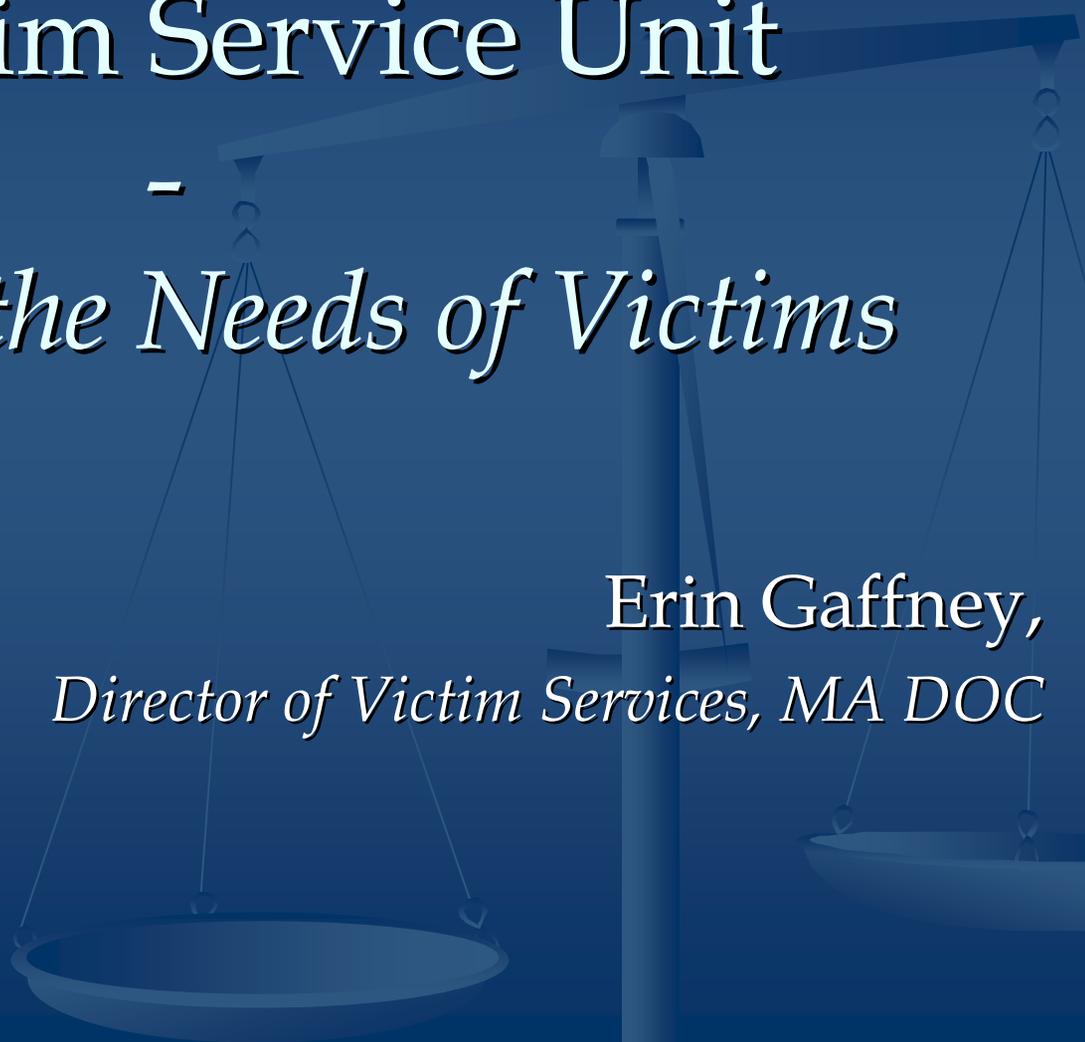


# The Victim Service Unit



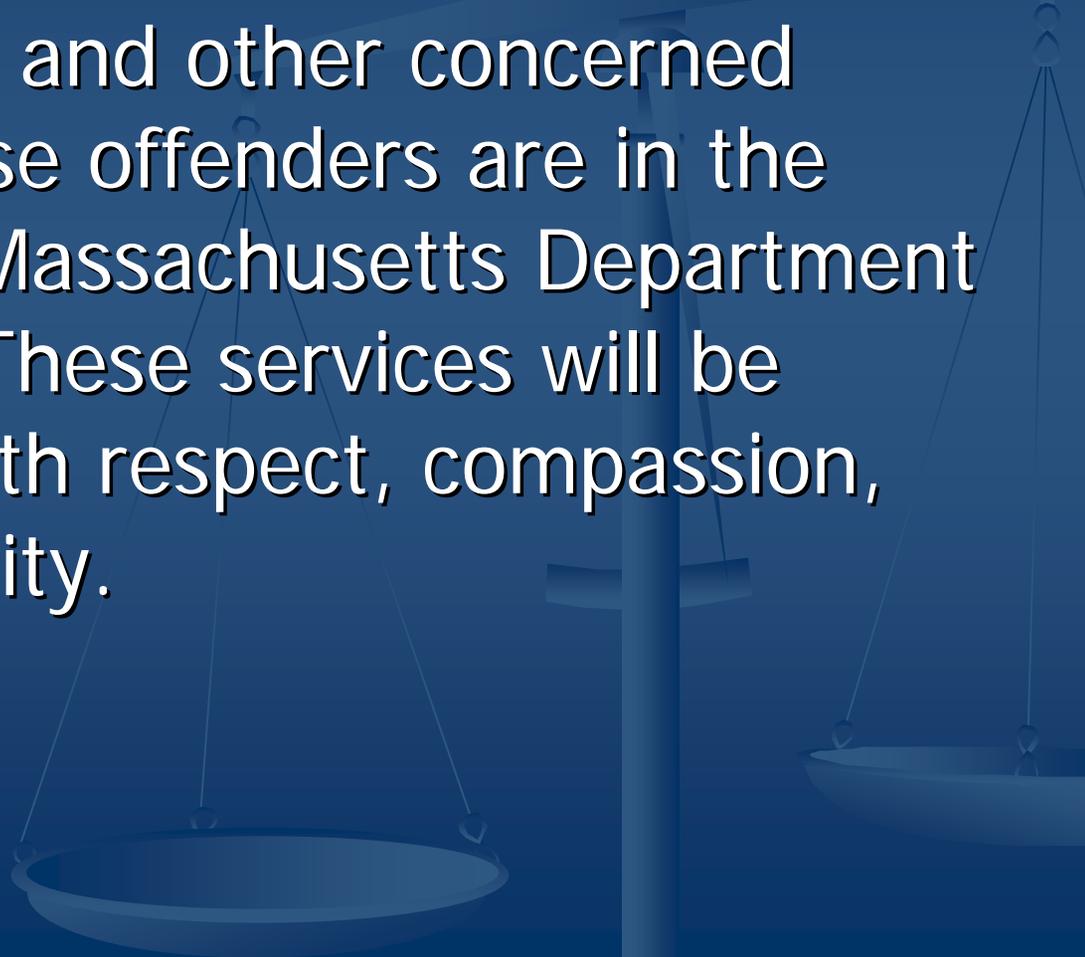
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## *Addressing the Needs of Victims*

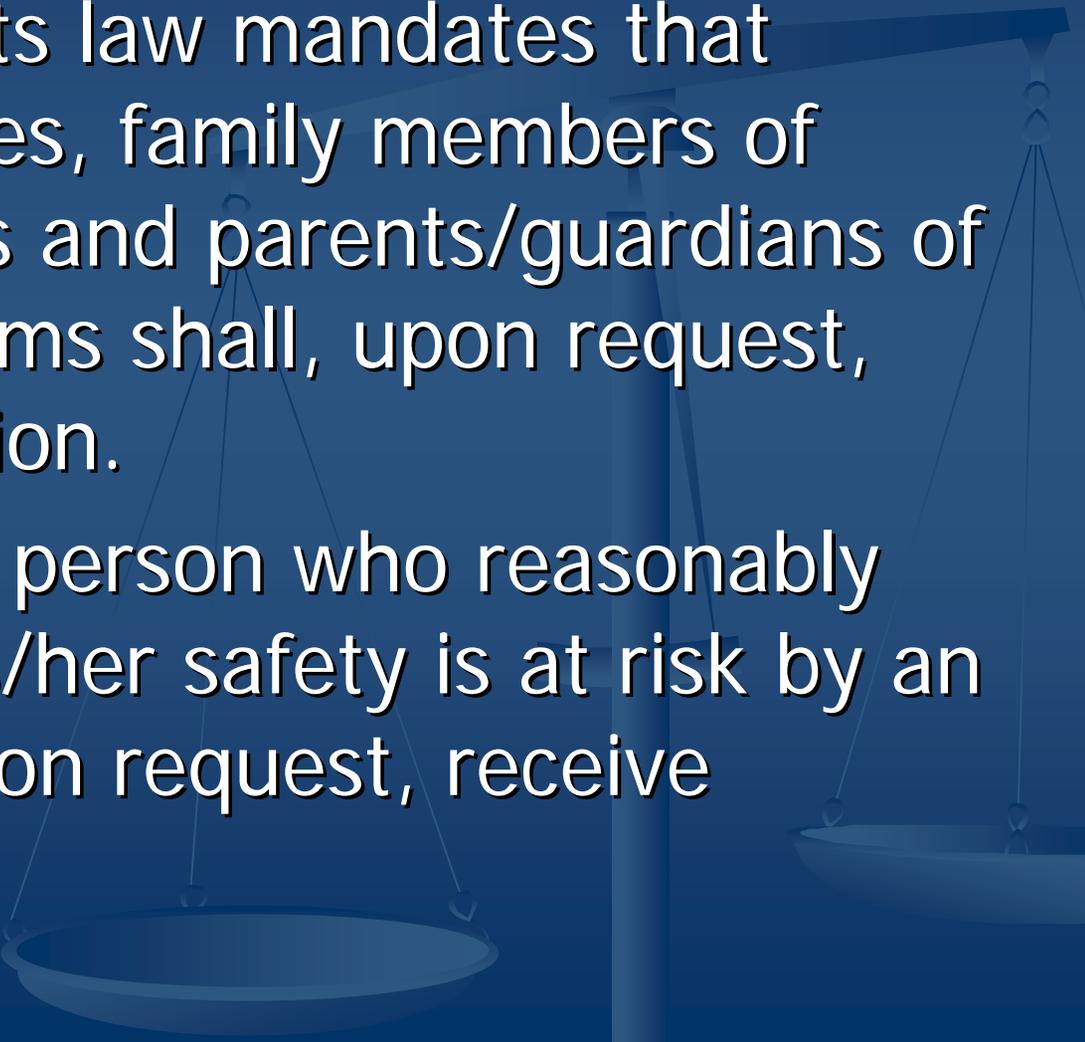
Erin Gaffney,

*Director of Victim Services, MA DOC*

# Mission of the VSU

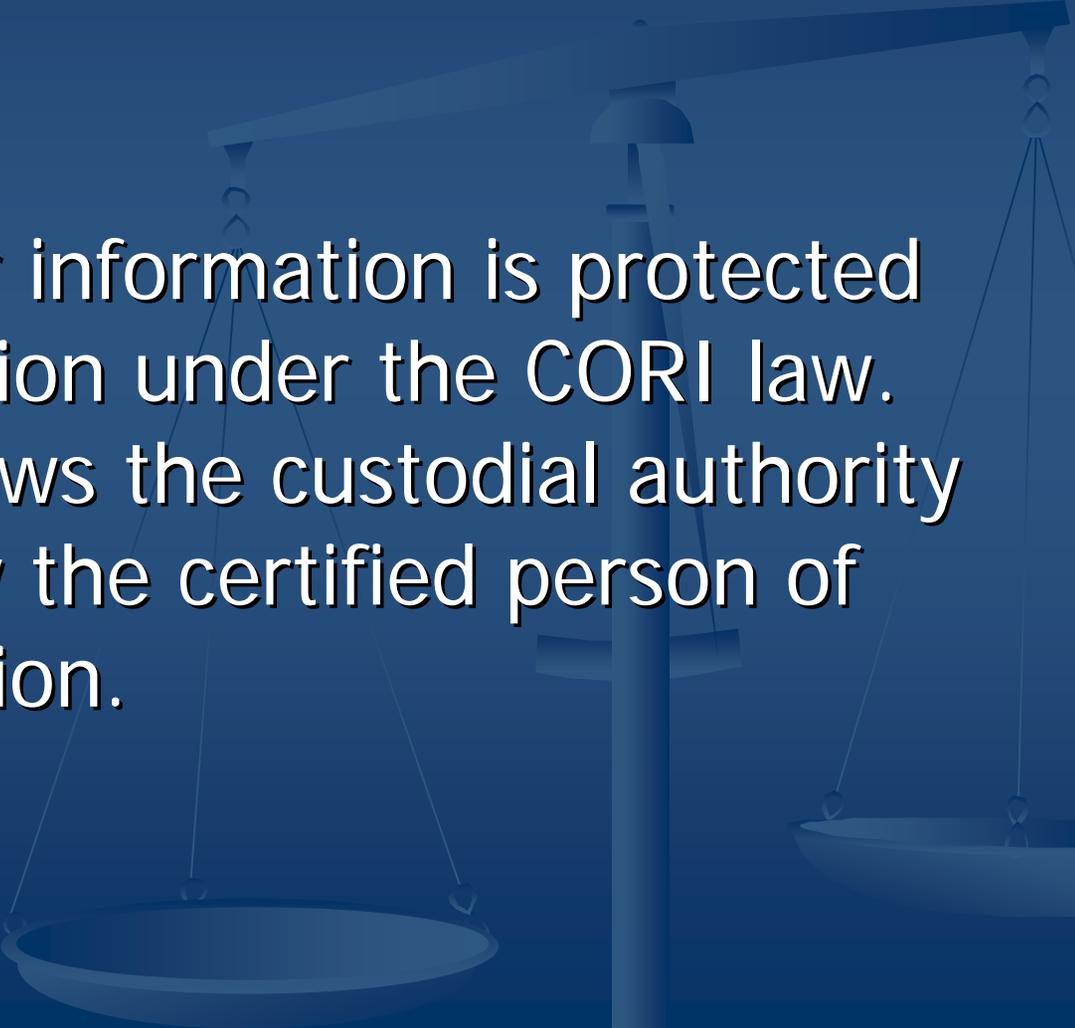
- To provide information and notification to victims of crime and other concerned individuals whose offenders are in the custody of the Massachusetts Department of Correction. These services will be administered with respect, compassion, and confidentiality.
- 

# Victim Rights Law

A faint, stylized image of a pair of scales of justice is visible in the background, centered behind the text. The scales are rendered in a light blue color, matching the overall theme of the slide. The background is a solid dark blue.

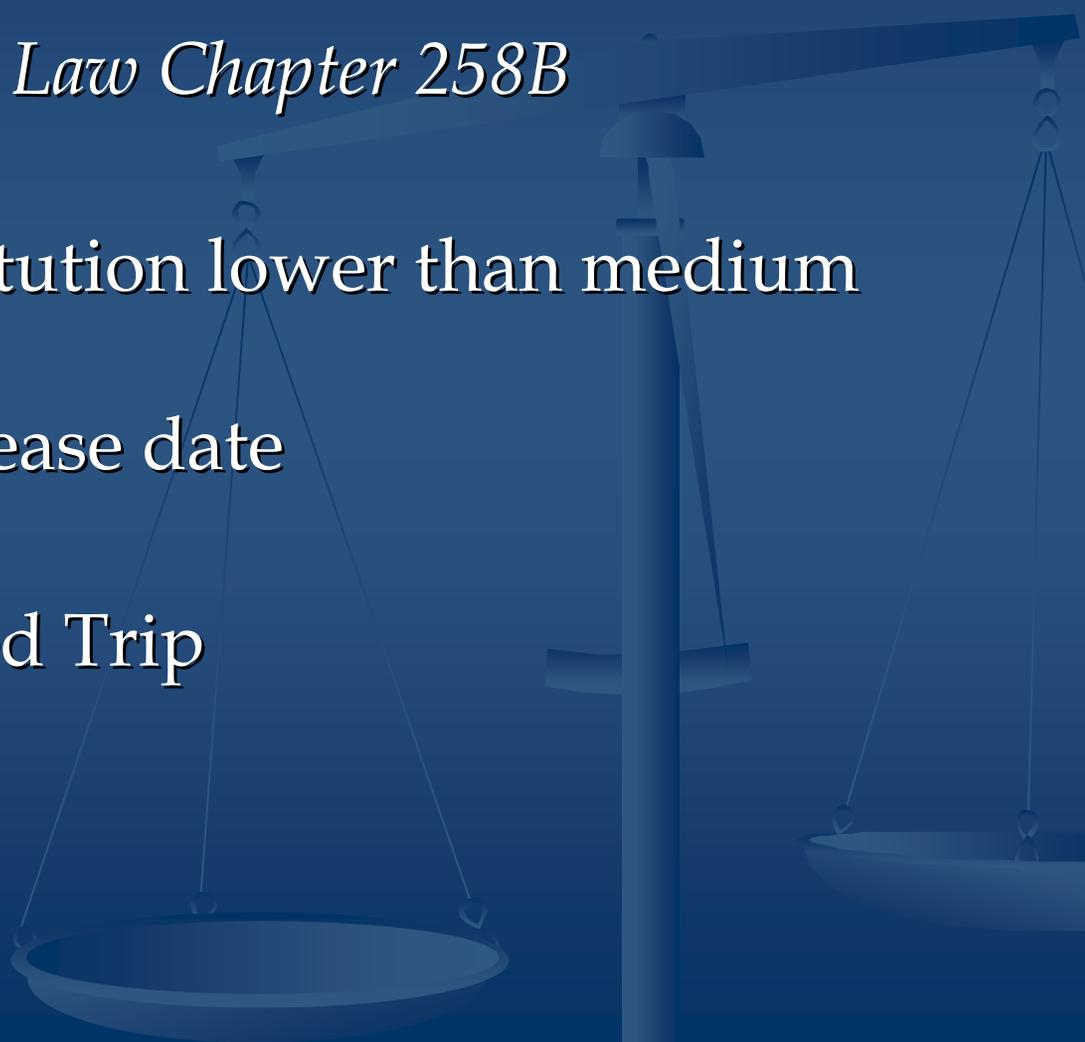
- The Victim Rights law mandates that victims, witnesses, family members of homicide victims and parents/guardians of minor aged victims shall, upon request, receive notification.
- In addition, any person who reasonably believes that his/her safety is at risk by an inmate shall, upon request, receive notification.

# Why is certification needed to receive notifications

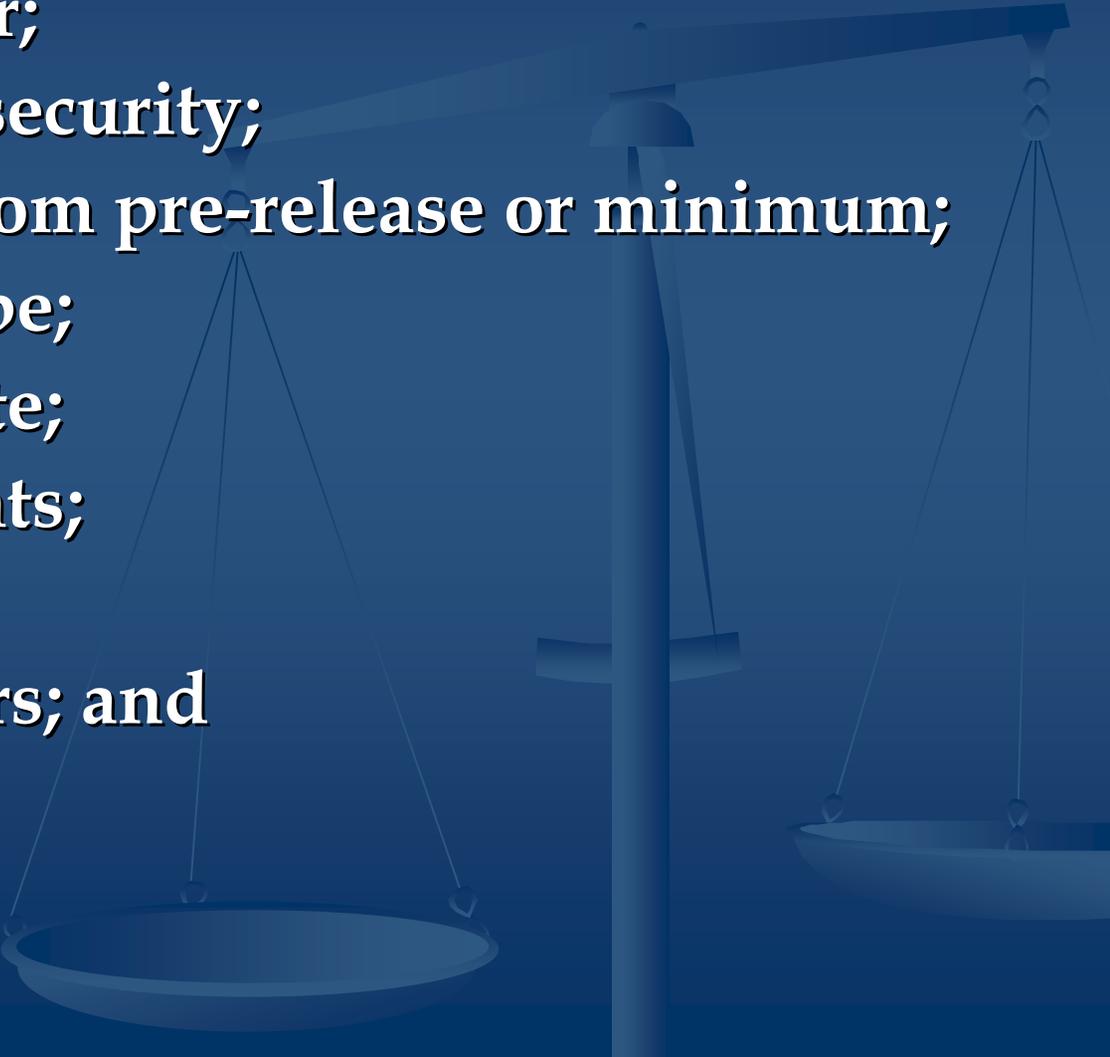
- Certain offender information is protected from dissemination under the CORI law. Certification allows the custodial authority to directly notify the certified person of certain information.
- 

# Victim Rights Law Notifications

## *Massachusetts General Law Chapter 258B*

- Transfer to an institution lower than medium security
  - Receives a final release date
  - Escape
  - Emergency Escorted Trip
- 

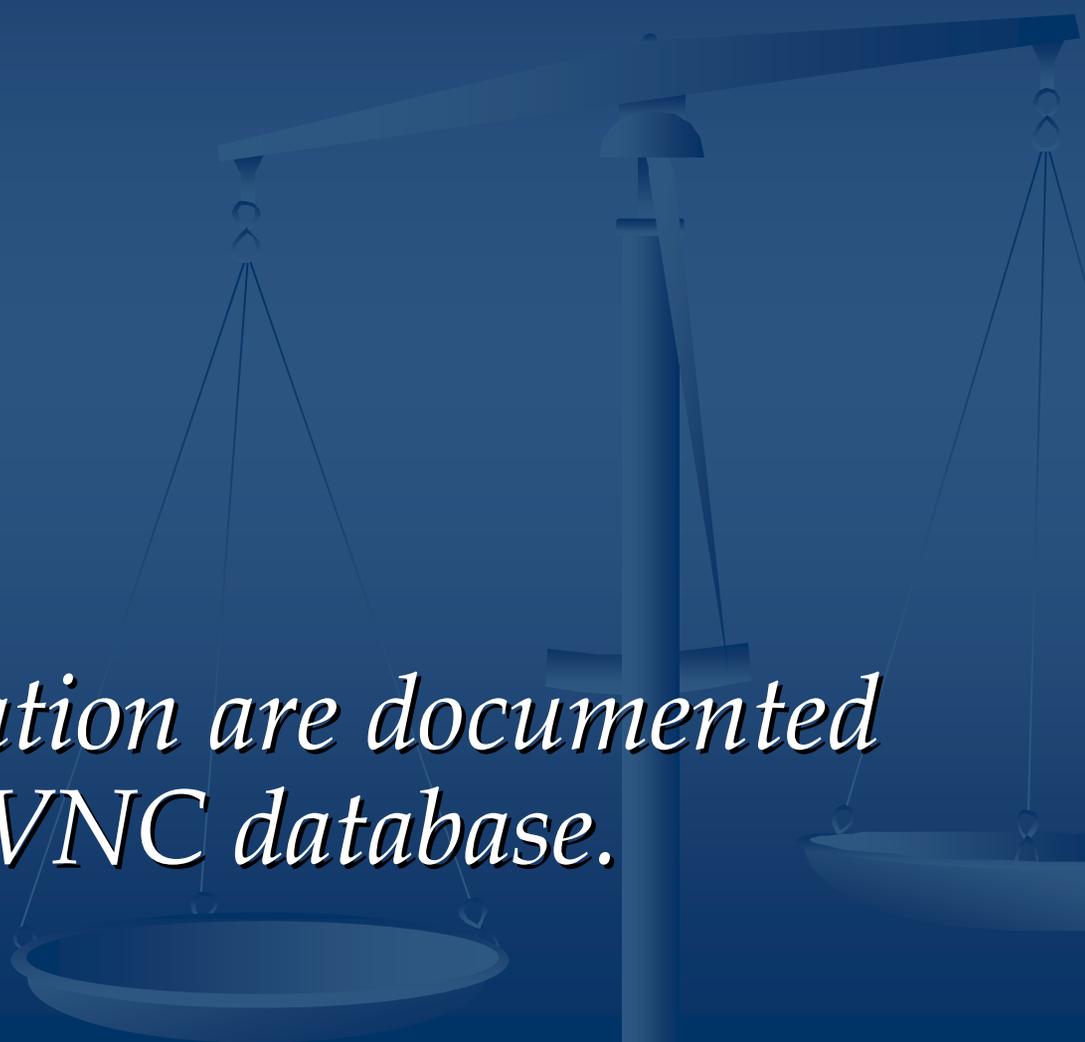
# Additional Notifications

- **Introductory letter;**
  - **Return to higher security;**
  - **Lateral transfer from pre-release or minimum;**
  - **Return from escape;**
  - **Death of an inmate;**
  - **Civil Commitments;**
  - **Name Change;**
  - **Restraining Orders; and**
  - **Media.**
- 

# *How notifications are made:*

- Phone
- Letter

*All notification are documented  
in VNC database.*



# Victim Information & Notification Everyday(VINE)

*A computer-based telephone information and notification service provides:*

- Public information relative to a DOC inmate's location.
- Notification of an inmate's transfer, release or escape.

1-877-421-VINE (toll free)

# VINELink

- A web-based extension of VINE

*[www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com)*

- E-mail notification

# Community Outreach Efforts

*The Victim Services Unit work with various stakeholders to address the needs of the victims...*

- Release letter
  - Place of confinement or supervision to be served upon release.
  - Parole partnership- RRC.

# Victim Services Council

*Principal duties are to:*

- Offer guidance and feedback to the Director of the Victim Service Unit;
- Ensure department policies are victim-sensitive;
- Review and comment on relevant policies; and
- Provide input and make suggestions for additional services.

# Victim Awareness Program

*Part of the five day transition workshop attended by inmates prior to their release.*

- This program teaches inmates how crime affects the victim, their family and friends, their community, and themselves.
- Understand the consequences of their actions and to increase the inmates' recognition of the victimization of another.
- The ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism.

# Public Awareness

*If crime victims are not aware of rights and services available to them as the inmate prepares to enter the community, they will not access them.*

- Public Service Announcements;
- Opinion/editorial;
- Brochures;
- National Crime Victims' Rights Week;
- Unwanted correspondence;
- Survey;
- A member of the VSU is on call seven days a week, and
- Training letter to DA's;

# Victim/Offender Dialogue (VOD)

- A voluntary structured face-to-face meeting between the crime victim and the inmate;
- Offers victims and survivors of violent crime an opportunity to meet with the inmate in a safe environment;
- A chance to ask the inmate questions about the offense; and
- Provide them with the opportunity to explain directly to the offender how the offense has affected them and/or their families.