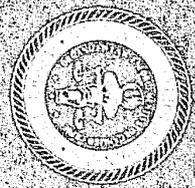
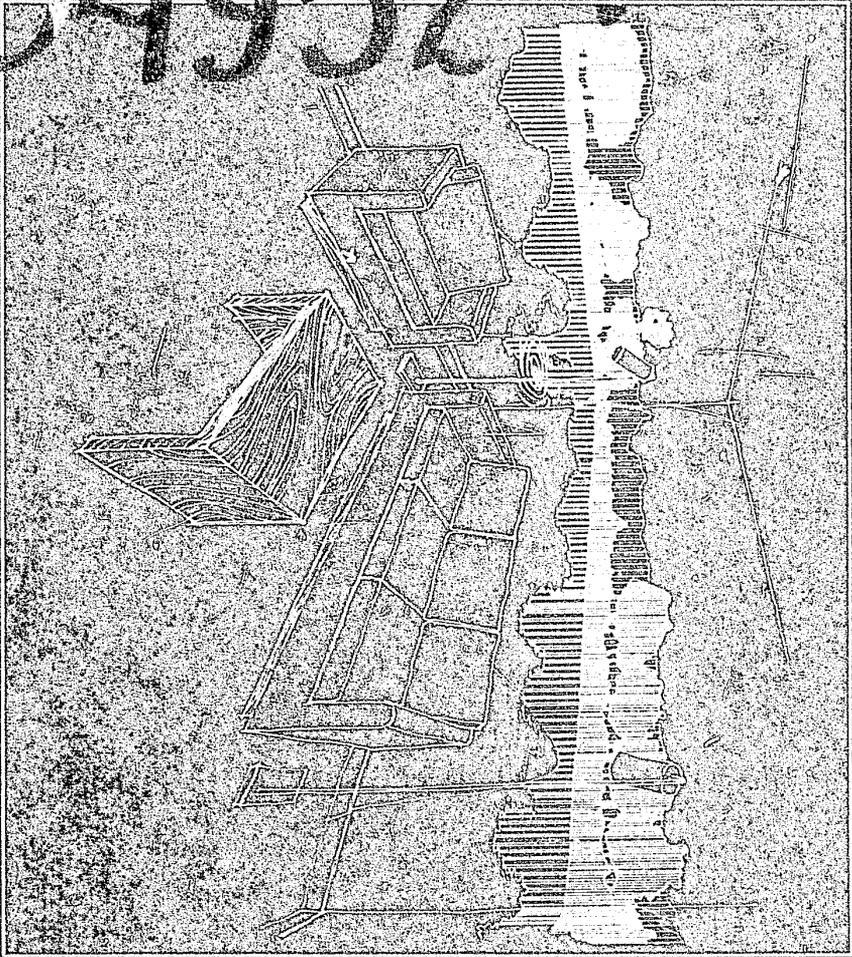


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**COMMISSION ON
VICTIM WITNESS
ASSISTANCE**

**A Primer for
Model
Victim Witness
Assistance
Centers**

A Special
National District Attorney's Association
Criminal Justice Improvement Program
Foreword by the
Law Enforcement Assistance
Administration

This is a special criminal justice improvement publication produced by the National District Attorneys Association Commission on Victim Witness Assistance. The Commission wishes to acknowledge the services rendered by its consultant, the architectural firm OKE, Inc., 1109 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. All drawings, cluster plans and architectural renderings have been designed by OKE, Inc. in consultation with the Commission on Victim Witness Assistance.

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ACQUISITIONS

Introduction

The victims and witnesses of crime are typically interviewed in less than acceptable facilities in most criminal justice institutions. Most victims and witnesses—as they pass through the criminal justice system—end up being interrogated on the street, in small and badly furnished offices and in the hallways of courthouses across America.

The victims and witnesses of crime are—or at least should be—the real “clients” of the criminal justice system. Without witnesses no district attorney could fulfill his responsibilities as a prosecutor. Moreover, witnesses who fulfill their responsibilities as citizens should be accorded the best possible treatment by all of us who serve the public interest. Those witnesses who are also the victims of crime should receive humane and considerate treatment from all law enforcement officials whose function it is to protect society.

Since October 1974, the National District Attorneys Association Commission on Victim Witness Assistance has been striving to find ways and means for improving the criminal justice system's responses to crime victims and witnesses. This publication suggests the creation of comfortable and secure victim witness reception centers. It suggests that such centers be constructed and furnished in such a manner as to provide the maximum amount of comfort and security to those of our citizens who have been injured or traumatized by criminal acts. Its emphases are on “non-institutional” settings, on providing a place where victims and witnesses may leave their small children, on providing privacy to spare embarrassment to those who have already been injured or shocked; in short, its emphasis in a total sense is on providing decent, desirable and friendly surroundings for people who have been preyed upon by crime.

The architectural concepts and drawings contained in this document have been prepared by OKE, Inc., an architectural firm in Silver Spring, Maryland. OKE, Inc. has consulted professionals to determine the extent to which district attorneys can, through design, furnishings and color, help set at ease

those who have undergone disturbing experiences. The model clusters and the center plans which appear on the following pages are all designed to set people at ease. This can be done in a number of ways and this document suggests the use of warm colors, comfortable and non-institutional furniture and indirect lighting. These are important concepts and should not be rejected out-of-hand by those district attorneys who wish to provide acceptable victim witness reception centers. On the other hand, without the use of trained and sensitive professional personnel, no such physical facility can have an impact. The drawings, architectural renderings and suggestions which appear on the following pages represent a goal which, in our judgment, prosecutors should strive to achieve. We understand that the facilities depicted may be beyond the present financial capabilities of many prosecutors. For that reason, the plan has been designed on a cluster basis: the space planning design employed is flexible, and distinct functional components are provided for in 12' x 12' “use” Clusters. These Clusters can be arranged in many configurations and most can be adapted to fit within existing or new buildings. The design allows for either “open” or “divided” plans and will give both small and large district attorney's offices ideas about establishing Victim Witness Assistance Centers.

No segment of society which becomes intimately involved in the criminal justice system should receive better or more considerate treatment than crime victims and witnesses. We suggest to prosecutors that one way to tangibly demonstrate prosecution's concern for the welfare, comfort and safety of crime victims and witnesses would be to renovate existing facilities by incorporating some of the ideas which appear on the following pages.

General Guidelines

In the design of both Cluster and Center Plans, the architect-designer has adhered to the following general guidelines in order to:

- provide space planning for small, medium and large Victim Witness Assistance Centers;
- provide for as much space flexibility and fixture portability as possible to facilitate the growth of small Centers, provide for a variety of plan arrangements and minimize wasted space;
- allow for "open plan" space common in new office buildings;
- allow for "divided space" more likely to be found in older structures; and
- create a secure and comfortable environment for victims and witnesses.

Furnishings and Color Recommendations

The model Victim Witness Assistance Center plans which appear in this brochure are designed to serve the needs of both clients and staff. The Clusters designed for client use (i.e. Reception, Waiting, Interview, Restroom and Babysitting) obviously serve a different function than the Staff Clusters (Secretary-Records, Private Office, Double Office and Conference). Furniture, paint finishes and lighting should reflect this distinction. If an "open" plan is used, the total space can be unified by the use of the same carpeting throughout.

Client areas should be designed to minimize emotional trauma. A quiet, secure and comfortable atmosphere is the goal. Thus, wall colors, carpeting and furniture fabrics should be muted and natural. Reception and Waiting Clusters should be treated with the same color scheme and a natural or beige scheme is recommended. To emphasize a feeling of security, the furniture should be substantial, comfortable and stable. Because the atmosphere should be easy and relaxed, we would recommend that wool fabrics or matt finish vinyl be used. Stiff furniture with shiny or slippery surfaces is not recommended. Lighting in the Client Reception and Waiting Clusters should continue the calm and secure theme: we recommend 75 footcandles in the Reception Cluster and 50 footcandles in the Waiting Cluster.

The Interview Cluster should be designed to resemble a

residential living room rather than an office. Colors employed could be earth tones such as dark gold, rust and brown. Substantial, upholstered and stable furniture should be used and we recommend solid color fabrics. To reinforce the client's need for security, we recommend the use of wall graphics that lower the vision line by using horizontal graphics about 4½ feet above the floor. To emphasize the secure atmosphere, ceilings may be painted the same color as the carpet (a light, neutral color is suggested). To emphasize the residential atmosphere, table and floor lamps may be used instead of ceiling light fixtures.

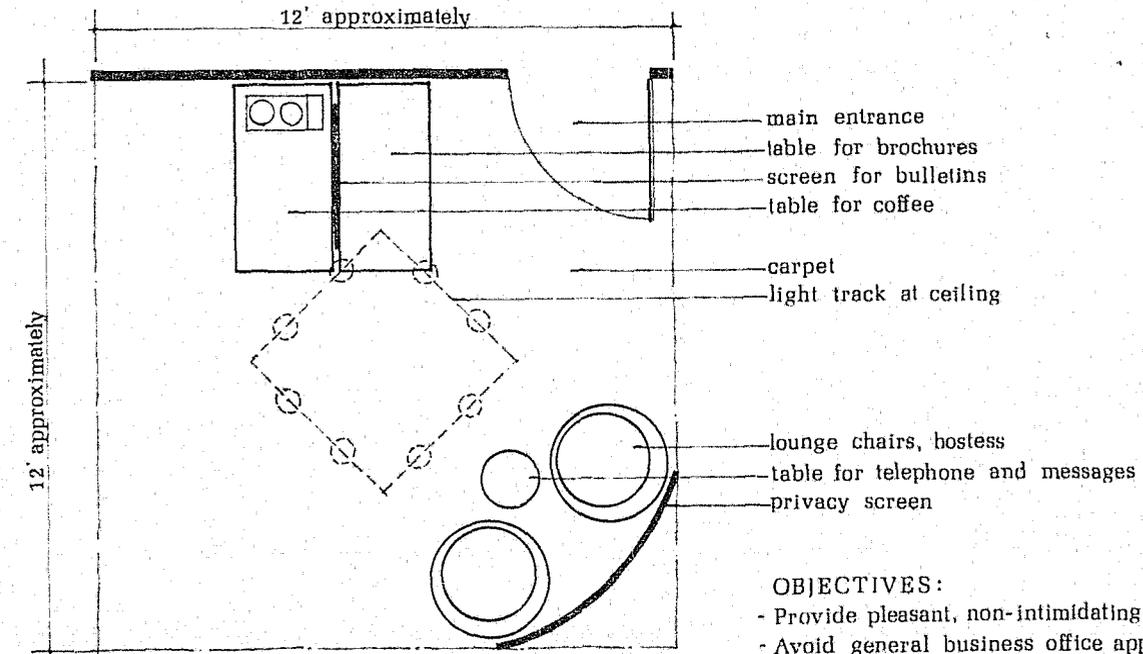
The Restroom Cluster can follow the prevailing client color scheme and should appear more like a residential powder room than an office building lavatory.

The Babysitting Cluster should be brighter and more vital than the other client Clusters. An open area with carpeted steps can be utilized as both a play and storage space. Colorful wall graphics provide an easy method for achieving a vital mood without occupying any space. Good lighting is necessary in this Cluster and ceiling fixtures would be appropriate.

The Staff Clusters are designed to provide efficient, comfortable work areas in which to conduct the administrative business of the Victim Witness Assistance Center. The client-staff distinction can be achieved through the use of a different color spectrum (i.e. blue-green range). The Staff Clusters will need desks, filing cabinets and other regular office equipment and, while these requirements will differ from the more "residential" style of the Client's Cluster, continuity can be achieved through the use of common carpeting, etc.

Clusters

In the following section are suggested layout plans for each individual Cluster. These plans suggest appropriate Cluster size, proper placement of furniture and then set forth the key objectives each Cluster is designed to achieve. In addition, four illustrations depict the architect-designer's conception of the proposed Waiting Cluster, the Interview Cluster, a typical Office Cluster and the Babysitting Cluster.

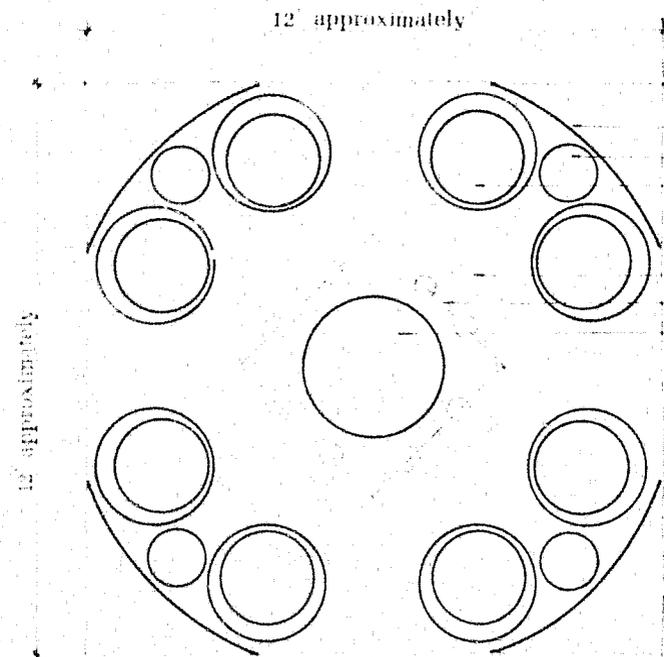


RECEPTION CLUSTER

MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide pleasant, non-intimidating greeting for clients
- Avoid general business office appearance and furnishing
- Arrange reception by host or hostess rather than secretary
- Continuity with waiting cluster in furnishing and use decreasing lighting levels for smooth transition to interview areas

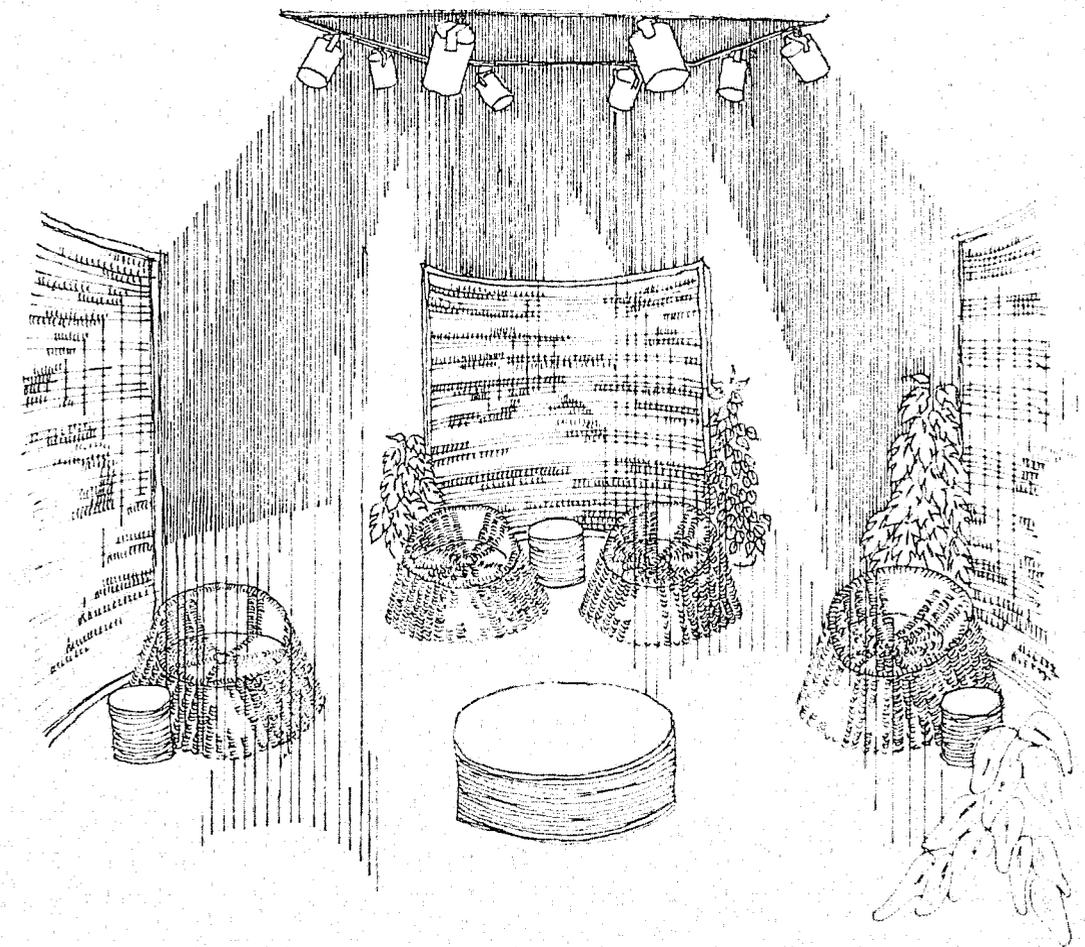


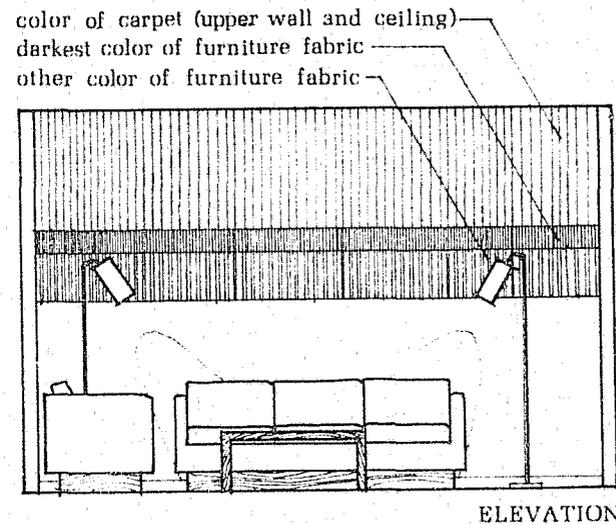
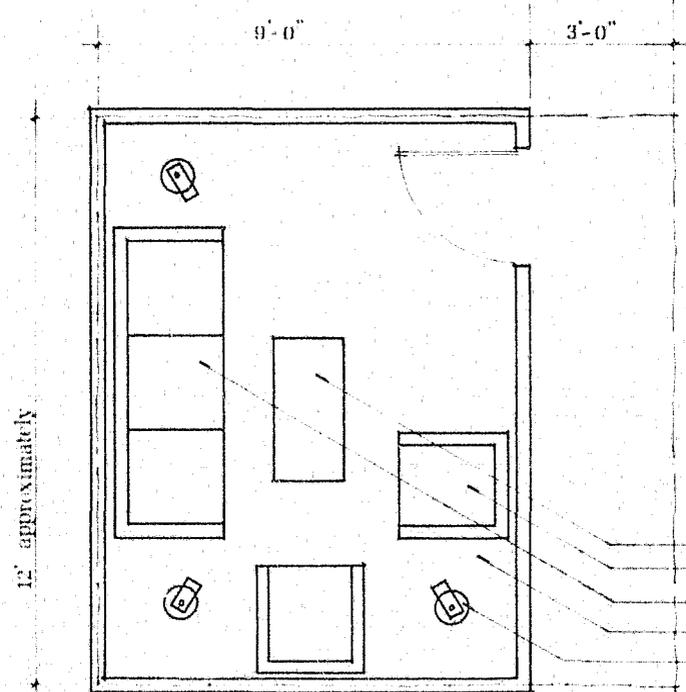
- privacy screen
- end table
- lounge chairs
- carpet
- light track at ceiling
- bench

- OBJECTIVES:**
- Casual furniture arrangement, planned mainly for small groups or individuals
 - Center bench used as a privacy barrier which still allows for one large group
 - Low lighting level for protected atmosphere; no light shining on any seat
 - Enclosure quality achieved by circular screens
 - Provide maximum comfort and a feeling of security for victim-witness clients

WAITING CLUSTER

MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
 NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION



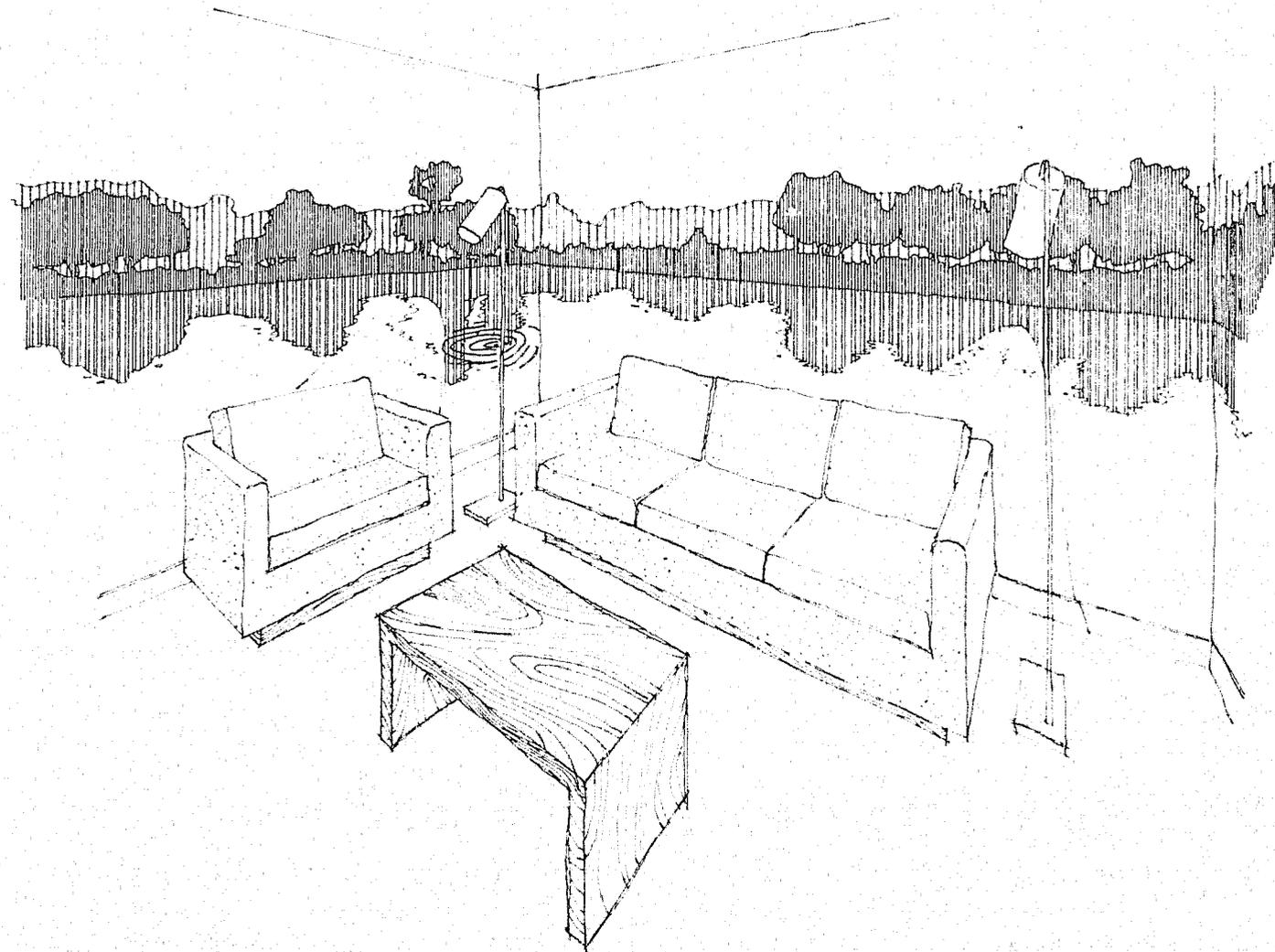


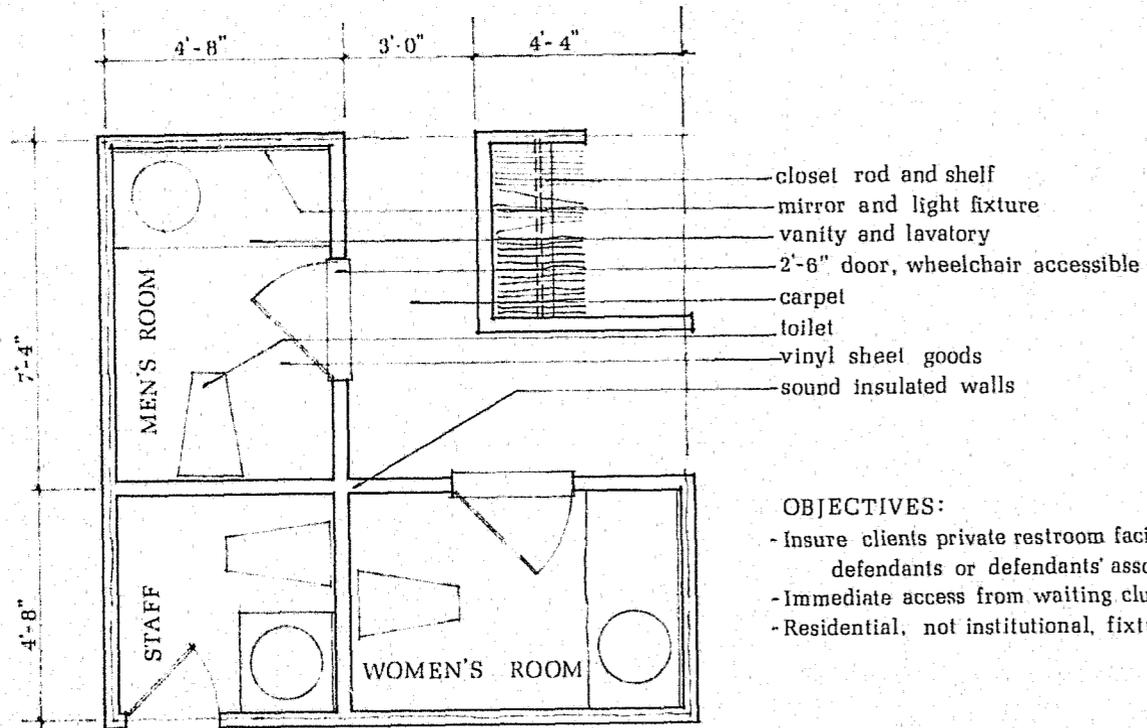
OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage relaxation in a familiar type of setting, a residential living room
- Reinforce enclosure quality by horizontal wall element and visually lowered ceiling
- Consider privacy of discussion with surrounding, sound-insulated walls

INTERVIEW CLUSTER

MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION





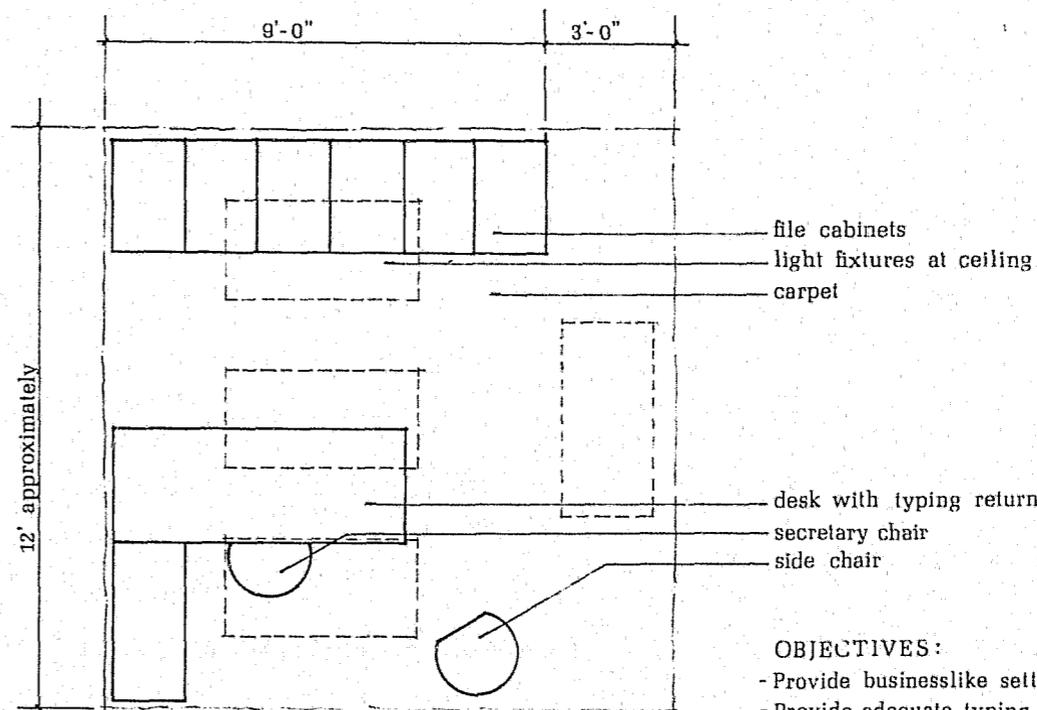
- closet rod and shelf
- mirror and light fixture
- vanity and lavatory
- 2'-6" door, wheelchair accessible
- carpet
- toilet
- vinyl sheet goods
- sound insulated walls

OBJECTIVES:

- Insure clients private restroom facilities to avoid mingling with defendants or defendants' associates
- Immediate access from waiting cluster
- Residential, not institutional, fixtures

RESTROOM-CLOSET CLUSTER

MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION



- file cabinets
- light fixtures at ceiling
- carpet

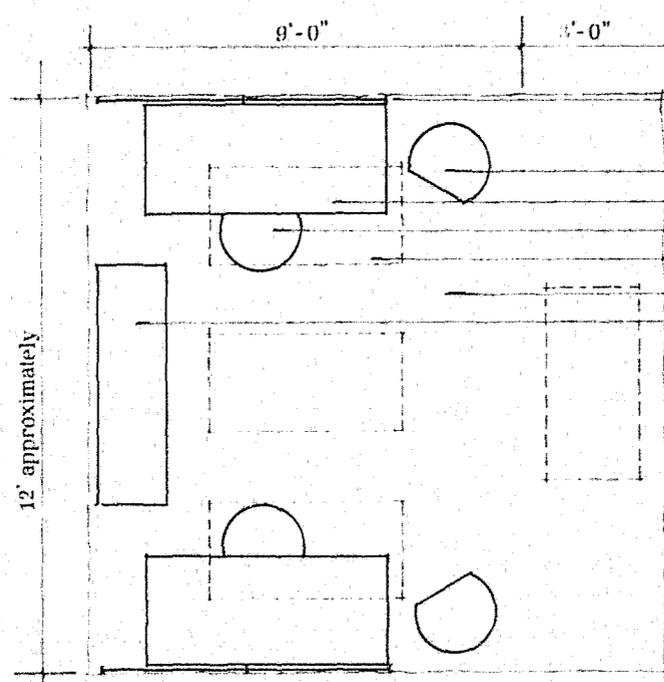
- desk with typing return
- secretary chair
- side chair

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide businesslike setting
- Provide adequate typing, filing, and telephone facilities
- Screen this more "institutional" area from client areas

SECRETARY - RECORDS CLUSTER

MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION



privacy screen for open plan;
for walls see plan layouts

side chair

desk

desk chair

light fixtures at ceiling

carpet

credenza

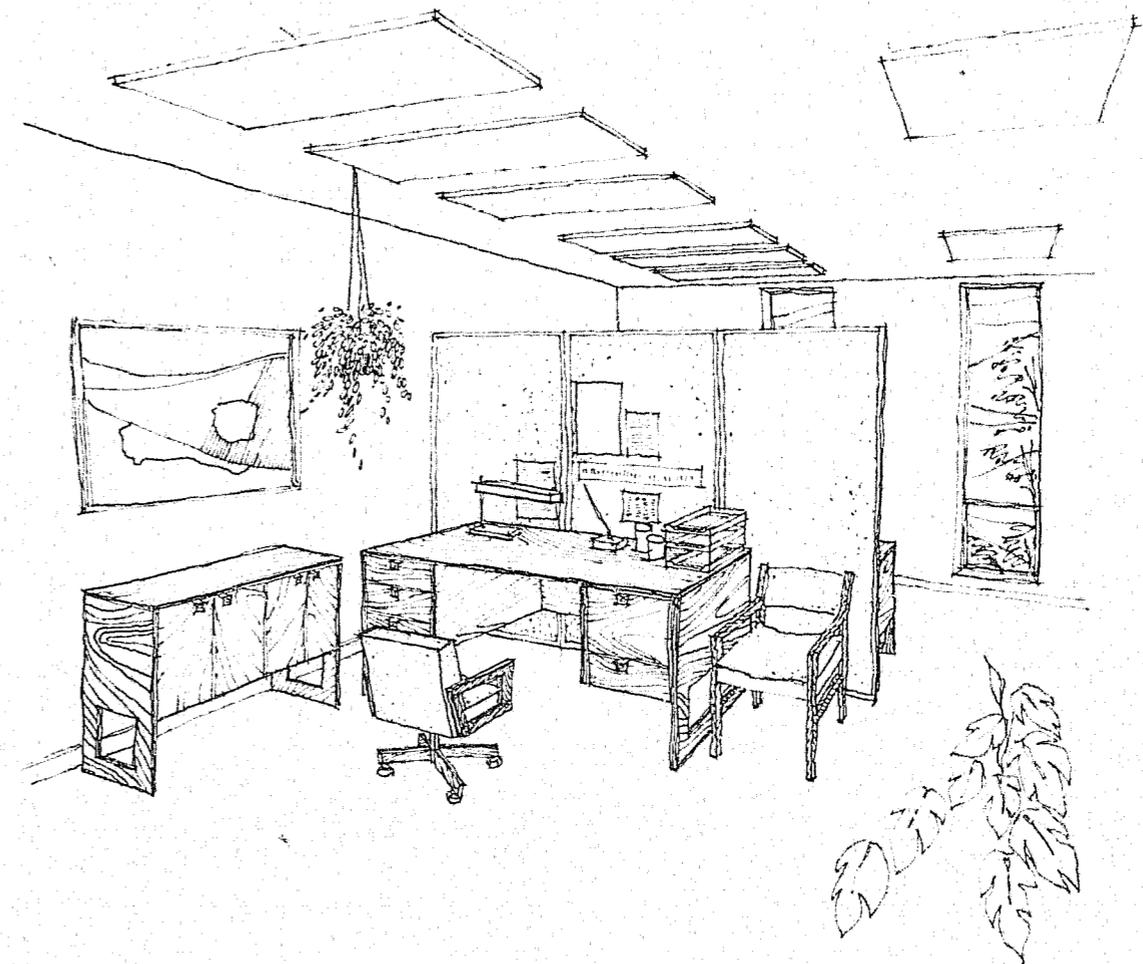
12' approximately

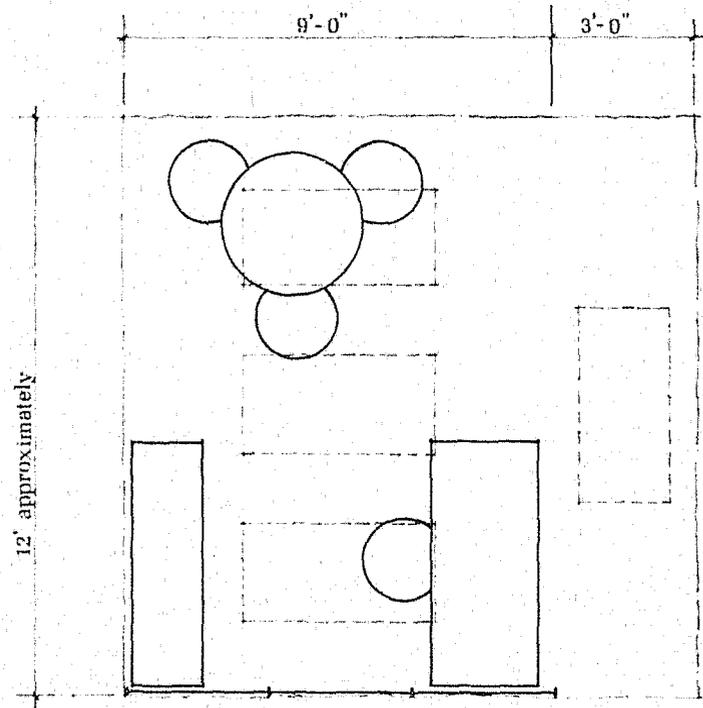
OBJECTIVES:

- Provide work space for victim-witness assistance personnel
- Screen visually from client areas

DOUBLE OFFICE CLUSTER

MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION





side chairs
table
light fixtures at ceiling
carpet

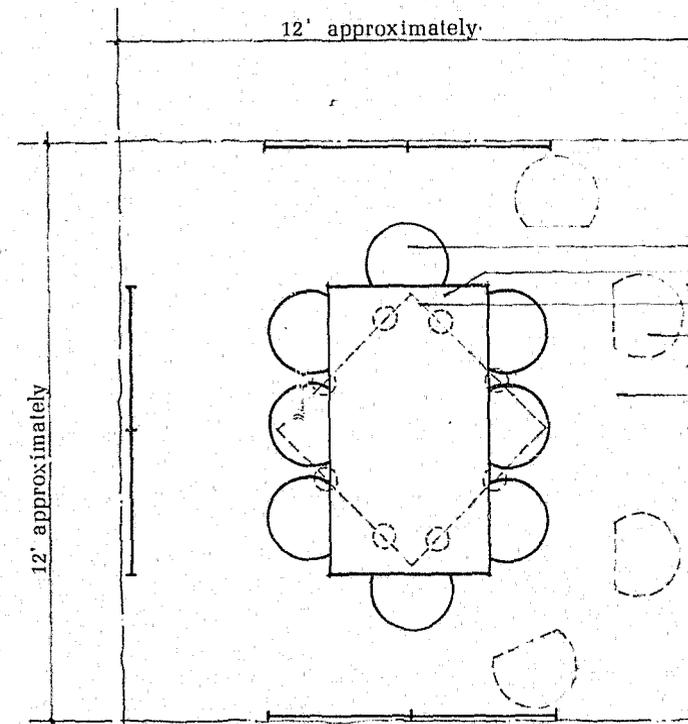
credenza
desk
desk chair
privacy screen for open plan

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide private office and work space for attorneys and other criminal justice professionals
- Provide privacy for confidential discussions and small conferences

PRIVATE OFFICE CLUSTER

MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION



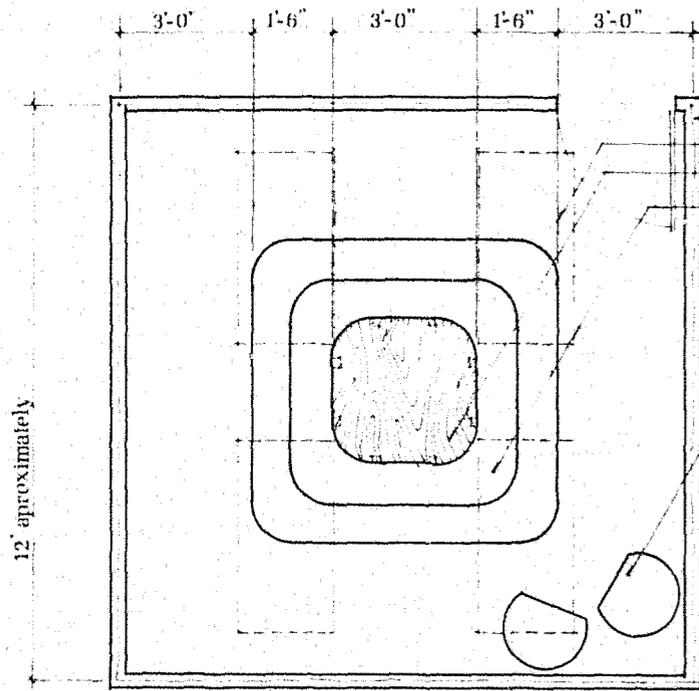
side chairs
conference table
light track at ceiling
additional chairs possible
privacy screens
carpet

OBJECTIVES:

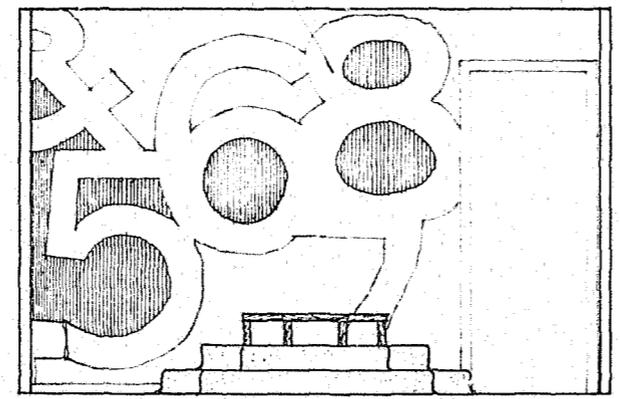
- Provide adequate space for conferences involving victims, witnesses, police, assistant DA's, and victim-witness assistance personnel
- Provide comfortable and efficient area for group and family conferences when necessary

CONFERENCE CLUSTER

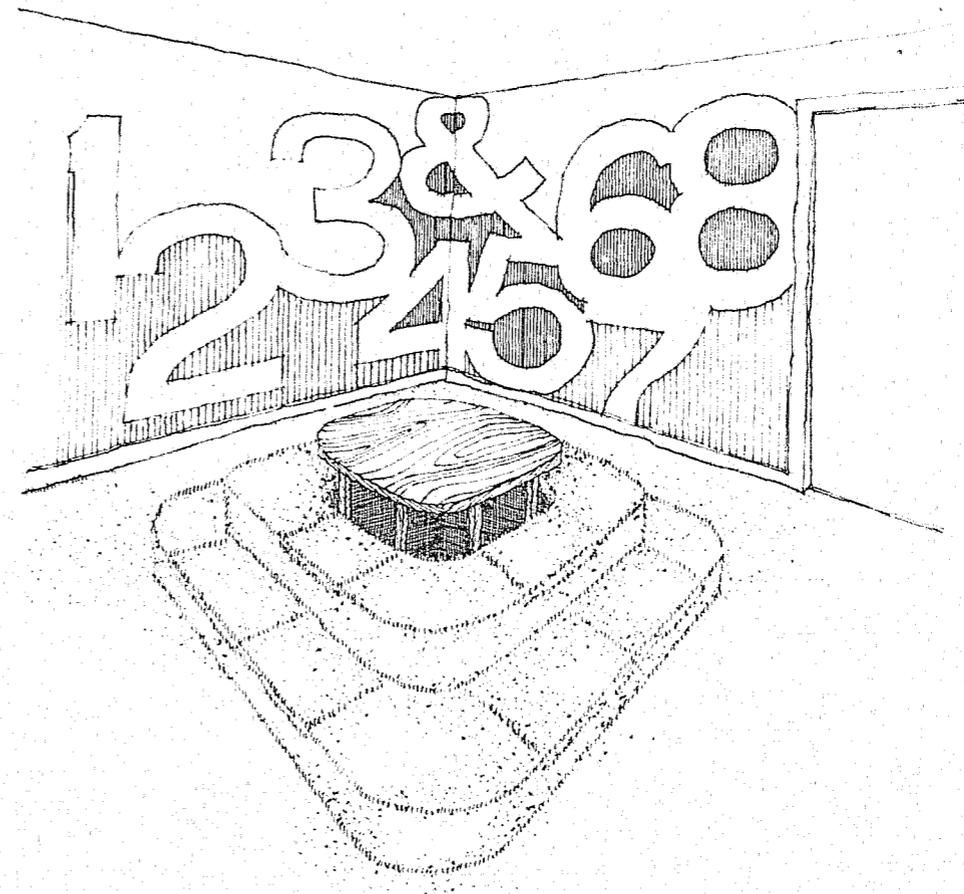
MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION



- sound insulated walls
- light fixtures at ceiling
- plastic laminate writing surface
- carpeted steps with lift-up storage
- wall graphics
- side chairs



ELEVATION



BABYSITTING CLUSTER

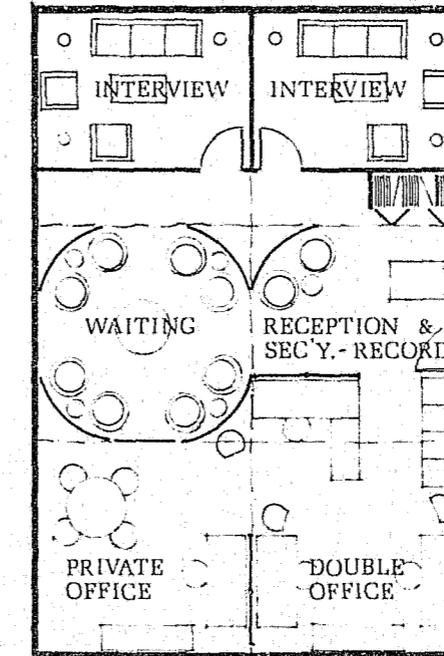
MODEL VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE CENTER
 NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

- OBJECTIVES:
- Provide secure but pleasant area for clients' children while their parents are involved in interviews or court proceedings
 - Flexible space for various activities
 - Avoid nursery atmosphere, for supervising older children

Center Layout

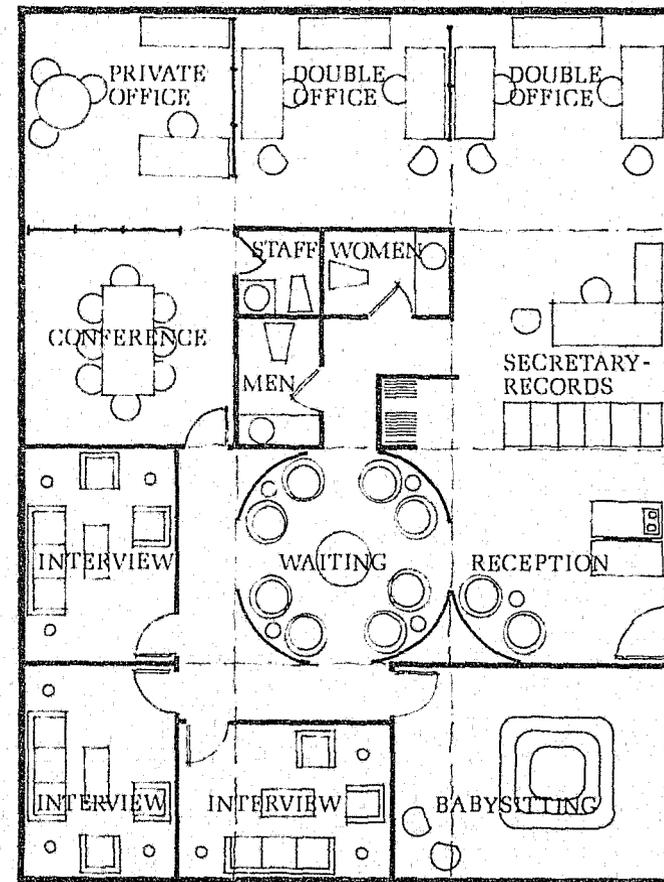
In the following section we provide layout plans for Victim Witness Reception Centers appropriate for small, medium, and large prosecution offices. The proposed plan for large offices provides an option of either an "open" plan or a traditional plan. The 12' x 12' Cluster Unit is a basic, suggested size and may, of course, vary because of available space. As a general guideline, the following number of Cluster Units have been suggested for small, medium, and large offices:

Cluster Type	Small	Medium	Large
Reception.....	1/2	1	1
Waiting.....	1	1	2
Interview.....	2	3	4
Toilet/Closet.....	-	1	1
Secretary/Records.....	1/2	1	2
Private Office.....	1	1	2
Double Office.....	1	2	3
Conference.....	-	1	1
Babysitting.....	-	1	1
Total Clusters.....	6	12	17
Total Area.....	864 sq. ft.	1,728 sq. ft.	2,448 sq. ft.
Staff for Center.....	4-5	6-8	10-12



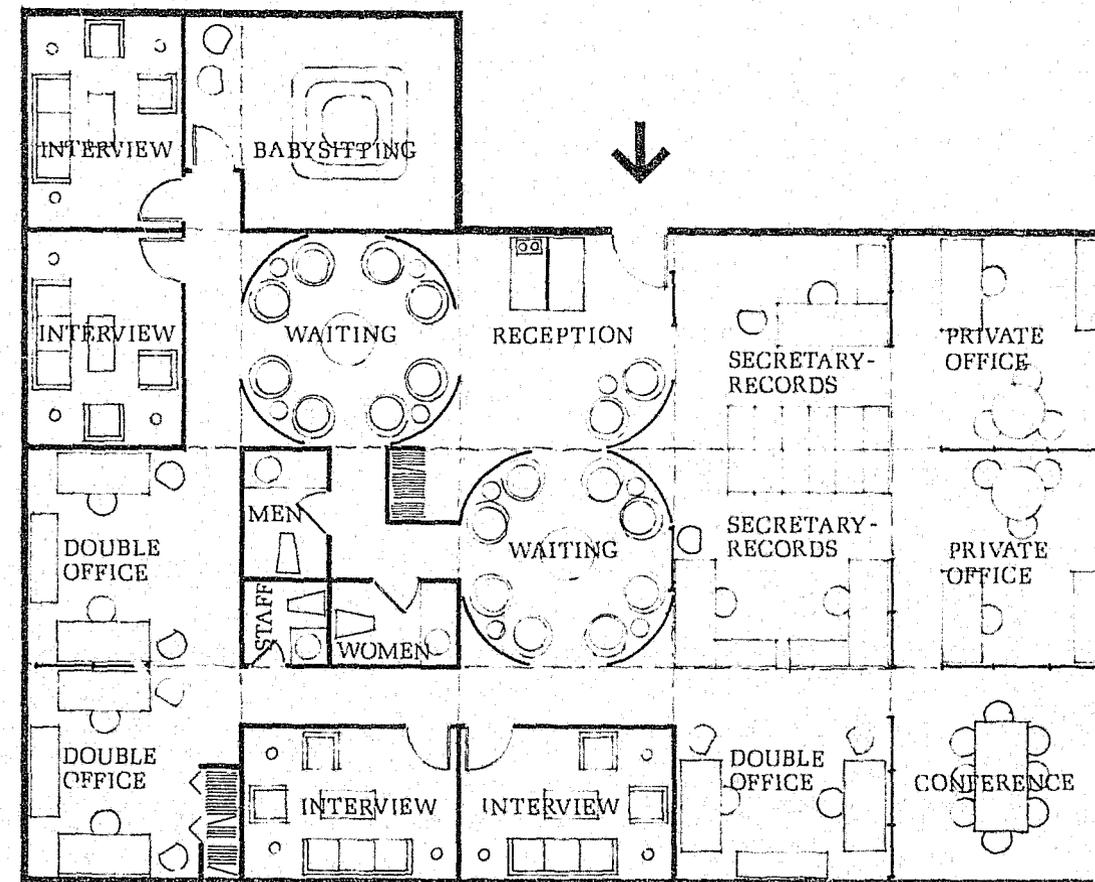
SMALL CENTER PLAN

864 square feet
4-5 staff members
open plan layout



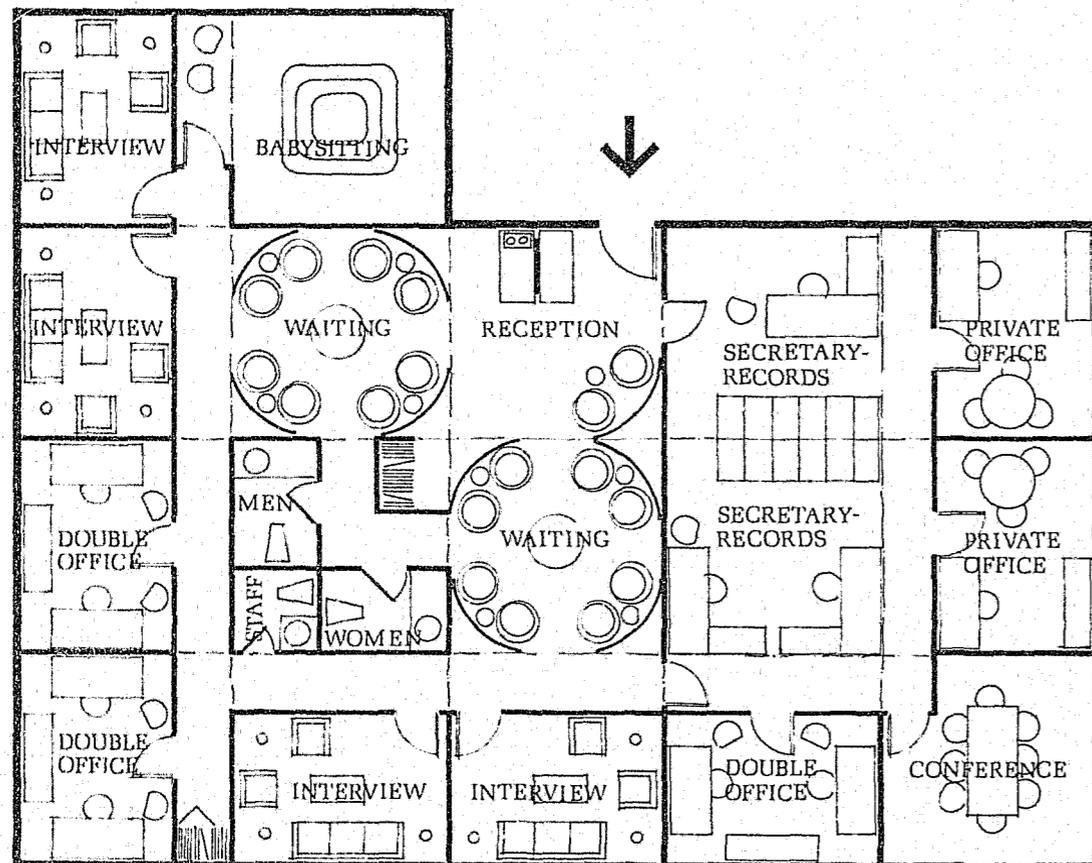
MEDIUM SIZED CENTER PLAN

1728 square feet
6-8 staff members
open plan layout



LARGE CENTER PLAN

2448 square feet
10-12 staff members
open plan layout



LARGE CENTER PLAN

2448 square feet
 10-12 staff members
 traditional layout

Budget Factors

Because of the many price variables, we have given estimated cost ranges for Victim Witness Clusters and Centers. Cluster costs include only retail furniture, carpeting and lighting fixture prices (June, 1975) in Washington, D.C.

Clusters

Cluster Type	Low	High
Reception Cluster	\$2500	\$3800
Waiting Cluster	\$4545	\$8780
Interview Cluster	\$3110	\$7220
Restroom/Closet Cluster	\$3100	\$3200
Secretary/Records Cluster	\$3220	\$4400
Private Office Cluster	\$3385	\$5760
Double Office Cluster	\$3790	\$6790
Conference Cluster	\$4620	\$6945
Babysitting Cluster	\$2120	\$2440

Centers

Estimated cost ranges for the Centers depicted in this brochure appear to the right. Center costs include furnishings and construction costs (partitions, installation of doors, wiring, etc.). "Low" estimates are based on costs in metropolitan Washington, D.C. in June, 1975. "High" estimates provide a 20% construction estimate differential to accommodate regional fluctuations in labor and materials.

Small Center	
1 Combined Reception and Secretary/Records Cluster	\$ 3,605-\$ 6,175
1 Waiting Cluster	\$ 4,790-\$ 9,070
2 Interview Clusters	\$ 6,220-\$14,440
1 Double Office Cluster	\$ 3,305-\$ 6,205
1 Private Office Cluster	\$ 2,780-\$ 5,200
Construction Costs	\$ 3,100-\$ 3,720
<i>Total</i>	\$23,800-\$44,810

Medium-Sized Center	
1 Reception Cluster	\$ 2,500-\$ 3,800
1 Waiting Cluster	\$ 4,545-\$ 8,780
3 Interview Clusters	\$ 9,330-\$21,660
1 Restroom/Closet Cluster	\$ 3,100-\$ 3,200
1 Secretary/Records Cluster	\$ 3,220-\$ 4,400
2 Double Office Clusters	\$ 6,120-\$11,825
1 Private Office Cluster	\$ 3,385-\$ 5,760
1 Conference Cluster	\$ 3,405-\$ 5,485
1 Babysitting Cluster	\$ 2,120-\$ 2,440
Construction Costs	\$11,400-\$13,680
<i>Total</i>	\$49,125-\$81,030

Large Center—Open Plan	
1 Reception Cluster	\$ 2,745-\$ 4,095
2 Waiting Clusters	\$ 9,330-\$17,850
4 Interview Clusters	\$12,440-\$28,880
1 Restroom/Closet Cluster	\$ 3,100-\$ 3,200
2 Secretary/Records Clusters	\$ 7,905-\$11,480
3 Double Office Clusters	\$ 8,935-\$17,445
2 Private Office Clusters	\$ 6,770-\$11,520
1 Conference Cluster	\$ 3,405-\$ 5,485
1 Babysitting Cluster	\$ 2,120-\$ 2,440
Construction	\$12,500-\$15,000
<i>Total</i>	\$69,250-\$117,395

Large Center—Traditional	
1 Reception Cluster	\$ 2,500-\$ 3,800
2 Waiting Clusters	\$ 9,090-\$17,560
4 Interview Clusters	\$12,440-\$28,880
1 Restroom/Closet Cluster	\$ 3,100-\$ 3,200
2 Secretary/Records Clusters	\$ 6,935-\$10,315
3 Double Office Clusters	\$ 8,450-\$16,860
2 Private Office Clusters	\$ 1,925-\$ 4,005
1 Conference Cluster	\$ 2,680-\$ 4,605
1 Babysitting Cluster	\$ 2,120-\$ 2,440
Construction	\$16,500-\$19,800
<i>Total</i>	\$65,740-\$111,465

Conclusion

This publication has provided plans and recommendations for the structuring and furnishing of Victim Witness Assistance Centers which could cost from \$23,800 to \$117,395. These sums are, of course, only estimates and District Attorneys may well find that total costs exceed these estimates. Nonetheless, in our judgment, the costs involved are minimal. This is particularly the case when they are measured against other costs in the criminal justice system. It has been estimated that the cost of incarcerating an offender can amount to \$11,000 per year; a typical police patrol car costs the taxpayers an estimated \$5,500; the cost of an additional police officer in a metropolitan jurisdiction can amount to \$29,000 per year; and the total amount of money expended annually for law enforcement and crime control is a staggering \$14 billion. Few, if any, of these dollars have been devoted to those citizens who are the victims of crime.

We do not suggest to District Attorneys that creating and staffing Victim Witness Assistance Centers will produce startling reductions in crime: we do, however, suggest that the creation of Victim Witness Assistance Programs, staffed by trained and competent personnel, can, in the long run, serve to strengthen our criminal justice system. Crime victims cannot be treated merely as "objects of proof" for the commonwealth or the state, and, if rehabilitation of criminal offenders is a goal to be desired, then it is equally important that we, as prosecutors, pay attention to the "rehabilitation" of crime victims. We can begin this fundamental reform by establishing clean, comfortable and decent surroundings for those of our citizens who must undergo the trauma of trial through no fault

of their own. We think that Victim Witness Assistance Programs should enjoy a very high priority in the criminal justice world and that prosecutors have a special responsibility to lead the way in bringing about such a reordering of our priorities.

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Bibliography compiled for OKE, Inc. by:
Norman A. Krasnegor, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Behavioral
Biology, Department of Psychiatry
The Johns Hopkins Medical School
Baltimore, Maryland

COMMISSION UNIT CHIEFS

Howard A. Janssen
Deputy District Attorney
Victim Witness Assistance Bureau
Alameda County Court House
1225 Fallon Street
Oakland, California 94612
Phone: 415-874-5145

J. P. Devlin, Unit Chief
Victim Witness Assistance Program
571 City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
Phone: 215-MU6-7664

Herbert C. Jones, Director
Victim Witness Assistance Program
2700 Tulane Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70119
Phone: 504-821-4370 or 71

Loren E. Landward
Unit Chief
Victim Witness Assistance
Davis County Courthouse
Farmington, Utah 84025
Phone: 801-295-2394, Ext. 31

Warren J. Schneider
Chief of Section
Westchester County Victim Witness Unit
County Court House
111 Grove Street
White Plains, New York 10601
Phone: 914-682-2984

Robert T. Core, Unit Chief
Victim Witness Assistance Bureau
404 City-County Building
Covington, Kentucky 41011
Phone: 606-292-2354

Patrick J. Delfino, Director
Victim Witness Project
500 Chicago Civic Center
Chicago, Illinois 60602
Phone: 312-443-5456

Michael Belson
Bureau Chief
Criminal Court Bureau
Kings County
400 Municipal Building
Brooklyn, New York 11201
Phone: 212-643-5100

Norman S. Early, Jr.
Chief Deputy District Attorney
Unit Chief
Commission on Victim Witness Assistance
Denver District Attorney's Office
West Side Court Building
Denver, Colorado 80204
Phone: 303-297-3220

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