

PREPLAN FOR CRISIS RESPONSE

Planning Tool for Crime Victim Compensation (CVC):

- 1) Does your jurisdiction have a critical incident team? Are you part of that team?

If there is a team, consider joining. If there isn't a team, consider starting one. A trained team is essential to providing coordination of efforts to support to victims of critical incident crimes.

The CVC office will be a major provider of victim services after a criminal incident. It will be important for law enforcement agencies and other victim service providers to know what role CVC has and how you will operate and support victims during and after a criminal critical incident.

Working with the team, decide what involvement CVC will have during the stages of response and community meetings. While every incident is different, and you likely won't be involved in non-crime events, it's important to have roles pre-determined. This helps clarify expectations and roles.

- a) Do you have policies related to mass criminal critical incidents?

Special policies allow for the CVC Board to create, meet and adapt policies based on the financial resources available to your jurisdiction at the time of the crime.

You can contact the State CVC Administrator, Office for Victims of Crime at DCJ or other CVC Administrators for assistance in creating and adapting critical incident policies.

- b) Is the Board and the DA well educated on those policies?

- i) The DA needs to know how you will react to victim and community needs and to understand why your program might have a significant influx of work, even if there will not be criminal charges.

- c) Have you disseminated those policies to law enforcement agencies?

- i) All first responding agencies in your community should be aware of your specialized policies. This obviously

helps reduce the risk of misinformation being given to victims.

- d) Have you educated the critical incident team in your community regarding your special policies?
 - i) Members of the team need to know what the role of the CVC program is and how your program will operate and support victims during and after a critical incident.

2) Do you have a special application process or forms for mass criminal critical incidents?

Specialized forms make identifying claims associated with mass incidents efficient and timely. Keep in mind that in order to utilize specialized applications, you must be willing to disseminate them almost immediately after an incident. This might involve bringing them to the command center immediately after the incident.

Many jurisdictions have condensed applications that are a special color. For a sample of a condensed application you can call the State CVC Administrator, Office for Victims Programs at DCJ or many of the CVC Administrators.

- a) If you use a specialized application, who will make the decision as to whether to use the form?
 - i) Will you decide when to use the forms or will you leave that decision to the law enforcement coordinator?
- b) How will the applications be disseminated?
 - i) Will you hand deliver the applications? Will you email them? Will you provide each jurisdiction with a hard copy and allow them to make copies as needed?
- c) Do law enforcement coordinators know how to contact you immediately for the applications or for critical incident policies?
 - i) If you will be the person deciding when to use the applications, law enforcement coordinators need to be able to contact you or someone from CVC in an emergency.

d) Keep an electronic copy so that it can be posted on appropriate websites dedicated to the incident.

3) What special reporting might I be asked to complete?

Before entering any claims, decide if you should set up a special crime code and payment code in CVC. Doing so will allow you to pull reports exclusive to the incident. This can be extremely useful and helpful for reporting purposes later. Do not set up special crime codes or payment codes until you need them, and remember, once you put them into CCVC- they remain in CCVC.

4) How will I determine what money is available for victims?

Whatever is unencumbered and in your main fund could be available for victims. However, there might be federal funds available for the incident. Call the State CVC Administrator, Office for Victims Programs at DCJ to determine if there are additional funds available for victims through CVC. The Office for Victim Programs at DCJ will also be able to help you with the projection of the financial need to help determine whether additional funds or specialized fiscal policies are necessary.

5) To the degree possible, consider the financial impact to the CVC program. What resources might you need to process claims?

- a) There will be an increase in claims/files which means there will be an increase in paper and printing costs.
- b) Do you have administrative support available to you? You may need to request the assistance of another CVC Administrator in order to process claims, or you may need to hire temporary assistance.
- c) If you need additional administrative support, do you have a workstation and a computer that has CCVC available?

Outreach to victims and claims processing

1) Provide ongoing outreach to victims

- a) Consider sending out press releases about the availability of CVC. Ongoing press releases may be helpful in highlighting that CVC is an ongoing resource.
- b) Have your application (or condensed application) put on to official incident websites.

- c) Continue to educate first responders about your policies and who should be receiving your application.
 - d) Consider sending applications directly to victims of the crime. This can be done in stages- several months, 6 months and 1 year anniversaries.
- 2) Set up specialized crime codes and payment codes to track the number of applications and payouts specific to the incident. If you aren't sure how to do this, call another CVC Administrator for assistance.
 - 3) Ask for assistance to process or enter applications. There may be money available to hire additional staff or you may want to ask assistance from other CVC Administrators.
 - 4) Stay informed and involved in community meetings. Your involvement will remind service providers that CVC is actively involved and available. It may also provide you information about resources that are available for losses that may not be eligible under the CVC program.
 - 5) Support your staff and yourself. Have regular meetings and contact to debrief and discuss challenges. Encourage your staff to limit their exposure to media to help avoid vicarious trauma. Know and disseminate information about your office Employee Assistance Program.
 - 6) Know your communities mental health services. If you have a critical incident team, you know what agencies/individuals may be called upon for community and victim mental health needs. If you do not have a critical incident team, or even if you do, review which mental health providers can provide specific services. Who does group support? Who can serve mono-Spanish speaking victims? Who will provide immediate crisis intervention?

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime has a Crime Victim Compensation Mass Violence Protocol. It was created by CVC Administrators from across the nation who provided CVC assistance after a mass incident. Please contact DCJ or the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards for a copy or a link to the most current document. <http://nacvcb.org>

Included in the sample section on the pre-planning page is the Colorado CVC response to the columbine tragedy.