



STATE OF MONTANA
BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE
POLICY DIRECTIVE

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Section 2: Victim Services	Effective Date: July 1, 2022	
Signature: /s/ Joseph McElroy, Chief of Staff	Revised:	

I. POLICY

The Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) have a collaborative working relationship with Department of Corrections (administratively attached -*See 2-15-112; 2-15-121; 2-15-124; 2-15-2302; 46-23-215; 46-23-202; 46-23-203; 46-23-1002; 46- 23-1021, MCA*). Together, both departments treat crime victims with dignity and respect, complies with victim notification and restitution statutes. The department of Corrections (DOC) offers programs that promote healing and encourages victim awareness training. The BOPP Victim/Witness Coordinator will ensure the collaborative working relationship is in good standing. Victim/Witness Coordinator will promote, respect, and follow all DOC policies in carrying out duties relative to the position given the statutorily administrative attached relationship.

II. APPLICABILITY

Victims of adult offenders under DOC supervision.

III. DEFINITIONS

Facilitator – A person who meets the DOC requirements to facilitate a victim-offender dialogue or victim impact panel.

Restorative Justice – A criminal justice concept that focuses on offender accountability and healing for victims, families, communities, and offenders.

Victim – The person against whom a felony crime has been committed, or a family member of that person. Other individuals may be recognized as victims on a case-by-case basis.

Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) – An automated telephone, email, and text message notification system that DOC purchases on contract from Appriss, Inc., which provides location and custody status updates about adult offenders under DOC supervision.

Victim/Witness Coordinator – A BOPP employee who manages victim programs and policies, responds to victims’ requests for information and referrals, educates victims about the post-conviction criminal justice system (parole), provides victim services training, and represents victim interests in all BOPP matters. This position will also respond to inmate/parolee family and support network who wish to participate in parole hearings and provide information related to the subject matter.

A. General DOC Requirements that BOPP Acknowledges

1. The DOC Victim Program Manager(VPM) provides valuable assistance to BOPP. The BOPP will:
 - a. Collaborate with VPM to ensure BOPP compliance with victim notification.
 - b. BOPP will respond to victim information requests via email and phone. All requests will be in writing to serve as confirmation.

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- c. BOPP will refer to DOC victim services programs and follow DOC Policy.
- d. VPM does manage the VINE service contract and is charge of, and will collaborate with the Information Technology Division and Appriss, Inc. to ensure the system is functional
- e. VPM will recommend/inform BOPP of new or expanded programs to respond to the needs of victims.

B. Victim Notification

1. If victims request notification, the BOPP will communicate all changes in offender custody status and location to the victim.
2. The BOPP acknowledges the DOC will maintain an automated electronic notification system, known as Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE), to provide custody status and location information about offenders under DOC supervision.
3. Offenders may not appeal any delay of case decisions or actions caused by statutory victim notification requirements or the processing of such notifications.

C. Victim Support

1. The BOPP assists victims of offenders under DOC custody and/or parole supervision by providing referrals to services within the DOC and in the community, training staff to respond to concerns regarding safety, providing prompt notification of changes in offender location and custody status.
2. The BOPP recognizes the importance of victim input concerning parole decisions. The BOPP will facilitate the right and ability of victims to provide oral or written statements to BOPP hearing panels. The BOPP also recognizes the right of victims to provide confidential statements under appropriate circumstances.

D. Victim Restorative Justice Program Acknowledgment

1. BOPP supports DOC Victim Impact Panels (VIPs) provide victims an opportunity to speak to offenders about how crime has affected them and serves to influence future offender behavior.
2. BOPP supports the DOC Victim-Offender Dialogue (VOD) program allows a victim, or an adult acting on behalf of a victim who is under age 18, to discuss the impacts of the crime with the offender in the presence of a trained facilitator. Participation in the program is voluntary for all participants and may only be initiated by the victim.
3. BOPP supports the DOC offender Accountability Letter Program (ALP) allows offenders to write to the victim(s) of the crime for which the offender was sentenced, reflecting responsibility for the crime and remorse for the harm caused to the victim(s) without excuses or requests for forgiveness or pardon.

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E. Rights and Responsibilities of Victims

1. Victims are not obligated to participate in victim services or programs.
2. Victims who choose to participate in victim services and programs offered by the DOC must provide their current contact information, agree to complete all evaluations, and sign all forms required by the DOC
3. BOPP acknowledges victims, support person(s), and facilitators must pass visitor background checks in accordance with DOC Policy 3.3.8. *Offender Visiting* and follow normal facility entrance procedures.
4. BOPP acknowledges victims involved in legal proceedings involving the offender may not participate in the VOD program or ALP.

F. Facilitator Requirements

1. BOPP acknowledges to be a facilitator, BOPP employee must meet the requirements of, and complete paperwork required in DOC Policy 1.3.16 *Volunteer Services*.

G. Offender Requirements

1. Offenders who approach the BOPP that are currently involved in legal appeals or other legal proceedings involving the victim, may not participate in the VOD program or ALP.
2. Offenders who approached the BOPP are referred to DOC and must agree to complete all evaluations and sign all forms required by the DOC.
3. BOPP supports victim restorative justice programs. The BOPP will not grant permission for the offender to make additional contact with the victim unless fully vetted through the DOC.

H. Training

1. The BOPP will consult DOC VPM quarterly to keep up to date on training about victim information requests, VINE and other notification procedures, victim sensitivity and staff communications, and programs for victims within the community, when requested, and within the department.

IV. CLOSING

1. Questions concerning this policy should be directed to Chairman or designee. In matters requiring further review, the BOPP will consult DOC VPM for further assistance.

V. REFERENCES

- A. 2-15-112, MCA; 41-5-1416, MCA; 46-18-241, MCA; 46-24-101, MCA; 46-24-102, MCA; 46-24-203, MCA; 46-24-212, MCA; 46-24-213, MCA; 53-1-203, MCA
- B. 4-4447-1, *ACA Standards Supplement*, 2008
- C. *DOC Policies 1.1.1, Purpose, Mission and Management Philosophy; 1.3.16, Volunteer Services; 1.5.6, Offender Records Access and Release*
- D. *Victim Services Standard Operations Procedure Guide 1.8.1A*

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VI. ATTACHMENTS

None.