

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Victim Services Needs Assessment was conducted in an effort to better understand the range and scope of victim/survivor services available across the Commonwealth. Among the answers sought, the needs assessment was designed primarily to identify unserved and underserved populations and barriers to services. The answers to these and other questions helped to identify gaps where efforts can be focused to improve services to victims of crime.

The detailed results in the previous section provide substantial detail on all of the findings in this report. The findings in this section are presented to illustrate multiple perspectives, comparing responses by region, urban versus rural, VSP versus Non-VSP, and victim responses. This section provides a summary of the major findings and recommendations for next steps in addressing the gaps that are identified.

The primary objectives of the Needs Assessment were to identify needs for services, unserved/underserved populations, and barriers to services. This information was broken down in three ways: statewide, by region, and by rural and urban communities. Responses from stakeholders, VSP and Non-VSP, are compared with victim respondents to highlights consistencies and irregularities in this discussion. These multiple perspectives help to shape our understanding of the needs and barriers that need to be addressed and to prioritize efforts accordingly.

... to identify unserved and underserved populations and barriers to services for victims of crime.

PERCEPTION OF NEED FOR SERVICES BY REGION AND STATEWIDE

The preliminary results showed that the perception of the top five greatest needs for services between victims and stakeholders differed substantially as seen in Table V-1.

Table V-1: Top Five Greatest Service Needs - Stakeholders vs Victims

Stakeholders	Victims
Long-term housing	Peer Support Groups
Transportation	Information about available services
Emergency financial assistance	Legal assistance
Relocation services	Coordination of services
In-home personal care	Counseling

As part of the inferential analysis, the individual service needs were combined into five subgroups. The following tables compile the mean responses for VSPs, Non-VSPs, and victims on their perceptions of the

need for services according to the subgroups. This comparison illustrates the difference and similarities in their perspectives, allowing for a more tailored strategy in response. In all of the tables, the numbers indicate the strength of the response on a scale from 1-5, 5 being the strongest. Because the victim results were presented on a different scale in section IV, the numbers below were recoded for comparison.

In Table V-2, the overall victims’ perception of the need for Assistance/ Shelter/Transportation services is considerably lower than that of the stakeholders. However, the need for Assistance/ Shelter/ Transportation services was ranked highest of the service needs in all regions among VSP & Non-VSP stakeholders. VSPs and Non-VSPs in Southeast/Philadelphia and East regions indicated the greatest need for Assistance/ Shelter/Transportation services. Victims in the Southcentral/west and Northcentral & Northeast regions indicated the strongest need. Overall, the greatest difference in perception was among Stakeholders (VSPs and Non-VSPs) and victims in the Southeast/Philadelphia region.

Table V-2: Assistance/Shelter/Transportation Responses

ASSISTANCE/SHELTER/TRANSPORTATION			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	2.46	2.72	2.00
East	3.01	2.90	1.75
Southeast/Philadelphia	3.04	2.92	1.35
Southcentral/east	2.68	2.69	1.30
Southcentral/west	2.85	2.50	2.50
Southwest/Pittsburgh	2.43	2.75	1.85
Northcentral & Northeast	2.81	2.29	2.08
Statewide Average	2.76	2.68	1.65

Table V-3, shows the overall victims’ perception of the need for Legal Services and Assistance is consistent with that of the stakeholders. The need for Legal Services & Assistance was ranked lowest among VSP stakeholders in the Northwest and Southcentral/west regions, and lowest among Non-VSPs in the Northcentral & Northwest and Northwest regions. VSPs and Non-VSPs in Southeast/Philadelphia region indicated the greatest need for Legal Services & Assistance. Victims indicated the need was strongest in the Southcentral/west region and weakest in the Southeast/Philadelphia region. Overall, the greatest difference in perception was among Stakeholders (VSPs and Non-VSPs) and victims in the Southcentral/west region.

Table V-3: Legal Services & Assistance Comparison

LEGAL SERVICES & ASSISTANCE			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	1.42	1.47	2.15
East	1.68	1.81	2.10
Southeast/Philadelphia	1.86	2.19	1.70
Southcentral/east	1.63	1.90	1.50
Southcentral/west	1.44	1.55	2.50
Southwest/Pittsburgh	1.57	2.13	1.85
Northcentral & Northeast	1.74	1.34	2.05
Statewide Average	1.76	1.82	1.85

In Table V-4, victims’ perception of the need for Medical & Mental Health services is lower than that of the stakeholders overall. VSPs and Non-VSPs in Southeast/Philadelphia region indicated the greatest need for Medical & Mental Health services. Victims indicated the need for Medical & Mental Health Services was strongest in the Southcentral/west region and weakest in the Northwest region. Overall, the greatest difference in perception was among Stakeholders (VSPs and Non-VSPs) and victims in the Southeast/Philadelphia region.

Table V-4: Medical & Mental Health Services Comparison

MEDICAL & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	2.11	1.89	1.36
East	2.23	1.70	1.80
Southeast/Philadelphia	2.57	2.47	1.45
Southcentral/east	2.22	2.24	1.30
Southcentral/west	2.26	1.79	2.85
Southwest/Pittsburgh	1.87	2.07	1.90
Northcentral & Northeast	2.43	2.01	2.43
Statewide Average	2.30	2.08	1.75

In Table V-5, victims’ perception of the need for Safety/Support/Crisis Assistance services is generally consistent with that of the stakeholders. Safety/Support/Crisis Assistance services were ranked lowest of among VSP stakeholders in the Northwest, Southwest/Pittsburgh, and Northcentral/west regions. Non-VSP VSPs ranked it lowest in the Northcentral & Northeast and Southcentral/west regions. Both VSPs and Non-VSPs in Southeast/Philadelphia region indicated the greatest need for Safety/Support/Crisis Assistance services. Victims indicated the need for Safety/Support/Crisis Assistance Services was greatest in the Southcentral/west region and least in the Southeast/Philadelphia region. Overall, the greatest difference in perception was among Stakeholders (VSPs and Non-VSPs) and victims in the Southcentral/west region.

Table V-5: Safety/Support/Crisis Assistance Services Comparison

SAFETY/SUPPORT/CRISIS ASSISTANCE			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	1.67	1.92	2.05
East	1.97	1.95	1.80
Southeast/Philadelphia	2.37	2.25	1.45
Southcentral/east	1.79	2.09	1.30
Southcentral/west	1.83	1.77	2.85
Southwest/Pittsburgh	1.74	1.96	1.90
Northcentral & Northeast	1.97	1.66	1.98
Statewide Average	1.99	1.97	1.75

In Table V-6, victims’ perception of the need for Language & Disability Assistance services is considerably lower with that of the stakeholders. VSPs and Non-VSPs in Southeast/Philadelphia region indicated the greatest need for Language & Disability Assistance services while Victims in the Southcentral/west region indicated the need was strongest in that region. The perception of the need for Language & Disability

Assistance was weakest among VSPs in the Southwest/Pittsburgh region; among Non-VSPs in the Southcentral/west region, and among Victims in the Southwest/Philadelphia region. Overall, the greatest difference in perception was among Stakeholders (VSPs and Non-VSPs) and victims in the Southeast/Philadelphia region.

Table V-6: Language & Disability Services Comparison

LANGUAGE & DISABILITY ASSISTANCE			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	2.07	1.88	1.80
East	2.38	2.22	1.50
Southeast/Philadelphia	2.74	2.34	1.35
Southcentral/east	2.13	2.28	1.10
Southcentral/west	2.11	1.68	2.50
Southwest/Pittsburgh	1.89	2.30	1.55
Northcentral & Northeast	2.40	1.86	1.88
Statewide Average	2.35	2.13	1.50

Based on the findings noted in Tables V-2 through V-6, Assistance/Shelter/ Transportation and Language and Disability Services were identified as the greatest needs among VSPs and Non-VSPs statewide with some variance from region to region. Legal Services & Assistance and Safety/Support/ Crisis Assistance were ranked lowest among VSPs and Non-VSPs, although not significantly lower by comparison. While their perception of the need for all services statewide was generally consistent on average, Victims also indicated that the need for all services was strongest in the Southcentral/west region. These variations in perception indicate that the needs are not the same statewide nor between victims and stakeholders. Strategies that address the needs by region and include breaking down the needs within the subgroups will be best in addressing these gaps. These strategies must also balance a response to the perceptions of stakeholders, VSP and Non-VSP, and victims.

PERCEPTION OF NEED FOR SERVICES BY RURAL/URBAN AND STATEWIDE

Overall, victims indicate that needs are greatest in rural communities...

Tables V-7 through V-11 show the differences in perspective between stakeholders and victims in rural communities and urban communities. In all five subgroups of services, victims perceived the need for services to be substantially less in urban communities over stakeholder perceptions. In three of the five subgroups, Legal Services & Assistance, Medical & Mental Health, and Safety/Support/Crisis Assistance, victims perceived the need for services to be substantially less in urban communities than stakeholders. Overall, victims indicate that needs are greatest in rural

communities while stakeholders believe that needs are greatest in urban communities. These differences in perspective may be the result of the lack of awareness about available services among victims/survivors of crime, indicating a need for a strategy that raises awareness about available services.

Table V-7: Assistance/Shelter/Transportation – Rural vs Urban

ASSISTANCE/SHELTER/TRANSPORTATION		
Area	Stakeholders	Victims
Rural	2.57	2.15
Urban	2.81	1.45

Table V-8: Legal Services & Assistance - Rural vs Urban

LEGAL SERVICES & ASSISTANCE		
Area	Stakeholders	Victims
Rural	1.70	2.20
Urban	2.19	1.75

Table V-9: Medical & Mental Health Services- Rural vs Urban

MEDICAL & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES		
Area	Stakeholders	Victims
Rural	1.91	2.20
Urban	2.19	1.55

Table V-10: Safety/Support/Crisis Assistance - Rural vs Urban

SAFETY/SUPPORT/CRISIS ASSISTANCE		
Area	Stakeholders	Victims
Rural	1.85	2.20
Urban	2.16	1.60

Table V-11: Language & Disability Assistance Services - Rural vs Urban

LANGUAGE & DISABILITY ASSISTANCE		
Area	Stakeholders	Victims
Rural	2.03	2.00
Urban	2.40	1.35

PERCEPTION OF BARRIERS TO SERVICES BY REGION AND STATEWIDE:

Similar to services, a comparison of perceptions between stakeholders and victims is helpful in identifying and addressing gaps as part of an implementation plan. Tables V-12 through V-14 compare responses regarding barriers to services from VSPs, Non-VSPs, and Victims. Based on the findings in Table V-12, structural barriers appear to be greatest in the Southeast/Philadelphia region for victims as well as stakeholders. **Overall, perceptions regarding barriers to services are consistent among stakeholders and victims alike. Victims and Stakeholders perceive personal barriers to be the strongest and structural barriers to be the weakest among barriers to services.**

Table V-12: Structural Barriers

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	2.56	2.28	1.88
East	2.65	2.54	2.16
Southeast/Philadelphia	2.97	2.89	2.32
Southcentral/east	2.61	2.70	2.12
Southcentral/west	2.44	2.40	1.00
Southwest/Pittsburgh	2.36	2.56	2.01
Northcentral & Northeast	2.39	2.43	1.35
Statewide Average	2.65	2.58	1.83

Table V-13 shows that stakeholders perceive cultural barriers to be greatest in the Southeast/Philadelphia region with Southcentral/east and East regions following closely behind. Victims indicate these barriers are strongest in the Southwest/Pittsburgh with Northwest region following in second.

Table V-13: Cultural Barriers

CULTURAL BARRIERS			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	2.42	2.28	2.40
East	2.90	2.56	2.16
Southeast/Philadelphia	3.41	3.18	2.34
Southcentral/east	2.89	2.91	2.27
Southcentral/west	2.36	2.06	1.44
Southwest/Pittsburgh	2.28	2.05	2.59
Northcentral & Northeast	2.23	1.97	2.06
Statewide Average	2.81	2.45	2.18

In Table V-14 all respondents indicate that personal barriers are the greatest overall barriers. Personal barriers are greatest in the Southcentral/west region based on VSP perceptions; in the Southcentral/east region based on Non-VSP perceptions; and almost equally strong in the Southcentral/east and Northcentral & Northeast regions for victims.

Personal barriers are the greatest overall barrier to services.

Table V-14: Personal Barriers

PERSONAL BARRIERS			
Region	VSP	Non-VSP	Victims
Northwest	3.25	3.04	2.81
East	3.29	2.92	2.00
Southeast/Philadelphia	3.15	3.11	2.20
Southcentral/east	3.21	3.21	3.00
Southcentral/west	3.58	3.01	2.29
Southwest/Pittsburgh	3.03	3.03	2.91
Northcentral & Northeast	2.97	2.98	3.04
Statewide Average	3.14	3.05	2.61

Table V-15 breaks down stakeholder perceived barriers to services by rural and urban geographic areas. Overall, stakeholder perceptions indicate that barriers to service are strongest in urban areas over rural areas. Understanding the significance of these barriers in accessing services relative to regions, geographic areas, and respondents is key to developing an implementation plan that addresses and improves outreach efforts and service delivery methods.

Table V-15: Barriers to Services - Stakeholders

BARRIERS TO SERVICE			
Area	Personal	Cultural	Structural
Rural	2.96	1.97	2.38
Urban	3.22	3.08	2.84

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Stakeholders were asked to indicate the adequacy of services based on population types. These types included victims of crimes against a person and victims of crimes against property as well as demographic factors. The need for services among victims of crimes against a person were higher overall on a statewide average and significantly higher in the East, Southeast, Southcentral/east, Southwest/Pittsburgh and Northcentral & Northeast regions. This indicates that these victims are underserved in these regions.

Demographic factors were combined into three subgroups. These include non-minority/white populations, minority/ethnic populations, and special/sensitive populations. Overall, the need for services among special/sensitive populations was greater than minority/ethnic and non-minority/white populations. There was no significant difference among these population subgroups in the East and Southcentral/east regions. Minority/ethnic populations ranked the same as special/sensitive populations in the Southwest/Pittsburgh region. In all other regions, special/sensitive populations were identified as the most underserved among the three population subgroups. Minority/ethnic populations ranked lowest among urban stakeholders but there was no difference between non-minority/white and special/sensitive populations between rural and urban respondents.

... the need for services among special/sensitive populations was greater than minority/ethnic and non-minority/white.

Based on the limited number of responses received from victims of crime, there was not sufficient data to assess their perspectives on underserved populations. The information provided by stakeholders regarding underserved populations is key in tailoring services, availability, and outreach efforts that will increase services where they are most needed. Future studies should expand efforts to obtain this information from victims as well.

For more detail on these and other findings, including stakeholder training and infrastructure needs, and how respondents learned about services available, please see section IV “Analysis & Results”.

MAJOR FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

This study produced many findings, both statewide and regionally. These findings include the need for services, barriers to services, underserved populations, and training & infrastructure needs for stakeholders. Details on these needs are provided in the Analysis & Results section. Following are a list of the major findings and recommendations, which should serve as the starting point for closing gaps in the provision of services to victims of crime:

1. The variations in perception of the need for services indicate that the needs are not the same statewide nor between victims and stakeholders. Strategies that **address the needs by region** and include breaking down the needs within the subgroups will be best in addressing these gaps. These strategies must also balance a response to the perceptions of stakeholders, VSP and Non-VSP, and victims.
2. Overall, victims indicate that needs are greatest in rural communities while stakeholders believe that needs are greatest in urban communities. These differences in perspective may be the result of the lack of awareness about available services among victims/survivors of crime, indicating a need for a **strategy that raises awareness about available services**.
3. Overall, perceptions regarding barriers to services are consistent among stakeholders and victims alike. Victims and Stakeholders perceive personal barriers to be the strongest and structural barriers to be the weakest among barriers to services. To close this gap on barriers to service, **develop new strategies that identify and address issues surrounding personal barriers as a priority**.
4. In all regions, Special/Sensitive populations were identified as the most underserved population among the three population subgroups among stakeholders, tying with Minority/Ethnic in the Southeast/Philadelphia region. There was no difference between non-minority/white and special/sensitive populations between rural and urban respondents. Ensure that plans for new and existing services **specifically address needs unique to Special/Sensitive populations**.
5. Among the greatest need for specific services identified by stakeholders statewide the top five included **Long-Term Housing, Transportation, Emergency Financial Assistance, Relocation Services, and In-Home Personal Care**. New programs and existing program enhancements should include an **emphasis on these services**.
6. Among the specific services needs that are currently sufficient or satisfactorily met as identified by stakeholders statewide the top five included **Crisis Hotline, Assistance with VCAP, Child Advocacy Center Services, Medical Exam for Sexual Assault, and Notification of Court Hearings and Events**. These services do not need special attention to close gaps and should receive **lower priority for new or expanded services unless regional variations suggest otherwise**. They should remain monitored to ensure that changes in availability remain satisfactory.
7. Stakeholders identified specific unserved/underserved populations by victimization type. The top five included **Harassment/Bullying, Human Trafficking (Sex/Labor), Stalking, Physical Assault or Domestic Violence Against and Older Adult/Elderly, and Identity Theft/Financial Abuse/Scam**. New programs and existing program enhancements should include an **emphasis on these underserved victim populations**.
8. Among the populations that are adequately served as identified by stakeholders statewide the top five included **Arson, Injury by DUI, Homicide/Murder, Robbery, and Burglary**. Services designed specifically for these victim populations do not need special attention to close gaps and should receive **lower priority for new or expanded services unless regional variations suggest otherwise**. They should remain monitored to ensure that changes in service availability remain adequate.

9. Stakeholders statewide identified specific demographic populations that are unserved/underserved based on population type. The top five included **Homeless, Non-native Speakers, LGBTQ, Immigrant/Refugees, and Hispanic or Latino (Sex/Labor)**. New programs and existing program enhancements should include an **emphasis on these underserved demographic populations to ensure that their unique needs for services are included in service strategies**.
10. Among the specific demographic populations identified by stakeholders statewide, those that were considered adequately served include **White, Individuals with Intellectual/Emotional Disabilities, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Adults (age 26-64)**. Services designed specifically for these demographic populations do not need special attention to close gaps and should receive **lower priority for new or expanded services unless regional variations suggest otherwise**. They should remain monitored to ensure that changes in service availability remain adequate.
11. Stakeholders identified most significant barriers to accessing services are **Substance abuse additions, Ashamed/Embarrassed about victimization, Caretaker was/is offender, Fear of losing housing, No childcare available**. Specific strategies aimed at **education & awareness for victims and stakeholders** should focus on messages that reduce or remove the perception of these barriers. Additionally, strategies for access to services could **expand on or find new ways to promote efforts that assure confidentiality, acceptance, and safety for victims**.
12. The most effective source of information about available services for both rural and urban stakeholders came from **existing partnerships with Victim Service Providers and from community outreach**. The most effective source of information about available services for victims of crime came from their **Victim Services Advocate, Police/Law Enforcement, and Medical Services providers**. Education and awareness strategies should **maximize these venues in sharing information about services for victims of crime**.

OBSERVATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

In addition to the review of the above findings and recommendations, this section provides some observations and lessons-learned on the needs assessment planning, implementation, and resulting response rates that will help to inform and improve the victim services needs assessment process in the future.

The Victim Services Needs Assessment process encompassed almost two years of developing a strategy, engaging support, soliciting input in developing the instrument, building a communications framework, conducting the survey, and analyzing the results. In order to improve on the initial Needs Assessment, the study team reviewed similar studies, borrowing best practices and noting lessons learned. One of the primary concerns identified in the initial Needs Assessment was the sampling frame and methodology, which targeted land-based telephone lines in conducting the survey. Our objective was to reach well beyond this limited population of homeowners to seek input from a much broader victim population that included individuals who are homeless, dependent, incarcerated, substance-dependent,



etc. In addition, we sought to engage not only traditional providers of victim services but also organizations with other primary missions in their community who serve individuals who may be victims of crime. Organizations such as homeless shelters, faith-based organizations, hospitals, and community & cultural centers provide a service in their community and often come in contact with victims of crime. Their knowledge and experience in serving these individuals helped to expand our understanding regarding needs for victims of crime. Additionally, we sought these organizations to help connect us with victims of crime, make them aware of the Needs Assessment initiative, and encourage their participation.

While this substantially expanded outreach provided much richer data, it also presented a variety of challenges noted below. Working through these challenges required adjustments to our strategy along the way and identified lessons learned, which will be helpful in future iterations of this effort. In the end, our goal was to develop a strategy that could be replicated in order to build on baseline data and gauge progress over time.

Challenges/Lessons Learned:

1. ***Conveying the objective among stakeholders*** – VSPs and others in the victim services community clearly understood the purpose and benefits of the Needs Assessment. However, it was much more difficult to explain this to stakeholders who were not VSPs. Throughout the regional meetings and in enlisting their support to share the effort within their network many were not clear on their role or what benefit this effort would have to individuals whom they serve. Based on their limited view of their potential, many were not sufficiently engaged in the effort and, therefore, did not follow through by providing input or actively promoting the effort in their community. While nearly half of the stakeholder respondents represented this group there are so many others whom we did not hear from, leaving their perspective incomplete. Future needs assessments should ensure more time is spent in building relationships with this group of Non-VSP stakeholders to help them understand their role and potential in serving victims of crime.
2. ***Engaging Victims of Crime*** – This presented an enormous challenge because individuals from all populations may be victims of crime. There is no single network to use in reaching out to them. Many do not consider themselves victims or are afraid to be identified because of their circumstances or are unable to engage because of a caretaker, perpetrator, incarceration, or disability. We had expectations of engaging many more victims of crime than we were ultimately able to. The variety of the participants who were victims was much better than the initial needs assessment, but the low number of actual participants requires a conditional interpretation of the victim results. Future need assessments should work to considerably expand this outreach through stronger collaboration with all stakeholders, broader distribution of information about the Needs Assessment, and clearer and more targeted messaging.
3. ***Accessibility*** – Our study team spent a great deal of effort in order to make the needs assessment as accessible as possible. The challenge was in finding the right mix that would maximize the responses without detracting too much from the effort. Input from our regional meetings guided us to using a digital questionnaire that could be accessed via smart phone. Our goal was to widely distribute fliers and printable questionnaires throughout our stakeholder network which could be reproduced locally. We suggested posting the fliers throughout their community and assisting victims in completing the surveys, both of which were a tremendous ask in hindsight. In addition to these efforts, we invested considerable time and effort in producing alternate language formats of the printable and digital survey, hoping to boost participation. Unfortunately, the

number of respondents using these formats was minimal, limited only to 11 Spanish and 9 Mandarin. Future needs assessments should balance the resources required with reasonable gains in participation.