



Department of Adult Correction
Policy and Procedure

Policy Name: Office Administration

Policy Number: VSS-B.200

Division: Administration- Victim Support Services

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction (DAC) Victim Support Services' (VSS) internal, standard operating procedures for administrative functions.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all VSS employees.

III. POLICY

A. Main Telephone Line – Incoming Calls

1. Scope

- a) Victims of crime have faced a complex and often confusing criminal justice system. They are now faced with understanding the variety of services and rights afforded to them.
- b) VSS is responsible for serving as the Department's central point of contact for responding to telephone inquiries from victims with procedural questions or concerns and forwarding specific inquiries to appropriate personnel for a response.
- c) The toll-free line is a priority for all VSS employees regardless of position or job duties.

2. Responsibilities

- a) The main number rings to the Victim Services Analysts (VSA) or to another line to which the Administrative Specialist (AS) has forwarded it. The following outlines specific roles and responsibilities for VSS staff as it relates to answering the toll-free telephone line.
 - i. All staff's regularly scheduled breaks and lunch shall be approved by their supervisor to ensure main line coverage.
 - ii. When VSS staff must be away from the immediate offices to conduct other VSS business or on leave, the staff shall:

- a. Notify the supervisor and carbon copy the Director and assistant director prior to the circumstances,
 - b. Coordinate appropriate phone coverage with their co-workers, and
 - c. Update the primary staff for answering the telephones regarding any changes to the approved calendar.
- iii. VSS staff will coordinate and further negotiate backup with co-workers when they are:
 - a. Involved in other calls,
 - b. When necessary to do follow-up tasks for victim contacts,
 - c. Attending meetings, trainings, conferences, etc., or
 - d. Planning for leave requests.

3. After Hours Calls

Calls to VSS after normal business hours, weekends and holidays are routed to the VSS voicemail and are checked the next business day.

4. Call Transfers within VSS

- a) It is the responsibility of the person who answers the call to use sound judgment when determining to whom the call should be transferred.
- b) Unless otherwise requested or delegated by the VSS Director, calls shall be handled as outlined below. If VSS employee takes a call in lieu of the primary person, it is the responsibility of the person taking a call to either transfer the call to the primary person or inform the primary person about the call and all the appropriate details.

5. Call Responsibilities for Individual Staff

- a) Staff members shall have the following responsibilities regarding incoming calls:
 - i. Administrative Specialist (AS)
 - a. Answering general questions about Victim Support Services,
 - b. Referring all other calls to appropriate staff,
 - c. Conference Room reservations,

- d. Acquiring office supplies and office equipment vendors,
 - e. Answering employee applicant and new employee questions,
 - f. Addressing human resources issues,
 - g. Monitoring fixed assets, and
 - h. E-Procurement and Accounts Payable calls.
- ii. Victim Services Analysts (VSA)
 - a. Phone coverage for all direct services calls,
 - b. Registering of victims for notifications,
 - c. Changes to registrations,
 - d. Requests to turn off DAC notifications,
 - e. Requests for DAC prisons County Blocks,
 - f. Requests for DAC No Contact Orders,
 - g. Responding to questions, issues or concerns pertaining to:
 - 1. Notifications about DAC offenders,
 - 2. Offender Visitation,
 - 3. Emergency Leave,
 - 4. Extensions of the Limits of Confinement,
 - 5. International Prisoner Transfer Program,
 - 6. Any other significant issues pertaining to DAC offenders.
 - h. Backup to SAVAN staff.
 - i. NOTE: Calls about county jail offenders who are not also in DAC and calls about county jail notifications by SAVAN are sent to SAVAN staff.
- iii. Victim Education and Outreach Specialist (VEOS)

- a. Training and outreach requests and materials,
 - b. Updating Victim Services Training Curriculum, and
 - c. Back up for phone coverage when the VSAs are not available.
- iv. SAVAN Administrator or SAVAN Administrative Specialist (SAS)
 - a. Calls pertaining to offenders in a NC county jails,
 - b. Problems with the SAVAN notification services,
 - c. Registering entities in the service,
 - d. Assistance with Vinewatch, and
 - e. Requests for SAVAN training and outreach materials.
- v. Technology Support Analyst (TSA)
 - a. Backup to the Victim Notification Staff,
 - b. IT calls relating to notification issues, and
 - c. Backup to the SAVAN staff.
- vi. Director
 - a. Calls from or regarding:
 - 1. The media,
 - 2. Secretary's office,
 - 3. DAC leadership,
 - 4. The Sexually Violent Predator Board,
 - 5. Legislative members or their staff,
 - 6. State and National organizations
 - 7. Calls pertaining to executions,
 - 8. Calls pertaining to commutations,
 - 9. Calls that are escalated due to unsatisfied victims or registrants.

vii. Assistant Director

- a. The Assistant Director shall serve as backup to the Director for calls from or regarding:
 1. The media,
 2. Secretary's office,
 3. DAC leadership,
 4. The Sexually Violent Predator Board,
 5. Legislative members or their staff,
 6. State and National organizations
 7. Calls pertaining to executions,
 8. Calls pertaining to commutations,
 9. Calls that are escalated due to unsatisfied victims or registrants.

B. Mail (hardcopy including hand delivery)

1. It is the primary responsibility of the VSAs to process the mail received by VSS. The backup for the mail is the AS.
2. All mail must be date stamped the date it is received.
3. Mail addressed directly to the VSS Director or a staff member will be date stamped on the envelope and delivered unopened to the Director or staff member.
4. All other mail must be opened, the envelope and contents date stamped, assessed, and routed to the appropriate individuals the day of receipt. For mail containing numerous pages, only date stamp the first page of each document.
 - a) VSS/SAVAN Victim Notification Requests, No Contact Orders, County Blocks, and Oppositions to Community Based Programs will be date stamped and distributed evenly between the VSAs for processing.
 - b) Any other correspondence for or regarding victims will be forwarded to the supervisor of the VSAs for assessment, processing and dissemination.

5. Outgoing Mail

- a) Requests for assistance with outgoing mail shall be forwarded to the Administrative Specialist to determine:
 - i. Method (i.e. first class, certified, signature requested, etc.),
 - ii. Agency (i.e. Correction Enterprise, USPS, FedEx, UPS, etc.), and
 - iii. Deadline.
- b) The AS will provide confirmation of the mailing and any documentation (tracking numbers, receipts, etc.) to the sender.
- c) Mass mailings will need approval of the VSS Director for budgeting purposes.

C. Written Communications

1. General

- a) In order to simplify victim's efforts with communication with DAC, VSS serves as a clearinghouse for victims of crime who can submit various requests, documentation, concerns and questions regarding offenders in the custody or under the supervision of DAC.
- b) VSS is responsible for ensuring that any written communication from victims is responded to or forwarded to the appropriate Division for a response.

2. Responsibilities (Forms, Letters, Documents)

- a) It is the responsibility of the person processing the incoming mail to ensure that any written communication (letters/forms/documents) is date stamped and forwarded to the appropriate staff for assessment on the date that it is received. In the absence of the Victim Support Analysts, the Administrative Specialist will process the mail.
- b) All victim correspondence must be assessed by the recipient within 24 business hours. Correspondence should be prioritized based on dates of upcoming events (such as projected release dates, hearing dates, etc.).
- c) The time allowed for VSS to respond is three business days, unless awaiting additional information or responses or if the issue is urgent.
- d) The Victim Services Analysts will forward any letters/forms/documents pertaining to a DAC offender on probation/parole to DAC Community Supervision within 24 hours.

- e) When processing forms, letters, documents or emails, the Victim Services Analysts must first and foremost assess the letter, form, or document to determine:
 - i. What the issue or concern is,
 - ii. Whether the issue is to be addressed by VSS or forwarded to other sections of the department,
 - iii. Significant dates which may determine the urgency of the matter, and
 - iv. The appropriate process to perform and or response to make.
 - f) After responding to the victim, division or section, the VSA or AS must place the following information in the appropriate filing system:
 - i. a copy of the correspondence and any attachments,
 - ii. a copy of the VSS response to the client or victims,
 - iii. a copy of any memos sent to another division, and
 - iv. a copy of any documentation from the victim
 - g) The VSS employee will then document in OPUS any action taken, including any referrals the employee made.
 - h) Finally, the employee will forward copies to Combined Records to be scanned into the offender OMNIDOCs record.
3. Email
- a) Employees will follow all DAC and North Carolina Department of Information Technology (DIT) policies and procedures for the utilization of email for both professional and limited personal use.
 - b) A group email address that is available on the DAC VSS web page is victimservices@dac.nc.gov and is also listed as SVC_DAC_VictimServices@dac.nc.gov. This email is managed by the VSS Victim Services Analysts.
 - c) Report spam and all other suspicious emails to report.spam@nc.gov by forwarding the email as an attachment so DIT has the email in its entirety.
 - d) For any emails containing sensitive, confidential, or personal health information such as the victim's name, address, and DOB, the employees shall encrypt the email to the

outgoing party. To encrypt the email the employee shall, in the subject line of the email, type an open bracket, the word ENCRYPT, a close bracket, and a space between the [ENCRYPT] and the subject.

4. Additional Responsibilities Pertaining to Emails

- a) VSS maintains an email account: victimservices@dac.nc.gov , also listed as SVC_DAC_VictimServices@dac.nc.gov.
- b) Emails to this account primarily come from victims in response to VSS notifications, safety concerns and /or unwanted contact from offenders.
- c) Requests for proxy to the group email account will be approved by the VSS Director and requested by the Technology Support Analyst to the Network Helpdesk.
- d) VSS employees are to respond to victim's issues/concerns via email to the victim's email address.
- e) The VSS employees responsible for managing the email must move the email to the Resolved folder after reviewing the email in order to distinguish it from emails to which a response has not been provided.
- f) Junk emails are to be retained for 24 hours and can then be blocked and deleted
- g) All other emails are to be retained indefinitely.
- h) Actions taken by employees in response to email inquiries are documented in the Offender Population Unified System (OPUS), including the victim's email address.

5. Public Information

- a) VSS employees shall abide by DAC Communications Office's public information policies and procedures.
- b) Any questions regarding public information requests should be directed to the DAC Communications officer who is assigned to VSS according to the area of question. Public records requests should be directed to the Communications Office public records coordinator. If possible, public records requests should be submitted in writing. Public information on offender may also be accessed on the www.ncdac.gov website under "Offenders Search".
- c) For DAC offender information, additional guidance for public information about DAC offenders can be found in the VSPPP publication "What is Public Information" (VSS-110).

D. Documenting Contacts

1. All VSS employees shall document their contacts in the appropriate computer systems.
2. VSS/SAVAN: Documentation is to be made in OPUS when the offender is a DAC offender. Documentation for offenders who are not DAC offenders but are county jail offenders can be made in Vinewatch.
3. All VSS employees shall document all victim related concerns in OPUS, or Vinewatch within 24 business hours.
4. Documentation will cover the victim's concern, any actions taken by employees, and any referrals which were provided.

E. Statistics

1. Statistics are generated through automated reports using data from OPUS, and Vinewatch.
2. Statistics and documentation entered into OPUS for DAC offender related victim concerns can be accessed via the internal web page under DAC OPUS Management Reports.
3. Telephone bills and telephone system reports can be utilized to ascertain call volume and changes to call patterns.
4. Additional reports can be requested of DIT – PS or other sections as the need and resources allow.
5. VSS staff are also required to maintain statistics on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis as directed.

F. Media

1. The VSS Director is responsible for media questions.
2. All VSS employees will notify the VSS Director immediately of media inquiries or instances which are likely to generate media inquiries.
3. In lieu of the VSS Director, employees will notify the Assistant Director (AD), and when the AD is also unavailable, employees will notify the Communications Director and the supervising Deputy Secretary.
4. VSS employees will follow all applicable Department and division policies regarding media interactions.

G. Governor's Office

1. The VSS Director is the point of contact for Governor's Office inquiries.
2. VSS employees will respond to Governor's Office inquiries in a timely manner.
3. VSS employees will follow DAC Communications Office's instructions for replies, including copying the Communications Office or the Governor's Office.
4. VSS employees will notify the Director of any critical situations.

H. Legislative Contacts

1. The VSS Director is responsible for legislative questions.
2. All employees will notify the Director immediately of legislative inquiries or instances where there may be legislative inquiries.
3. In lieu of the VSS Director or Assistant Director, employees will notify DAC Legislative Affairs and the supervising Chief Deputy Secretary.

I. Executions

The VSS Director is the designee for victims' inquiries about executions.

J. Safety and Repairs

1. The VSS Director will designate a staff member of VSS as the Building Safety Representative for VSS.
2. The VSS Director may also designate another representative for VSS as the backup representative for the Building Safety Representative.
3. VSS employees will read and abide by the building safety policies.
4. Any safety concerns or incidents should be brought to the attention of the VSS Building Safety Representative or backup.
5. Any work orders should be processed by the AS.

K. Equipment

1. Equipment for VSS is managed by the Technology Support Analyst and the backup is the Administrative Specialist. They are responsible for:

- a) Demonstrating the proper use of office equipment to each employee,
 - b) Maintaining company contacts for each piece of office equipment,
 - c) Requesting repairs, replacements, or supplies for equipment in a timely manner, and
 - d) Managing passwords for networked equipment (i.e. shared copiers).
- 2. VSS employees are responsible for:
 - a) Operating the equipment according to instructions,
 - b) Notifying the appropriate staff of repair needs including a description of the problem, and
 - c) Notifying the appropriate staff when supplies are needed.
- 3. State Cell Phones
 - a) All DAC policies shall be adhered to regarding use of state cell phones.
 - b) All VSS employees will certify by signing the monthly phone bill that the call was for business purposes unless otherwise allowed by DAC policy.
- L. Office Supplies
 - 1. VSS employees will utilize office supplies in a judicious manner.
 - 2. VSS employees make requests by email to the appropriate Administrative Assistant designated to make purchases in VSS. Employees will also maintain, track, and organize supplies.
 - 3. The SAVAN Victim Services Specialist will be the backup to the AS for purchasing and accounts payable duties. They shall also maintain, track, and organize supplies.
 - 4. The appropriate purchaser will forward completed requests to the VSS Director for approval.
 - 5. The appropriate purchaser will follow DAC fiscal procedures to obtain approved items.
- M. Shared Network Drive

1. A shared drive exists on the network called the I:drive. VSS employees share the common folder and subfolders on this drive and items are placed here for all employees to have access to this information.
2. The I: drive folder organization is to be maintained and will only be changed after thorough communication and consensus is reached about the change or with the approval of the VSS Director.
3. Any accidental deletions should be brought to the attention of the Technology Support Analyst for restoration.
4. The VSAs are responsible for maintaining the direct services documents and subfolders.
5. The VEOS is responsible for maintaining the training, outreach, and publications documents and subfolders.
6. The AS is responsible for maintaining the administrative, fiscal, policy and forms documents and subfolders.

N. Technology

1. The staff of VSS shall have access to multiple information systems as required to fulfill the responsibilities of VSS. Access to secure information systems shall be through methods approved by DIT-PS and shall not be accessed through non-secure methods. Any breach or exposure of information systems or the non-public data contained within the systems is cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
2. The VSS Director or designee shall provide access to each system and any required or necessary training to utilize the system effectively.
3. VSS staff are responsible for reporting any malfunctions to the Technology Support Analyst, making requests to their supervisor for additional training, if needed, and utilizing the systems in accordance with all policies and procedures.
4. For additional instructions for the use of each system, see online lessons or instructional manuals.
5. Site Security Administration for each system shall be provided by VSS staff and includes:
 - a) Completing security access forms,
 - b) Coordinating with DIT-PS employees to set up systems,
 - c) Arranging required training, and

- d) Developing, or referring staff for, additional training.
- O. Site Security Administration for each system shall be provided as follows:
- 1. Technology Support Analyst:
 - a) Site Security Administration Access
 - b) OPUS (all OPUS related subsystems and web-based systems)
 - c) SAVAN (Vinelink, Vinewatch, and related reporting systems)
 - d) CJLEADS
 - e) OmniDocs
 - f) FIORI formerly known as BEACON which includes: HR, payroll, benefits, training (LMS), timekeeping
 - i. Backup for NCID is the SAVAN VSS
 - g) DIT-PS web applications
 - h) AOC systems for VSS and SAVAN staff
 - i) Office equipment's' online systems for VSS and SAVAN staff
 - j) DAC computers, software systems, and shared drives for VSS and SAVAN staff
 - k) Cisco telephone system.
 - 2. Administrative Specialist:
 - a. Grant funding and reporting systems,
 - b. E-Procurement,
 - c. NCFS (NC Financial System),
 - d. E-Billing (telephone bills),
 - e. DAC Bookmarks,
 - f. Communications with DAC Human Resources regarding staff benefits, Worker's

Compensation system, etc.,

- g. Communications regarding time and leave issues with Best Shared Services and DAC Human Resources.

P. Data Management Systems

1. Offender Population Unified System (OPUS)

- a) OPUS has been built and maintained by DIT-PS. This database contains all DAC prison, probation and parole offender data including staff actions and notes, and victim data. Certain OPUS data is sent by DIT-DAC electronically to other databases such as SAVAN's VINE and DIT's CJLEADS.
- b) Mainframe OPUS: This is the mainframe-based (black screen) version of OPUS and is the primary source of OPUS used at this time by VSS staff.
- c) OPUS on the Web: This is the web-based version of OPUS and contains additional job aids and dashboards for the Division of Institutions (DOI), Division of Community Supervision (DCS) and the Post-Release Supervision and Parole Commission employees.
- d) OPUS also contains multiple other systems such as facility, staff, fixed assets, and training information, some of which predates newer systems. Some information is also now available on the web under DAC' internal page, DIT-DAC Web Applications.

2. OmniDocs

- a) Omnidocs is the web-based DAC offender documents system. It is administered by DAC Combined Records through a vendor contract. Offender related documents are scanned into this system. OmniDocs access is limited to Combined Records, the Post Release and Parole Commission (PRSPC) and VSS staff.
- b) VSS staff shall send any victim records or documents that need scanned into OmniDocs to Combined Records to process.

3. SAVAN

- a) SAVAN is the name for the notification program for telephone, email, text and TTY notifications for all DAC and county jail offenders. It is administered by VSS through a vendor contract which uses the vendor's web-based system VINE. VINE has two portals, a public and a secure portal and offender data is provided to the vendor via OPUS and each county jail's management computer system.
- b) Vinelink.com (public): Vinelink is SAVAN's public portal used for registering for notifications about all NC offenders in custody or under supervision. Any person may search for an offender and register themselves either anonymously or confidentially for the notification methods provided.

- c) Vinewatch.com (secure): Vinewatch.com is a secure portal for administrative users to access Vinelink information. The SAVAN Coordinator manages access to Vinewatch.com for individual criminal justice and victim services professionals. These professionals assist victims with registering for their notifications, especially county jail offenders. Vinewatch also contains administrative and programmatic reports and statistics.

4. CJLEADS

- a) CJLEADS stands for Criminal Justice Law Enforcement Automated Data Services and is a secure, centralized, web-based database of up-to-date information about offenders compiled from many state databases for use by law enforcement and other criminal justice system personnel, including VSS personnel. CJLEADS is administered by the DIT-DAC through a vendor contract.

5. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) systems

- a) ACIS - Automated Criminal I Infractions System of NC district and superior court criminal cases.
- b) VCAP - Civil Case Processing System of all NC civil court cases.
- c) FMS - Financial Management System of AOC where offender payments are entered and distributed from such as restitution to a victim.
- d) NCAWARE - North Carolina Warrant Repository is a comprehensive statewide repository of unserved criminal processes such as warrants and summons.

Q. Fiscal Systems

- 1. NCFS: The NC Finance System is a secure, mainframe system which contains NC state governments' budgets, accounts payable, accounts receivable, etc.
- 2. E-Procurement: This is a secure online procurement system with some information shared electronically with NCFS.
- 3. Fixed Assets Tracking System: This system is for managing and tracking equipment which is purchased by state government.

R. Grant Systems

- 1. Funding sources may or may not have an online grant application, award and/or reporting system.
- 2. The VSS Director shall determine which personnel require access and the necessary level of access.
- 3. Common sources of funding for VSS are:

- a) The NC Governor's Crime Commission – EBS System
 - b) The US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs
 - i. Grant Management System (GMS)
 - ii. Performance Measurement Tools (PMT) for each funding source within the Office of Justice Programs (e.g. Office for Victims of Crime, Bureau of Justice Assistance)
- S. Personnel and Training Systems
- 1. FIORi, formerly known as Beacon, which includes: HR. payroll, benefits, training (LMS), and timekeeping.
 - 2. LMS stands for Learning Management System and is a subsystem of the Integrated HR-Payroll System where online and classroom training courses are available as well as each employee's training history.
 - 3. NCVIP stands for NC Valuing Individual Performance and is a subsystem within the FIORi System. It is NC's employee performance management system where employees and supervisors enter information, documents and comments for individual employee's performance and supervisors evaluate and rate the performance.
 - 4. PowerDMS is a cloud-based document management system used to store and distribute DAC Department and Division policies.
- T. EXPTR
- 1. EXPTR provides for connections between mainframe databases such as OPUS and NCAS and printers to allow for the printing of data, reports, forms, letters, and checks.
- U. DAC Computers and Software
- 1. Various computers, cell phones, tablets, and software may be provided to VSS staff. All State, Department and Office policies regarding these items' use shall be followed.
 - 2. DIT and DAC provide Helpdesks. Helpdesk requests for VSS are to be managed by the Technology Support Analyst.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Opening & Closing Offices

- 1. The first VSS employee to arrive at the offices will:
 - a) Open common areas,

- b) Start up the copiers, and
 - c) Check for faxes and route them to the appropriate recipient.
2. All VSS main telephone line incoming calls will be answered from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm for normal scheduled workdays. The VSS Director will make exceptions to these time frames for staff meetings, adverse weather, and other emergency situations.
 3. The last VSS employee to leave the offices will close and lock common areas.

B. Phone System

1. VSS operates a toll-free telephone number for victims of crime to contact the Department. The National and State toll-free number is (866)719-008.
2. The VNS will check the voicemail each morning and at least four times during each workday. In the absence of the VNSs, the AS will check voicemails.
3. Problems with the phone system should be sent via email to the Technology Support Analyst who shall forward the issue to the DIT-DAC Help Desk. A ticket will be issued and addressed by DIT. The VSS Director should be carbon copied on this email, so they are aware of the problem. Any phone system chronic problems or issues of a serious nature such as phone outages should be brought to the attention of the Director as soon as possible.
4. The Technology Support Analyst will provide the phone system instructions to each VSS employee.
5. All employees must record an outgoing message for their own individual extensions to include:
 - a) Individual's name and title,
 - b) Identification that they have reached Victim Support Services (VSS),
 - c) Indication to the caller about how to leave a message,
 - d) Indication to the caller when the individual is out of the office and the return date, and
 - e) Indication to the caller to press "0" to reach the VSS main line.
6. VSS employees should manage their voicemail responsibly as too many messages saved on the system can be detrimental to its proper functioning.
7. Calls are to be forwarded to the person requested. If the person requested is not in the office, this shall be explained to the caller and the options of:

- a) The caller leaving a voicemail for the employee, or
 - b) providing an alternate VSS employee with whom the caller may speak.
8. For callers who are not requesting a specific employee, route the call to the appropriate employee.