

Crime Victim Notification (CVN) Requirements Definition Draft Document Summary

The *Crime Victim Notification (CVN) Requirements Definition Document Discussion Draft* represents a baseline understanding of the requirements of the proposed CVN system. The purpose of the requirements document, which was prepared by an initial group of stakeholders from key state agencies representing justice, corrections, and the courts, is to provide a starting place for stakeholders to provide input and give direction for the development of a statewide CVN system.

Background and Project Goals

Responsibility for crime victim notification is divided among different governmental entities, including the Attorney General, the Department of Corrections, and County Attorneys. No statewide automated system for the sharing of the information exists. As a result, the burden of requesting information is often put on the victims themselves. In light of this, the state of Montana has decided to establish a statewide victim information and notification system that crosses all agencies involved in a victim's case. This system is not intended to take away individual agencies' responsibilities to provide crime victim notification, nor is it intended to replace any current functionality in use by agencies. Instead it is intended to be a tool that agencies can use to cooperatively fulfill statutory obligations for crime victim notification and to enable victims to have access to information pertaining to their cases. The goals of the system are to:

- Assist agencies in fulfilling the statutory requirements for crime victim notification,
- Take the burden off the victims for initiating multiple registrations with multiple different agencies throughout the proceedings of a CVN case,
- Support the intent of the SAVIN grant awarded Montana to undertake this effort, and ultimately
- Provide better, timelier, and more effective communication with the victims and witnesses of crimes

General Design Concepts/Principles

The objective of the CVN system is to collect appropriate and timely information to support the notification of at least statutorily required events to crime victims, witnesses, and other authorized parties. In order to meet this objective, several general design concepts or principles were discussed by the initial stakeholders:

- The CVN is intended to be an information system as well as a notification system, meaning that the victim will have a central place – an on-line system – to obtain information in addition to receiving notifications.
- Whenever possible, information for a notification should be captured by the agency responsible for that notification, and the information should be submitted to CVN electronically. Agencies with notification responsibility that do not have the capability of handling electronic transactions should be able to designate or authorize an agency to submit information on their behalf.
- Victims should only have to register for notification once for a given incident, should have a means to update their own profile information for notification, and

should have the option for notification and/or report-style information on events concerning the cases involving the crime victim.

- If a victim is involved in more than one incident requiring notification, the victim will need to register for notification for each incident. Notification will be at an incident level, meaning that victims and witnesses will receive notification for all events for all cases involved in the incident.
- The CVN must be able to accept registration of an agency's identifier (docket number, case number, or correctional number) against a CVN file number to support that agency's submission of CVN event information.
- The CVN must be able to register victims of juvenile felony offenses as well as victims of crimes committed by adults. There are differences, however, in the sources of information and the assumptions that must be taken into account in the requirements for CVN.

Summary of Recommended Functional Requirements

The following high-level functional requirements were identified by the initial stakeholders for the CVN:

1. **Register the Crime:** Victim notification will require the registration of the incident for which notification applies in order to establish a CVN file to track the notification events.
2. **Register the Victim:** Certain information about the victim (which can include advocates and witnesses) to be notified must be stored in the CVN so that the victim can receive and access information.
3. **Record the Event:** Information regarding proceedings on the cases involving the incident must be sent to the CVN to support notifications.
4. **Notify Victim of Events:** The victim will receive a notification when the CVN receives data that requires the generation of a notification. Key notification events are defined in statute for pre-disposition, custody, and juvenile felony cases.
5. **Close the CVN File:** After receipt of certain events, or upon request by the victim, the CVN file should be closed, meaning no further notification is needed.

Summary of Recommended System Requirements

System requirements are related to the management and administration of the system, and include:

1. **Create and Maintain Users:** The CVN system will provide victims, advocates, and other authorized agencies the ability to sign onto the system to update and maintain user information.
2. **System Inquiry:** Users at different levels and through different means must be able to inquire upon data within the CVN System.