



ASSOCIATION OF PAROLING AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL

JANUARY 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

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THINGS TO DO IN 2012

- **Renew APAI Membership**
- **Plan to attend 2012 Annual Training Conference, May 20 - 23 in Orlando, FL**
- **Serve on an APAI Committee**
- **Convince a colleague to join APAI.**
- **January 2012—National Stalking Awareness Month—visit <http://stalkingawarenessmonth.org/> promote for more information**
- **April 22-28, 2012—National Crime Victims' Rights Week—visit <http://ovs.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw/> for more information**

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I hope each of you had a great holiday season and are looking forward to a fruitful and productive year ahead as we set out to do the very important work we do. We at APAI, guided by our newly revised business plan, will be producing unique and highly valuable products that will assist you as you go about your daily work.

We are particularly excited about the continuing work of the National Parole Resource Center (NPRC), a partnership of APAI and the Center for Effective Public Policy with funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). This project has been able to assist boards and releasing authorities improve their practice and we expect great results from future NPRC work.

Preparations are well underway for the 2012 APAI Annual Training Conference in Orlando, Florida. We hope that you are able to attend this year's conference, May 20 -23, 2012. The program committee has been hard at work putting together a highly educational program

agenda for the conference. You may view information about this conference, including a tentative program agenda, by visiting the APAI website at www.apaintl.org.

In conjunction with this year's conference there will be an election for the offices of President and Treasurer. There will also be the opportunity to honor those in the field who have made outstanding contributions with the various APAI Awards.

As my second and final term as APAI President draws to a close I would encourage each of you to consider how you can best serve APAI and your profession; whether it is running for office, serving on a committee, serving as a mentor, contributing to the Newsletter or nominating a coworker for an award. Serving APAI, particularly as your President for these last four years, has been one of the most fulfilling endeavors of my forty plus years in this profession.

Another strategic goal for APAI is to use our resources to share the "best practices" of our member organizations with each

other. To this end we have devoted this issue of the newsletter to "best practices" in the field of victim services.

This area of our work was ignored for far too long. APAI has a renewed commitment to ensuring that this critically important constituency and partner in our work is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve, that their voices are heard and that their input plays a meaningful role in all that we do.

Again, have a safe, productive and satisfying New Year!

With sincere appreciation for all you do;

Charles Traughber
President, Association of
Paroling Authorities
International

APAI CRIME VICTIM SURVEY AND A MODEL PROTOCOL BY JERALITA "JERI" COSTA AND KEITH HARDISON

In May of 2011, the APAI Crime Victims Committee conducted a survey of United States parole boards and releasing authorities along with those international boards and releasing authorities that are members of APAI. This 30 question survey sought to assess the current status of the crime victim services provided by these agencies.

The questions related to such issues as staffing, victim/survivor information and referrals, victims' rights, restitution and other financial and legal obligations, protection/safety, victim compensation and "best practices" in serving victims. The ultimate purpose of this survey will be to guide the APAI Crime Victims Committee as it works to ensure that the mission and values of the association take into account the rights of crimes victims and to increase collaboration between crime victims and parole boards and

releasing authorities.

Twenty One jurisdictions responded to the survey. There were several areas of particular interest to the Crime Victims Committee:

- * Most boards and releasing authorities have staff dedicated to victim notification and victim's services; those that do not, partner with other agencies to provide these services
- * Most agencies have a website that contains information about their victim's services.
- * Most agencies have a brochure that explains victims' rights, but a substantial number do not have a brochure that explains the parole hearing process for victims and witnesses.
- * Most victims and survivors get notification the 'old

fashioned way", by letter and phone; some are now going to text messages and email.

- * Most victims and survivors give input through in person or written submissions; a few jurisdictions now allow video or audio taped or live video conferenced input.
- * Very few agencies track statistics on victim's input or have a formal system to track satisfaction with victim's services provided by their agency or partners.
- * Only half of the responding agencies have authority to order restitution or other financial obligations.

The full results of this survey can be viewed on the APAI website at: <http://www.apaintl.org/resources/surveys.html>

So what is next? The recently approved APAI Business Plan, which will direct the work of APAI for the next two years, has assigned the Crime Victim's committee the task of developing a model protocol for victim input in the parole process. This survey will provide excellent guidance to the committee as it goes about its work developing this protocol.

A workgroup of the committee has been formed to develop a work plan to guide these efforts and outside technical assistance will be sought for this project. Our hope is that by the end of January 2012 a work plan will be in place and work can begin on this very important project.

Anyone wishing to assist with this project should contact committee chair Barbara LeMaitre at Barbara@ci.gillette.wy.us or Keith Hardison at keith@apaintl.org.

BEST PRACTICES IN CRIME VICTIMS SERVICES

Ohio

Ohio recently implemented an online registration process for crime victims to submit their information through a website to register for notification, rather than mailing in a form. This allows crime victims to more quickly and efficiently register for notification.

Ohio has a dual notification system. Crime victims are encouraged to register with

both VINE and the Office of Victim Services for the most comprehensive notification services available to them. The online registration prompts them to easily register for both systems, making it much less confusing overall.

Not only does this make the process more efficient and better serve crime survivors, but there is also an added feature to be able to track the information gathered through

the notification process to better inform staff outreach efforts.

For example, if it is determined from the data that the highest percentage of inmates incarcerated in Ohio are from the Cleveland area, staff will be able to compare victim registrations and see where most of our registrations are coming from. If there is a significant discrepancy, say there are very few victims from

Cleveland registering for victim notification, that information can be then used to strengthen education and outreach to that area improving awareness of services available to victims.

Following this evidence-based process staff will be able to strategize about how to best focus their efforts operationally.

For more information, please

BEST PRACTICES IN CRIME VICTIMS SERVICES,

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contact: Karin Ho, Administrator of the Office of Victim Services, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction at Karin.ho@odrc.state.oh.us

Tennessee

Attending a parole hearing is a traumatic experience for victims. The parole hearing could be the first time that the victim is able to speak to the impact of the crime on their lives in front of the offender.

Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole hearings are open to the public. For victims, this is a scary time. They may have never been to a prison before. Victims have to travel to the institutions, sometimes hours away, and incur expenses associated with this travel along with the emotional toll of contemplating possible freedom for the offender who harmed them

Tennessee has added video conference capabilities as an option for victims. Video conference systems are

located in seven field offices scattered across the state so that victims usually do not have to drive more than an hour to view a parole hearing. Victim Coordinators are in these offices to explain the parole hearing process, provide information, and provide support as the victims go through the hearing process.

There are added benefits beyond just victim participation. Personal security for all parties is enhanced. Video conferencing parole hearings decrease the number of visitors going in and out of Tennessee prisons. .

Video conferencing allows Tennessee to reduce costs while increasing participation in the parole hearing process. Video conferencing also increases participation of public officials, such as prosecutors and law enforcement, who can attend a hearing at a local field office and not miss a whole day of work.

It has also reduced travel

costs for hearings officials and for officers who before video conferencing had to travel to institutions for revocation hearings.

For more information, please contact: Jennifer Brinkman, Director of Victim Services, Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole at Jennifer.L.Brinkman@tn.gov.

Florida

The Florida Parole Commission is constantly trying to locate victims in old cases in which complete information was not captured originally or the passage of time has made location of victims and survivors challenging. The agency has implemented a promising practice by using resources such as obtaining death certificates, obituaries, and news articles to identify survivors and search for them using Florida driver's license information, court records, the internet, Accurant (a commercial database) and various public search engines.

It is very upsetting to have to tell a victim or survivor that the offender who harmed them was paroled and to realize that they were never contacted to allow them to have a voice in the process or to know what was going on, because victims services staff didn't know they existed

Many defendants in Florida murder cases in Florida are serving very long sentences. The persons listed as next of kin may not be around when the offender becomes eligible for a parole hearing 25 years later.

In such cases, staff start with the media. Using the state or local libraries, they search for an obituary or articles that list family members. Another good source of information is news articles about the crime itself.

Another good resource is a death certificate. The death certificate contains wealth of information that can be used to locate a crime victims survivor

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THE PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA'S REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS—THE HUMAN FACE FOR VICTIMS, BY MARIE COCKING, MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS

Federal legislation enacted in Canada in 1992 mandates that parole decisions must consider all relevant information, including "information obtained from victims". Under this law, the victim has the right to certain information about the offender, as well as the right to attend a parole hearing, and to submit a statement of harm.

It is a lofty ideal. But let's remember that Canada has a vast geography, fearsome weather, and a diverse population of about 34 million people - 437,000 of whom reported violent

incidents to the police in 2010 (Statistics Canada). So making that law a reality takes a comprehensive outreach and information program that ensures victims are aware of the parole process and their role in it. To do that, the Board relies on the hard work of many, including its Regional Communications Officers, or RCOs.

"RCOs play a unique role. They are not counsellors, but they are a human face to victims in a system that can be large, difficult and impersonal," explains Harvey Cernaiko, Chairperson of the

Board.

By no means are RCOs the only point of contact for victims in Canada's criminal justice system, but they play a key role in explaining the parole system. Every day in offices across the country, RCOs field questions from victims, register those who wish to attend hearings or receive information, take victims' statements, and go with victims to parole hearings.

They work behind the scenes with the Correctional Service of Canada and others to ensure a smooth and

appropriate flow of information, and help victims who need access to a federal victim travel fund so they can attend parole hearings in person. Board policy permits video and teleconferencing where arrangements can be made and RCOs work with victims to offer as much flexibility as practical to accommodate victim needs.

In fact, a recent survey of registered victims (PBC 2009) indicates that 71% of victims are satisfied with observing a hearing, 70% satisfied with presenting a statement, and 81% satisfied with the Board's staff. A

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For instance, if you have names of family members and approximate ages, you can use a search engine like Accurint (which is available through LexisNexis) to locate potential family members. A search engine like this has the capability to show possible relatives or associates. Accurint also allows you to track folks by former addresses.

Another resource available to

searchers in law enforcement is a social security number. There is a quick online lookup that anyone can access called State Of Issue By Social Security Number Calculator. The state of issuance can be determined by the first three digits of the number. Accurint can then be used to expand the search to locate a survivor.

Using these methods the Florida Parole Commission has been very successful in

locating victims who were unaware of the offenders' status, but very interested in being informed and having input

For more information contact: Daphne Asbell, Victim Services Supervisor, Florida Parole Commission at DaphneAsbell@fpc.state.fl.us. Visit the APAI Blog at <http://www.apaintl.org/news/> to read more about this practice.



THE PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA'S REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS—THE HUMAN FACE FOR VICTIMS, CONT FROM PAGE 3

good outcome, when you consider how many victims contact RCOs.

As of April 2011, this small team of RCOs had fielded 22,483 contacts with victims of crime, assisted 237 victims to make presentations at 137 hearings, and sent out 5,689 copies of parole decisions.

Legislation now under consideration in Canada, Bill C10 or the *Safe Streets and*

Communities Act, would expand the rights of victims in the parole process. It would entrench in law, for example, the victim's right to present a statement at a parole hearing. Victims are taking on a more important role than ever in the parole system in Canada.

ASSOCIATION OF PAROLING AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL
Correctional Management Institute of Texas
George J. Beto Criminal Justice Center
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX 77341-2296
Phone: 877-318-APAI
Fax: 936-294-1671
E-mail: info@apaintl.org



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www.apaintl.blogspot.com

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