

Department of Correction marks National Crimes Victims' Rights Week by reviewing first year of enhanced victim services, launching new informational resource

Dover – The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) today marked [National Crime Victims' Rights Week](#), observed this year from April 19-25, by reaffirming its commitment to engaging with survivors and their families and unveiling a new informational brochure for community members impacted by crime.

Last spring, Commissioner Robert Coupe strengthened DOC's victim resources by [establishing a statewide victim service coordinator position](#). Coupe hired experienced victim advocate Renee Buskirk as DOC's first Victim Services Coordinator to serve as a direct point of contact for victims and to engage with state and local police agencies, the Attorney General's office, and non-profit social service agencies in an effort to coordinate resources for victims as their cases move from the prosecution, through the term of offenders' criminal sentences, and beyond.

"For many survivors of crime and their families, the arrest of a suspect and the conclusion of the prosecution are just two steps in a years-long recovery and healing process," Commissioner Coupe said today. "Survivors and their families continue to need the support of the criminal justice system.

That's where our Victim Services program steps in to provide information about the DOC's supervision of offenders who are serving criminal sentences and to offer referrals to services and programs that can support victims in their ongoing recovery."

Commissioner Coupe reported today that over the past year DOC's Victim Services Coordinator has responded to more than 1,400 inquiries. In response to those inquiries, the DOC has developed the Guide to Victim Services, an informational brochure that outlines several state resources for survivors and their families, features answers to frequently asked questions, and provides contact information for victim serving organizations. "We're pleased that our enhanced victim services are meeting our goal of providing a new level of individual service to victims and families who have been impacted by offenders in our custody or in community-based supervision, and we hope that our new informational brochure empowers victims to reach out for help and engage in the correctional system," Coupe said.

The DOC Victim Services Coordinator assists victims to:

- be prepared to participate in the correctional process, if they choose
- understand DOC's role in supervising offenders who serve criminal sentences, including its supervision of offenders in prison and in the community
- obtain information and answers to questions surrounding the processes of incarceration and probation
- receive information and referrals to services
- register with VINELink, an automated notification system that allows crime victims to obtain real-time information about criminal court cases and changes in the custody status of offenders
- check eligibility for victim's compensation
- establish Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders
- connect with domestic violence advocacy programs

DOC victim services contact information:

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