



# Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund

Easing the Burden for Crime Victims

Mary Vail Ware, MSW  
Director



## Fund Facts

- Created by 1977 Virginia General Assembly
- Housed in the Virginia Workers Compensation Commission
- Pays out-of-pocket expenses for innocent victims of violent crimes
- Allowable expenses include: funeral costs, out of pocket medical bills, transportation, lost wages, moving expenses, etc.
- Funded by court fees, restitution, and VOCA

# CICF Role in Mass Casualty Crime Incidents

- Respond to Family Assistance Center
- Provide financial assistance to victims and families for medical bills, funeral expenses, etc.
- Coordinate with other funding agencies to ensure resources are maximized
- Utilize local victim witness assistance programs to work with families
- Provide technical assistance and support to institutional victim

## Context

- Since 2001, Virginia has been challenged with the Pentagon Attack, Appalachian School of Law Shooting, Sniper Attacks, Anthrax Attacks, Virginia Tech shootings, etc.
- Nationally, there have been 40 school shootings in the last ten years ending 4/16/08. 36 of those in the eight years since Columbine. Over a dozen occurred in 2006-2007

# Why plan for a Family Assistance Center (FAC)?

- Family members of individuals at the event location will begin to flock to the scene
- Well meaning (and not so well meaning) individuals will go to scene
- Convergence of people can impact investigation, perhaps endanger others
- Need a place to verify who belongs, and to provide services and information
- Manage interaction between victims, responders, and press

# Key Concepts in Response

- Do not resist the urge to do what's "right"
- Immediate response defines the event for victims & public
- Understand that the needs of crime victims are very different from individuals that survive other types of disasters (new legislation)
- Rely on experts in the field-victims taking care of victims is not a good model
- Ensure that assistance efforts have clear leadership with decision making authority

## More Key Concepts

- Hold daily meetings of responders to debrief and find solutions
- Immediately prepare for influx and money and donations
- Ensure that all on site are “credentialed” in some way, assign someone to this task
- If you don’t know something or have something—ask!

# Key Concepts

- If crime victims do not have their needs met in the immediate aftermath of the event, they will seek to have them met in other ways
- Individuals who are not experienced with victims of crime should not provide direct service
- Families should have a safe place to gather to receive services and information
- If possible, victims should be paired with a trained and experienced advocate in order to meet requirements of Virginia Code §19.2-11.01

# Care for the Caregivers

- First responders cannot provide ongoing service without relief
- Working in teams is critical
- Debriefing and support services are not a luxury, they are a necessity
- “Taking care of our own” is never a good plan, wounded serving wounded is not constructive for either party
- Take it easy on yourself and colleagues

# Final Thought



- Plan ahead!