



# NJ VICTIMS OF CRIME COMPENSATION OFFICE

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*Serving New Jersey Victims  
from Sussex...*

**caring**  
**support**  
**dignity**  
**help**  
**respect**

*...to Cape May*

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**2014 ANNUAL REPORT**



## New Jersey Office of the Attorney General

# Victims of Crime Compensation Office



**JOHN J. HOFFMAN**  
*New Jersey Acting  
Attorney General*

## Executive Director's Message

The New Jersey Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO) is the only state agency whose sole mission is to compensate victims of crime for losses incurred as a result of their victimization. Each year, we reflect on past accomplishments and challenges, assess and analyze current performance and plan for future innovations and improvements. We recognize the need to remain vigilant in maintaining a high standard of excellence in serving victims of crime.

With the extraordinary efforts of the staff, the VCCO stayed on course and awarded \$9.893 million to victims of crime. The staff handled 28,192 telephone calls and assisted over 2,330 walk-in clients. Unlike most states' compensation offices, New Jersey's compensation staff provides direct assistance to victims in completing the application and gathering the necessary documentation. The dual role of providing direct services and progressing claims is no small task. The Agency's technological enhancements have alleviated some of the manual functions, but no technology can replace the listening ears, consoling words and the smiles of encouragement. These intangible gifts are shared with thousands of NJ's victims of crime.

In her own words, VCCO investigator Maggie Miranda shared a quote she works by, "Keep your heart in your business and your business in your heart." VCCO Supervisor Investigator Kathy Yuill added, "Just quietly listening to a crime victim share their story can often be as important as providing compensation. Sometimes this is the victim's only opportunity to freely express how they are feeling." Finally, In-Take Supervisor Melissa Verardi culminates with "We are privileged to serve in a position where we can positively affect the lives we encounter. It is a tremendous opportunity to be able to provide our claimants with the tools to make the transition from victim to survivor."

The above quotes reflect the entire staff's commitment to serve victims of New Jersey, and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to work and serve with such a compassionate group of professionals.



**MARSETTA LEE**  
*Victims of Crime  
Compensation Office  
Executive Director*



# About Us

## Mission

Our mission is to provide compensation to innocent victims of violent crime for some expenses they suffer as a result of the crime. In carrying out its mission, the New Jersey Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO) is mindful of the special needs of those victimized by crime and their right to be treated with fairness, compassion and respect.

## Historical Snap Shot

The Violent Crime Compensation Board (VCCB) was established in **1971** by the Criminal Injury Compensation Act to help victims recover from the effects of violent crimes by providing financial assistance to victims, their families, and victim service providers to help alleviate the economic and emotional burdens of victimization. VCCB was set up as a quasi-judicial three commissioner board, originally part of the Executive Branch.

**In 1981**, the number of Commissioners was increased to five, with three of the five required to be attorneys licensed to practice in the State of New Jersey.

**In 1995**, the name was changed to Victims of Crime Compensation Board; the Board was deemed to be a criminal justice agency for purposes of obtaining criminal history records and penalties.

**In 2007**, the name changed again to Victims of Crime Compensation Agency (VCCA); the Commissioners were eliminated, and the agency was put in the Department of Treasury.

**In 2008**, by Executive Order, the Victims of Crime Compensation Agency was relocated to the Office of the Attorney General and renamed the Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO) as it remains today.

**In 2013**, the VCCO implemented electronic filing. This innovation allowed victims to file applications from their homes and upload the necessary documents. Governmental and nonprofit agencies representing victims can also utilize this convenient process.

**In 2014**, the agency deployed online tracking for providers. This measure reduces the volume of telephone calls to staff and allows more time to be spent processing open claims.

## Funding/Revenue Resource

The VCCO is funded by penalties assessed in both Municipal and Superior Court. Additional funding comes from the Federal VOCA compensation grant, State appropriation and the Commissary Surcharge on all items purchased in the Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities.

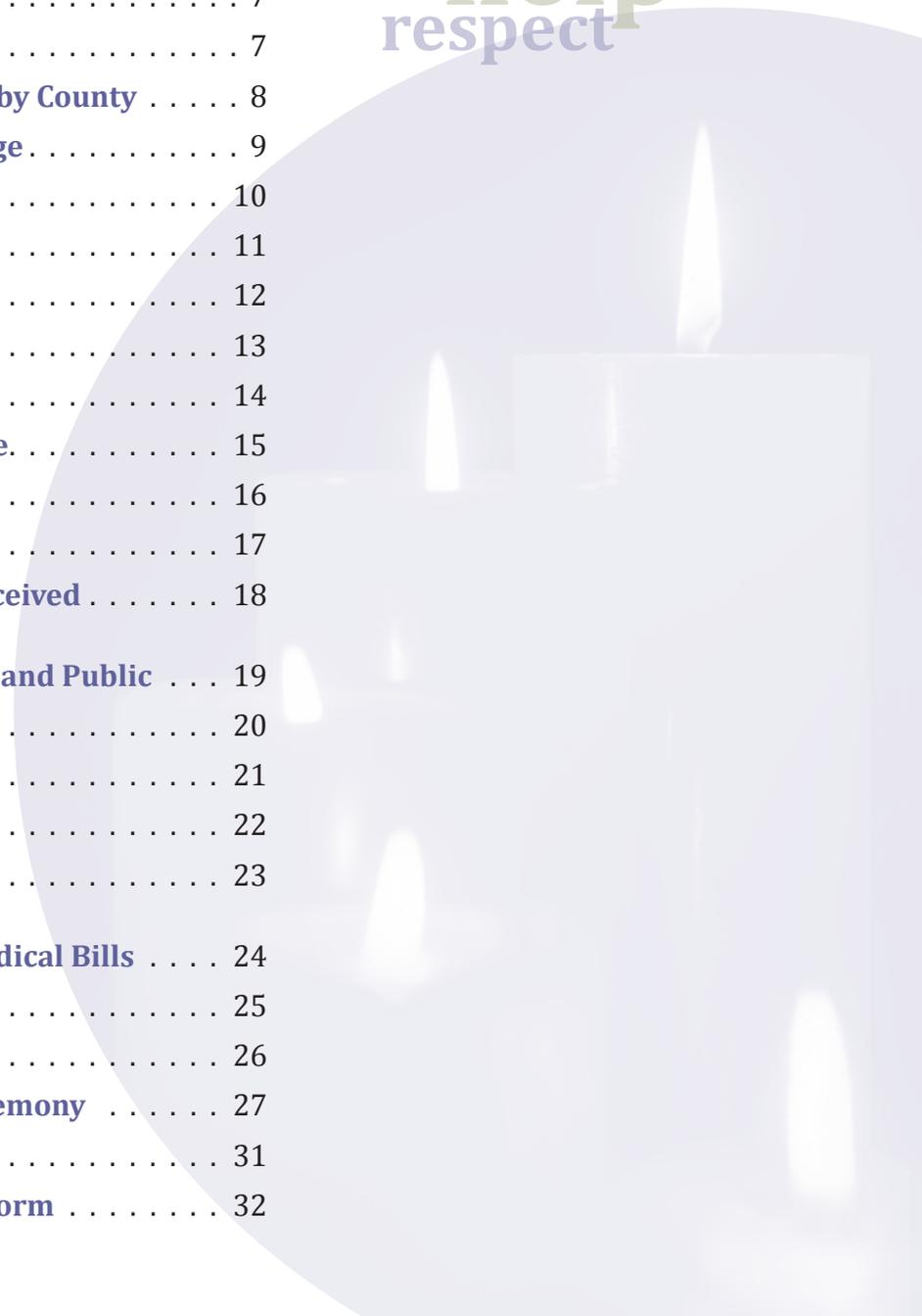


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help  
respect



# Application

VCCO

Claim applications are available in English and Spanish and can be obtained directly from this office. Claim applications can also be obtained from county office of Victim Witness Advocacy, hospitals, police stations and some nonprofit agencies that work with victims of crime.

An application for compensation may be filed by (1) the victim; (2) a dependent of deceased victim; (3) an authorized person acting on behalf of victim; or (4) any other person who has demonstrated an eligible expense for which they have become responsible due to the victimization.

Applications can be submitted in person, by mail, fax or online. VCCO staff is available to assist victims/claimants and their families in accessing information about the compensation program and the application process. Walk-ins are welcome at our Newark and Trenton offices. Please see the information below.



## **The Victims of Crime Compensation Office**

Phone: 973-648-2107/1-877-658-2221

Fax: 973-648-3937

E-mail: [njvictims@njvictims.org](mailto:njvictims@njvictims.org)

Web: [www.njvictims.org](http://www.njvictims.org)

### **Newark Office**

50 Park Place 5th Fl.

Newark, NJ 07102

#### **Walk-in Hours:**

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

### **Trenton Office**

Justice Complex, 7th Fl. West Wing

Trenton, NJ 08625

#### **Walk-in Hours:**

Tuesday & Thursday

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

# Claims Processing

## **Intake Phase:**

Upon receipt of an application, the claim is opened and given a claim number. An acknowledgment of receipt is sent to the applicant; if needed, additional information is requested. Requests for emergency assistance are reviewed immediately. All applications are screened for denial on a procedural basis, including expiration of time for filing, noncompensable crimes or outstanding warrants.

## **Bill Review:**

Bills are screened for the proper name and address, federal tax ID number, CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) codes & date of service. Any missing information and collection notices are returned to the provider with a letter stating the need for an itemized bill, where applicable. Once all the information is gathered, bills are entered into the VCCO's Claims Processing System. The bills are then forwarded to the appropriate unit for processing of the claim.

## **Eligibility Phase:**

Upon receipt of the police report, bills and supporting records, the claim is assigned to an investigator for eligibility determination. The assigned investigator will review all the circumstances surrounding the incident including communicating with police and prosecutorial personnel and securing related information from the courts. The investigator will make a recommendation either that the claim is eligible for compensation or to deny pursuant to statutory/regulation mandates. His/her superior will review the recommendation and either approve it, reject it or ask for additional information.

## **Compensation Phase:**

Once a claim is deemed eligible for compensation, the investigator will verify losses by: 1) communicating directly with providers of medical services, securing insurance benefit statements and 2) gathering loss of earnings and disability payment information to determine compensation.

## **Payment Processing:**

After the Order of Payment is written and approved, the case is transferred to the Accounting Unit. The voucher is reconciled to the order and mailed to the provider. Upon receipt of a signed voucher, the Accounting Unit processes the payment and submits it to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) administration for approval in New Jersey Comprehensive Financial System (Treasury System).

Claimants do not receive a payment voucher; their payments are processed the day after the Order is signed.

# Eligibility

VCCO

The preconditions for eligibility are as follows:

- The claim must be filed within three years from the date of the personal injury or death, or after three years if the VCCO determines that “good cause” existed for the delayed filing.
- The crime must be reported to the police within nine months after it occurs, or within nine months from the time it was known, but may be considered when reported to the police after nine months if the VCCO determined that “good cause” existed for the delay.
- The crime must occur in New Jersey (residency not required) or you must be a New Jersey resident who became a victim in another state or jurisdiction that does not have a crime victim compensation program or has a program which has not provided full compensation for your crime-related losses.
- The victim must cooperate with the police and prosecutor’s office; however, eligibility is not dependent upon conviction or prosecution of the offender.
- The claimant was not the offender or an accomplice of the offender.
- The victim must be an “innocent victim” of the crime, which means that the VCCO must consider whether the victim’s conduct contributed to the injuries suffered.
- Victim or claimant must not have open warrants or active criminal charges.

# Compensation

## Compensable Crimes\*

The VCCO may order the payment of compensation for personal injury or death that resulted from the commission or attempt to commit any of the following offenses:

- Aggravated assault
- Threats to do bodily harm
- Lewd, indecent or obscene acts
- Indecent acts with children
- Kidnapping
- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Bias crimes
- Aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual contact, criminal sexual contact
- Any other crime involving violence including domestic violence
- Burglary\*\* (personal property loss or damage will not be compensated)
- Tampering with a cosmetic, drug or food product
- Stalking
- Human trafficking
- Commission of a crime with an automobile where injury occurred

*\* It should be noted that simple assault is not a compensable crime.*

*\*\* Must be present in the structure when the crime occurred.*

## Compensable Benefits

Compensation payable to a victim, providers and to all other claimants sustaining economic loss because of injury to or death of that victim, may not exceed \$25,000 in the aggregate, and may include:

- Medically related expenses not covered by other insurance or benefits programs.
- Mental health counseling up to \$12,500 for a direct victim and up to \$7,000 for immediate family members.
- Loss of support for dependents in homicide cases and from offender in domestic violence/sexual assault cases. Maximum of \$600 per week not to exceed 48 months.
- Temporary loss of earnings for direct victims up to \$600 per week not to exceed 24 months; Permanent loss of earnings is not to exceed five years.
- Funeral expenses of up to \$5,000.
- Limited transportation costs for funerals and medical treatment.
- Limited domestic service up to \$6,500 for child care, day care and after school care costs.
- Crime Scene Cleanup expenses up to \$4,000.
- Relocation expenses up to \$2,500 when necessary as a result of the crime, where the health and safety of the victim are jeopardized.
- Reimbursement for up to \$200 in stolen cash resulting from assault and robbery, if you are at least 60 years old or determined to be disabled and meet financial guidelines.
- Attorneys are limited to receiving fees that are set by statute.
- Catastrophic Benefits – Supplemental \$35,000 for rehabilitative services only.

# Common Reasons for Denial

VCCO

There are many reasons that the Victims of Crime Compensation Office may deem a claim ineligible. Listed below are some of the most common reasons a claim may be denied.

- Open warrants/pending criminal charges/victim is incarcerated.  
N.J.A.C. 13:75-2.1 (i)
- Outstanding VCCO penalties.  
N.J.A.C. 13:75-2.1 (h)
- Failure to cooperate with law enforcement.  
N.J.A.C. 13:75-2.1 (l) (4)
- Contributory conduct.  
N.J.A.C. 13:75-2.1 (l) (3)
- Non-compliance with VCCO statute of limitations.  
N.J.A.C. 13:75-3.1 (a)
- Non-compensable crimes.  
N.J.S.A. 52:4B-11

The reasons listed above do not encompass all of the reasons a claim may be denied.

Each claim filed with the Victims of Crime Compensation Office is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

# Appeals Process

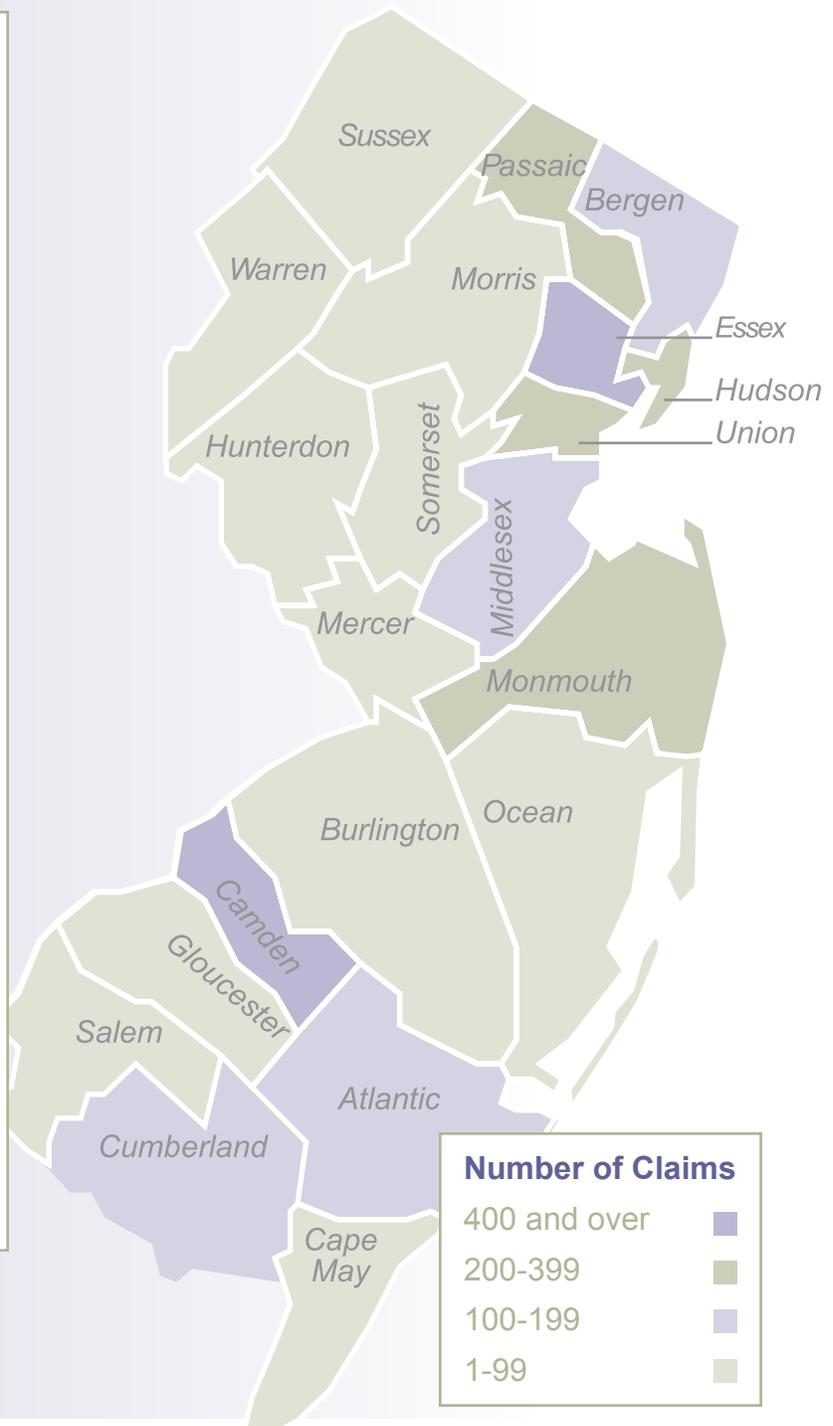
- Claim is denied, determined eligible with no compensation or limited pay.
- Claimant disagrees with the determination.
- Appeal is requested by claimant or his/her attorney upon VCCO denial.
- Appeal is scheduled and notification of appeal date is made at least 15 days prior to the appeal.
- Hearing held before the Victims of Crime Compensation Review Board; claimant and the Office present respective positions.
- Review Board considers all of the relevant evidence along with any applicable statutes or regulations and either affirms the denial, overturns the denial, or remands the file to obtain additional information necessary to render a decision.
- Review Board issues a Final Order and Decision on the Appeal within 60 days of the hearing date.
- If the decision is reversed, the Office processes the claim accordingly.
- Appeal of the Review Board's Final Order and Decision must be made to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of the State of New Jersey within 45 days of receiving the Review Board's Final Order and Decision.

## Most Common Issues Raised on Appeals

The most common issues raised on appeals are:  
Contribution and late filings.

# FY 14 Claims Received by County

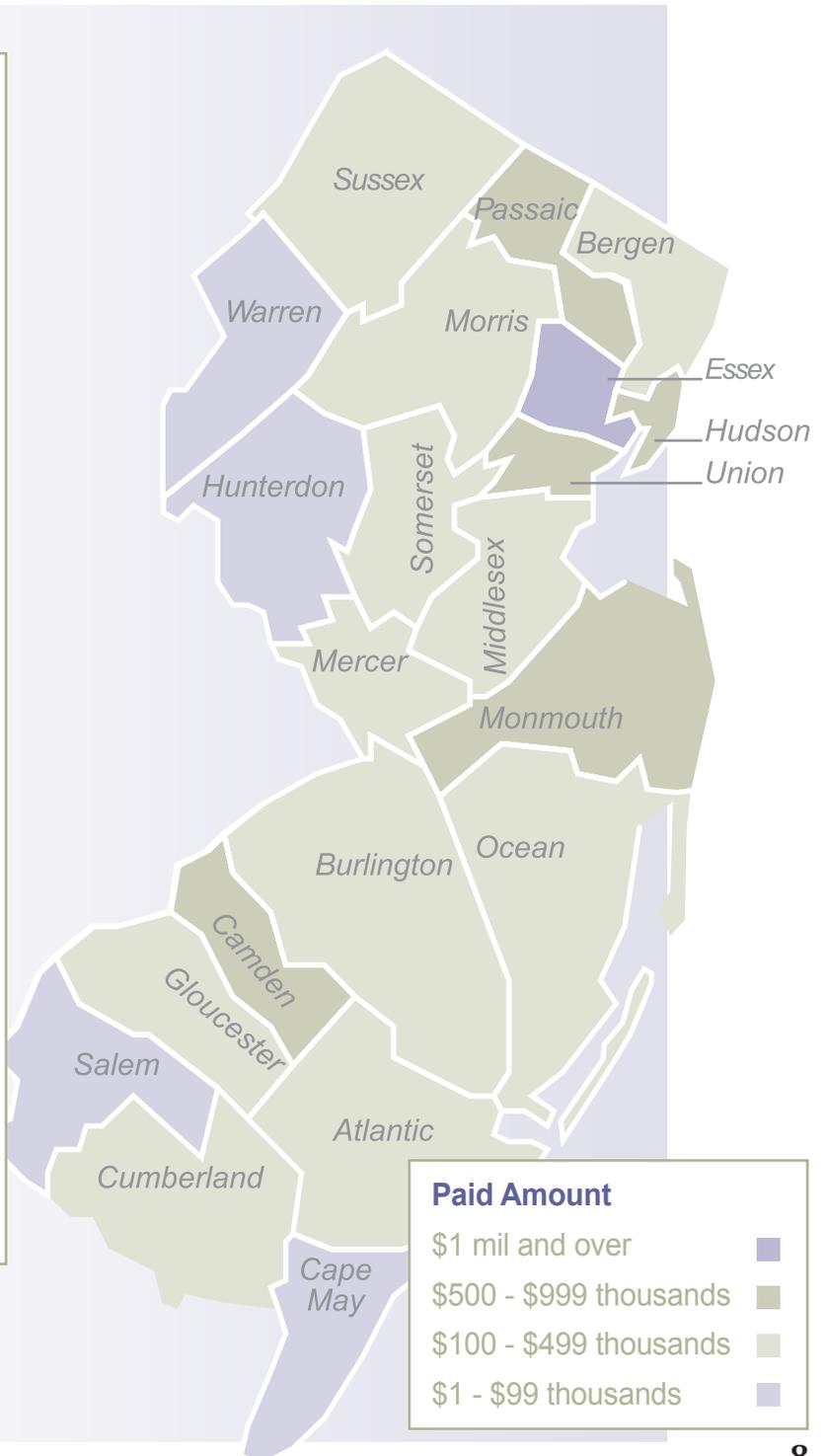
County	Claims	Percentage
Essex	1,292	33.0%
Camden	462	11.8%
Hudson	263	6.7%
Union	255	6.5%
Mercer	228	5.8%
Monmouth	205	5.2%
Passaic	205	5.2%
Middlesex	165	4.2%
Atlantic	128	3.3%
Bergen	121	3.1%
Cumberland	104	2.7%
Ocean	99	2.5%
Burlington	94	2.4%
Morris	62	1.6%
Gloucester	54	1.4%
Somerset	54	1.4%
Cape May	32	0.8%
Salem	28	0.7%
Sussex	27	0.7%
Warren	18	0.5%
Hunterdon	5	0.1%
Out -Of-State	16	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,917</b>	



# FY 14 Claims & Dollar Amount

## Paid for each county

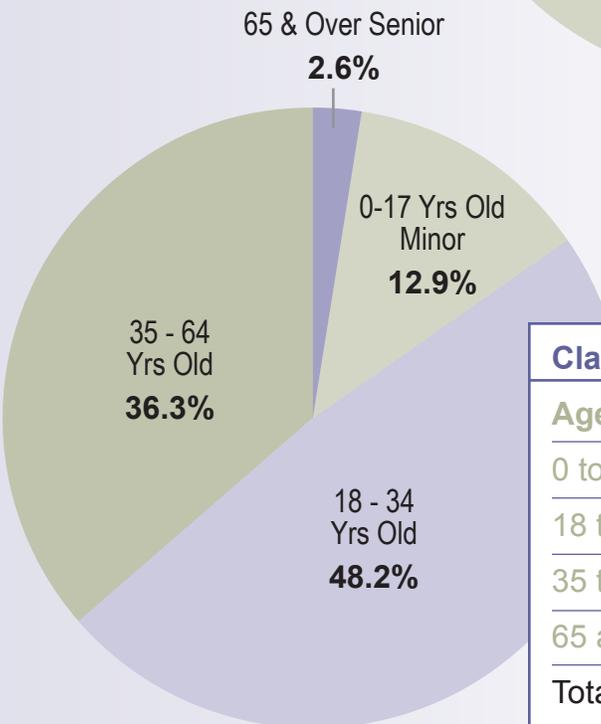
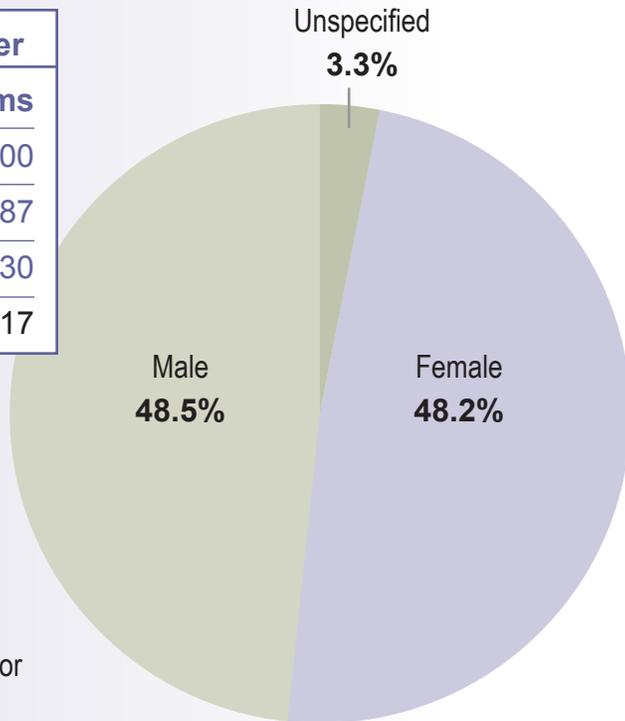
County	Claims	Paid
Essex	867	\$3,482,880.38
Camden	216	905,140.94
Union	169	672,571.93
Hudson	174	662,259.30
Monmouth	155	592,315.75
Passaic	128	521,724.18
Middlesex	141	471,058.78
Bergen	119	438,670.80
Mercer	139	400,768.23
Atlantic	93	298,152.05
Cumberland	56	276,283.11
Ocean	70	211,195.84
Gloucester	54	163,085.33
Morris	39	157,125.23
Burlington	50	149,186.41
Somerset	42	141,150.39
Sussex	30	111,656.32
Warren	18	72,836.42
Hunterdon	10	60,471.05
Cape May	19	58,694.11
Salem	4	16,083.48
Out-Of-State	7	29,704.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>\$9,893,014.35</b>



# FY 14 Demographics

VCCO

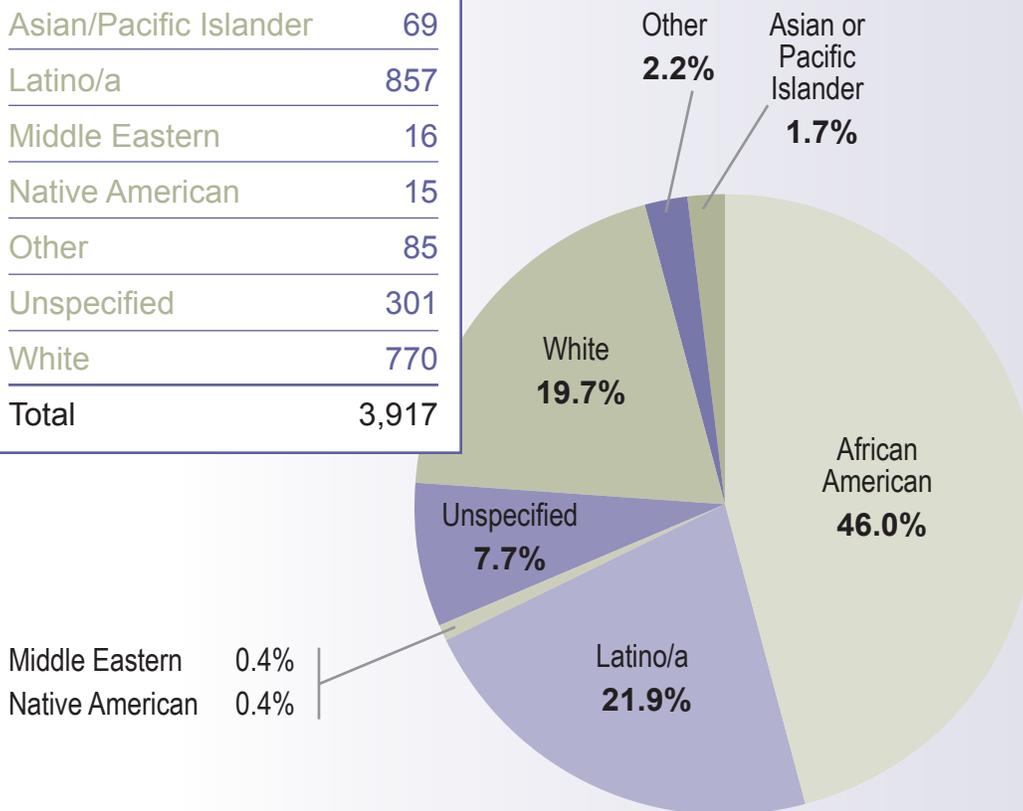
Gender	Claims
Male	1,900
Female	1,887
Unspecified	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,917</b>



Age	Claims
0 to 17	506
18 to 34	1,887
35 to 64	1,424
65 and over	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,917</b>

# FY 14 Demographics (continue)

Claims Received by Race	
Race	Claims
African American	1,804
Asian/Pacific Islander	69
Latino/a	857
Middle Eastern	16
Native American	15
Other	85
Unspecified	301
White	770
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,917</b>

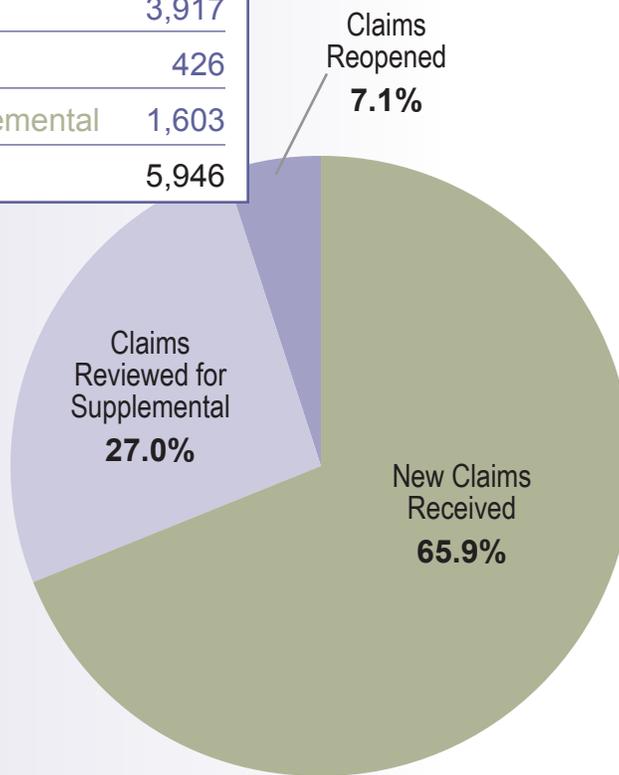


# FY 14 Total Annual Activity

VCCO

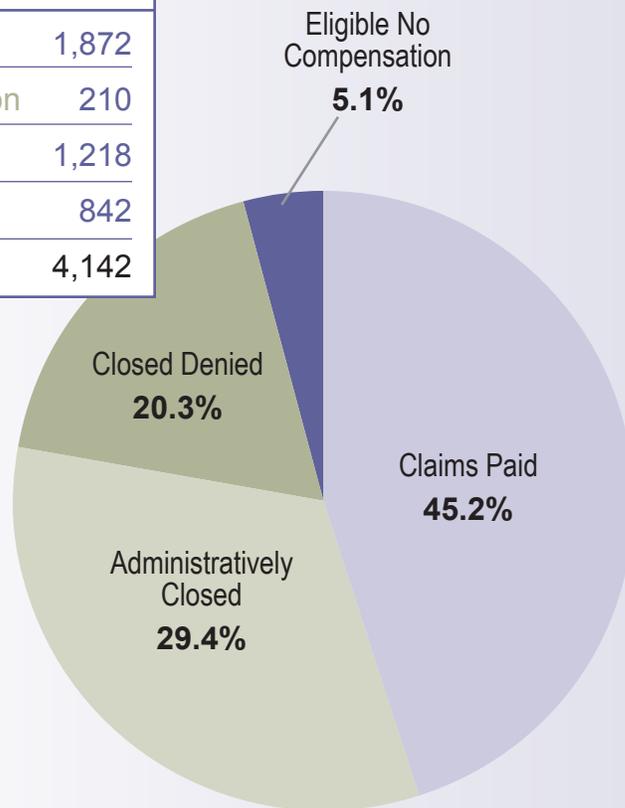
Total Annual Activity	
New Claims Received	3,917
Claims Reopened	426
Claims Reviewed for Supplemental	1,603
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,946</b>

*Caveat - because our individual claims can fall in various categories during an annual period, claims can be double counted. Example: A new claim opened in January can be closed for lack of Information in April; when information is received in June, the claim would be reopened.*



# FY 14 Original Claims Disposition

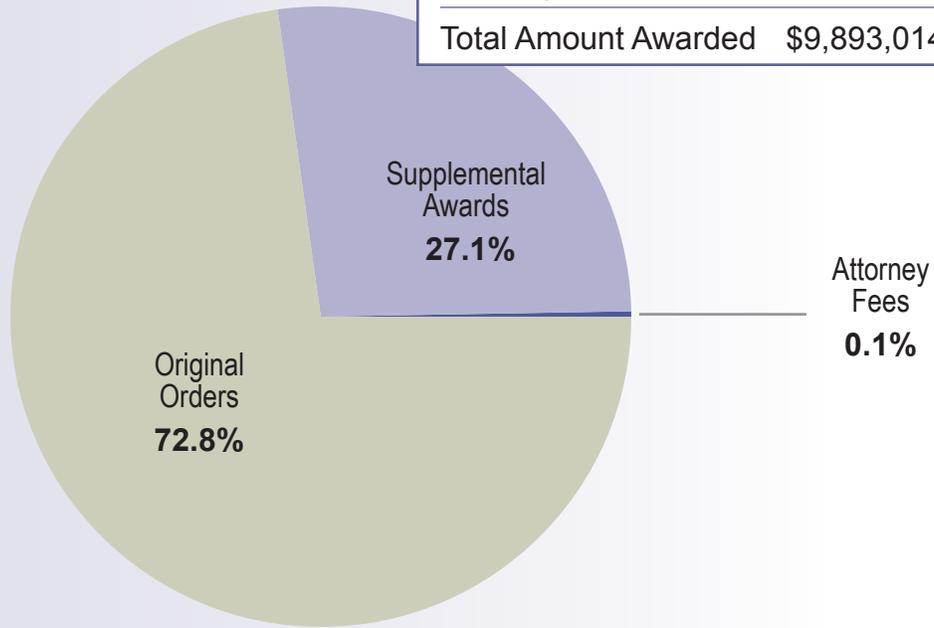
Original Claims Disposition	
Claims Paid	1,872
Eligible No Compensation	210
Administratively Closed	1,218
Closed Denied	842
Total Claims Concluded	4,142



# FY 14 Awards Analysis

VCCO

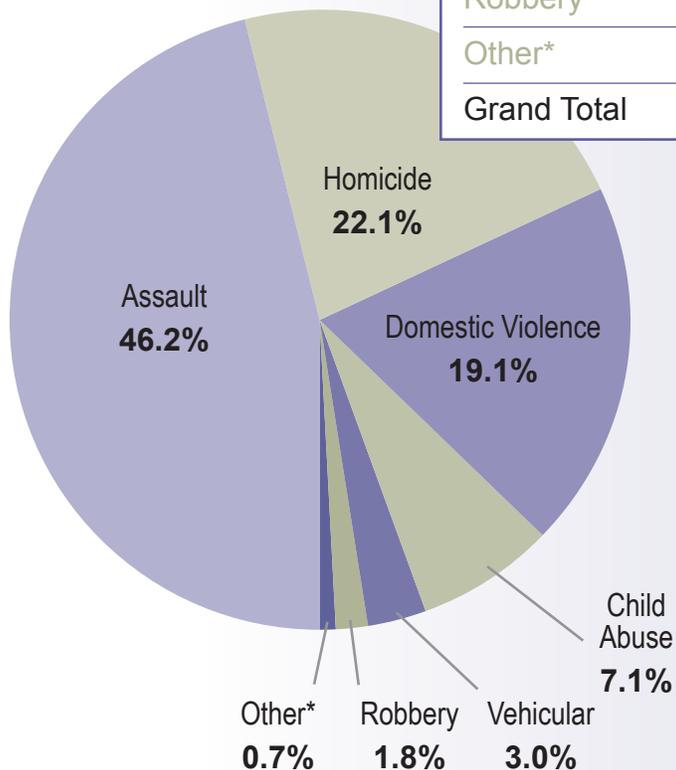
Type of Award	Amount
Original orders	\$7,201,321.82
Supplemental Awards	2,678,475.30
Attorney Fees	13,217.23
<b>Total Amount Awarded</b>	<b>\$9,893,014.35</b>



# FY 14 Analysis of Crime Types

## by Number of Claims & Awards

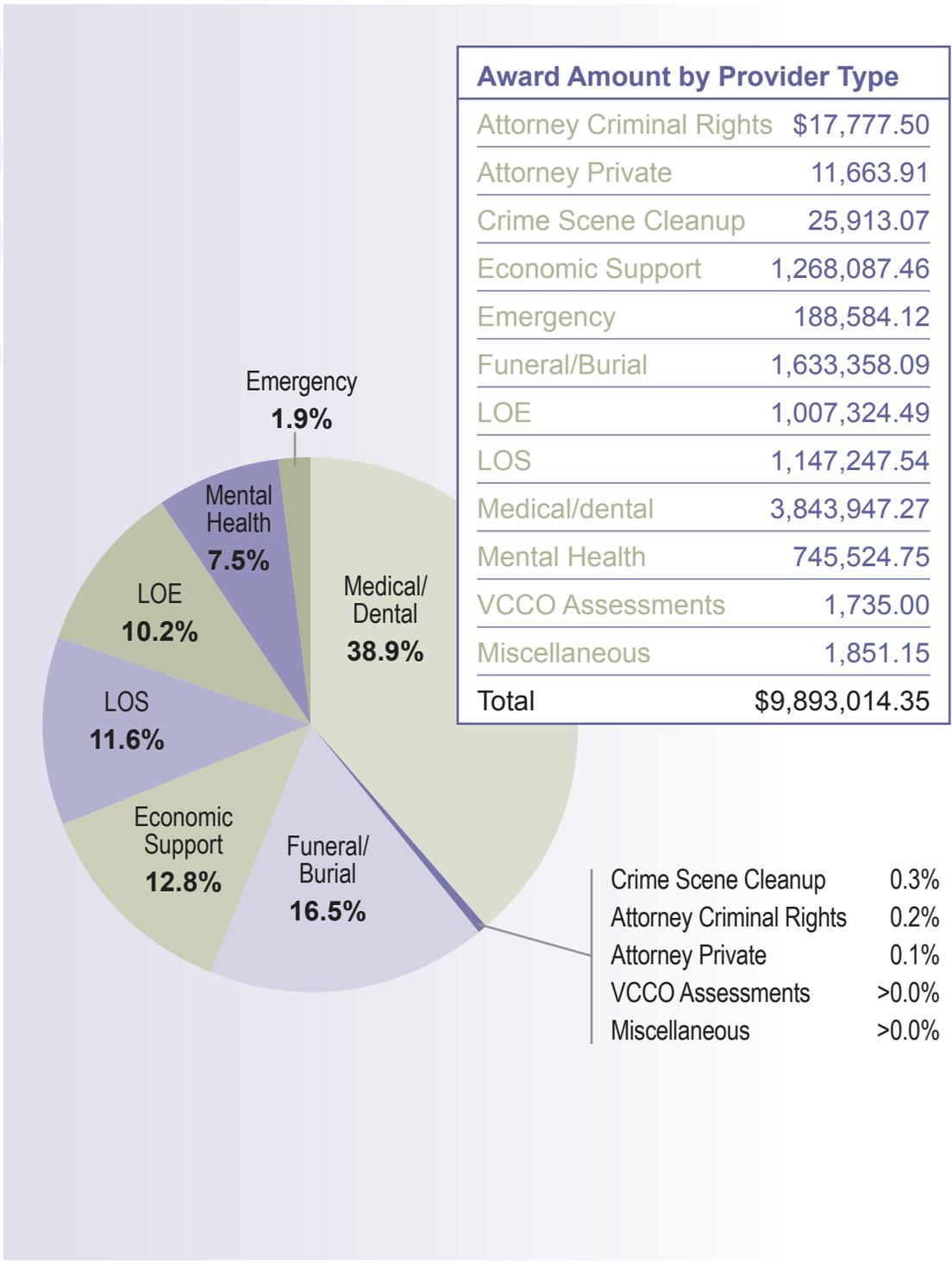
Crime Type	Claims	Amount
Assault	1,289	\$4,566,622.49
Homicide	420	2,187,593.92
Domestic Violence	532	1,886,144.90
Vehicular	61	299,033.55
Child Abuse	199	703,462.94
Robbery	65	178,191.82
Other*	34	71,964.73
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>\$9,893,014.35</b>



*\*Other - Includes: Kidnapping, Arson, Stalking, Burglary, Tampering with a Cosmetic, Drug or Food Product, Miscellaneous*

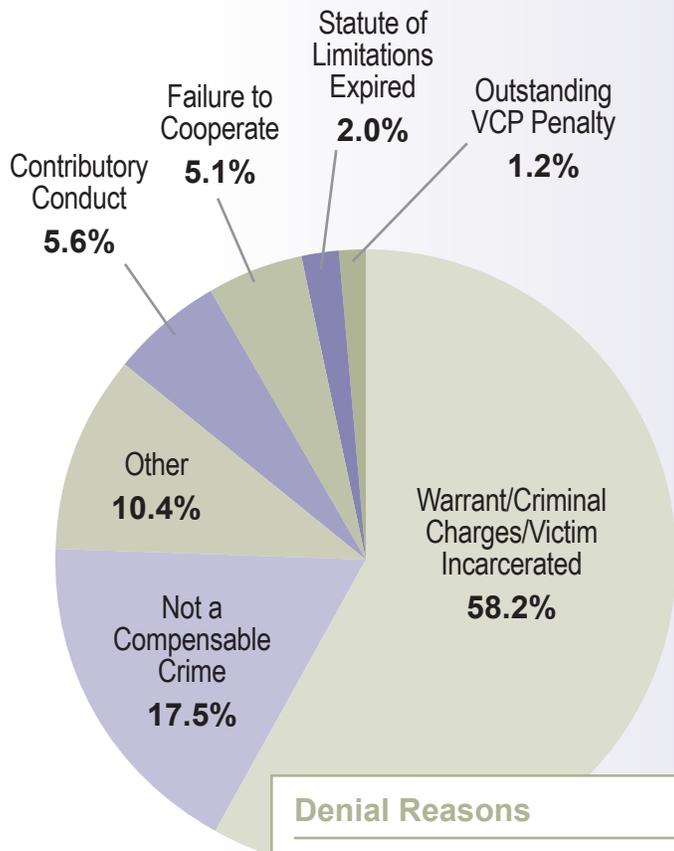
# FY 14 Award Amount by Provider Type

VCCO



Crime Scene Cleanup	0.3%
Attorney Criminal Rights	0.2%
Attorney Private	0.1%
VCCO Assessments	>0.0%
Miscellaneous	>0.0%

# FY 14 Commons Reasons for Denial

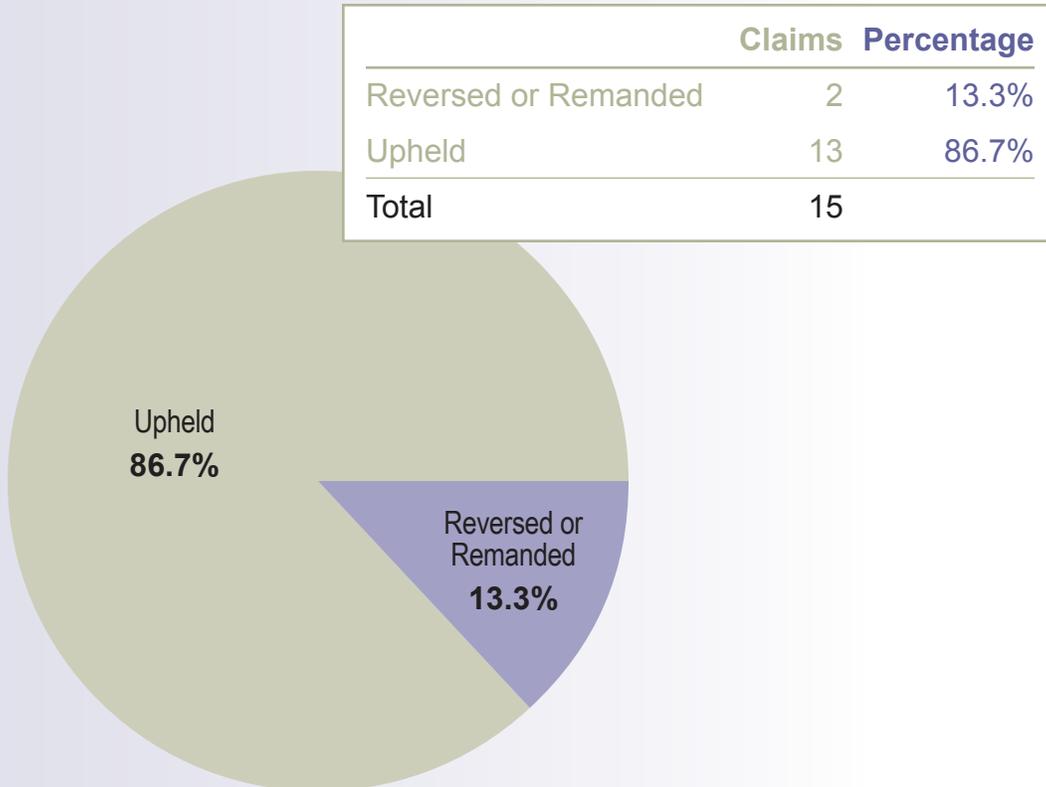


Denial Reasons	Claims
Warrant/Criminal Charges/Victim Incarcerated	488
Outstanding VCP Penalty	10
Failure to Cooperate	43
Contributory Conduct	47
Not a Compensable Crime	147
Statute of Limitations Expired	17
Other	87
<b>Total</b>	<b>839</b>

# FY 14 Hearing Results

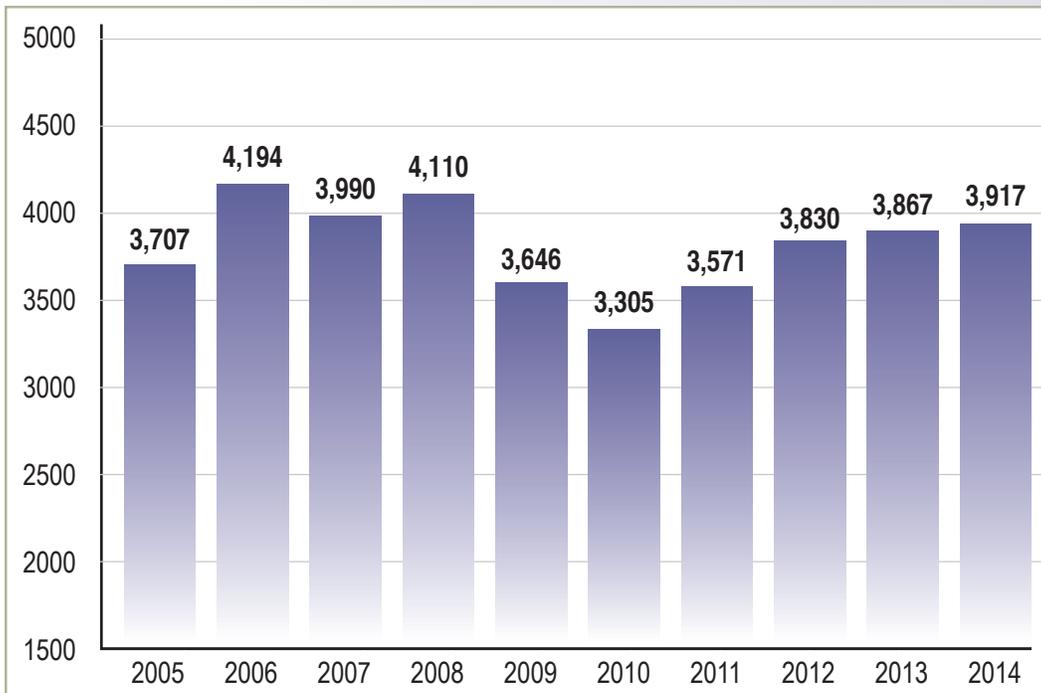
## Statistics

VCCO



# Historical Analysis

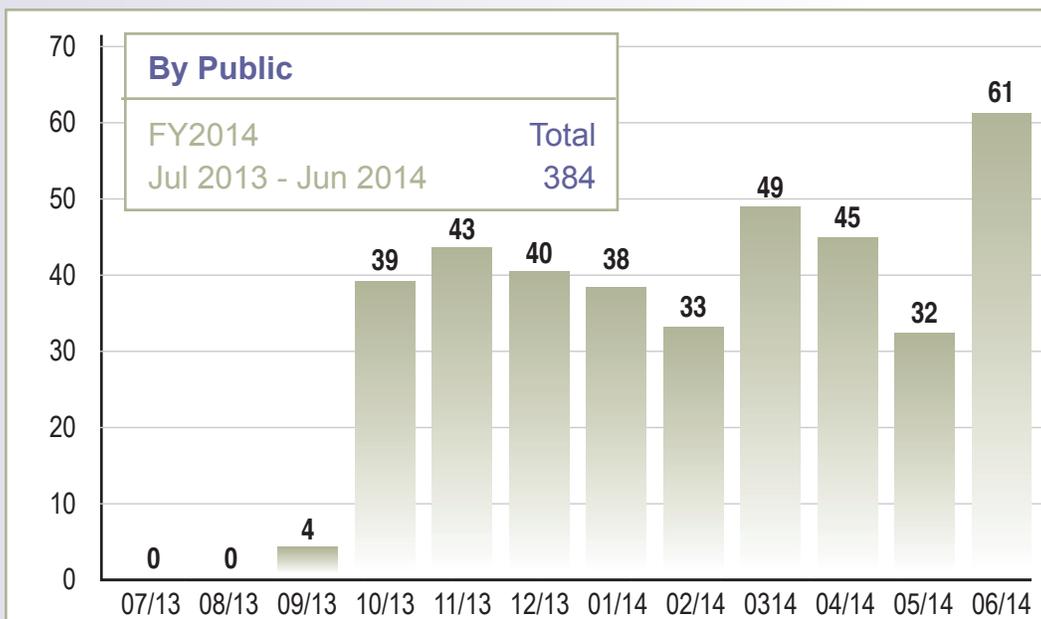
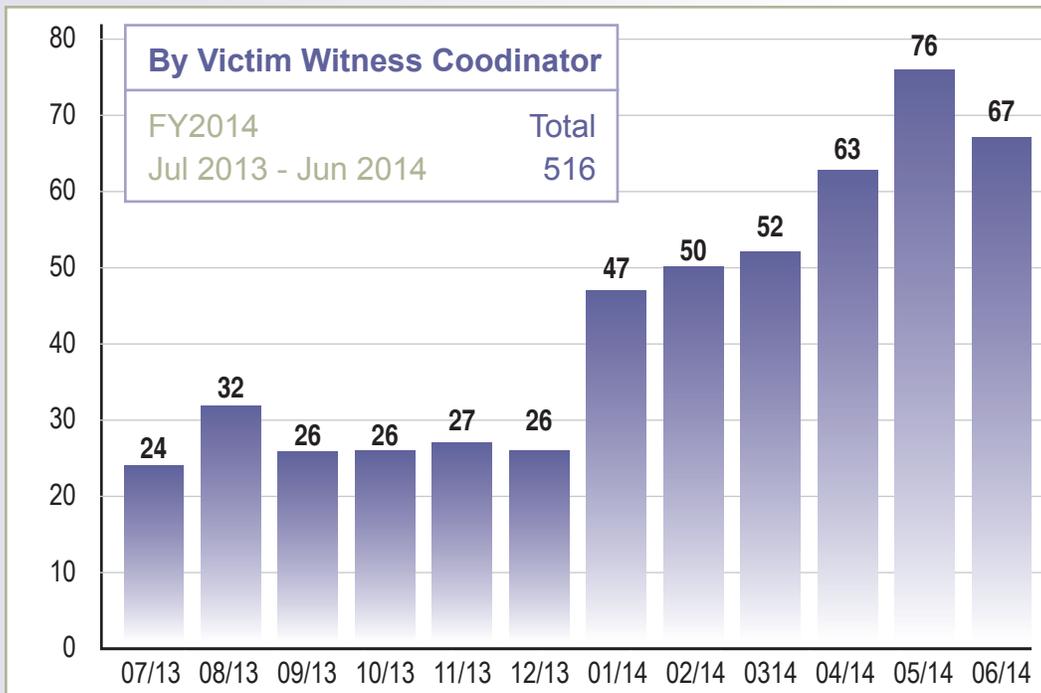
## of Claims Received FY 2005 - 2014



<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Claims</b>
2005	3,707
2006	4,194
2007	3,990
2008	4,110
2009	3,646
2010	3,305
2011	3,571
2012	3,830
2013	3,867
2014	3,917

# FY 14 Electronic Claims Entered by Victim Witness Coordinator and Public

VCCO



# FY 14 Walk-In Statistics

FY2014 Walk-In Statistics: July 2013 - June 2014													
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
New Walk-Ins	78	56	68	57	44	39	35	47	45	43	54	52	618
Case Processing													
Intake Walk-Ins	86	91	80	87	62	50	52	46	63	69	63	75	824
Investigator													
Assigned Walk-Ins	43	47	27	49	51	30	32	28	35	30	30	38	440
Intake Covering for Investigators	40	42	35	37	38	37	27	24	35	24	42	39	420
Trenton Office	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	10	6	5	3	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>2,330</b>

# FY 14 Filing & Assigning Analysis

VCCO

Time Period Between Crime & Victim Filing a Claim		
	Claims	Percentage
Less than 1 Month	1,357	34.64%
Between 1 Month and 6 Months	1,610	41.10%
Between 6 Months and 1 Year	459	11.72%
Between 1 Year and 2 Years	253	6.46%
Between 2 Years and 5 years	166	4.24%
More than 5 Years	72	1.84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,917</b>	

Time Period Between Claim Filed & Assignment to Investigator*		
	Claims	Percentage
Less than 1 Month	1,357	54.11%
Less than 2 Months	441	17.58%
Less than 3 Months	209	8.33%
Less than 4 Months	132	5.26%
Less than 5 Months	68	2.71%
Less than 6 Months	104	4.15%
More than 6 Months	197	7.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,508</b>	

\* Most claims are only assigned to Investigators for eligibility determination when sufficient documentation has been received and that includes police reports, medical reports, EOB, etc.

# FY 14 Revenue Statement

<b>FY 14 Revenue</b>		
<b>Revenue Source</b>		<b>Amount</b>
VCCO NET		\$4,556,256
Criminal Disposition Penalties		341,242
Commissary		2,578,559
Sex Crime Treatment		109,874
Restitution		246,346
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>\$7,832,277</b>
<b>Federal Grants</b>		
<b>Federal Fiscal</b>	<b>Year Grant Periods:</b>	<b>Amount</b>
FFY 12	10-1-11 through 9-30-15	\$3,677,000
FFY 13	10-1-12 through 9-30-16	2,201,000
FFY 14	10-1-13 through 9-30-17	4,929,000
<b>Total Grants Available</b>		<b>\$10,807,000</b>
<b>FY 14 State Appropriations</b>		
<b>Direct State Services</b>		<b>Amount</b>
Salaries and Wages		\$1,092,000
Material and Supplies		20,000
Services Other than Personnel		31,000
Maintenance and Fixed Charges		19,000
State Claims		3,372,000
<b>Total Appropriations</b>		<b>\$4,534,000</b>
<b>Total FY 14 Revenues</b>		<b>\$23,173,277</b>

# FY 14 Expenditure Summary

VCCO

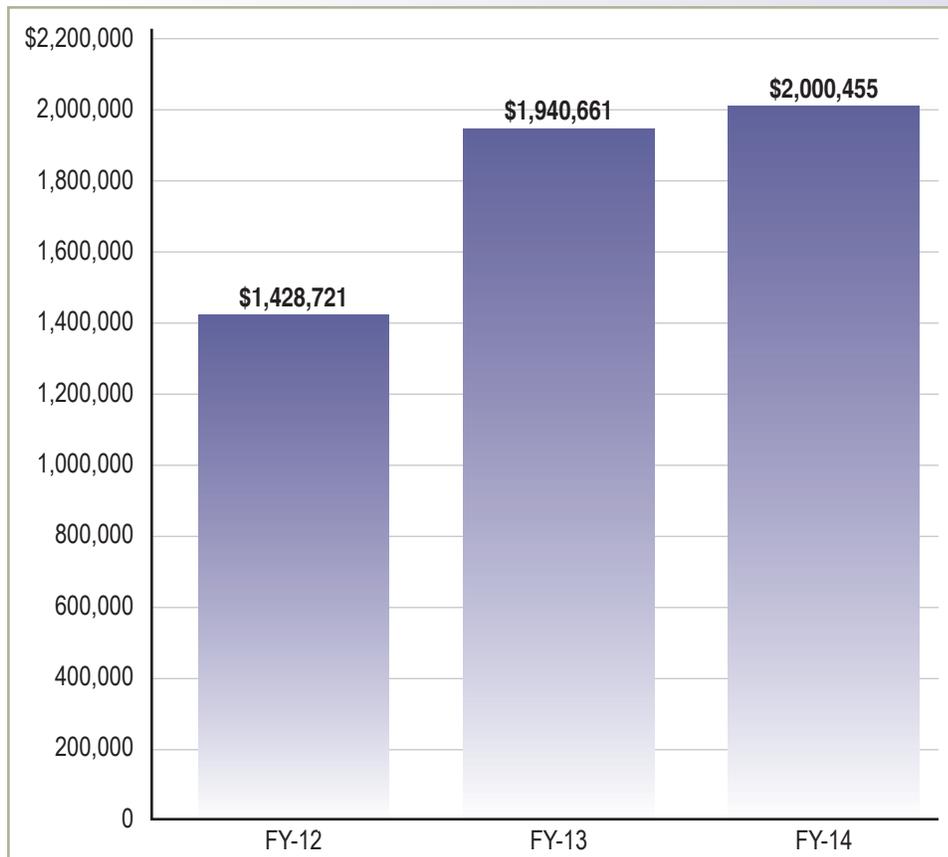
<b>Salaries &amp; Operations</b>	
Salaries and Wages	\$1,089,433
Material and Supplies	12,243
Services Other Than Personnel	30,978
Maintenance and Fixed Charges	6,355
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Operations</b>	<b>\$1,139,009</b>
<b>State &amp; Federal Claims</b>	
State Claims (Direct Payments to Victims)	\$5,913,462
Federal Claims - Grant Year '12	3,492,343
Federal Claims - Grant Year '13	5,000
<b>Total State &amp; Federal Grants</b>	<b>\$9,410,805</b>
<b>Total FY 14 Expenditures</b>	<b>\$10,549,814</b>

# Savings Achieved

## Through 3rd Party Review of Medical Bills: FY 12-14

Continuing through Fiscal Year 2014, the Victims of Crime Compensation Office contracted with a bill review service to ensure submitted bills were deemed “reasonable and customary” for the services provided. Over \$2 million saved in Fiscal Year 2014 represents a 3 percent increase from the prior Fiscal Year.

Fiscal Year	Review Savings	Review Fee	Net Saving
FY 12	\$1,484,690	\$55,969	\$1,428,721
FY 13	\$1,985,117	\$44,456	\$1,940,661
FY 14	\$2,029,199	\$28,744	\$2,000,455



# Benefits in a Nutshell

## Crimes Covered

- Aggravated Assault
- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Burglary
- Sexually Related Crimes
- Kidnapping
- Domestic Violence
- Drug and Food Tampering
- Carjacking
- Human Trafficking
- Bias Crimes
- Threat To Do Bodily Harm
- Motor Vehicle Offenses
- Stalking
- Indecent Acts with Children
- Lewd, Indecent or Obscene Acts

## What You Need to File

- Completed NJ VCCO Application
- Police Report
- Copies of Bills and Receipts of all Related Losses
- Documentation

## Time Requirements

- Report Crime to Police Within 9 Months
- File Claim Application with NJ VCCO within 3 Years

## Benefits Provided

- \$25,000 Maximum

## Mental Health Counseling

- Homicide Survivor- \$12,500
- Injured Victim- \$12,500
- Secondary Victim(s)- \$7,000
- Group Counseling- \$50 per Session per Victim

## Medical Bills

- Medical Bills not Covered by Other Sources
- Chiropractic/ Physical Therapy
- Medical Supplies and/or Other Prescription Drugs
- Medically Related Transportation

## Loss of Earnings or Financial Support

- Maximum Amount-\$600/Week
- Loss of Support- 48 Months
- Loss of Earnings- Direct Victim-104 Weeks
- Permanent Disability- Direct Victim-60 Months
- Loss of Earnings- Secondary Victim-\$7,000 to Care for Primary Victim

## Others

- Funeral Cost-\$5000
- Transportation to Funeral- \$200/Person or \$1,000 Total
- Crime Scene Cleanup- \$4,000
- Relocation Expenses- \$2,500
- Domestic Help not to exceed \$6,500 Total
- Child Care/Day Care Services- \$6,500
- Victims' Rights Attorney Fees (Criminal Matter)- \$125/Hr with a \$1,000 Maximum
- Attorney Fees for Representing Victims in VCCO Claim (Up to 15% of the Award)

## Catastrophic Injuries

- Supplemental \$35,000 for Rehabilitative Services Only



# FY 14 Outreach & Training

The Outreach and Training Group (OTG) continued its mission to inform and educate service providers, victim advocates, civic and faith based groups, law enforcement and legal service providers. Outreach materials like pamphlets, wallet cards, posters and applications were mailed to hospitals, police departments, municipal courts, service agencies, senior housing and other public venues.

To increase public awareness, OTG trained and presented on more than 25 occasions, which included legal and in-house training seminars, community affairs, conferences, health fairs, law enforcement and civic events. The VCCO website, [www.njvictims.org](http://www.njvictims.org), also serves as an excellent resource guide. The website features a Frequently Asked Questions page, which provides information that can expedite claims processing.

## Outreach Materials Distributed - FY 2014

	Claim Application	Informational Brochure	Tri-Fold Card	Miranda Warning Card	Small Poster	Large Poster
English	8,210	7,850	4,650	990	41	15
Spanish	6,830	6,690	3,720	740	25	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,040</b>	<b>14,540</b>	<b>8,370</b>	<b>1,730</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>24</b>



*Top Row, Left to Right: Mary Pyffer, Patricia Stewart, Amy Congdon, Rita Carr-Volpe, Janet Kerr, AG Hoffman, Director Honig, Jayne Guarino, Susan Meyer, Melissa Miller, Nancy Frankie, Carol Froberg*

*Sitting Left to Right: Claire McCardle, Deborah McGowan, Joan Nixon, Pamela McCauley, Linda Burkett, Jacqueline Simonson, Barbara Carter.*

# Crime Victims' Rights Week Ceremony

April 09, 2014





# National Crime Victims' Rights Week

Credits: Article written in 2014 by Carlos Avila, The Trentonian

The Division of Criminal Justice's State Office of Victim Witness Advocacy and the Victims of Crime Compensation Office sponsored an event promoting victims' rights and those who advocate on their behalf in honor of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (April 6-12).

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Victims of Crime Act, which changed the landscape of victim rights and services nationwide.

During the event, six individuals from across the state received Excellence Awards for their dedication and commitment to crime victims' rights.

Award recipients include a sexual abuse survivor, an assistant prosecutor, a victim-witness advocate, a victim witness coordinator, a human trafficking program coordinator, and assistant attorney general.

"These deserving award winners simply do it all," said Elie Honig, director, Division of Criminal Justice. "From making sure that a grieving family can navigate through the criminal justice system to providing an opportunity for survivors to stand up

for themselves, these winners are pillars of strength for countless crime victims."

Essex County Supervising Assistant Prosecutor Romesh Sukhdeo received the Gladiator Award. This award recognizes an assistant prosecutor or detective who has demonstrated extraordinary commitment and zeal to ensure that the criminal justice system serves the victims during the prosecution and that the victim is treated with compassion and dignity. Deputy Chief Assistant Prosecutor Gwendolyn Williams nominated Sukhdeo, writing, "He was one of two assistant prosecutors assigned to the 2007 school yard cases, in which three young college students were killed and one was shot and left for dead. He kept the victim and the slain students' families informed on the legal process. When survivor's family members had issues with their employers, he didn't hesitate to assist them so they could be present at each stage of the court proceedings. All defendants were either found guilty at trial



Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn Murray, Romesh Sukhdeo received the Gladiator Award, Acting Attorney General John Hoffman, Director of DCJ Elie Honig



VCCO Executive Director Marsetta Lee and Mark Crawford, received Ronald W. Reagan Award.



or plead guilty. Whenever the survivors have vigils celebrating the life of their loved one, Mr. Sukhdeo is present.”

Mark Crawford received the Ronald W. Reagan Award. Crawford was chosen for his long-term commitment to victims’ rights and services, extraordinary efforts on behalf of victims, delivery of compassionate services to victims and advocacy for victims via legislation, policies and other measures.

Crawford is a survivor of sexual abuse as a child who is currently the New Jersey State Director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests.

In nominating Crawford, Sen. Joseph Vitale wrote, “Mark receives contacts weekly from sexual abuse victims throughout the country, and spends time listening and educating victims who are often in a raw emotional state.”

The keynote speaker, and the highlight of the event, was the Rev. Simone Shields-Oliver, a domestic violence survivor.

In 2011, Shields-Oliver was attacked by a fellow member of the clergy. She suffered stab wounds to her face and body.

“Three surgeons operated simultaneously to save my life repairing internal organs and a ruptured artery,” said Shields-Oliver to a crowd of law enforcement officials, case managers and attorneys. “I woke up out of a coma on the third day to the smiling face of my family, friends and doctors.”

Shields-Oliver, who is perusing her Master of Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary, shared that in order to move on with her life she had to forgive. “I realized that to remain angry and frustrated would simply allow my attacker to continue to control my life and I was sure that was not a solution.” Shields-Oliver, along with her husband, Allen, went on to found New Day Ministries, Inc., which combats gender-based violence.

Other awardees include Tracy M. Thompson, Assistant Attorney General’s Office; Linda Burkett, Coordinator of Camden County Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy who received the Endurance Award; and Kathy Friess received the Crime Victims’ Rights Award.





## VCCCO Staff

VCCCO

### **Executive Director**

Marsetta Lee, *Deputy Attorney General*

### **Deputy Director**

John Holl, *Assistant Attorney General*

### **Administration**

James R. Casserly, *Manager*

Michele Maraviglia

Jessica Morejon

Daisy Quiles

### **Information Technology**

Joe Cordoma, *OAG Manager Coordinator*

Jeff Zuber, *Manager*

Winston Tsang

### **Intake**

Melissa Verardi, *Manager*

Brian Penn, *Supervisor, Grants Manager*

Zuanette Cabrera

Tom Cicalese

Gerriann DeCicco

Vanessa Gomez

Tabitha Otero

### **Bill Entry**

Mimi Rosenshein, *Manager*

Tanny Kyak

Elizabeth Lucano

Gloria Rueda

### **Investigators**

Mary Ellen Bonsper, *Chief of Investigators*

Craig DiFiore, *Deputy Chief of Investigators*

Richard Gill, *Supervisor*

Kathy Yuill, *Supervisor*

Tobi Footman, *Sr. Investigator*

Peter Kobylarz, *Sr. Investigator*

Jacqueline Sierchio, *Sr. Investigator*

Doug Brooks

Ricardo Carabelli

Telisa Chambers

Kevin Mendes

Maggie Miranda

Ramona Peterson

Ken Thomas

Michelle Williams

### **Temporary Staff**

A special thanks to the best temporary staff an office could have:

Audeliz Acevedo

Marianela Caraballo-Soto

Linda Maynard

Icel Salazar

Marjorie Scarder

# Information/Speaker Request Form

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## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:

E-mail:

Provider, Organization, Association:

Phone:

Fax:

Address:

Shipped to Address:

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## MATERIAL REQUESTED

Application Request:     YES    NO

Number of Applications:     1    5    10    25    50    100    200

Miranda Card Request:     YES    NO

Number of Miranda Cards:     1    5    10    25    50    100    200

Poster Request:     YES    NO

Number Posters:     1    5    10    25    50    100    200

Brochures Request:     YES    NO

Number of Brochures:     1    5    10    25    50    100    200

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## SPEAKER REQUESTED

Request a Speaker:     YES    NO

Day:

Time:

**Fax to: 973.648.3937, Mail to: VCCO, 50 Park Place, Newark NJ 07102  
or submit your request using our online form at [www.njvictims.org](http://www.njvictims.org)**



NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

**VICTIMS OF CRIME COMPENSATION OFFICE**

[www.njvictims.org](http://www.njvictims.org) • TOLL FREE 877-658-2221