

A Message from the Ombudsman

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South Carolina Crime Victim Ombudsman

Our mission is to ensure that victims of crime are served equitably and treated fairly by the South Carolina criminal justice system and its victim service organizations by providing

How We Accomplish Our Mission

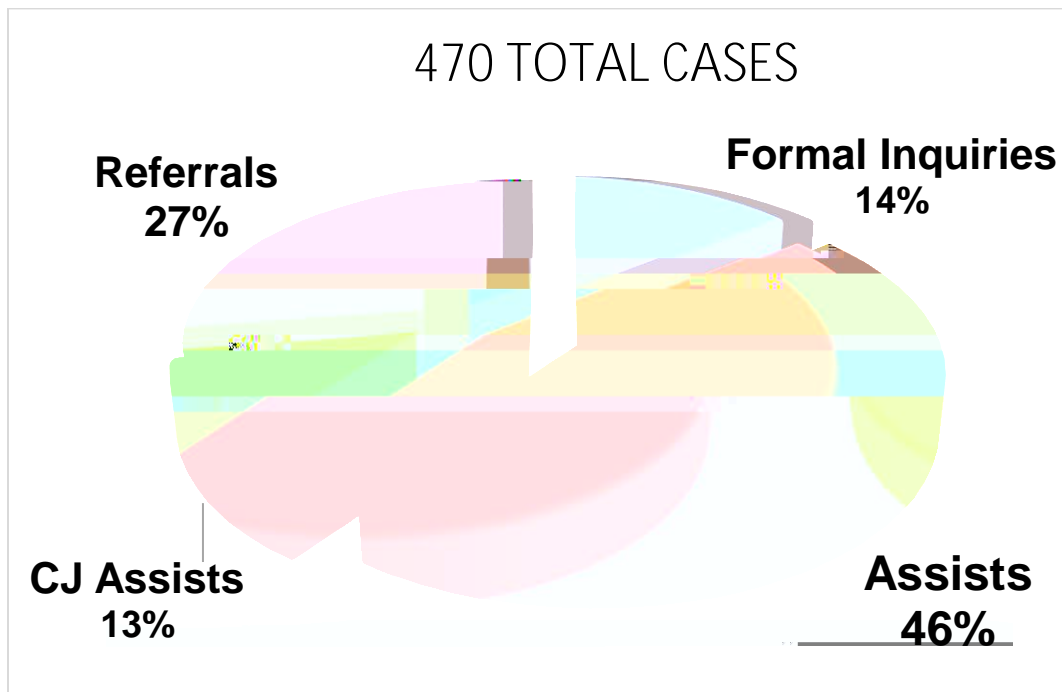
_____ to the appropriate element of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, when services are requested by crime victims or are necessary as determined by the Ombudsman;

_____ between elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, victim assistance programs, and victims when the need for liaison services is recognized by the Ombudsman;

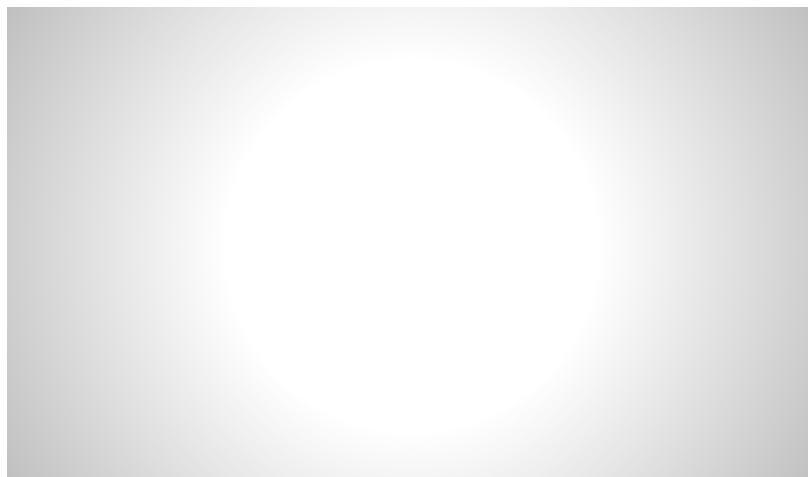
_____ against elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, made to the Ombudsman by victims of criminal activity within the state's jurisdiction.



2018 – 2019 STATISTICS



1. [CVO REFERRALS](#): We serve as a hub of information in the State to help anyone find crime victim assistance. Much of our work involves educating callers about who in their own community can assist them and how they can help. We connect victims to the expert Victim Service Providers working in law enforcement agencies, Solicitors' Offices, courts, detention centers/jails, state agencies and in non-profit organizations to ensure their needs are rapidly and effectively met.



"Other" refers to non-governmental organizations, attorneys, research/studies, laws or other resources.

EXAMPLES: CVO REFERRAL CASES

Caller s mother was raped last week. They want to make sure suspect is caught.

Caller reported a threat to police this morning but believes they did not do their job correctly.

Offender deemed sexually violent predator is in a maximum security hospital. He is still active on social media and father of minor victim is concerned over the activity.

CVO "ASSIST" CASES

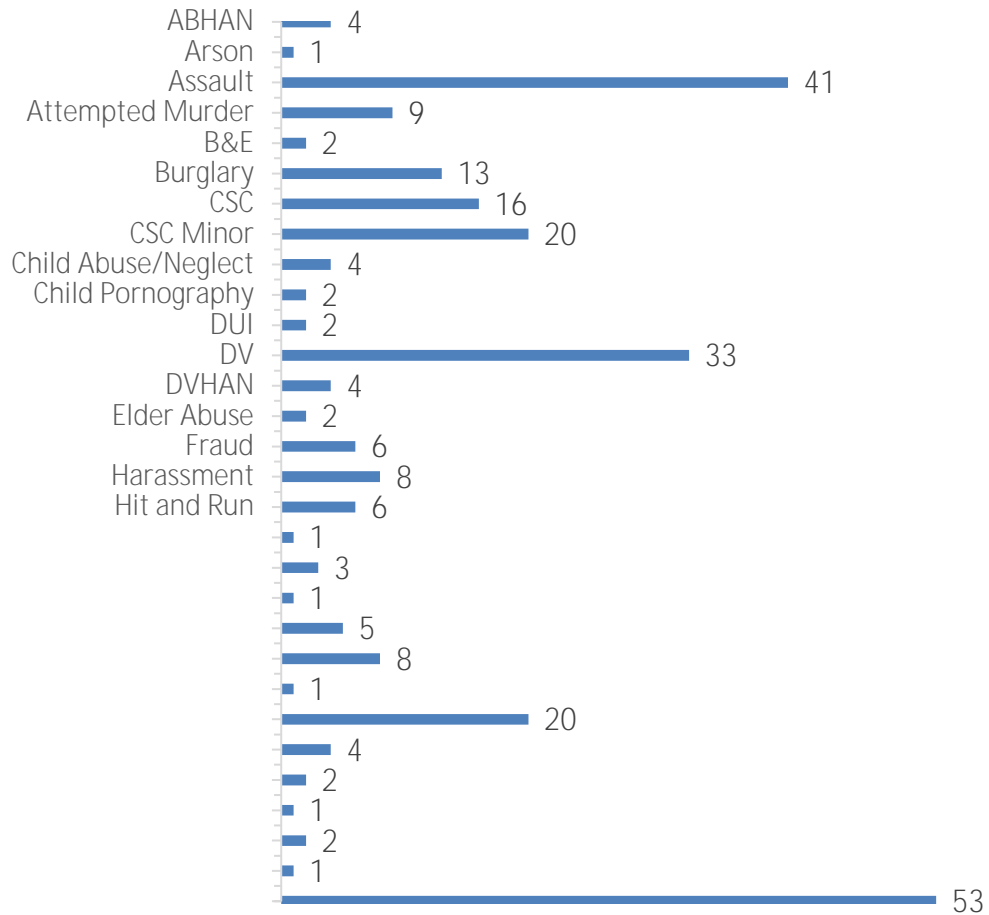
Neither happened. CVO consulted with the solicitor and a PRO was obtained. Solicitor clarified the issue regarding the .

Victim was found dead: law enforcement determined it was a suicide but the Coroner determined it was a homicide. The case was referred to the Attorney General , which believed they had enough to convict and accepted the case for prosecution or

CVO DATA

We collect all types of data in every case: type of caller, county, agency involved, type of complaint, crime involved, and how we resolved the issue.

Types of Crimes: 275 Assist Cases



"No Crime" indicates either a general request from the victim services' community about "all crimes," or from someone who has a civil issue or who is not referring to a crime.

Formal Complaints

A crime victim may file a Formal Complaint against any entity, individual and/or victim service programs in the criminal and/or juvenile justice system, or non-profit victim/survivor service group:

Law Enforcement: All Sheriffs' Departments
 All City and Town Police Departments
 All Campus Public Safety/Police Departments;

Solicitor: All Solicitors and their staff
 All City Prosecutors and their staff

Courts: All Circuit, Magistrate and Municipal Judges,

In carrying out the inquiry, we

Relevant Law

SC Constitution, Article I, Section 24 (A) To preserve and protect victims' rights to justice

Scenario: A Child Advocacy Center contacted us about a credible report from a child that his grandfather had sexually abused him. They alleged that when they reported to law enforcement, the Chief of Police told them that he was not going to make a report. He stated that he had spoken with the alleged offender and

CVO spent a great deal of time speaking with the victim to help her understand the criminal justice process, including bond reduction hearings, and to reassure her that this case was being handled appropriately by both law enforcement and the Solicitor.

Outcome:

The victim eventually understood the reasons for the prosecutorial decisions made in the case and felt more confident in law enforcement's and the Solicitor's abilities to reach an appropriate disposition.

The complaint against law enforcement was UNFOUNDED.

The complaint against the Solicitor's Office was UNFOUNDED.

Formal Case Summary 4

Crime: No crime

Complaint: A website was publishing defamatory remarks about Complainant.

Subject of Complaint: Other

Scenario: Complainant alleged he performed a search for his name and located personal information and a "rating" about him that he did not consent to have published. He requested our help to take it down and help him recover any reparations due to him.

CVO Inquiry: CVO did not conduct an inquiry.

Outcome: We explained to the Complainant that personal information about most people are now readily available all over the internet. We advised him to seek the assistance of an attorney to determine whether any remedies were available to him.

The complaint was DISMISSED.

CVO Training and Outreach:

CVO trained 902 Victim Service and Criminal Justice professionals, conducted nine site visits, attended 13 outreach events and participated in 29 meetings to help improve South Carolina's ability to serve crime victims.

South Carolina Crime Victim Ombudsman

Established in 1994 by S.C. Code §§16-3-1620-1690, the Office of the Crime Victim Ombudsman is statutorily defined:

SECTION 16-3-1610. Definitions.

As used in this article:

- (1) "Criminal and juvenile justice system" means circuit solicitors and members of their staffs; the Attorney General and his staff; law enforcement agencies and officers; adult and juvenile probation, parole, and correctional agencies and officers; officials responsible for victims' compensation and other services which benefit victims of crime, and state, county, and municipal victim advocacy and victim assistance personnel.
- (2) "Victim assistance program" means an entity, whether governmental, corporate, nonprofit, partnership, or individual, which provides, is required by law to provide, or claims to provide services or assistance, or both to victims on an ongoing basis.
- (3) "Victim" means a person who suffers direct or threatened physical, emotional, or financial harm as the result of an act by someone else, which is a crime. The term includes immediate family members of a homicide victim or of any other victim who is either incompetent or a minor and includes an intervenor.

SECTION 16-3-1620. Department of Crime Victim Ombudsman.

(A) The Department of Crime Victim Ombudsman is created in the Office of the Attorney General, South Carolina Crime Victim Services Division. The Crime Victim Ombudsman is appointed by the Director of the Crime Victim Services Division.

(B) The Crime Victim Ombudsman shall:

- (1) refer crime victims to the appropriate element of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, or both, when services are requested by crime victims or are necessary as determined by the ombudsman;
- (2) act as a liaison between elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, victim assistance programs, and crime victims when the need for liaison services is recognized by the ombudsman; and
- (3) review and attempt to resolve complaints against elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, or both, made to the ombudsman by victims of criminal activity within the state's jurisdiction.

SECTION 16-3-1630. Ombudsman; responsibilities; authority; annual report.

Upon receipt of a written complaint that contains specific allegations and is signed by a victim of criminal activity within the state's jurisdiction, the ombudsman shall forward copies of the complaint to the person, program, and agency against whom it makes allegations, and conduct an inquiry into the allegations stated in the complaint.

assistance programs that are pertinent to the inquiry. Following each inquiry, the ombudsman shall issue a report verbally or in writing to the complainant and the persons or agencies that are the object of the complaint and recommendations that in the ombudsman's opinion will assist all parties. The persons or agencies that are the subject of the complaint shall respond, within a reasonable time, to the ombudsman

enforcement of the rights and provisions of these services contained in this section, and a willful



Attorney General Alan M. Wilson
State of South Carolina

Crime Victim Ombudsman
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