



A table setting from Victim Services' display "SAVING A PLACE AT THE TABLE" presented during Victims' Rights Week April 2007

THE TABLE

Victim Services Program Vermont Department of Corrections

Ensuring that the Victim's Voice Always Has a Place at the DOC's Table

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Inside this issue:

VANS Launch	2
VANS Directive	3
Casework Highlights	3
Booking Officer Highlights	4
Administrative Staff	4
Highlights	
Registration	5
VINELink/VINEWatch	5

From the Director

Amy Holloway

Big surprise. This issue of THE TABLE is going to be devoted exclusively to the VAN Service.

Needless to say, we have been very busy in Victim Services lately, putting the finishing touches on VANS. Getting it ready for its launch has been a bigger challenge than even we could have imagined. And we have experience with challenges!

Between some of the issues with our data and how it interfaces with the automation technology and our recent agency-wide bout with the techno-flu (virus), we have had some setbacks. However we are not deterred and our hope is that by mid July we will be up and running. In the meantime here is a list of some of our accomplishments:

- The proposed new Victim Notification Directive has been posted for comment and should be ready to be signed by the end of September.
- Over 300 DOC staff have participated in either a two hour booking training or a six hour casework training about VANS which included training on the new directive, the need for consistent use of booking codes throughout the department, how the VAN Service works, orientation to VINELink and VINEWatch, and information on victim services in the age of automated victim notification.
- VANS training has been conducted for several County DV Task Forces, law enforcement agencies, and the State's Attorneys Victim Advocates and will continue to be done for our community partners throughout the summer including the Domestic Violence Council and the Center for Crime Victim Services.
- 2,003 envelopes for victims who are currently registered to receive notification have been labeled and stuffed with information about VANS and are waiting in the Victim Services Office in Waterbury to be sent out the first week of July
- Packets of materials containing VANS brochures, tear-off cards, refrigerator magnets, lanyards and User ID information are all ready and will be hand delivered by the VANS Team to each field and jail facility by July 1.

No one will be happier when VANS goes live than those of us on TEAM VANS, as we affectionately call ourselves. It has been a long and sometimes frustrating journey, but one that we certainly have not been on alone. I actually want to say a general THANK YOU

(Continued from page 1)

to the DOC staff who participated in VAN training this spring. You had some excellent questions and comments and we appreciate your help making VANS the best it can be.

I would be remiss however if I didn't take some time to say a special THANK YOU to a few people who have gone above and beyond. I certainly don't mean to leave anyone out, but how can I not give a special thanks to someone like Phil Fernandez, who not only helped us every step of the way in the design and code development process but who woke up before the crack of dawn day after day for two weeks to meet us at every jail facility in the State to conduct training for each shift of booking officers, supervisors and administrative staff. Thank you Phil! Thanks also to Ellen Sklar, Kit Andrews, Anne Cosgrove and Sue Ransom Kelly who not only have participated in the Victim Notification workgroup and helped design the VANS Service but who went the extra mile to make sure that the trainings took place without a hitch in Burlington, St. Johnsbury and Springfield. Thanks to Lynne Walther who has been so patient with us during the directive writing process. We know what we want to say... we just don't always say it in DOC speak. Thanks Lynne for helping VANS find its place in the directive world. And finally a very special and important Thanks You to Jenifer Zuber who has worked single handedly with the technology staff at Appriss to create an interface between their technology and our database, so that the VAN Service will do what it is meant to do. Thank You Jenifer. And of course a huge thanks to TEAM VANS, Ashley and Jill.

Amy

VANS' Launch Highlights



- The month of April was spent doing training across the Department for booking officers, administrative staff and caseworkers/supervisors.
- The proposed Victim Notification Directive was introduced and feedback was taken with a goal of getting a final directive signed by the end of September. The Directive is being revised and has incorporated the feedback.
- Staff were introduced to the VAN Service and shown how to register a victim or themselves through VINELink and how to access victim contact information through VINEWatch. (See VINELink and VINE-watch Highlights).
- Work continues with Appriss and our IT staff to complete the VANS design interface with a target "go live" date of July 15, 2009. Our data is being sent to Kentucky on a regular basis and the bugs are being worked out.
- Folders with User ID's, instructions and VANS materials (brochures, tear off cards, lanyards, refrigerator magnets, and chip clips) have been prepared for every member of the staff who has gone through training and will be hand delivered by the first week in July.
- Letters to all currently registered victims have been printed, the envelopes have been addressed and stuffed with VANS brochures and will be sent the first week of July.
- Launch Press Conference and Reception being scheduled for the week of July 13, 2009



VANS'Directive Highlights

The updated Victim Notification Directive 502.01 explains the roles and responsibilities of Department staff in light of automated notification.

- Victims are entitled by statute to receive notification when an offender's custody status changes.
- The management and maintenance of the notification function within the DOC has been shifted to Victim Services.
- Most notifications will be done automatically through VANS therefore staff will no longer have to make telephone calls or send registered letters to registered victims for routine changes in an offender's status.
- Staff is required to use consistent and accurate codes on booking slips and to keep PMD dates and code information accurate and current.
- Staff is required to help victims register onto the VAN Service.
- In the event the DOC's booking system is off-line and a paper booking slip is required, booking staff and or supervisory staff are required to call the VAN Service to initiate the override procedure so that VANS will accurately reflect the offender's custody status.
- Staff will have access to victim contact information through
- VINEWatch. Access to Vine-watch is given only to staff who have completed VANS training
- Staff will be required to make personal non-automated notifications for a list of designated events. (See Caseworker Highlights)
- VANS is an open system which allows anyone to register for notification.
- Casework staff are still required to have contact with victims for the purposes of doing release and safety planning, and responding o questions and concerns.

Caseworker Highlights

- Caseworkers will continue to do letter/phone call notifications until November 1, 2009 unless victim is already registered on VANS.
- To confirm that victim is registered on VANS or to access victim contact information, go to www.vinewatch.com.
- Your User ID for VINEWatch is your first name initial/last name (example Amy Holloway's user ID is aholloway) Use your user ID as your password the first time you log in. You should then change your password.
- Make personal non-automated notifications for the following events:
 - * death of an inmate
 - * when inmate is requesting a compassionate furlough
 - * when offender is requesting a pardon or sentence reconsideration
 - * when a staff member makes a positive recommendation for parole outside of the regular hearing/review cycle
 - * when an incarcerated offender is interviewed by the media
 - * when a victim who is receiving medical treatment or works in a medical facility requests to be notified when the offender is going to a scheduled medical appointment at the same facility. No notification is required if it is a medical emergency.
 - * when an offender is given permission to travel to another state and the victim lives in that state
 - * when an offender is going to appear before the Parole Board for a revocation hearing
 - * when an offender goes to the work camp
 - * when an positive recommendation for a probation termination is made

(Continued on page 4)

THE TABLE

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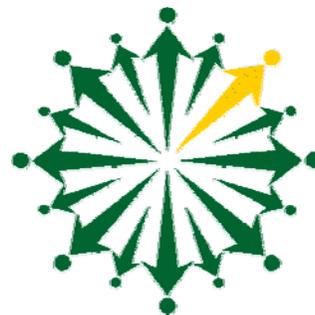
- Continue to involve victims in your practice as you did before automated notification especially while doing release planning. Remember too much information is better than no information at all.

Booking Officer Highlights

- Use accurate booking codes as outlined in Attachment 2 of the Victim Notification Directive (including the F comp furlo when releasing to compassionate furlough).
- Complete a computer based Bail Pending Slip when receiving bail at the facility in advance of the actual release. If the system is “down” complete a paper NCR bail receipt. Do not complete an a computer based Bail Pending slip if bail is posted at court.
- If the DOC’s PAS Booking system is not available and you have to complete a paper booking slip, initiate a manual override of the VAN Service when you book an offender into a facility or release an offender from a facility.
- To initiate the override do the following:
During regular business hours call Victim Services at 241-2309. After hours call the 866-976-8267 or if you have access to VINEWatch, log onto VINEwatch and initiate the override.

Administrative Staff Highlights

- Fax any Request for Notification Forms that get sent to the facility to Victim Services (fax # 802 241-2377)
- When a victim calls asking for information about an offender tell them about the VAN Service and help them register through VINELink.





Registration

Toll Free/24 hour operator assistance
1-866-976-8267 (VANS) or www.VINELink.com

- VANS is an open system which means anyone can register for notification.
- Registrants have a choice of being notified by either phone or email. Registrants who don't have phone or email access can register to get letter notification
- Registrants will be asked to register as either a Victim/Affected person or as an "Other". Victims will be asked to register their name and address in addition to a phone/email address. "Others" may register anonymously by registering just a phone and/or email but no name and address.
- Registration takes less than two minutes to complete.
- Registrants may register to receive notification about more than one individual.
- Staff should consider registering to receive notification about individuals on their caseload

VINELINK

VINELink is the "public face" of the VAN Service.

- Can be accessed by the public and DOC staff by logging on to www.VINELink.com. Click on VT when the map comes up and search for the offender's name.
- Information about individuals who register for notification through VINELink is totally confidential.
- Use VINELink to get information about an offender's custody status and to register victims quickly.
- When registering for more than one offender it is a bit more cumbersome through VINELink than it is through VINEWatch, but it can be done.

VINEWATCH is the management tool for the VAN Service

VINEWatch is accessed only by those who have permission. Access by logging on to www.vinewatch.com. A User ID and password is necessary. Use VINEWatch to:

- Run reports to see who is registered and what notifications have gone out to whom.
- Register an individual to receive notification about more than one offender.
- Update a registrant's profile or disable/delete a registration.
- Access victim contact information.
- Print notification letters
- Over-ride an offender's status, block a notification, stop a notification call