

**THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE CLIENT SURVEY: DEVELOPMENT AND
TESTING OF INSTRUMENTS AND METHODOLOGIES**

Prepared for the Nebraska Crime Commission

May, 1997

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I. Executive Summary

1. Three versions of a victim needs assessment research instrument, designed to measure client satisfaction and identify possible gaps in services, were developed and successfully tested at pilot sites for each of three major types of victim agencies identified: (A) The Traditional Victim/Witness Unit (Lincoln Police Department), (B) The Grassroots Community-Based Victim Program (MARR-Omaha), and (C) The Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program (The Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center-Lincoln).
2. The response rates testing the mail survey methodology exceeded or were near the expected target of a 20% return necessary to produce useful information for the service providing agencies in the areas of: client contacts, service provision, perception of staff, support groups/referrals, victimizations, and demographic characteristics of victims.
3. Victim agencies should use the instruments and results from these tests as base-lines or starting points from which to further refine the instruments and methodologies to meet their agency-specific needs and to develop on-going procedures to monitor client satisfaction and needs.
4. The Crime Commission should provide technical assistance to agencies interested in collecting and making use of this type of information and in incorporating such efforts into their case management systems and operational routines. Training to prepare agencies in all aspects of systematically obtaining feedback from clients, including such basics as having client addresses and telephone numbers readily accessible, should be developed.
5. Results from the mail surveys were not adequate however, due to the high percentage of non-respondents, for purposes of external evaluation of agency performance or service provision. The in-house distribution method tested, with near 100% participation and completion among selected sub-groups, demonstrated the potential of the instrument to successfully evaluate client needs and satisfaction with service provision.
6. Mail-survey response rates can likely be improved through more intensive follow-up procedures (although it is uncertain whether they could be improved significantly). Future efforts should rely on non-mail or telephone techniques when possible, where non-response (refusals) can be controlled more by selecting replacements at random.

7. The client survey instruments have the potential to be further refined as internal feedback mechanisms for victim agencies or developed into external service provision evaluation tools (when used in combination with the field assessment instrument developed during the research process) to measure victim needs and/or agency performance.
8. The field studies revealed that existing case management practices and policies hampered research/evaluation efforts at all three pilot sites, albeit to different degrees and in different manners. Improvements in case management, such as the utilization of standardized client intake forms and computerized client file systems, would likely result in increased efficiency and improved service provision at all three pilot sites. Such improvements could also facilitate the use of more precise and cost-effective research methods.

II. Overview

This report provides information on the outcome of the third phase of research efforts aimed at testing data collection instruments and methodologies having potential use for assessing state and local victim needs and gaps in services. Valid and reliable instruments and methodologies can provide data for use in identifying victim services needs and gaps. Additionally, such data has the potential for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of such services by identifying program overlap and problems with service coordination.

The origin of the project reported on dates back to July of 1993 when it was determined by the Nebraska Crime Commission that it was necessary to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of services available to victims of crime. The concern was for making sure that federal VOCA funds were being put to the best use possible. The Crime Commission began a search for a comprehensive victim services assessment tool that could be used, but quickly learned that such a tool did not exist.

A request was made to the Bureau of Justice Assistance for technical assistance to develop such a tool. BJA provided technical assistance through Community Research Associates (CRA) who provided the services of Dr. William Pelfry, a criminologist from Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Pelfry, along with VCU victimologist Dr. Laura Moriarity, began to develop the assessment tool in March of 1994. The process they used included a literature review, matrix development, and the development of proposed models. This part of the process was concluded in March of 1994. In June and July of 1994, Dr. Pelfry conducted focus groups with representatives from several Nebraska victim services agencies and with representatives of the Nebraska Crime Commission. A multi-site focus group was conducted in February of 1995 to

further refine the assessment instruments. The actual testing of the instruments was delayed until the necessary funding was secured. Discussions were held with representatives of the University of Nebraska at Omaha's criminal justice department, and that department agreed to test the instruments.

The project that was finally implemented in early 1996 has three major goals:

- > To test the Nebraska Victim Services Needs Assessment Tool
- > To provide data that could be used to assess the effectiveness and utility of different assessment methodologies
- > To provide data that could be used by service providers to improve victim services.

Three different project components were developed to meet these goals: (1) a Nebraska Crime and Victimization Survey; (2) an Inventory of Victim Assistance Programs; and (3) a Victim Assistance Client Survey. The first two of these components were successfully completed (see the report *Testing Nebraska's Victim Services Needs Assessment Instruments*, July, 1996), while implementing the third component proved problematic.

The Victim Assistance Client Survey was originally conceptualized as a test of different methods for client evaluation of victim services and agencies using a common evaluation instrument. The 1996 report concluded that a single instrument would not be adequate to provide useful and meaningful feedback to victim service agencies, nor for use by a funding agency to evaluate the quality of services and subsequently the strengths and weakness of the agencies.

The wide variation that exists among victim service agencies (as revealed in the *Inventory of Victim Assistance Programs*) in terms of clientele, the types of services provided, caseloads and

case-management practices, indicated that multiple survey instruments and data collection methodologies would be necessary to adequately survey crime-victim clients about their needs and satisfaction with the services they had received.

Although a general survey instrument was developed as part of the 1996 report, it was also shown that more detailed information about the different types of victim assistance agencies and their specific operations needed to be systematically collected. This information would inform the development of more specialized instruments, each better suited to the major types of agencies identified, and would also be necessary to identify and/or develop the most appropriate methodologies to be used in testing them.

III. Field Studies/Selection of Pilot Test Sites

In order to obtain detailed information about the various types of victim assistance agencies and their operations, seven agencies (see Appendix A-Field Study Sites) were initially identified to participate in a process of personal interviews with agency directors/staff and on-site observations. A standardized field interview form (see Appendix B) was developed to systematize the collection of agency information in the following areas: 1) history of the organization, 2) agency structure and organization, 3) clients, 4) inter-agency relationships and referrals, 5) case management and records, and 6) existing client evaluation methods.

Based on the information gathered in this process during November and December, 1996, three of the seven agencies were further selected as being as representative of the major types of victim service agencies: (A) the Traditional Victim/Witness Unit, (B) the Grassroots/Community-Based Program, and (C) the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program. The field assessments

showed that these three agencies were the most suited to be pilot sites for the initial development and testing of different variations of the previously-constructed general survey instrument. The field observations also provided the basis for the development of three different prototype instruments, which were then used as a starting point, for obtaining further input from the pilot site agencies, to improve and refine them.

In addition, the field studies also revealed that victim service delivery is also significantly impacted by inter-agency relationships, understandings and procedures; and that this varies significantly from city to city. The Lincoln Police Department, for example, provides information and referrals to the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center in a different manner than does the Omaha Police Department in its relationship with the YWCA Women Against Violence program.

This has implications for understanding and evaluating client satisfaction and needs, as well as possible gaps or overlaps in service provision. The less-complicated relationship between the two aforementioned agencies in Lincoln made them more suitable for the initial development and testing of instruments (A) and (C), while the grassroots victim agency in Omaha offered the best site for testing instrument (B).

The development and testing of the survey instruments at the pilot sites were expected to produce: 1) valuable information about crime victims, their needs and satisfaction with service delivery, 2) information about the multi-agency service delivery system, 3) improvement and refinement of the instruments and data collection methodologies, and equally important, 4) the building of increased capacity within the agencies themselves to collect feedback from clients in order to improve service provision.

IV. The Client Survey

This section of the report: 1) examines the most important, agency-specific background factors and their implications for client evaluations, as identified through the field study interviews and observations, 2) explains the development of the three variants of the research instrument and the methodologies chosen to test them, 3) summarizes the baseline results of the studies undertaken at each of the pilot sites, and 4) offers analysis and recommendations for further research and development.

(A) The Traditional Victim/Witness Unit

Field Study Background/Implications for Client Evaluations

The Victim/Witness Unit of the Lincoln Police Department examines 100-200 police reports on a daily basis, as the first step in their outreach process. From these reports, between 400 and 500 informational letters and brochures are sent out monthly to selected victims. At present there is no codified criteria used to determine which individuals/cases are selected to receive a letter/brochure and the criterion varies from case to case depending on the type of crime.

Staff and volunteers rely on their training and experience to make the selections and while it was beyond the scope of this study to determine this, the possibility exists that some victims are overlooked or omitted at this stage in the process, while others who may not need assistance are included. Time and resources permitting, an internal examination and comparison of current training and written materials, de facto selection policies, and a way to test these against the

actual selections made on a case by case basis (perhaps examining the selections made for a given week or month), may be of benefit to the agency and victim service provision in the future.

Currently, the computerized list of victims that are contacted via mail by the unit, constitute the broadest and most inclusive population of crime victims among the three major types of victim assistance agencies. In other words, if you simply wanted to survey all crime victims as a whole, this list would be more representative than one obtained from a domestic violence/sexual assault program, a grassroots/community-based organization, or a program based in a district attorney's office.

Information gathered from a study of this population should be the most useful in determining the characteristics of crime victims in general, identifying different types of victims, what their needs are, and how well their needs were met by this particular type of agency and others they encountered. In-depth information about victims with more specialized needs, such as those involved in domestic abuse or sexual violence, cannot be adequately addressed studying this population. This type of information will be gathered using a different version of the survey instrument and a different data collection method.

Although a significant outreach effort is made by the Lincoln Victim/Witness unit to contact each identified victim by telephone after they receive an informational letter and brochure, the most complete list of victims is only accessible via mailing addresses, at this time, and not telephone numbers. Currently, telephone numbers are only recorded and held temporarily by the victim/witness unit in a separate card system used primarily by volunteers and staff to conduct and track telephone outreach efforts.

These cards contain only minimal outreach information due to concerns that more detailed

information might be subpoenaed in the judicial process, potentially to the detriment of the victims. Once telephone contact is made, services have been provided, and/ or the case is closed; or after three unsuccessful attempts to reach the victim, the card is returned and attached to the police report/file from which the information was originally obtained.

Methodology

The issues relating to the use of different data collection methodologies in assessing crime victimization were explored in the first component of the 1996 report, The Nebraska Crime and Victimization Survey. The results of this study showed that overall, while each method had advantages and disadvantages, the results obtained by mail and telephone surveys in a statewide study of citizens on this subject were remarkably similar.

In this pilot-testing of the survey instrument, a six month catchment of crime victims (from the list of victims compiled by the Lincoln unit) from April through September of 1996, numbering 1,980 victims, was selected as the study population. From this sampling frame, a simple random sample of 990 victims was selected by choosing every other name on the list. Further inspection of the list revealed that 53 names were duplicates and ten were unmailable, leaving a sample size of 927 victims.

These subjects were surveyed via a self-administered written questionnaire (Instrument A-see pages 28-38) mailed out April 1, 1997. More recent victims were not included in the survey as they may not yet have completed their encounter with the criminal justice system and therefore not received all the services available to them. Victims from the more distant past (prior to April, 1996) were also excluded from this part of the study, as including them might raise questions

about their memory of contact with service providers, which may be especially important in cases where multiple agencies are involved.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha was identified as the research agent in a cover letter from the Nebraska Crime Commission to each victim (see Appendix C), assuring them of complete anonymity and confidentiality, to help ensure an unbiased client evaluation of their needs and experiences with each agency. A reminder post-card (also in Appendix) was likewise mailed to each respondent one week after the questionnaires were mailed out. Completed questionnaires were returned directly to the University for processing in a pre-addressed and stamped envelope provided for each respondent.

The Research Instrument/Key Variables

A seemingly simple, but nevertheless fundamental aspect of the evaluation of service provision relates to initial contacts and ongoing communications with the agency. Following the normal sequence of events a typical client would encounter, the opening part of the survey was devoted to these contacts and communications, including: the receipt and effectiveness of the introductory (and in some cases follow-up) letter/brochure, follow-up telephone contacts, and the client's self assessment of their need for information or assistance (questions 1-6).

As the case study revealed that approximately 75% of services provided by the Lincoln unit could be classified as supplying information to clients, questions relating to gaining a greater understanding of and evaluating this service are highly important and separated out from the more traditional listing of victim services (questions 7-8). The listing of traditional services was re-worked to group related services into distinct sections to improve clarity and the logical

ordering of services (question 9).

Also, rather than simply repeating the listing of services in question 9 (as was done in the original template), to determine what services clients needed, but did not receive, an open-ended question was substituted. This allowed clients an opportunity to consider on their own, in their own words, with the benefit of already having reviewed the list, services that they felt they needed *and/or* expected, but did not receive (question 10).

In the process of refining the questionnaire, the LPD victim/witness unit also suggested that it would be important for them to know more about the number of telephone and face-to-face contacts with clients and the combined duration of those contacts (questions 11-14). Open-ended questions were used here to collect information about the duration of contacts, to allow the computation of the average length of those combined contacts per victim.

Other key variables included the clients' rating of the agency and personnel in terms of their effectiveness in helping the client obtain services and their empathy, support, and professionalism (questions 15-18); support groups (questions 19-20), referrals (questions 21-24), contacts and service utilization with other agencies (questions 25-27), and basic demographic information about the victims (questions 31-38). LPD was also interested in obtaining additional information about multiple victimizations (question 28) and the type and results of victimization (questions 29-30).

The input received by LPD staff greatly improved the overall instrument and individual questions to the point that many changes were incorporated into the other variants of the questionnaire. This fact, combined with difficulties encountered at the other sites operationalizing certain variables and implementing other questions (which had more sharply differentiated the

prototype instruments) resulted in the three variants of the questionnaire becoming more homogenized at the end of the development process. This ran counter to expectations that the three versions of the instrument would become even more differentiated, after consultation with the pilot agencies, rather than less differentiated.

Although the survey instrument initially appears somewhat lengthy, tests utilizing staff and students role-playing, including some crime victims who had agency contact, revealed that the average completion time for the questionnaire was about 8 minutes-30 seconds, and the maximum time was just over 12 minutes.

Results

a) Response Rates

Of the 927 questionnaires mailed to victims in the LPD victim/witness unit's files, 197 were returned for a response rate of 21.25%. Approximately 60 telephone calls were also fielded by the research coordinator identified in the cover letter, in cases where respondents had questions regarding the survey. The volume of telephone calls was unanticipated and somewhat surprising during the first week and no systematic method for classifying the calls had been prepared in advance.

An informal tracking was soon initiated however, revealing that a vast majority of the calls were from individuals who were uncertain as to why they had been sent the survey, as they could not recall or did not consider themselves to be crime or domestic abuse victims. Upon some probing by the researcher, most individuals did recall some relatively minor incident within the past year, such as vandalism to or theft from a car or their home, for which a police notification or

report had been made/filed.

In several instances, individuals called back several hours or even days later, to report that they finally recalled an event or incident that was reported to the police. In other cases however, their reason for inclusion in the study, beyond their name being in the LPD victim/witness unit's files, could not be explained to the respondents. All respondents who contacted the researcher were encouraged to return questionnaires, even though they could not recall being a crime victim. A total of 15 subjects were resent an additional questionnaire, at their request, after receiving the reminder postcard, as they had been misplaced or thrown-away.

b) Initial Contacts/Information Provision

Of the total number of participants that returned questionnaires (197) a total of 20 respondents or about ten percent (10%) indicated that they were not a crime or abuse victim, that the survey did not apply to them, or that they did not contact or were not contacted by the LPD victim/witness unit (see "other" comments in question 1). All comments made in response to question 1, and for all other questions, were entered into computerized format and separately made available to the Nebraska Crime Commission.

The data obtained in question 1, including an examination of the open-ended comments to the "other" category, shows that for all 178 responses to this question, 121 persons (68.0%) were initially contacted by the LPD v/w unit, 28 persons (15.7%) initiated contact by either calling or walking-in to the unit, while 16 persons (9.0%) had initial contact through an "other" method. Of those who initiated contact with the victim/witness unit, over one-half (52.3%) did so by calling the unit while 11.4% walked-in. By subtracting these 165 respondents who identified how

they originally had contact with the v/w unit, 13 (7.3%) are left with genuine responses of "no contact," either generated by LPD or themselves.

Of the sixteen "other" responses, only two however, were clearly valid (one phone call and one contact at the hospital), while 14 responses posed some validity questions as respondents used this space to explain an initial triggering incident for contact with LPD and reasons for their possible inclusion in the survey. Due to the subjective nature of the responses and the non-responsiveness to the intent of the question, some doubts remain about whether these 14 respondents (7.8%) actually initiated contact with the unit or not, or whether they had contact with the unit at all.

Despite the need for some reworking of this question however (see recommendations on page 23), the data from question 1 clearly shows that about 85% of the respondents were initially contacted by the LPD or initiated contact themselves. The responses to question 2 support this, as slightly over 15% indicated they did not receive the informational letter or brochure, about 73% said they had, and 12% were unsure. A vast majority who received them (96.1%), said the letter and brochure adequately explained the services available to them as crime victims, thus supporting their effectiveness as outreach tools.

More than half (56.6%) had received a follow-up telephone call from LPD while 43.4% had not. Of those that had not, 18.1% said they received a second mailing, while 81.9% said they had not or were not sure. A partial explanation for the fact that 47 respondents (27.2%) stated they did not receive (or were not sure if they had) an informational letter or brochure, may be found in the significant numbers who reported they were rape/sexual assault (18), or domestic violence victims (28). As per the inter-agency working agreement, these cases are forwarded by

the LPD v/w unit (without a letter/brochure being sent) to the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center (RSACC), which sends an outreach letter/brochure. Seventeen victims did report that they had had contact with RSACC.

The arrangement with RSACC may also account for part of the 43.4% (69) who said they did not receive a follow-up phone call, but this higher percentage also indicates an area of outreach the agency might want to look at for possible improvement (for non-domestic abuse and sexual assault victims) and for further analysis by seriousness or type of victimization. This would also be true for the second mailing to victims (in cases where no telephone contact was made), as only 18.1% reported receiving the additional mailing.

In describing their need for services as a crime victim, as shown in Table 1, slightly over two-fifths (41.4%) felt they never needed assistance or information while 15.1% knew they needed assistance all along. Significantly, almost one-third of victims (30.9%) realized they could use assistance or information after being contacted by the victim/witness unit.

Table 1. Need for Assistance

	Number	Percent
Never needed assistance or information	67	41.4
Realized could use assistance or information after being contacted by LPD	50	30.9
Knew needed assistance or information all along	25	15.4
Other	20	10.3

As shown in Table 2, most victims stated that they received information relating to the investigation or status of their case (71) and regarding their rights, issues and options (70).

Thirty-eight (38) victims received information about specific services available through other agencies, while 26 received information about the court system or legal process.

Table 2. Type of Information Provided

	Number
Investigation or status of case	71
Court system or legal process	26
Victim rights, issues, options	70
Services available through other agencies	38
Other	13

A majority of the respondents (46.3%) said LPD was helpful in answering questions they had, 41.9% did not have questions, and slightly over 10% said the unit was not helpful in answering questions. Thirteen respondents indicated, in the comments space provided, what their questions were that were not answered to their satisfaction.

c) Services

As shown in question 9 of the survey (see page 30 for a complete listing), the services available through LPD which clients used most often were: on-scene comfort or help (17), assistance handling a crisis/emergency services or notifications (16), notifications about offenders (13), counseling or support groups (11), court or legal system orientation (11), assistance with protection orders (11), crime prevention and making their home safe (11), and provision of a cellular telephone to call 911 (9).

Least used services were assistance obtaining child care (0), assistance with financial

matters (0), employer interventions (0), utility company interventions (1), landlord interventions (2), assistance with transportation (2), and obtaining shelter, food, clothing or other basic necessities (2).

Respondents cited "information about their case status or investigation, information about the offender, and the results of hearings" most often (12) as the service they expected or needed but never received. Fourteen (14) other subjects also noted complaints about other aspects of the criminal justice system (the courts, police performance, the correctional system, etc.) in response to this question. Other responses included: information that services were available (2), counseling or supportive follow-up (2), shelter (1), phone to call 911 (1), medical care (1), protection order (1), on-scene information about legal process (1), crime prevention (1), and help relocating (1).

Almost one-third (30.8%) indicated they had no telephone contacts with the unit, while the majority (53.5%) reported 1-2 telephone contacts; about ten percent (10%) had between 3-5 contacts while 3.8% reported 10 or more contacts. The average duration for all combined telephone contacts was 13.7 minutes per person.

About three-fifths (60.8%) had no face-to-face contact with the unit, 28.1% had 1-2 contacts, 8.5% had 3-5 contacts, while 2% reported 10 or more contacts. The average time-duration combining all face-to-face contacts was 39.1 minutes per person .

d) Staff

Of those who had contact with the staff, as shown in Table 3, over 60% felt the staff were either very effective or somewhat effective in helping them obtain the services they needed, while

slightly less than 18% thought the staff was either somewhat ineffective or very ineffective; about 20% had no opinion. Forty (40) comments were forwarded to the Crime Commission for further analysis.

Table 3. Effectiveness of Staff in Service Provision

	Number	Percent
Very effective	40	39.6
Somewhat effective	22	21.8
No opinion	21	20.8
Somewhat ineffective	4	3.9
Very ineffective	14	13.9

The unit's personnel also received also received high ratings for questions 16-18 (see page 32) in terms of their empathy (78.4% said staff were either very or somewhat empathetic vs. 9.0% somewhat or very unempathetic), support (73.9% very or somewhat supportive vs. 7.2% somewhat or very unsupportive), and professionalism (73.0% very or somewhat professional vs. 4.5% somewhat or very unprofessional).

e) Support Groups/Referrals

A very small number of respondents had attended the support group offered through the unit. Of the 95% who had not attended, the most often cited reasons were that respondents felt they did not need or want to attend (75), and significantly, 49 persons were not aware one existed, indicating a possible area for improvement in outreach.

Only about 10% of respondents were referred to another agency, but of those who were, most of these felt that the referral was very appropriate or somewhat appropriate; while none

thought the referrals were in anyway inappropriate. About 15% of respondents had contact with another victim assistance program, while 85% said they did not.

The Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center (RSACC) was cited as the agency to which victims were referred most frequently (17), along with the county attorney's office (8). Of those who had contact with another program, almost two-thirds (65.4%) said they utilized the services of these other programs and over half (52.3%) were either very or somewhat satisfied with the services or assistance they received, while 9.1% were very dissatisfied.

Slightly over two-thirds (67.1%) of respondents said they would feel comfortable referring others in need to the LPD v/w unit, while only 6.7% said they would not; about one-fourth (26.2%) were unsure. Somewhat surprisingly, the most common response to how clients found out about the victim/witness program was that they were referred by police (55) vs. the informational letter/brochure (54), while "other" avenues were cited 26 times (see question 24).

f) Victimization

Twenty-one respondents (13.5%) indicated that they had sought assistance for more than one crime in the past year, while 86.5% said they had not. Of those that had sought assistance as a result of multiple crimes, most (10 persons) cited 2 crimes, three persons cited three crimes, and one person reported being the victim of nine crimes.

Table 4 shows the type of crimes which prompted respondents to seek or resulted in their receiving assistance. The most frequently cited victimizations were for vandalism or property crime (57), burglary or theft (43), domestic violence (28), assault and battery (21), rape/sexual assault (18), and telephone threats (18). Least cited victimizations were homicide/manslaughter

(0), child abuse/incest (2) and robbery (10).

Table 4. Types of Victimization

	Number
Homicide/manslaughter	0
Rape/sexual assault	18
Child abuse/incest	2
Domestic violence	28
Assault and battery	21
Robbery	10
Burglary or theft	43
Telephone threats	18
Vandalism/property crime	57
Other	16

Respondents stated most frequently that the crimes of which they were a victim resulted in property loss or damage (79), psychological or emotional injury to themselves or another (70), financial loss (47), and physical injury to themselves or another (36); there were eleven (11) "other" responses.

Cross-tabulation Comparisons of Victimization

A closer examination of clients' self-description of their need for services provided an example of comparisons that can be made by type of crime (victimization). As summarized in Table 5, the need for services was cross-tabulated for victims of more serious/personal crimes (homicide/manslaughter, rape/sexual assault, child abuse/incest, domestic violence, assault and

battery, robbery) and less serious/property crimes (burglary or theft, telephone threats, vandalism/property crime). In cases where multiple crimes were listed (in question 29) the most serious crime was selected for the computations.

Table 5. Need for Assistance by Type of Victimization by Percentage

	More Serious/ Personal (n=59)	Less Serious/ Property (n=77)	Combined (n=162)
Never needed assistance or information	16.9	53.2	41.4
Realized could use assistance or information after being contacted by LPD	44.1	23.4	30.9
Knew needed assistance or information all along	22.0	13.0	15.4
Other	16.9	10.4	10.3

These comparisons clearly show, as could be expected, that a much higher percentage of victims of less serious crimes (53.3%) felt they never needed assistance or information compared with only 16.9% of victims of more serious crimes. Significantly, 44.1% of the victims of more serious crime said they realized they could use assistance after being contacted by the LPD v/w unit, while 22.0% said they knew they needed assistance all along. It is also significant to note that over one-third (36.4%) of victims of less-serious/property crimes also needed assistance; 23.4% realized this after being contacted by the unit and 13% knew they needed assistance all along. (Similar comparisons for the number of telephone and face-to-face contacts with the type of harm caused by the victimizations were also made which may be useful to the agency, but are not included in this report due to length considerations).

Other comparisons, related to type of victimization and harm caused by the victimization, showed that while 41.2% of all respondents were victims of more-serious personal crimes, about 56% of all respondents indicated the victimization resulted in either physical harm (25.2%) or psychological harm (30.8%) to themselves or another.

Further analysis also reveals that a much higher percentage of physically- or psychologically-harmed individuals realized they could use assistance after being contacted by the LPD v/w unit 46.7% (plus 22.7% who knew they needed assistance all along), than financial/property loss victims (17.9% who realized after being contacted, plus 8.9% who knew all along).

g) Demographics

Somewhat surprisingly, over three-fifths of the respondents (61.6%) were female and 38.4% were male. The average age for a victim was 49.75 years, while the mode for the age of victims was 65 years old. The numerical and percentage breakdowns for age, sex, race, education, marital status, household size, income, and area of the city by zip code are summarized in questions 31-38 (see pages 36-38).

If one were to draw a composite of the typical crime victim who responded to the questionnaire based on the greatest frequencies and averages for each demographic category, the profile would be 50 years old, female, white, a high school (or GED equivalent) graduate, married, living with one other person in their household, had a total family income of between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and lived in zip code area 68502.

Summary/Recommendations

a) The Research Instrument

Overall, the test results for the research instrument showed that it was effective in collecting the desired information from research subjects and that this information could be coded to transfer it to a more usable/computerized format, processed, and manipulated by performing cross-tabulations and comparisons of selected variables. The greatest difficulty encountered with the instrument had to do with classifying initial contacts with the agency. Other concerns have to do with comments made by some respondents about other aspects of the criminal justice system, which raise validity questions about whether these respondents were actually evaluating their experiences with the victim/witness unit.

Based on the open-ended responses to question 1., the confusion some respondents encountered, and the number who responded that they were not crime victims, this question should be re-worked to provide a more straightforward method of assessing the type of initial contacts, if any, either by the LPD or self-initiated. This can be accomplished by simply giving subjects an opportunity to respond that they: 1) had no contact with the LPD v/w unit, 2) had contact with police officers only, or 3) were not crime victims.

Earlier drafts of the questionnaire had included options for such responses, but concerns that victims might misinterpret wording about contacts with "the victim/witness unit" and not see the list of services which they may have used (in question 9.), if they were directed to "skip" to the next relevant question (question 25) led to the testing of this format. These additions seem necessary however, and can be made without including the "skip" instructions to insure that

respondents see the list of services available, which may jog their memories and which has an educational benefit to the respondent.

b) Response Rate/Methodology

The response rate of 21.25% was about what was expected as an acceptable minimum from the outset of the test. It was initially anticipated however, based on the field study observations, that the study population (a six-month catchment of clients from which the sample would be drawn) would be approximately 2,500 victims, rather than the 1,980 which an examination of the LPD victim/witness unit's lists for April-September, 1996, actually produced.

A decision was made, for test purposes, to retain the originally proposed method of selecting a sample by choosing every other name on the list. This resulted in a somewhat smaller sample than anticipated, 927 (after duplicates and unmailable addresses were eliminated) vs. 1,250 (20% return rate for 1,250 would have resulted in a return of 250 questionnaires which was the target number for the test).

In these circumstances, it would have been possible (and perhaps advisable), to use a computer-generated random sampling method to obtain a sample of 1,250 from the 1,980 subjects in the study population, rather than relying on the simple random sampling method of selecting every other name in the sampling frame. The simpler sampling method was retained to test it for use by other agencies which might not have the capacity to computer-generate a random sample, and to see if a higher response rate might attain the target of 250 returns anyway, thus keeping agency mailing costs to a minimum.

The high percentage of non-respondents is problematical for estimating the degree of

confidence with which one can state that the results from this survey represent all clients of the Lincoln victim/witness unit during the study period. Two options for remedying this problem are: 1) increasing the response rate for the mail survey, or 2) moving to another distribution method, such as a telephone survey, where one can better control for non-response (refusals) by selecting replacements at random.

The response rate for the mail method could probably be improved by supplementing the procedure beyond simply mailing one follow-up postcard. This would involve, as was done in the statewide crime and victimization study (response rate of 43%) conducted in earlier phases of this project, including an "alert" mailing in the process prior to actually sending out the survey and the reminder. As victims of crime are a different study population than in the above-mentioned study (random survey of Nebraska driver's license holders 18 years of age and older), duplication of the attained response rate cannot be assumed.

Beyond this, more sophisticated and costly methods, such as tracking returns and sending out a complete second packet including the cover letter and questionnaire, or a registered-mail system could be employed. Another less-costly possibility which would yield larger numbers of respondents and hopefully somewhat better information, although it would not solve the non-response problem, would be to not draw a sample and simply mail to all clients on the mailing list for the six-month catchment period.

A preferred option would be the additional testing of this instrument, which is easily modified to a telephone format, in a randomly-drawn telephone survey. Telephone surveys are more representative, quick to do, provide better estimates of sampling error, greater confidence levels in findings, and are cost-effective (especially when the increase in participation rates is

considered).

This method would also be able to better deal with the validity issues mentioned above, as telephone interviewers could keep respondents focused on victim-service provision rather than other aspects of the criminal justice system, as may have occurred in the mail survey (the comments section of questions 10 and 15, revealed that some respondents, rather than commenting on the LPD victim/witness unit, commented on the police officers in the field and other departmental personnel, as well as other components of the entire criminal justice system [district attorney's office, the courts, corrections department, etc.]).

This method would also better address the concerns raised by those who returned surveys claiming they had never been a crime victim, including a majority of the over 60 calls researchers fielded, from respondents who had questions about their inclusion in the survey. Most did not initially recall being a victim, which overall may partially explain the low participation rates. A comparison of results obtained using a telephone survey, informed by these concerns, allowing interviewers to probe subjects' responses more carefully, may provide better data and a greater understanding of these types of responses.

c) Further Research and Development

The initial testing and development of the research instrument and methodology used to study the Traditional Victim/Witness Unit should be seen as a starting point for ongoing efforts to gain information about and feedback from victims and clients relating to service provision. The results should be seen as a baseline from which future comparisons and improvements can be made.

Beyond the information and insights gained from the survey results, the research process revealed other potential opportunities to improve data collection on and reporting about victims and clients. Information about victim needs, client service-satisfaction, and outcome assessments would be much more readily obtainable from agencies utilizing an automated, computer-based client tracking system. At this site, this may simply entail making greater use of existing computer system capabilities, perhaps an additional case-management software package, and coordination with the departmental records division.

With such a case-management system, agencies could integrate and systematize current information gathering efforts by tracking and identifying victims by type of crime, harm caused by victimization, demographic characteristics, and also the types and quantity of services provided (the results of which are required by and reported to the Nebraska Crime Commission on a monthly basis). Individual case files containing this information, which would be systematically obtained and recorded through the use of standardized client in-take forms upon initial contact, would also include the mailing address of victims, telephone numbers, and other case-related or service-provision information. The result potentially, would be a more efficient system for 1) ongoing monitoring and analysis of service provision and need, and 2) a tool used on a daily basis to actually outreach to clients and deliver services.

One practical result of the development of an integrated client data-base system, from the research, data collection, and evaluation perspective, would be that future studies would be easier to conduct (utilizing either mail or telephone methods for example) and more meaningful results might also be obtained. With an integrated data base, specific groups could be readily identified and targeted in future studies, ensuring sufficiently large stratified samples.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE CLIENT SURVEY (A)

The Traditional Victim/Witness Unit

*Criminal Justice Department
University of Nebraska Omaha*

Please circle your answer as in this example:

1. Yes
2. No

Shortly after you became a crime victim,

1. Did the Lincoln Police Department (LPD) Victim / Witness Unit contact you either by mail or telephone?

Yes	121	68.0%
No	57	32.0%
n =	178	100.0 %

No, I first contacted the unit myself by:

Walking in	5	11.4%
Calling the unit	23	52.3 %
Through the support group	0	0.0%
Other	16	36.4 %
n =	44	100.0%

2. Did you receive a letter and informational brochure from the LPD Victim / Witness Unit?

Yes	126	72.8 %	
No	27	15.6 %	(if no, skip to question 4)
Not sure	20	11.6 %	(if not sure, skip to question 4)
n =	173	100.0 %	

3. Did this letter and brochure explain the services available to you as a crime victim?

Yes	124	96.1%
No	5	3.9%
n =	129	100.0 %

4. Did you receive a follow-up telephone call from the LPD Victim/Witness Unit?

Yes	90	56.6%	(if yes, skip to question 6)
No	69	43.4%	
n =	159	100.0%	

5. If you did not receive a follow-up phone call, did you receive a second information letter?

Yes	17	18.1%
No	47	50.0%
Not sure	30	31.9%
n =	94	100.0%

6. How would you describe your need for services as a crime victim?

Never felt I needed assistance or information	67	41.4%
Realized I could use assistance or information after being contacted by the LPD Victim/Witness Unit	50	30.9%
Knew I needed assistance and information all along	25	15.4%
Other	20	10.3%
n =	162	100.0%

7. Did the LPD Victim/Witness Unit provide you with information about: (circle all that apply)

	n
The investigation or status of your case	71
The court system or legal process	26
Victim rights, issues and options	70
Specific services available through their and other agencies	38
Other	13
Does not apply	37

8. Was the LPD Victim/Witness Unit helpful in answering questions you had?
If no, what were your questions? _____

Yes	74	79.6%
No	19	20.4%
n =	93	100.0%

9. What specific services available through the LPD Victim/Witness Unit have you used?
(Circle all that apply.)

<i>Assistance obtaining or support with:</i>	<i>n</i>
Medical care	4
Shelter, food, clothing, or other basic necessities	2
Child care	0
Transportation	2
Financial matters	0
Handling a crisis / emergency services or notifications	16
Counseling or support groups	11
On-scene comfort or help	17
Court or legal system orientation	11
Escorting you to court or County Attorney's office	6
Emergency legal service	3
Protection orders	11
Witness notifications or fees	4
Victim compensation, restitution claims or impact statement	6
Notifications about offender arraignment hearing, bail, posting or release from jail	13
Insurance claims	6
Cellular telephone to call 911	9
Property return	3
Your landlord (landlord intervention)	2
Your employer (employer intervention)	0
Your utility company or other debtors	1
Crime prevention and making your home safe	11
Other	11

10. As a crime victim, what other services did you expect or need, but never receive?

	<i>n</i>
Complaints with other CI parts – police, courts	14
Case status information	12
Information that services are available	2
Counseling or support – follow up	2
Shelter	1
Phone to call 911	1
Medical Care	1
On scene information about criminal justice process	1
Crime Prevention	1
Help relocating	1
Protection order	1

11. Altogether, how many times did you have telephone contact with the LPD Victim/Witness Unit?

0	49	30.8%
1-2	85	53.5%
3-5	16	10.1%
6-9	3	1.8%
10 or more	6	3.8%
n =	159	100.0%

12. Combining all of your telephone contacts, approximately how much time did you spend on the phone with someone with the LPD Victim Witness Unit?

___ Minutes or ___ Hours

1-10 minutes	55	57.3%
11-30 minutes	23	24.0%
31-59 minutes	3	3.1%
1 hour or more	15	15.6%
n =	96	100.0%

13. Altogether, how many times did you have face to face contact with someone at the LPD Victim / Witness Unit?

0	93	60.8%
1-2	43	28.1%
3-5	13	8.5%
6-9	1	0.7%
10 or more	3	2.0%
n =	153	100.0%

(skip to question 13)

14. Combining all the visits, approximately how much time did you spend with the LPD Victim / Witness staff while services were provided?

___ Minutes or ___ Hours or ___ Days

1-29 minutes	19	40.4%
30-59 minutes	9	19.1%
1-2 hours	10	21.3%
more than 2 hours	9	19.1%
n =	47	100.0%

15. Overall, how effective were staff members in helping you obtain the services you needed?

Very effective	40	39.6 %
Somewhat effective	22	21.8 %
No opinion	21	20.8 %
Somewhat ineffective	4	3.9 %
Very ineffective	14	13.9 %
n =	101	100.0 %

Comments about staff members or service provision:

If you had telephone or face to face contact with the LPD Victim/Witness Unit, **PLEASE RATE THE PERSONNEL IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING:**
(if you had no contact skip to question 19)

EMPATHY – that is, how sensitive were the personnel to your problems? Were they able to see your point of view?

16. I would say the personnel were:

Very empathic	58	52.3 %
Somewhat empathic	29	26.1 %
No opinion	14	12.6 %
Somewhat unempathic	8	7.2 %
Very unempathic	2	1.8 %
n =	111	100.0 %

SUPPORT – that is, did the staff provide sympathy and encouragement during your experience?

17. I would say the staff were:

Very supportive	61	55.0 %
Somewhat supportive	21	18.9 %
No opinion	21	18.9 %
Somewhat unsupportive	3	2.7 %
Very unsupportive	5	4.5 %
n =	111	100.0 %

PROFESSIONALISM – that is, did you get the feeling you were being taken care of by a group of confident, well-trained individuals who knew a great deal about victims?

18. I would say the staff were:

Very professional	61	55.0 %
Somewhat professional	20	18.0 %
No opinion	25	22.5 %
Somewhat unprofessional	3	2.7 %
Very unprofessional	2	1.8 %
n =	111	100.0 %

19. Did you attend the victim support group available through the Victim/Witness Unit?
If yes, how many times? _____

Yes	8	5.0 %
No	152	95.0 %
n =	160	100.0 %

If no, why not: (circle all that apply and skip to question 21)

I did not need or want to attend	75
I could not attend	8
I was not aware one existed	49
Other	13

20. If you attended the support group, how would you rate the overall effectiveness of the sessions?

Very effective	2	2.7 %
Somewhat effective	2	2.7 %
No opinion	3	4.1 %
Somewhat ineffective	0	0.0 %
Very ineffective	0	0.0 %
Does not apply – I did not attend	67	90.5 %
n =	74	100.0 %

21. Did the Victim/Witness Unit refer you to any other agency or specialist for assistance?
 If yes, please identify the agency or type of specialist you were referred to: _____

Yes	15	10.9 %	
No	123	89.1 %	(if no skip to question 23)
n =	138	100.0 %	

22. How would you rate the overall appropriateness of the referral(s)?

Very appropriate	12	40.0 %
Somewhat appropriate	4	13.3 %
No opinion	14	46.7 %
Somewhat inappropriate	0	0.0 %
Very inappropriate	0	0.0 %
n =	30	100.0 %

23. Would you feel comfortable referring others in need to the LPD Victim/Witness Unit?

Yes	100	67.1 %
No	10	6.7 %
Not sure	39	26.2 %
n =	149	100.0 %

24. How did you find out about this program?

	<i>n</i>
Informational letter or brochure	54
“Word of mouth”	5
Referred by police	55
Referred by County Attorney’s office	2
Newspaper, t.v. or radio ads	1
Other	26

25. Did you have contact with any other victim assistance programs?

Yes	24	15.3 %	
No	133	84.7 %	(if no skip to question 28)
n =	157	100.0 %	

If yes, which ones?

	n
County Attorney's office	8
Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center	17
Other	1

26. Did you utilize their services? If yes, which services? _____

Yes	17	32.7 %
No	35	67.3 %
n =	52	100.0 %

27. Overall, how satisfied were you with the services or assistance you received from these other victim assistance programs?

Very satisfied	18	40.9 %
Somewhat satisfied	5	11.4 %
No opinion	17	38.6 %
Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0.0 %
Very dissatisfied	4	9.1 %
n =	44	100.0 %

28. Did you seek victim assistance for more than one crime (crimes that occurred at different times) during the past year?

Yes	21	13.5 %
No	135	86.5 %
n =	156	100.0 %

If yes, how many?

2	10	62.4 %
3	3	18.8 %
more than 3	3	18.8 %
n =	16	100.0 %

29. What type of crime prompted you to seek or resulted in you receiving assistance?
(circle all that apply)

	<i>n</i>
Homicide / manslaughter	0
Rape / sexual assault	18
Child abuse / incest	2
Domestic violence	28
Assault and battery	21
Robbery (contact with criminal)	10
Burglary or theft	43
Telephone threats	18
Vandalism / property crime	57
Other	16

30. Did the crime of which you were a victim result in: (circle all that apply)

	<i>n</i>
Physical injury to yourself or another	36
Psychological or emotional injury to yourself or another	70
Financial loss	47
Property loss or damage	79
Other	11

YOUR CHARACTERISTICS (will be used for statistical analysis only):

30. What is your age?

3 – 19	23	13.1 %
20 – 34	32	18.2 %
35 – 49	33	18.8 %
50 – 74	55	31.3 %
75 – 97	33	18.8 %
n =	176	100.0 %

32. What is your sex?

Male	68	38.4 %
Female	109	61.6 %
n =	177	100.0 %

33. What is your race or ethnic background?

White	161	91.0 %
African American / Black	2	1.1 %
Asian	1	0.6 %
Hispanic	4	2.3 %
Native American	1	0.6 %
Other	8	4.5 %
n =	177	100.0 %

34. Please check the category which describes your highest level of education:

6th grade or less	6	3.4 %
7th - 11th grade	23	13.0 %
High school graduate or GED	52	29.4 %
Some college	51	28.8 %
College degree	30	16.9 %
Advanced college degree	15	8.5 %
n =	177	100.0 %

35. Are you:

Single	49	27.8 %
Married	71	40.3 %
Divorced	26	14.8 %
Widowed	28	15.9 %
Separated	2	1.2 %
n =	176	100.0 %

36. How many people live with you in your home or apartment?

Live alone	40	22.8 %
1 other person	74	42.3 %
2 other people	18	10.3 %
3 or more other people	43	24.6 %
n =	175	100.0 %

37. Of these categories, which describes your total family income?

Under \$10,000	29	17.8 %
\$10,000 to \$20,000	53	32.5 %
\$20,000 to \$40,000	42	25.8 %
Over \$40,000	39	23.9 %
n=	163	100.0 %

38. What is your zip code?

68017	1	.6 %
68065	1	.6 %
68104	1	.6 %
68333	1	.6 %
68349	1	.6 %
68404	1	.6 %
68502	27	15.6 %
68503	16	9.2 %
68504	13	7.5 %
68505	8	4.6 %
68506	23	13.3 %
68507	10	5.8 %
68508	12	6.9 %
68510	15	8.7 %
68512	3	1.7 %
68516	16	9.2 %
68520	1	.6 %
68521	13	7.5 %
68522	3	1.7 %
68524	4	2.3 %
68528	2	1.2 %
68760	1	.6 %
n=	173	100.0 %

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return this form right away.

(B) The Grassroots/Community-Based Program

Field Study Background/Implications for Client Evaluations

The Murder Assault Rape and Robbery (MARR) Victim Assistance Program conducts outreach via mailing informational letters and brochures to approximately 1,300 crime victims each year. About 74% of this number are identified by staff and volunteers through a daily examination of accounts of crime reported in the Omaha World Herald (the major daily newspaper in Omaha), 24% are culled from parole board hearing lists provided through the Douglas County Attorney's Office, and the remaining 2% are from referrals.

From this outreach effort (which also includes follow-up outreach calls for about 40 selected cases), in-coming calls to their hot-line, and walk-ins to their office, MARR is involved in direct client-contact advocacy work with between 10-15% of the total outreach effort (1300 victims) or 130-195 victims per year. In addition, MARR maintains crime victim case files for those identified, currently numbering over 5,000 open cases; and 1,500 offender files.

Since its founding in 1980, MARR has a long history of citizen-based advocacy on behalf of crime victims including: legislative work, legal action on behalf of victims to gain access to police records and incident reports, and improvements regarding victim involvement in sentencing, restitution, and parole and hearing notifications. In terms of evaluation of services, this role, which has often put MARR at odds with the traditional elements of the criminal justice system (such as the police department, the county district attorney's office, and the parole board), has important implications.

MARR contends that much of its clientele is comprised of individuals that, for various reasons, have not have their needs met as crime victims through the more traditional victim/

witness programs (such as those found in the police department or county attorney's office). Examples of such instances would include: victims who have not filed a report or where no written report was made, victims who have been frustrated in their efforts to obtain services or to find out more about the investigation or handling of their cases through traditional channels, cases where a decision has been made not to prosecute a suspect, and/or where trust issues exist between the victim and the traditional criminal justice system.

A study of the population served by MARR, which includes victims who have been associated with the criminal justice system on a long-term basis (for example, those cases where an offender is just now coming up for parole), may yield a very different view of the needs of crime victims than could be gleaned from population frames provided by the police department or district attorney's office. In addition, this population may also provide important feedback about those traditional victim/witness units and other types of victim programs that MARR clients may also have encountered.

Methodology

As with the study of the Lincoln Victim/Witness Unit population, either a mail or telephone survey method would be the most appropriate and effective means to gather information. Unlike the Lincoln unit however, which makes a concerted effort to contact all identified victims by phone and thus has telephone number information at some point, MARR makes no such large-scale attempt and therefore does not have complete nor usable telephone number lists for their overall client base at any point.

In this pilot-testing of the survey instrument, a two-year catchment of crime victims (from

the lists of victims provided by MARR) from January through December of 1995 and 1996 (2,328 victims) was selected as the study population. The two separate sampling frames obtained for each year resulted in the selection of random samples of 975 victims for 1996 and 538 for 1995 (see page 42 for more detail regarding sample selection).

These subjects from 1996 and 1995 were surveyed via a self-administered written questionnaire (Instrument B-see pages 52 to 63) mailed out respectively, April 1, and April 22, 1997. A comparison of responses between the two years is intended to provide information about the optimal time frame to obtain information from victim clients of this type of agency; that is, whether going back two years is too far or whether one year is not enough.

As with the traditional victim/witness unit test, the University of Nebraska at Omaha was identified as the research agent and the cover letter, reminder postcard, and return techniques employed in the survey were basically the same.

The Research Instrument/Key Variables

As with the traditional victim/witness unit, the provision of information is a key service of MARR and was similarly broken out separately from the list of services available and provided (questions 1-6). Services expected but never received was again put in an open-ended format (question 8). This question was then repeated, as it pertained to experiences clients had obtaining services with other agencies/programs (question 23), to further test the gathering of this information beyond the scope of what was attempted in instrument (A).

Since MARR devotes a significant portion of its outreach effort to providing information about parole hearings and notifications, separate questions were included to measure the success

of efforts to contact these victims (question 16). Additional questions were also included about contacts with or by other agencies (question 21), why victims did not receive information or assistance from them (question 22), and about the support groups offered by MARR.

Other variables in the instrument having to do with client satisfaction and victim perceptions and attitudes, which may have been modified slightly to more accurately reflect conditions associated with MARR, were intentionally kept the same as in instruments (A) and (C) to facilitate comparisons between study populations and their contacts with their respective agencies.

Results

a) Response Rate

Of the 975 questionnaires mailed to victims in MARR's 1996 files (975 total cases in the files for that year), 135 were returned for a response rate of 13.85%. An examination of problems with the address fields in the lists obtained from MARR however (see summary/recommendations on page 48), revealed that only 683 of the 975 addresses selected were complete. Assuming that all 292 flawed addresses were undeliverable (as the surveys were mailed bulk-mail they were not forwarded nor returned to the sender, so there is no accurate or reliable count of how many were actually delivered) this would have resulted in a sample of 683 respondents and a response rate of 19.76%. As many of the addresses were shortened by only several characters however, a more reasonable estimate (assuming half of the flawed addresses were undeliverable [146] would have resulted in sample size of 829 and a response rate of 16.28%.

Of the 538 questionnaires, randomly selected from the 1995 files containing 1,353 cases,

65 were returned for a response rate of 12.08% (flawed addresses were eliminated prior to mailing out the 1995 sample). This lower response rate indicates that going back more than one year prior to the initial outreach mailing, in surveying clients at this agency, had a negative impact on returns. Only survey results for the 1996 population of victims are presented in this report.

In contrast to the relatively large volume of inquiry calls about the LPD questionnaire, only about 15 calls were received for the 1996 MARR test. This may be partially explained owing to the fact that MARR is in Omaha and this is a long-distance call to Lincoln. The MARR office did report receiving 10-12 calls during the week the surveys were mailed out, although no formal tracking system was in place. A total of eight replacement surveys were sent to respondents after they received the reminder postcard.

Several of the calls received by the researchers however, provided dramatic evidence of the existence of victims of crimes who felt unserved and neglected by the system and others who needed to be re-directed back into the system for additional assistance. In several instances, victims requested more information and assistance in the questionnaire. Such information was passed on to the agency when the respondent identified him/herself and requested to be contacted.

b) Initial Contacts / Information Provision

Of the 137 returned questionnaires, only 7 respondents (about 5 %) indicated that they were not a crime or abuse victim, or that the crime was minor so they did not complete the survey. Sixteen (about 12 %) of the respondent's indicated that they had not heard of MARR until receiving this questionnaire. These were included in the written comments that were separately made available to the Nebraska Crime Commission.

Sixty percent indicated that they had received the letter and informational brochure while about 40% said they did not receive them or were not sure. Most of the people who received the letter (90%) said the letter and brochure adequately explained the services that MARR could provide them as a crime victim. Eighteen percent of the respondents said they contacted MARR for assistance or information. Of those that indicated reasons for not contacting MARR, the majority felt that they did not need assistance or information.

In describing their need for services as a crime victim, as shown in Table 6, over half felt that they never needed assistance, over one-tenth (12.4 %) realized they could use assistance after being contacted by MARR, and more than 20% knew they needed assistance all along.

Table 6. Need for Assistance

	Number	Percent
Never needed assistance or information	59	52.2 %
Knew needed assistance or information all along	25	21.1 %
Realized could use assistance or information after being contacted by MARR	14	12.4 %
Other	15	13.3 %

As shown in Table 7, many victims responding received information regarding victim rights, issues and options (38). Victims also received information about the status of the case investigation (21), the court system or legal process (20) and specific services available through MARR and other agencies.

Table 7. Type of Information Provided

	Number
Victim rights, issues and options	38
Investigation or status of your case	21
The court system or legal process	20
Specific services available through their and other agencies	19
Other	10

Seventy percent of those indicating whether MARR was helpful in answering questions said they were helpful. The ten responses, including specific questions and comments, were forwarded to the Crime Commission.

c) Services

As shown in question 7 of the survey, the services available through MARR which clients most often used were: notifications about offenders (17), court or legal system information (10), handling a crisis/emergency (9), and witness notification or fees (8). Least used services included obtaining shelter, food, clothing or other basic necessities (0), child care (0), landlord interventions (0), medical care (1), emergency legal service (1), and provision of a cellular telephone to call 911 (1).

Respondents most often cited case status information (other than parole dates) (9) as the service they expected or needed but never received. The other responses included criticisms of the police or court system which were not directly related to MARR.

Seventy percent of the respondents reported having no telephone contact with MARR. The majority that did have phone contact reported having 1-2 contacts and only one person

indicated having 10 or more contacts. About 80% of the respondents indicated they did not spend any time in-person receiving services from MARR, or that the question did not apply to them. Of those that did, most spent two hours or less (14.5%).

Significantly, about one-third of the respondents indicated that MARR contacted them in regards to the parole hearing of the offender in the case. Another third indicated that they were not contacted and a third responded that it did not apply.

d) Staff

Over a third of the respondents rated the staff on empathy, support and professionalism. The ratings for all three were quite high; around 60% indicated that the staff was very empathic, very supportive and very professional; while only a few individuals felt that the staff was not exhibiting these qualities.

e) Support Groups / Referrals

Only five individuals indicated having attended the victim support group through MARR. Of those not attending, more than half felt that they did not need or want to attend and about a third was not aware a support group existed. Only four of the people rated the effectiveness of the support group with the most common response being somewhat effective.

Very few respondents indicated that MARR referred them to any other agency, however, twelve people gave an opinion on the appropriateness of the referral; about three-fourths of those responding felt the referral was appropriate. Significantly, only about 25% indicated that they were contacted by any other victim/witness unit. The Omaha Police Department and the Douglas

County victim/witness programs were the two that respondents mentioned. Ten percent of respondents did obtain information or assistance from these programs. Those that didn't indicated they did not feel they needed additional assistance (70%), did not know of any programs existed (15%) or preferred to work with MARR (8%). Most indicated that they obtained information about notifications on arraignment hearings, bail posting or release from jail and were satisfied with these services

Respondents found out about MARR mainly through the informational letter (36) with referral from the county attorney's office being second (12). Over half of the respondents felt comfortable referring others in need to MARR, over a third were not sure and 11% said they would not be comfortable referring others to MARR.

f) Victimitizations

As shown in Table 8, property crime or theft was the most prevalent type of victimization that prompted assistance (55%). Personal or assaultive crime (not including domestic violence) was reported by 23% of respondents. Only six people indicated they were victims of domestic violence. The crimes resulted in property loss or damage (67), financial loss (50), psychological or emotional injury (45) and physical injury (22).

Table 8. Types of Victimitization

	Number
Personal or assaultive crime (not including domestic violence)	20
Personal or assaultive domestic violence crime	6
Property crime or theft	47
Other	13

g) Demographics

Respondents' ages ranged from 15 to 92 and slightly over half were male. Numerical and percentage breakdowns for age, sex, race, education, marital status, household size, income, and area of the city by zip code are summarized in questions 31 – 38.

If one were to draw a composite of the typical crime victim responding to this questionnaire based on the greatest frequencies or averages for each demographic category, the profile would be: 46 years old , male, white, having had some college, married, living with 3 or more people in their household, having a family income of over \$40,000 and living in zip code area 68164.

Summary/Recommendations

a) The Research Instrument

Overall, the test results for this research instrument showed it to be an effective tool in collecting and tabulating desired information from research subjects. The results also showed that subjects were more clear in evaluating this one agency, unlike the traditional victim/witness unit test. Subjects in this test did not exhibit the same degree of non-responsiveness and confusion, such as commenting on other departmental personnel or aspects of the criminal justice system, which raised some validity concerns about the respondents evaluating the correct agency in that test (see page 23).

In addition, the analysis did not reveal that any particular questions were problematic. The instrument effectively showed significant differences between the test sites in terms of

demographics of the clientele, service provision (especially in relation to parole notifications and providing information about victim rights, issues and options) and victim needs. The survey instrument attempted to evaluate MARR's claim that many of their clientele are dissatisfied with traditional victim/witness agencies, but was unsuccessful however, because of the small resulting sample size indicating involvement with both. A large number of open-ended comments were received however, which were forwarded to the Crime Commission.

Several of the calls received by the researchers, as well as written comments and requests for additional information and assistance, also provided dramatic, anecdotal evidence that victims exist who feel their needs have not been met and who need to be re-directed back into the victim-assistance system. Procedures need to be developed to systematically address such cases in any future research efforts conducted to assess client satisfaction and needs.

b) Response Rate/Methodology

The response rate of 16.28% (see page 42) was only slightly less than the expected acceptable target minimum for the mail surveys using a single follow-up postcard.

Recommendations to improve the response rate and the case-management system to allow for the use of other methods, would basically be the same as for the traditional victim-witness unit test (see pages 24-27).

The research process also revealed some of the typical difficulties which might be expected or encountered when working with grassroots, community-based agencies. MARR (now merged with a previously-existing agency named PULSE) was in a "transitional-crisis" as an agency during a major portion of the study due to the departure of the founder and director. This

individual had been with the agency for about 17 years and was not available to assist with the study after leaving the agency. While the long-time director was present during the field assessment portion of the study, this change left an interim director and volunteer staff unfamiliar with a non-standard, "personalized" computer-software system and client database.

With the assistance of the interim director and later the new director, who were very cooperative, yet unfamiliar with the system, sampling frames were drawn, although with considerable effort and difficulty on the part of the researchers. Problems existed with the address fields (which were not completely written in the database field extracted and thus missing characters) making many of the questionnaires undeliverable. These difficulties negatively impacted the size of the actual sample and thus the response rates in the survey.

c) Further Research and Development

The development of a standardized case-management system may reduce the impacts of situations such as this in the future, where personnel changes coupled with the use of somewhat idiosyncratic software creates problems in continuity. In addition to this site-specific benefit, the broader advantages to grassroots, community-based programs in utilizing such a system would very much be the same as those discussed with regard to the traditional victim/witness units.

As with the traditional victim/witness test, the unavailability of telephone numbers made testing a telephone methodology unworkable, given MARR's procedure of identifying such a large proportion of clients from newspaper accounts. The comparatively low response rate obtained using the mail survey affected the ability of the study and the instrument to assess MARR's claim that many of the clientele are dissatisfied with and underserved by the traditional victim/witness

agencies. This inability was due to the small sample size obtained which had contact with both MARR and other agencies.

Given the impossibility of obtaining an adequate telephone sample frame for clients of this agency, a broader survey of crime victims (utilizing a method which can better control for non-response, such as a telephone survey) perhaps drawn directly from police files, irrespective of contact with any victim-assistance agency, may be necessary to identify gaps in service or underserved populations. Such a study would still omit victims who did not file reports, for one reason or another, but would nevertheless be an avenue which should be explored in subsequent efforts.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE CLIENT SURVEY (B)

The Grassroots/Community-Based Program

*Criminal Justice Department
University of Nebraska Omaha*

Please circle your answer as in this example:

1. Yes
2. No

Shortly after you became a crime victim,

1. Did you receive a letter and informational material from the Murder, Assault, Rape, Robbery (MARR) Victim Assistance Program?

Yes	76	60.3 %	
No	39	31.0 %	(if no, skip to question 3)
Not sure	11	8.7 %	(if not sure, skip to question 3)
n =	126	100.0 %	

2. Did this letter and material explain the services available to you as a crime victim?

Yes	71	89.9 %
No	8	10.1 %
n =	79	100.0 %

3. Did you contact MARR for assistance or information?

Yes	23	18.3%
No	103	81.7%
n =	126	100.0 %

If no, why not? (circle all that apply & skip to question 6) n

I had already been contacted or received assistance through another victim/witness program	6
I did not feel I needed information or assistance	60
I did not feel my needs would be met through MARR	10

4. Did MARR provide you with information about: (circle all that apply)

	<i>n</i>
The investigation or status of your case	21
The court system or legal process	20
Victim rights, issues and options	38
Specific services available through their and other agencies	19
Other	10

5. Was MARR helpful in answering questions you had?

If no, what were your questions? _____

Yes	27	47.4 %
No	11	19.3 %
Does not apply	19	33.3 %
n =	57	100.0 %

6. How would you describe your need for services as a crime victim?

Never felt I needed assistance or information	59	52.2 %
Realized I could use assistance or information after being contacted by MARR	14	12.4 %
Knew I needed assistance and information all along	25	22.1 %
Other	15	13.3 %
n =	113	100.0 %

7. What specific services available through MARR have you used?
(Circle all that apply.)

<i>Assistance obtaining or support with:</i>	<i>n</i>
Medical care	1
Shelter, food, clothing, or other basic necessities	0
Child care	0
Transportation	4
Financial matters	4
Handling a crisis / emergency services or notifications	9
Counseling or support groups	7
On-scene comfort or help	4
Court or legal system orientation	10
Escorting you to court or County Attorney's office	7
Emergency legal service	1
Protection orders	2
Witness notifications or fees	8
Victim compensation, restitution claims or impact statement	9
Notifications about offender arraignment hearing, bail posting or release from jail	17
Insurance claims	4
Cellular telephone to call 911	1
Property return	5
Your landlord (landlord intervention)	0
Your employer (employer intervention)	4
Your utility company or other debtors	2
Crime prevention and making your home safe	2
Other	7

8. As a crime victim, what other services did you expect or need, but never receive?

	<i>n</i>
Complaints with other CJ parts - police, courts	10
Case status information (other than parole dates)	9
Crime prevention information	3
Counseling	2
Court system or legal process information	1
Information about support services like MARR	1
Protection Order	1

9. Altogether, how many times did you have telephone contact with MARR?

0	78	69.9%
1-2	22	19.6%
3-5	7	6.3%
6-9	4	3.6%
10 or more	1	.9%
n =	112	100.0%

10. How much time did you spend with MARR while the services were provided?

No time	28	25.2%
1 hour or less	9	8.1%
1-2 hours	6	5.4%
2-6 hours	3	2.7%
1-2 days	1	.9%
More than 2 days	1	.9%
Does not apply	63	56.8%
n =	111	100.0%

*If you had telephone or face to face contact,
PLEASE RATE THE MARR PERSONNEL IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING:*

EMPATHY – that is, how sensitive were the MARR personnel to your problems? Were they able to see your point of view?

11. I would say the MARR personnel were:

Very empathic	19	43.2%
Somewhat empathic	6	13.6%
No opinion	16	36.4%
Somewhat unempathic	2	4.5%
Very unempathic	1	2.3%
n =	44	100.0%

SUPPORT – that is, did the staff provide sympathy and encouragement during your experience?

12. I would say the staff were:

Very supportive	17	41.5 %
Somewhat supportive	6	14.6 %
No opinion	14	34.1 %
Somewhat unsupportive	1	2.4 %
Very unsupportive	3	7.3 %
n =	43	100.0 %

PROFESSIONALISM – that is, did you get the feeling you were being taken care of by a group of confident, well-trained individuals who knew a great deal about victims?

13. I would say the staff were:

Very professional	22	51.2 %
Somewhat professional	5	11.6 %
No opinion	13	30.2 %
Somewhat unprofessional	0	0.0 %
Very unprofessional	3	7.0 %
n =	43	100.0 %

14. Did you attend the victim support group available through MARR?
If yes, how many times? _____

Yes	5	5.4 %
No	87	94.6 %
n =	92	100.0 %

If no, why not: (if no, skip to question 16)

I did not need or want to attend	40	54.8 %
I could not attend	4	5.5 %
I was not aware one existed	23	31.5 %
Other	6	8.2 %
n =	73	100.0 %

15. If you attended the support group, how would you rate the overall effectiveness of the sessions?

Very effective	1	6.7%
Somewhat effective	3	20.0%
No opinion	11	73.3%
Somewhat ineffective	0	0.0%
Very ineffective	0	0.0%
n =	15	100.0%

16. Did MARR contact you regarding the parole hearing of the offender in your case?

Yes	30	32.6%
No	26	28.3%
Does not apply	36	39.1%
n =	92	100.0%

17. Did MARR refer you to any other agency or specialist for assistance?
If yes, please identify the agency or type of specialist you were referred to: _____

Yes	2	2.4%
No	80	97.6%
n =	82	100.0%

18. How would you rate the overall appropriateness of the referral(s)?

Very appropriate	5	12.8%
Somewhat appropriate	4	10.3%
No opinion	27	69.2%
Somewhat inappropriate	1	2.6%
Very inappropriate	2	5.1%
n =	39	100.0%

19. Would you feel comfortable referring others in need to MARR?

Yes	43	52.4%
No	9	11.0%
Not sure	30	36.6%
n =	82	100.0%

20. How did you find out about MARR?

	<i>n</i>
Radio announcements	0
TV announcements	0
Newspaper ads	3
Brochures in offices	2
Informational letter	36
“Word of mouth”	5
Referred by police	9
Referred by county attorney office	12
Other	23

21. Were you contacted by any other victim / witness programs?

Yes	29	26.6 %
No	80	73.4 %
n =	109	100.0 %

If yes, which ones?

	n
Omaha Police Department V/W Unit	16
Douglas County V/W Program	15
YWCA Domestic Violence Program	0
Other	4

22. Did you obtain information or assistance from any of these other victim witness programs?

Yes	10	9.9 %
No	91	90.1 %
n =	101	100.0 %

If no, why not: (if no, skip to question 25)

I did not feel I needed additional assistance or information	33	68.8 %
I did not feel my needs would be met by these other programs	1	2.1 %
I preferred to work with MARR	4	8.3 %
Other	10	20.8 %
n =	48	100.0 %

23. What specific services available through these other programs have you used?
(Circle all that apply.)

<i>Assistance obtaining or support with:</i>	<i>n</i>
Medical care	1
Shelter, food, clothing, or other basic necessities	0
Child care	0
Transportation	2
Financial matters	3
Handling a crisis / emergency services or notifications	4
Counseling or support groups	4
On-scene comfort or help	5
Court or legal system orientation	5
Escorting you to court or County Attorney's office	4
Emergency legal service	0
Protection orders	1
Witness notifications or fees	1
Victim compensation, restitution claims or impact statement	3
Notifications about offender arraignment hearing, bail posting or release from jail	10
Insurance claims	2
Cellular telephone to call 911	1
Property return	5
Your landlord (landlord intervention)	0
Your employer (employer intervention)	2
Your utility company or other debtors	1
Crime prevention and making your home safe	6
Other	3

24. Overall, how satisfied were you with the services or assistance you received from these other victim assistance programs?

Very satisfied	10	26.3%
Somewhat satisfied	6	15.8%
No opinion	15	39.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	5.3%
Very dissatisfied	5	13.2%
n =	38	100.0%

25. What type of victimization prompted you to seek assistance?

Personal or assaultive crime (not including domestic violence)	20	23.3 %
Personal or assaultive domestic violence crime	6	7.0 %
Property crime or theft	47	54.6 %
Other	13	15.1 %
n =	86	100.0 %

26. Did the crime of which you were a victim result in:
(circle all that apply)

	<i>n</i>
Physical injury to yourself or another	22
Psychological or emotional injury to yourself or another	45
Financial loss	50
Property loss or damage	67
Other	3

YOUR CHARACTERISTICS (will be used for statistical analysis only):

27. What is your age?

15 - 19	4	3.3 %
20 - 34	24	19.5 %
35 - 49	47	38.2 %
50 - 74	45	33.3 %
75 - 92	3	2.4 %
n =	123	100.0 %

28. What is your sex?

Male	64	52.0 %
Female	59	48.0 %
n =	123	100.0 %

29. What is your race or ethnic background?

White	109	90.1 %
African American / Black	8	6.6 %
Asian	0	0.0 %
Hispanic	2	1.7 %
Native American	1	0.8 %
Other	1	0.8 %
n =	121	100.0 %

30. Please check the category which describes your highest level of education:

6th grade or less	1	0.8 %
7th - 11th grade	10	8.2 %
High school graduate or GED	31	25.4 %
Some college	42	34.4 %
College degree	23	18.9 %
Advanced college degree	15	12.3 %
n =	122	100.0 %

31. Are you:

Single	27	22.1 %
Married	67	54.9 %
Divorced	17	13.9 %
Widowed	10	8.2 %
Separated	1	0.9 %
n =	122	100.0 %

32. How many people live with you in your home or apartment?

Live alone	23	19.2 %
1 other person	32	26.7 %
2 other people	23	19.2 %
3 or more other people	42	35.0 %
n =	120	100.0 %

33. Of these categories, which describes your total family income?

Under \$10,000	15	13.3 %
\$10,000 to \$20,000	17	15.0 %
\$20,000 to \$40,000	24	21.2 %
Over \$40,000	56	49.5 %
n=	113	100.0 %

34. What is your zip code?

44312	1	.8 %
46811	1	.8 %
51501	2	1.6 %
51503	1	.8 %
51542	1	.8 %
68005	2	1.6 %
68007	2	1.6 %
68008	1	.8 %
68015	2	1.6 %
68022	3	2.5 %
68028	1	.8 %
68037	1	.8 %
68046	1	.8 %
68069	1	.8 %
68102	3	2.5 %
68104	6	4.9 %
68105	2	1.6 %
68106	4	3.3 %
68107	5	4.1 %
68108	2	1.6 %
68110	3	2.5 %
68111	7	5.7 %
68112	4	3.3 %
68114	2	1.6 %
68116	1	.8 %
68117	2	1.6 %
68118	2	1.6 %
68122	4	3.3 %
68124	5	4.1 %
68127	2	1.6 %
68128	1	.8 %
68130	1	.8 %
68131	6	4.9 %

68132	2	1.6 %
68134	5	4.1 %
68135	5	4.1 %
68137	3	2.5 %
68138	2	1.6 %
68144	3	2.5 %
68147	1	.8 %
68152	1	.8 %
68154	6	4.9 %
68164	11	9.0 %
68184	1	.8 %
n=	122	100.0 %

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return this form right away.

(C) The Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program

Field Study Background/Implications for Client Evaluations

The Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center (RSACC) of Lincoln addresses the specialized needs of crime victims faced with the traumatic aftermath of sexual assault, domestic violence and incest. These needs are primarily met through three separate, but over-lapping, avenues: 1) a 24-hour crisis line, 2) in-person advocacy contacts with clients, and 3) both short- and long-term counseling and support groups.

Over 16,000 telephone calls are fielded annually through the crisis line, about 2,200 persons are served through in-person advocacy efforts and assistance, and about 300 persons are involved in long-term counseling and support groups. About 2,000 case files are provided to RSACC per year (170 per month) by the Lincoln Police Department via the Victim/Witness Unit. These victims receive an informational letter and brochure explaining services available through RSACC, but no telephone outreach effort is made in order to protect domestic violence victims from possible additional harm that such a call could trigger.

Victims are encouraged to contact RSACC through the crisis line or to walk-in to the office for services. Information obtained in a previous study conducted for RSACC, revealed that about 20% of callers to the crisis line cited the informational letters and materials sent from RSACC as the source of their familiarity with RSACC. Callers and walk-ins seeking information, assistance and other services are, in cases where follow-up is required, asked if it is "O.K.," i.e., do they feel it is safe and acceptable, to have RSACC contact them by phone in the future; this information then being noted in the case file for that client.

The issue of potential additional harm to victims and the seriousness with which staff at

RSACC rightly treat this subject, has several important implications for conducting client satisfaction and need evaluations. Several efforts to obtain some of this type of information for RSACC utilizing different methodologies have met with mixed results owing to the difficult nature of the task and the complexity and diversity of the services provided by RSACC, further complicated by the critical necessity to help keep victims who often are in danger, as safe as possible.

Such considerations have largely determined RSACC's policy not to conduct follow-up telephone calls to victims, relying rather on victims receiving written materials and then contacting RSACC. While every outreach holds increased risk, the possibility of a mail survey was considered but dismissed owing to the high mobility of domestic violence victims; over 40% of the initial outreach efforts are returned to RSACC with address change notifications. More importantly, the importance of reducing potential risk and real danger for clients supersedes the importance of gaining client satisfaction and need information via telephone or mail methodologies at this point. Other methods to survey the entire RSACC client population, relying on client initiation of contacts (such as calling an 800 number at their convenience or completing a survey during a walk-in or returning it at a later time) are more reasonable and feasible.

Other factors also need to be considered however, with regard to the client population and the quality of information provided by clients, in a determination of the actual study population and methods employed. Early in the process of service provision, when clients are most "in crisis" during the first contacts with the agency for example, clients have not received any of the full-range of services available and therefore would be unable to assess, at this time, their satisfaction or the degree to which their needs were met. This factor is of critical importance because a

majority of walk-ins pay only one visit to RSACC and are never seen or heard from again.

Of related importance would be the fact that clients who are "in-crisis" at this time, by definition, would not be in a "normal" state of being and therefore one would have to question the validity of their responses at this time. An analogous situation would be asking a client with a broken arm in an emergency room, to evaluate his satisfaction with the services he/she is receiving while his bone is being re-set. For all these reasons, i.e., confidentiality of case-file records, potential for harm, high mobility of this population, the small percentage with more than one agency contact, the mental and physical state of the client, and the time frame of service provision, the pilot study of this instrument should focus on a sub-population of RSACC clients, namely those that are out or nearly out of crisis, but still in contact with RSACC.

This target population could potentially be a combination of clients with three or more contacts with the RSACC office and attendees of the various mid- and long-term counseling and support groups offered at RSACC. These clients will be able to evaluate more-fully the entire range of services provided, including encounters with the criminal justice system, as well as their early experiences, from perhaps a more balanced, objective, and "normal" state of mind or perspective. While this population is not representative of all RSACC clients, the constraints of the situation (as detailed above) make this the best alternative and a logical starting point. Insights gleaned from a study of this sub-population may lead to the development new methods with which to study, more completely, the entire RSACC client base.

Methodology

In this pilot-testing of the survey instrument, attendees of five ongoing support groups were surveyed via a self-administered written questionnaire (Instrument C--see pages 78 to 88) distributed by RSACC staff and completed on-site at the end of each group meeting during the first two weeks of April, 1997.

The five groups were comprised of two domestic violence groups, two sexual assault and trauma groups and one parenting group. The groups varied in size from between two and 15 participants and had a total of 36 attendees. A collection box was provided for study participants to turn in completed questionnaires, to offer them some additional physical assurance that the results were confidential and would not be read by the group facilitators or agency personnel, about whom they were giving their comments and perceptions.

The Research Instrument/Key Variables

As with the other approaches for the Traditional Victim/Witness Program and the Grassroots/Community-Based Program, an important part of the provision of services has to do with communication and the delivery of information. Questions included as part of this section related to the evaluation of the informational letter and materials, initial contacts with the agency (questions 1-4), verification of whether personnel asked if it was "O.K." to contact them at home (questions 5-6), and the type of information provided (question 16).

Clients are also asked to evaluate the effectiveness of crisis-line and advocacy personnel in helping them obtain needed services (questions 9 and 12), as well as other questions focusing more sharply on client perceptions of the effectiveness of the different types of counseling and

support groups offered at RSACC (questions 13-15) and referrals (questions 24-26). Clients are also asked about their contacts with other victim assistance programs, if any, and their satisfaction with them (questions 27-29).

Questions relating to the type of services provided and obtained, as well as those expected or needed but not provided, closely mirror those used in the other instrument variations for comparison purposes. One exception is that "Information I needed as a victim" was included as a service in question 19, to test against the other versions. The type of victimization question was also modified to reflect the specialized nature of the clientele.

Overall, this variation of the survey instrument differs from the other two primarily because of the more diverse structure and larger size of the agency, as well as the more complex nature of the service provision. These factors are reflected in an emphasis on questions relating to the operation of the crisis line, safety issues, in-person advocacy efforts, and a highly-differentiated and specialized system of counseling and support groups.

The choice of a different methodology used in the distribution and collection of questionnaires and the targeting of a sub-population of RSACC clients for study, arose primarily as a result of the confidentiality of records and related safety issues, as well as concerns about the clients' ability to validly evaluate services during a crisis. The decision to initially target clients with three or more agency contacts and those in on-going support groups reflects these concerns.

A major result from this test effort may not only be the important information gathered on this specialized type of program and domestic violence and sexual assault victims, but also greater insights into how to study the broader victim population, including victims in crisis and those that did not contact RSACC or any other agency at all.

Results

a) Response Rate

No attendees refused to complete the questionnaire, so the completion rate was virtually 100% based on the notes provided by the staff who administered the survey, which showed the total number of group participants to be 36, exactly matching the number of completed questionnaires. The tracking mechanisms were not detailed enough however, to determine for certain that everyone in all five groups completed the survey. Although the groups were virtually unchanged during the two-week study period, there may have been one or two new members; staff noted that one member had to leave the group early and therefore did not participate in the survey in one of the groups. Some of the five groups had overlapping membership, so a small number of individuals may have completed the questionnaire in a previous group.

The instructions to group facilitators (see Appendix D) also provided space for comments or reaction to the survey by the facilitators and group members. Respondents were encouraged to contact the research coordinator or their facilitator if they had questions or comments about the questionnaire. No comments by participants were recorded, while one facilitator made comment about the amount of detail in the questionnaire.

b) Initial Contacts/Information Provision

Under half (40%) of the respondent's indicated that they received a letter and informational material from RSACC. The fact that this study population is comprised exclusively of members of support groups, the largest proportion of whom (13) were referred by counselors however, may explain the relatively low percentage who received them. Of those that did receive

the material, nearly all (93%) said that it explained the services available to them as a crime victim.

Others became aware of RSACC through friends or family (6), or through “word of mouth” (5), police referral, and the informational letter (3). "Written-in" responses included being informed by a shelter (2) or hospital staff (2). Half of the respondents replied that they first contacted RSACC by calling the crisis line or other telephone number. One fourth replied they walked into the office and another fourth had first contact through a support group.

Significantly, nearly all (88%) of the respondents indicated that it was okay to contact them by the telephone and nearly half reported that RSACC asked for permission to call. A third reported that RSACC did not ask permission to call and 20 % were not sure.

In describing their need for services as a crime victim, as shown in Table 9, over half indicated that they knew they needed assistance and information all along. Significantly, a third indicated that they realized they could use assistance after being contacted by or receiving information from RSACC. A small number indicated they never felt they needed assistance.

Table 9. Need for Assistance

	Number	Percent
Never needed assistance or information	2	6 %
Realized could use assistance or information after being contacted by RSACC	20	57 %
Knew needed assistance or information all along	13	37 %

As shown in table 10, RSACC provided a majority of the respondents (22 out of 36) with information about victim rights, issues and options, and information about specific services

through RSACC and other agencies. Eleven of the respondents indicated that they received information on the court system or legal process and five received information about the case investigation. The open-ended responses primarily indicated providing support and assistance with coping issues.

Table 10. Type of Information Provided

	Number
Victim rights, issues and options	5
Investigation or status of your case	11
The court system or legal process	22
Specific services available through their and other agencies	22
Other	9

Nearly all of the respondents indicated that RSACC was helpful in answering any questions they had (89%). Only one person stated that they were not helpful, while three people said they did not have questions.

c) Services

As shown in question 19 (see questionnaire for the complete listing), the services available through RSACC which the 36 clients used most often included: counseling or support groups (33), handling a crisis / emergency services or notifications (15), court or legal system orientation (14), child care (10). Least used services, some of which RSACC does not provide but which were included in the survey for testing and continuity purposes, were notifications about offender arraignment hearing, bail posting or release from jail (1), property return (1), insurance claims (0), and landlord intervention (0).

A fourth of the respondents indicated having no telephone contact with RSACC. Three-

fifths (58%) had between 1-5 contacts and 14% indicated having ten or more contacts.

Significantly, nearly half indicated that the phone conversations lasted one hour or more. The majority had 10 or more phone contacts.

Estimating the time with staff was problematic for this sample because all respondents had attended 2 hour support groups (maybe multiple groups) for differing time periods and many were also involved in individual counseling. Questions 10 and 11 were initially constructed in earlier versions of the questionnaire, to measure time with advocacy staff as differentiated from time in individual counseling sessions and support groups. Thus the questions did not take the issue of support groups into account and respondents encountered difficulty in assessing time with staff, and so indicated when answering. Therefore, the most accurate description of time could be made by referring to the number of contacts and assuming many of those are 2 hour support groups.

Very few respondents listed other services that they expected or needed, but did not receive. Additional counseling, especially for family and friends, was listed twice and a personal escort to collect personal possessions from home was also mentioned.

d) Staff

Responses to the effectiveness of crisis-line personnel and staff involved in face-to-face contacts were extremely positive. Everyone surveyed indicated that the RSACC staff was empathic, supportive, professional and effective.

e) Support Groups / Referrals

All but one of the respondents indicated attending support groups or in-house counseling. The support group most often attend was the Domestic Violence Women's Group (23). The Sexual Trauma/Assault Group (16) and individual counseling by appointment (14) were also attended by many respondents. Only one of the respondents had attended the drop-in parenting support group. Everyone attending the sessions indicated they were effective.

About 40% of the people indicated that RSACC referred them to other agencies. The two listed were shelters like the Friendship Home (2) and long term therapy (3). All respondents felt the referrals were very appropriate. Thirty-four out of thirty-five respondents said they would feel comfortable referring others in need to RSACC.

One-fourth of the respondents reported having contact with other victim/witness units. The two units with which contact was made were the Lincoln Police Department Victim/Witness Unit and the County Attorney's office. Half of those having contact did utilize services from these units and were satisfied with them.

f) Victimizations

The types of victimization that prompted respondents to seek help included: domestic violence or abuse (24), child abuse/incest (13), sexual assault, rape or battery (12). [Note: it was intended that "battery" be dropped from the sexual assault/rape category, but it was inadvertently left in]. There were three "other" responses that indicated psychological abuse as an additional type of victimization (see question 30).

g) Demographics

All of the respondents to this questionnaire were female, which is not surprising since nearly all of RSACC's clientele are female. All of them were also white and ranging from 16 to 68 years of age.

If one were to draw a composite of the typical client in the support groups, based on the greatest frequencies or averages for each category, the profile would be: a 35 year old, white, female, who had some college experience, was divorced, lived with one other person, had a total family income under \$10,000 and lived zip code was 68502.

Summary/Recommendations

a) The Research Instrument

Overall, the test results for this research instrument showed it to be a very effective tool in collecting and tabulating desired information from research subjects. The results also showed that subjects were more clear in evaluating this agency, than either the traditional victim/witness unit or the community-based agency. Subjects in this test exhibited the lowest degree of non-responsiveness, such as commenting on other departmental personnel or aspects of the criminal justice system, which raised some validity concerns about the respondents evaluating the correct agency in one of the tests.

In addition, the analysis revealed that only two of the questions were problematic. These were questions (10 and 11) related to the time clients spent with staff and some confusion arose about whether this included time spent in the support groups. The instrument effectively showed significant differences between this and the other test sites in terms of demographics of the

clientele, service provision (especially in relation to support groups, initial contacts with the agency, and safety issues) and victim needs.

The survey instrument attempted to gather additional information from clients about whether it was acceptable to be contacted by telephone due to safety concerns and was successful in this regard. Almost 90% said that it was okay to be contacted by telephone at the time of their initial contact with the RSACC.

b) Response Rate/Methodology

Virtually 100% of the respondents in selected support groups agreed to participate in the in-house distribution of the survey and successfully completed the questionnaire. None of the subjects registered any negative comments or responses about the survey or questionnaire when given the opportunity to do so in the facilitator's instructions.

Overall, the methodology yielded the best information, from among the three test sites, about the selected study population, given that non-response and therefore questions of representativeness and confidence levels are not issues. The problem is that attendees of support groups are only a small portion of RSACC's clientele. Limiting client evaluations to these small groups leaves great gaps in knowledge about the majority of clients, their experiences, and perceptions.

Callers who only received information and assistance through the crisis line or the regular RSACC number and clients who only had contact with advocacy or individual counselors or staff, who comprise the vast majority of RSACC's cases, were not included in the study. Beyond this, there may be an even broader population of sexual assault/domestic violence victims who may

have had no victim-agency contact at all, either through the police department or with RSACC, about which very little is known.

c) Further Research and Development

Ongoing efforts to expand the collection of client satisfaction and needs information from a broader population of domestic abuse and sexual assault victims should continue, both within specialized agencies set up to handle this population and beyond. Confidentiality and safety concerns pose the largest obstacles to further study, but are not insurmountable.

At the outset of the study, based on the field assessment, the target population at RSACC was to include clients with three (3) or more contacts with agency personnel and those involved with individual counseling, as well as those in support groups. Such an approach was primarily geared to gather information from clients who were less likely to be "in crisis" and better able to give useful feedback to the agency.

Concerns raised by RSACC staff, during the research process and development of the instrument, about the difficulty of identifying such suitable participants led to the compromise decision to survey only those in the support groups. Other issues having to do with the number of studies of sexual assault/domestic violence victims conducted at RSACC, the feeling among some of the staff that their population may be currently over-studied, and that staff time is already "stretched too thin" may have also contributed to the decision to limit the study population.

The development of an automated case-management and database system could prove helpful in future and ongoing efforts to obtain evaluations from and information about a larger client population, perhaps reducing the need for many such "ad hoc" studies. Information about

victim needs, client service-satisfaction, and outcome assessments would be much more readily obtainable from agencies utilizing such a computer-based client tracking system.

With such a case-management system, agencies could integrate and systematize current information gathering efforts by tracking and identifying victims by service needs, type of harm caused by the victimization, demographic characteristics, and also the types and quantity of services provided (the results of which are required by and reported to the Nebraska Crime Commission on a monthly basis). Individual case files containing this information could be systematically obtained and recorded through the use of standardized client in-take forms upon initial contact, would also include the mailing address of victims, telephone numbers, and other case-related or service-provision information.

Inclusion of information about whether it is safe and acceptable for clients to be contacted at home or elsewhere, collected at the time of the intake and included in the client file, could be a key to reaching a larger segment of the client population and gaining important feedback about specific needs, service provision and eventual outcomes.

Moreover, the broader advantages to sexual assault/domestic violence programs in utilizing such a system could be very much the same as those discussed with regard to the traditional victim/witness unit and community-based programs. The result could potentially be a more efficient system for 1) ongoing monitoring and analysis of overall service demand and provision, and 2) a tool used on a daily basis to actually outreach to individual clients and deliver services. In addition, in-house distribution and evaluation methods, similar to those used in the support groups, could be effectively developed as another avenue to obtain information from the larger population of "non-crisis" walk-in, advocacy, and individual counseling clients.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE CLIENT SURVEY (C)

The Domestic Violence / Sexual Assault Program

*Criminal Justice Department
University of Nebraska Omaha*

Please circle your answer as in this example:

1. Yes
2. No

1. Did you receive a letter and informational material from the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center of Lincoln (RSACC).

Yes	13	36 %	
No	22	61 %	(if no, skip to question 3)
Not sure	1	3 %	(if not sure, skip to question 3)
n =	36	100 %	

2. Did this letter and material explain the services available to you as a victim?

Yes	13	93 %
No	1	7 %
n =	14	100 %

3. How did you find out about RSACC?

	<i>n</i>
Informational letter or brochure	3
Telephone book	5
Referred by police	4
Referred by County Attorney's office	1
Referred by counselor	13
"Word of mouth"	5
Newspaper, TV, or radio ads	1
Presentation by RSACC	0
Friends or family	6
Shelter	2
Hospital staff	2
Other	3

4. Did you first contact RSACC by

Calling the crisis line or other telephone number	17	49 %
Walking into their office	8	23 %
Support group	7	20 %
Other	3	8 %
n =	35	100 %

5. Did RSACC ask if they could contact you by telephone?

Yes	16	46 %
No	12	34 %
Not sure	7	20 %
n =	35	100 %

6. Was it okay with you to be contacted by telephone?

Yes	28	88 %
No	3	9 %
Not sure	1	3 %
n =	32	100 %

7. Altogether, how many times did you have telephone contact with RSACC during the last year?

0	9	26 %
1-2	10	29 %
3-5	10	29 %
6-9	1	2 %
10 or more	5	14 %
n =	35	100 %

8. Combining all of your telephone contacts, approximately how much time did you spend on the phone with someone with RSACC?

1-10 minutes	10	37%
11-30 minutes	5	19%
31-59 minutes	0	0%
1 hour or more	12	44%
n =	27	100%

9. How effective were the crisis-line or telephone personnel in helping you obtain the services you needed?

Very effective	27	90%
Somewhat effective	2	7%
No opinion	1	3%
Somewhat ineffective	0	0%
Very ineffective	0	0%
n =	30	100%

10. Altogether, how many times did you have face to face contact with someone at RSACC during the last year?

0	1	3%
1-2	2	6%
3-5	5	14%
6-9	7	19%
10 or more	21	58%
n =	36	100%

11. Combining all the visits, approximately how much time did you spend with the RSACC staff while individual counseling or other services were provided?

_____ Minutes or _____ Hours or _____ Days

Results for this question not an accurate depiction. People are attending two hour support groups near the number of times reported in question 10.

12. Overall, how effective were staff members you had face to face contact with in helping you obtain the services you needed?

Very effective	31	91 %
Somewhat effective	3	9 %
No opinion	0	0 %
Somewhat ineffective	0	0 %
Very ineffective	0	0 %
n =	34	100 %

Comments about staff members or service provision: _____

13. Did you attend any of the victim support groups or in-house counseling sessions at RSACC?

Yes	35	97 %	(if no, skip to question 14)
No	1	3 %	
n =	36	100 %	

14. Which groups or counseling sessions did you attend? (circle all that apply)

	<i>N</i>
Individual counseling by appointment	14
Domestic Violence Women's Group	23
Sexual Trauma / Assault Group	16
Positively Angry Workshop	6
Parenting Support Group (drop in)	1
Parenting Workshop	3
Other	2

15. Overall, how effective would you say the support groups have been in helping you as a victim?

Very effective	30	86 %
Somewhat effective	5	14 %
No opinion	0	0 %
Somewhat ineffective	0	0 %
Very ineffective	0	0 %
n =	35	100 %

Comments about support groups: _____

16. Did the RSACC provide you with information about: (circle all that apply)

	<i>n</i>
The investigation or status of your case	5
The court system or legal process	11
Victim rights, issues and options	22
Specific services available through their and other agencies	22
Other	9

17. Was the RSACC helpful in answering questions you had?

Yes	31	89 %
No	1	3 %
Does not apply	3	8 %
n =	35	100 %

18. How would you describe your need for services as a victim?

Never felt I needed assistance or information	2	6 %
Realized I could use assistance or information after being contacted by RSACC	13	37 %
Knew I needed assistance and information all along	20	57 %
Other	0	0 %
n =	35	100 %

19. What specific services available through RSACC have you used?
 (Circle all that apply.)

<i>Assistance obtaining or support with:</i>	<i>n</i>
Medical care	2
Shelter, food, clothing, or other basic necessities	6
Child care	10
Transportation	2
Financial matters	3
Handling a crisis / emergency services or notifications	15
Counseling or support groups	33
On-scene comfort or help	8
Court or legal system orientation	14
Escorting you to court or County Attorney's office	8
Emergency legal service	6
Protection orders	5
Witness notifications or fees	7
Victim compensation, restitution claims or impact statement	2
Notifications about offender arraignment hearing, bail posting or release from jail	1
Insurance claims	0
Cellular telephone to call 911	2
Property return	1
Your landlord (landlord intervention)	0
Your employer (employer intervention)	2
Your utility company or other debtors	2
Crime prevention and making your home safe	3
Other	1

20. What other services did you expect or need but never receive?

If you had telephone or face to face contact,

PLEASE RATE THE RSACC PERSONNEL IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING:

EMPATHY – *that is, how sensitive were the RSACC staff to your problems? Were they able to see your point of view?*

21. I would say the RSACC staff were:

Very empathic	34	97%
Somewhat empathic	1	3%
No opinion	0	0%
Somewhat unempathic	0	0%
Very unempathic	0	0%
n =	35	100%

SUPPORT – *that is, did the staff provide sympathy and encouragement during your experience?*

22. I would say the staff were:

Very supportive	34	94%
Somewhat supportive	2	6%
No opinion	0	0%
Somewhat unsupportive	0	0%
Very unsupportive	0	0%
n =	36	100%

PROFESSIONALISM – *that is, did you get the feeling you were being taken care of by a group of confident, well-trained individuals who knew a great deal about victims?*

23. I would say the staff were:

Very professional	32	89%
Somewhat professional	4	11%
No opinion	0	0%
Somewhat unprofessional	0	0%
Very unprofessional	0	0%
n =	36	100%

24. Did RSACC refer you to any other agency or specialist for assistance?

Yes	11	37 %	(if no skip to question 24)
No	19	63 %	
n =	30	100 %	

If yes, please identify the agency or type of specialist you were referred to:

	<i>N</i>
Shelters (Friendship Home)	2
Long term therapy	3

25. How would you rate the overall appropriateness of the referral(s)?

Very appropriate	15	100 %
Somewhat appropriate	0	0 %
No opinion	0	0 %
Somewhat inappropriate	0	0 %
Very inappropriate	0	0 %
n =	15	15

26. Would you feel comfortable referring others in need to RSACC?

Yes	34	97 %
No	1	3 %
Not sure	0	0 %
n =	35	100 %

27. Did you have contact with any other victim assistance programs?

Yes	9	26 %	(if no, skip to question 28)
No	26	74 %	
n =	35	100 %	

If yes, which ones?

	n
Lincoln Police Department Victim Witness Unit	24
County Attorney's office	5
Other	0

28. Did you utilize their services?

Yes	4	44 %
No	5	56 %
n =	9	100 %

29. Overall, how satisfied were you with the services or assistance you received from these other victim assistance programs?

Very satisfied	9	53 %
Somewhat satisfied	5	30 %
No opinion	3	18 %
Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0 %
Very dissatisfied	0	0 %
n =	17	100 %

30. What type of victimization prompted you to seek assistance?

	<i>N</i>
Domestic Violence or Abuse	24
Sexual Assault, Rape or Battery	12
Child Abuse / Incest	13
Other	3

YOUR CHARACTERISTICS (will be used for statistical analysis only):

31. What is your age?

15 - 19	1	3 %
20 - 34	18	51 %
35 - 49	13	37 %
50 - 74	3	9 %
75 - 92	0	0 %
n =	35	100 %

32. What is your sex?

Male	0	0 %
Female	36	100 %
n =	36	100 %

33. What is your race or ethnic background?

White	36	100%
African American / Black	0	0%
Asian	0	0%
Hispanic	0	0%
Native American	0	0%
Other	0	0%
n =	36	100%

34. Please check the category which describes your highest level of education:

6th grade or less	0	0%
7th - 11th grade	1	3%
High school graduate or GED	6	17%
Some college	17	47%
College degree	10	28%
Advanced college degree	2	5%
n =	36	100.0%

35. Are you:

Single	9	25%
Married	7	19%
Divorced	11	31%
Widowed	1	3%
Separated	8	22%
n =	36	100%

36. How many people live with you in your home or apartment?

Live alone	7	19%
1 other person	12	33%
2 other people	6	17%
3 or more other people	11	31%
n =	36	100%

37. Of these categories, which describes your personal income?

No income	2	6%
Under \$10,000	13	36 %
\$10,000 to \$20,000	10	28%
\$20,000 to \$40,000	10	28 %
Over \$40,000	1	2%
n =	36	100 %

38. What is your zip code (optional)?

68065	1	3.1%
68310	1	3.1 %
68317	1	3.1%
68333	1	3.1 %
68360	1	3.1%
68502	7	21.9 %
68503	2	6.3%
68504	1	3.1 %
68506	2	6.3%
68507	3	9.4 %
68508	3	9.4%
68510	1	3.1 %
68512	1	3.1%
68516	2	6.3 %
68521	3	9.4%
68522	1	3.1 %
68635	1	3.1%
n =	32	100 %

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return this form right away.



APPENDIX A: FIELD STUDY SITES



Omaha Police Department Victim-Witness Unit
Joan McDonald, Director
505 South 15th Street
Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 444-4970

Douglas County Attorney's Office Victim-Witness Unit
Neill Everitt, Director
428 Hall of Justice
Omaha, NE 68183
(402) 444-4900

M.A.R.R. Victim Assistance Program
Eric Sheers, Executive Director
542 Elkwood Mall
42nd & Center
Omaha, NE 68105
(402) 341-6277

YWCA Woman Against Violence
Mary Larson, Director
222 South 29th Street
Omaha, NE 68131
(402) 345-6555

Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center
Marcee Metzger, Director
2545 N Street
Lincoln, NE 68510
(402) 476-2110

Lincoln Police Department Victim/Witness Unit
JoAnna Svoboda, Administrator
233 South 10th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 441-7181

Lincoln County Attorney's Office Victim Assistance Program
Kim Ahrens, Director
North Platte, NE 69101
(308) 534-4350



APPENDIX B: FIELD ASSESSMENT FORM



- II.3. What do they do?
- II.4. What is their educational background? (Just those with direct client contact?)
- II.5. What sort of training do you/your employees receive ?/in-service?/(do they have opportunities for the training they need?/other?
- II.6. How many volunteers does the agency use?
- II.7. What do they do?
- II.8. How are the volunteers trained?/in-service?/other?
- II.9. What are the agency=s office hours?
- II.10. Can clients contact agency personnel after regular hours?
- II.11. How?
- II.12. How frequently does that happen?
- II.13. What is your (total annual) budget?
- II.14. What are your budget sources? (How much of your budget comes from:
- | | |
|---------|-------|
| Federal | _____ |
| State | _____ |
| City | _____ |
| County | _____ |
| Private | _____ |
- II.15. What other criminal justice and community agencies are you most often in contact with?
- II.16. What is the basis of your relationship with the others?

- II.17. Do you get referrals from other agencies? (If yes, how many in an average month from each agency? Ask this here or down in client section?)
- II.18. How does the referral process work?
- II.19. Do you make referrals to other agencies?
- II.20. To which agencies do you make referrals to most often?
- II.21. Why?
- II.22. How does that process work?
- II.23. About how many clients/month would you estimate are referred?

III. CLIENTS

- III.1. Who are your clients? (Generally, how would you describe your "average" client? Do we want to get demographic information here on clients: gender, age, race, etc?)
- III.2. What are the most important victim needs that your agency addresses?
- III.3. Are there other/additional/different services they need?
- III.4. How many clients does the agency serve ___ annually?
monthly?
weekly?
- III.5. Is client demand fairly constant throughout the year or are there peaks? (Does this affect service delivery?)

III.6. How are client needs assessed, if at all?

III.7. How do clients come into contact with the organization?

III.8. Do you get referrals from other agencies? (How many from each agency?)

III.9. Which agencies?

III.10. Do you get referrals from other clients?

III.11. Do you initiate contacts potential clients or do clients initiate contacts with you or both? (

III.13. What is the major source of clients for your agency?

III.14. What is the typical process when a client first “comes into contact with the agency ?
(Could you walk me through the process of what a typical new client would encounter step by step?)

III.15. What is the in-take procedure?

III.16. How do you make a determination of what services needed?

III.17. How are clients assigned to staff/volunteer for assistance?

III.18. How are the clients referred to another agency(if they are)?

III.19. How long is a client typically served by the agency? (Are certain types clients, with different needs for example, typically served for different lengths of time? Are there different service paths for different types of clients? Is there a limit to the length of time services can be provided to a client?)

IV. CASE MANAGEMENT

IV.1. What (are the criteria that define) an Active client/case?

IV.2. When is a case considered opened/ (i.e. when is) a person considered a client of the agency?

IV.3. When is a case considered closed/ a client terminated?

IV.4. What can/should a client expect from the agency? (Probe from "other services" list?)

IV.5. When clients drop out, is there any follow-up? (How many drop out in a given month?)

IV.6. What does follow-up consist of?

IV.7. How is follow-up done?

IV.8. By whom?

IV.9. If a client drops out and then returns, is that considered a new or continuing case (How

often does that happen?

V. CASE RECORDS

V.1. How are client records kept?

V.2. What sort of information is kept in the records system?

V.3. Is there a general in-take form? (Intake form may be different from case management forms).

V.4. [Get copy of form]

VI. CLIENT EVALUATION AND SATISFACTION

VI.1. Is there any procedure in place used by clients evaluate services received?

VI.2. If so, what is it?

VI.3. [If a form, get a copy of the form]

VI.4. Given the kinds of clients you serve and the kinds of services you provide, what do you think would be the best method of getting client evaluation?

VI.5. What do think should be evaluated?

VI.6. Quality of services provided by the agency?

VI.7. Timeliness of services provided?

VI.8. Breadth/extent of services provided?

VI.15. In what ways is/would client evaluation be useful to your agency?

VI.16. What are the standards used to determine Agood/effective@ services in this kind of agency?

VII. CONCLUSION

VII.1. What are your greatest needs in this agency (to improve service delivery?)?

VII.2. How can those be met?

VII.3. As you look at the entire scheme of things in the community, do you see any duplication of services for your clients? (If your program suddenly "went out of business" or ceased to exist for some reason, would there be anywhere else your clients could get the services you provide?). (Should we avoid using terminology "duplication of services" due to negative connotations?)

VII.4. What other agencies offer the same services you do?

VII.5. Why do clients choose your agency rather than another?



APPENDIX C: COVER LETTER / FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD



STATE OF NEBRASKA



E. Benjamin Nelson
Governor

NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Allen L. Curtis
Executive Director
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94946
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4946
Phone (402) 471-2194

Dear Concerned Citizen,

This booklet contains questions about your needs as a domestic abuse or crime victim and the services you may have received through a Victim/Witness program.

It has been prepared in a cooperative effort involving the Lincoln Police Department, the Nebraska Crime Commission, and the Criminal Justice Department of the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and your responses are completely anonymous, that is, we do not need your name or address and there is no way to identify you. Your cooperation in answering these questions will help improve victim services in Nebraska.

The survey only takes a few minutes to complete and a self-addressed, postage-paid, return envelope has been provided for your convenience.

Your answers will be tabulated by the Criminal Justice Department of the University of Nebraska. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact the research coordinator, R.K. Piper, at 472-0754.

Thank you for your valuable participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen L. Curtis".

Allen L. Curtis
Executive Director

Dear Concerned Citizen,

A few days ago, you should have received a survey designed to help improve services for victims of crime.

This card is just to remind you to please complete the survey and return it in the postage-paid envelope as soon as possible.

If you did not receive a survey or need another sent to you, please call R.K. Piper, Project Director, at the University of Nebraska, 1-(402)-472-0754.

Thank you for your valuable time—the information you provide is very important.

**APPENDIX D: IN-HOUSE DISTRIBUTION
INSTRUCTIONS / FORMS**



Dear Support Group Member,

This booklet contains questions about your needs as a domestic abuse or crime victim and the services you may have received through a Victim Assistance Program.

It has been prepared in a cooperative effort involving this agency (RSACC), the Nebraska Crime Commission, and the Criminal Justice Department of the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and your responses are completely anonymous, that is, we do not need your name or address and there is no way to identify you. Your cooperation in answering these questions will greatly help in the development of the most effective victim assistance system possible in Nebraska.

The survey usually takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Once finished, please place the survey in the collection box.

Your answers will be tabulated by the University of Nebraska. If you have any questions about the study or comments about the questionnaire, please contact the research coordinator, R.K. Piper, at 472-0754 or your group facilitator.

Thank you for your valuable participation.