

# **Strategic Funding & Services Plan for Survivors of Homicide Programming (SOHP)**

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Iowa Attorney General's Crime Victim Assistance Division  
Iowa Department of Justice

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## I. Introduction

The Victim Services Support Program (VSS) through the Iowa Attorney General's Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD) administers state and federal funds to agencies that provide direct services to Iowa's crime victims. Survivors of Homicide Programs (SOHP) are eligible and receive federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA or VA) funds. Over the last few years, all of Iowa's victim service programs funded through the VSS program have sustained federal, state and local cuts. In fiscal year 2013 (7/1/12-6/30/13), our victim services program received an approximate \$1 million dollar cut in total. Iowa Attorney General Thomas J. Miller allowed the VSS Program to transfer funds from the crime victim compensation reserve (the Fund) to cover the FY2013 cuts; however, this is not a sustainable long-term solution. The transfer assisted in maintaining SOHP for FY2013.

There is potential to receive more cuts in FY2014. If we continue to transfer funds at the current level we could bankrupt the Fund in the future. Bankrupting the fund will jeopardize other victim service programming. The Attorney General is open to transferring funds to victim service programs, but at a responsible level after reviewing the Fund annually.

The Iowa Attorney General's Office is proposing changes to how crime victim services are funded in Iowa. This Strategic Funding & Services Plan ("Plan") was developed with input from SOHP Directors, and input from experts in the field, such as retired CVAD Director Marti Anderson. The goal of the SOHP Plan is to propose changes to utilize available funding in a manner that most effectively provides quality services to survivors of homicide victims. This includes equitable distribution of the funds across the state and more adequate coverage of all of Iowa's ninety-nine counties. This proposal/plan is a model to sustain services to SOHP victims based on the funds available.

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## II. Process for Creating Strategic Funding & Services Plan

Below is a summary of the steps the CVAD Director and VSS Administrator has and will implement.

- **Experts (Timeline: Ongoing)**  
In the creation of the plan, the CVAD Director and VSS Administrator incorporated input from various experts, local SOHP Directors, and experts in the victim service field.
- **SOHP Directors Meeting (Timeline: September 18, 2012, Completed)**  
The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator presented to the SOHP Directors outlining the SOHP Plan. At this meeting the CVAD Director and VSS Administrator requested input and explained the various times that they could provide input.
- **Draft of the Plan (Timeline: November 2012, Completed)**  
The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator will sift through all the information and input provided and draft a written SOHP Plan.
- **Input on Written Plan (Timeline: 30 Days for Input, In Progress)**

The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator will provide the written draft of the plan to SOHP Directors and other experts for input.

- **Finalize Plan (Timeline: December 2012, Not Occurred Yet)**  
The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator will sift through all the information and input provided on the written draft plan and finalize the SOHP Plan.
  - **Present Plan to Attorney General (Timeline: December 2012, Not Occurred Yet)**  
The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator will present the final SOHP plan to the Attorney General for his input and consideration.
- **Plan Presented to Legislators (Timeline: January 2013, Not Occurred Yet)**  
The final SOHP Plan will be presented to Legislators.

### III. Application/Funding Cycle

Each program (applicant) seeking VSS funds for survivors of homicide programming will complete an application for funding as is required by Administrative Rules. Each applicant will have to provide a complete application in order to be considered for receipt of funding. Each applicant will follow the instructions outlined at the Application Workshops. The application process is a competitive process. Only those applicants meeting the expectations of the application and services as outlined in the application will be considered for funding.

The Application/Funding Cycle for Fiscal Year 2014 will begin January 2013, ending June 2013, with the funding beginning July 1, 2013. Below is a table outlining the Application/Funding Cycle as determined by the Division and voted on by the Crime Victim Assistance (CVA) Board. The CVA Board provides oversight of the programs administered in the Division.

<b>Application/Funding Cycle</b>	
<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
January 8-11, 2013	<i>Funding Application Workshops:</i> Various locations and various dates and times the week of January 8-11, 2013.
January 11, 2013	<i>Letters of Intent Due:</i> All agencies or programs seeking VSS funding for Fiscal Year 2014 are required to submit a letter of intent to the Crime Victim Assistance Division
February 28, 2013	Applications due by 4:30 pm.
April 16-18, 2013	Application Review Committee and VSS staff reviews applications for funding.
May 3, 2013	Crime Victim Assistance Board votes on award amounts recommended by the Application Review Committee and VSS staff.

<b>Application/Funding Cycle Continued</b>	
May 9, 2013	Denial and award letters are mailed to funding applicants.
May 23, 2013	Appeals or Requests for Reconsideration are due by 4:30 pm on May 23, 2013 in the Crime Victim Assistance Division.
June 14, 2013	Crime Victim Assistance Board will hear appeals or requests for reconsideration for funding applicants.
June 28, 2013 (approximate date)	Contracts are issued to all funded applicants.

Per Administrative Rules, CVAD will establish a grant review committee (Application Review Committee) comprised of representatives from the Crime Victim Assistance Board and experts in the fields of victim services, grant administration and management, and criminal justice. CVAD will also conduct an internal review of the applications. The grant review committee will make recommendations for grant awards to the CVAD Director. The CVAD Director shall submit to the Board the recommendations of the grant review committee and any alternative recommendations by the program staff.

#### **IV. Types of Services**

Due to ongoing funding cuts, victim service programs have strived to keep their doors open and to maintain services to the best of their ability. On December 8, 2011, the VSS Program met with the four funded SOHPs in an effort to discuss current services, core services, and how to promote efficient and quality services from all of Iowa's SOHPs. Through this meeting the following types of core services were outlined for all SOHPs to implement.

- **Individual Crisis Counseling** – including one-on-one crisis counseling immediately after the incident.
- **Court Advocacy** – including personal advocacy with victim witness coordinators, law enforcement, and county attorneys and court accompaniment for trial proceedings.
- **Personal Advocacy** – including assistance with completing victim compensation applications and problem solving with the survivor and/or their families.
- **Information/Referrals** – including referrals to needed resources.

In addition, it was decided each agency will assist crime victims by providing the following:

- **Community Education** – including educating community members about available core services and issues surrounding victimization.
- **Crime Victim Rights Week** – including holding an annual event or awareness activity that will honor victims of crime.
- **Collaboration** – including working with local community partners to ensure all victims of crime are treated with respect and dignity.

- **Volunteer Program** – creating a volunteer program to assist in carrying out the core and other services of the program. (Volunteer Programming is a federal requirement in order to receive Victims of Crime Act funds.)

The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator are requiring applicants for SOHP funds; provide the core services and other services outlined in this section of the SOHP Plan. There has been discussion that the core and other services can also be conducted by trained volunteers and interns with oversight and training from the designated SOHP for the “zone” or multi-county service area.

### **A. Service Delivery**

At the September 18, 2012 meeting with SOHP Directors, there was discussion on sharing a position between a SOHP and other service program within the same agency. Currently there is approximately \$303,812 available for SOHP across Iowa. After much discussion and consideration, a SOHP may share a staff person with another service program within their agency as long as the following is met and assured:

- The staff person’s time will be tracked by activity, service and victim related to the SOHP,
- Reimbursement will only be for SOHP allowable activities,
- Program will have a Plan in providing outreach and services throughout the service area, and
- Program can assure the funds are utilized only for SOHP.

If a program fails to abide by the requirements listed above, a Program’s SOHP funds may be terminated by the CVAD and it may affect future funding with the CVAD.

### **B. Subcontract of Services**

Throughout the discussions with the SOHP Directors there have been questions about whether or not a Program could subcontract with another program for services. Subcontracting is an allowable expense if it is reasonable and necessary. A few things to consider if you are requesting to subcontract with another program:

- How would the subcontract benefit victims in your service area?
- Is it the most cost effective way to provide quality services to victims?
- What happens to services if the program you are subcontracting with closes, or reduces services?
- How will you continue to ensure the philosophy and standards of your agency are being practiced in the delivery of services; including the day-to-day operations of the subcontracting party?
- What is your plan if the program you subcontracted with does not perform within the parameters of your funding or philosophy of your program?

As part of your application for funding you must provide any subcontracts for services to be paid with VSS funds. The CVAD Director, VSS Administrator, and Application Review Committee may award funds with stipulations on subcontracts including, but not limited to, disallowing a subcontract or a modification of the subcontract.

### **C. Fundraising, Foundations, Local and Federal Government Funds**

Some issues that emerged through discussions with SOHP Directors were how to continue to receive local funding and how to show the benefits of local funding are staying in the local area. Programs can track the funds separately by county/local area in order to make sure the funds are utilized in the designated county or local area. It will also require collaborations and communication with leaders in communities about how you will ensure the funds will stay local, how your Program will provide services, and how you will collaborate with other Programs to provide services.

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### **V. Zones or Multi-County Service Areas**

In reviewing the amount of funds available and how to best cover the state, the VSS Program realized the SOHP needed to be distributed differently across Iowa in an effort to more effectively meet the needs of survivors of homicide victims. The VSS Program currently funds four SOHP that serve 24 counties or 27% of Iowa's ninety-nine counties, which is 47% of Iowa's population. In the last three state fiscal years, the four funded SOHP served 1,364 survivors of homicide victims.

One of the SOHP's service area (counties served) has fluctuated over the past five years in an effort to respond to survivors of homicide victims. In an effort to utilize the funds in a more efficient manner, VSS Program looked at various ways to use the available funds for SOHPs. The majority of Iowa's homicide investigations are conducted by the Department of Criminal Investigations (DCI) through the Iowa Department of Public Safety, to equitably distribute the funds in a way to allow for successful programming, the SOHPs will be distributed based on the DCI Zones.

The next page is a map which provides a breakdown of the four zones or multi-county service areas.



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## VI. Formula

The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator requested input from SOHP Directors and other interested applicants on the formula to be utilized in equitably distributing the VSS funds. Below are the three different formulas that were suggested in distributing the SOHP funds.

- (1) Formula #1: 60% for a base amount and 40% based on the population of the service area.
- (2) Formula #2: 50% for a base amount and 50% based on the population of the service area.
- (3) Formula #3: Divided by % of Murders in each zone.

Formula #1 received the highest votes and was determined by VSS staff to be a more equitable distribution of the funds across all four zones. The VSS funds will be dispersed by the four zones, or multi-county service areas based on Formula #1 for SOHP.

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## VII. Transition Plan

The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator will write a transition plan of services for any program that does not receive SOHP funding in Fiscal Year 2014, but has received funding in FY2013 as well as to assist Programs receiving funding in a new service area. The plan will include but not be limited by the following:

- transition of outreach services,
- ensuring retention of client records,
- ensuring retention of financial records,
- community notifications, including making introductions between current collaborative partners and the new Program to provide services,
- staff and volunteer notification, and
- other items as determined by the CVAD.

The CVAD Director and VSS Administrator will continue to gather input from SOHP Directors to create a plan that can be implemented.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

The SOHP Plan is a basis for strengthening services and equitably distributing funds, so that survivors of homicide victims will receive quality services regardless of which county in Iowa they live. Federal funding reductions have made it difficult to maintain or expand services to survivors of homicide victims in our state. The CVAD continues to make an effort to distribute the funds equitably while maintaining quality core services. The SOHP Plan is necessary in order to provide services to all survivors of homicide victims in Iowa. A survivor of a homicide victim deserves services no matter where they live or where the murder/crime occurred. While we recognize the victim service field is in dire need of additional resources, we have to continue planning based on the current funding levels. The reality of the economic situation; however, is if we have to pass down the funding cuts we were able to make up for this year SOHP will suffer and potentially risk disappearing in our state all together. This SOHP Plan is necessary in order to take a proactive approach to restructuring these services, in order to ensure quality, efficient services in all areas of Iowa for all crime victims.

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