



Waukesha County
Criminal Justice Collaborating Council
Evidence-Based Decision Making Victim Issues Workgroup
Friday, March 4, 2016

Team Members Present:

DOC Community Corrections Field Supervisor Marla Bell Clerk of Circuit Court Kathy Madden
Victim Witness Coordinator Jen Dunn Judge Michael Aprahamian
DOC Victim Services Director Stephanie Hove

Team Members Absent: Public Defender Kelsey Morin

Others Present: Senior Collections Specialist Michele Gallun, CJCC Coordinator Rebecca Luczaj, Administrative Specialist Alison Ries

Bell and Dunn called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Approve Minutes from February 15, 2016 Meeting

Motion: Aprahamian moved, second by Bell to approve the minutes of February 15, 2016. Motion carried 5-0.

Overview of DOA Collections Process – Michele Gallun, Senior Collections Specialist

Michele Gallun was present and distributed a handout titled *Overview of Collection Processes*. Gallun provided the workgroup with a brief history of DOA Collections and reported they collect both internally for departments and externally for 57 different municipalities statewide. She explained the collection process, which includes sending out letters to debtors, tax intercept procedures, skip tracing in other databases to locate debtors, and payment processing methods. Responding to Hove's question, Gallun stated currently there is no option for online payments.

Gallun explained civil judgements are forwarded weekly to DOA collections and downloaded into their system immediately. She said there is no interest being charged to the debtor at this point, but that there is an option available within their system that has the capability to calculate and charge interest. DOA Collections keeps track of the status of debtors (incarceration, death, bankruptcy, etc.) through available online systems and probation and parole officers. Hove questioned why there was such a large difference in monies collected from 2013 to 2014. Gallun stated the tax intercept program was implemented at that time, thus allowing more restitution to be collected. Madden stated currently there is \$3.1 million in uncollected restitution funds. Reasons for this include debtor status and/or unknown location of debtors. She explained that even though a civil judgment has ended, the debt is still owed. When a civil judgment ends, a lien is placed on any real property that the debtor owns in the county. When the debt is paid, the lien is released. Madden stated that civil judgments may be renewed for another 10 years but many individuals are not aware of that. She questioned if a standing order for renewal of civil judgments from the courts would be an option in helping victims collect restitution. Dunn questioned if the Victim/Witness office should be included as a resource for the court to locate victims if restitution has been collected for them and they are unable to be located.

Continue Discussion on Current Restitution Process

Dunn distributed a draft of the workgroup's vision, goals, identified problems and potential solutions. She will re-draft a new version including items discussed at today's meeting.

Review Dane County Restitution Addendum

Luczaj distributed Dane County's order for restitution. Hove reported on the process Dane County uses for collecting restitution, stating that the Victim/Witness office collects the monies and then distributes them to victims. She stated Dane County does list the victim's name on the order, but lists the victim's address as in care of Victim Witness in an effort to protect the victim's confidentiality. Dunn stated there needs to be a better process for communicating information between departments electronically. Hove stated the idea is to submit the form as an attachment electronically with the Judgment of Conviction. She reported the state is looking at using this as a statewide practice, and will be holding a meeting in March to discuss it. Hove and Dunn will attend the meeting and report back to the workgroup at the next meeting.

Review Legislative Restitution Bill

Hove stated this bill is known as the "restitution reform bill" and makes changes to the procedures for providing restitution to victims. The bill will prohibit DOC from collecting any administrative or supervision fees until restitution is paid in full. The bill will also require a court to order an offender to authorize DOC to withhold a portion of any wages earned or any monies held by the offender while they are in prison to pay restitution. The bill also authorizes any garnishment order to remain in effect until the restitution is paid in full, and will require the clerk of courts to submit an annual report to the legislature indicating amounts of restitution collected each year. Implementation date is July 1, 2016.

Continue to Discuss Data Needs & Workgroup's Proposed Change Strategy

Restitution pilot in Waukesha County: Hove reported that currently the Office of Victim Services & Programs (OVSP) has approximately 30,000 victims set up to receive notification on VOICE (Visual Offender Information Center) for Victims. VOICE offers enrolled victims access to information about the offender(s) who committed a crime against them. It also offers routine notification to enrolled victims regarding certain changes in the offender's status and location. An enhancement was launched this month that allows victims to view restitution information. Waukesha County VW staff were trained yesterday and will be using the program as a pilot to ensure the system is operating effectively. Following the 90-day pilot, the system will be launched statewide.

Discuss Next Steps & Set Date for Next Meeting

Dunn will edit the draft of identified problems and possible solutions and provide it to workgroup members prior to the next meeting. Aprahamian will contact Representative Rob Hutton to present on the restitution reform bill at one of the next workgroup meetings.

Future meetings:

Wednesday, March 16th at 12:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 6th at 12 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.