



Governor's Office of Child Abuse & Domestic Violence Services
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FAX COVER SHEET

TO: Audrey Haynes FROM: Carol Jordan
COMPANY: _____ DATE: _____
FAX NUMBER: _____ TOTAL # OF PAGES, INCLUDING COVER: 5
PHONE NUMBER: _____ RE: V-NET
☒ Urgent ☐ For Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Please Reply

Notes/Comments:

this describes the V-NET project. We actually don't need additional funding to use ^{up to} ~~about~~ \$70,000 in VOCA administrative dollars that Kentucky already has access to if this usage is approved.

I have talked to Fran C. at Justice several times. I sent this letter to her so she could show it to her general counsel for approval, but I haven't heard back.



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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GOVERNOR

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May 22, 1998

Fran Callanan
Office for Victims of Crime
U.S. Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue NW
Washington DC 20531

Dear Fran:

I very much appreciate your willingness to discuss the statewide victim advocate communication network which we are working to create in Kentucky. The goal of the project, which we are calling V-NET is two fold. First, it will enhance victim safety by allowing advocates to electronically access the V.I.N.E.™ system. Secondly, it will provide critically needed support to advocates by giving them immediate access to information with which they can assist victims.

The agencies which will be included in the V-NET network include the Governor's Office of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services, the Cabinet for Families and Children (Department for Social Services central office and district offices), the Health Services Cabinet (Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services/Sexual and Domestic Violence Program), the Justice Cabinet, Rape Crisis Centers, Spouse Abuse Centers, Children's Advocacy Centers, prosecutor-based victim advocates and victim advocates in mental health agencies, the Office of the Attorney General (Victim's Advocacy Division), the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs and the Kentucky Council on Child Abuse. There are approximately 150 different state-operated or state-funded agencies which will be connected through V-NET.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Below I have attempted to describe the major features of the V-NET System and specific examples of how I believe it will aid advocates in their delivery of services to victims:

V.I.N.E.™ Interface

In July of 1997, Governor Patton announced completion of Kentucky's statewide victim notification system. As you are aware, the V.I.N.E.™ system allows victims to receive notification electronically of an offender's release from a jail or prison simply by calling a toll free telephone number and registering to be notified. While this system is excellent, it places the burden of accessing notification on the victim. The V-NET System will

remove that burden and any confusion a victim of crime may have by allowing advocates to directly access offender record information by computer. This will allow advocates to provide victims with current information about the location of the offender, and will allow the advocate to register the victim for notification through the V-NET System.

An additional advantage of this V.I.N.E.TM enhancement is that advocates will be notified by electronic mail when offenders are released. This will allow an advocate to follow up with the victim when she is notified or will allow a victim to request that the advocate receive the notification instead of her if she chooses.

Case Example:

A woman seeks protective shelter in a spouse abuse center after being assaulted by her partner. She knows her husband was arrested, but because she fled across county lines, she is uncertain where he is located and whether he has already been released from jail. Through V-NET, the advocate in the shelter will be able to pull up the offender record, advise the victim immediately in which jail the offender was incarcerated and whether he is still in jail. The advocate can also use V-NET to register the victim for notification. After the woman leaves the shelter and the offender is later released, the advocate will also be notified, so that she can follow up with the victim to determine her safety needs.

Communication Between Advocates

Too often, victim advocates in Kentucky feel isolated in their work. Whether they work in Rape Crisis Centers, prosecutors' offices, Spouse Abuse Centers, Children's Advocacy Centers, the Department for Social Services or other locations, they often do not have contact with other advocates who provide the same types of services they do. Heavy caseloads and court dockets make it difficult to contact one another by telephone, and advocates find it difficult to contact state agencies in a convenient manner to access technical assistance and support. V-NET will solve much of the problem of isolation by providing immediate and simplified access through electronic mail and a chat room.

Case Example:

An advocate faces a complex case of ritualistic abuse and wants to know if any victim advocacy agencies in surrounding areas have experienced similar cases and how they were handled. Without disclosing case information, the advocate can access the chat room to pose the question to other advocates.

Information Access, Technical Assistance and Research (Web Site Access)

Victim advocates need ready access to the most updated legal and program information, but rarely have time to conduct research or telephone multiple sources for information. The V-NET System will provide advocates with immediate access to the web sites of the Governor's Office of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services, the Attorney General's Office, the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Program, other state-level agencies and offices, as well as national and federal web sites.

Case Example:

A peace officer arrives at a Rape Crisis Center requesting copies of the records of a client of the agency. The advocate can access the web site of the Governor's Office of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services to access an immediate description of Kentucky law as it relates to confidentiality and privileged communication for victims so she will know what appropriate answer to give the officer.

Case Example:

An advocate in a prosecutor's office receives a call from a rape victim in another county who needs a forensic examination. Through V-NET, the advocate can immediately access the list of certified sexual assault nurse examiners in Kentucky and make an effective referral for the victim.

Electronic Grant Application and Reporting

As all of state government in Kentucky moves toward greater efficiency in their work, victim advocates cannot be left behind. While not as critical as the above functions, a side benefit of V-NET is that it will allow advocates to complete their grants and, ultimately, file them electronically. This feature will reduce administrative time for agencies and allow them to focus more on delivering direct services to victims of crime.

IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET

There are four distinct areas of budgetary need which must be met in order to implement the V-NET System which we anticipate will cost approximately \$145,000 to develop and approximately \$95,000 to operate on an on-going basis:

- 1) software to support the system (one-time cost)
- 2) file server and related equipment (one-time cost)
- 3) on-site installation and initial training (one-time cost)
- 4) help desk staff operations and on-going training (recurring cost)

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We are interested in using VOCA funds to support this project in two ways. First, one of the partners in this project is the Kentucky Council on Child Abuse, a private not-for-profit agency serving victims of child maltreatment. The Justice Cabinet would award a VOCA grant to that agency which, in turn through a bidding process, would award a sub-contract to a computer firm to develop the software needed to implement the program. Second, we are interested in using VOCA administrative funds to support equipment and other one-time costs.

Additionally, we anticipate being able to access state general funds to support a portion of the V-NET System through our Attorney General's Office and at least one other state human services agency. As a result, the total project will be supported through the use of VOCA grant funds, VOCA administrative funds, state funds from the Attorney General's Office and state funds from at least one other state human services agency.

I appreciate the time you are taking to review this description and to consider giving approval for the use of VOCA grant and administrative funding to provide this state of the art resource for victim advocates in our state. We are excited about the potential of this unique program, both for how it will improve services to victims in this Commonwealth and, because we believe it to be a first of its kind, how it can serve as a model for other states.

Please simply advise me of your questions. I may be reached in the Governor's Office at (502) 564-2611.

Sincerely,

Carol E. Jordan, M.S.
Executive Director
Governor's Office of Child Abuse and
Domestic Violence Services