Academy. There was a concern among some Steering Committee members that volunteers, who are often victim survivors, may still have cases pending, and so would not be able to give their full attention to the Academy. While only paid staff was accepted in the first year of the Academy, a decision was made to include volunteers as students in the second year.

## **2.5 Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)**

During the planning phase, the Project Director attended an OVC meeting held for SVAAAs in conjunction with the NOVA Conference, and subsequently received ongoing TTA from the NVAA. In addition, the Curriculum Writing Group was given the *Ultimate Educator*—a training manual developed by and for the NVAA—to use as a reference as they drafted the Connecticut-specific and teaching aids.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

During the planning phase, the Steering Committee along with key stakeholders designed the model for how the Connecticut SVAA would actually operate on a day-by-day basis. This section describes the Academy topics addressed, the general format of the Academy, and TTA.

### **3.1 Description of Topics Addressed**

Topics covered during the 2001 Connecticut SVAA included:

- Scope of Crime in Connecticut
- History of Crime Victim Services
- Crime Victim Rights
- Connecticut Criminal Justice System
- Criminal Justice System Panel
- Victim Advocacy Techniques for Diverse Populations
- Dealing with Stress and Burnout: Vicarious Victimization
- Drunk Driving
- Homicide
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health

- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Internet Crimes Against Children
- Child Abuse
- Elder Abuse
- Issues
- Civil Litigation
- Hate Crimes
- School Violence Issues
- Restorative Justice: An Overview.

Some of the topics in the 2001 Academy were replaced in the second Academy with the following topics:

- Overview of Victims' Rights/Restorative Justice
- Child Victims and the System's Response
- Surviving Victimization with New Approaches to Healing
- Diverse Populations and Cultural Competency
- Victims' Rights and 'Sea Change' in the Criminal Justice System
- Campus Violence Issues
- Financial Remedies: Compensation, Restitution, Civil Remedies
- Child Victims and the System's Response.

### **3.2 Format of the Academy**

The Connecticut SVAA closely modeled the National Academy, including a consecutive 5-day academy, competitive student selection process, in-residency mandate, large class meetings, and mentoring groups. The Academy even tried initially to replicate the attendance of the National Academy, with an enrollment goal of 60. A smaller pool of interested applicants ultimately limited the size of the Connecticut Academy.

The first Connecticut SVAA was held on June 18 – 22, 2001. Tuition was \$125. Students attended a 5-day, 40-hour, academic-based training. Each session covered specific learning objectives. Following each session, the students were directed into small group activities, which were designed to promote discussion and provide skill-building exercises. Small group activities were led by a faculty member and were comprised of approximately 8 students.

The second annual Academy was held on June 17 – 21, 2002. Though the overnight residency requirement was made optional in the second year, the Academy still maintained a 40-hour training. To accommodate commute time, Academy activities began each day at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 5:15 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday activities ended at 7:00 p.m., to incorporate dinner and opportunities for interaction between panelists/speakers and students. Tuition in the second year was raised to \$200.

Credit was made available to students in the form of undergraduate, graduate and continuing education units. Students were required to write term papers of varying lengths and qualities for the different levels of credit.

### **3.3 Training and Technical Assistance**

During the course of implementation, the Project Director and associated project staff participated in several TA sessions hosted by OVC via teleconference, with four other SVAA grantees. The topics discussed during the teleconference included:

- NVAA evaluation
- Discretionary grant for additional State academies
- State academy Web site
- State academy access to NVAA Text and supplements
- Use of the word “rape” vs. “sexual assault”
- State distribution and use of NVAA Text
- Reports from all of the SVAA grantees.

Specific TA was also requested regarding OVS’ ability to retain program-generated income to offset the costs of the second Connecticut SVAA.

## **4. SUSTAINABILITY**

Based on stakeholder interviews, a strong commitment on the part of the lead agency and continued buy-in from the stakeholders still exists. There is a common belief that the State academy meets an important need among victim service providers in the State. While this is a core component of sustainability, such consensus and momentum still requires funding in order to produce an Academy.

OVS submitted a request to the Connecticut Judicial Branch for State funds to continue the State academy at the end of the grant, in addition to conducting an active search for corporate sponsorship. While this request was denied in 2001, Connecticut SVAA was sufficiently funded through Federal, State match and tuition funds for that year. The 2002 Academy was funded through a mix of State, Federal and tuition funds.

Other funding ideas included:

- Employee tuition assistance programs
- Agency funding streams allocated for training and related expenses
- Foundation and corporate sponsorship of individual participants or particular SVAA sessions
- Utilization of limited VOCA training resources for annual competitive scholarships
- Utilization of limited VOCA training resources to partially underwrite the SVAA
- Request to Connecticut General Assembly to allocate funding to the project.

Significant State budget cuts negatively impacted State funding for the 2003 Connecticut SVAA. Though the Steering Committee sought other funding sources, it was not able to obtain funds for the continuation of the Academy at the conclusion of the grant.

## **5. OUTCOMES: PAST EVALUATIONS**

UNH conducted evaluations of the Connecticut SVAA. Students completed evaluation forms for each session, as well as an overall evaluation form. Session evaluation forms asked for feedback on the content, faculty member, as well as the written curriculum materials for each session. The overall evaluation forms asked for feedback on the Academy as a whole, the NVAA Text, the Connecticut Supplement to the NVAA Text, faculty, methods of instruction (e.g., teacher/student interaction, effectiveness and presentation of visual aids, overall effectiveness of instruction, etc.), course organization/time, facilities, and breakout sessions/exercises. Students were also asked what the most beneficial aspect of the Academy was, suggestions/recommendations for future academies, and for long and short-term goals as a result of attending the Academy. Three months later, follow-on mail surveys were conducted with students to determine the long-term impacts of Academy attendance, the usability of knowledge and skills learned at the Academy, the utility of both the NVAA Text and the Connecticut Supplement, and networking outcomes. The follow-on surveys also asked for specific feedback on the in-residence requirement, the weeklong format, as

well as suggestions for topics to be addressed, faculty members, and overall recommendations.

### **5.1 2001 Connecticut SVAA**

Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive for the 2001 Connecticut SVAA, with the majority of students rating each session, the content presented, the faculty members, and the written curriculum materials very highly. Overall evaluations at the conclusion of the Academy were also very positive. On a 5-point scale of 'poor', 'average', 'good', 'excellent', and 'outstanding', students rated the overall content and professional value of the Academy 'excellent', appropriateness of topics 'good', overall applicability to their needs 'good' and the overall academy 'excellent'. Students rated the NVAA Text and the Connecticut Supplement to the NVAA Text 'excellent'. Students were also very positive about the faculty, with an average rating of 'excellent' for expertise, availability, communication skills, and diversity of experience and point of view. 'Excellent' ratings were given for methods of instruction, which included teacher/student interaction, effectiveness and presentation of visual aids, and overall effectiveness of instruction. For course organization/time, students rated the Academy 'good' on organization of schedule, length of time for topics, length of Academy, and time available for participant networking and interaction. Slightly less enthusiastic, but still positive, feedback was given on the facilities. Students rated the auditorium, classrooms, and housing as 'good', and access (to facilities) as 'excellent'. The lowest rating was for food, which received an 'average' rating. Breakout Sessions/Exercises were rated 'excellent' for both usefulness and effectiveness.

Follow-on surveys were completed by 17 of the 41 students that attended the Academy. In the completed surveys, students remained very positive about the Academy experience, giving it an average rating of 6.0 on a 7-point scale, with 1 representing 'poor' and 7 representing 'excellent'. Students rated the usefulness of the NVAA Text at 5.8 and the Connecticut Supplement at 5.9. In qualitative comments, students reported that they, as well as colleagues in their offices, referred to the information provided in both of the Texts. When asked about the instructional methods used during the Academy, students rated it at 5.6. Some students felt very positively about the small groups, while other students felt that the small group format could have been more productive and better utilized. Students were also asked how helpful the information they learned was to their work with victims. The average rating was 5.8, with students commenting on a range of applicable information, including general skills such as listening skills, as well as more tangible pieces of information, such as specific victim rights, referrals, and services. Students rated networking at 5.8. Some students detailed specific situations where they used a contact from the Academy, while other students generally noted the value of networking opportunities. As

one student commented, “It has broadened my referral base as well as my support base—not only professionally but personally.”

Based on the evaluations, the Steering Committee reviewed/reconsidered the following changes to the Academy:

- Presentations were retooled to meet the interests of students desiring to improve practical advocacy skills rather than theory
- Residency requirement was removed
- Target population was reviewed with regard to years of experience in the field.

## **5.2 2002 Connecticut SVAA**

Feedback from the participants for the 2002 Connecticut SVAA was very similar to the previous year, with slightly higher ratings on certain aspects of the Academy. The majority of ratings for each individual session, the content presented, the faculty members and the written curriculum materials were very high. Overall evaluations at the conclusion of the Academy were very positive, with an ‘excellent’ rating for appropriateness of topics and ‘outstanding’ ratings for the overall content, professional value, overall applicability, and the overall Academy experience. Students gave the NVAA Text and the Connecticut Supplement to the NVAA Text the highest rating— ‘outstanding’. With regard to faculty, students were also very pleased, giving ‘outstanding’ ratings for faculty expertise, availability, communication skills, and diversity of experience and point of view. ‘Outstanding’ ratings were given for methods of instruction, which encompassed teacher/student interaction, effectiveness and presentation of visual aids, and overall effectiveness of instruction. For course organization/time, students rated the Academy ‘excellent’ on organization of schedule, length of time for topics, length of academy, and time available for participant networking and interaction. Students rated the auditorium, classrooms, food, and access (to facilities) as ‘excellent’, with an ‘outstanding’ rating for housing. Breakout Sessions/Exercises were rated ‘excellent’ for both usefulness and effectiveness.

Follow-on surveys were completed by 10 of the 30 students that attended the Academy. Students remained very positive about the overall Academy experience, giving it an average rating of 6.0. In qualitative comments, students called the academy “thorough and extensive” and thought that “attendance should be a requirement for employment as an advocate”. Students rated the usefulness of the NVAA Text at 5.7 and the Connecticut Supplement at 5.9. When asked about the instructional methods used during the Academy, students rated it at 6.4. Small group exercises and case studies were specifically noted by

students as being effective methods of instruction. Students were also asked how helpful the information they learned was to their work with victims. The average rating was 5.9. In the words of one student, “It gave me an excellent starting off point in my quest to help other people.” Another student particularly noted that he/she “used the information to more fully inform victims of crime about the law and their rights”.

## **6. IMPACTS: CURRENT ASSESSMENT**

In addition to reviewing existing data collected by the site, Caliber collected additional data with students and stakeholders. Follow-on telephone interviews were conducted with students from the 2001 and 2002 Academies, and in-person and telephone interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. All data collected by the Caliber research team was collected between January 2003 and May 2003.

### **6.1 Students**

While only a very small sample of students completed the telephone survey (N=6), feedback from the students mirrored the results of the evaluations conducted by UNH. Students reported learning important communication skills that have helped them interact with victims in a more sensitive manner. Knowledge gains were made specifically in certain topic areas, such as Internet crime victimization, as well as generally, in terms of broad-based knowledge of the criminal justice system, different roles of various agencies along the continuum, and types of victims. Students found that they were also more compassionate, supportive, and empathetic towards victims. Towards other agencies, students commented that being better informed about other agencies serving victims, helped them feel more comfortable approaching/collaborating with these agencies.

Networking opportunities also provided professional as well as personal contacts, as some students contacted fellow Academy students for resources/referrals as well as for personal support. Overall, students felt more “professional”, “confident” and “more motivated” after attending the Academy. This was also demonstrated in the fact that students continued expanding their skills/knowledge through conferences, trainings, workshops, as well as informal professional development (i.e., “keeping up with new research and resources”). In fact, one student pursued a graduate credit course through UNH, and several students received promotions following the Academy.

### **6.2 University Partners**

Victimology at UNH predated the Connecticut SVAA. Even so, in the role of Academic Partner, UNH found partnership to be an “enriching” experience that enhanced the

curriculum at UNH. Furthermore, the fact that UNH is working with the State to provide this professional training has given the victimology department more exposure within their own university.

### **6.3 Victims Field**

As outlined in the year 1 goals, Connecticut developed the Academy and documented it in such a way as to promote replicability. In addition to the Connecticut SVAA Planning Guide, Connecticut developed a *Handbook for Planning a State Victim Assistance Academy* as tools for the victim field.

Connecticut SVAA was able to provide more specific TTA to a neighboring State. Two individuals from the State of New York observed the 2001 Academy to help them in their efforts to develop a State Academy in New York. After observing the Academy, they were given copies of both the Connecticut SVAA Planning Guide, and the *Handbook for Planning a State Victim Assistance Academy*.

More generally, Steering Committee members and Academy faculty felt that having a university such as UNH as the co-sponsor made the Academy more credible. Opportunities for credit (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, and CEU) raised the standard of the Academy for participants, and students themselves felt more “legitimate” and “professional” in their work.

The curriculum developed for the Academy has also been useful in enhancing victim-related training and educational programs throughout the State. Some of the Connecticut SVAA materials have been integrated into the forensic nursing program at Quinnipiac College in Connecticut. Academy curriculum has even been used by Academy graduates, as in the case of a former student from the Bridgeport Police Department who currently uses Academy materials in developing training materials for the agency.

## **7. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

This section details typically the key findings and ensuing lessons learned from the planning and implementation phases of the Connecticut SVAA.

### **7.1 Factors that Influenced Planning**

#### **Sponsoring Agency**

Stakeholders noted that OVS as the sponsoring agency was an important success factor in the early stages of planning. In particular, stakeholders pointed to the fact that OVS is the lead agency in service provision to victims of crime throughout the State of

Connecticut, with an understanding of the needs of victims and the service providers that work with them. OVS also has experience in administering and managing Federal funding, managing projects, monitoring and providing technical assistance to community-based direct service providers throughout the State, and designing and implementing training programs for both service providers and allied professionals. Stakeholders felt that OVS as a recognized leader and collaborator in the State was able to effectively spearhead efforts to develop a Connecticut Academy.

### **Steering Committee**

Stakeholders commonly observed that Connecticut is a small State with a tight knit community of victim service providers that have a long history of collaboration. These working relationships, stakeholders continued, allowed the Steering Committee to work effectively as a decision-making body without needing time to build internal cohesion. The existing trust and rapport between and among stakeholders, as well as the common vision shared by the stakeholders, jumpstarted the planning process.

Despite strong established relationships among service providers, stakeholders felt that there still exists some measure of “turf” issues. Inclusive representation of various agencies in the planning process was helpful in dealing with these interagency “turf” issues. Furthermore, concerns surrounding buy-in and collaboration (e.g., loss of autonomy, rivalries among stakeholders, loss of funding, etc.) by individual stakeholders were openly discussed and addressed early on in the planning process, which stakeholders felt helped defuse any potential problems with collaboration.

Stakeholders also believed that the consensus model of decision-making created a sense of equal partnership among all of the players at the table. OVS serves as the funding agency for many of the Steering Committee members, which was the source of tension among the members. Stakeholders considered the consensus model of decision-making an essential part in defusing the tension that existed in collaborating with OVS.

In determining the size of the Steering Committee, a decision was made to keep the Steering Committee small. While the Steering Committee members were committed to inclusiveness and diverse representation, there was concern that with a consensus model of decision-making a larger Steering Committee would diminish in productivity. Therefore, stakeholders noted that the Steering Committee made intentional efforts in other aspects of the Academy (e.g., curriculum, faculty, students, etc.) to be inclusive and multi-disciplinary in scope.

## **National Victim Assistance Academy**

The Steering Committee convened a focus group of 15 NVAA graduates from Connecticut, to learn from their experiences and gather any suggestions and recommendations for the State academy. Based on the focus group data, enhancements were made to the Connecticut curriculum in the areas of cultural diversity, hate and bias crime, workplace and school violence, and Native American Tribal Justice. Moreover, it was determined that the Connecticut academy would closely model the National Academy. With limited experience in developing a Statewide Academy, stakeholders felt that the information obtained from the focus group was an important step in the initial planning stages of the Academy.

## **Academic Partner**

Stakeholders observed that while the Steering Committee members had expertise in the areas of victim services and victim issues, they did not have experience in the area of training that was necessary to develop a State-level academy. As the Academic Partner, stakeholders widely recognized that UNH was able to bring this expertise to the table. However, the Academic Partner was not chosen until Year 2 of the grant. UNH, as a bidder, could not be involved in the planning phase. The inexperience of the lead agency in planning a State Academy was apparent in the first RFP, which outlined unnecessary and/or unrealistic selection criteria for the Academic Partner. Through feedback from responding colleges and universities, the selection criteria were revised. Stakeholders observed that once UNH entered the process, conceptual and logistical plans for the Academy were quickly cultivated.

## **Delays to Progress**

Staffing challenges posed significant barriers in the planning phase of the Connecticut SVAA. The Project Coordinator position was not filled until three months into the planning year, and by the sixth month the coordinator had submitted a letter of resignation, followed by 3 unsuccessful attempts to fill this position. While this was eventually overcome through the absorption of program responsibilities by the sponsoring agency, stakeholders felt that the absence of consistent program staff caused significant delays to progress. The OVS Director assumed project management responsibilities of the Connecticut SVAA Project Director, and other OVS staff (e.g., Public Education and Training Coordinator, Administrative Secretary, Buyer Specialist, and Accountant) were utilized as necessary. In addition, funding was dramatically delayed at one point, because there was confusion/miscommunication regarding a deadline for a deliverable. While this deliverable was ultimately submitted, the delay in funding caused further interruptions to progress.

## 7.2 Factors that Influenced Implementation

### Academic Partner

A key to the development of the Academy was a representative of UNH who was a former faculty member of the National Academy. As the Connecticut SVAA was closely modeled after the National Academy, stakeholders felt that this representative was invaluable to the process. With a wealth of knowledge of the NVAA, this individual was able to bring his expertise to bear on the development of the Connecticut SVAA, in terms of Academy content/focus as well as major logistical issues that are inherent in planning a Statewide Academy. In the words of one Steering Committee member, “We had pre-existing knowledge.”

### Steering Committee

Despite long-established relationships among direct service providers and victim advocate groups, stakeholders believed that some “turf issues” existed surrounding training. Some felt that the specialized services that they provide are more significant and applicable to victims than any standardized approach to victim services. Stakeholders felt that buy-in on several issues helped overcome this barrier:

- A standardized foundation of knowledge about the Connecticut criminal justice system, dynamics of victimization, and victim rights is valuable.
- The Connecticut SVAA would not supplant training programs currently being conducted by organizations and agencies.
- Use of the NVAA curriculum, which is widely recognized, would add credibility to the Connecticut SVAA.

The Steering Committee had a more “hands-on” approach to the planning of the Academy in the first 2 years of the grant. In the third year of the grant, the Steering Committee was more removed from the process, which stakeholders noted was both positive as well as challenging. It positively showed the implicit trust that the Steering Committee had in the abilities of UNH and OVS in planning and conducting the Academy. At the same time, stakeholders felt that it was challenging to keep the Steering Committee engaged in the process, despite inherent support for the Academy.

### Residential Requirement

Of the participants of the 2001 Academy, only 65 percent of those individuals that requested an application actually completed the application process. OVS developed and

mailed a questionnaire/survey to those individuals that did not return an application to better understand the barriers that deterred participation. Feedback from the potential students showed that the in-residence commitment was the biggest deterrent to students for both professional and personal reasons. Based on this feedback as well as evaluation results from the first Academy, the residence was made optional for the second annual Academy.

## **Evaluation**

While the Connecticut SVAA collected a wealth of feedback from students, so much energy had been poured into planning and implementing each Academy that the stakeholders noted that the Steering Committee did not have the opportunity to fully benefit from data collection. While some modifications have been made from the first to second Academy based on student feedback, stakeholders observed that further analysis, reflection and discussion of the findings would have been helpful in making further substantive changes to the Academy to better meet the needs of students.

## **Academy Texts**

As the 2001 NVAA Text was one of the main texts used for the Academy, the late delivery of the Text was problematic. The NVAA Text was not received from VALOR until June 8, 2001. OVS then hand delivered the reading materials to students, to give students as much time as possible to read the Text in preparation for the Academy. Even so, students only had a week to read the Texts, which many stakeholders felt was not adequate preparation time for students.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

This case study report chronicles the Connecticut SVAA's activities and resources between 1999 – 2002 for meeting their goals and objectives. Using the support provided by OVS and UNH, including the NVAA curriculum, key organizational partners planned and implemented weeklong Connecticut SVAA's in 2001 and 2002. Based on prior evaluations of the Connecticut SVAA, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the Spring of 2003, it was learned that students reported learning important communication skills and new knowledge. Students also reported that as a result of the Academy they were more compassionate, supportive and empathetic toward victims and knew more about the work of other agencies.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Connecticut SVAA also impacted the University Partner and the victim services field. For example, the victimology department at UNH gained more exposure within the university, and Connecticut SVAA

materials have been integrated into the forensic nursing program at Quinnipiac College in Connecticut. These efforts have contributed to professionalizing the victims' field. Unfortunately, because of a lack of funding, the Connecticut SVAA was unable to offer another Academy in 2003. The lessons learned from the Connecticut experience can be shared with the field in terms of better understanding what works and what it takes to sustain an effort such as a State specific victim assistance academy.

#### **IV. CASE STUDY: PENNSYLVANIA SVAA**

## **IV. CASE STUDY: PENNSYLVANIA SVAA**

This case study presents a brief description of the Pennsylvania Victim Assistance Academy (Pennsylvania SVAA or Academy), followed by information on the planning of the Academy, its implementation, sustainability, results of past evaluations, impacts of the Academy, and concludes with a discussion on key findings and lessons learned from this site. Information used for this case study was taken from the Office for Victims of Crime FY 1999 Discretionary Grant Application; progress reports from 1999 – 2002; the Pennsylvania SVAA 2001 planning guide; the Pennsylvania SVAA 2002 Academy Manual; Pennsylvania SVAA evaluation reports from 2001 and 2002; Caliber Associates' Pennsylvania SVAA Advisory Committee focus group with approximately ten participants, three stakeholder individual interviews, and fourteen student telephone interview data all from 2003. All data collected by the Caliber research team was collected between January 2003 and May 2003. A review and analysis of these data form the basis for this Pennsylvania case study.

### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Pennsylvania Victim Assistance Academy (Pennsylvania SVAA) offers a valuable opportunity for those in the victim services field to work, study, and interact with other victim service providers across Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania SVAA reflects a partnership between the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), The University of Scranton, State leaders in the fields of criminal justice and victims' rights, and talented practitioners. This section describes the Pennsylvania SVAA sponsoring agency and its goals and objectives for the Academy.

#### **1.1 The Pennsylvania SVAA Sponsoring Agency**

As part of Pennsylvania's Crime Victims Act, the Victims' Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) was established within PCCD to advise the Commission on issues relating to direct victim services and compensation. VSAC's mission is to honor crime victims by treating them with dignity, compassion, and respect through all phases of the criminal justice process. VSAC instituted a variety of training initiatives including a collaborative effort among law enforcement, prosecution and victim services; a training and technical assistance effort to support staff working with victims of juvenile offenders; a State-wide training program for victim advocates; and a certification process for victim service providers through its Accreditation, Certification and Training (ACT) Subcommittee. The creation of the Pennsylvania SVAA was a natural extension of VSAC's vision and the mandate of the ACT Subcommittee.

In 1996, the ACT Subcommittee was established in part to create a victim services training institute dedicated to the professional development of victim services staff. The ACT

Subcommittee is comprised of victim advocates from community-based and system-based victim service agencies in Pennsylvania. Its responsibilities include the development of:

- Training programs to certify victim service professionals
- Program standards for the accreditation of victim service programs
- Training programs on victims' issues for professionals in criminal justice and related fields.

In 1999, when the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) announced its interest in having States develop and implement their own State Victim Assistance Academy programs, the PCCD submitted an application to establish a Pennsylvania Academy. In September of 1999, a cooperative agreement was awarded to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to be one of five pilot projects to develop and implement a State academy.

## **1.2 Pennsylvania SVAA Goals and Objectives**

Utilizing the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) curriculum as a model, the Pennsylvania program focuses on expanding the knowledge base of its victim advocates and allied professionals to give them a better understanding of the needs of crime victims, and knowledge on how to better respond to those needs in an appropriate fashion. To achieve these goals, the Pennsylvania SVAA will:

- Establish and implement a minimum training standard
- Develop advanced Pennsylvania-specific courses for more tenured advocates
- Promote professional development tied to career development
- Promote certification of victim service providers.

While it is understood that participants have had previous training, the Pennsylvania SVAA is designed to provide a broad-based interactive learning opportunity. The Academy's goal is to expand one's knowledge of the victim services field, especially promising practices used by other Pennsylvania specialists. The idea is to prepare victim service providers with resources, especially those relevant to Pennsylvania issues that will aid them in any aspect of victim services.

## **2. PLANNING**

Pursuant to the terms of the OVC Discretionary Grant Application, the PCCD set out to establish their State Academy to begin operation in 2001. In this endeavor, the PCCD selected

an Advisory Committee, a University partner, faculty and students. They also developed their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their Pennsylvania students. This section describes each phase of the planning process that resulted in the creation of the Pennsylvania SVAA and its continued operation in 2002.

## **2.1 Establishing an Advisory Committee**

The State Victim Assistance Academy Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) was created pursuant to the terms of the OVC application. Because the ACT Subcommittee was already established, the SVAAC became a subgroup of the ACT Subcommittee, with a member of the ACT Subcommittee volunteering to serve on the Advisory Committee. The PCCD then sought to recruit members to the Advisory Committee who were representative of the victim services field in Pennsylvania. They solicited members from:

- PCCD's Bureau of Victims' Services
- State Office of the Victim Advocate
- State coalitions against sexual assault, domestic violence, and drunk driving
- State law enforcement training programs
- State prosecutor training programs
- State aging agencies.

The 2001 Advisory Committee consisted of 16 professionals from the victim services field, including victim service providers, government representatives, academicians, and attorneys. Their first task was to hire a Victim Assistance Academy Coordinator who would be responsible for the project's implementation under the direction of the Advisory Committee. Candidate resumes were reviewed by a three-member subgroup of the Advisory Committee for education and relevant experience. Four individuals were selected for an oral interview with the Director of PCCD's Bureau of Victims' Services, project staff, and the Director of Training for the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Institute. An Academy Coordinator was chosen from this group of candidates. The Advisory Committee continues to work on behalf of the Pennsylvania SVAA, meeting regularly to refine and promote the Academy.

## **2.2 Selecting a University Partner**

The Advisory Committee developed a formalized process for selecting a partner school. In 2000, they mailed announcement letters to approximately 100 four-year degree granting institutions in Pennsylvania, conducted a formal briefing with approximately 20 institutions that

expressed an interest in the Academy, created a protocol to evaluate the 8 academic partner proposals submitted, and conducted site visits with 5 schools. To facilitate the process of site evaluations, the Advisory Committee developed an academic partner checklist modeled after the Texas State Victim Assistance Academy project, which included a standardized approach to evaluating the campus facilities, faculty experience, and support from the school administration.

Based on the criteria above, The University of Scranton was selected as the academic partner for the Pennsylvania SVAA. A formal written agreement was made between the PCCD and The University of Scranton to implement the Academy program in 2001. The University of Scranton continues to serve as the Pennsylvania SVAA academic partner, and promotes the value of attending the Academy, the inclusion of victim related courses on its campus, and the certification of victim service professionals.

### **2.3 Selecting the Pennsylvania SVAA Faculty**

Pennsylvania SVAA faculty members were recruited by the Advisory Committee through a State-wide solicitation to over 320 victim service organizations within Pennsylvania. Applicants were asked to submit current work responsibilities, their educational background and training/teaching experience, and the endorsement of their employer. The Advisory Committee received 25 applications that were reviewed for level of knowledge of the subject matter, training experience and instructional team experience. Five victim service providers were selected to serve as core faculty members. In a separate process, The University of Scranton selected five University instructors to serve as Pennsylvania SVAA core faculty. University faculty members were selected from the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, the School of Nursing, and the Department of Political Science. Together, a total of 10 instructors were chosen to serve as the core faculty.

In addition to the 10 core faculty members, the Advisory Committee hired subject matter experts to serve as guest lecturers during the Academy. The decision to include guest lecturers was based on the Advisory Committee's desire to use the most knowledgeable instructors available in Pennsylvania to support the Pennsylvania SVAA faculty and enhance instruction. More than 25 guest lecturers were hired to present during the 2001 Academy. Interview data show that faculty thus far has been selected every other year. Ideally, the Pennsylvania SVAA operates with 10 faculty members but in some years they have managed to operate the Academy with fewer full time instructors.

## **2.4 Developing the Pennsylvania SVAA Curriculum**

The Advisory Committee conducted a needs assessment of the training needs of Pennsylvania's victim services community. The findings from the needs assessment served as the basis for the development of curriculum topics to be included in the Pennsylvania curriculum. The needs assessment research design included:

- Surveying front-line provider staff from local victim service agencies
- Surveying local victim service agency directors
- Conducting telephone interviews with victim service staff from Pennsylvania who previously attended the NVAA.

Front-line providers with two to five years' experience in the victim services profession were surveyed. The survey instruments contained a list of 28 topics offered in the 1999 NVAA curriculum. Respondents were asked to rank each of the topical areas based upon what they would like or need to know more about to help them in their work. The results of the 265 responses received were then ranked ordered based on the level of importance. Agency directors were also given the survey and asked to rank the topic areas in order of importance for what they wanted staff with 2 to 5 years' of experience to know. The telephone calls were designed to gather feedback from prior attendees on their experiences at the NVAA.

To further refine their development of a State-specific curriculum, two members from the SVAAAC attended the NVAA in Washburn, Kansas in 2000. Staff expressed that attending the NVAA was an invaluable experience; they experienced the NVAA first hand and shadowed faculty from beginning of the Academy to the end. Attending the NVAA helped the Pennsylvania SVAA staff to clearly distinguish their project both academically and professionally from the NVAA.

Using the data collected above, the Advisory Committee and the representatives from The University of Scranton selected the chapter topics to be included in the Pennsylvania curriculum. Several chapters from the NVAA were included in the Pennsylvania SVAA course, while others were eliminated (see section 3.2 for topics included in the Pennsylvania SVAA curriculum).

The Manual Development Subcommittee was created to coordinate the overall revision of the topical areas and production of the final Pennsylvania SVAA course text. The Manual Subcommittee was comprised of SVAAAC members and individuals knowledgeable in victim services, training, theory, and practice. For the 2002 Pennsylvania SVAA Manual, the Subcommittee asked instructors to review the 2001 Pennsylvania SVAA Manual and several

chapters were significantly revised, such as: Scope of Crime/History of Victims' Rights, Juvenile Justice, Compensation, Crisis & Trauma, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Hate and Bias Crimes.

## **2.5 Recruiting Students for the Pennsylvania SVAA**

Pennsylvania SVAA students are recruited from mailings and promotion of the Academy via the PCCD Web site. For example, in 2001 victim service agencies in Pennsylvania received 5 copies of the application, and allied professionals (i.e., police victim liaison officers) received individual applications. The Bureau of Victims' Services' *Pathways & Partnerships* newsletter contained an article announcing the dates and location for the Academy along with contact information. Additionally, the PCCD placed a notice on its Web site, including an application that could be downloaded. Brochures and applications are modeled after those used by the NVAA.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Director of the PCCD's Bureau of Victims' Services, and the Academy Coordinator screen student applications for type of work experience, length of work experience, and type of position held in their place of employment. Selected students receive a confirmation letter, an invoice for \$300, and information on how to apply for undergraduate credit from The University of Scranton. Students may qualify for undergraduate and/or professional credit for attending the Pennsylvania SVAA. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the credit is transferable to their degree seeking institution. Once registration is confirmed, students receive a copy of the Pennsylvania SVAA Manual and a copy of the Pennsylvania Criminal Justice Manual.

Eligible students must have 2 to 5 years of work experience (paid or volunteer). The Advisory Committee reasoned that those with at least a minimum of 2 years of work experience would benefit most from this training. Applicants with greater than 5 years experience are required to submit a letter explaining how the Academy curriculum would benefit them.

Students are recruited in such a way to assemble a student body that is diverse in type of agency represented, geographic location, and range of work experience. A typical Pennsylvania SVAA student is a white female that works directly with victim services either professionally or as a volunteer. In 2001, forty-four students attended the Academy. They were primarily from suburban and rural locations with a specific interest in domestic violence. In 2002, thirty-two students attended the Academy. The 2002 students were more diverse in terms of their specific victim services background and there were more male students, and students worked with largely

urban populations. Overall, the Pennsylvania SVAA has served up to 106 students, averaging 35 students each session, with a total of 3 students seeking credit.<sup>1</sup>

## **2.6 Training and Technical Assistance**

The Pennsylvania SVAA has benefited from training and technical assistance provided from the NVAA, The University of Scranton, and other State Victim Assistance Academies. For example:

- Recognizing the importance of utilizing adult educational techniques (i.e., interactive classroom instruction to compliment the material provided in the text), the Advisory Committee sent the project consultant, a member of the University's faculty and an educational expert from the Advisory Committee to the Ultimate Educator course offered through the NVAA.
- An Instructor Workshop is held at The University of Scranton for all Academy presenters. Presenters are introduced to campus facilities, co-presenters, the purpose/goals of the Academy, the partnership between PCCD and The University of Scranton, the student manual, and adult-learning skills.
- Protocols developed by other State academy projects (i.e., the Texas State Academy's academic partner checklist) were used by the Pennsylvania SVAA.

The training and technical assistance provided has helped Academy administrators and faculty to continuously refine the Pennsylvania SVAA. With thoughtful planning, the Pennsylvania SVAA was created and began operation in 2001.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

During the planning phase, the Advisory Committee along with faculty designed the model for how the Pennsylvania SVAA would actually operate on a day-by-day basis. Based on what was primarily learned from the needs assessment, NVAA attendance and training and technical assistance, the Pennsylvania SVAA model greatly mirrored the NVAA model. This section describes how the Pennsylvania SVAA vision was first implemented in 2001, slightly modified in 2002 and concludes with a brief description on planned changes to the implementation of the Pennsylvania SVAA model.

### **3.1 Format of the Academy**

In 2001, the Academy began on a Sunday with students registering and attending an opening session. Students were also given a pre-assessment exam and attended presentations on

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers include data from the 2003 Pennsylvania SVAA.

the History of the Victims' Rights Discipline and Professionalizing the Discipline of Victim Services. The general Academy schedule for Monday through Thursday included breakfast followed by announcements and the start of class at 8:30 a.m. Classes ended each day at 5:00 p.m. At the end of each day, students were asked to participate in a review exercise structured in a game-show format. The review questions highlighted the primary information students should have learned that day. On Friday, the last day of the Academy, students participated in a group photograph, the post-assessment exam, the overall Academy evaluation and the graduation ceremony. The graduation featured remarks given by the Commission Chairman and the Dean of the Dexter Hanley College at The University of Scranton. Graduates received a certificate of completion awarded jointly by the PCCD and The University of Scranton.

In addition to the above, participants were given a tour of a local domestic violence shelter and briefed by the shelter director on its history, mission and operation. Individual instructors and the OVC Resource Center provided handout materials throughout the week.

In 2002, the Pennsylvania SVAA format remained the same, however program administrators incorporated a few changes to improve the Academy experience based on comments and suggestions received from the 2001 evaluation. For example, the faculty members:

- Concluded each day with a teach-back session in which students from each table group summarized the information learned from a class that day
- Several sessions were presented to PCCD's Office of Victim Services staff and interested agency employees using videoconferencing
- The Academy participated in the live satellite broadcast of *Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence: A Continuum of Care* satellite conference in conjunction with the NVAA.

The refinements made to the implementation of the 2002 Academy served to enhance instruction and provide students with a better Academy experience. Results from the 2002 Academy evaluation were also used to further develop implementations of the Academy.

### **3.2 Topics Addressed at the Pennsylvania SVAA**

For the 2001 Pennsylvania SVAA curriculum, the Advisory Committee decided to include most chapters from the NVAA text, while omitting some NVAA topics and adding Pennsylvania-specific information to many chapters. The chapters included in the Pennsylvania SVAA Manual (curriculum) included:

- Campus Crime and Victimization
- Child Victimization
- Civil Litigation
- Collaboration of Victim Rights and Services
- Criminal Justice System Continuum
- Crisis, Trauma and Stress Management
- Domestic Violence
- Drunk Driving
- Financial Assistance for Victims of Crime
- Financial Crime
- Hate and Bias Crime
- Homicide
- Innovative Technologies and the Information Age (include JNET, R/Client, PFAD)
- International Issues in Victim Assistance
- News Media's Coverage of Crime and Victimization
- Professionalizing the Discipline of Victim Services
- Research and Evaluation (incorporate Pennsylvania-specific issues)
- Respecting Diversity: Responding to Underserved Victims of Crime
- Restorative Justice
- Rural Victims
- Scope of Crime/Historical Review of the Victims' Rights Discipline (move to course introduction)
- Sexual Assault
- Specific Justice Systems and Victims' Rights (including juvenile, adult, Federal and military)
- Stalking
- Substance Abuse and Victimization
- Victimization of Individuals with Disabilities
- Victimization of the Elderly
- Victims of Gang Violence
- Workplace Violence

Although the Pennsylvania SVAA Manual included nearly all of the NVAA chapters, it did restructure the Mental Health chapter into Crisis, Trauma and Stress Management, made Civil Litigation a separate chapter; and deleted the Funding for Victim Services chapter. The actual Pennsylvania SVAA classroom schedule did not include presentations on Campus Crime and Victimization, Gang Violence, Workplace Violence and International Victimization Issues. The Advisory Committee decided not to present these topics because the results of their needs assessment indicated that these subjects were not of great importance to Pennsylvania victim

service providers. The Committee did, however, feel that it was valuable to keep these chapters in the curriculum as resources. As described earlier in section 2.4, several chapters in the 2002 Pennsylvania SVAA Manual were significantly revised, however, chapter topics addressed at the 2002 Academy did not change from the 2001 Academy.

### **3.3 Planned Changes to the Pennsylvania SVAA Model**

A stakeholder interview revealed that there are plans to reshape the Pennsylvania SVAA model to enhance its implementation. For example, the Advisory Committee has discussed the possibility of offering more advanced courses through the Pennsylvania SVAA. Currently, the program is designed for students with two to five years of work experience. Evaluation findings from The University of Scranton have shown that some students and the stakeholders believe there is a need for more advanced training opportunities for those service providers that have been in the field longer who need refresher courses, but also need more direct instruction on how to perform their jobs in Pennsylvania.

Also, it was learned from the Advisory Committee focus group that there has been discussion on revising the Pennsylvania SVAA Manual to include updated information, as well as offering a new chapter titled “Crisis of Faith and Victimization.” The idea to add new topics to the curriculum is in response to student feedback that the topics covered need to be relevant to what Pennsylvania service providers need to know. The Advisory Committee intends to offer students their desired topics and plans to include more high-profile instructors to attract more students. While keeping the integrity of the Academy in tact, the Advisory Committee plans to make some modifications to enhance instruction, promote visibility and attract more students.

## **4. SUSTAINABILITY**

There is a strong commitment on the part of the PCCD, the Advisory Committee, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to keep the Pennsylvania SVAA fully functioning. For example, in 2000 the PCCD submitted a proposal to the Governor’s Budget Office seeking State funding for the Pennsylvania SVAA. The funding request was based upon the need to institutionalize the Academy within the State before OVC funding expired in 2002. The Pennsylvania SVAA was successful in becoming a line item in the Governor’s budget and State funding was secured and phased in before OVC funding expired. Because the Pennsylvania SVAA is funded at a State coalition level it has a level of credibility or validation that helps support its sustainability.

Additionally, the Academy charges students a \$300 registration fee that generates approximately \$15,000 to support the Academy. The registration fee was deemed low enough

by the Advisory Committee to preclude a provider from participating, yet would be high enough that those admitted to the class would actually attend the course. The Advisory Committee also recognizes that to maintain the vitality of the Pennsylvania SVAA program, administrators should improve the promotion of the Academy in the Pennsylvania victim services community. During the focus group it was learned that the Advisory Committee was establishing a subcommittee to begin working on developing a marketing strategy to assist with increasing the visibility of the Academy. Because the Pennsylvania SVAA is viewed as an integral educational/training opportunity in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, efforts are being made by key stakeholders to ensure its sustainability.

## **5. OUTCOMES: PAST EVALUATIONS**

In addition to providing the Pennsylvania SVAA with 5 faculty members and hosting the weeklong Academy, The University of Scranton evaluates the Pennsylvania SVAA, collecting and analyzing data and generating reports to help guide future implementation of the Academy. Evaluation designs generally include pre- and post-course assessments, individual class evaluations and an overall Academy evaluation. The pre- and post-course assessments were designed to measure the extent to which an attendee increases his/her subject matter expertise. The assessment questions are drafted by each instructor and submitted to the University for editing and compilation into the final assessment instrument. A general evaluation instrument, similar to the NVAA instrument, was created by the University and utilized throughout the program to gather feedback on individual presenters. An overall Academy evaluation instrument was developed by the University and administered at the conclusion of the Academy. A four-month follow up questionnaire was mailed to faculty to get their feedback on the Academy. Evaluation findings are presented to the Advisory Committee to continuously refine the Pennsylvania SVAA to enhance the educational opportunity for its participants and the contributions it makes to the victim services field at large. This section presents findings from the 2001 evaluation, a nine-month follow up of that evaluation, and the 2002 evaluation all conducted by The University of Scranton.

### **5.1 October 2001 Evaluation**

A formal evaluation of the 2001 Pennsylvania SVAA was conducted by a University of Scranton core faculty member and presented to the Advisory Committee in October 2001. The following are highlights from that evaluation. In 2001, 44 students attended the Academy and overall, students rated the daily sessions and instructors favorably, highlighting those sessions that involved ‘hands on skills’ and real life/victim stories. However, there was a consistent pattern to the negative responses. For example, common criticisms were that sessions did not address critical issues, did not present advancements in the field, there was too much repetition

of Manual information, there was a need for information earlier (i.e., Academy manual, schedule information, facilities information), and their were scheduling concerns (e.g. some sessions that are not as relevant are too long, some sessions are too basic, 'heavy' topics were clustered together).

Pre-assessment evaluations were conducted to establish a baseline of information for which to gauge the short-term changes from the Academy. Respondents were not notified in advance about the pre-assessment exam and expressed concerns about the exam (e.g., 'unexpected,' 'too much on the first night,' 'scary,' 'what is the purpose of the exam?' 'Would their agencies see their score?'). The pre-assessment exam contained 75 questions with the average score of 58 percent. The post-assessment exam contained 73 questions and the average score increased from 58 percent to 82 percent, only one person's score decreased. The average improvement score was 23.4 percent. Evaluators did one-way analysis of variance tests and found that there were no statistically significant differences in the percent score of the pre-assessment, the percent score of the post-test or the differences between the pre- and post-test scores by the participants' position, service time or agency.

Overall, the participants of the first Pennsylvania SVAA rated their Academy experience positively. Many participants felt that the content level was appropriate for a person with at least two years of experience in the field; they bonded with their fellow participants; learned new material; and reported that they would recommend the Pennsylvania SVAA to others in the field.

## **5.2 Nine-month Follow-up Study in May 2002**

A nine-month follow-up evaluation was conducted by the University evaluation team to help the faculty better articulate the Pennsylvania SVAA experience for future students. The faculty believed that it was important to see what graduates' perceptions were after they had been able to process the experience. A survey was mailed to the 44 participants who graduated from the 2001 Academy asking the participants questions about the manual, sessions offered, and relevancy/usefulness of sessions back in the workplace.

While there was a 43.2 percent response rate for the follow-up survey (19 respondents out of the 44 graduates), there were common patterns seen in the responses. First, sessions and chapters that were rated either high or low immediately following the Academy were frequently rated the same nine months later. Respondents praised sessions and chapters that were relevant to their current work, involved personal stories and/or were presented by instructors with real life experiences. They were critical of chapters and sessions that they viewed as boring or irrelevant to their daily work concerns.

The Academy Manual and new contacts in the field were the two resources respondents reported using almost one year after the Academy. While the satisfaction with the Manual was not uniform, almost two-thirds of respondents claimed to have used the Manual at least three times since the Academy. Respondents from community/non-profit organizations were more likely to feel that the Manual was not current or not useful to their daily work, than were respondents from criminal justice based agencies.

Approximately half of the respondents reported that specific sessions were relevant to their daily work and that they believed other sessions would become more relevant in the future. While there was a lot of variation in the sessions respondents specified, this variation supported the Academy's goals of preparing advocates for a multitude of circumstances beyond their current work demands.

Overall, respondents were still satisfied with their Academy experience, citing that they would recommend the Academy to others. The one person who reported that he/she would not recommend the Academy to others claimed that too much information was covered, sessions were not appropriate for 'seasoned' service providers, and those useful sessions or excellent presenters were slighted on time.

### **5.3 October 2002 Evaluation**

Findings from the October 2001 evaluation were used to refine the Pennsylvania SVAA in its second year of operation. The University evaluation team conducted an evaluation similar in design to the 2001 evaluation. However, because the pre- and post-assessment tests were altered in 2002 and not re-validated they were not included in the 2002 evaluation report, thus not included in this case summary. The findings from the 2002 Academy evaluation were used to see what changes were made from the 2001 Academy and to aid in the planning of the 2003 Academy.

There were 32 students in the 2002 Academy and the student body remained primarily women, but more men attended this year. Additionally, the student body was more diverse (in terms of race, gender, and urban/rural location), and almost two-thirds of the students had at least a four-year college degree. The 2002 curriculum addressed 27 topics all of which were presented in both group sessions and in a comprehensive manual.

Overall, the majority of participants in the 2002 Academy rated their Academy experiences positively. They remarked that they learned a lot of information in the short period of time, that the content level was appropriate for a person with at least two years of work experience, they established networks, and that they would recommend the Academy to others. Participants favored sessions where instructors had concrete experience with the topic being

discussed, successfully integrated activities in the presentation, provided case studies or personal stories, did not read their presentations and gave useful material they could take back to their agencies. General areas of concern centered around a long first day, the lack of a diverse faculty, the lack of variation in victim-provider scenarios, food issues, housing choices and the length of breaks during the session day.

When the 2002 Academy findings are compared to the 2001 findings, there is evidence of improvements in the planning and administration of the 2002 Academy. For example, 2001 participants complained about receiving the Manual late; this was not a general complaint in 2002. In 2001 participants complained about emotionally difficult classes being scheduled too close together; this was not an issue in 2002. The 2001 participants complained that not enough time was set aside for a question and answer period; while this remained an issue for some 2002 participants, it was not as great as in 2001. Overall, the Academy administrators used the findings from the 2001 evaluation to reorganize aspects of the 2002 Academy to make the Academy experience better for participants.

The 2002 Academy evaluation findings will be useful in planning for the 2003 Academy. Specifically, program administrators intend to address areas of concern such as, the lack of diversity in faculty, lack of variation in presentation of subject matter (use examples too often of just white victims), and the lack of distinct connections between the subject matter and Pennsylvania. While many of the issues raised in the 2001 evaluations findings were not present in the 2002 findings (suggesting that the areas of concern were addressed), the areas of concern learned from the 2002 participants will be used to strengthen the Academy in 2003.

## **6. IMPACTS: CURRENT ASSESSMENT**

To supplement data collected from previous Pennsylvania SVAA evaluations conducted by The University of Scranton, a research team at Caliber Associates, Inc. collected data from 14 student telephone interviews, 3 individual stakeholder interviews, and a focus group with approximately 10 participants. All data collected by the Caliber research team was collected between January 2003 and May 2003. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in analyzing the supplemental data. The findings of the analyses are presented in detail below.

### **6.1 Impact of the Pennsylvania SVAA on Students**

Approximately 10 months after the 2002 Academy 14 students were called by a Caliber research team member to assess the impact of the Academy on the students' knowledge and skills, attitudes and behaviors, professional networking and professional attainment. The findings are presented below.

## **Knowledge and Skill Gains**

Fourteen Pennsylvania students (22%) from the 2002 Academy completed the telephone interview. Overall, students reported that their knowledge and skill level increased as a result of participating in the Pennsylvania SVAA. For example, 50 percent of the respondents said that they learned new skills such as listening and interviewing skills. Students also reported learning how to communicate more effectively with different types of victims. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents reported gaining new knowledge, and 71 percent said that they actually used the skills and knowledge they gained from the Pennsylvania SVAA in the workplace. Students gained knowledge on funding sources, victims' rights and on the different types of victims they may encounter. A majority of the respondents (57%) even reported being able to use the skills or knowledge they gained to implement service expansion or improvement. When asked about their ability to implement policies or practices, 71 percent of the respondents reported that they have not been able to do so. This is not surprising especially in light of the fact that respondents are fairly new to the field (2 to 5 years of experience) and may be new to their place of employment.

## **Attitudes and Behaviors**

Students were asked questions about the affects of the Pennsylvania SVAA on their attitudes and behaviors. Overall, respondents did not feel that the Pennsylvania SVAA had a significant impact on their attitudes toward victims or other agencies, or in the support they receive from their peers/supervisors. However, a noticeable amount (43%) of respondents remarked that the Pennsylvania SVAA changed their behavior on the job. Respondents reported a change in how they interacted with victims. They feel more confident about their work and believe they are more professional.

## **Professional Networking**

Students consistently reported that the Pennsylvania SVAA is an excellent networking opportunity. The ability to network is commonly cited as a beneficial feature of the Academy. When students were asked if they stayed in touch with those they met at the Academy, 57 percent said that they remained in contact with colleagues they met during the Pennsylvania SVAA. However, only 43 percent of respondents reported that this contact benefited their work with victims implying that the relationships established while at the Pennsylvania SVAA may have been more social in nature. The benefits of bonding with other service providers should not be overlooked because students reported that the nature of the relationship was one of support and empathy for the work that they do. The Pennsylvania SVAA comprises an emotional bonding and social network element that the students greatly value.

## **Professional Attainment**

An objective of the Pennsylvania SVAA is to foster professional advancement of victim service providers. Thus, a member from the Caliber research team asked students questions about whether the Pennsylvania SVAA influenced their professional development. Data show that 43 percent of respondents reported that they have pursued formal education in the field of victim services since attending the Academy. Moreover 71 percent said that they would recommend the Pennsylvania SVAA to other advocates and their co-workers. While none of the respondents reported that their attendance at the Academy led to a promotion, students view the Academy as a means of increasing their professionalism.

### **6.2 University Partners**

It was learned during individual interviews and the focus group that The University of Scranton is a vital component to the success and sustainability of the Pennsylvania SVAA. The University partner shares the vision of the Pennsylvania SVAA and has a representative on the Advisory Committee. The University representative greatly contributes to discussions at meetings on how University resources can be used by the Pennsylvania SVAA such as the University hosting the Academy and conducting evaluations of the Pennsylvania SVAA. The representative also contributed to discussion on how the Pennsylvania SVAA can be marketed in the community and how the University can aid in the professionalization of the field through victim services course work on campus.

### **6.3 Victim Services Field**

#### **Impact of the Pennsylvania SVAA on the Field as a Whole**

Stakeholders reported that participants who attend the Academy share with their colleagues the Pennsylvania SVAA Manual that is used as a resource guide in the workplace. This is also supported by student data; 71 percent of student respondents report discussing the Pennsylvania SVAA with their coworkers and using the Pennsylvania SVAA materials since returning to their workplace.

The Pennsylvania SVAA has also impacted the victim services field by providing technical assistance to other States. For example, they have responded to inquiry e-mails and sent categorical progress summaries to other States interested in developing an SVAA, specifically New York. Also, the Pennsylvania SVAA has sent successful proposal documents to other States, such as Arizona, as a model for how to construct certain documents.

## **Professionalizing the Field**

Stakeholders report that there has been a push to professionalize the field of victim services. This is evidenced in an increased use of the term ‘professional’ in their classes and workplace. There is also a push to get victim service providers to think of themselves as professionals and to act accordingly. However, several stakeholders did report that at conferences the victim service providers were not given enough of a platform to share their contributions to the field, or were not included in discussions about the victim services field.

Recently, the Pennsylvania Coalition of Crime Victim Organizations (COPCVO) implemented a voluntary certification program that provides professional recognition of an individual’s commitment to education, experience, and ethical conduct in basic victim assistance. The ACT Subcommittee, under the guidance of the VSAC, developed the program and then transferred the project to COPCVO in order to independently administer the certification. Requirements for initial certification include 40 hours of core instruction and 25 hours of elective courses. The Pennsylvania SVAA course is one of many sources from which an advocate may obtain training hours to fulfill certification requirements. The program is independently administered because neither the PCCD nor the VSAC or its subcommittees are statutorily authorized to provide such certification.

Overall, the impact of the Pennsylvania SVAA on students, the University partner and the victim services field has proven to be positive. With continued monitoring of its implementation the Pennsylvania SVAA will remain a valuable option in victim service training and education. The next section presents the key findings and lessons learned as a result of operating the Pennsylvania SVAA in 2001 and 2002.

## **7. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The data reviewed and analyzed for this case study reveal many key findings and lessons learned from the Pennsylvania SVAA site. The key findings and lessons learned have been grouped into two sections, planning and implementation, for ease of presentation. They are not ranked in any particular order, as all findings and lessons learned are of equal importance to program administrators and students.

### **7.1 Factors that Influenced Planning**

The key findings and lessons learned during the planning stage are:

- **Support from outside institutions is vital to the sustainability of the Pennsylvania SVAA.** A major factor that facilitated the planning phase was the financial support

the Pennsylvania SVAA received from not only OVC but also from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. With adequate resources, the Pennsylvania SVAA was able to hire a full time project consultant who was vital to every stage of the Academy planning process. Key stakeholders report that while they have received support from OVC, continued mentoring and additional site visits to the Pennsylvania SVAA is needed from the National level.

- **A strong Advisory Committee was vital to the planning of the Pennsylvania SVAA.** A major factor that facilitated planning of the Academy was that a victim services coalition was in place and did not have to be established to support the Pennsylvania SVAA vision. The Advisory Committee members work together on other related projects, thus they have an established working relationship. This relationship is not only among the individuals that work at the agencies, but extends to the institutions as well. When selecting the Advisory Committee the PCCD took great efforts to ensure the Advisory Committee was representative of the victim services field and that representative from the Committee attended the NVAA who could speak about their personal experiences attending the National Academy.
- **The Pennsylvania SVAA selected a committed University partner.** A major obstacle occurred during the early planning stages of the Pennsylvania SVAA when Shippensburg University, the academic institution originally interested in partnering with the PCCD, decided to withdraw. It became evident that a variety of administrative and programmatic issues related to the academy project were going to affect Shippensburg's ability to meet the commitments needed of an academic partner. To resolve this problem, the Advisory Committee decided to formalize the university selection process as described in section 2.2. While the selection process took longer than expected (e.g., it took 5 months; vacation schedules) the PCCD secured a qualified university partner that understood the commitment necessary from a partnering institution and the vision of the Pennsylvania SVAA. The PCCD's relationship with The University of Scranton thrives today.
- **The Pennsylvania SVAA must continuously revise the Pennsylvania curriculum.** A major obstacle the Pennsylvania SVAA faced during the planning phase was the revision of the NVAA Manual to address the issues/needs of Pennsylvania service providers. It took the Advisory Committee longer than expected to review, edit, revise and rewrite the NVAA manual chapters to include the Pennsylvania-specific information. Even though the Pennsylvania SVAA faculty recognized that the NVAA text needed considerable changes to its content and style, to minimize the time burden on Pennsylvania SVAA faculty, the Advisory Committee asked that faculty members only add information on Pennsylvania statistics, practice, policy or standards. The Advisory Committee decided to wait until after the 2001 Academy to revise the Pennsylvania SVAA Manual for general content and style. Delaying this level of revision allowed them to mail to students the Pennsylvania SVAA 2001 Manual as early as possible. For the 2002 Manual, instructors were asked to review the 2001 Manual and several chapters were greatly revised.

## 7.2 Factors that Influenced Implementation

The key findings and lessons learned during the implementation stage are:

- **The Pennsylvania SVAA must continuously refine and promote its vision.** Key stakeholders addressed the need to clearly distinguish the Pennsylvania SVAA from the NVAA and other competitive trainings to prevent duplication of efforts and to make the Pennsylvania SVAA a unique experience. Clearly distinguishing the Pennsylvania SVAA from other training opportunities proves difficult for the Advisory Committee because there is a lack of a clear focus regarding whether the Pennsylvania SVAA should be viewed, structured and promoted as a training opportunity versus an intense educational course. Clarification of this issue will greatly help to refine the vision, promotion and implementation of the Pennsylvania SVAA.
- **The Pennsylvania SVAA utilizes other resources its University partner can provide.** The University partner uses its research resources to conduct evaluations of the Pennsylvania SVAA. The evaluations are used to generate a list of general and specific recommendations on how to improve the Academy that are later presented to the Advisory Committee.
- **The Pennsylvania SVAA needs to continue its efforts to diversify its faculty to enhance instruction and attract more students.** Both students and key stakeholders expressed the need to diversify the Pennsylvania SVAA faculty. The current composition of the Pennsylvania SVAA faculty is primarily Caucasian and female. The Advisory Committee is working to recruit other qualified instructors by advertising in the community and at conferences.
- **The Pennsylvania SVAA needs to advertise its program more effectively to increase public awareness and to increase the student applicant pool.** It was learned from the stakeholder focus group and individual interviews that adequate advertising for the Pennsylvania SVAA is lacking. The Advisory Committee understands the need to develop a marketing strategy for their program in order to increase visibility in the victim services community and Pennsylvania SVAA enrollment. For example, because a low number of student applications were received in 2001, it was decided that students with less than 2 years' work experience would be invited to attend the Academy. In 2002 because there were last minute withdrawals from the program enrollment was low (35 participants). A marketing plan will improve enrollment and the sustainability of the Pennsylvania SVAA.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This case study report chronicles the Pennsylvania SVAA's activities and resources between 1999–2002 for meeting their goals and objectives. With the support provided by PCCD, the Advisory Committee, the University of Scranton, and Pennsylvania SVAA faculty, a

5-day Academy was planned and implemented in 2001 and 2002. Overall, the Pennsylvania SVAA has served 106 students, of which 3 students have earned academic credit. Based on prior evaluations of the Pennsylvania SVAA, as well as telephone interviews and a focus group conducted in the Spring of 2003, it was learned that students reported an increase in their knowledge, skill and communication levels. Students also reported that as a result of attending the Academy they felt more professional and confident about their work.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Pennsylvania SVAA also positively impacted the victim services field. For example, Academy graduates share their experience with colleagues in the workplace, and Academy staff provide technical assistance to other States that are interested in establishing a State-wide Academy. There is even a push within the State of Pennsylvania to achieve some sort of certification within the victim services field.

The factors that have influenced the development and refinement of the Pennsylvania SVAA have enabled it to thrive and continue today. The findings and lessons learned presented in this case study will only serve to make the Pennsylvania SVAA better and a powerful asset to victim service training. With continued implementations of the Pennsylvania SVAA, victim service providers in the Pennsylvania area will have a worthwhile opportunity to improve their skills and render more effective victim service provision, as well as serving as a model for other States.

## **V. CASE STUDY: TEXAS SVAA**

## **V. CASE STUDY: TEXAS SVAA**

This case study presentation begins with a brief description of the Texas State Victim Assistance Academy (Texas SVAA or Academy) site. The case study continues by presenting a description of the planning, implementation, and the issues concerning the sustainability of the Texas SVAA. The case study concludes with a description of the outcomes and impacts of the Texas SVAA on students, university partners, and the victims' field. Data for this case study is drawn from a number of planning and implementation documents prepared by the Texas SVAA. Primary documents included the Texas SVAA grant application and semi-annual progress reports, the Texas Victim Assistance Academy Planning Guide, the 2002 Texas Victim Assistance Academy Comprehensive Services Education in Academic Settings: Victim Assistance Provider Student Course Book and Faculty Guide, and the 2001 and 2002 Texas SVAA Overall Research Results. In addition to a review of the Texas SVAA planning and implementation documents, between January – May 2003, Caliber Associates staff collected supplemental data on the Texas SVAA. The supplemental data collection included a focus group with seven members of the 2003 Texas SVAA planning team, follow-up interviews with key stakeholders and Texas SVAA staff, and telephone interviews with graduates of the 2002 Texas SVAA.

### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Texas SVAA is an initiative of the Crime Victims' Institute, Crime Victim Services Division of the Office of the Texas Attorney General. In Fiscal Year 1999, the OVC funded the Texas Crime Victim's Institute to develop an SVAA. The 3-year grant from OVC supported the Texas Crime Victim's Institute and other stakeholders to develop a model program where a standard State-specific curriculum could be offered to victim assistance providers, victim advocates, criminal justice personnel, and allied professionals.

#### **1.1 Sponsoring Agency**

The Crime Victims' Institute, Crime Victim Services Division of the Office of the Texas Attorney General has primary responsibility for the development and evaluation of the Texas SVAA. The Crime Victims' Institute was created by the State legislature to evaluate the effectiveness of criminal justice and juvenile justice policies, programs, and services related to crime victims and their family members, and make recommendations for improving crime victim services in Texas. In addition to the Texas SVAA, the Institute directs several research studies and directed the development of the Texas Victim Information and Notification (VINE) system. The Crime Victims' Institute receives guidance from an Advisory Council whose members are appointed by the Attorney General.

## 1.2 Goals and Objectives

The goals of the Texas SVAA are to:

- Establish academic settings for the delivery of Texas-specific victim services education
- Offer a comprehensive, performance-based, foundation level curriculum that enhances the quality and consistency of victim services
- Continuously evaluate student feedback and experiences in improving the Academy
- Utilize a diverse faculty composed of victim service practitioners along with faculty from the academic partner who have a knowledge of victim issues
- Lay a foundation for degree programs in victim services as curriculum is integrated into university courses
- Partner with major stakeholders and offer training that complements other initiatives.

The Texas SVAA is designed as an educational opportunity for those victim service providers who have been in the field of victim services for three years or less or for those who have been in a single area of victim services throughout their career and are seeking cross-training.

## 1.3 Faculty

In 2001, the first year of Texas SVAA implementation, the Texas SVAA faculty included six core faculty members (four of these faculty members had previously taught at the NVAA) and one adjunct faculty member, one support faculty member, and multiple guest speakers. The faculty included experienced trainers and speakers on victim-related issues nationally and locally, in addition two instructors had victim service expertise in other States (i.e., Florida and Tennessee). The faculty also represented a blend of academicians from the university partners (instructors from the criminology department at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos) as well as victim service practitioners from diverse settings. The faculty also represented the ethnic and racial diversity of the Texas population.

In 2002, the second year of implementation, the Texas SVAA faculty included six core faculty members (four of these faculty members had taught at the Texas SVAA in 2001) one adjunct faculty member, one support faculty member, and multiple guest speakers. The 2002 faculty were nationally and locally known trainers and speakers on victim-related issues and provided the perspective of both academic researchers from Sam Houston State University and Federal, State, and local-level victim service practitioners.

## **1.4 University Partner**

In 2001, the Texas SVAA was held at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. Due to the large geographic area and population of Texas, an objective process—using a state-of-the-art Geographic Information System—was used to select the Texas SVAA university partner. The selection criteria included: the type of university, crime rate, cost of academic credits, administration support, food service, and availability of distance learning technology.

Based on similar selection criteria in 2002 and 2003, the Texas SVAA selected Sam Houston State University in Huntsville as its university partner. The long-term intent of the Texas SVAA is to expand its locations to multiple university sites.

## **1.5 Students**

In 2001, 48 students attended the Texas SVAA; the student/teacher ratio was approximately 4 to 1. Students were selected from government and non-profit victim service programs in Texas. Students were primarily from rural areas, but there was also representation from urban settings. Approximately 10 students elected to receive academic credit for their participating at the 2001 Texas SVAA. In 2002, 48 students attended the Texas SVAA. While several students who attended the 2002 Texas SVAA initially expressed interest in pursuing academic credit for their participation at the Texas SVAA, no students actually earned academic credit.

## **2. PLANNING**

For the Texas SVAA, a detailed planning process was conducted that included several key steps: establishing a steering/planning committee, selecting a university partner, developing a State specific curriculum, receiving training and technical assistance, assessing the training and educational needs of Texas Victim Advocates, student selection and staffing, and the development of a financial plan and product development. Each of these steps is described in the remainder of this section.

### **2.1 Establishing a Steering Committee**

In Texas, a diverse steering committee of victim assistance, criminal justice, and social service professionals was developed to plan the Texas SVAA. The steering committee originally consisted of approximately 20 members who are involved in all aspects of the development of the Texas SVAA. Members include representatives from the Governor's Criminal Justice Division (which administers the VOCA victim assistance grants), Texas Attorney General's Crime Victims' Compensation Division, key State-wide victim advocacy groups and coalitions,

and victim assistance, criminal justice, and social service professions. According to key stakeholders, they tried to select committee members who would really “step up” to the challenge of planning and implementing a Texas SVAA.

In 1999 – 2000, the Texas SVAA steering committee formed to answer four key questions:

- Who is the intended audience for training?
- What is the overall purpose for the training?
- What would be the attendees’ needs?
- What must the training include to meet those needs?

The steering committee for the Texas SVAA intended not only to make the Academy different from the NVAA, but also to provide attendees with basic knowledge and skills to do their job efficiently and effectively. Two factors that differentiated the Texas SVAA from the NVAA were that: the Texas SVAA utilizes a victim services approach so that students can better understand the roles of all stakeholders in the continuum of victim services; and the Texas SVAA was developed using a performance-based and outcome-oriented curriculum and training model.

## **2.2 Selecting a University Partner**

According to the cooperative agreement with OVC, the Texas SVAA established a partnership with the academic community that involved several components, including: the provision of academic credit through an accredited college or university; the establishment of a college/university as a host site; and the use of expert faculty to develop State-specific curricula and oversee the Texas SVAA. The university partner also provided the Texas SVAA with faculty, low-cost dormitory housing and dining facilities, classroom space, and a computer lab with Internet access.

The Victims’ Assistance Legal Organization, Inc. (the OVC-grantee who conducted the NVAA) and key NVAA faculty members provided all of the SVAA grantees with suggested criteria to use in selecting an academic partner. The Texas SVAA project team added its State-specific needs to the information provided by the NVAA and developed the criteria to be used in the academic partner selection process. The Texas SVAA criteria for academic partner selection included the following:

- Type of university—to ensure representation from the State’s five university systems
- Geographical location—to promote geographic and cultural diversity by providing access to as many students as possible
- Local crime rate—to assess need for victim services in the area where the academic partner is located
- Number of local victim assistance providers—to assess the number of potential students who reside close to the academic partner
- Degrees offered in related topics—to promote the long-term goal of Academy curricula being integrated into a university degree program in victim services
- Core classes in victim related topics—to identify potential faculty from the academic partner
- Cost of academic credits—to ensure students could afford to attend
- Administration support—to ensure university embraced vision for the Academy
- Facilities—classrooms and meeting rooms
- Campus housing—sleeping rooms, linen service, and other services
- Food service—for three meals and after hours
- Distance learning technology—to deliver curricula to multiple sites.

The Crime Victims’ Institute gathered the above data for each of the State’s 35 public colleges and universities. A database of this information was created using geographic information system software that allowed the Texas SVAA steering committee to analyze the appropriateness of each university. The final selection of the university partner was also based on letters of interests from Texas universities.

### **2.3 Developing a State Specific Curriculum**

OVC anticipated that the NVAA curriculum would provide the core of an SVAA curriculum, with each State adding State information, elective courses, and interactive exercises. To develop the Texas SVAA curriculum, three primary strategies were used:

- Intervention mapping—providing an explicit, step-by-step guideline to integrating theory, empirical finding from the literature, and data collected from the target population in the development of an intervention

- Brainstorming sessions—with Crime Victims’ Institute staff, Texas SVAA steering committee members and stakeholders
- Application of the Minimum Service Guidelines—the knowledge, skills, and abilities minimally necessary to work with victims of crime in the State of Texas in 6 key areas. The Minimum Service Guidelines were developed in Texas following a comprehensive process that included a literature review and a review of recommendations from victim service providers.

As a result of these strategies, a curriculum was developed that not only ensured that Texas had a State-specific curriculum that met learning objectives but also could be empirically measured to determine the impact on victim service providers and victims. As a result, Texas produced a well-researched and tested curriculum and methodology that could serve as a useful tool for other States.

A curriculum writer who worked closely with the Crime Victims’ Institute staff and Texas SVAA faculty wrote the curriculum. As opposed to developing specific topic areas as individual chapters within the text, the text presented a victims’ needs continuum, reflecting what the victim service provider would need to know at each stage of victim interaction. The final curriculum package consisted of two pieces, a faculty binder and a student textbook. The student text included information that could be read by students prior to attending each day’s session. The faculty guide included an overview of each session including key session goals, information points, and interactive skills-based activities.

## **2.4 Training and Technical Assistance**

To complete the steps in the planning process, in addition to funding, OVC supported the SVAAAs by providing:

- An opportunity to attend the NVAA, where special training was provided on ways to conduct academies
- Copies of the NVAA curriculum, technical assistance, and logistical materials including NVAA’s Training of Trainers course, for faculty or staff of the SVAA
- Informational materials available through OVC’s Resource Center
- Specialized teaching faculty for the academy provided through OVC TTAC.

The Texas SVAA staff took advantage of the training and technical assistance by sending two project team members to the 2000 NVAA at the Medical University at South Carolina in Charleston, to shadow NVAA faculty and staff. In addition, the Texas SVAA curriculum writer was also an NVAA faculty member, who was familiar with the NVAA curriculum and materials.

Finally, the first year that the Texas SVAA was implemented, four faculty members who had previously taught at an NVAA were hired to teach at the Texas SVAA.

## **2.5 Assessing the Training and Educational Needs of Texas Victim Advocates**

As part of the planning for the Texas SVAA, the Crime Victims' Institute conducted a needs assessment of 1,370 Texas victim assistance providers in Fall/Winter 2000. Agencies surveyed included police departments, sheriffs' departments, probation departments, prosecutors' offices, advocacy groups, and community programs. Of the 519 victim services/allied professionals responding, 403 (78%) reported being interested in a baseline education in victim services provided through a week-long training. For those not interested in a baseline training or week-long academy, the most frequently reported reason was the amount of time required to be away from the job and other personal obligations. In addition to the initial needs assessment, the Crime Victims' Institute also relied on two other data sources:

- Survey of Prospective Students—as part of the needs assessment, survey participants were asked for information about their length of service and experience in victim services, education level, basic interest in the Texas SVAA, and reasons for attending.
- State Agency Task Force on Victim Services Minimum Service Guidelines—these guidelines establish a basic level of service that Texas victim service providers should be able to offer every victim in six key areas (notification of victim rights, personal advocacy, information about crime victims' compensation, criminal justice system orientation, information and referral, and crisis intervention). The Guidelines were developed through a process that took nearly a year to complete and included a review of statutory requirements and existing standards in Texas State agencies and national victim service organizations.

## **2.6 Student Selection and Staffing**

In Texas, the student selection criteria was a competitive process for applicants who have been in the victim services field for less than three years, or who have been in the field longer but have only focused on one area of victim assistance. The Texas SVAA believed a mix of new students and experienced victim service providers could foster mentor groups, new friendships, and professional connections. Applicants must be in a paid or volunteer victim services position; agree to be in-residence for the entire week-long training; and agree to participate in evaluation of the Academy, its curriculum and its online and other specialized offerings. In 2002, a 3-person panel was used to select approximately 50 students from an applicant pool of 70 potential students.

In addition to developing a procedure to ensure an appropriate and diverse student body, Texas developed criteria for selecting SVAA core faculty members to assist in the planning,

organization, and management of the SVAA. Core faculty members of the Texas SVAA were selected based upon a need for national and State-level victim service training experience, expertise in content areas directly related to the curriculum, and their ability to teach multiple areas in victim services. Core faculty members are expected to review curriculum, provide supplement curriculum (i.e., bring information from their respective agencies), spend the entire week at the Academy and stay on campus. Since 2001, the Texas SVAA faculty has included staff from academic partners, practitioners in the field, NVAA graduates, as well as other guest lecturers.

## **2.7 Financial Plan and Product Development**

OVC requested that States: develop a viable financial plan for continuation of the SVAA after the conclusion of the OVC funding in Year 3; and develop a Year 1 Planning Guide and a Year 2 Implementation Guide. The Texas SVAA has produced a number of products that document their activities including a financial plan and planning guide; a student text and faculty guide; and evaluation and assessment tools.

## **2.8 Summary of the Texas SVAA Planning Process**

Beginning with the award of the OVC discretionary grant in 1999, the Texas Crime Victims' Institute and the Texas SVAA steering committee composed of major victim services stakeholders led the planning process for the Texas SVAA. All of the planned tasks were completed and implementation of the Texas SVAA began with the initial Academy in June 2001.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

Beginning in June 2001, the Texas SVAA has been offered annually for one-week on the campus of the Texas SVAA academic partner. In year one, the Texas SVAA was held at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. For the past 2 years, however, the Texas SVAA has been held at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. The remainder of this section describes the format of the Texas SVAA, including its unique “victim needs continuum” and the training and technical assistance provided to other sites.

### **3.1 Format of the Academy**

The Texas SVAA is organized by a “victim needs continuum” and focuses temporally on what may be the victim’s experience across time. Then, potential advocates whom the victim or the victim’s family may need are identified at each juncture in the process. This allows for cross-educating victim service providers about whom they may need to be networking with at any given time in the process. Days 1 – 5 of the Academy cover the initial period surrounding

the crime (first 24 – 48 hours) through the long-term follow-through (6 months or longer). The Texas SVAA course topics and schedule are presented below:

- Day One—Emergency Services and Trauma Reaction
- The Nature of Crime
  - Types of Violent Victimization
  - State Mandated Reporting
  - Family Members and Witnesses Following a Death
  - Emergency and Medical Response
  - Crisis Intervention and Active Listening
  - Confidentiality and Privilege
  - Death Notification
- Day Two—Immediate Aftermath Services and Trauma Reaction
  - Influences, Biases, and Values
  - Written Information
  - Safety Planning
  - Law Enforcement and Pre-Indictment Rights of Victims
  - Crime Victims’ Compensation
- Day Three—Intermediate Services
  - Stalking/Safety Plans
  - Terrorism and Mass Casualty Incidents
  - Resources for the Aftermath of Mass Casualty
  - Texas State Crisis Consortium
  - Record Keeping
  - Helping Victims Beyond Crisis Intervention
- Day Four—Long-Term Services
  - The Texas Court System
  - Federal Courts
  - Pre-Sentencing Preparation for Victims
  - Media Intervention
  - Post-Sentencing Opportunities for Victims
  - Civil Lawsuits
  - Victim Impact Statements
  - Victim Impact Panels
  - Appeals
  - Viewing Executions

- Day Five—Surviving Victimization: Victims and Victim Assistance Providers
  - Long-Term Needs of Victims
  - Support and Advocacy by Victims
  - Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and Vicarious Traumatization Among Victim Assistance Providers.

The Texas SVAA begins on a Sunday with registration, faculty and student introductions, dinner, and other preliminary activities. The course schedule occurs Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with additional activities in the evenings including networking dinners and video nights. On Friday, the last day of the Texas SVAA, students attend three sessions followed by a group photo and a graduation ceremony.

### **3.2 Summary of the Texas SVAA Implementation Process**

Beginning with the implementation of the Texas SVAA in June 2001, the Academy has been the responsibility of the Texas Crime Victims' Institute and its academic partners (Southwest Texas University and Sam Houston State University). Approximately 50 students have attended the Texas SVAA annually. Plans for the ongoing sustainability of the Texas SVAA after the conclusion of the OVC discretionary grant are presented in the following section.

## **4. SUSTAINABILITY**

At the end of the three-year funding from OVC, Texas had a plan for financial support and commitment from the Crime Victims' Institute and the Office of the Attorney General to continue implementing the Texas SVAA. The Texas SVAA for 2004 has been assured of financial support from the Texas Attorney General's Office. In the event that the Attorney General's office is no longer able to house the program after 2004, the Crime Victims' Institute would seek out funding from other sources (e.g., independent State Victims Grant Program, Victims for Crime Act (VOCA) Fund, DPS).

## **5. OUTCOMES: PAST EVALUATIONS**

Evaluation of the Texas SVAA and measuring the program outcomes reported by the Texas SVAA students and faculty are a key component of the implementation of the Texas SVAA and the responsibility of the Crime Victims' Institute.

## 5.1 2001 Student Evaluation Results

The evaluation of the first Academy was based on session evaluations, overall Academy satisfaction survey, pre- post-test to measure changes in performance objectives and a pre- post-test to measure gains in knowledge. The results from the first year academy were that:

- Overall knowledge increased significantly (pre- to post)
- There were significant increases in perceived skills (pre- to post)

Evaluating and tracking the Texas SVAA outcomes, via a follow-up survey 10 months following the Academy, is a key component of the Texas SVAA. According to the Summary Report on the 2001 Texas SVAA, students reported a significant increase in their *skills* in:

- Providing victims with services that are mandated by agency policy of Texas law
- Referring victims to appropriate services when needed
- Serving as a liaison through the criminal justice process
- Informing victims of their rights
- Providing crisis intervention when needed.

Students also reported providing *more victim services* after attending the Texas SVAA (e.g., providing victim with services that are mandated by agency policy or Texas law, communicating more effectively with victims experiencing common reactions to trauma, and providing services to victims that address different racial/ethnic/cultural/religious backgrounds).

Students reported that they had had success in achieving the work related goals they had developed for themselves and had increased networking with various agencies in their community following the Academy. In addition, over 75 percent of students reported that they had experienced an increase in support and cooperation from their community, allied professionals, and supervisory staff after returning from the Academy. They also reported an increase in their ability to secure resources and to receive information from State and Federal institutions.

## 5.2 2002 Student Evaluation Results

The evaluation of the 2002 Texas SVAA provided a comprehensive assessment of student outcomes on a number of dimensions of student satisfaction (overall, the Texas SVAA text, instructional level, faculty, methods of instruction, facilities, course organization/time) as well as recommendations for improving the Academy. Students gave high overall ratings of the

Texas SVAA with 52 percent rating it as “excellent” and an additional 42 percent rating it as “outstanding.” Students also gave high overall ratings of the Texas SVAA text with 63 percent rating it “excellent” and an additional 31 percent rating it as “outstanding.” Students were asked about the appropriateness of instructional level for students with less than one year of experience and two or more years of experience. Students rated it highly for both groups of students with 90 percent rating that the level of training was either “excellent” or “outstanding” for students with one year or less of experience.

Texas SVAA faculty received high ratings from the students with:

- 98 percent of students rating faculty expertise as either “excellent” or “outstanding”
- 87 percent of students rating faculty availability as either “excellent” or “outstanding”
- 89 percent of students rating faculty communication skills as either “excellent” or “outstanding”
- 87 percent of students rating faculty diversity and point of view as either “excellent” or “outstanding.”

Students also provided high ratings to the methods of instruction utilized with 86 percent rating the effectiveness of instruction as either “excellent” or “outstanding;” and the course organization/time with 66.7 percent rating the organization of schedule as either “excellent” or “outstanding.”

## **6. IMPACTS: CURRENT ASSESSMENT**

To supplement the information available from the 2001 and 2002 Texas SVAA student evaluations conducted by the Attorney General of Texas, Crime Victims’ Institute on the impacts of the Texas SVAA, in April and May 2003 Caliber Associates staff conducted telephone interviews with students from the 2002 Texas SVAA. Approximately 9 months after the 2002 Texas SVAA, students were interviewed about any knowledge or skills gains, any changes to their attitudes and behaviors on-the-job, professional networking, and professional advancement that occurred as a result of their attendance at the Texas SVAA.

The assessments of the impact of the Texas SVAA on the university partner and the victims field presented in this section represent the findings from a focus group with seven members of the 2003 Texas SVAA planning team and three interviews with key Texas SVAA staff and stakeholders.

## 6.1 Students

In April and May 2003, Caliber Associates conducted follow-on interviews with 22 of the 48 graduates of the 2002 Texas SVAA. Students were asked 16 questions to assess:

- Any increase/change in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and abilities following SVAA participation
- Major changes in students' behaviors on the job
- How students have applied what they learned in their work with victims
- To what extent has participation in the Texas SVAA led to greater educational/professional attainments
- How students have been able to network with other participants at the SVAA
- How students described the Texas SVAA experience to co-workers.

A summary of the interview data is presented below.

### **Knowledge and Skill Gains**

Overall, while the majority of students reported that they gained new knowledge by attending the Texas SVAA (91%), few reported that they had gained new skills (18%). Students reporting learning about the functions of other victim service agencies and new insight into the victim's experience, which are both key features of the Texas SVAA model. Of those who reported a change in knowledge and/or skills, 86 percent reported that they have used the knowledge or skills gained from the Texas SVAA and 50 percent reported that they used the knowledge or skills they gained to either implement service expansion or improvement, or to implement new policies or practices. Respondents gave examples such as creating new materials for victims or victim service providers, implementing new training for victim service providers, and developing new services for victims.

### **Attitudes and Behaviors**

Students were asked questions about the effects of the Texas SVAA on their attitudes and behaviors on-the-job. The majority of students reported a change in their attitude towards victims (64%); students often reported that they are more compassionate, supportive, and empathetic towards victims as a result of attending the Texas SVAA. Sixty-four percent of students also reported a change in their attitude towards other agencies; notably, students reported that they are more aware of other victim service agencies in Texas and what they offer. A smaller percentage of students (36%) reported changes in their behaviors as a result of

attending the Texas SVAA. Of those who reported a behavior change, however, important changes were noted including being more professional or confident in interacting with victims and practicing more self-care techniques.

### **Professional Networking**

The majority of students (82%) reported staying in touch with other students they met at the Academy. In addition to the social and professional camaraderie, 73 percent of those students who had contact with other Texas SVAA students felt that it benefited their work with victims by providing additional victim resources or referrals.

In addition to the student self-reports, eight key Texas SVAA faculty and stakeholders were asked about the impact the Texas SVAA has on students. According to Texas SVAA stakeholders, the opportunity for networking was, by far, one of the most important aspects of the Academy. There are not any other natural opportunities for victim service providers to come together in Texas, which is largely a factor of the size of the State. Before leaving the Academy, one of the most reported requests was to have a reunion because people wanted to maintain those networking opportunities. The Academy afforded attendees a real opportunity for network building.

### **Professional Attainment**

When asked about the impact of the Texas SVAA on their decision to expand their skills and/or knowledge of victim services or to pursue formal education or training in victim services, the majority of students (59%) reported continuing to expand their skills and knowledge of victim services since attending the Texas SVAA; they reported taking classes (e.g., critical incidents stress management, victim services in Spanish, and suicide and mental health) and attending conferences, and trainings on victim services. Five students also reported pursuing formal education in victim services/victimology since attending the Texas SVAA.

## **6.2 University Partner**

The Texas SVAA stakeholders were not sure if any Texas colleges or universities have actually incorporated material from the Academy to enhance their victim-related training and educational programs. The stakeholders reported that State universities are very slow to implement changes, but several Texas universities (e.g., Southwest Texas State University, University of Texas Center for Disability Studies, Sam Houston State—Institute for Victim Studies, and University of Texas at Austin’s School of Social Work) are exploring the possibility of including some of the Texas SVAA materials into their course work. The stakeholders felt the

Texas SVAA materials included important information for university victimology and criminology courses.

### **6.3 Victims Field**

Although the Texas SVAA has only been in implementation for two years, stakeholders report that it has had an impact on the victims' field in Texas. Some of the impacts they noted included:

- It has advanced the credibility and professionalization of the victims assistance field by helping all victims to receive a standard level of services
- It has helped the Crime Victims' Institute to provide victim services training information and recommendations to the State legislature based on research and evaluation of the Texas SVAA
- Students report using the Texas SVAA materials for ongoing training purposes (e.g., new employee training, volunteer training).

## **7. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The Texas SVAA case study revealed several important key findings and lessons learned with respect to planning, implementing, and sustaining an SVAA. They are not ranked in any particular order, as all findings and lessons learned are of equal importance to program administrators and students. This information is presented in the subsections below.

### **7.1 Factors that Influenced Planning**

The Crime Victims' Institute and the Texas SVAA planning/steering committee led the initial planning of the Texas SVAA in 1999 – 2000. The planning process benefited from the existing work of State Agency Task Force on Victim Services, leadership of the Crime Victims' Institute, and the technical assistance provided by OVC/NVAA. The stakeholders also reported several other factors that facilitated the Texas SVAA planning:

- **Support of the Texas Attorney General's Office.** The Attorney General's Office provided resources and exemplified flexibility throughout the planning process. It provided a place to "house" the Texas SVAA that made sense, created positive synergies, and provided a strong foundation for program continuity and credibility.
- **Commitment of the planning committee members.** The Texas SVAA planning benefited from the planning committee members willingness to share their knowledge of the victim services field, training needs, and planning processes.

- **The NVAA curriculum.** The NVAA curriculum was used as a basis for developing the Texas Victim Assistance Provider Student Course Book; other OVC resources were also used in preparation of the student text.
- **Leadership.** The Texas SVAA benefited from initial leadership by nationally known trainers in victim services topics, and familiar with the NVAA concept as well as from the Director of the Crime Victims' Institute who had a real clear idea for implementation, provided the vision, and the know-how.

The Texas SVAA stakeholders also reported several challenges to Texas' success in SVAA planning:

- **Attrition of planning/steering committee members.** Due to Texas regulations, a subgroup of initial committee members had to leave the committee in order to become Texas SVAA faculty members or consultants. This led to a loss of structure on the planning/steering committee that ultimately became less formal once the initial Texas SVAA planning was completed.
- **Limited planning time and resources.** In year one, there were several significant tasks to be completed in a short period of time. Initially the Crime Victims' Institute proposed that one person would work quarter-time on the Texas SVAA. By the end of the first planning year, they were relying upon the collective efforts of staff and committee members to represent one full-time equivalent (FTE).
- **Lack of a prior working relationship with academia.** During the planning phase, the planning/steering committee did not have someone designated to foster the relationship between academicians and practitioners. Ultimately, resources were needed to develop and foster a consistent relationship between the Texas SVAA and the university partner in order for it to be successful.

## 7.2 Factors that Influenced Implementation

Following the initial planning in 1999 – 2000, a weeklong Texas SVAA has been implemented in both 2001 and 2002. The Texas SVAA stakeholders reported several factors that facilitated the Texas SVAA implementation:

- **Faculty preparation.** A critical part of the implementation phase is arriving on campus a day prior to the start of the Texas SVAA for a faculty meeting. In addition, at the end of every day at the Academy, the faculty members debrief on the day's events and to discuss feedback received from students.
- **Consistency of faculty members.** The Texas SVAA has been able to attract and retain faculty who are NVAA graduates/faculty, nationally recognized speakers and professionals in the field.

- **The right mix of students at the Academy.** In the student selection process, it was very important to have a group of students that would gel together.

The Texas SVAA stakeholders also reported several challenges to the implementation of the Texas SVAA:

- **Busy stakeholders.** The planning/steering committee members, staff, and faculty are involved in many professional activities in addition to the Texas SVAA; implementing the Texas SVAA required a personal commitment.
- **Other victim services training opportunities.** There are other victim services conferences held in Texas. This presents a problem for agencies/organizations to send employees to the Texas SVAA because they do not want to lose their employees to another training academy for an entire week. This competition for limited resources could potentially limit the number of applicants and/or people who accept the invitation to attend the Texas SVAA.
- **Limitations of the university partner schedule.** The Texas SVAA is bound by a June/December date to hold the Academy. This is a result of the association with an academic institution.

### 7.3 Factors that Influenced Sustainability

Sustainability is a real issue for the Texas SVAA. Although efforts are made to generate ongoing revenues from Academy attendance by victim service providers and agencies, a decrease in operating funds could jeopardize the long-term sustainability of the Texas SVAA.

The Texas SVAA stakeholders reported several factors that facilitated the Texas SVAA sustainability:

- **Solid commitment from the Texas State Attorney General's Office.** The Texas SVAA's strong association with the Attorney General's office lends credibility to the Academy with students, universities, and other stakeholders. It also helps the Texas SVAA to maintain strong ties to other victim services issues in the State.
- **Annual update of materials used at the Academy.** This helps to ensure the quality and accuracy of the materials.
- **Local agency funding for students to attend the Academy.** At first there was uncertainty regarding whether or not organizations will be able to afford to send students to the Academy, however, stakeholders now feel that State and local agencies now recognize the value the Academy.

- **Ability to offer academic credit for attending.** Through its university partner, the Texas SVAA is able to offer graduate and undergraduate credit for students who complete the university requirements.

The Texas SVAA stakeholders also reported several challenges to sustaining the Texas SVAA:

- **Lack of ongoing funding from OVC to support the Texas SVAA.** Stakeholders reported that limited funding should be available from OVC to support successful SVAAAs.
- **Lack of public funding.** Stakeholders reported that without a consistent source of Federal or State funding, the Texas SVAA might ultimately have to be outsourced to the private sector.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This case study report chronicles the Texas SVAA's activities and resources between 1999 – 2002 for meeting their goals and objectives. Using the funding and support provided by OVC/NVAA, including the NVAA curriculum, the Crime Victims' Institute and its key organizational partners planned and implemented weeklong SVAAAs in both 2001 and 2002. Based on prior evaluations of the Texas SVAA students, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the Spring of 2003, the majority of students report that they gained new knowledge, positively changed their attitudes towards victims, and have applied the knowledge gained by attending the Texas SVAA. A smaller number of students also reported gaining new skills and actually changing their behaviors after attending the Texas SVAA.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Texas SVAA has also created new working relationships between the victim services field and its university partners and among victim services organizations in Texas. The Texas SVAA has also facilitated several activities that may contribute to professionalizing the victims' field such as increasing student networking and educational attainment. In terms of sustainability, as of March 2003, the Texas SVAA had identified funding and resources to continue its annual implementation.

## **VI. CASE STUDY: UTAH SVAA**

## **VI. CASE STUDY: UTAH SVAA**

This case study presents a brief description of the Utah Victim Assistance Academy (Utah SVAA or Academy), followed by information on the planning of the Academy, its implementation, sustainability, results of past evaluations, impacts of the Academy, and concludes with a discussion on key findings and lessons learned from this site. Information used for this case study was gathered from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) FY 2001 Discretionary Grant Application; Utah SVAA progress reports from 1999 – 2002; the Utah SVAA 2001 Planning Guide; the Utah SVAA Planning Committee and subcommittee meeting minutes; the Utah SVAA 2002 Academy Manual; Utah SVAA 2002 Facilitator Manual; and Utah SVAA evaluation reports from 2001 and 2002. In addition to a review of the Utah SVAA planning and implementation documents, between January – May 2003, Caliber Associates staff visited the Utah SVAA to conduct interviews with the sponsoring agency representatives, an academy staff member, and a focus group with 15 stakeholders. During the spring of 2003, Caliber staff conducted telephone interviews with a sample of 13 former Utah SVAA students. Caliber also conducted follow-up telephone conversations with Academy staff to verify specific pieces of information and to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered overall. A review and analysis of these data form the basis for this case study on the Utah State Victim Assistance Academy.

### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Utah SVAA is a weeklong 40-hour Academy that offers state-of-the-art comprehensive training for victim service providers throughout the State of Utah. The Academy seeks to enhance networking resources and prevent burnout experienced by victim services personnel. The training is state-focused, practical, and skills-based geared toward meeting the needs of crime victims and preserving their rights as guaranteed by the Utah State Constitution and Code, Utah Crime Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment, and Federal victims' rights legislation.

#### **1.1 Sponsoring Agency**

Two organizations, the Office of Crime Victim Reparations (CVR) and the Utah Council on Victims of Crime (UCVC) sponsor the Utah SVAA. The CVR provides financial compensation for victims of crime, administers and monitors Victim of Crime Act Compensation and Assistance (VOCA) and Violence Against Women (VAWA) grants; provides access to a network of victim services across the state; and provides enhanced training and staff support to the UCVC. The Utah Council on Victims of Crime was created in 1987 in response to public outcry for an improved response to victims of crime. As a part of the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (UCCJJ), UCVC has worked to organize victim service training

through annual conferences and was involved in the passage of the Utah Crime Victims' Rights Amendment. UCCJJ is an established umbrella organization within the Executive Branch of Utah State government. The agency was created in 1983 by the Utah State Legislature to coordinate statewide efforts to reduce crime and victimization in Utah and reports directly to the Governor. Through its association with The Statewide Advocates for Victims Organization (SWAVO), both organizations were perfectly positioned to sponsor the Utah SVAA. According to stakeholders, these agencies bring state-level knowledge, a commitment to victim services, and credibility to the Utah SVAA.

Before CVR applied for funding through the Office for Victims of Crime, SWAVO was formed to serve as the coordinating body for victim service providers throughout the state. SWAVO's 12-member Steering Committee conducted a needs assessment of the Utah victim advocates about their training needs. The feedback they received indicated a strong need for statewide leadership, guidance, and standardized training. Specifically, advocates wanted accessible and affordable training that would improve the quality and availability of services to victims of crime throughout the state. Based on this information, the Office of Crime Victim Reparations applied for discretionary funding through OVC to implement the Utah SVAA.

## **1.2 Goals and Objectives**

The mission of the Utah SVAA is to improve the quality and availability of direct services to victims of crime by training victim assistance personnel, volunteers, and allied professionals. The Academy's goal is to support efforts to improve community response to crime victims by providing comprehensive, academically-based, fundamental education for victim assistance providers, criminal justice personnel, law enforcement and others who interact with victims of crime. To achieve these goals, Utah SVAA:

- Provides the highest quality state-of-the-art training focused on the needs of crime victims
- Builds victim advocacy skills and practical resources
- Creates a comprehensive continuum of training to address victim needs from first response to completion of the criminal justice system
- Preserves the rights of victims as provided by the Utah State Constitution and Utah statutes
- Encourages local and statewide networking to enhance victim services and prevent burnout of trained and experienced victim assistance personnel.

Stakeholders believe that the greatest value of the Utah SVAA is their ability to help victims by providing comprehensive standardized training to the advocates who will deliver services to crime victims.

### 1.3 Faculty

The Utah SVAA faculty is composed of presenters and facilitators. Since this is a skills-based training experience, the Utah SVAA Planning Committee decided to use faculty who are practitioners rather than academicians. The Committee was also desirous of presenters who would be able to use their expertise to teach from the Academy curriculum. A selection criterion was designed to guide the Utah SVAA in selecting teaching staff for the Academy. The Utah SVAA teaching faculty members are recruited on the basis of the following criteria:

- Expertise in their individual service area
- Ability to transfer knowledge
- Commitment to the transfer of learning
- Representation of an Academy curriculum topic area
- Familiarity with and commitment to using the adult learning model.

The Utah SVAA also created facilitation teams to support various Academy activities. The facilitation team members assist presenters with any technical assistance they may need from audio/visual equipment to group activities. Among other things, facilitators are responsible for knowing the physical layout of the facilities; ensuring that evaluations are collected; serving as crisis intervention workers for students who may need to process highly emotional material; and leading activities that will build student morale and group cohesion. The facilitators must also be prepared to stand in for a presenter who is unable to attend at the last minute.

To receive training for the Utah SVAA faculty, the Planning Committee sent four members to Washington, DC to become familiar with the training concepts and skills of the OVC Training of Trainer course. OVC's course, *The Ultimate Educator: Achieving Maximum Adult Learning Through Training and Instruction*, is designed to assist trainers in developing curricula that appeals to adult learners. Prior to the first Academy, Utah SVAA staff arranged to have a member of the NVAA faculty present a two-day training workshop based on *The Ultimate Educator* course for its faculty. Now, the Utah SVAA uses the concepts from this training as the basis for the facilitator job assignments and the daily structure of the Academy.

## **1.4 University Partner**

The Utah SVAA Planning Committee also designed selection criteria for their university partner. The university partner was selected based on their ability and willingness to:

- Provide academic credit for students
- Provide a geographic location with reasonably convenient access for participants
- Have an interest and expertise in victims' issues and the criminal justice system
- Provide appropriate classroom and sleeping facilities for Academy students
- Have a commitment to the concept of an academy or a history of successful academies
- Guarantee site use for one-week segments at least twice a year.

Members of the Planning Committee visited each major university in Utah to determine their level of interest in working to develop the Academy. Based on the criteria above, the results of these visits were reviewed and Weber State University was selected as the academic partner. Weber has the only 4-year criminal justice degree program in the state and is geographically beneficial as it is located near airports and Salt Lake City, Utah's capital. Another benefit to selecting Weber was their willingness to explore the creation of a Bachelor of Science degree program with a victim services emphasis in their Criminal Justice Department. The Criminal Justice Department includes academic faculty with expertise in criminology and victimology, which is supported by faculty in the areas of social work, nursing, and psychology. In addition to their ability to meet all of the specified criteria, Weber also offered networking opportunities through their partnership with other State universities.

## **1.5 Students**

The Utah SVAA was designed for students with one year of victim services experience. Students admitted to the Academy represent a broad base of agencies to include mental health professionals, corrections workers, law enforcement personnel, shelter workers, court officials, youth corrections, adult probation, and child welfare. Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) are available through the Utah SVAA as an option. For college credit, students must register as a student at WSU, complete a short application process, and pay a recording fee for the credit itself. Currently, only undergraduate level credit is provided, but plans are in place to offer credit on the master's level. Utah SVAA students are required to complete additional assignments beyond what is required at the Academy and must be present at the entire Academy to receive credit. Academy staff also work with professional organizations to provide CEUs.

Law enforcement organizations accept Utah SVAA credit; and the Academy has been approved for providing CEUs for prosecutors. The National Association of Social Workers has also approved the acceptance of Utah SVAA credit for its licensed clinical social workers.

## **2. PLANNING**

The Utah SVAA staff used the first two years of the grant period to plan the Academy. They approached this opportunity with a sense of eagerness at the need for improving the quality and availability of services to victims of crime throughout the State of Utah. The rapid development and expansion of victim services programs in domestic violence shelters, prosecutors' offices, and law enforcement agencies were the primary reasons for ensuring proper statewide training among victim service providers. This section describes the planning process to include establishing a planning committee, staffing the academy developing a curriculum, obtaining training and technical assistance, and assessing statewide victim service providers.

### **2.1 Establishing a Planning Committee**

The Utah Victim Assistance Planning Committee is composed of approximately 20 members representing a diverse cross-section of professionals who assist crime victims in a variety of ways. The Committee includes professionals and practitioners from the law enforcement and court community, ethnic affairs, human resources, social services, victim advocates, and academia. Most of the members of the Planning Committee were already working together to provide statewide trainings to victim advocates through the Statewide Advocates for Victims Organization (SWAVO). When CVR applied for the OVC discretionary funding, many of these same members joined in partnership with the Utah Council on Victims of Crime, the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, and Weber State University to work together to plan and implement a university-based comprehensive training program.

The Utah SVAA Planning Committee, with help from the SWAVO Steering Committee, developed selection criteria for both agency and individual involvement on the Utah SVAA Planning Committee. Committee involvement requires that agencies meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have direct involvement with crime victims at a local level (law enforcement, prosecution, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), children's justice centers and shelters)
- Serve as a state agency providing leadership in victims' rights and services
- Serve as a state or local agency with strong training programs

- Serve as an agency that represents underserved crime victims' groups that previously have not been involved in leadership of victims' rights and services
- Represent a university or educational institution
- Represent private/nonprofit agencies that serve victims of crime.

Individual Committee members are selected based on representation, experience, and availability. The criteria for selecting representatives from the agencies above is that they have:

- A history of providing direct services to crime victims
- Past leadership and respect in the field
- Training expertise
- Policymaking or funding resource experience.

The Utah SVAA Planning Committee established four subcommittees with specific roles: Finance, Curriculum, Facilitation, and Implementation. The Finance Subcommittee investigates opportunities for funding the Utah SVAA. The Curriculum subcommittee drafts and/or revises the Academy Text each year. This Subcommittee also outlines information for the presenters, topics, and presentations. Members of the Facilitation Committee, along with the overall Planning Committee, recruit faculty and serves as points of contact/assistance during the Academy. The Implementation Committee is responsible for advertising and marketing. This Committee developed program brochures, contributes to and manages Academy content on the CVR Web site, and selects facilities on the campus of WSU. The Planning Committee and subcommittees meet every other month, unless there is timely business that needs attention. The Committee and subcommittees also meet more often closer to the Academy week depending on what discussions are necessary to finalize academy activities.

## **2.2 Staffing the Academy**

During the planning phase, CVR, with input from the Utah SVAA Planning Committee created the Academy Coordinator position. This position serves as staff to the Committee and functions as the Coordinator of the Academy. The Committee drafted an Academy Coordinator job description, advertised throughout the state in all major newspapers, job bulletins, universities and colleges. According to stakeholders, it was important to staff this position early because this person would be the central point of contact for the sponsoring agencies, the Committee and subcommittees and the university partners. In fact, one stakeholder mentioned that the first few Committee meetings were "rocky" because it was hard to schedule meeting

dates and arrange meeting logistics without a point person. The Academy Coordinator position was filled in September 2000.

In addition to the Academy Coordinator, a part-time academic intern position was established. This position was developed to provide administrative support for the Academy Coordinator and the Planning Committee. Again a job description was drafted and the position advertised. The person in this position assists facilitators and instructors in preparing for their presentations during the Academy. Prior to the Academy, this person assists with setting up and other logistical duties associated with the Academy. A new intern fills this position each academic year.

### **2.3 Developing a State-Specific Curriculum**

The Utah SVAA Curriculum Subcommittee developed a plan for creating a curriculum for the Utah SVAA. The plan included developing a curriculum that addressed basic victimology and victim assistance principles, but that focused the most essential components on information about providing services to Utah victims. The Subcommittee conducted a needs assessment with Utah victim service providers. This assessment revealed the need for foundational, entry-level training that included basic components of both victimology and direct service provisions to victims of crime. The Subcommittee next searched for best and promising practices literature on the Internet and by requesting curriculum examples from various universities.

Based on this process, the Subcommittee reviewed and expanded the NVAA Academy Text to include Utah-specific information. Specifically, the Subcommittee added suggestions for treatment providers, laws and statutes, flow charts where applicable, and sample needs assessments. After this review, the Subcommittee approved using the NVAA Academy Text as its core curriculum along with the Utah-specific additions as the Utah SVAA curriculum. The Utah SVAA curriculum review process is on-going. A draft version of the curriculum was pilot tested at a “mini” academy produced by the Planning Committee (see Section 2.5 for more information on the mini academy). Prior to each Academy, the Curriculum Development Committee reviews last year’s curriculum to identify any chapters in need of revision based on student and faculty feedback. Changes to the curriculum are made and reprinted for addition to the Utah SVAA Academy Text notebook.

The Utah SVAA curriculum is a combination of NVAA Academy Text chapters and Utah-specific information. The curriculum includes all of the NVAA Academy Text chapters as its core curriculum, 14 chapters and subchapters modified to include Utah-specific information, and 2 new chapters on polygamy and advocacy. The curriculum topics include:

- Victimization Trauma
- Communication Skills
- Crisis Intervention
- Victim Impact Statements
- Homicide Victims
- Child Victims
- Elder Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Stalking
- Sexual Assault
- Mental Illness
- Criminal Justice Continuum
- Agency Collaboration
- Service Provider Burnout
- Victims of Drunk Driving
- Safety Planning
- Substance Abuse
- Victimization of Polygamy.

One topic unique to Utah is polygamy. According to Tapestry Against Polygamy (TAP), a support organization for women who have left polygamous situations, Utah is home to a great many of the estimated 100,000 polygamists in America. Utah SVAA stakeholders report that this is a very closed society with high incidences of child and domestic abuse. Therefore the need for victim services training and advocacy on this issue is crucial. After investigating and researching the issue, the Curriculum Subcommittee developed a state-specific topic entitled, “Victim Issues for Persons Living in Polygamy.” In order to appropriately present this material, the Subcommittee identified learning objectives with the help of the State attorney general’s office and TAP. These objectives cover:

- The history of polygamy in Utah
- The religious beliefs in the polygamy community
- The prosecutorial issues related to polygamy
- The barriers to serving individuals in polygamous relationships
- The issues regarding loyalty to the group among polygamy victims
- The resources available for these particular victims.

This curriculum has been modified slightly from 2001 – 2002 to highlight or increase the amount of information on particular topics based on student feedback or faculty input. The first Academy year, the Curriculum Subcommittee identified individuals to review each chapter in the Text. The review and revision process included having the Academy Coordinator send electronic versions of the Text to reviewers. Reviewers then made recommendations, revisions or additions

as necessary, and returned final versions of the Text to the Coordinator. A disclaimer was added to distinguish those chapters revised to be state-specific. For each academy, the Utah SVAA prints and distributes a copy of the final version of the Text for each student.

## **2.4 Training and Technical Assistance**

In addition to funding, OVC provided training and technical assistance in a variety of ways. The Utah SVAA Coordinator attended the NVAA at its Fresno location. This was helpful in terms of getting an up-close look at the NVAA model. Members also attended OVC's *Ultimate Educator* Training of Trainer seminars. A representative from OVC has also been in attendance at each Academy to offer feedback.

During the first Academy, there was a lack of presence at the Academy by the university partner. Although the academic partner provided the facility, assisted with curriculum development, and offered CEU credits, their presence was not felt during the Academy. OVC suggested providing technical assistance from NVAA in an effort to further tie in this partner. Dr. Steven Walker, who created and managed the first national academy at California State University Fresno, was invited to discuss the options and benefits to involving the university in a larger capacity. Stakeholders commented that Dr. Walker's input greatly assisted in solidifying the SVAA's relationship with WSU.

## **2.5 Assessing the Training and Educational Needs of Utah Victim Advocates**

To garner buy-in from the victim service community for the Academy structure, the Planning Committee targeted approximately 70 criminal justice leaders, administrators, and supervisors in the victim services field whose staff would be recruited to attend the Academy. These individuals were invited to attend an 8-hour "mini" academy designed to acquaint them with the Utah SVAA and its curriculum. First, a mock Academy presentation was conducted for attendees. Next, they were invited to provide input into the training needs of their employees, suggestions for improvement to the curriculum, and input on additional training topics. They were also queried for recommendations on experts in their fields who would be good presenters.

After establishing Planning and subcommittees, developing a state-specific curriculum, hiring a Academy Staff, assessing the needs of the field, and obtaining training and technical assistance, the Utah SVAA reported they were ready to implement the Academy.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

During the planning phase, the Planning Committee along with faculty and the Academy Coordinator designed the model for how the Academy would actually operate on a day-to-day

basis. Using what they learned from the needs assessment, NVAA attendance and training and technical assistance, the Utah SVAA model slightly mirrored the NVAA model with a Utah-specific emphasis. This section describes the implementation of the Academy in 2001, and concludes with a brief description on planned changes to the implementation of the Utah SVAA model.

### **3.1 Format of the Academy**

The first Utah SVAA was held in June 2001. The Academy is a weeklong 40-hour training modeled after the National Victim Assistance Academy and provides education and training to up to 60 victim advocates and allied professionals.

#### **Student Recruitment**

The Utah SVAA uses various methods to recruit Academy students. These methods include the CVR newsletter, media advertising, word-of-mouth advertising, and CVR's Web site. Dates for the Academy are advertised in the CVR quarterly newsletter, which are mailed to each person on the mailing list along with a Utah SVAA brochure. The mailing list includes approximately 1,800 people from the fields of law enforcement, health and mental health, government, nonprofit, prosecutors' offices, and those involved in grants management. The CVR also advertises the Academy on their Web site. Students may request an application via telephone, e-mail or download an application from CVR's Web site. The application requests such information as the student's position, educational background, and the organization and field they represent. Students are also required to pay a \$150 fee, which covers tuition, the Utah SVAA Academy Text, and room and board. In addition, students must obtain their supervisor's signature on the Utah SVAA application, which indicates that both the student and supervisor are aware that the Academy will require a 40-plus hour commitment plus travel time.

#### **Student Selection**

The Utah SVAA's goal is to provide a standard base of knowledge in the victim advocacy field, so the applications are scrutinized with a preference for students with up to one year's experience on the job. The applications are also reviewed in order to redirect students who are seeking specialized training. Approximately three months before the Academy, the Implementation Committee, Utah SVAA Coordinator, and a Planning Committee member meet to review applications and make selections. The Planning Committee devised a selection criterion for students to include:

- Referral and sponsorship by their organization
- Agreement of participants to attend the entire educational event without disruption (i.e., work obligations)
- Agreement of participants to be held accountable for demonstrating a minimum standard of professional skill and knowledge prior to graduation
- Referrals of victim service providers that represent the rich and diverse tapestry of Utah's population.

In addition to the selection criteria, student selection is based on a variety of factors. One factor is the training needs of the organization at which the student works. Another selection factor is the number of applications received for each Academy. The Utah SVAA established that it would accept up to 60 students to attend each Academy. This number is based on the *Ultimate Educator* train-the-trainer model wherein it is important to facilitate interaction through small group activities. For example, one of the highlights of the Academy is a presentation on domestic violence or incest by Vectors, a psychodrama team. The idea to implement this teaching technique evolved from *The Ultimate Educator* training. One of the benefits Utah SVAA staff realized was the value of varying the types of learning. Vectors demonstrates through a combination of drama, art, music, and movement, scenarios on how victim service providers might use certain techniques when working with crime victims. This presentation is followed by a small group-processing period so that students can discuss how to implement what they learned in a similar setting. Based on the *Ultimate Educator* training, a small student-to-teacher ratio is necessary to accommodate this group processing activity. So, training needs, number of applications received, and remaining true to the train-the-trainer model all influence student selection.

### **Faculty Recruitment**

Among other things, teaching faculty is selected based on their expertise in the victim services field and their willingness to teach the curriculum established for the Utah SVAA. The individuals recommended are contacted by the Academy Coordinator about teaching at the Academy. Prior to each Academy, the Academy Coordinator sends faculty members a packet of materials that provides information on the topic(s) instructors will be presenting, the facilitation team assigned, and other support materials. For the first Academy in 2001, 10 teaching faculty members were recruited to make presentations. For the 2002 Academy, 18 teaching faculty members were recruited to make presentations. Of these 18, 2 were members of the Utah SVAA Planning Committee.

Thirty-four facilitators were initially recruited through the CVR newsletter. Some of these individuals have become part of the 9-member Utah SVAA Facilitation Subcommittee and others are rotated each year as part of the Academy facilitation team. For the first Academy in 2001, 6 facilitators served as presenters or teaching faculty and as part of facilitation teams. During the second Academy in 2002, the facilitation team was comprised of 10 individuals, which included the chair of the Planning Committee and the Academy Coordinator. Facilitators must be familiar with the course subject matter as outlined in the Utah SVAA text because presenters depend on facilitators to transform lecture material into skill-building exercises. Facilitators help students to process and problem solve how the information they have learned can be taken back and used in the students' agencies. They also address any barriers that might prevent students from implementing this new knowledge or skill into their agencies. Students also learn how to use the information to collaborate between agencies. During the Academy, facilitators also meet to "take the pulse" of the Academy, problem-solve, and make any necessary adjustments to the curriculum. Stakeholders admit that flexibility is a necessity because challenges arise that effect the schedule. For the 2003 Academy, the Academy Coordinator developed a facilitator job description and manual. See *Appendix A* for a copy of the facilitator job description. The manual provides information on the dress code for facilitators appropriate behavior, the course schedule and presenters, learning activities and scenarios, and OVC's PowerPoint presentation on the topics in the NVAA Academy Text. According to stakeholders, it is a handy tool for finding ways to deal with unplanned challenges during the Academy.

### **Site Selection**

Each year, the Academy is conducted on the campus of Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. This academic partner has provided classroom space for instruction, meetings and interactive activities; cafeteria and banquet facilities; student sleeping quarters in dormitories; access to the library and such technological assistance as computers, audiovisual materials and compressed video links.

### **Academy Schedule**

A typical Academy schedule involves an introductory, welcoming, or "daily business" announcement period at the beginning to be followed by a little more than 3 hours of instruction. Next is a 60-minute lunch break followed by another three-and-a-half hours of instruction. One 15-minute break is provided between morning sessions, two 15-minute breaks during the afternoon sessions, and a 2-hour dinner break is provided before the last session of the day.

### **3.2 Training and Technical Assistance**

OVC has continued to provide guidance and offer recommendations and assistance for support through its Training and Technical Assistance and Resource Centers. Planning Committee members have attended OVC Discretionary Grantee meetings, which have provided networking opportunities with other SVAA and NVAA faculty.

### **3.3 Planned Changes to the SVAA Model**

Stakeholders revealed to Caliber staff that they planned to implement changes to enhance the Utah SVAA. For example, prior to the 2003 Academy, Utah SVAA planned to revise student applications, unveil new dormitories, and investigate an off-campus attendance policy. The Implementation Subcommittee recommended revising the application to collect information on the Students' gender, request a 24-hour contact number from students, offer the option for students to stay in the dorms or commute from off-site locations, and informed students that they must sign-in if they are off-campus Academy students. Some students live in close proximity to WSU and have inquired about staying at home and driving to the Academy each day. All of these changes were implemented before the 2003 Academy. Additionally, for those students electing to stay on campus, Weber allowed them to stay in its newly constructed apartment complex. Each suite can sleep 4 students and offers a unique dorm experience. Students have private bedrooms, semi-private bathrooms, kitchens and living rooms. Stakeholders believe the new dorms are a great marketing tool because this new setting allows for interaction in common areas or privacy, if needed.

### **Certification**

The Utah SVAA is pursuing a certification component to their program. In the spring of 2002, a preliminary survey was created and disseminated to domestic violence shelters, police agencies, and prosecutor offices inquiring if these agencies favored certification for advocates. This six-question survey requested responses on the interest level and need for certification, and whether or not certification advanced the profession of victim advocacy and increased advocate wages. When asked whether or not the Utah SVAA should pursue offering certification, responses were decidedly in favor of this option. Details for certification were not implemented in time for the 2003 Academy.

### **Mini Academies**

The Utah SVAA ceased conducting "mini" academies in an effort to generate feedback from the victim services field. Having conducted mini academies each year prior to the first two

academies, the Planning Committee believed they have a good idea of the needs of the field. In addition, stakeholders did not believe it would be cost-effective to continue this practice.

### **Academy Text**

Each year, the Curriculum Subcommittee reviews, revises, prints and distributes the Utah SVAA Text. Beginning in 2003, the CVR will post curriculum addendums and updates on their Web site so that students can download and add chapters to their Text.

### **University Partner**

Stakeholders interviewed mentioned that WSU would like to fund a position at the university to work directly with the Utah SVAA to more efficiently facilitate the logistics of the Academy. The University just implemented a master's level criminal justice degree program and is working to get the continuing education credit at that level as well as the undergraduate level. Eventually, WSU is interested in developing a bachelor degree in victim services that would complement and partner with the Utah SVAA.

### **Evaluations**

Obtaining responses to their post-Academy evaluations has been quite difficult for the Utah SVAA. Discussions among Planning Committee members have provided some decisions for how to improve their response rate. One of the decisions made is to create a telephone interview protocol and a written survey with closed-ended questions and check boxes. Stakeholders agree that further discussions about which protocol to implement, if either, will need to take place in the future.

At the end of the original OVC funding period in 2003, the Utah SVAA sought a variety of sources for sustaining the Academy.

## **4. SUSTAINABILITY**

The Utah SVAA Planning Committee developed a Financial Planning Subcommittee to seek and report on fund development opportunities and activities. During its first year of operation, the Planning Committee determined that the annual budget for operating the Utah SVAA totaled \$100,000. This did not include in-kind contributions. Stakeholder interviews revealed that OVC funding would end in 2003; however, the Utah SVAA Planning Committee designed the Academy to ensure on-going financial support beyond the support of OVC. From the outset, the financial plan included a one-third contribution from students, a one-third contribution from VOCA, and a one-third contribution from OVC/CVR/UCVC. At the conclusion of funding from OVC, the Utah SVAA will continue with the support of student

tuition, and financing by the Office of Crime Victims Reparation, and Utah Council on Victims of Crime.

## **5. OUTCOMES: PAST EVALUATIONS**

During each Academy, both quantitative and qualitative data is collected by Academy staff from each student about the sessions and the Academy overall. Surveys are used to gather data that will assist the Utah SVAA in determining student knowledge and skill gain, as well as their overall satisfaction with the training, the logistics of the Academy and future topics of interest.

### **5.1 Evaluation Design**

The Utah SVAA collects data through daily evaluations and overall evaluations about students' Academy experience during the Academy week. Students are asked to rate, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), their level of agreement, about the presentation of the material, their knowledge increase, introduction of new concepts, demonstration of knowledge by the presenter, and satisfaction with the Academy Text. The overall evaluation is a slightly enhanced NVAA document. This questionnaire requests that participants provide feedback on the Utah SVAA Academy Text, the instructional level appropriateness, methods of instruction, facilities, and course organization and time using a scale ranging from "poor" to "outstanding."

### **5.2 Evaluation Results**

Overall, the participants of the first Utah SVAA rated their Academy experience positively. Of the 61 students in attendance at the 2001 Academy, more than 90 percent rated their experience as "outstanding" or "excellent." More than half felt favorably about the content of the Utah SVAA Academy Text. Thirty-six percent of the students stated that the Academy was appropriate for those with one or less years' experience. An equal number believed the curriculum to be an appropriate instructional level for those with two or more years' experience. The faculty, methods of instruction, facilities, and course organization all received "excellent" or "outstanding" ratings.

Six months after Academy attendance, students are surveyed about the three most important concepts or skills they learned while attending the Utah SVAA. Students are also asked how they have implemented these concepts and skills into their jobs, and to identify any barriers to doing so. Simultaneous to disseminating student surveys, the Utah SVAA also requests input from the supervisors of students who have attended the Academy. They are similarly queried about their employees' knowledge and skill gain that has benefited their

organization, as well as barriers, topics or concerns that Utah SVAA needs to address in the future. Stakeholders report that it has been extremely difficult to obtain responses to the six-month evaluation, but that the Academy has received favorable feedback of the completed evaluations they had received. Of those responding, both supervisors and former students particularly report the value of the Academy manual especially the Utah-specific presentation of topics.

Immediate feedback from students during the first Academy prompted Academy officials to make swift changes. For example, the Utah SVAA adjusted the presentation schedule after learning that it was not wise to present highly emotional topics (e.g., murder, drunk driving, child abuse) back-to-back. Students reported experiencing “meltdown” after receiving information on these kinds of topics. Therefore, the Utah SVAA began “staggering” topics to prevent this from occurring in the future. For example, after presenting a highly emotional topic, students engage in an interactive, scenario-based or processing activity.

Stakeholders interviewed said that the evaluation results predict fewer turnovers because victim service providers are receiving better training, which includes tools to help decrease stress and lessen burnout. These are factors that will help retain newly trained advocates.

## **6. IMPACTS: CURRENT ASSESSMENT**

To supplement data collected from previous Utah SVAA evaluations conducted by Academy staff, a research team from Caliber Associates collected data via telephone interviews with 13 former Utah UVAA students, 2 individual stakeholder interviews, and a focus group with 15 additional stakeholders. All data collected by the Caliber research team was collected between January and May 2003. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in analyzing the supplemental data. The findings of the analyses are presented below.

### **6.1 Students**

Caliber conducted telephone interviews with a sample of 13 former Utah SVAA students from the 2001 and 2002 academies. Students were asked about the impact of the Academy on them and the organizations/agencies at which they work. Students were also asked about their knowledge and skill gain and use, changes in attitudes and behaviors, and their general experience at the Academy. Of those students interviewed, all 13 report knowledge gain and two report skill gain. Specifically, updated laws and statistics, resources available to them, and information on communicating with child victims, and safety planning were cited as examples of their knowledge gain. In terms of skills, students report learning to conduct needs assessments and safety plans. A small percentage of students reporting modest skill gains indicated that the

Utah SVAA simply enhanced the skills they already had. For example, they are more effective and empathetic when interacting with victims.

Students described using their knowledge and skill gains to develop new services and improve existing services. For example, students have implemented risk assessments and safety plans, created Lock Exchange Programs, developed limited release policies with other agencies, and improved restitution procedures. More than half (69%) of the students report using the materials they received at the Academy in their work place as sources of reference or for training their advocates.

Almost 70 percent of students interviewed did report changes in their attitudes and behaviors as a result of attending the Academy. They have demonstrated a more sensitive, less judgmental approach to interacting with victims, and are better able to deal with job-related stress. In addition, students do report that they have expanded their knowledge and skills since the Academy more than they would have had they not attended the Academy. For example, 62 percent report attending additional workshops, seminars, and trainings on topics they were exposed to at the Academy.

Based on interviews with key stakeholders conducted for this assessment, it appears that students receive the dual benefits of cross-training and networking opportunities at the Utah SVAA. The Academy is beneficial in that this interdisciplinary approach allows people from other agencies to build bridges and offer different perspectives. Comments from student evaluations confirm what the stakeholders believe to be one of the values of the Academy. Also during the interviews with Caliber staff, students remarked that they have gained an appreciation and understanding of how people and their agencies fit into this victim assistance “puzzle.” In fact, one student verbally commented that she was no longer scared to interact with law enforcement officials as she had been before the Academy. Another student, who is a therapist, remarked that she never thought about getting a release from her clients that would allow her to work with victim advocates if her clients sought their assistance. Now she will implement this procedure into her practice.

## **6.2 University Partners**

Early in the planning process, Weber State University considered expanding their Criminal Justice Department curriculum to include victim assistance classes. In particular, discussions have taken place about implementing a victimology degree program within the Social Work Department. Although the Criminal Justice Department presents a victimology class, stakeholders believed that incorporating a social work element was necessary. Follow-up interviews with stakeholders reveal that Weber is in the process of expanding their Criminal

Justice Department curriculum to include victim assistance classes. In particular, discussions have taken place about implementing a victimology degree program as a joint venture between the Criminal Justice, Social Work, Psychology and Sociology departments.

### **6.3 Victims' Field**

Stakeholders remarked that the Utah SVAA definitely adds to the professionalization of the field by offering a standard, formal, professional training for advocates. The focus group with 15 stakeholders produced a few words to describe the process of professionalizing the field: knowledge, attitude, and respect. They explained instances that support their belief that the Utah SVAA has been influential in setting standards as well as teaching them. One member admits that as an administrator, he uses the Academy to justify the salary and benefit increases of his advocates. The Academy provides the minimum basic level of standardized training that an advocate must have and this is a good starting point for salary considerations. Overall, stakeholders believe that the Utah SVAA lends credibility to the field.

Approximately 77 percent of the students interviewed report changes in their attitude towards other agencies. A number of students said they became more aware about the services that other agencies offer and do or that they even existed. Some students remarked that they now understand that their agencies have to take responsibility for educating other agencies on what their agencies do in order to increase cooperation between agencies. Now that students view these agencies as resources, they report feeling comfortable working with these agencies and understand the importance of communicating. In fact, a majority (85%) of the students interviewed report staying in touch with other students they met at the Academy. All report that the contact has benefited them in their work with victims because of the access to more resources and referrals that these networking opportunities provide.

When interviewed, both stakeholders and students alike agree that networking has been one of the most beneficial aspects of the Academy. All of the students report that having a wide range of knowledge and experience among students was conducive to their learning. Overall, former Academy students report that the Utah SVAA has created an identity for victim advocates such that others in the criminal justice system will understand their role and know what to expect of them.

## **7. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

In addition to the interviews conducted with stakeholders and former Utah SVAA students, the data reviewed and analyzed for this case study reveal key findings and lessons learned from the Utah Victim Assistance Academy site. The key findings and lessons learned

are grouped by factors that influenced planning, implementation, and sustainability and are presented below.

## 7.1 Factors that Influenced Planning

Stakeholders reported several factors that contributed to planning the Utah SVAA. The key findings and lessons learned during the planning stage are:

- **Conducting a statewide needs assessment is vital.** Stakeholders report that it was important to solicit training development ideas for the Academy from the victim services field. Targeting key people, maintaining support for the SVAA, and deciding what direction to take the academy in prior to implementation required input from those who would take advantage of the training the Academy would provide.
- **Conducting “mini” academies was critical to identifying the needs of the field, appropriate teaching faculty, and potential beneficiaries of the Academy.** Stakeholders report that conducting “mini” academies that allowed stakeholders to preview the Academy was important in terms of achieving buy-in from the field.
- **A change in organizational representation among the partnership may affect the planning stage.** Just after their first Academy, the chair of WSU’s Criminal Justice Department retired. This change slowed down the implementation process for the second Academy because the Planning Committee had to start again in terms of getting support from the new chair, building a relationship with new contacts, and obtaining agreement to keep the same focus with the university partner.
- **Creating a balanced student body is important.** According to stakeholders, the first two academies were comprised primarily of females, so the Planning Committee became concerned about the female to male student ratio. Prior to the third academy, the Planning Committee took steps to recruit male facilitators in hopes that this would increase male student attendance.

## 7.2 Factors that Influenced Implementation

Stakeholders reported several factors that contributed to implementing the Utah SVAA. The key findings and lessons learned during the implementation stage are:

- **Employ a multi-method approach for a skill-based training.** Stakeholders report that in transferring knowledge, it is important to employ adult learning theory and interactive skill-building activities to ensure knowledge and skill gains among students.
- **Use marketing techniques to obtain buy-in from the field.** Stakeholders also report that three aspects of the Academy have been particularly helpful in garnering support for the Academy. First, students receive a certificate of completion. This is

proof of credibility in the field. Second, students get a videotape that shows the activities of that particular Academy. Students show this videotape to co-workers, family, and supervisors, which serves as a good advertising tool. Finally, the students' supervisors are invited to the luncheon on the last day. Stakeholders believe that inviting the supervisors provides yet another opportunity to promote the Academy and get buy-in. Some supervisors are reluctant to send their staff to the Academy because of lack of staff or funding or the length of time required for attendance. This luncheon is a way of showing supervisors that the Academy is worth the time and funds.

- **Be aware of other victim services conferences and annual meetings.** Stakeholders reported that scheduling the Academy has been influenced by the university partner's academic calendar and other victim service training schedules. Many of the Utah SVAA facilitators look forward to attending the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) conference, which previously has been held the week after the Utah SVAA. Since it was not prudent to have facilitators away from their jobs two weeks in a row, the Utah SVAA Planning Committee has been careful to take this into consideration when setting the dates for the Academy training week. The Planning Committee also began recruiting for additional facilitators so that facilitators could "rotate" each year. This allows them to maintain their facilitator pool, allows facilitators to maintain their obligations at their own agencies, and attend other victim service trainings. Another governing factor that affected Academy date selection has been Weber State University's graduation schedule. The Committee is also careful to take Weber's academic schedule into account when deciding upon Academy dates each year.

### 7.3 Factors that Influenced Sustainability

Sustainability is a real issue for the Utah SVAA. Although efforts are made to generate on-going revenues from Academy attendance by victim service providers and agencies, a decrease in operating funds could jeopardize the long-term sustainability of the Academy. The Utah SVAA stakeholders reported several factors that facilitated or challenged their efforts at sustainability:

- **A commitment to continuing and generating the resources needed to sustain the Academy is crucial.** Stakeholders agree that it will take dedication by the partners to improve training for victim service providers and to maintain the Academy. All of the partner agencies are committed to putting forth whatever resources are necessary to continue the Utah SVAA. For example, CVR will continue to put forth a substantial portion of the operating funds, the university partner will continue to provide facilities, and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Utah agreed to cover the cost of printing the Utah SVAA curriculum for the 2003 Academy.
- **Consider the economic climate.** Prior to the 2003 Academy, the Financial Planning Subcommittee explored diverse funding sources to include private foundations and

corporations. One of the challenges stakeholders faced in looking to these funding sources was the economic conditions of the state. Stakeholders report that because many of the nonprofit organizations would be relying heavily on this funding source since Federal and State funding was not as plentiful in 2003, the possibility existed that it would be difficult to secure funding from private agencies.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

This case study report chronicles the Utah SVAA's activities and resources between 1999 – 2003 for meeting their goals and objectives. Using the funding and support provided by OVC, including the NVAA curriculum, the OVC Resource Center and Training and Technical Assistance Center, as well as its key organizational partners, the Utah SVAA planned and implemented weeklong SVAAAs from 2001 – 2003. In addition to receiving training and technical assistance, the Utah SVAA Academy Coordinator has responded to various requests for assistance. States requesting assistance have included Hawaii, Oregon, and Alaska to which telephone consultation and copies of the Utah SVAA curriculum were provided. The Coordinator also has made presentations for Weber State University's Social Work Department. Committee members regularly mention the Utah SVAA when they conduct trainings and have financed exhibits at various conferences to advertise the Utah SVAA. At least one domestic violence organization has employed the Utah SVAA curriculum to train 100 law enforcement officers. Stakeholders also report that at least four statewide organizations, agencies, and shelters have used the Utah SVAA curriculum to train their employees. These organizations agree that the curriculum provides the standardized training their employees need. Moreover, the Academy Coordinator has sought mentoring from the Texas SVAA on their unique presentation style.

As of 2003, the academy has served approximately 185 victim services professionals and practitioners. Since the very first academy, students have reported a change in their attitudes towards victims and the victim services field. Based on prior evaluations of the Utah SVAA students and their supervisors, as well as telephone interviews conducted in the spring of 2003, students reported feeling more effective and empathetic when interacting with victims. After attending the Academy, students have used the knowledge and skills they learned to implement risk assessments and safety plans, conduct needs assessments, created programs and implemented policies to improve their programs. These results are directly in line with the goals of the Utah SVAA to improve the quality and availability of direct services to victims of crime by training victim service providers.

In addition to the reported positive student outcomes, the Utah SVAA has also created new working relationships between the victim services field and its university partners and within victim services organizations in Utah. The Utah SVAA has also facilitated several

activities that may contribute to professionalizing the victim services field such as increasing student networking and educational attainment. In terms of sustainability, the Utah SVAA has identified funding and resources that will allow them to plan for an Academy in 2004.

## **VII. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

## **VII. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The five case study sites were very different in size and approach to developing their academy although there were common themes and challenges, and opportunities to learn from each other. This chapter presents a summary of key findings and lessons learned identified within and across sites. The key findings relate to the overarching goals and key questions addressed by the case studies including: goal accomplishment, impact of the SVAA on students, and role of the SVAA in professionalizing the field. Additionally, this chapter highlights important lessons learned from the case studies, including factors reported to have contributed to SVAA success as well as those that hindered progress. A table highlighting key features of each of the SVAA case studies is presented at the end of this chapter. Together, this information is meant to guide other states in the development of their own statewide training academy for victim service providers, allied professionals, and volunteers.

### **1. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

#### **1.1 SVAA Goal Accomplishment**

An important question addressed by the case studies was, “To what extent did each SVAA accomplish its goals and objectives as outlined in its strategic plan for the SVAA?” This report chronicles each SVAA’s activities for meeting their goals as well as the resources that contributed to this. Overall, each of the sites was successful at bringing together partners with commitments to serving the needs of crime victims in their states, including university partners. These partnerships have worked together to plan and implement academies that would meet the relevant training needs of the victim service providers statewide. Moreover, most of the academic partners demonstrated a willingness to embrace the possibility of developing a victim-focused curriculum within their university if one did not currently exist. Each site has also used the NVAA curriculum, at least as a starting point, and OVC support in their efforts to plan and implement their State Academies. In terms of sustainability, each site reported that consistent funding and resources are significant factors to continuing the SVAA’s and efforts to identify and secure such funding must occur earlier than later in the initiative.

#### **1.2 Impact of the SVAA on Students**

Another important question was the extent to which students report knowledge and skill gains, attitude and behavior changes, and how they have applied what they learned at the SVAA. Student comments and statistics gleaned via telephone interviews were generally positive. Approximately 70 percent of respondents reported that they had gained new skills as a result of their Academy participation, and over 90 percent described gains in knowledge. Attesting to the usefulness of this new information is the fact that the vast majority of students (approximately

80%) reported utilizing new skills and/or knowledge in their work with victims. Almost half of students said that they had used new information to implement or improve services to victims. In addition, 50 percent stated that they had used this information to implement new policies or practices. These findings are promising for the victim services field.

Positive changes in attitude and behavior were also noted by students. A majority of students reported a shift in their attitudes related to both victims and other agencies. A little over 35 percent of those interviewed said they noticed changes in their coworkers' or supervisor's attitude towards them, and about 45 percent reported other attitude changes toward their profession. When asked about changes in behavior on the job, almost 50 percent of the interviewees reported positive changes in how they worked with victims.

### **1.3 Role of the SVAA in Professionalizing the Field**

An additional question to be answered by the case studies was, "To what extent does the SVAA contribute to professionalizing the field?" Many students mentioned the ample opportunities for networking that the Academy affords. This statement is reflected in the 70 percent of interviewees who reported continued contact with fellow SVAA students following the conclusion of the Academy. Almost all of those students who reported contact felt that it has been beneficial to their clients. Nearly 100 percent of previous students said that they had discussed the SVAA with coworkers and as many said that they would recommend the experience to other advocates.

Stakeholders agree that the SVAA has greatly contributed to the professionalizing the field in that it provides standardized training for victim service providers across the state. This training adds credibility to what the victim service programs are trying to achieve in meeting the needs of crime victims, which is recognized by other non-victim service professionals. The issue of certification and accreditation of individual SVAA's have also been considered by stakeholders and recommended by students. Both stakeholders and students believe this will give victim service providers an added level of standing within and outside the field.

## **2. LESSONS LEARNED**

According to stakeholders and program staff at each site, there were several critical factors that contributed to the success of each SVAA in achieving its goals, impacting students, and contributing to professionalizing the field. Specifically, factors influencing the planning, implementation, and sustainability phases of the Academies, both positively and negatively, are presented in the following subsections. Where appropriate, references are provided for specific Academies that can serve as a resource and provide guidance on how to

effectively accomplish the identified task. Additionally, sample documents and protocols from the SVAAAs are provided in Appendix B as additional resources.

## 2.1 Factors Contributing to SVAA Success

### Success Factors for Planning

Based on the case studies, the following key factors were identified as contributing to successful planning of a SVAA:

- Choosing collaborative partners wisely (e.g., shared vision of the Academy, committed to offering quality training)
- Commitment of the planning committee members (e.g., consistently attend meetings, participate in working groups, follow-through with commitment) (*Utah, Connecticut*)
- Hiring key staff and project coordinator to oversee planning (e.g., coordinate planning meetings, identify key stakeholders to include on committees, connected to the victims field) (*Pennsylvania, Texas*)
- Strong leadership from the SVAA sponsoring agency (e.g., foster continued support from State, facilitate relationship with OVC/NVAA)
- Common vision shared by stakeholders
- Consensus model of decision-making created a sense of equal partnership among the stakeholders
- Formal needs assessments of the field (e.g., government and non-government agencies, grassroots organizations, front-line works, supervisors) to ensure the Academy is designed to meet diverse training and educational needs (*Utah, Texas, Colorado*)
- Development of selection criteria for faculty, university partners, and students (*Texas, Colorado, Pennsylvania*)
- Ongoing guidance, support, and access to resources/materials from OVC and the NVAA.

Although each site had varying success with each of these factors, they were recognized across the board as things others should consider when planning a SVAA.

## Success Factors for Implementation

For the implementation phase of the State Academies, the following factors were considered important for ensuring success:

- Strong academic partner well recognized within the state with expertise in victimology or willingness to embrace a victim-focused curriculum (*Connecticut, Texas, Pennsylvania*)
- Committed faculty and steering committee members to the Academy
- Rotation of agency/organizational or individual representation among steering committee members
- Appropriate site selection to accommodate the geographic challenges attendance might pose (*Colorado*)
- Strong marketing/advertisement of the Academy and its benefits to the field (*Connecticut, Colorado*)
- Availability of scholarships for students to facilitate Academy attendance
- Appropriate mix of students for the SVAA (e.g., different professions, variation in geographic location, gender, type of victim served, etc.)
- Multi-method instructional approach (e.g., use of video, small group discussion, role-play, experiential learning, etc.)

Again, not all Academies embraced each of these factors to the same degree but each was recognized for its value to the implementation phase by most of the Academies.

## Success Factors for Sustainability

Finally, when asked about key factors contributing to the sustainability of a SVAA, the following were identified by most of the sites:

- Commitment from steering committee and faculty beyond the grant period
- State and local agency buy-in to the SVAA (e.g., sending students, paying fees, advertising the Academy) (*Texas, Pennsylvania*)
- Access to State, local, or private funding to continue the project at the conclusion of the OVC grant (*Texas, Pennsylvania, Utah*).

Sustainability was identified by all states as the most challenging phase of the initiative. Sustainability requires time and resources, both limited commodities. During a time of shrinking resources for victim services, it is often difficult and challenging to engage in long-term planning, especially financial planning. All of the Academies reported the need for additional technical assistance from the beginning of their academy planning process with sustainability (see below for more detail on challenges to sustainability).

## **2.2 Factors Hindering SVAA Success**

In addition to important lessons learned regarding factors contributing to Academy success, stakeholders and program staff at each site also identified factors which posed a challenge to each SVAA.

### **Challenges to Planning**

Key stakeholders and program staff identified several factors that hindered the planning phase of the Academies. These included:

- Insufficient staff, resources, expertise, and time to conduct a thorough SVAA planning process
- Lack of guidelines or protocols for establishing and maintaining an ongoing working relationship with local colleges and universities
- Including university partner after the planning phase had been completed (need to involve them from the beginning)

Additionally, lack of a shared vision around the purpose of the Academy was a problem for some sites. Specifically, the primary problem was reaching consensus on whether the Academy should have been designed and implemented as a training or an educational course. This struggle, not unique to the State Academies, reflects the historically different philosophies of many practitioners and academicians. Obtaining assistance on how to manage these differences and how to use information from a formal needs assessment of the field to help inform what the vision and mission of the Academy should be is critical during the planning phase.

### **Challenges to Implementation**

There were several factors that posed challenges or barriers to the implementation of the Academies. These included:

- Lack of a mission and a purpose that clearly differentiate them from other State and local victim services training (e.g., confusion within the state and across agencies regarding how the State Academy is “different” from other training programs, including the NVAA)
- Limitations of university partner to assist with implementation (e.g., scheduling conflicts, access to facilities/constraints on use, access to appropriate faculty)
- Lack of strategic marketing efforts for recruitment of students and garnering support (financial, etc.) from legislators and the community at large
- Ineffective use of evaluation data to make modifications to the structure and content of the Academy (often data collected but not used in planning to improve/refine the Academy).

These issues are important not only because of their implications for successful implementation of the Academy but because they have implications for the ongoing planning and sustainability as well. For example, if a state is having problems recruiting students, perhaps because agencies do not understand why it is important to send their staff to the Academy, it becomes very difficult to know how to plan for future Academies (e.g., anticipated needs, expected number of participants, needed resources, etc.) and therefore garner support necessary for sustainability. Dissemination of information about the SVAA at all levels (national, state, and local) that differentiates the SVAA model from other academies and highlights the benefits of the Academy for the state, victim service agencies, providers, and victims of crime is critical to continued success of the SVAA. Where possible, both anecdotal and more quantitative evidence of training outcomes need to be included in the marketing materials.

### **Challenges to Sustainability**

The biggest challenge or obstacle to sustainability for all sites was obtaining funding to support the Academy once OVC funding ended. Some states were faced with having to consider outsourcing the Academy to the private sector (e.g., the university partner) because of a lack of public funding. In addition to a lack of funding, poor or inadequate preparation and attention to sustaining the Academy beyond OVC funding early on in the initial planning phase of the Academy was a problem for some. It is often difficult to think about raising funds to sustain an initiative at the same time you are planning how to spend the existing funds you have just received.

**KEY FEATURES OF THE FIVE SVAA CASE STUDY SITES**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Colorado</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>Utah</b>
Project Coordinator	Part-time	NA	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
Key partners	DAs Office, law enforcement, human service agencies, academia	University, judicial branch, victim services	University, Pennsylvania Commission on crime and Delinquency, State Coalitions Against Domestic Violence and Rape	State Crime Victims Organization, University, victim services stakeholders	University, law enforcement, community-based service agencies
Location of the Academy	Hotel	University of New Haven, CT	University of Scranton, PA	Sam Houston State University campus	Weber State University Campus
Average length of the Academy (in days)	5	5	5	6	5
# of Academies offered to date	5	2	3	3	3
# of students served to date	118	73	106	146	185
Average number of students per academy	24	36	35	49	60
# of students receiving academic credit	50	13	3	10	20
# of core faculty per academy	16	5	10	8	16
Use of the NVAA text as a model	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Type of evaluation conducted	Student session and overall feedback, 6-and 12-month follow-up with students and supervisors	Class evaluations, overall academy evaluation, follow-up questionnaire	Class evaluations, overall student evaluations, pre/post testing, follow-up questionnaire	Session evaluations, overall academy satisfaction survey, pre/post testing	Student session and overall feedback, pre/post testing of students, 6-month follow-up with students and supervisors

**KEY FEATURES OF THE FIVE SVAA CASE STUDY SITES (CONT.)**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Colorado</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>Utah</b>
Plans for a 2004 Academy	Yes, April 26 – 30	No	Yes, TBD	Yes, TBD	Yes, June 13 – 18
Availability of Academy materials	Electronic form can be completed via the COVA web site to request information, be placed on a mailing list, and receive academy application.  Hard copies available of 2002 academy application, instructor packet, and academy evaluation protocols.	Hard copies of academy evaluation protocols available upon request.	Electronic version of application available online.  Hard copies available of course handouts.	Daily outlines and evaluation summaries are posted on the website.  Hardcopy materials are reprinted by request.	Electronic versions of the academy application available from CVR web site.  Hard copies of academy evaluation protocols, academy coordinator job description, and facilitator job descriptions available upon request.
Contact information	Adrian Unell Academy Coordinator 789 Sherman Street, #670 Denver, CO 80203 303-861-1160 800-261-2682 303-961-1265-fax adrian30@earthlink.net <a href="http://www.colorado.org/academy.htm">http://www.colorado.org/academy.htm</a>	Linda Cimino Director, Office of Victim Services Office of Victim Services Supreme Court Building 231 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106 860-747-6070 Linda.cimino@jud.state.ct.us	Jan Bechtel Manager Education and Outreach Program Office of Victims’ Services Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency P.O. Box 1167 Harrisburg, PA 17108 717-783-0551, Ext. 3014 jabechtel@state.pa.us <a href="http://www.pccd.state.pa.us">www.pccd.state.pa.us</a>	Eugenia (Jennie) Barr, Ph.D. LPC Program Administrator for Applied Research Crime Victims’ Institute PO Box 12548 300 W. 15 <sup>th</sup> William Clements Building Austin, TX 78711 521- 936-1655 512-708-8799-fax jennie.barr@oag.state.tx.us <a href="http://www.oag.state.tx.us">http://www.oag.state.tx.us</a>	Victim Service Coordinator Office of Crime Victim Reparations 350 East 500 South, Suite 200 Salt Lake City, UT 84111 801-238-2369 <a href="http://www.crimevictim.utah.gov">http://www.crimevictim.utah.gov</a>

## **VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

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This chapter presents recommendations supported by the five SVAA case studies (Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah) for ways to improve the future planning, implementation, and sustainability of successful SVAAAs.

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SVAAS**

This section highlights key recommendations related to leadership, marketing, recruitment, technical assistance and assessment and evaluation. This information should be considered along with the specific recommendations included with each case study in Chapters II - VI and the key findings and lessons learned presented in Chapter VII for future SVAAAs.

#### **1.1 Leadership**

##### **Lead Agency**

It was clear from all of the Academies the importance of identifying a strong lead agency/organization for each SVAA. The lead agency should be capable of garnering support for the Academy across the state, identifying funding opportunities, and reaching out to other agencies and organizations to serve on the steering committee. Additionally, it is helpful if the lead agency has an existing relationship with potential university partners.

The lead agency must also be able to convey the vision and mission of the Academy to potential partners and committee members. It is important that the benefits of the Academy be clearly presented to all relevant stakeholders—State and local victim service agencies, university partners, State legislators, etc. to help gain their buy-in, support, and commitment to the Academy.

##### **Partnering University/College**

It is important to select a University/College Partner that can provide access to faculty with expertise in criminal justice and victimology (if possible), offer continuing education unit (CEU) credits for participants of the Academy, support for the Academy from the administration, and if necessary, can provide the facilities for housing the Academy. The selection criteria developed by the Texas SVAA and the formal solicitation process utilized by the Pennsylvania SVAA are good models to follow when identifying a partner. Factors to consider might include: the type of university or college, geographic location, degrees or courses offered in related topics, distance learning technology, and quality of housing/food services.

It also is important for the University/College Partner to share, with the lead agency, the vision for the Academy, whether the focus is on training, education, or both. To ensure a successful partnership, the University/College Partner should be brought on board during the early planning stages of the Academy (in fact, as early as the grant writing stage, if possible).

### **Steering Committee**

When establishing a steering committee, it is important to reach out to grassroots organizations and agencies serving unserved and underserved populations in addition to other mainstream victim service providers. Diversity among the committee (e.g., representing different agencies, populations, geographic areas within the state, etc.) is important, however, with diversity comes differences of opinion. It is important that all concerns regarding collaboration be discussed openly early on and throughout the planning and implementation of the Academy. Additionally, engaging the steering committee throughout the duration of the Academy – not just during the planning phase is critical to success.

### **1.2 Marketing/Recruitment**

It is important to create a plan from the outset for marketing the benefits of the Academy to current and future stakeholders, including funding agencies, victim service organizations, faculty, and students. Marketing efforts need to target agency directors and supervisors as well as front-line works, demonstrating the benefits to the individual student, the agency, and ultimately to the client.

Additionally, when recruiting faculty, it is important to ensure a well-rounded core for the Academy representing both practitioners and educators. Faculty members should be representative of all cultures, genders, and the victim services field (e.g., law enforcement, medical, mental health, substance abuse counselors, domestic violence providers, clergy, etc.). It also is important for faculty to have experience working with a diverse group of clients. Faculty also should have experience in the principles of adult learning. If not, training should be provided to ensure the learning styles of students can be accommodated by the faculty.

Efforts to recruit participants for the Academy must be culturally appropriate and reach diverse populations, ranging from Victim Witness Coordinators to Community Advocates. Additionally, recruitment efforts should focus on the identified needs of the participants (as identified by the formal needs assessment) and how the Academy can meet those needs. Where possible, offering scholarships, especially to individuals from grassroots organizations, can increase recruitment.

### **1.3 Technical Assistance**

Critical to the successful planning, implementation, and sustainability of the Academy is access to technical assistance. One form of technical assistance is to utilize the resources developed by the existing SVAAAs (e.g., needs assessment surveys, selection criteria, curriculum development methodologies, evaluation tools). Although each state has unique characteristics and features of its Academy, much of the information developed for each has utility for other states. For example, existing Academies can share planning guides, needs assessment instruments, curricula and other supporting materials (e.g., agendas, logistical plans, registration forms), and evaluation protocols with other states. Setting up a repository of these materials accessible to existing Academies as well as states wanting to start an Academy is an important next step. Additionally, lessons learned from existing states can be shared with others through conferences, websites, and other communication mechanisms that can facilitate networking, information sharing, and technical assistance delivery. The opportunity for this type of information exchange between new and existing SVAAAs was made possible by OVC during its most recent grantee meeting. Other opportunities for information exchange and technical assistance are being planned by OVC in collaboration with OVC TTAC.

It is important for states to take advantage of the mentoring and technical assistance available from OVC and the NVAA. Shadowing faculty at the NVAA, reviewing materials developed for the NVAA, and talking with the NVAA developers regarding budgeting, logistics, planning, implementation, and sustainability have been valuable exchanges for the existing SVAAAs. States also recognized, however, that not all states can be successfully modeled after the NVAA. It is important to have the NVAA as a resource or guide, but SVAAAs need to be tailored to meet the specific needs of the victim service providers and victims in each state.

### **1.4 Needs Assessment and Evaluation**

The importance of conducting a needs assessment and evaluating the Academy were recognized at the outset by OVC as critical factors to the success of any SVAA. Although requirements for funding, each sites acknowledged the importance of basing an academy on the identified needs of the state and evaluating the academy to ensure those needs were being met. It was recognized that a needs assessment should include not only the topic areas to be covered during the Academy but preferred location, length, method of delivery (interactive sessions, labs, satellite conferencing, mentoring, on-line tutorials), and expected outcomes (knowledge gains, new skills, change in attitudes, increased network). The results of the needs assessment, if used correctly, can greatly assist with the planning phase of the Academy. In addition to a needs assessment, each Academy should evaluate its training efforts. This is essential to determine if the Academy is in fact achieving its intended goals and objectives. Additionally, the evaluation results can be used to obtain continued support for the Academy, including financial assistance.

Academies are more likely to continue to receive funding if they can demonstrate the impact of the training for the field.

## **2. CONCLUSION**

The results of the case studies suggest that State Victim Assistance Academies can and do address the need for statewide, consistent, comprehensive, skills-based training of victim service providers, allied professionals, and volunteers who come in contact with crime victims. The findings from the case studies are both positive and informative and provide a roadmap for other states looking for solutions to their statewide training needs. The information in this report provides insight into possible obstacles and challenges that states will face during the various phases of development, as well as ideas for solutions to overcome problems. Additionally, this information demonstrates the possible benefits of instituting a State Victim Assistance Academy for the state, agencies and organizations, providers, and ultimately victims of crime. Drawing on the experiences and lessons learned from the existing SVAAAs and using them as resources, along with the assistance available from OVC through NVAA, OVC TTAC, and OVC RC will contribute to the successful development of future SVAAAs across the country. Finally, increased marketing of the SVAA model, ongoing technical assistance in key areas identified by the five SVAAAs (e.g., recruitment, financial planning/fundraising, etc.), and continued evaluation by states and OVC of the immediate and long-term benefits of the training, including the cost-benefit of statewide training, will provide states with the information needed to garner initial support for a State Victim Assistance Academy and maintain support and resources needed for sustainability.

**APPENDIX A:  
CASE STUDY DATA  
COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Research Question: To what extent did SVAA accomplish its goals as outlined in the strategic plan for the state academy? What useful resources/barriers may have contributed to this?

Name of the program document reviewed:

Document copied?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents to be forwarded by the SVAA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents summarized on site?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:

Possible points of inquiry

- What is the mission of the SVAA?
- What are the goals/objects of the SVAA?
- What are the outcomes of the SVAA?

Research Question: What types of students attend the SVAA? How many students attend the SVAA? How diverse are the SVAA students in discipline?

Name of the program document reviewed:

Document copied?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents to be forwarded by the SVAA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents summarized on site?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:

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Research Question: What were the results of pre-post tests for students attending the SVAA?

Name of the program document reviewed:

Document copied?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents to be forwarded by the SVAA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents summarized on site?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:

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Research Question: To what extent have University partners incorporated victim course work into existing/new curricula or developed other activities as a result of SVAA?

Name of the program document reviewed:

Document copied?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents to be forwarded by the SVAA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
Documents summarized on site?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:

Possible points of inquiry

- Who is the SVAA university sponsor?
- Which universities/departments are represented on the SVAA steering committee?
- Which universities/departments do the SVAA faculty members represent?
- Which universities provide undergraduate/graduate credits to students who attend the SVAA?

## SVAA STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Interview Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency or Organization Representing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SVAA Site:**

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### *Introduction:*

Caliber Associates is collecting data for an assessment of the five SVAAAs originally funded by OVC in 1999: Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Texas and Utah. The purpose of the SVAA assessment is to assess the SVAAAs' progress in meeting its objectives and to develop a report with recommendations to OVC and the field on developing, implementing and sustaining successful SVAAAs.

*The confidentiality of the information you provide is guaranteed. Only members of the Caliber Associates team will have access to information that could identify individuals. OVC and NIJ will never have access to what you as an individual say during this interview. Your responses to these questions will be reported only in aggregate and will never identify you as an individual.*

*Your participation in this evaluation is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate in the study or withdraw your participation from the study at any time without consequences or penalties. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

**I'm going to start by asking you a few questions about your involvement with the SVAA.**

1. What is your role with the SVAA? How did you become involved with the SVAA?
2. How was the SVAA planning/steering committee formed? Does it have broad representation of victim assistance, criminal justice and social service professionals to plan the development of the SVAA? Were any key stakeholders missing from the planning/steering committee?

3. What is the role of the SVAA planning/steering committee? Did the SVAA planning/steering committee face any barriers or challenges in accomplishing its tasks? How did you overcome these barriers?
4. What did you hope to achieve with the SVAA? What are the goals of the SVAA? Did the SVAA have a special focus, or concentration?

**Now, I want to ask you a few questions about the key factors to successful planning and implementation of an SVAA.**

5. If you were to classify your SVAA as successful, define success. What resources helped to make the SVAA a success? (Probe: NVAA, OVC, other SVAAAs)
6. What factors contributed to the success of the SVAA during the planning phase?
7. What barriers or challenges did you experience in planning the SVAA? How did you overcome them?
8. How would you describe the transition from the planning phase to the implementation phase? (Probe: Did it go smoothly? Were there problems?)
9. What factors contributed to the success of the SVAA during the implementation phase?
10. Were there any key partners or collaborations that contributed to planning and implementing the SVAA other than those already mentioned? (Probe: OVC or OVC TTAC, Other key Federal or State agencies, Local colleges/universities Local or tribal victim service agencies)
11. Were there barriers or challenges in implementing the SVAA? How did you overcome them?

**Now, I want to ask you a few questions about the impact of the SVAA on students and the professionalization of victim service programs. What kinds of students attend the SVAA?**

12. What is the most valuable aspect of the SVAA for participants?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. Do you think the SVAA contributes to “professionalizing” the victim assistance field? If yes, to what extent?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. If victim service programs in your state wished to expand or enhance their victim-related training and educational programs would you recommend that they use the SVAA model/materials? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. Have the SVAA model/materials been used by *victim service programs* to expand or enhance their victim-related training and educational programs? If yes, explain the benefits of using this information. Have there been any challenges in adapting the SVAA model/materials for local, victim-related training and education? Please explain

**\*\*The following questions are for SVAA faculty members, although other SVAA stakeholders may also be familiar with the university programs in their state.**

16. Did you receive feedback from students about the SVAA either on-site during the Academy or afterwards? Do students report an increase or change in knowledge, attitudes, skills and abilities following SVAA participation? What examples of changes in SVAA student knowledge, attitudes, skills and abilities were provided?

17. How many universities in your state offer victimology or victim-related course work? How many sponsor victim-related events?

18. If victim service programs or colleges/universities in your state wished to expand or enhance their victim-related training and educational programs would you recommend that they use the SVAA model/materials? Why or why not?

19. Have the SVAA model/materials been used by *colleges/universities* in your state to expand or enhance their victim-related training and educational programs? If yes, explain the benefits of using this information. Have there been any challenges in adapting the SVAA model/materials for use by colleges/universities?

20. Has the SVAA model created any other changes to college/university departments in your state? If yes, which departments and what kind of changes were made? Has it impacted the attitudes of any department heads or other administrators toward the victims' field (e.g., increased enrollment in victim-related course, new/better course offerings in victimology, new degree programs)?

**Finally, I want to ask you a few questions about your plans for sustaining the SVAA.**

21. What plans are in place for sustaining the SVAA? What type of support is needed to sustain this type of program?

22. What factors have/will contribute to the sustainability of the SVAA?

23. Are there any key partners or collaborations that are contributing to the sustainability of the SVAA? (Probe: OVC or OVC TTAC, Other key Federal or State agencies, Local colleges/universities Local or tribal victim service agencies)
24. What have been/will be the barriers or challenges to sustaining the SVAA? How did/will you overcome them?
25. What advice would you give to other states planning an SVAA?
26. What recommendations do you have for OVC to assist other sites in developing and sustaining an SVAA? What additional assistance can they provide?

**Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us!**

## SVAA STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Interview Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SVAA Site:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency or Organization Representing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(work)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(home)**

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### *Introduction:*

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ with Caliber Associates. Caliber is collecting data for a case study assessment of five State Victim Assistance Academies (SVAAs) funded by the Federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). The focus of these case studies will be to assess the SVAAs' progress in meeting its objectives and to develop a report with recommendations to OVC and the field on developing, implementing and sustaining successful SVAAs.

*The confidentiality of the information you provide is guaranteed. Only members of the Caliber Associates team will have access to information that could identify individuals. OVC and SVAA will never have access to what you as an individual say during this interview. Your responses to these questions will be reported only in aggregate and will never identify you as an individual.*

*Your participation in this evaluation is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate in the study or withdraw your participation from the study at any time without consequences or penalties. The interview will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes.*

*Do you have time right now to participate? If no, when would be a good time for you? If yes, do you have any questions before we begin?*

---

[Note to interviewers: Answer any questions the student has at this time. If he/she does not wish to participate in the interview, thank him/her for his/her time and conclude the call.]

Declined to participate

**I'm going to start by asking you a few questions about your participation with the SVAA.**

1. What year did you attend the SVAA? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How long have you been working in the victims assistance field? \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, I want to ask you a few questions about any changes to your skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors following your SVAA attendance.**

3. Did you gain any new *skills* as a result of attending the SVAA?

Yes

No

If yes, what new skills did you gain? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you gain any new *knowledge* as a result of attending the SVAA?

Yes

No

If yes, what new knowledge did you gain? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. If yes, have you used the *skills and/or knowledge* gained from the SVAA to make any changes in your program? [Note to interviewer: Refer to questions 3 and 4 above. Only ask this question if the respondent has indicated that he/she gained new skills and/or knowledge.]

Yes

No

If yes, have you [Read the options below and place a check mark next to the answers indicated by the respondent.]:

■ Implemented service/program expansion or improvement?:  Yes  No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

■ Implemented new policies or practices?:  Yes  No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

■ Other?:  Yes  No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

6. There are various ways that one's *attitude* might change as a result of attending the Academy. In the next questions, we would like to find out whether your attitudes changed toward various aspects of your work. [Note to interviewer: Read the questions below and place a check next to the answers indicated by the respondent.]

■ Was there a change in your attitude toward victims?  Yes  No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

■ Was there a change in your attitude toward specific Federal, State or local victim assistance agencies?  Yes  No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

■ Do you perceive a difference in the support provided to you by your peers and supervisor?  Yes  No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

■ Were there other changes in your attitudes?  Yes  No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Since returning from the SVAA, are there any major changes in your *behaviors* on the job?

Yes

No

Please describe the changes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Now, I want to ask you some questions about networking with other students from the SVAA.**

8. Have you stayed in touch with other students you met at the SVAA?

Yes

No [Note to interviewer: Skip to the last follow-up question below and record response.]

If yes, how many SVAA students *have you contacted*? \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate number)

If yes, how many SVAA students *contacted you*? \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate number)

For those you contacted, what were *your reasons*? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

For those who contacted you, what were *their reasons*? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the contact with other SVAA students *benefit your work with victims*? \_\_\_\_\_

If there has been no contact, why do you think that is the case? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Did you feel there was a wide range of knowledge and experience among your fellow SVAA students?

Yes

No

If yes, was this wide range conducive to learning or did it interfere with your ability to learn?

Conducive to learning

Interfered with learning

Did not matter

**Finally, I want to ask you some questions about your overall experiences/impressions following the SVAA.**

10. Have you used the SVAA materials since returning to your workplace?

Yes

No

Which materials have you used? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how have you used the materials? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If no, why haven't you used the materials? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you continued to expand your skills and/or knowledge of victim services since attending the SVAA, more than you probably would have anyway?

- Yes
- No

If yes, in what ways have you done this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, have you pursued any formal education/credit in the field of victim services/victimology?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what courses have you taken? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you had discussions about the SVAA with your co-workers since your return to work?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what words have you used most often to describe your experience in these discussions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Would you recommend SVAA attendance to other victim advocates/co-workers?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which of your co-workers would benefit most from the SVAA (i.e., position type) and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Have you actually referred other colleagues to the SVAA?

Yes

No

15. What changes would you recommend that SVAA make to be better able to advance the victims' field as a professional discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you have any other comments/suggestions that you'd like to make regarding the SVAA?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us!**

**APPENDIX B:**  
**SVAA SAMPLE RESOURCES**

## **COLORADO SAMPLE RESOURCES**

**PENNSYLVANIA SAMPLE RESOURCES**

## **TEXAS SAMPLE RESOURCES**

## **UTAH SAMPLE RESOURCES**