

# Information *bulletin*

Victim Services and Crime Prevention

**December 2013**

## **We Want to Hear from You!**

If you have feedback about this bulletin or would like to submit information about an innovative project to be featured in a future bulletin, please contact us at [victimservices@gov.bc.ca](mailto:victimservices@gov.bc.ca).

Please consider the environment before printing this e-bulletin.

Thank you!



Victim Services and  
Crime Prevention  
Community Safety and  
Crime Prevention Branch  
Ministry of Justice



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## **Message from the Executive Director**

You will also learn about the upcoming launch of a Restitution Program pilot project which has the objective of increasing compliance with restitution orders and providing information and support to victims.

This Bulletin contains a program spotlight on the Greater Victoria Regional Domestic Violence Unit. Domestic violence units are effective in enhancing victim safety and offender accountability. The Ministry's recent call for proposals for civil forfeiture grants includes funding for developing or enhancing domestic violence units.

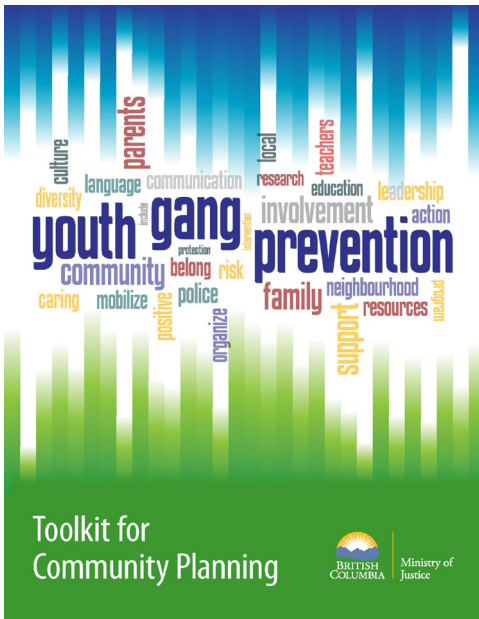
Happy holidays to all of our service providers. As 2013 comes to an end, I would like to acknowledge the extremely valuable work you do throughout the year to assist victims of crime as well as women and children impacted by violence.

*Taryn Walsh*  
Executive Director  
Victim Services and Crime Prevention  
Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch  
Ministry of Justice

Welcome to the December 2013 Information Bulletin which contains news and updates from the Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division.

In this issue, you will find information about the launch of a new youth gang prevention toolkit to help communities develop local strategies on youth gang issues. Please take time to view the [short video](#) introducing this toolkit.

# New Youth Gang Prevention Toolkit Launched!



The Ministry has launched a new resource on youth gang prevention to help communities develop local strategies on youth gang issues.

The *Youth Gang Prevention Toolkit for Community Planning*, and its accompanying *Quick-Start Guide*, are designed to assist service providers, community leaders, and others who are working to help prevent youth from becoming involved in gangs or to help them leave gangs. The toolkit was developed with the assistance and partnership of many stakeholders, including the Community Action and Assessment Networks, Alberta's Ministry of Justice, and the federal government.

Please view the four minute promotional video for the toolkit which features notable anti-gang proponents. The toolkit, quick-start guide, and video are available free for download on our [Community Safety and Crime Prevention website](#).

## Launch of Restitution Pilot Project

Victims have the right to seek payment from offenders for financial losses through restitution orders. In 2012, British Columbia provincial courts issued 605 stand alone restitution orders with a value of almost \$7 million dollars.

Victim Services and Crime Prevention will be launching a pilot Restitution Program in Vancouver early in 2014. The Restitution Program is designed to assist victims to receive payment of restitution orders, and to work with offenders to comply with stand-alone restitution orders. The pilot is modelled on similar programs currently operating in PEI, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan.

Key activities of the Restitution Program pilot will include:

- Receiving referrals from justice system personnel and victim service programs;

- Contacting offenders to encourage payment of the order including setting up voluntary payment schedules where appropriate;
- Liaising with Community Corrections as appropriate if restitution is ordered as a condition of probation;
- Contacting victims to provide them with information and support around the restitution enforcement process (note: the Program does not provide legal advice); and
- Tracking data on pilot activities and compliance rates.

Michele Matthews is the person to contact regarding the Restitution Program. Please feel free to contact Michele if you have any questions at 604-660-4898, or by email at [victim.restitution@gov.bc.ca](mailto:victim.restitution@gov.bc.ca).

## SOS Mobile Safety App



In April 2013, the Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC), in partnership with Securigard and TELUS, launched a six month pilot project that utilizes the SOS Response Mobile Safety App to increase the safety of high risk women in six B.C. communities (Abbotsford, Prince George, Terrace, Vernon, Courtenay and Surrey) who were accessing the services of community-based victim service programs.

The SOS Response Mobile Safety App is a new personal safety tool for smart-phones that automatically sends images, GPS location and other valuable information to a global, 24/7, professionally monitored station. The app is available for anyone wanting to increase their personal safety.

Anyone with a smart phone can download the app and obtain around-the-clock monitoring services for less than \$3 per month when **purchased through the EVA BC portal**. To find out more about the app, you can view a **three-minute video** from TELUS Optik TV about the SOS Response Mobile Safety App.

## Program Spotlight: Greater Victoria Regional Domestic Violence Unit



The Greater Victoria Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU) is a co-located program with police, community-based victim services, child protection services (MCFD) and local municipalities. The RDVU addresses high risk domestic violence cases and focuses on victim safety and offender accountability. Services include follow-up investigation, offender management/monitoring, risk assessment, safety planning, and victim support.

"The piece that makes it work most effectively is the partnerships that we have," says Sergeant Jason Laidman.

"Once the file is referred to the unit, we go into what is called a triage process. We gather police information. We gather community corrections information. We gather open source information. We base our decision on primary risk factors and we base our decision on what the next steps are for that case."

Because of the complexities involved in domestic violence, building relationships is a key factor in the success of the RDVU. This includes a relationship with the offender.

"I find about 50 percent of my time is talking to offenders," says Wayne Unger, Investigator with the RDVU. "I'll meet them at a coffee shop. I'll meet them at a construction site. By developing relationships with offenders, I get a sense of

what they're thinking and where they're at. To me that's a big part of increasing victim safety is getting a sense of where the offender's mind is at."

Community-based victim services plays a key role in supporting victims and enhancing safety.

"We're able to develop a relationship with victims of domestic violence that is quite different from the ones that they can have with police or the Ministry," says Susan Robinson, Victim Service Worker with the RDVU. "What [the RDVU] has done for [victims] at the end of the day is help them get a greater sense of safety."

An MCFD Social Worker is responsible for working with the family to provide resources and support to reduce the risk of future harm. The offender is held accountable and the safety of the children and non-offending caregiver is enhanced.

As of August 2013, the investigations conducted by the RDVU contributed to 124 guilty pleas, 13 convictions, 10 peace bonds, and one civil peace bond. The success of the RDVU was recently recognized with a Premier's Award in the Partnership category, a validation of the RDVU's hard work and ability to make a difference in the lives of women, children, and families impacted by domestic violence.

More information about the RDVU can be found on the [RDVU webpage](#). A [short video](#) is also available.

## Recipients Honoured at the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards



Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Suzanne Anton, honoured the recipients of the 2013 Ministry of Justice Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards at a ceremony held in Burnaby on November 1, 2013. The awards were co-hosted by the Ministry of Justice and the BC Crime Prevention Association (BCCPA), and were part of BCCPA's 35th Annual Training Symposium. More than 200 representatives from community agencies and government were on hand to witness the 22 recipients receive their awards.

The Anthony J. Hulme Award of Distinction was awarded to David and Mary Gates for their long term commitment to Block Watch and community safety initiatives in Burnaby.

For more information about the awards, please visit [our website](#).



# Practice Tips: Safety Planning for Victims of Domestic Violence

A safety plan can help to prepare women experiencing domestic violence for the possibility of further violence and provides guidelines to follow if safety is at-risk. Safety planning takes into account the victim's needs and circumstances. Plans may be developed to address a current abusive relationship, preparing for the possibility of future violence, creating emergency escape plans, eliminating contact with the abusive partner, safety in public or at work, and the emotional impacts of violence. The safety of children and youth also need to be considered.

There are a number of resources available to support workers to help them to work with women on safety plans. These include:

[Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training](#)

[Factors to Consider when Domestic Violence Safety Planning](#)

[Creating a Safety Plan](#)

[Safety Planning with Children and Youth: A Toolkit for Working with Children and Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence](#)

[Child and Youth Safety Planning Videos](#)

[Domestic Violence Service Priority Assessment – Information and Form](#)

[Personalized Safety Planning Template](#)

## Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime Hosts National Forum



Hosted by the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime 1 April 18 and 19, 2013

Canada

On April 18th and 19th, 2013 the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime (OFOVC) hosted a National Forum, bringing together more than

150 victims, victim-serving agencies, law enforcement, academics, federal and provincial government representatives, and other stakeholders. Participants joined together to discuss eight key themes and to chart the path forward for victims of crime in Canada.

The OFOVC has developed a Forum summary report entitled *Moving the Conversation Forward: A Forum for Victims, Victim Advocates and Victim-serving Agencies*. To accompany the report the OFOVC has also developed a series of eight videos which speak to the key themes of the Forum. The videos feature victims, victim advocates and victim-serving agencies talking about the issues and solutions from their point of view. The report and videos are now publicly available on the OFOVC's website ([www.victimfirst.gc.ca](http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca)).

## Grants for \$1 Million in Civil Forfeiture Recoveries Announced

During Crime Prevention Week, Minister Anton announced the availability of \$1 million in civil forfeiture recoveries to support crime prevention projects in the following areas:

1. **Develop or enhance domestic violence units.** Domestic Violence Units respond to highest risk cases and involve co-locating community-based victim services, police, and in some locations child protection workers.
2. **Prevent sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking of vulnerable women and girls.** Preventing and addressing human trafficking and sexual exploitation is a priority within BC's Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and this category of funding will also address a recommendation contained in the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Report.
3. **Prevent youth crime.** These projects will focus on preventing at-risk youth from engaging in crime and violence through targeted programs and interventions.

Application details are available [on our website](#).

# Online Training Opportunities Available!



We would like to remind you that staff and volunteers of our contracted programs can still register for online training opportunities and take advantage of training resources.

Click the links below to access the training!

## [Indigenous Cultural Competency Training](#)

The Indigenous Cultural Competency training is a unique facilitated online cultural competency training course that is designed to increase knowledge, enhance self-awareness, and build on cultural competency skills.

## [Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training](#)

The Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training is a practical resource to assist front-line service providers working with women, children, and families impacted by domestic violence.

## [Understanding and Responding to Elder Abuse E-book and Video](#)

The Understanding and Responding to Elder Abuse E-Book and video are designed for workers in B.C. who work with older adults who have been abused and neglected.

## [Human Trafficking: Canada is Not Immune](#)

Human Trafficking: Canada Is Not Immune is a free and accessible online training program for anyone who wants to learn more about human trafficking in Canada.



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