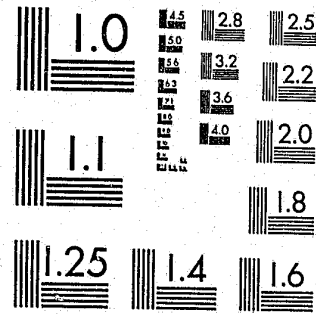


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# CRIME VICTIMS

Working Paper No. 8

## THE EVALUATION OF THE WINNIPEG VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

94627

and Statistics Section  
Planning and Development Branch

Canada

94627

CRIME VICTIMS  
WORKING PAPER No. 8

THE EVALUATION OF THE  
WINNIPEG VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This evaluation was conducted by S. Brickey and Ann Guest of the University of Manitoba, under a contract from the Department of Justice of Canada. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the ideas and policies of the Department of Justice of Canada.

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This working paper is one of a series of papers on victims of crime published by the federal government as part of an initiative in the crime victims field.

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March, 1984

(Résumé en français à la fin)

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### INTRODUCTION

This research project has endeavoured to evaluate the Victim/Witness Assistance Program in Winnipeg in terms of the Program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of victims and witnesses. That task has been complicated by the changes which have occurred within the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. Because many of these changes have taken place concomitantly with the evaluation research, it is necessary to outline the basic structure of the Program and then to describe the alterations which have been made.

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program began in the summer of 1981 with two full-time staff members. The staff operated the Program from an office in the Provincial Judges Court Building and most of their assistance was given to victims and witnesses at the court stage of the criminal justice system. In May, 1982 the Program was expanded to include the services of a full-time Winnipeg Police Department Constable. The Constable was given the position of Victim Services Worker and his role was to develop a system of delivering more immediate assistance to victims of crime. This Victim Assistance Program will be discussed separately from the Witness Assistance Program because the two programs are functionally separate.

#### WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

The initial objectives of the Witness Assistance Program were:

1. to provide a range of informational services to individuals who have been subpoenaed to appear in court.
2. to save prosecutors time by handling witness inquiries and dealing with a variety of concerns that witnesses express.

When the program began, most of the contact with witnesses resulted from telephone inquiries. These telephone inquiries stemmed from the information witnesses received when they were subpoenaed to appear in court. The subpoena had the phone number of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program printed on it and witnesses were invited to call for assistance with arranging a more specific time for court cases. In addition to the subpoena, each witness received a brochure briefly outlining various aspects of the criminal justice system such as court setting, preliminary hearings and trial procedure. The brochure included summary information on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board on property held as evidence, and on the procedure



for collecting witness fees. The brochure also directed witnesses to call or visit the Witness Reception Centre for additional information or for assistance with "other problems resulting from being a victim or witness of crime".

Copies of the brochure ran out in June 1982 and until January 1983 it was only the phone number on the subpoena which channelled inquiries to the Witness Reception Centre. In September 1982, the format of the subpoena was changed but the phone number of the Witness Reception Centre remained intact. In addition to inviting witnesses to call for assistance with time narrowing, the new subpoena directed witnesses to "report to Room 303 (Witness Reception Centre) for payment of fees". Unfortunately, due to a delay in the arrival of the witness fee vouchers, Witness Reception Centre staff could not dispense witness fees until the arrival of the vouchers in mid-October 1982. Traffic through the Witness Reception Centre increased with the arrival of the fee vouchers because each witness reported to the staff following the completion of his/her court appearance. With the increased traffic came an increase in the number of in-person inquiries directed to the Witness Reception Centre staff.

The staff began recruiting volunteers to work in the Witness Reception Centre in the summer of 1982. By September several volunteers were working regular shifts at the Witness Reception Centre. Their duties were mainly to telephone witnesses whose court appearances were no longer required due to case cancellations. This service cut down on the number of unnecessary court appearances by witnesses. The volunteers were trained to answer general inquiries from witnesses who appeared at the Witness Reception Centre. The volunteers had been recruited to work two hour shifts with two on duty on each shift. With the delay in the printing of the fee vouchers, however, and the resulting slack in activity at the Witness Reception Centre, their services were not required and after an initial orientation period they were dismissed until further notice. With the arrival of the fee vouchers on 18 October 1982 the volunteers were recalled. At this time the Witness Reception Centre staff decided that one volunteer on duty for each two hour shift was sufficient.

A new brochure to be delivered to witnesses along with the subpoena was printed in January 1983. The brochure outlines the Witness Assistance Service, instructs witnesses on the procedure for obtaining fees, and offers specific suggestions regarding the delivery of testimony. This brochure is currently being delivered to all witnesses along with the subpoenas.

The needs Assessment Study identified a large number of witnesses who make unnecessary court appearances. The appearances are unnecessary because the case has been cancelled often due to a last minute guilty plea by the accused. At the proposal stage of this evaluation, the author outlined the Witness Alert Program which was going to be initiated as a pilot project with doctors as its target group. Briefly, the Program was designed to offer these witnesses the opportunity to make their court appearances only if their testimony was required. This pilot project, however, was not fully implemented. (To date, three individuals - two physicians and one working woman - have been put "on alert" and none of them was required to testify). Instead, the Witness Reception Centre staff have sought the co-operation of crown attorneys in further narrowing the time of a doctor or other professional's anticipated court appearance. Attorneys have agreed to put doctors whose testimony is required on the stand first thing in the morning and/or first thing in the afternoon. This practice does decrease the time spent at court but it unfortunately does not eliminate the possibility of unnecessary court appearances.

#### VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

The Victim Assistance Program began in May 1982 as an offshoot of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. It began with the appointment of Constable Bernie Dionne of the Winnipeg Police Department as victim services worker. The initial objective of the Program was to contact three target groups of victims.

1. All break-ins of private residences within District 6 in Winnipeg. These individuals were sent a letter informing them of the Victim Assistance Program and encouraging their inquiries regarding information or assistance. District 6 was chosen primarily because it includes a wide spectrum of socio-economic groups.
2. All robberies in the City excluding businesses. These individuals were to be contacted by phone or in person if they could not be reached by telephone.
3. All break and enters in the City where the victim is age 60 or over. These individuals were to be contacted by phone or in person and provided with assistance if requested.

In addition, individuals who were referred to Victim Services from other police departments or other agencies were contacted to determine their need for assistance.

Constable Dionne found that many elderly victims were confused or frightened by telephone contact because they could not be sure that they were, in fact, talking to a Police Officer. Early on in the Program, therefore, he began to use age as the major criterion in determining the mode of contact. To allay the suspicions of elderly victims, he visited them in person, while he telephoned younger victims to determine their need for assistance. Apparent seriousness of the crime also determined the mode of contact.

In September 1982, the staff of the Victim Services Unit was increased with the addition of two student social workers from the University of Manitoba's School of Social Work. One student worked a total of sixteen hours/week (32 hours beginning in January) while the other worked eight hours/week. Constable Dionne trained the students to assume some of the responsibilities for contacting victims. By mid-October both students were providing assistance to victims by means of telephone and personal visits.

In late November, 1982 the Victim Services Unit expanded the number of victims contacted by letter. Initially, only victims of break and enters in District 6 received a letter and brochure informing them of the Unit and its services. The response to this contact was between 5 and 10% (depending on the month) and it was generally favourable. The workers decided therefore, to contact additional victims of break-ins in this way. Beginning on November 23, 1982 letters were sent to all victims of break and enter in the City of Winnipeg (excluding businesses). This practice is continuing.

At the same time, and in an effort to reach as many crime victims as possible, Victim Services began sending letters and brochures to victims of robbery and crimes involving violence. In addition, Constable Dionne requested that Police Constables make a concerted effort to record in their reports the age of victims of break-ins. This request was officially communicated to the Constables and by mid-December the number of elderly crime victims who came to the attention of Victim Services rose dramatically. All of these changes added to Victim Services workers' case-loads and necessitated the addition of more workers.

The Age and Opportunity Centre had agreed to a liaison with Victim Services in September, 1982. When their assistance was required in December 1982, the Age and Opportunity Centre was able to contribute a half-time Victim Services worker and a number of volunteers to assist with visits to Winnipeg's

elderly crime victims. By January, 1983 six volunteers had been trained and these individuals were making calls to elderly victims. The Age and Opportunity Centre is continuing to recruit volunteers to assist the Victim Services Unit. As of March 1983, there are fourteen volunteers available for visits to elderly crime victims.

## METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION:

This project employed a methodology designed to collect data from a variety of sources. The objective of the research was to determine the impact of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program on all major parties. It was necessary, therefore, to gather information from victims, witnesses, representatives of different levels within the Police Department, Crown Attorneys, and victim and witness assistance program workers.

The major areas of concern were: utilization of services, awareness of services, availability of services, effectiveness of the Programs in meeting the needs of victims and witnesses and the impact of the Programs on the criminal justice system.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of all major parties. Victims and witnesses were surveyed by telephone because of their large numbers. These victim and witness interviews were conducted by the administration of questionnaires consisting mainly of closed-ended questions. Police, Crown Attorneys and Program workers were interviewed in-person. These interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions and ample opportunity for additional comments.

### QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION:

The first stage of data collection involved the administration of questionnaires to samples of victims and witnesses. These questionnaires were developed from those used in the Needs Assessment Study.

#### A. Victim Questionnaire:

Questions dealing with the following were left intact and included in the new questionnaire:

- immediate needs of victims following the crime and assistance received
- fears resulting from being victimized
- informational needs related to the status of the investigation
- assessment of police handling of the case

In addition, a new series of questions was constructed. This series deals directly with the victim's contact with the Victim Assistance Program. More specifically, the following major areas are covered:

- mode of contact and with whom
- initial reaction to the contact
- information and/or assistance provided
- satisfaction with the assistance

#### B. Witness Questionnaire:

The witness questionnaire was also developed from the one used by Brickey in the Needs Assessment Study. Questions dealing with the following issues were used in that study and they formed the base of the new questionnaire:

- manner in which the subpoena was received
- knowledge of witness obligations
- questions and concerns that arise as a result of being issued a subpoena
- extent and nature of contact with Police and Crown Attorneys
- satisfaction/dissatisfaction with handling and disposition of case

An additional series of questions was formulated to collect data on the witnesses' contact with the Witness Assistance Program.

This series deals directly with the following areas of concern:

- knowledge of the existence and purpose of the Witness Reception Centre
- mode of contact(s) with the Witness Reception Centre staff
- services requested and/or provided by the Witness Reception Centre staff
  - before the court appearance
  - at the time of the court appearance
  - after the court appearance.

#### C. Pre-Test:

Each questionnaire was pre-tested by administration to small samples of victims and witnesses. The names of victims were supplied by Constable Dionne from his files of victims who had been contacted. Witness names were taken by Wendy Bond (Witness Reception Centre) from the Witness Encounter Forms. Minor changes were made to the wording and order of some questions, but overall, both questionnaires proved to be clear and seemed adequately to cover the topics of interest.

The victim questionnaire was submitted for approval at the

December meeting of the Winnipeg Victim/Witness Assistance Advisory Committee. One minor change to the question regarding marital status was agreed to and the Committee then approved the questionnaire.

At the January meeting of the Advisory Committee the witness questionnaire was approved with the addition of questions dealing with the respondent's desire to know and knowledge of the outcome of the case in which he or she was involved.

IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS:

A. Police:

Interviews with Police Officers were conducted in person and individually. The uniformed Constables, a Sargeant, the Superintendent of Crime, and the Deputy Chief agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were all semi-structured with a series of open-ended questions and considerable encouragement for free discussion of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. The questions focused mainly on the Victim Assistance Program because this part of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program has the closest ties with the Police Department. Constables were asked about their knowledge of the Witness Assistance Program but this knowledge was extremely limited. This line of questioning, therefore, was not pursued.

In regard to the Victim Assistance Program, Constables were initially asked whether or not they had participated in an in-service training session given by Constable Dionne and Ann McBain. The following issues were dealt with in the balance of the interview:

- knowledge of the services offered by Victim Assistance Program and knowledge of its priority victims
- procedure for referring victims to Victim Assistance Program; number and kind of referrals made in the past; willingness to refer victims to the Victim Assistance Program again.
- perceived major value of the Victim Assistance Program
- perceived benefits of the Victim Assistance Program for the Police Department

- perceived problems with the Victim Assistance Program
- assessment of ways Victim Assistance Program could be improved and/or expanded

Superintendent Stephen and Deputy Chief Ogelski were interviewed to determine both how knowledgeable the executive is about the Victim Assistance Program and also how the executive perceives the Program and what it sees for the Program's future. The interviews were semi-structured. Specific topics were raised for discussion and both individuals were encouraged to discuss openly their feelings about the Victim Assistance Program. The following issues were discussed:

- perceived value of the Victim Assistance Program for the community
- perceived value of the Victim Assistance Program for the Police Department
- knowledge of the Program's activities and priorities
- cost and/or other savings for the Police Department
- expenses incurred by the Police Department to operate the Victim Assistance Program
- perceived future of the Victim Assistance Program
- recommendations for changes and/or improvements

B. Crown Attorneys:

Interviews with five Crown Attorneys were conducted to assess their awareness of the Witness Assistance Program and its services. The Attorneys volunteered to be interviewed and all interviews were done individually. A semi-structured format with open-ended questions and free discussion was again employed. The questions focussed on the awareness, utilization and assessment of the value of the Witness Assistance Program. The following specific topics were covered:

- knowledge of Witness Assistance Program services
- feedback from clients who used the Witness Assistance Program
- perceived value of the Witness Assistance Program
- perceived benefits of the Witness Assistance Program for Crown Attorneys
- recommendations for changes and/or improvements
- knowledge of and feelings about the Witness Alert System.

C. Program Workers:

a. Victim Assistance Program

Constable Dionne and the two social work students were interviewed regarding the Victim Assistance Program. The interviews were designed to discover the workers' roles within the Program and their views on its value and future. The questions were all open-ended to promote discussion. The Program workers were asked to outline their duties and the proportion of time spent on the separate duties. They were asked whether they perceived this division of time to be optimal or whether their time would be better spent through a different delegation of duties. The balance of the interviews focussed on the following topics:

- perceived response from victims to visits; phone calls
- ability of other agencies to meet victims' needs
- perceived role as victim services worker
- perceived differences in victims' response to different workers
- perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Victim Assistance Program
- referral to and/or from other agencies.

b. Witness Assistance Program

Ann McBain, the Project Co-ordinator, Wendy Bond, the Witness Services Worker, and two volunteers agreed to be interviewed concerning the Witness Assistance Program - its value and its future. Again, the interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. The workers were asked to describe their duties and estimate the proportion of their time allotted to the various duties. The following topics were also discussed during the course of the interview:

- perceived role as Witness Assistance worker
- perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Program
- referral to and/or from other agencies
- recommendations for changes and/or improvements
- Witness Alert System - use, effectiveness, attitudes of Crown to its use.

In addition, the volunteers were asked to evaluate the training program and make suggestions for its improvement if needed.

SAMPLE:

A. Victim Sample

For the purposes of this research a sample of three hundred victims of crime was selected. That sample was composed of victims from three groups:

- Victims of break and enter (includes break and enter and theft AND break and enter with intent) from Winnipeg's District 6. These victims had been sent a letter and brochure from Victim Services informing them of the Program and inviting their inquiries regarding information or assistance.
- Victims of crime who had been contacted personally by a member of the Victim Services Unit. The contact was by telephone and/or personal visit. The most common crimes of which these individuals had been victims were robbery (including purse snatch) and break and enter (elderly).
- Victims of break and enter (including break and enter and theft AND break and enter with intent) from Winnipeg's District 4. These individuals had no contact in any fashion with the Victim Services Program. District 4 is roughly comparable to District 6 in terms of size, density of population and social composition of its population.

Lists of victims from each of the three groups were obtained with the co-operation of the Winnipeg Police Department. The Police Department stated that before the victims could be interviewed they had to be contacted by someone representing the Police to determine their willingness to participate. The research team anticipated the need to begin with more than 300 names in order to achieve that end result in terms of completed interviews. The difficulties encountered in matching the size of the original lists with the eventual list of completed interviews were: a number of telephone numbers were unlisted or unavailable; some individuals refused to participate when contacted



for permission; many individuals refused to participate when contacted (initially or at the time of the interview) even after repeated attempts; others refused to participate when actually called for the interview even though they had originally agreed to the interview.

The sample of victims of break and enter in District 6 was drawn from a list of these victims who had been sent the letter from Victim Services in October or November, 1982. When this list failed to result in a complete sample, an additional list was obtained of victims contacted by mail in December 1982 and early January 1983.

The same procedure was followed to compose a sample of "personal contact" victims. Victims contacted by phone or visit in October or November 1982 comprised the original list. Names of victims contacted in December 1982 comprised the original list. Names of victims contacted in December 1982 and January 1983 were used to complete the sample.

The third sample (victims of break and enter in District 4) was drawn from an original list of victims who had had their homes broken into between October 1st and November 22nd, 1982. This original list did not result in the necessary sample size, so an additional list was obtained from the Crime Reports for August and September, 1982. It was necessary to search further back in time because subsequent to November 22, victims of break-ins across the City, including District 4, received letters from Victim Services. A final sample size of 284 victims was obtained.

B. Witness Sample

A sample of two hundred witnesses was required for the purposes of this research. This sample was obtained with the co-operation of the Clerk of the Court who made available a list of all witnesses who had a Court appearance and been paid a witness fee between December 1982 and January - February, 1983. As with the victim sample, the original list of witnesses contained considerably more names than the final list of completed interviews. Individuals who declined to participate and ones who could not be contacted accounted for most of the discrepancy between the size of the original list and the final sample size. A final sample size of 201 witnesses was obtained.

C. Police Sample

In selecting officers to be interviewed an effort was made to choose individuals with different duties or different duty locations. Therefore, the sample consisted of two Constables on station duty in District 1, six Constables on patrol car duty in District 1, the Sargeant in charge of Operation Affirmative Action, and two Constables on patrol car duty in District 6.

In addition to these uniformed Officers, two representatives of the upper hierarchy in the Police Department were interviewed. The Superintendent of Crime, Herb Stevens, was chosen because he is the superior officer responsible for the Victim Assistance Program. Deputy Chief Ogelski was interviewed because he is a member of the administration within the Police Force.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS OF VICTIM SERVICES:

Field observations of two of the Victim Services workers in personal contact with victims were made in the fall of 1982. Constable Dionne agreed to have the research associate accompany him on three visits to crime victims. On another occasion, the research associate accompanied Sherri Mooney (one of the Victim Assistance Program's social work students) while she contacted three other victims. The purpose of these observations was to increase the researcher's awareness of the services which the workers do offer and the responses of victims to the assistance being offered. These first-hand observations were considered valuable aids in the construction of the Victim Questionnaire and in all aspects of the evaluation of the Victim Assistance Program.

Two of the victims whom Constable Dionne visited were elderly women who had recently had their purses snatched. When we arrived at the apartment of the first victim we were immediately ushered into the living room. Dionne required virtually no identification, the couple appeared very happy to have him visit, and he promptly made them feel quite at ease. (Dionne discovered that the couple was French-Canadian and proceeded to speak shortly with them in their native language. He only continued in English for the benefit of the researcher). Constable Dionne asked about the woman's health and her security (e.g. locks, credit cards) but did not ask her specifically about the incident. She volunteered considerable information, however, about her reaction to the crime (she didn't mind the loss of the money but she didn't want to give it to "some bum") and her experience at the Police Station. The Sargeant on duty had

directed her to a pay phone when she inquired about using a phone to call her husband for transportation and she was still visibly angered by the insensitivity of this response. Constable Dionne sympathized with her feelings and offered to look into it.

There seemed to be an immediate sense of trust and willingness (even eagerness) on the part of the victim to confide in Dionne. The couple both expressed extreme gratitude for the visit and said that it had made them feel better. The victim certainly had a more positive image of the Police than she had had after the incident.

A similar reaction was witnessed when Dionne visited the second purse snatching victim. This woman had been knocked down and injured during the incident and had been treated in hospital. She was very immobile and obviously hit hard emotionally by the crime. She was very appreciative of the visit and she too volunteered considerable information about her experience. She had not had her locks changed so Dionne said that he would contact the building superintendent. We visited the Superintendent on leaving and were met with considerable deferment (probably because of the uniform). The Superintendent was very concerned and insisted that the locks would be changed immediately.

Constable Dionne left a brochure and his card with each victim. The daughter of the second victim called Dionne a few days after his visit because her mother was refusing additional health care. Dionne was able to assist the family further in this regard.

The other victim whom Dionne visited was a young man who had called Dionne to request more information about his case. He was concerned about his application to CICB because he had not yet been compensated. Dionne explained that he did not work for CICB but that he would find out what he could from CICB and also track down the Police records for the information the man wanted. He said that he would call him the next morning.

The man was grateful for Dionne's concern and thanked him for his assistance. He was disappointed that Dionne was not part of the CICB but he accepted the role that Dionne could play on his behalf.

All of the victims that Sherri Mooney contacted were elderly women. The first victim had had her garage broken into and a few items stolen. Mooney introduced us and asked if we could come in to talk with her for a few minutes. The woman welcomed us in but seemed a little more hesitant than the victims whom Dionne had visited. The woman was not visibly upset by the incident. (She

said she would have felt differently if her house had been broken into). Mooney asked her how she was and gave her some tips on making her home more secure. She told her about the Age and Opportunity Centre which has lists of reputable handymen who could help her to replace her locks with deadbolts. The woman was reluctant to contact Age and Opportunity so Mooney offered to make the contact. She also informed the victim about Neighbourhood Watch. The woman felt that she could not approach her neighbours about getting involved with that crime prevention program.

The woman thanked us for the visit and seemed grateful for the contact. She did seem a bit unnerved by the experience, however. At one point she said, "I can feel my cheeks getting red". She was a rather quiet woman and seemed unsure about what was expected of her.

The second woman had been the victim of an attempted break and enter. The incident had occurred while the couple was away, nothing was taken, the locks were being replaced and the woman did not seem upset by the incident. She was busy baking but she listened to a few crime prevention tips from Mooney who left pamphlets as well. This woman thanked us for the visit but did not seem to require (or want) any assistance.

The third woman had had her purse stolen from her room (in a Senior Citizen's complex) while she dozed on the couch. She too welcomed us in and told us all about the incident and how she felt sorry for the "poor young boy" who had robbed her. In fact, she was more concerned for him than for herself because he was native ("and we're not too good to them anyway") and he was "clean and neatly dressed" and he "could have done so much better". The assistance given in this case was mainly a show of interest and concern. She said to us as we left that she had some grand-nieces and nephews who were "doing little things like this"; then she added "they're not little things, they're big things" and thanked us very much. She seemed sincerely grateful for the visit.

It is difficult to make general statements about the field observation because the number of cases is small, the victims were all in different circumstances and had had different experiences. The observations did leave the following impressions however:

1. The response from victims was generally favourable. There was some surprise but always gratitude. Certainly, all victims were left with a more positive image of the Police than before the visit.

Also, the victims who had been shaken up by the experiences seemed to welcome and benefit from being able to express their feelings and fears openly.

2. The amount of support that the victim wanted seemed to vary with the severity of the crime and with the kind of family support the victim had.
3. Although none of the victims refused to admit us to their homes, Constable Dionne did appear to have an advantage in this respect. The trust was more apparent, it came immediately, and few questions were asked concerning the researcher (Dionne just gave my name). Victims visited by Mooney were a little more hesitant, more reserved, and it seemed to take longer to establish a rapport with the victims. Also, there were more questions asked concerning the researcher's identity and role (Mooney also just identified me by name). A number of factors could have contributed to these different responses but nonetheless, the impression was made.

#### DATA COLLECTION:

The technique used to administer the victim and witness questionnaires was the telephone interview. The two major considerations that led to the decision to use telephone interviews were the time parameters of the research project and considerations of cost.

Three female interviewers were employed and given several training sessions where they became familiar with the questionnaires and to ensure that they would be able to deal with any contingencies that might arise during the course of an interview. At the beginning of each interview, the interviewers gave the following introduction:

##### Introductory Statement Given to Victims

Good evening. You were called recently by the Winnipeg Police Department and asked if you would be willing to participate in a telephone survey pertaining to crime victims. I was wondering if you could spare a few minutes now to answer the survey. Before I begin, I would like to inform you that your name will not be used in any report

that results from the survey. Our interest is in looking at the experiences that a large number of victims have encountered in order to determine what types of victim services should be introduced in Winnipeg.

##### Introductory Statement Given to Witnesses

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling with regard to a study being conducted in Winnipeg by the Department of Justice. The Department is studying the needs and experiences of witnesses to crime. In doing so, they hope to improve the services available to witnesses. The survey is being done by confidential telephone interviews. I am calling to ask if you would take the next ten minutes or so to answer the questionnaire.

As I have said, the interview is entirely confidential and your name will not appear on the questionnaire.

If any of the victims or witnesses were skeptical of the authenticity of the survey, the interviewers would provide them with the name and telephone number of an individual in the Police Department or Crown Attorney's Office who could verify the authenticity of the survey.

It took approximately five months to complete all of the telephone interviews. The data on the questionnaires were then coded and transferred to a computer file.

#### ENCOUNTER FORMS:

Victim and Witness Encounter Forms were introduced to provide feed-back regarding numbers and kinds of contacts which victim/witness assistance workers made with clients. These forms were coded and their data entered into the computer for the purposes of this evaluation.

##### A. Victim Services Contact Form

This form was completed by the Victim Services workers for each victim contacted by phone or in person as well as for victims who contacted the Victim Services Unit (in person or phone call). These latter victims were usually individuals who had received a letter from the Unit.

Each client was identified by name, address, telephone number (if available) and as much additional information as could be discerned. Ideally, age, sex, ethnic identity, and nature, date and location of incident were all noted. In addition, the following types of information were called for:

- mode of initial contact
- source of contact (i.e., how the client came to the attention of the Victim Assistance Program)
- service requested and/or provided
- time spent
- referrals made
- need for follow-up
- worker who provided the service

B. Witness Encounter Form

This form was completed by the Witness Services worker for each client who telephoned the Witness Reception Centre with a request of any substance and for clients who were assisted in person. Beginning in December 1982, the program workers used a log book to indicate inquiries and assistance provided which did not warrant the completion of encounter forms.

As with the Victim Services Contact form, each encounter form called for the witness's name, address, telephone number, sex, age, and whether or not the witness was also the victim. The Witness Reception Centre staff attempted also to note the court date, court room, name of the accused and charges laid, and the name of the Crown Attorney involved with the case. In addition, the form allowed for:

- a summary of services requested and provided
- indication of whether the client had been referred to another agency (e.g. Criminal Injuries Compensation Board)
- time spent
- worker who provided the assistance

ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS:

VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

Victim Services Workers:

The Victim Services Workers divide their time between personal contact with victims (telephone and/or visits), administrative tasks associated with providing service to victims (going through Sargeants' "dailies" to determine which victims require assistance; providing names of elderly victims to Age and Opportunity volunteers; filling out victim services "contact" sheets; phone calls regarding referrals to other agencies), and general office duties (filing, stuffing envelopes, signing letters [Constable Dionne]). Although all of the workers do all of these tasks to some degree, the proportion of time spent on these activities varies between the social work students and Constable Dionne.

The social work students spend one-half to two-thirds of their working time in contact with victims. This contact generally takes the form of personal visits. Their telephone contact is limited to occasional introductory calls and incoming calls which occur while they are taking their "office shifts". The balance of their time is divided between the administrative tasks outlined above and general office duties. Both of the students thought that secretarial help would definitely benefit the Program by freeing more of their time for the tasks for which they are trained. Heidi Friesen felt that a secretary trained in the Program's services and priorities could even assume some of the responsibility for going through the "dailies" as long as that person could consult a Victim Services Worker on questionable cases. With the social worker thus available for more hours of personal contact with victims, Sherri Mooney noted that the service would improve. For example, victims who required immediate assistance could be visited within a day of the crime instead of having to wait two or three days as is sometimes the case now.

When the Program started, Constable Dionne spent about 80 percent of



his time making personal visits to victims. He felt that the need for these visits existed but he also "wanted to know exactly where the people were at" so that he could help to steer the Program to meet victims' needs. As the students became more familiar with the Program and with the work, they gradually assumed more of the responsibility for home visits. By March 1983, Constable Dionne was spending 70 percent of his time doing administrative and general office work. A large part of this time was spent in "assuring that the project continues..., ironing out the problems... to make this thing go." Therefore, in addition to doing a share of the same kinds of activities the students do, his recent responsibilities have included overseeing the hiring and training of Age and Opportunity volunteers, and meeting with various organizations such as the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse. (He is organizing a training session for volunteers who will work with victims of domestic disputes). Many of his activities are necessary because the Program is so new. Constable Dionne hopes to be able to spend more time with victims once the Program is more established. He feels that there is a "great need for a Police Officer [in uniform] to go and visit many of the victims" particularly victims of assault where the victim has ended up in hospital, and elderly victims of serious crimes like purse snatching. A full-time social worker, part-time secretary and students on the Canada Works project would free some of his time for this increased contact with victims.

The Victim Assistance Program workers were asked about the kind of response they receive from victims. They all felt that the response is very positive. In terms of introducing the purpose of a visit, the Constable has the advantage of the uniform but the students found no problems with establishing their legitimacy. They are equipped with Police identification badges and brochures and a mention of the recent crime is usually all the introduction that is required. Constable Dionne often is met with surprise. The victim will say "I didn't know the Police did that." They are familiar with the investigative procedure but "to receive a letter, .. call or personal visit from an officer, after the fact - somebody that just shows interest - is tremendous public relations for the Police Department." Dionne also noted that the visits he has made to victims of serious assaults (often while the victim is still in hospital)

have been greatly appreciated. He has had the victims call him when they return home "just to thank me for going to visit them." Generally then, the response is:

Hey, the Police do care, and I think that is so important. The Police on the street haven't got time to do that ... I guess maybe they could find time but ... not for every victim. ... I think everybody should get a chance to work a few months in this office, just to find out what those people go through.

He is working on establishing a more effective training program for Police Officers so that "this response that I get from the public as a victim services worker can be generalized throughout the Police Force."

The victim services workers use telephone contact minimally. Besides the obvious problems of trying to establish identity, and the impersonal nature of a phone call, the workers mentioned other reservations that they had about using the telephone as a mode of contact. Sherri Mooney finds that personal contact is "far, far better" particularly for elderly victims. It can take 10 minutes to explain to an elderly victim the reason for the phone call and then "you're still not sure they have the idea." Heidi Friesen also finds telephone contact inadequate with elderly victims. The phone call can be frustrating for both because often the elderly have hearing losses and they will "say things that indicate they haven't understood what you're saying." There is also the possibility that the victim will gloss over the incident because it is "sometimes easier to tell an inanimate person at the other end that everything is fine and no help is needed."

Constable Dionne has had similar problems with telephoning elderly victims and he has made a rule not to telephone anyone over 65. Generally, it is difficult to offer assistance to any victim by telephone. He notes that:

I like to be able to give as much of myself to that person [victim] and listen and try to be as close to that person as I can so that they can respond back with whatever feelings

they have and I can be of some help if I can. It's difficult to do that over the phone ... It's too impersonal.

Dionne thinks that even a letter is better than a phone call because it is something concrete, there is less confusion possible and there is more certainty that the victim has received the proper information.

In response to the question "Do you think that the victim's needs that the Victim Assistance Program meets would be met by any other group if the Victim Assistance Program did not exist", there was a unanimous and emphatic "No!". The main reason given for this answer was that all of the other agencies which would provide assistance to victims only act if an individual makes contact with the agency. The problem arises because as Constable Dionne says, "the public is not educated enough to know that these [agencies] exist." When a person is victimized he doesn't know who to call "so he calls the Police". That call and the investigation which will result from it is all that Victim Services requires to initiate contact with the victim. Because the call to the Police is usually made immediately, Victim Services is able to provide assistance when it is most needed "within the first few days" or even the "first 24 hours in many cases". [Dionne]

Sherri Mooney pointed out that once the initial contact has been made, the Victim Services worker can "act as a liaison between the clients and the resources that could be of benefit to them". The worker can "explain what services are available to them and then have them decide what they want." Heidi Friesen explained that the Victim Assistance Program worker can then make the referral and follow it through to ensure that the victim does receive assistance. In addition, and if the victim wishes it, the worker can continue to maintain contact with the victim. She also noted that there are instances where the victim decides not to go to another agency but to continue receiving whatever assistance the Victim Assistance Program worker can offer. Essentially then, the victim service workers see the Victim Assistance Program as a service which, because of its operation within the Police Department, can make initial contact with victims, offer them immediate assistance, and refer them, if required to other available agencies.

The social work students see their most important role as being a "support for the victim... emotional support primarily." The criminal justice system leans towards the accused and ignores the victim. The Victim Assistance Program has allowed a change in that situation. "For the first time someone is concerned with them not for the information that they can give, but for them as a person; how they are doing as a result of the incident". There is some concern that the social worker within the program will become more of an administrator with increasingly less contact with victims. The problem as Heidi sees it is that the social worker would then "lose her awareness of victim needs and her skills in meeting them. The social worker should continue to have contact with victims because that is what she is trained to do."

In contrast to the role played by the students, Constable Dionne perceives his most important role at present to be one of "making sure everything functions. The program really has to come up with credibility and if things don't function properly, if I don't think enough in advance, ... we're going to run into stumbling blocks." In addition to his supervisory and training role, visiting victims is still an important part of Dionne's job and a part to which he hopes to devote more time once the program is well established and staffing has been finalized. "I hope to ... do a lot of visiting. My job will be to deal with the public..." Certain victims will have priority with Dionne. The elderly who have been victims of serious assaults need the Police visit and he hopes also to visit victims of wife abuse who "don't know where to turn." His experience has shown that "often a Policeman, in uniform, with some authority can help them."

All of the workers were asked to describe any differences which they could see between the ways victims respond to a Police Officer as opposed to a trained social worker. Both students thought that victims are less willing to express an emotional need to a uniformed officer than to a non-uniformed social worker who is therefore less threatening. Heidi Friesen commented that "people will not feel as free to tell a Policeman that they are 'coming apart'. A social worker can let them know that it's o.k. to 'come apart' for a time and then help them get back together in their own

time." In some circumstances, however, the uniform can be a help, especially if a person tends to defer to obvious signs of authority. They expressed the belief that as long as there is a balance within the Victim Assistance Program - with Police and non-Police workers - more victims will have someone to whom they can readily relate.

Constable Dionne saw differences as well. The differences are because "we come from different directions. I come from a Police experience ... a lot of people will have respect for the uniform and will ask and want certain things of a Policeman. The social workers, on the other hand, come from another direction and they:

will see a problem that I might not see at all.

I might know there is a problem but I might not be able to pinpoint it. They will go ahead and structure their interview to get at the root of the problem. As a result they get closer to the victim and get good results.

The social workers therefore, can assist with emotional support for victims and with referrals to other agencies when required.

Often, what the victim really needs, however, is information regarding the investigation. Dionne has found that in many cases:

the trauma is caused by the uncertainty resulting from [the crime], and they need the Policeman to tell them 'look, this doesn't happen too often and chances are it won't happen to you and these are the things you can do to prevent it from happening again.' The social worker might be out to say the same thing but not as effectively [as an officer in uniform].

The differences which all of the workers have noticed appear to be differences not so much in the way the workers approach victims, but differences in the ways victims respond to the workers based at least in part, on dress.

The Victim Assistance Program uses the services and staff of several other agencies and has a reciprocal referral system with some of these agencies. The Age and Opportunity Centre and the Victim Assistance Program

have a close working relationship. Volunteers from the Age and Opportunity make many of the home visits to elderly victims of break and enter crimes. Constable Dionne hopes to expand their involvement to include elderly victims of a greater variety of crimes.

The Victim Assistance Program has a relatively new reciprocal arrangement with the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse. The Victim Services workers are able to provide names of victims of domestic violence to the M.C.W.A. and in certain cases the M.C.W.A. will call the attention of the Victim Assistance Program to a victim's situation.

Klinik (Rape Crisis Centre) is an agency with which the Victim Services workers would like to work more closely. A close relationship has been difficult, however, because there is a long-standing conflict between the Rape Crisis Centre and the Police Department. Klinik has a rape crisis counselling training session which Heidi Friesen thinks would be valuable to Victim Assistance Program workers. To date, Klinik has been unwilling to allow the Victim Assistance Program social work students to participate in the training session ostensibly because the students are not permanent staff. Friesen suggested that the reason may be more of a professional rivalry in which the Klinik workers are saying: "This is my territory". Constable Dionne would like to see the Rape Crisis Centre having workers operating "right out of this building [PSB], right out of Victim Services, if necessary, so that the Police Officers that work on rapes know who these people are, and they know who the Police Officers are. That hasn't happened and I'm not sure that it's going to happen. There is fault on both sides."

The Manitoba Community and Correctional Services is a resource which Constable Dionne would like to use more than it has been used. This resource has not been used to date because "they don't know too much about us and we don't know about them". The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board however, is an agency with which the Victim Assistance Program has close, often daily contact. There is a reciprocal referral arrangement with this agency. Victim Assistance Program will refer victims to CICB if the victim might be entitled to a claim. And CICB may contact the Victim Assistance Program for certain crime report information which they have been unable to locate.

Although the Victim Assistance Program began as a close affiliate of the Witness Assistance Program, there is not a close relationship between the two programs according to the Victim Assistance Program workers. Constable Dionne, would like to see a smooth transition for the victim right from the time of the crime through to the Court appearance. He believes that this could be done by having the victim transferred from his workers to a Witness Assistance Program worker or for the Victim Assistance Program worker to continue on assisting the victim through the Court stage with the assistance of the Witness Assistance Program workers if required. This procedure has not been followed to date because of a lack of time for this kind of intense follow-up. "I have been virtually a one-man operation except for the help of my two social workers, so although I have plans to have this thing carried right through, I haven't had the time or the manpower. ... I haven't had the time to phone up the Witness Assistance people and ask them to watch for a particular individual." This is an area, therefore, which needs improvement and one which Dionne hopes will improve with a more efficient filing system to identify victims with upcoming Court cases.

Finally, the Victim Assistance Program workers were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Program. As expected, their responses were very favourable towards the Program in terms of the kinds of assistance it has been able to offer to victims. Heidi Friesen commented that a real strength of the Program is that it meets needs which have not been met before (in Winnipeg) and shows people that "someone does care". It demonstrates to victims that the accused is not the only one to receive attention from the criminal justice system. She also mentioned that the referral function of the Program is important for victims. Without this function many agencies which could be of assistance are rendered ineffective because of the lack of public knowledge of their existence and/or because the victim must make the initial contact (something which many individuals are reluctant to do even though a need exists).

Sherri Mooney is very supportive of the Program as well, and strongly in favour of the new directions the Program is taking. The involvement

with the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse is a "good step, an important step". The proposed referral system whereby names of victims of domestic disputes can be picked up from the "dailies" and referred to the Committee should be an efficient and worthwhile system.

Constable Dionne also voiced the above strengths and added that public relations for the Police Department is an important function of the Program. The Unit sends out "roughly 250 - 300 letters a week". While Dionne is unable to assess the precise impact of these letters he feels that they do show people that the Police care. "Providing information to victims" - information about the investigations and about crime prevention - is another function of major importance according to Dionne.

The major problem with the Program according to all of the workers is one of manpower. In order to continue to offer the kinds of services it now provides and to expand gradually into the proposed areas (domestic disputes and eventually secondary victims such as next of kin of homicides, suicides, traffic fatalities), the Program needs a full-time social worker and secretarial assistance in addition to a full-time Police Officer. Both the students and Constable Dionne noted during the course of the interviews how valuable a secretary would be to the Program. The secretary would allow the other workers to pursue their activities without being tied down with office duties.

Until April the Program has had the services of the equivalent of one full-time social worker (together the students' hours total 40/week). Constable Dionne feels strongly that the Program must continue to have the services of at least one full-time social worker "to assure continued services and assistance to victims." In a brief presented to the Advisory Board in January 1983, Dionne wrote:

In many cases there is a need to provide specialized services to victims in order that they can cope with the effects of crime... Many of [the areas in which a social worker can provide crisis counselling and referral] are too sensitive to be dealt with by volunteers. Policemen are not trained to look after these needs nor is it their responsibility ... Without



[the assistance of social workers] the project can only succeed in providing a band-aid type of service and only a small area of assistance will be looked at.

At the time of the interview, it was to this brief that Constable Dionne referred when he discussed the manpower needs of the Victim Assistance Program.

Another problem to which Dionne referred was the "whole police attitude toward assisting victims. A lot of them still have the attitude that victims have become victims because they asked for it ... We treat them [victims] as part of the evidence ... we are trained like that in the Academy ... - make sure the victim doesn't spoil the evidence, but don't worry about the victim's feelings." Education for the Police Department, therefore, is an area which needs improvement. Several in-service training sessions were held this year but because the sessions are scheduled infrequently and only 25 Officers are involved at a time, the possibility of reaching 1100 Constables plus supervisors is remote at best. Constable Dionne hopes to be able to establish a travelling training program which he could present during the shift overlap time in each district office. This education program could reach a significant number of Police Officers during a relatively short period of time.

In closing, Constable Dionne voiced his belief that the Program would benefit from having the services of a Police Officer above the rank of Constable directly involved with the Program. An Officer with the rank of Sargeant, for example, would be better able to get co-operation for the Program from the various Superintendents, Sargeants, and Staff-Sargeants with whom he must deal. "I had to do a lot of struggling, a lot of sleepless nights, just trying to think up ideas of how to overcome that problem - [a Constable does not tell a Superintendent what to do]. However, we have come unbelievably long distances with what we've got ... [but] it would have been easier [for someone with a higher rank]."

#### INTERVIEWS WITH POLICE:

##### 1. Uniformed Officers:

These Officers were interviewed to determine their knowledge of the Victim Assistance Program and their reactions to it. Only one of the Officers had participated in the in-service training program offered by Constable Dionne and Ann McBain. This Officer and the Sargeant were the most knowledgeable about the specific services which the Victim Assistance Program offers to victims. All of the Officers had heard of the Victim Assistance Program around the time it started. Further questioning revealed, however, that the two Constables from District 6 had the Victim Assistance Program confused with the Witness Assistance Program. They thought essentially that the Witness Assistance Program (office on Broadway) was also the Victim Assistance Program. All of the Officers from District 1 knew the distinction, many because they knew Constable Dionne personally.

When asked if they knew what services the Victim Assistance Program provides, five Officers identified emotional support ("helping them cope"; "making them not feel persecuted") as a major service of the Program. Providing information about the legal system was also identified by about half the officers as available through the Victim Assistance Program. Five Officers did not know what services are offered by the Victim Assistance Program but two of these men guessed that "help with the legal system" was probably one of the services. Only 2 Constables and the Sargeant knew that elderly victims are a priority with the Program.

Two officers had made referrals to the Program. One of the station duty officers made 1 or 2 referrals per week to Victim Assistance. The individuals he referred were generally elderly victims of robbery who he thought might need help in getting interim assistance from the Welfare Office. The other Officer who had made a referral to Victim Assistance Program had made it thinking that the Victim Assistance Program was simply a satellite office of the C.I.C.B. which offered financial compensation to victims.

Because their answers to the substantive questions revealed a considerable lack of knowledge and even misconceptions about the Victim Assistance Program, their thoughts on the value (pro and con) of the Program, its benefit to the Police Department, and suggestions for improvement were scant. Therefore, the discussion of these data is necessarily brief. All of the officers who expressed an opinion thought that the Victim Assistance Program was a good Program which could provide assistance to victims which they as investigating officers would not provide. Several men commented that there were many occasions when they had to leave a victim in a state of confusion or trauma. They welcomed a service which could provide more lengthy assistance to these victims. Many officers also noted that even if they had been able to stay longer they did not feel qualified to offer the kinds of support which these victims required. One officer commented that the Victim Assistance Worker "would know more about the different agencies and would be able to refer victims better than investigating officers would".

Two officers suggested that there was some overlap between the Victim Assistance Program and other agencies. One individual mentioned that if the office (Victim Assistance Program) was not open there were other agencies to call. This officer mentioned agencies like the Salvation Army and Harbour Light as alternatives. The other officer thought that there are "civilian agencies which do as much as the Victim Assistance Program does". He saw the Victim Assistance Program as mainly a referral agency.

Good public relations was a benefit for the Police Department which two officers noted. They thought that it was important that the public see the Police as being concerned with the victim and not just involved with the criminal. Two officers also thought that if people saw that their reports of crime and their feelings about being victimized were taken seriously by Police, more crimes would actually be reported.

When asked for suggestions to improve the Victim Assistance Program, all ten Constables mentioned that Police Officers needed to be made more aware of the Program and its services. They said that they would welcome a training program to inform them of the function of the Victim Assistance

Program. The Sargeant suggested an expansion of the Program as an improvement. He felt that the Program could benefit from the addition of more Police Officers and more social workers to its staff. He expressed concern over an unaccompanied social worker making initial contact with a victim and preferred that a Police Officer accompany the social worker on at least the first visit. Besides the safety dimension, he believed that this practice could lead to easier admittance to a victim's home. As he said, "People (especially elderly people) still respect the uniform and they want to know why you're there (you might have news of a relative or something) so they'll open the door and once it's open you can 'get your foot in' and talk to them." The Sargeant also recommended that raising the Constable's position within the Victim Assistance Program to Sargeant would give the position more strength and the power to perform its function more readily.

Overall, the Constables had a limited knowledge of the specific functions of the Victim Assistance Program but a generally favourable attitude to its existence and to services they believed it offered.

## 2. Superintendent Stephen and Deputy Chief Ogelski:

The Executive of the Winnipeg Police Department represented by Deputy Chief Ogelski is very familiar with the operation, goals and purpose of the Victim Assistance Program. Superintendent Stephen is also very knowledgeable about the Program. Stephen, particularly, is in touch with the day-to-day activities of Constable Dionne and the social work students because he has been closely involved with the Program since it began. Stephen directly supervises Victim Services and is a member of the Advisory Board of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program.

Deputy Chief Ogelski was consulted originally before the Program was accepted and he "agreed that it was a much needed thing ... and that's why we consented to do it." The entire Executive (three Deputy Chiefs and the Chief) is solidly behind the Program. When the Program started, it meant the loss of one Police Officer on street duty but the Executive agreed to it because "we felt that ... the cause was worth the loss of that personnel". Ogelski referred to the considerable amount of money which is spent by the Police Department on its Crime Prevention Unit.

He commented that while crime prevention is "a very important thing... I really and truly in my own opinion think that the victims of crime have long been neglected and ... I think it's worth every nickel, including any extra people they [the Federal Government] decide to put into it ... I was glad to see it come and I would like to see it stay."

Deputy Ogelski clearly sees the need for a program of assistance to victims of crime. He singled out victims of break-ins for comment:

... it is extreme trauma that they go through.

You can slap a person's face or you can kick him in the seat of the pants, and it only hurts for a minute. But if you invade their privacy [their home] which is their castle, then you really shake them up. They feel like they've been violated whether they've been physically touched or not.

These comments have been echoed many times by the Victim Services workers in conversations with the researchers.

Ogelski is also aware and highly supportive of the assistance which is available to victims who must appear in Court. In the past, Police Officers did provide some assistance to victims who were also witnesses by "spending time with the complainants before the Court cases... to brief them and refresh their memories." Unfortunately, heavier workloads and cutbacks in manpower have all but eliminated this contact. "We really don't have the time to spend with the witnesses and this is not right." He can appreciate the real need, therefore, for an assistance program which offers help to victims at the Court stage of the process that begins with victimization.

Superintendent Stephen also sees a real need for the Victim Assistance Program to continue. Help for victims "hasn't been happening and it's going to take quite a while before we get 1100 Policemen trained "to give some assistance to victims." The investigating Officers, besides not being trained to offer assistance usually cannot take the time. The Officers walk away from one victim "and there's another call waiting... We do need someone like Bernie [Dionne] ... to follow" the investigating

Officers and offer assistance. Stephen recognizes that the main function of the Victim Assistance Program is to provide initial contact with victims and refer them to other agencies if they need and/or want assistance of a more long-term nature.

Both Stephen and Ogelski are extremely pleased with the work that Constable Dionne has done as the Victim Services worker. Stephen stated: "I know that Bernie was the right man for the job; he's done a super job since he's been in there." Ogelski voiced the Executive's opinion when he said: "We think that we chose the right man ... Bernie is a very sincere individual." Stephen knows through his close contact with the Program that the volunteers (social work students) have contributed greatly to the success of the Program and to its ability to reach and assist the numbers of victims it has contacted. He is aware that Constable Dionne is "doing an awful lot of [office work] ... and he's not able to get out and assess problems", as much as he would like. Stephen is concerned that with the termination of the students' contribution, both the Program and Dionne will suffer. "I'm afraid that he's [Dionne] going to get burned out if ... we don't get him more help ... he certainly needs someone to ... funnel them [victims] to the right agency."

Stephen and Ogelski were asked to comment further on the value of the Program for the community and for the Police Department. Both men were quick to point out that the Program shows people that "there is someone that cares". This demonstration of concern is good for the community and also benefits the Police Department. The Program provides much needed public relations for the Police Force. As Stephen pointed out, "even if people don't want help from Bernie, just getting that letter [sent to victims of break-ins and some robberies and assaults] they see that the Department is a little concerned about them ... It's going to help our image". Ogelski sees the crime prevention unit as a better source of positive public relations because in contrast to this unit, the Victim Assistance Program provides assistance "after the fact". Thus, while the Victim Assistance Program does contribute to "PR" for the Police it is "PR in a different sense". The Victim Assistance Program provides

assurance to victims that their needs are being considered and it is this assurance that makes the Program so valuable in Ogelski's view.

The costs to the Department are minimal because the Federal Government has been responsible for salary and incidental costs. Stephen pointed out that even though the need for assistance to victims was clear "this Program would not have got going if we had had to pay for it." This sentiment was shared by Ogelski who added: "If we had to pay for him, I doubt very much ... that we could afford a man there." Ogelski indicated as well that the real cost to the Department is the "loss of the one man to us who we probably need because ... it's half of a cruiser car on one shift." He noted however, that the Program is regarded highly and that he would like to see it continue so the Department will "certainly attempt to keep our man in it as long as possible." Stephen felt that with the growing awareness of victims' needs and the expansion of these services in other areas, the Program will eventually be able to stand on its own merit. He speculated that: "If we keep it going for at least another year it's going to be in so solid that there's no way they'll be able to do away with it. The City would then maybe be forced into going along with the salary for the Constable whether they like it or not". Regardless of what happens, Stephen stressed that he would push to have the Program carried on. "It's got to stay ... Hopefully we can keep someone like Bernie in there."

Both Stephen and Ogelski are pleased with the Program as it now operates and with the proposed future of the Program. Stephen had one recommendation for the future (though not necessarily the immediate future) of Victim Services. He has found it difficult to spare his time for supervising the Program and as a result "Bernie ... has really been left on his own". He added that "For a Constable he's done one hell of a job. Everything that has happened so far he's done on his own pretty well." Stephen, therefore, would like to see the Victim Assistance Program switched over from his supervision to the Community Relations Unit. Within that Unit the Program would have the benefit of "more direct supervision" under the Sargeant and Staff-Sargeant. In addition, Constable Dionne could draw on the services of the uniformed Constables who work out of that Unit. These services would be invaluable during holiday or other times when Dionne is not available and for ongoing assistance in meeting victim's needs.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACTIVITY

As mentioned earlier, at the inception of the Victim Assistance Program, the decision was made to concentrate on break and enters in District 6 in Winnipeg and crimes against the elderly. As of March 25, 1983, a total of 2099 letters have been sent to victims of crime. Of this total, 1884 letters were sent to victims of break and enter and 215 were sent to victims of robbery and assault. In addition, there have been a total of 654 personal contacts (telephone or personal visits) during this period.

In order to assess the utilization of victim services, the research team coded the information included in the encounter forms filled out by the Victim Assistance staff for the last six months of 1982. Given below is the breakdown of information derived from the encounter forms.

Victim Encounter Forms:

In the last six months of 1982, the Victims Assistance staff had personal contact with 269 victims of crime. These contacts were either visits or telephone calls to elderly victims to inquire whether they needed any assistance or inquiries made by victims as a result of receiving a letter from the program. Given below is a breakdown of the different sources of contact.

Initial Source of Contact

Victim initiated as a result of letter	14.1%
Initiated by Victim Assistance staff	71.4
Referral	8.2
No information	6.3 (N=269)

As can be seen from above, most of the contact with victims is initiated by the Victim Assistance staff. It is also important to note that only a small portion of contacts were the result of referrals. It would seem at the present time that Police Constables are not referring victims to the Program.

Of the 269 personal contacts that were examined, the following crimes were present:



<u>Type of Crime</u>	
Break and Enter	43.9%
Purse Snatching	20.8
Robbery (other than purse snatching)	26.4
Assault	3.3
Rape	1.1
Other Offences	4.1

Knowledge of the type of crime and crime victim encountered by the staff is important to the extent that the needs of a victim is partially related to the type of crime committed. When one examines the services provided to victims of those crimes most frequently dealt with by the Victim Assistance Program some interesting differences emerge:

	<u>Type of Offence by Service Given</u>		
	<u>B &amp; E</u> (N=88)	<u>Purse Snatching</u> (N=29)	<u>Robbery</u> (N=37)
Information on Investigation	43.3%	24.1%	21.7%
Information on Criminal Justice System	2.2	0.	10.8
Referral for Legal Advice	1.1	0.	5.4
Information on Return of Stolen Property	15.6	0.	16.2
Referral to C.I.C.B.	0.	6.9	20.3
Emotional Support	37.8	69.0	21.7

Although victims of all three offences were given emotional support, it is apparent that victims of purse snatching received this service more than victims of other offences. This is probably due to the emotional impact of this type of crime and the age of the victims. For both victims of break and enter and victims of robbery other than purse snatching, the majority of services they received were of an informational nature. In order to further examine the different services provided to clients in contact with the Victim Assistance Program, a preliminary analysis was done on the relationship between age and type of service given.

	<u>Age of Victim and Service Given</u>	
	<u>59 and younger</u>	<u>60 and older</u>
Information on Investigation	36.4%	0.0%
Information on Criminal Justice System	8.1	0.
Referral for Legal Advice	0.	1.3
Information on Return of Stolen Property	20.5	15.0
Referral to C.I.C.B.	22.8	10.0
Emotional Support	11.4 (N=107)	73.7 (N=130)

The differences in services given to the elderly and others come out strongly in the above table. While the general population receive a wide range of services from the Victim Assistance staff, the elderly primarily receive some form of emotional support after being victimized. It is clearly the predominant service given to victims aged 60 and over. There are two implications to this finding. The first is that some thought should be given to expanding the program to the point where someone from Victim Assistance could be on the scene immediately after the Police become aware that a victim requires some form of emotional support. It would seem that this is the time when assistance is needed most. Under the present system, there is at least a one day delay between the offence becoming known to the Police and the victim being contacted by the Victim Assistance staff.

A second obvious implication is that the staff dealing with victims should have some training in being able to offer emotional support. Giving emotional support requires qualitatively different types of skills than delivering various types of information.

Analysis of Victim Survey:

The following section presents the finding gathered from the telephone survey of crime victims. The major objective of the survey was to assess the impact of the Victim Assistance Program in its initial attempt to provide a range of services to victims.

Sample:

A total of 284 victims agreed to participate in the survey. As mentioned earlier, the criteria used in selecting a sample were related to how a victim was initially contacted, and to select a group of break and enter victims that had not been contacted. Given below is the distribution of the sample by mode of contact:

<u>Types of VAP Contact in Victim Sample</u>		
Contacted by letter	130	(45.8%)
Contacted by telephone	16	( 5.6%)
Contacted by visit	30	(10.6%)
Not contacted	<u>108</u>	(38 %)
Total	284	

There were no surprises with the above distribution with the exception of the small number of victims that stated they had been contacted by telephone, since the sample selection was conducted in such a way as to produce at least twice the number of victims contacted in this manner. The only plausible explanation for this finding is that a number of victims contacted by phone reported to the interviewer that they were contacted by letter. This explanation is supported by the fact that 75 victims in the sample are elderly (age 60 and older) and the VAP had a policy of phoning or visiting every elderly victim. Yet we find that only 46 victims in the sample report being contacted by telephone or by a visit.

It was subsequently learned that the Victim Assistance Program had a policy of sending letters to victims who were phoned. It is possible that either these victims only reported the latter method of contact to the interviewer or, for some reason, remembered receiving the letter but not the phone call.

Because the Victim Assistance Program structured the program primarily toward break and enter victims, the crimes represented in the victim sample were intentionally skewed heavily toward this offence. The following distribution of crimes are present in the sample:

Types of Crimes Represented in Victim Sample

Break and Enter	86 %
Robbery	2.8
Purse Snatching	5.3
Assault	1.4
Willful Damage	1.1
Attempted Murder	.7
Other Crimes	2.1

Other characteristics of the sample indicate that the respondents represent diverse elements of the Winnipeg population. Given below are several demographic variables of the victim sample that illustrate this diversity.

<u>Sex</u>	
Females	45.8%
Males	54.2%

<u>Age</u>	
59 and younger	72.5%
60 and older	27.5%

<u>Family Income</u>			
Under \$5,000	2.5%	\$20,000 - \$29,999	15.5%
\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999	7.4	\$30,000 - \$39,999	13.7
\$10,000 - \$14,999	13.4	Over \$40,000	9.9
\$15,000 - \$19,999	7.0	No information	30.6

Method of Contact:

One of the purposes of the evaluation was to compare the different methods of contacting victims used by the Victim Assistance Program. If one or more methods of contact seem to have little value in providing victim assistance, this information should be of benefit to the Victim Assistance Program in structuring its activities and allocation of resources.

One of the initial questions asked in the survey was the reactions of the person to the contact by Victim Assistance Program. As is noted below the method of contact appears to influence victims' reactions.

Victims' Reactions to Receiving a Letter

Thought VAP service was valuable	33.8%
Provided good informational literature	5
Made victim aware that victim services were available	12
Circumstances of crime not serious enough to make use of VAP	17
Victim services has little or no value	16
Good to know that someone is thinking about the victim	7
No answer	8 (N=130)

Victims' Reactions to Receiving a Phone Call

Appreciated the contact	56.3%
Surprised to learn there was a Victim Assistance Program	12.5
Hesitant at first, but glad they called	18.8
Don't know or no answer	18.8 (N=16)

Victims' Reactions to Visit

Pleased with the visit	43.3%
Thought the service was good	23.3
Visit was comforting	13.3
Visit wasn't helpful	3.3
Upset with visit	3.3
Don't know or no answer	13.3 (N=30)

When a comparison is made of the reactions to the different methods of contact, the responses given suggest that personal visits and telephone contact is seen more favourably than contact by letter. If we group the responses into a more general category of positive response, the following differences are found:

Percentage of Positive Responses by Contact

Letter	50.8%
Telephone	75.1
Visit	79.9

There are two alternative explanations for the above finding. The first is that indirect communication through the use of a letter is not as effective as direct communication in conveying to victims the willingness of the Victim Assistance Program to be of assistance. As most of us know from experience, receiving a letter containing information on some service available is not often taken seriously or acted upon. On the other hand, a phone call or personal visit necessitates a two-way flow of communication that, by its very nature, requires more involvement on the part of the person receiving the information.

An alternative explanation is that, because the victims contacted by phone or personal visit were elderly or victims of more serious crimes, these victims had more salient needs than the victims of break and enter contacted by letter. If this were the case, then the victims with greater needs might respond more favourably to contact with the Victim Assistance Program, regardless of the nature of the contact. Although this latter explanation is plausible, data analysis described later in this section indicates that it is method of contact and not differential needs of victims which account for the higher proportion of favourable responses to personal contact.

Another basis for comparing the relative utility of the different methods of contact is to examine the kinds of assistance received by the victims as a result of being contacted by the Victim Assistance Program. In the interview the victims were asked whether or not they had received any of the following services from Victim Assistance Program. Given below is the distribution of those who stated they did receive the service. It should be noted that a victim could have received more than one of these services.

Percentage of Victims Receiving Service by Type of Contact

	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Visit</u>
Information on Crime Prevention	6.9%	37.5%	63.0%
Information on Investigation (including information on who to contact)	8.5	31.3	23.3
Information on other Social Service Agencies	0	12.5	33.3
Conversation that made the victim feel better about the incident	4.6	56.3	80

If one indication of the value of Victim Assistance Program is the volume of services given to victims, the use of personal contact is obviously preferable to contact by letter. On every form of assistance asked by the survey, victims contacted personally received significantly more service/assistance than those contacted by mail.

An additional concern related to method of contact is the degree to which contact with Victim Assistance Program would influence victims' perception of the criminal justice system. More specifically the question arises as to the impact of Victim Assistance Program on victims' assessment of Police performance. One would expect that personal contact with a victim following the crime would be more likely to improve a victim's assessment of the Police than simply receiving a letter. The responses to the question on Police performance support this idea.

Perception of Police Performance by Method Contacted

<u>Assessment of Police Performance</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Visit</u>
Good	63.1%	75 %	80 %
Average	23.9	6.3	10
Poor	4.6	6.3	0
Don't know or No Answer	8.5	12.5	10

Although a majority of respondents in each category of contact rate the Police performance as good, personal contact increases the likelihood that victims will define the Police as doing a good job.

One final measure of the differential effect of type of contact is the victim's willingness to be contacted by the Victim Assistance Program if "the same incident occurred tomorrow". The responses to this question are consistent with the previous findings on contact.

Percentage of Victims Who Would Like to be Contacted By VAP if the Same Incident Occurred Tomorrow

Contacted by letter	53.8%
Contacted by phone	87.5
Contacted by visit	76.7

Comparison of Victims Contacted With Victims Not Contacted:

In the research design of the evaluation of Victim Assistance Program, the decision was made to survey victims of break and enter from another Police district in Winnipeg that is roughly comparable to District 6. District 4 was chosen for this comparison. By comparing this group of victims to those in District 6, some estimate could be made of the effect of the victim services in ameliorating victim problems and concerns following the commission of the crime. The assumption behind this decision was that there would be sufficient use of Victim Assistance Program by break and enter victims who received a letter to allow a comparison to be made. Unfortunately, this assumption proved to be false. Approximately 6 percent of the sample who received a letter subsequently contacted the Victim Assistance Program. Given this low utilization rate, the only question that can be addressed is if there was any effect of a victim receiving a letter, even if he or she did not make use of the program. One area that might be affected, for example, is perception of Police performance. Victims who receive a letter from Victim Assistance Program might have a more positive attitude toward the Police even if they didn't use victim services.



When a comparison is made of those who received a letter with victims who received no contact, the latter group tend to rate Police performance a bit higher.

<u>Assessment of Police Performance</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>No Contact</u>
Good	63.1%	57.5%
Average	23.9	28.8
Poor	4.6	6.3

Elderly Victims:

As was stated earlier, the decision was made at the inception of the Victim Assistance Program to give a priority to elderly victims, on the assumption that their needs would be greater and more diverse than younger victims of crime. The data obtained from Victim Assistance Program encounter forms seemed to support this assumption by revealing that most of the assistance to elderly victims was in the form of emotional assistance while assistance to non-elderly victims was primarily informational.

Given this difference in services provided to the elderly, on one of the questions of particular interest in the telephone survey of victims was, what differences exist between the elderly and the rest of the population with respect to the needs following the crime and the fears that are experienced as a result of being a victim. Contrary to expectations, the findings from the victim survey indicate that there are no major differences between the elderly and non-elderly on needs and fears experienced following the crime. The findings supporting this conclusion will first be presented and then an explanation will be given to account for the discrepancy between these findings and the findings from the encounter forms.

Fears:

The providing of emotional support to elderly victims would indicate that this group is more adversely affected than others from crime. In the survey, the respondents were asked the following open-ended

question: "Have you had any problems or fears as a result of this crime?". In comparing the responses of the elderly and non-elderly, the following differences were found:

Percentage of Elderly and Non-Elderly Reporting Fears/Problems

	<u>59 and younger (N=206)</u>	<u>60 and older (75)</u>
Fear of re-occurrence	13.6%	10.7%
Apprehension/Nervousness	14.6	18.7
Threatened by invasion of property	1.5	5.3
Fear of being alone	3.9	2.7
Fear of entering home	2.9	5.3
Fear of going out	4.9	10.7
Sleeplessness	1	1
Concern for family	1.5	0
More cautious	15.0	12.0
Don't feel safe at night	1.0	2.7
Feel vulnerable	4.9	5.3

Although one can find several instances in the above table where there is some difference between the elderly and non-elderly, given the expectation that elderly victims have proportionately more fears/problems than others when victimized, the similarity between the two groups is surprising. Additional data on the lack of differences between the two groups is found when examining the responses to questions related to specific fears the victims developed as a result of the crime. Following the open-ended question, the interviewers asked a series of questions to elicit responses on fears resulting from the crime that might not have been given in the initial question.

	<u>59 and younger</u>	<u>60 and older</u>
Fear of being alone	30.1%	26.7%
Fear of entering home	43.2	32.0
Fear of going out	33.0	33.3
Sleeplessness	32.0	32.0

Based on the above findings, it would be difficult to argue that the elderly should receive priority in victim services based on the fears/problems they experience from being victimized.

The same conclusion is reached when a comparison is made between the two groups on the percentage who stated that they had specific needs following the commission of the crime.

<u>Percentage of Sample With Specific Needs Following the Crime</u>	<u>59 and younger</u>	<u>60 and older</u>
Someone to talk to after the Police had left	32.5%	22.7%
Somebody to stay with the victim to provide security	19.9	13.3
Emergency repairs to secure home	34.5	33.3

Given the absence of significant differences between the two age categories in the sample, how can this be reconciled with the apparently contradictory findings from the encounter forms which suggest that elderly victims' needs are greater than other victims of crime. The most plausible explanation for this discrepancy is that the findings from the encounter forms are primarily the result of the method in which victims were contacted and not the age of the victims.

In order for emotional support to be given to a victim, there must be some form of direct contact between the victim and a victim services worker. The structure of the program dictates that most personal contacts are with elderly victims. For a younger break and enter victim, receiving emotional support or other services from Victim Assistance Program would necessitate that the victim initiate contact and be willing to disclose over the telephone that he or she needs some form of assistance over and above information. Given our reluctance in this society to initiate contact with a stranger and request assistance such as emotional support, one should expect to find that younger break and enter victims were rarely provided this service, even though the results of the survey indicate that their

needs and fears following the crime are just as great as elderly victims.

Discussions with Constable Dionne give some support to the above interpretation. He noted that he preferred to make direct visits to the elderly rather than use the telephone because he thought that a telephone conversation was inadequate in revealing the various needs the victim might have. He also noted that when a personal visit was made, it was first necessary to establish some rapport with the victim before the victim would disclose their situation candidly and the types of assistance they required. One would expect that the same kind of rapport would have to be established with younger victims before a full picture would emerge on the type of assistance they require.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Several general statements can be made about the Victim Assistance Program - its present status, its strengths and weaknesses and suggestions for change.

The Victim Assistance Program has strong support from all quarters which were investigated in this evaluation. The uniformed Constables, the Police administration, the staff of VAP and the victims who received assistance from the program were all highly supportive. Briefly, the strengths of the Program are:

1. It provides assistance to victims when the investigating Officers are unable to meet the needs. The Officers do not have to feel that they are leaving victims without any support nor do they have to try to provide assistance for which they do not feel qualified.
2. It is a service which has never existed before in Winnipeg and it is therefore meeting a variety of needs which would previously have gone unattended.
3. Because of its position within the Police Department, it can initiate contact with victims instead of having to rely on their requests for assistance. This situation allows for more immediate assistance to victims and it means that more victims will actually receive help.
4. It is expanding its role as a liaison between victims and existing agencies which possess resources to deal with specific problems. This role increases the efficiency of meeting victims' needs and again means that more victims will actually receive the assistance they require.
5. It contributes to a more positive image of the Police Department by demonstrating to victims that Police interest in their case does not stop when the investigating officer takes a statement from them.

There are several areas which should be considered weaknesses of the program. Several of these weaknesses and recommendations for improvement are listed below:

1. The uniformed Constables are not fully aware of the existence of the VAP and the services it provides. Since these Constables are usually the first line of communication between victims and the Police Department,

their role in referring victims to the VAP is crucial. The methods used to date to educate the Officers about Victim Services have either been inadequate (Police memos) or inefficient (in-service training) in developing awareness. Constable Dionne's proposal for a travelling training session which he could present during shift overlap times in each District should be considered. This method could reach a significant number of officers in a relatively short period of time. It would also likely be more effective than written communication because it could incorporate audio-visual teaching aids along with an oral presentation.

2. An insufficient number of personnel infringe on what appears to be the most important role of Victim Services workers - victim assistance via personal contact. In 1982-83 the Program had one paid staff person - Constable Dionne. It was able to meet the needs of a greater number of victims, however, through the efforts of the two student social workers (unpaid) and a number of volunteers. If the program continues with one Constable, no students, and the volunteer contingent, it will necessarily have to reduce the number of victims it contacts personally. With a Constable and another paid staff member, the Program could continue to offer assistance to the same number of victims; if the second paid staff person is a social worker the Program could continue to offer effective assessment and referral services. Any additional staff members such as secretarial help or additional Constables or social workers could readily be accommodated into the Program since there are still a number of untouched areas of victim assistance (e.g. secondary victims).
3. There are indications from several sources (Sargeant McEwan, Constable Dionne, and Superintendent Stephen) that the Victim Assistance Program is lacking because it does not have the direct involvement of a Police Officer with a higher rank. A Sargeant supervising the Program would be better able to get co-operation from the various ranks within the Department. The suggestion that Victim Services be incorporated into the Community Relations Unit would give the Program supervision from a Sargeant. It would also make available a number of uniformed Officers who would be more familiar with Victim Services.

4. During the first year of the Victim Assistance Program, a good deal of time and resources have been allocated to providing services to the elderly, with beneficial results according to the victim survey. However, results from the survey also indicate that better use could be made of the program's limited resources if the time and expense of sending letters was used to provide similar services to the rest of the population that are now being given to the elderly. The low utilization rate by victims contacted by letter illustrate the ineffectiveness of this method in providing assistance to victims.

ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS:

WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

Witness Assistance Workers:

The two full-time staff members of the Witness Assistance Program have different responsibilities and daily routines. Ann McBain is the co-ordinator of the Program and she spends the largest part of her time on administrative tasks including record keeping, correspondence, travel and generally keeping up with "what we are supposed to be doing and planning into the future what we want to be doing. Presently, with the provincial expansion there is a lot more paper work to be done just keeping track of who is involved." She is working at getting a victim/witness assistance program operating in several rural centres (Brandon, The Pas, Thompson, Dauphin). The Brandon expansion is the furthest ahead to date. There are no paid staff members but there is a volunteer advisory board with representatives from the Crown's Office, Police Department, probation, the judiciary, and a YMCA staff member who has assumed the responsibility for overseeing the volunteers. The program is not in operation yet but McBain expects it to be running shortly.

The balance of McBain's time is spent relieving or assisting Wendy Bond in the Witness Reception Centre. Only McBain and Bond have signing authority for the fee vouchers so whenever Court is in session, one of the paid staff members has to be available in the Witness Reception Centre. The volunteers can answer questions and man the telephone lines but they cannot dispense fee vouchers.

In contrast, Wendy Bond spends most of her working time in direct contact with witnesses. A great deal of this contact is by telephone because many witnesses call the Reception Centre with questions regarding their subpoenas or their upcoming Court appearances. Often, Bond will need to consult the witnesses' files in the Crown Attorneys' Office in order to answer questions. Therefore, she spends "about an hour per day [on average] in contact with Crowns, finding out from them [on their files] the things that witnesses need to know".



An ongoing activity for Bond and for McBain when she is in the Reception Centre is dispensing fee vouchers to witnesses who present their subpoenas at the Reception Centre. They also answer questions from witnesses who often don't know where the Courtroom is, who the Crown Attorney is or when they should go to the proper court. At certain times of the day, therefore, the Witness Reception Centre is quite a busy area. The busiest times are early in the morning and first thing in the afternoon when witnesses arrive for their scheduled Court appearances.

Court cancellations is another ongoing activity for the Witness Assistance Program staff. They receive lists of witnesses whose Court appearances have been cancelled from the Crown Attorneys. Most of the cancellations are done by the volunteers. Indeed, cancelling witnesses is the major duty of the volunteers. Some witnesses are difficult to reach even after several attempts, however, and in these cases Bond (or McBain on occasion) will take the names home and call the witnesses in the evening. Bond does these cancellations "almost nightly ...[for]... maybe fifteen minutes ... but it saves maybe 6 or 7 witnesses a trip to Court.

Bond also does the typing for the Program and she finds it difficult to allot time for this responsibility. Ideally, they would use the services of the Judges' or Crowns' secretaries for the small amount of typing which McBain requires. Unfortunately, they have met some resistance to their requests from the Judges' secretaries who seem to "have ample time... They just don't seem to want to cooperate". The Crowns' secretaries on the other hand "are going out of their minds already they're so busy", so their services are not often requested.

Both McBain and Bond thought that the services of at least a part-time secretary would benefit the Program. The secretary could do the small amount of typing which the Program generates and be available to relieve in the Reception Centre. This relief is especially needed when McBain is out of town or when Bond must go to the Crowns' Office for information. The secretary would have to have signing authority for the fee vouchers to make the position most useful. While they cannot justify the services of

a full-time secretary at present, McBain commented that, "certainly by next year I would think we're not going to be able to do the things we want to do on a staff of two people."

Ann McBain responded to the question about her most important role as a Witness Assistance worker by saying that

it is important to keep the general public comfortable with the Criminal Justice System... because that results in many other good things. You've got more co-operative witnesses who are not getting screwed around; they're not appearing four times and being told to go home and they'll be mailed a cheque - that they don't receive... I think if we are doing something we're hopefully making people more aware that we're trying to make it easier for them... [Consequently] the benefit for the system, hopefully, will be that not so many cases will blow up because witnesses don't show [or don't come with expected documents].

The ease with which witnesses can contact the Witness Reception Centre and get answers to their questions relates to the latter benefit. Often witnesses will call the Witness Reception Centre to say that they don't know what documents they are expected to produce in Court or that they cannot produce certain documents. Because the Witness Reception Centre staff know which Crown to contact and when, they can relay the information and if necessary the Crown can locate another witness to produce documents which "may be crucial" to a case.

Wendy Bond thinks that her most important role is as a "liaison between the Crown Attorneys and their witnesses". This liaison saves "a lot of time" for the Attorneys who are "getting me to do a little bit more leg work for them now like finding out things from witnesses..." The liaison also benefits witnesses who, under the old system, would have difficulty even finding out who the Crown was, and if they got that far, getting to speak to him/her was also difficult. In other cases, for example, if the Crown has been changed for some reason, "it takes a lot of digging to find out who has the [witnesses'] file." It would be very difficult for witnesses to find out because "if they don't have a person to ask for, they're lost."

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse are the two agencies with which the Witness Assistance Program has the most contact. There are referrals to and from the CICB and occasionally "Ab [Peterson, CICB] will ask us about the co-operation of a witness" or the disposition of a given case to help make a decision in a questionable claim. The contact with the M.C.W.A. is relatively recent but McBain can see "there being a fairly close interaction there" in the future. Again the referrals are reciprocal, but to date, infrequent.

In addition, the Witness Assistance Program has "a close working relationship" with the Victim Assistance Program. Ann McBain can see no problems with there being a neat transition to the Witness Assistance Program for victims who have been assisted by the Victim Assistance Program when it comes time for their Court appearances. In "particularly violent cases" however, "if you've got someone that's been with you from the beginning it makes sense to carry it through [the Court appearance] rather than hand the person over to someone else." In other cases, it would be a simple task to find out information about the Court appearance for victims who are nearing that stage.

About the relationship between the two programs, McBain commented that

I think we can have the same liaison we've always had, I don't see any problem developing... I don't think the Program is going to suffer at all by the split. I think it may benefit. It's just difficult to keep two virtually separate programs under one person... It's hard to keep a handle on things over the phone... I really don't think there's any reason why we can't have the close working relationship - the day-to-day contact - that we've always had.

McBain and Bond were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Program. Generally, they both felt that the Program provides a valuable service to witnesses by "making the whole thing smoother". The fee payment system "benefits the system and the public" and the Reception

Centre provides a welcomed refuge for Crown witnesses. Bond added that the "informational service is the most important" service that the staff provides. Providing information in many cases helps witnesses emotionally as well. Many witnesses have commented to her that the information made them "feel a lot better" about their upcoming Court appearances.

In terms of weaknesses of the Program, Bond said that she "would like to see the volunteers doing more. A lot of them are still very shy on the telephone" and thus unable to get all the information that is needed from witnesses. They are gradually becoming more useful however, as Bond has instructed them to "do a lot more digging" on telephone calls. She feels that the new training session which will feature "smaller discussion groups" will be more valuable to the volunteers than the panel who "gave an overview of the system" at the last training session.

Bond would also like to see more expansion within the City before the Program attempts to expand too much rurally. For instance, the Witness Assistance Program brochure "should get out on the PSB subpoena". (These subpoenas are served to witnesses whose Court appearances are at the Public Safety Building not the Provincial Judges Building). McBain commented that they have not received any requests for new brochures from the PSB and added that she is "not too terribly concerned about PSB at this point, because there aren't too many witnesses that get called to PSB... so it might be a waste of paper to be sending them [the brochures] out from PSB." Both McBain and Bond can see a need for an expansion of the Witness Assistance Program to Juvenile Court, however, because "witnesses are really in the dark over there." The Crown's Office at the Juvenile Court has expressed a keen interest in the Program so the gate appears to be open to expand into that area.

Finally, McBain and Bond were asked to comment on the Witness Alert System. At the time of the interviews, four witnesses (three doctors and one "civilian" employed in the downtown area) had been put "on alert". None of these individuals was required to appear in Court. At first, both workers were reluctant to try the Alert System because of a fear that the

Crown Attorneys would be unwilling to take the risk. Bond is "still a little leery about using it". The Crowns however, have been very co-operative in the few cases in which the system has been tried and no problems have been encountered in putting witnesses "on alert". Bond pointed out that doctors often have an alternative to the Alert System because in many cases their presence is excused if they produce a letter outlining the information about which they were subpoenaed to testify. Other professionals don't often have that alternative, however, and McBain said that she can see the Alert System being used more frequently in the future.

Two of the volunteers with the Witness Assistance Program were also interviewed to determine their role within the Program and their feelings about its value. There is one volunteer on duty in the Reception Centre during each shift (a.m. and p.m.). What that person does while "on duty" appears to depend largely on his or her personality and, of course, the situations which arise.

All of the volunteers are expected to do Court cancellations. This activity takes up a large part of their working time. The balance of their time is spent in the Reception Centre answering the telephone, answering questions from witnesses in person, and filling out the fee vouchers for witnesses. (Volunteers do not have signing authority for the vouchers but they can fill in the other necessary information). Their personal contact with witnesses ranges from giving simple directions in response to questions, to offering real emotional support to witnesses who are nervous, afraid, or confused about the whole seemingly "impersonal" process.

The volunteers were very supportive of the Program and agreed that it is doing a "good job" for witnesses. One volunteer commented: "I don't know how they did without it before... Things must have been hectic... a complete 'schmozzle'". They also felt that expansion to Juvenile Court and to the other City Courts would be a good idea because "the only people we're helping are the ones in this building".

Neither of the volunteers had been involved in an initial formal training session because they were both original workers who began their

work before a formalized training program was initiated. While they could see some value in a presentation-type training session, they both felt that on-the-job training is the most useful type of training for Witness Assistance Program volunteers.

Crown Attorneys:

All of the Crown Attorneys were aware of at least some of the services that the Witness Assistance Program offers. They were all aware that the Witness Assistance workers do Court cancellations, answer questions from witnesses, and act as a liaison between the Crown Attorneys and witnesses. Most of the prosecutors did not specifically mention emotional support as a service available to witnesses through the Program. Neil Cutler and Manfred Plug, however, had each had a witness who was assisted in this manner by the Witness Assistance staff. Only Cutler was aware of the existence of the Witness Alert System and he was the only Crown interviewed who had had a witness put "on alert" by the Program's staff.

The Crown Attorneys' evaluations of the Program were all positive. They were extremely pleased with the fact that the Program workers act as a liaison between witnesses and prosecutors. They felt that this liaison role benefits both them and the witnesses. Witnesses who tried to call the Crown Attorneys' Office before the Program started would get "bounced around" from one secretary to another and eventually hit "a bureaucratic wall". If a witness did manage to contact the right Crown Attorney, chances were good that he or she could not take the time to answer questions very thoroughly. Marcia Kran felt that not only would the Witness Assistance staff be able to answer questions more completely, but they would also have the time to listen to a witness's other concerns or fears about making a Court appearance and giving testimony. "It's far more efficient... and the service must be better."

This channelling of calls through one place saves witnesses "a certain amount of aggravation" but it also saves time for the Attorneys. Rick Saull commented that he used to spend "a hell of a lot of time... returning phone calls from witnesses. The Witness Assistance Program has taken a

little off my load..." as he spends less time now taking non-urgent calls. Cutler pointed out that at first he was "very ambivalent" about the Program because:

it seemed aggravating to have someone come trooping in with all these files and all these questions.

After a while I realized that to sit down with one person for ten minutes and talk about five cases was easier than having calls come in "helter-skelter".

These comments represent the feelings of the other Crown Attorneys as well.

The prosecutors are also pleased with the Court cancellation function of the Witness Assistance staff. This function is appreciated although it does not directly save time for the Crown Attorneys. It was their secretaries who did the cancellations in the past so it lifts the chore from the secretarial staff. Marcia Kran indicated that it indirectly saves time for her because "all my other work comes back to me more quickly". Kran also suggested that the cancellation system may work more efficiently because in many cases, Wendy Bond will have spoken to the witnesses prior to the cancellations and may therefore know alternative numbers where they can be reached.

Other positive aspects of the Program which the Crown Attorneys commented on, were the Witness Reception Centre, the brochure, and the volunteers. They see the Reception Centre as a "good idea". The staff provide "a very pleasant atmosphere [plus]... magazines, coffee and pleasant chit-chat" all of which offer witnesses a "good psychological advantage". Several prosecutors, however, felt that witnesses who are subpoenaed to Courts on the second or fourth floors do not know about the Reception Centre or that they are welcome to use the facility.

The brochure which is delivered to the witnesses along with a subpoena is regarded as a useful tool - one which not only provides information but lets witnesses know that "they're not alone." Most of the Crowns who were interviewed had not looked closely at the brochure but they felt that the concept is a "very good idea".

Although the prosecutors were not asked specifically about their impressions of the volunteers, Bob Maxwell offered his praise for their work. "They're good and they help in that building [Provincial Judges Court], directing people to the right Courtroom, coming and telling me so and so is here..." He was pleased that the Program has attracted people who are doing it just "as a public service".

The Crown Attorneys made a number of positive statements about the staff of the Witness Assistance Program. Cutler commented "they are sincere... and they seem to be working hard". This comment reflects the views of the others who were interviewed. Wendy Bond, in particular, was singled out for high praise. She is in most direct contact with the Crown Attorneys. Different prosecutors referred to her as "very helpful", "very hard-working", and "pleasant". Another prosecutor added:

I really like working with Wendy; I think she's fantastic. She's excellent in dealing with us and she's excellent in dealing with [witnesses]... [The Program] is really lucky to have a person like that... She does a really good job, ... she's hard-working,... she really cares about what she's doing... With her it's just a pleasure; she does as much as she can for you.

Generally, then, the Crown Attorneys have responded very favourably to the Program. There were few recommendations for its improvement or expansion. Cutler pointed out that many witnesses are "upset" when they discover after the trial that they will not be compensated for lost wages. He suggested, therefore, that the brochure might be altered to inform witnesses of this situation in advance.

Phlug believes that the Program could go "a little bit farther" by "telling people what the Court is about, preliminary hearings [etc.]". It is his impression that the Program is not doing that because "I still explain that to witnesses and most people don't know anything about it before I talk to them. "Saul, on the other hand, is pleased with the information his witnesses have received. He has received feedback from witnesses "indirectly" through a substantial decrease in the number of



questions directed to him about the whole Court process. He assumes that the witnesses "have been educated in part, and I can only attribute it to that [Witness Assistance Program]; either that or it's an amazing coincidence."

The other topic that was raised for discussion with each of the Crown Attorneys was the Witness Alert System. As mentioned earlier, only Neil Cutler was aware of the System and had had a witness put "on alert". The others did not know that the System is "institutionalized" and available through the Witness Assistance staff. When the concept of the system was outlined to them by the interviewer, their response was generally favourable. In fact, two of the prosecutors said that they had used the procedure themselves on occasion. Maxwell saw no real need for the System to be run through the Witness Assistance staff. It is "just as easy" for him to arrange the Alert himself. Saull pointed out that "so far it [the Alert System] has been kind of quietly going along fine." He added that "if the Crown is diligent he can handle it alone" but he indicated that it could also be done through Wendy Bond.

None of the prosecutors saw any real problems with the System. Cutler thinks that the system is "terrific" as "there are so many cases where witnesses end up not being required for one reason or another." If that witness is a doctor "you screw up a lot of people" if the doctor has to cancel a full slate of patients. Several of the Crowns had less sympathy for the doctors, however, and felt that the system should be available to other witnesses for whom a day's lost wages would be a significant hardship. They also indicated that they often make special arrangements with doctors in any case. In many instances, doctors are excused if they send in a written report on injuries in lieu of oral testimony. In other cases, doctors will be given a very specific time for their testimony - usually, either first thing in the morning or afternoon. Generally, though, the idea of the Alert System was well received because as Phlug noted: "we are greatly inconveniencing people" by asking them to appear early in the day for an unknown and unknowable amount of time.

The Alert System would not be jeopardized [as McBain and Bond had feared] by an incident in which a witness "on alert" did not show up for

testimony as directed. Cutler responded to this hypothetical situation with the comment: "It's something you can work around... Most judges would be prepared to recognize that witnesses are human... and nothing works 100 percent all the time."

As for the logistics of the Alert System, Kran pointed out that it would work as long as the Crown had had the opportunity to speak with the witness at some time before the Court appearance. Prosecutors usually use the time before the trial begins to talk with witnesses and review testimony. A witness "on alert" would not be available at this time so a prior meeting or phone call would be necessary. Saull also made an important point when he expressed concern that if the System were "advertised" it could lead to a serious breakdown in the Court process. "If you tell the people about something that is available that hadn't really concerned them until it was put in front of them, I think you might have some problems." Theoretically, all witnesses could be "on alert" with no one actually present to testify. He was, therefore, agreeable to the System but cautioned against its indiscriminate use.

WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Based on the number of encounter forms in the files, the Witness Assistance Program has dealt with a total of 1,777 witnesses since the inception of the program in June, 1981 to the end of February, 1983. According to the staff of the program, this is a conservative figure since not all of the inquiries they receive are written up on the encounter forms. Using the last twelve months of these figures as an indication of volume of activity, the monthly average is approximately 86 witness assistance contacts.

Witness Encounter Forms:

In order to assess services provided by the Witness Assistance Program, the research team coded 347 counter forms from the last five months of 1982. It was quickly discovered, however, that this data would be of little value because of the amount of missing information for a number of categories on the encounter form. In contrast to the Victim Assistance Program, the vast majority of encounter forms on witness assistance are the result of client initiated contacts. As a result, the staff are often limited to what the witness tells them on the telephone concerning the nature of the case and demographic characteristics of the witness.

One piece of information that can be used from the encounter forms is the types of assistance given to witnesses who used the program.

Services Provided to Witnesses

Information on outcome of case	5.3%
General information	2.6
Information on why the individual was subpoenaed	33.0
Assistance to witness who would not be available on date specified on subpoena	19.0
Assistance on time narrowing	26.8
Information regarding documents	7.5 (N=347)

As can be seen from the distribution of services, most of the witness inquiries were related to questions concerning conflicts or reduction in time commitments and information explaining why the witness had received a subpoena. It should also be noted that only 5 percent of the inquiries were related to the outcome of the case. As will be discussed, a significantly higher proportion of the witnesses interviewed stated they would have liked to receive this information.

Analysis of Witness Survey:

The following section includes the findings from the telephone interviews of witnesses. Since the Witness Assistance Program offered essentially the same range of services to all witnesses, regardless of the type of crime or age, the types of comparisons made in the analysis of the victim survey will not be utilized in the present analysis.

Sample:

A total of 201 witnesses participated in the telephone survey. The only criterion that was used in the selection of the sample was to include witnesses of property crimes and crimes against the person. The actual distribution of crimes represented in the sample are given below.

Types of Crimes Represented in Witness Sample

Property (vandalism, theft, etc.)	54.7%
Person (assault, rape, etc.)	28.9
Highway Traffic Act	12.4
Other Crimes	4.0

Approximately 45 percent of the sample reported that they were the victim of the crime. As with the sample of the victim survey, the sample of witnesses appear to represent a diverse number of backgrounds, as the following distribution of demographic characteristics indicate.

	<u>Sex</u>	
Females		40.3%
Males		59.7%

<u>Age</u>			
20 and younger	11.4%	31 - 40	17.9%
21 - 25	20.4	41 - 50	16.9
26 - 30	18.9	50 and older	14.4
<u>Income</u>			
Under \$5,000	1.5%	\$20,000 - \$29,999	20.9%
\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999	8.0	\$30,000 - \$39,999	14.9
\$10,000 - \$14,999	9.5	Over \$40,000	8.5
\$15,000 - \$19,999	10.4	No information	25.4

Utilization of Program:

One of the central questions in the evaluation of the Witness Assistance Program was an assessment of the willingness of witnesses to contact the Program when they had questions and concerns related to receiving the subpoena. Unfortunately, no brochures were being sent out to witnesses during the time the evaluation was being conducted. This would obviously reduce the awareness that witnesses would have of the Program.

Approximately 19 percent of the sample stated that they had contacted the Witness Reception Centre before their Court appearance. Listed below are the questions asked by the witnesses who contact the Centre prior to their Court appearance.

Witness Inquiries Prior to Court Appearance

Do I have to go?	32.4%
What if I can't make it?	5.3
What is this?	10.5
What is expected of me in Court?	21.1
Is the trial still on?	5.3
Questions on location of Court, aspects of the crime, etc.	21.1
Other	4.1 (N=38)

There were indications from the interviews that a significantly higher proportion of the sample could have benefitted from contact with the Centre. For example, when asked if they would have found it helpful to talk to someone about Court procedures and what was expected of them in Court before their Court appearance, 58.2 percent stated they would have found this helpful. When asked if they found someone to talk to about these matters, 20.4 percent answered in the affirmative. When asked who they found to talk to about Court procedures, the following answers were given:

Sources of Information Used by Witnesses

Witness Reception Centre Staff	7.3%
Friends/Acquaintances	46.3
Relatives	12.2
Crown Attorney	31.7
Employer	2.4 (N=41)

If one can assume that the knowledge that friends and relatives have of Court procedures might be questionable, it would seem that even those who did find someone to talk to about their forthcoming Court appearance would probably have benefitted if they had talked to the staff of the Witness Reception Centre.

When the witnesses were asked why they didn't contact the Witness Reception Centre for this information the two model responses were: "I didn't know they could help" (40.2%) or, "I had never heard of the Centre" (27.4%).

One final area of utilization concerns information related to the outcome of the case. Although 67 percent of the respondents stated that they would have liked to receive information on whether or not there was a conviction and the sentence given to the accused, 57 percent stated that they didn't receive this information. Given the high proportion of witnesses who want this information, some thought should be given to developing a procedure for communicating the outcome of cases to witnesses, particularly those witnesses who were the victims of the crime.

Witness Fees:

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Witness Assistance Program initiated a procedure of disbursing witness fee vouchers in order to increase the ease with which witnesses would be paid for their services. The findings from the survey demonstrate that this system is working remarkably well. When the respondents were asked if they had any difficulty in obtaining their witness fees, the following answers were given:

<u>Difficulty in Obtaining Witness Fees</u>	
Very difficult	0.0%
Difficult	.7
Easy	46.9
Very Easy	52.3

An added benefit of this system is that it guarantees at least nominal contact between a witness and the Witness Reception Centre, which might be used by the witness to ask any questions he or she might have related to their Court appearance.

Impact of Program on Assessment of Court System:

One of the questions in the research was to what extent would the Witness Assistance Program influence witnesses' assessment of the Judicial System. The sample was asked how satisfied they were with the way the case was handled by the Courts. Their responses show that their dissatisfaction is not strongly affected by the Program.

Witness Satisfaction With Court Handling of Case

Very satisfied	20.6%
Satisfied	43.0
Dissatisfied	21.2
Very dissatisfied	15.2

These findings are quite similar to the findings from the needs assessment study. It would seem that satisfaction with the Court processing of a case is not significantly influenced by activities of the Witness Assistance Program.

There was no indication that the witnesses were dissatisfied with the Program, even though most respondents' contact with the Program were limited to the time immediately prior to their Court appearance. When they were asked if they would be willing to use the services of the Witness Reception Centre again if subpoenaed at some future time, 87.1 percent responded in the affirmative. One must conclude from this that the vast majority of the respondents view the Program positively.

SUMMARY:

The Witness Assistance Program is rated positively by those who work within the program, Crown Attorneys, and the witnesses surveyed. Both the Crown and the Program staff indicated their enthusiasm for the existence and continuation of Witness Assistance. Given below is a summation of strengths and weaknesses of the Program as brought out through in-person interviews and from the witness survey. The major strengths of the Witness Assistance Program are:

1. It benefits witnesses by making it easier for them to get answers to their questions and may reduce the impersonal nature of the Court process.
2. It benefits Crown Attorneys by providing a liaison between them and their witnesses. The prosecutors spend less time looking up information for witnesses and returning phone calls.
3. The fee payment system appears to be working well for both witnesses and the System. Witnesses are happy because they don't have to wait for their cheques and "Accounts" is relieved of considerable paperwork in issuing cheques by mail.
4. The Witness Alert System has the support of both staff and Crown Attorneys. It is seen as a useful system which has the potential to decrease substantially the number of unnecessary Court appearances by witnesses. The majority of the Crowns interviewed think that the Alert System should be available to other individuals besides doctors. It should not be over-used, however, as it could cause a serious disruption in the flow of witnesses through the Courts if it were used in the extreme.



The weaknesses of the Program are:

1. It is sometimes difficult to ensure that a staff member is always present in the Reception Centre to dispense fee vouchers and assist volunteers with troublesome inquiries. Another staff person (perhaps part-time) who could provide secretarial services and be authorized to sign fee vouchers would relieve the situation to some degree. McBain and Bond would then be more free to perform their other duties because they would not be so tied to the Reception Centre.
2. The Witness Assistance Program has not expanded its horizons within the City although it is expanding rurally. There are a number of Courts in Winnipeg where witnesses are still not receiving assistance. Juvenile Court, Courts at the Public Safety Building, Law Courts, and Municipal Courts such as St. Boniface, were all mentioned in the course of the interviews as areas where the Witness Assistance Program could provide a much needed service. There has been some contact with the Crown at the Juvenile Court, although no arrangements have been finalized. The Program could make a beginning by ensuring that brochures (perhaps slightly different ones giving the location of the specific Court in question) are delivered with subpoenas issued for Courts other than the Provincial Judges Court. Gradually, and where feasible, a wider range of services could be offered to this pool of witnesses.
3. Although the majority of the respondents interviewed wanted various forms of information subsequent to receiving a subpoena, only a small proportion of these individuals contacted the Witness Reception Centre. Although this proportion may have increased as a result of the brochure now going out with the subpoena, some attempt should be made in the future to assess the utilization of the Program by witnesses prior to their Court appearance.
4. Consideration should be given to the development of a procedure that would facilitate communication of information about the outcome of a case to the witnesses who desire this information.

## AVANT-PROPOS

### INTRODUCTION

Au mois de mai 1983, le programme d'aide aux témoins (PAT) a donné naissance au programme d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels (PAVAC). Le PAT a été conçu pour assurer un service d'information aux témoins assignés à comparaître devant les tribunaux et leur éviter ainsi les frais de comparution d'un avocat. Le PAVAC a été créé pour aider les victimes d'infractions dans les résidences dans le district n°6, les victimes de vols qualifiés perpétrés dans toute la ville, sauf dans les commerces, et toutes les personnes d'au moins 60 ans qui ont été victimes d'infractions à Winnipeg.

L'évaluation a porté sur les points suivants: le recours aux services, la connaissance de leur existence et leur disponibilité, l'efficacité avec laquelle le PAVAC et le PAT ont répondu aux besoins des victimes et des témoins et l'effet de ceux-ci sur le système de justice pénale.

### PROGRAMME D'AIDE AUX VICTIMES D'ACTES CRIMINELS

Le PAVAC a commencé avec un agent de police. Deux étudiants en travail social travaillant un total de 24 heures par semaine se sont ajoutés 6 mois plus tard. Un employé à mi-temps et 14 volontaires du "Age and Opportunity Center" sont arrivés en mars 83. Les 16 dernières personnes se sont occupées des victimes de 60 ans et plus. En outre, entre mai 1982 et mars 1983, le programme a été élargi pour inclure les effractions, les victimes de vols qualifiés et les crimes avec violence dans toute la ville.

### METHODE

L'échantillon a été constitué par trois groupes comprenant au total 300 personnes réparties selon les catégories suivantes: (1) effractions et vols dans les résidences; effractions avec intention (district 1), (2) vols qualifiés et effractions commises

contre des personnes âgées dans toute la ville et (3), même que (1) à l'exception du district n°4. L'échantillon a aussi compris 13 agents de la force de police, y compris le chef adjoint de la police, le Surintendant de la criminalité et le personnel du PAVAC.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Dans l'ensemble, les policiers, le personnel du PAVAC et les victimes qui ont reçu de l'aide étaient très favorables au programme.

- 1) Les victimes ont des besoins semblables quantitativement et qualitativement, quel que soit leur âge. Cependant, le programme a été concentré sur les personnes âgées par la prise de l'initiative de la première communication et l'offre d'une rencontre personnelle, mais a permis aux plus jeunes de demander eux-mêmes l'aide après avoir reçu une lettre du PAVAC. On a pensé que l'expansion du programme permettrait d'offrir aux plus jeunes les services qui sont présentement offerts aux personnes âgées.
- 2) Les réactions ont été partagées sur la question de savoir si le rôle devait être confié à des agents de police ou à des civils. On a jugé que, dans certains cas, l'uniforme des policiers faisait rapidement disparaître la méfiance mais on a constaté que la formation reçue par les travailleurs sociaux leur permettait de mieux répondre aux besoins affectifs et aux besoins d'orientation des victimes.
- 3) Les 1100 policiers en uniforme n'étaient pas adéquatement renseignés sur les services du PAVAC et n'ont pas souvent eu recours à eux. Toutefois, les agents de police désiraient obtenir plus de renseignements et estimaient que le PAVAC pouvait aider à réduire le stress résultant de l'incapacité de répondre aux besoins des victimes. En outre, le corps de police croyait que le programme lui donnait une image positive.
- 4) L'existence du PAVAC au sein du service de police a permis aux policiers de prendre l'initiative de communiquer avec les victimes.
- 5) Sur le plan de l'organisation, des employés supplémentaires sont nécessaires et le Surintendant de la criminalité pensait

que l'appui et la supervision nécessaires pourraient être accrus si le PAVAC était implanté au sein de l'unité de la prévention du crime. Il semble aussi que, en raison de problèmes inhérents à la hiérarchie, un sergent de police devrait participer au programme avec l'agent de police.

#### PROGRAMME D'AIDE AUX TEMOINS

##### METHODE

L'échantillon incluait 284 témoins, dont 201 ont participé au sondage par téléphone (environ 45% de ces personnes étaient également des victimes), 2 employés du PAVAC et des procureurs de la Couronne. Les victimes ont été réparties dans les 4 catégories suivantes: biens 54.7%, personnes 28.9%, Code de la route 12.4%, autres infractions 4%.

##### CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Au moment de l'évaluation, on n'envoyait pas de brochures aux témoins de sorte que seulement 10% ont contacté le Centre d'accueil des témoins. Cependant, 58.2% des témoins ont déclaré qu'ils auraient trouvé le service utile. Enfin, 67% des répondants ont déclaré qu'ils désiraient obtenir des renseignements concernant les déclarations de culpabilité et les sentences, mais seulement 10% les ont obtenus.
- 2) Les témoins et les procureurs de la Couronne ont jugé que les services offerts par le programme étaient utiles, entre autres, le paiement du droit versé aux témoins, le système Alert (qui vise à réduire les comparutions inutiles des témoins), la qualité de la liaison entre les procureurs de la Couronne et les témoins, de même que l'atmosphère accueillante du Centre et l'attitude chaleureuse du personnel.
- 3) On a constaté certaines faiblesses comme la nécessité d'avoir au moins un autre employé (peut-être à temps partiel), l'extension du programme au système des jeunes délinquants et aux cours municipales de St-Boniface). Il semble exister actuellement un besoin non encore satisfait de communiquer des renseignements aux témoins à propos de l'issue d'une affaire.

**END**