APPENDIX C:

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

CLACKAMAS COUNTY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Clackamas County stretches from the Willamette River to Mount Hood and includes a portion of the city of Portland as well as a few suburbs. The county seat of Oregon City with its historic riverfront downtown is the oldest city in the state and was briefly the state capitol in pioneer days; it currently has a population of 23,405 and increased by 59.24% in the last decade. Overall, the county population of 327,000 grew 17% in the last decade. Beyond the Portland metro area, the county is largely still rural with several small towns, but suburban development is clearly expanding. Principal industries of the county include paper, lumber, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism.

Sponsorship and Setting

Clackamas County Victim Offender Mediation Program [VOMP] is completely under the auspices of the Clackamas County Juvenile Department and receives no funds from any outside source. The Juvenile Department is located in Oregon City in a single story building laid out in concentric circles from a central reception area. The Department is outgrowing the facility and there is a modular unit housing additional offices. The VOMP program is located in a single office within the Juvenile Department main building, and additional meeting rooms in the facility are available for mediation sessions. About half the mediations are held on site; the remaining are located in a variety of places across the county, both for the convenience of participants and to help with visibility for the program. These locations include fire departments, police departments, libraries, schools, and community centers, as well as participants’ homes.

History

Clackamas County Juvenile Department VOMP had its beginnings in the spring of 1995, when the County Commissioners asked the Juvenile Department to submit a wish list “to bring the county up to par.” Both the Department Director and the current VOMP Coordinator, then a Juvenile Counselor, were familiar with restorative justice principles, and the latter had already been trained in mediation. VOMP was added to the department budget as a line item largely because both had seen several other valuable non-profit services for youth, including an earlier local VOMP program, closed for lack of a secure funding base. The VOMP program began receiving referrals in September, 1995.

Purpose and Mission

The short version of the Clackamas County Juvenile Department mission is “helping our youth make better choices.” The more detailed description is “to provide fair and just sanctions to juvenile offenders, to protect the community from the criminal actions of juvenile offenders, and to hold offenders responsible for their actions and accountable for the consequences of those actions. Restoration to the community and to victims for losses is a fundamental factor in our work.” (Clackamas County Juvenile Department website). Under that broad umbrella, Clackamas County VOMP program descriptions emphasize in equal measure the potential benefits of VOMP for victims, for offenders, and for the community.

The VOMP Coordinator’s comments highlight similar concerns: “My hope is that offenders will gain a true understanding of what their actions created for other people, an opportunity to apologize and make amends, to get beyond it, and not be branded by it. Parents of offenders often feel bad about what they’ve raised. No matter where they come in, they get an opportunity to see their kid take one of the worst moments and make it one of the best. And for victims, that there will be an opportunity to get the event behind them, to get questions answered, to find out who offended them, to reduce their fears and concerns about a repeat, and to get restitution, though this is almost always secondary and often becomes more so during the session.”

Staffing And Budget

The Clackamas County VOMP program is operated by a single 80% staff position; the VOMP Program Coordinator spends the remaining 20% of his time as the referee for juvenile drug and MIP hearings, juvenile parole revocation hearings, and traffic cases for youth under 16, as well as developing and coordinating the Department Community Service program options. Total annual budget for the VOMP program is approximately $84,000. Roughly 20 volunteers trained in VOM by other programs are available to support the program; they donate a total of 150 hours per year to the VOMP program. Volunteers by choice do not participate in case development. Nearly all mediation is done in pairs, with the VOMP Coordinator and a volunteer serving as co-mediators.

Volume and Characteristics of Case Referrals

Clackamas County VOMP does not use MadTrack. It tracks cases by the numbers of youth referred. For fiscal year 1999, a total of 135 juvenile offenders were referred into the VOMP program. The average age of those referred was 15.44; approximately 90% were Caucasian, and there were 111 males (82.2%) and 24 females (17.8%).

Juvenile Justice Service Context

Not specifically part of the VOMP program, but handled as a separate job component by the VOMP program Coordinator, the Clackamas County Community Service Program is a creative blend of opportunities for youth, service to the community and joint participation involving a range of community entities. In one project, five to six youth are involved weekly in preparing, serving and cleaning up after a dinner for homeless persons each Sunday. A second project is a cooperative venture to keep trash picked up on a section of highway leading to and from an area recycling center. Agencies involved are the Oregon Department of Transportation, which furnishes the truck; the Portland Metropolitan Service District, which pays for the service; and the Juvenile Department, which supplies the youth. Supervision is provided by retired adults seeking to contribute both to their community in general and to kids, in particular. The most complex are a collection of projects operated in cooperation with the Clackamas County Employment Training and Business Services (ETBS), which provides supervision and a van for transporting youth. Under this broad umbrella, various cities across the county contract with ETBS for specific projects to be carried out. Projects have included clearing brush, cleaning trails, maintaining city parks or other tasks the city needs done. The participating city pays ETBS a set fee per Saturday; the money which is collected goes to the victims of the youths who perform the work, but after four consecutive Saturdays the youth may elect to work a fifth Saturday and keep the money. It has proven important to maximize attendance on these projects, so the Department secretary telephones every youth who has signed up a day or two before their scheduled date; this has nearly eliminated no-shows.

Referral Sources, Criteria and Process

Most youth are referred from their juvenile counselors and have been offered Formal Accountability Agreements. These youth will not be adjudicated if they meet the conditions of their FAA; they are on informal probation. The FAA in these cases is worded to indicate that the youth will consider VOMP; both the Department and the VOMP program coordinator take pains to make clear that participation is entirely voluntary for offenders. In the words of the VOMP Coordinator, “I truly believe that the mediation will be better for all if I can acknowledge publicly at the mediation that everyone is there voluntarily. It particularly gives the offender some pride and instant respect that he/she is willing to do this and be responsible for his/her actions.” In a few cases a judge may order VOMP to establish restitution or for other reasons, but even these cases are screened by the Coordinator for offender attitude and willingness. In FY 1999, a total of four such adjudicated cases were referred, 3.0% of the total referrals.

From its beginnings, Clackamas County VOMP has typically handled more felonies than misdemeanors. For FY 1999, 79 of the referrals (58.5%) had committed a felony, and 56 (41.5%) a misdemeanor. The vast majority of the offenses were committed against property (84.4%, n=114); the balance were crimes against persons (15.6%, n=21). The top four offenses for the felony and misdemeanor categories are summarized below; percentages are given for the total youths referred for the year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felony</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief I</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary I</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary II</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UUMV</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief II</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault IV</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reckless Endangerment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft II</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intake Procedures

Case development consists of in-person meetings with both offenders and victims, and is entirely handled by the Program coordinator in most instances; in complex cases a volunteer may be called in to assist at this stage. Once the youth has been referred, a letter goes out from the Juvenile Department under the VOMP coordinator’s signature inviting the youth to participate and explaining what mediation is. The letter stresses that participation is voluntary and makes no mention of any consequences for deciding not to participate. The letter is followed up with a phone call, and youth who interested are scheduled for an intake meeting along with their parents. These meetings typically take about an hour; the facts of the offense are explored and the mediation process, including its voluntary nature, is explained. If the youth is taking responsibility and agrees to meet with the victim, a letter goes out to the victim followed by a phone call within a week. Preparation meetings are held with the victims who are interested and mediations are scheduled as soon as it is feasible.

Flow of Cases

A total of 135 youths were referred to Clackamas County VOMP for the fiscal year 1999. Of these, nine were deemed inappropriate for mediation and an additional two moved out of the jurisdiction. Of the remaining 124 cases, four offenders declined to participate, one could not be located, and 4 cases were still in development at the end of the fiscal year. This left a total of 115 cases in which offenders had agreed to participate and victims were invited to do so. Victims in three cases could not be located; of the 112 who were contacted, 12 reported that the situation had already been resolved, victims in 39 cases were unwilling to mediate,
and victims in 57 cases (57% of those contacted in unresolved cases) agreed to mediate. An additional 4 cases did not mediate for unknown reasons.

Mediations
Of 135 cases referred, a total of 57 were mediated; this figure is 42.2% of all cases referred and 57.0% of previously unresolved cases in which the victims were contacted and invited to participate in mediation. Mediations are jointly facilitated by the Program Coordinator and a volunteer. The offender, the offender’s parent(s) and the victim(s) are typically present; other family members or support persons may be present. Mediators begin with introductions, ground rules, explanation of confidentiality and signing the agreement to mediate, which includes the confidentiality agreement. Typically the offender will be invited to talk first. “If we let the victim talk first, the offender may take that story and change his story around.” (Volunteer). Mediation covers the facts from each person’s perspective, the feelings, and what can be done to make it right. Contracts may include financial restitution, either to be paid directly or through Project payback; community service; and/or behavioral components. Typical sessions last from about an hour to three hours.

Outcomes and Follow up
Of the 57 cases that came to mediation in FY 1999, 56 (98.2%) successfully resolved the situation, resulting in 55 contracts; one case reached resolution without the need for a contract. Only one of the 57 cases (1.8%) did not reach resolution; the parties could not come to agreement. By the end of FY 1999, 37 (67.3%) of the contracts had been successfully completed, another 13 (23.6%) were still in progress, and 1 (1.8%) was partly completed. Together these 51 youth paid out $7892.03 in restitution to their victims, worked a total of 148 hours for their victims, and contributed 114 hours in service to their community. A few contracts included behavioral agreements such as apologies, future good behavior, or an agreement to be mutually respectful. Only two (3.6%) contracts were fully breached by the offenders; in two additional cases (3.6%), the victims changed their minds about the contract terms after the mediation and did not ask the youth to complete the agreement.

Comments from Participants:

“It was the right thing to do for kids this age (13 year olds). I wanted them to hear my side face to face in a non threatening environment, and to hear their side, where they felt safe in letting me know.” (Victim)

“One kid rode his bike for several Saturdays to get to the Payback project arranged by the Department -- I was really impressed with that.” (Victim)

“This gave it closure, we’re all able to move on, we can have friendly interaction here at school.” (Victim)

“We came into the situation saying ‘if there’s some way to meet with these kids, let’s find it.’ We’re a school. What we really need to do is have them understand the course of their actions and become contributing members of society.” (Victim)

(Of all the dealings I’ve had with the legal system, this was by far the cleanest.” (Victim)

“Our restitution request was designed for them, not us. We wanted it to be significant but not impossible, something they would work hard for but could succeed at. They were excluded from our campus for a period of time, after which we could re-establish normal relations if they wanted. (Victim)

“What he did was stupid and dumb and goofy; that’s why there should be programs like this. There wasn’t a violent malicious intent.” (Parent of offender)

“It was mainly us talking. We wanted her to know not to worry — the police prohibit you from going over and handling it.” (Offender)

“The concept is good. Court isn’t always just. Here, the youth admits and figures out the consequences versus denying and trying to get out of it. Lawyers as antagonists sends a wrong message; a youth can be penalized for not having a good lawyer. Courts are more sterile and victims rights aren’t well protected. This is better for victims.” (Parent of offender)

DESCHUTES COUNTY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Located in the scenic Central Oregon high desert just east of the Cascade range, Deschutes county comprises 3055 square miles and has a population of 107,000. The region is undergoing phenomenal growth; the county population increased 42% in the last decade, and the county seat of Bend grew from just over 20,000 to 51,000 in the same time period, an increase of 148%. The major industries are lumber, agriculture and tourism. Other cities in the still largely rural county include Redmond (12,810), Sisters (840) and La Pine (1000).

Sponsorship and Setting
Deschutes County Juvenile VOMP is operated by the Deschutes County Department of Community Justice. On the far north end of Bend in a complex of new governmental buildings is the “Community Justice Center” which houses not only the court, detention facility and services of the justice department, but also an alternative school, a CDRC, Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, a dental clinic and several other social services, both governmental and private. The VOMP program has a single office in a wing with other Juvenile Counselors, the Victims Services Program, the Community Dispute Resolution Program, and a spacious and comfortable meeting room with a modular central table used for mediations, the Judge Hawpetoss room.
History

The Deschutes County Probation Department changed its name and its focus in October of 1996. The official focus of the Department is restorative justice, reflected in the new departmental name “Department of Community Justice” and defined by its director as follows: “Community Justice views the community (including individual victims and offenders) as the ultimate customer as well as the partner of the justice system. The justice system and citizens must work together to restore victims and communities to the fullest extent possible and to solve crime-related problems” (Department web site). Facilitating face-to-face meetings between victims and offenders is seen as a natural outgrowth of this emphasis.

Two additional driving forces led the Department to establish its own program. In 1997, the Department began a six year pilot program supported by state legislation to reduce county reliance on juvenile beds in the state secure facilities and use those funds to support programming in the local community. In the first two and a half years of the pilot program, Deschutes county juvenile commitments to state institutions dropped from 24 to 6 per year. The second is a keen awareness of the need to be building links and structures which will see the Department through the rapid population growth yet to come. Every effort is being made to circumvent the turf issues which can easily hamstring large programs, and to provide for maximum coordination and cooperation across programs and agencies, with a focus on service to victims, youths and the community. As part of the process of training staff in the restorative approach and building links, the Department Program Manager was asked to sit in on mediation training and to explain the justice system to potential mediators. “I felt it would be better to take our own staff and train them in mediation instead of relying on an outside agency.” At the time the Deschutes CDRC had not yet been established and the only other mediation services available anywhere were court mediations.

Purpose and Mission

“The Deschutes County Department of Community Justice VOMP is an effort to respond to victims of crime. Our goal is to meet some of the needs and concerns of victims and to provide victims an opportunity to have a broader voice in our system of justice” (program brochure). Comments obtained in interviews with VOMP staff, volunteers and other Justice system personnel corroborate this central purpose. According to the VOMP Program Coordinator, “the goal of VOMP is to give victims the opportunity to participate in the process if they want to. A close second is to give the offender an opportunity to explain and not be stuck in the ‘bad person’ role. The victim is first, the community is second and the offender is third.”

Staffing and Budget

The entire VOMP program for the Department, including both juvenile and adult VOMP, is run by a single staff person who spends 50% of her time on VOMP and the remaining time on a number of prevention programs such as victim empathy classes and a merchant accountability board for adult shoplifters. The budget for these combined programs is approximately $100,000 and comes entirely from Department funds. Three volunteer mediators, trained in both CMS mediation and VOMP, are available to assist the VOMP program; in 1999 they contributed a total of 9 hours of service to the juvenile VOMP program. By their own choice, volunteers are involved only in mediation and not in case development or follow up.

Volume and Characteristics of Case Referrals

Deschutes County VOMP tracks cases by youth referrals. In calendar year 2000 there were a total of 99 youths referred into the juvenile VOMP program. The age range was from ten to eighteen years old; most of the referrals were Caucasian. Twenty four percent of these offenders participated in a total of 19 mediation sessions with 19 victims. It should be noted that the relatively low ratio of cases mediated to cases referred is mostly an artifact of the minimal criteria used to enter a case in the referral log: “If there’s both a victim and an offender, I’ll enter it in log book and try to develop it” (Program Coordinator).

Juvenile Justice Service Context

The Deschutes Community Justice Department has a number of strong and creative programs in place to respond to its juvenile offenders and their needs. This context and overall commitment to community youth affords the VOMP program the luxury of being primarily focused on meeting victim needs. The same philosophy is reflected in the structuring of Departmental Formal Accountability Agreements [FAA’s], the elements of which are listed in the following order on the contract forms: (1) restitution to victim, (2) restitution to community, (3) restore youth behavior. In addition the Department offers victim empathy classes, classes on anger management and problem solving, conflict resolution and a range of other services. These services have been developed in-house so they can be offered free as part of restoring the youth as a functioning member of the community.

Another important component of the Deschutes County VOMP context is the very active victim services program. The District Attorney’s Victim Assistant handles all juvenile cases which have been referred to court. She calls every victim, explains their rights, informs them of all arraignment dates and other hearings in their case, solicits information about their losses, informs them about restitution options and offers continued involvement and support from her office. Of the nearly 400 cases handled by the court on a yearly basis, victims attend court nearly forty percent of the time. Only a small portion of the court-referred cases are also referred into VOMP, but in her experience “there’s deeper satisfaction for victims who’ve gone through VOMP than court alone, when it’s worked. Any time victims learn more about the offender, they’re more satisfied.” She is further involved in supporting restitution collection through passing along information about missing or late payments to the youth’s counselor.

A final major unique aspect of the Deschutes County Juvenile VOMP context is the wide range of meaningful and productive community service options available to youth. These programs, entitled the “Deschutes Community Justice Corps,” are available for
all youth coming through the Department and not merely VOMP cases. The Department motto, seen on posters in several locations throughout the building, is “if we’re going to be tough, let’s be productive.” The brochure for the Community Justice Corps defines its purpose as follows: “To provide meaningful work service projects for youth offenders that will enable them to provide restitution to victims and to assist and guide them to establish bonds between themselves and the community.” Youth who cannot obtain their own jobs or who are referred for other reasons can earn minimum wage through several creative options, including building homes for Habitat for Humanity, offering service to citizens in need through the Interfaith Caregivers programs, pine needle removal in neighborhoods rated high risk for fire hazard, graffiti removal, and completely creating and landscaping a small city park on land donated by the city. Some of these options are available even if the youth is serving time in one of the detention programs.

**Referral Sources, Criteria and Process**

All police referrals to the Department come across the VOMP Program Coordinator’s desk. Each week she meets with the District Attorney and together they decide which cases will need to go to court, which should be handled through an FAA (which may include VOMP as an option), and which should be referred directly to VOMP. Domestic violence cases are excluded from VOMP and handled in a separate program. Referral criteria are purposefully kept broad at this point, to keep from overlooking potential opportunities for VOMP as a response to victim needs. A total of 58.6% of the referrals were for property offenses; the remaining 41.4% were for crimes against persons. Offenses of youth referred in calendar year 2000 are summarized in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MISDEMEANORS (percentage of total referrals)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assault IV</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer crime</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief II</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly conduct</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menacing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reckless endangering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft II</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft III</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MISDEMEANORS</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FELONIES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burglary I</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary II</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft I</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UUMV</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FELONIES</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intake Procedures**

Once a case has been logged in, the Program Coordinator schedules and convenes an intake meeting with the youth and a parent. If youths are taking responsibility for their actions, show at least some degree of remorse, and have some interest in talking with the victim, the case will be further developed through attempting to contact the victim. Victim preparation typically takes place over the phone, but if the victim seems uncomfortable, can’t hear, or doesn’t understand, a meeting can be held in the victim’s home. Sometimes victims come upstairs to the VOMP office to meet with the Coordinator after attending a court hearing. In her contact with victims, the Coordinator explains “I’m not selling it. They’re comfortable or they’re not, then they have questions. They’re spending enough time already; it’s not up to me to persuade them.”

**Flow of Cases**

Deschutes County VOMP received a total of 99 referrals for Calendar Year 2000. Of these, fourteen were deemed inappropriate for mediation for administrative reasons and were not further developed. Of the remaining 85 cases, offenders declined participation in ten cases (10.1% of all referrals, 11.8% of offenders who were invited). This left 75 cases in which an attempt was made to contact the victim. In 9 cases the victim could not be located; in 7 cases the victim did not respond; and in an additional 12 cases, the victim reported the situation had already been resolved to their satisfaction. Of the remaining 47 unresolved cases in which victims were contacted, 23 victims declined mediation and 24 agreed to participate.
Mediations

Of the 99 cases referred into the program for calendar 2000, a total of 24 were scheduled for mediation sessions; this figure represents 24.2% of all cases referred and 44.4% of unresolved cases in which the victim was invited to participate in mediation. One offender did not show for the scheduled mediation; the remaining 23 cases met for mediation in a total of 19 mediation sessions held with the 19 victims involved.

Most mediations are held at the Community Justice Center, though exceptions are made for persons who would need to travel a great distance. Always invited are the offender and the offender’s parents and the victim. Other support persons, including lawyers, are permitted to come but sit away from the table and do not participate directly in the mediation process.

The mediator begins with a formal statement which is usually read out loud to ensure that nothing is left out. This covers the confidential nature of the process, the purpose, the fact that mediators are not lawyers, and the type of report. The meeting itself is confidential; participants are invited to make notes for their own use during the process but these are collected and shredded afterwards. The offense and any contract resulting from the meeting are a matter of public record.

Typically the offender is then invited to describe what happened in as much detail as possible. Once the youth is done, victims may ask questions and give their own account of the event and its impact. This portion of the mediation often flows relatively smoothly with little need for intervention on the part of the mediator. When the exchange of questions and information has run its course, the mediator moves to ascertain what needs to be done to make things right. If the victim has incurred a financial loss and restitution has not yet been established, both parties discuss and agree on the actual amount which will be paid to the victim. The mediator may help explain the options available to the youth for making payments and in some instances the youth will already have made these arrangements prior to the mediation. The Program Coordinator comments that “restitution contracts nearly all have a ‘kid improvement’ component; this is what victims want.” Formal contract components such as monetary restitution or community service usually have a six month time limit due to the time limits of FAA agreements; less formal more open ended components, such as a commitment to earn a high school degree, may also be negotiated.

Outcomes and Follow up

Of the twenty four cases which were scheduled for mediation in the year 2000, a total of 22 (91.7%) were successfully resolved. These cases involved the negotiation of twelve new contracts in addition to the five cases in which a restitution contract had already been set. Six of these were contracts in what is called “school” cases, where an assault charge has been entered but the situation is in fact one of mutual antagonism. These contracts consist of agreement by both parties to be respectful of one another. In the remaining five cases the resolution was successful without the need for a contract. The two cases which did not come to resolution involved one in which the offender failed to show for the mediation, and one in which the mediation was terminated when the offender refused full responsibility. Of the total of seventeen contracts, fifteen were completed on time and one is still in progress on time for a combined 94% success rate. In the remaining case the youth made no effort to fulfill the contract and the case has been referred back to court.

The responsibility for following up with youth varies according to the situation. If the youth is under an FAA with a previously established contract, the youth’s Juvenile counselor continues to monitor completion. For contracts negotiated in the mediation, the VOMP coordinator primarily carries out any necessary follow up. If the youth is making payments directly to the victim, there may be no further contact unless there is a problem. When a youth is having trouble making payments the Coordinator will help problem solve and troubleshoot but in general responsibility is primarily up to the youth.

Comments from Participants:

“If it will make them [victims] feel better, I’ll do it. People who are selfish are stupid.” Offender

“I liked that all I had to do was give the coordinator my schedule and she did the work of setting it up. I also liked that it was a neutral environment, a round table rather than sides.” Offender

“The victims wanted me to have said I was sorry sooner, but I’d been ordered not to have any contact with them.” Offender

“I didn’t really want to talk to her.” Offender

“I like how the victim put us in her place and how she understands our shoes.” Offender

“I wanted to let them know who I am and me know who they are; I had some questions. We’re neighbors. Let them know I’m not out to bite them.” Victim

“Wanted them to know what it did to me — husband works nights, I’m disabled and home alone, it put me on the defensive, every little noise upsets me. Lots of teenagers take revenge, I worried they would.” Victim

“I’ve been a victim before but I’ve never had this opportunity before; this was a pleasure, to get frustrations out. It made me feel a lot better.” Victim

“All three offenders told the truth — that was amazing to me, nearly brought tears to my eyes.” Victim

“It went much better than if the DA had charged them. It was harder for them to face me than to do community service.” Victim

“I think it’s a great program and should be continued. I have an eleven year old and if she ever got in trouble I hope there’d be this much effort to fix it.” Victim

Juvenile Victim Offender Mediation in Six Oregon Counties ~ Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking
JACKSON COUNTY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Jackson County ranges over 2,801 square miles along the California border of Southwest Oregon just east of the Coastal Range. With a population of 175,000 it is largely rural outside of its one major city. The county seat of Medford is home to 60,000 and is the location of Mediation Works and its Victim Offender Program [VOP]. Ashland, twelve miles to the southeast, is the next largest city, with 20,000 residents. The principal industries of the region are lumber, recreation and tourism, with the Ashland Shakespearean Festival, the Rogue River Valley and the nearby national forests and ski areas serving as major draws. The county is experiencing rapid growth with a twenty percent increase in the last decade.

Sponsorship and Setting
Mediation Works is a private non-profit (501-C-3) Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) offering a broad range of mediation services. In addition to the VOP program, these include neighbor to neighbor, landlord-tenant, mobile home park, small claims and family mediation, as well as school based training in conflict resolution for students, teachers, parents, support staff and community volunteers.

The CDRC is housed in a downtown Medford office building carved out of a converted early 1900's department store. The office includes a central reception area, a mid sized room with a board table for meetings and mediations, an office for the director, and shared office space with several desks and phones for other staff and volunteers. Although the VOP program coordinator has a desk and keeps case files at this location, the primary site of the VOP program operation is at the Jackson County Juvenile Department some two miles south of downtown. Here, in a collection of gray modular units, the Juvenile Department houses its court, probation staff, detention and program offices. Each month the four-session Mediation Works VOP class for offenders is conducted by MW/VOP staff and volunteers at the Juvenile Department in a large meeting room with a central table.

History
Mediation Works was incorporated in 1990 to provide community and small claims mediation; it next expanded into offering an educational program in conflict resolution skills. Mediation services for juvenile offenders and their victims were added in 1996 but were completely overhauled in conjunction with a staff turnover in 1997. The Juvenile Probation Department had major input into shaping the revamped service; criteria developed by the department included “helping the youth understand that what they did was wrong; being able to give and receive feedback [between the Department and the Program]; and involving the youth’s families” (Probation Officer).

Purpose and Mission
The mission of Mediation Works is “to teach conflict resolution skills and provide mediation services to the people of Jackson County. Empowering individuals and organizations to resolve their differences peacefully contributes to a healthy and safe community” (Mediation Works Program Brochure). This mission is echoed in the comments of the director: “Our purpose is not just resolving a situation, but showing people another way, the power of how transformative it can be if they’re just quiet while the other person is talking.”

The VOP program with its emphasis on teaching skills to juvenile offenders is cast from the same mold. “As a culture, we don’t teach kids how to take responsibility for their own behavior” (MW Director). A volunteer adds, “for offenders to tell the truth, to be responsible for their actions, to have a terrific mediation of the part that’s within their control — they’re getting a skill that’s unmatchable.” The VOP coordinator comments, “teaching thinking errors is a tool to help them take responsibility rather than a goal in itself. If they can do that, there’s a ripple effect: they will develop empathy at some level, and they’ll think before they act.”

Staffing and Budget
Mediation Works is operated by seven part time staff members whose combined positions total 4.55 F.T.E. A receptionist/secretary is the hub of the Mediation Works operation, handling phone inquiries, keeping records and relaying information to staff. In addition to the Mediation Works Director, there are several staff positions for coordinating the various programs. The VOP program has one part time coordinator at 25 hours per week (.625 F.T.E.) and a total budget of $42,714, of which 68% is funded by a contract with the Jackson County Juvenile Department and the rest by United Way. A strong cadre of 20 volunteers are available to assist the VOP program coordinator and contributed 558 hours to the program in FY 1999.

Volume and Characteristics of Case Referrals
Mediation Works VOP program tracks cases according to the number of referrals into the VOP class. For fiscal year 1999 there were a total of 103 referrals into the class. Since a youth who fails may be re-referred for a later class, this number includes 95 unduplicated youth and 8 re-referrals during the year. The average age of the 95 offenders was 14.8 years, with a range of 9 years to 18 years.

Age of offenders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Juvenile Victim Offender Mediation in Six Oregon Counties ~ Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking
Gender of offenders:
- Male: 82.7%
- Female: 17.3%

Juvenile Justice Service Context

An important component of the context of this VOM program is the highly active role of the Victim Advocate affiliated with the county Juvenile Department. She contacts all victims of offenses which are referred into the department. Among other things, she talks with them about their losses and gathers information used by the judge and probation officers to establish restitution amounts. She notifies victims of any pending actions regarding their case and may accompany them to court. Once restitution has been set she keeps in touch with victims about the timeliness of payments and relays information to probation officers if a youth has fallen behind. She informs victims about the VOP program and encourages their participation. “I help persuade them to want to come. I can’t think of a time a victim wasn’t happy” (Victim Advocate).

Referral Sources, Criteria and Process

All referrals into VOP come from the Jackson County Juvenile Department. Most often this is initiated by the youth’s probation officer, although victims may also initiate a referral through their contact with the Victim Advocate. Youth may be either adjudicated or not; many are on a Formal Accountability Agreement (FAA). In nearly all instances, any necessary restitution amount has already been set by the judge in coordination with information obtained from victims through the Victim Advocate. Often the youth may have already begun or even completed paying the victim before beginning the VOP program.

The Juvenile Department has a number of its own programs for entry level offenses, including one for theft and another for arson. Referrals into VOP tend to be for youth who have penetrated further into the system after accessing other programs. Of 95 youth referred into the VOP program in FY 1999, only 19 (20.0%) were first time offenders; 73 (76.8%) had at least one prior offense and data is missing on 3 (3.2%). Fifty seven (60%) of the youths were referred for misdemeanors, 35 for felonies (36.8%) and data is missing for three (3.2%). “VOP is best suited for the baffled kid, the one who’s saying ‘what’s the big deal’ and showing no remorse or insight” (Juvenile Court Judge). Similarly, probation officers refer youth who are not showing empathy or are minimizing their actions. “If they’re going to stay on probation and stay in the community, we’ll make sure they go through VOP if they’re continuing to offend” (Probation Officer).

Offenses of Youth Referred to VOP, FY 1999

**Top Four Misdemeanors**
- Theft: 28.1%
- Assault: 26.3%
- Harassment: 14.9%
- Criminal Mischief: 12.3%

**Top Four Felonies**
- Burglary: 45.7%
- Theft: 22.9%
- Assault: 11.4%
- Criminal Mischief: 5.7%

Intake Procedures

VOP may be assigned as part of an FAA or as part of a judge’s ruling following adjudication. Once a youth has been assigned to VOP, the Juvenile Department enters the name in a log book and sends a face sheet to the VOP program coordinator. The Victim Advocate notifies victims by letter that their offender has been referred to VOP and sends information explaining the program. Youth are scheduled in the next upcoming class appropriate to their age, space permitting. Currently there is a wait of about three to four months between the time of the VOP referral and the first available class.

The hallmark of the Jackson County VOP program is the preparation procedure for the offenders. Before meeting with victims, youth are required to attend and pass a two-week four-session class focused on learning the thinking errors that got them into trouble, developing victim empathy, and writing a sincere and detailed apology letter to the victims. The two hour classes are held twice a week for two weeks each month, alternating between older youth (sixteen and up) and younger youth (fifteen and under). As many as eighteen youth may be referred for each class; often two or three do not show up for the first session, and any lateness, inappropriate behavior or incomplete homework is further grounds for being excluded from the rest of the class, with the result that by the end of the second session there may be as few as ten or twelve youth actually participating. In addition to the VOP coordinator who conducts the class, there is always at least one probation officer in attendance and two to five VOP volunteers, maintaining a ratio of one adult to every three youth. All adults help with checking homework, and convening subgroups during the course of the class in addition to supporting and participating in the group process.
The VOP class curriculum has been developed by the VOP coordinator from a number of sources, including victim empathy classes, material on thinking errors, and problem solving skills. Class format capitalizes on the use of group dynamics; youth are asked in each class to share what their offense was without using any thinking errors or excuses, and others in the group help identify the elements that are unacceptable. Empathy is learned not only through structured exercises in taking the role of the victim, but also from the feelings participants develop for one another’s difficulties as the level of trust and sharing rises across the four sessions. Emotions run high and honest sharing is rewarded both by the leaders and by the other youths.

Conceptually, “VOP Class” is a five session commitment: four group classes, and a final “clarification session” scheduled after the youth has successfully completed the group class and the apology letter. After the second class of each two-week session, volunteers contact makes telephone contact with victims of the youth who are still participating to appraise them of the offender’s participation and begin the process of scheduling a meeting, if they are interested. This telephone contact is the only specific preparation victims receive from VOP program personnel prior to meeting with their offender; conversations may run as long as twenty minutes and include further explaining the purpose and process of the meeting and answering any questions the victim may have. The Juvenile Department Victim Advocate is also a source of information for victims and can even bring them to the meeting if transportation is a problem.

Mediations

In FY 1999, a total of 69 youths (72.6% of unduplicated referrals) successfully participated in “clarification sessions” in the Jackson County VOP program. These sessions most nearly approximate “mediations” held in other VOM programs, though in most instances there is no resulting contract or formal agreement. It is the hope of VOP program staff that youths will have an opportunity in this final session to be directly accountable to the person they have harmed, to tell their story without excuses or thinking errors, to hear the impact of their actions from the victim, and to deliver their apology in person. When this cannot be arranged because a victim is unwilling or cannot be located, VOP staff make every effort to provide a meaningful alternative for the youth, including having the youth take responsibility for the ways in which their actions harmed their own family, or involving surrogate or role play victims to share the impact of the offense on the community. Of the 69 youth who successfully passed VOP in FY 1999, 22 (32%) met with their actual victim, 14 (20%) met with a parent or other family member, and the remaining 33 (48%) had clarification sessions with a staff member and/or volunteer.

Clarification sessions are usually held at the Mediation Works office, especially if a victim is attending. When victims are not involved, the sessions are sometimes held at the Juvenile Department. The sessions have typically been facilitated by the VOP coordinator; increasingly volunteers are taking on this additional role. Both offenders and victims may invite support persons if they wish, but this is seldom done. When it is, these persons usually have the role of silent observer. The Victim Advocate is occasionally present as a support person for the victim.

Following introductions, explanations about confidentiality and signing the confidentiality agreement, the clarification session usually begins with the youth’s account of his or her offense. Typically the facilitator might say “this incident started with you, so I want you to say as much as you can about what happened.” Once the youth has given a full account, the victim may ask questions and is invited to describe his or her own experience of the offense and its impact. Toward the end of the session the youth will be invited to read the apology letter and give it to the victim.

Restitution is generally not part of the clarification session, having already been established by the judge or the Juvenile Department. However other possible contract components may be agreed to during the mediation. Follow up for compliance with any required restitution or participation in other programs rests with the Juvenile Department. After the clarification session has been completed, the VOP program coordinator sends a brief report to the Juvenile Department indicating whether or not the youth successfully completed the program and what the youth’s level of participation was. Any additional information about either the class or the clarification session is deemed confidential so only a general summary is shared with the department.

Outcomes and Follow up

Of the 95 unduplicated referrals in FY 1999, outcome data is missing on two youth, and one youth died before completing the program. Of the remaining 92 youth, 69 (75%) successfully completed both the class and the clarification session, and 23 (25%) failed. Youth who fail the class are most often referred back to repeat it in a later session. Seventeen of the 95 youth referred to VOP in FY 1999 were repeaters, fifteen of whom had failed the class for the same offense and two of whom had successfully completed the VOP program for a previous offense. Only repetitive failure combined with a pattern of continuing to offend will send a youth back to court. This was the outcome for fifteen of the youth who attended VOP in FY 1999. An additional eight of the new referrals failed in FY 1999 but were re-referred to take the class in FY 2000.

Comments from Participants

“I was able to meet them right in the face and explain to them my side of it. That’s so important.” (Victim)
“I wanted closure. Since I knew him, I needed him to look me in the eye and tell me why he stole from his friend. Now, the anger’s gone. I feel sorry for him.” (Victim)
“We didn’t agree and he wasn’t owning everything he did, but even so I feel a peace. It helped to say it.” (Victim)
“They were good classes” (Offender)
“I learned to find out what you’re gonna do before you do it.” (Offender)
“I think it [VOP] was a very good thing. It teaches values, honesty, respect, right and wrong.” (Parent of offender)
LANE COUNTY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Lane County is located in the mid-Willamette Valley some 110 miles south of Portland. Nearly equal in size to the state of Connecticut, it encompasses 4620 square miles and stretches from the river valley westward to the coast. Its total population is 315,000. The largest city is Eugene, the county seat and home of the University of Oregon. Eugene’s population of 136,000 has grown 21% in the last decade, although the county itself only expanded by 12%. The city of Springfield, which borders Eugene on the east, is home to another 53,000. The remainder of the county is largely rural and its principal industries are agriculture, education and tourism.

Sponsorship and Setting
Community Mediation Services [CMS] of Lane County is a private non-profit (501-C-3) Community Dispute Resolution Center [CDRC]. The CMS juvenile VOM program is called the Restorative Justice Program [RJP]. The Center is located in a remodeled and modernized office building converted from a former department store on the pedestrian shopping mall in downtown Eugene. CMS offices include a reception area, a moderate sized meeting room with a central table, two smallish individual offices housing the Executive Director and the RJP coordinator, and a storage/workroom. In addition the Center rents a large room in the basement of the building with tables, chairs and a circle of second hand couches which is available for mediations or intake meetings involving larger numbers of persons.

History
Community Mediation Services was incorporated in 1991 after functioning for some time as a solely voluntary effort. Services to juveniles were begun in 1994. The initial focus was to offer mediation services for juvenile offenders and their victims at the diversion level. A four month pilot program developed in coordination with DYS serviced 32 youth and became the basis for negotiating an ongoing contract which currently averages eleven referrals a month.

Purpose and Mission
The overall mission of CMS of Lane County is “Empowering people to resolve disputes effectively.” Within this context, the goal of the RJP program is to “provide juvenile offenders and their victims a mediation process that allows them to come together to dialogue and explore options for resolving issues surrounding the crime.” For the RJP Program Coordinator, a major focus is balancing the needs of the offender with the needs of the victim. “Any time the balance gets off, alarm bells ring. In transformative justice, people have internalized it through experience. It instills a type of leaven so when they’re dealing with conflict in the future they come to it with new eyes.” His hope is that the mediation meeting can lead to “healing, understanding, agreement, closure, so people can put it behind them.”

Staffing and Budget
Lane County Community Mediation Services has a full time Executive Director, a Restorative Justice Program Coordinator, and a part time secretary/receptionist, for a total of 2.63 FTE. The RJP coordinator works 35 hours per week but spends 15% of his time assigned to other projects, leaving a total of about .75 FTE for the RJP program. At the time of the site visit (February, 2001) there were a total of 18 volunteers who had received RJP in addition to the basic CMS mediation training, and a new RJP training session scheduled for the following month was expected to increase the size of this pool. The total annual budget for CMS is $120,000; the RJP annual budget is $30,000.

Volume and Characteristics of Case Referrals
The Department of Youth Services [DYS] contracts with RJP to receive eleven referrals a month. In fiscal year 1999, a total of 115 new cases were referred. Cases for the year were 68.6% male and 31.4% female. Data on race/ethnicity is unavailable for nearly a fourth of the referrals; the remainder were largely white, with six Latinos, two African Americans and two Asian/Pacific Islanders.

Juvenile Justice Service Context
The Lane County Department of Youth Services has a number of its own diversion procedures and options. Most first referral misdemeanors in Lane County are diverted with simply a letter sent to the juvenile’s parents informing them there has been a police report and suggesting possible services they may wish to access. Second time misdemeanors, especially shoplifting, tend to be referred to a Delinquency Diversion class operated by a private provider; juvenile cases involving drugs and/or alcohol also are referred out.

Under the arrangement with DYS, the CMS Restorative Justice Program functions nearly entirely as a diversion program for youth with second or third misdemeanors, or with a more serious first offense. Diverted youth referred into the program do not have a
probation officer and are not further supervised or handled by DYS unless they fail to resolve the situation through their participation. When an agreement has been reached between the victim and the offender and the offender has met the terms of the agreement, RJP notifies DYS and the case is closed with no record. A small minority of cases are under Formal Accountability Agreements (FAA's) and remain under DYS supervision in addition to the services received through RJP, and occasionally adjudicated cases are referred to negotiate restitution; these youths do have a Probation Officer.

Referral Sources, Criteria and Process

All cases are referred into RJP from the Department of Youth Services. Cases seen as appropriate tend to be those where the victim has sustained a loss either through theft or property damage and restitution is seen as appropriate. A second group of referrals are misdemeanor assault cases, particularly with younger youth and where there are ongoing problems among the participants in their neighborhood. Youth who are exhibiting an overall pattern of increasingly serious referrals, on the other hand, are not seen as appropriate for diversion through RJP, though in small numbers they may be referred as an additional component of the terms of their FAA or probation. When in doubt, the DYS Intake Counselor refers anything he thinks might work well in mediation; “If it doesn’t work out, we don’t lose any jurisdiction.” The RJP Coordinator has the option of looking through the referrals and screening cases out, but in his words, “pretty much we’re willing to try anything they send us.” Property offenses were the most frequent referrals, at 60.0%; 40.0% of the referrals were for crimes against a person. The four most frequent offenses for FY 1999 are listed below; the RJP tracking system does not differentiate between felonies and misdemeanors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Intake Procedures

At the time of referral, DYS sends a letter to the youth and family explaining that they have the option of working with CMS/RJP rather than have the case referred to court. Once RJP has received the referral, the RJP coordinator assigns the case to a volunteer for case development and mediation. The mediator sends an RJP letter to the offender and follows up with a phone call within a week to schedule an intake. Intake for offenders is scheduled at the CMS office; if the youth is under 16, a parent is always included in both the phone contact and the intake meeting. With older youth who are driving, parental involvement is seen as more optional.

The intake meeting for the offender takes about an hour and is in some ways a dry run for the mediation. The youth is asked to give an account of the incident, parents may have some input, and the procedures and rules of the mediation session are described in detail. If the youth agrees to mediate, a letter is sent to the victim and a phone call follows within a week. Most victims are seen in person for intake/preparation though occasionally this may be done over the phone. Pre-meetings with victims may be held at the Center, but increasingly volunteers are offering to come out for the convenience of the victim.

If a victim is unwilling to mediate or cannot be located but an offender has agreed to participate, RJP explores a number of other options in an attempt to craft a restorative response to the offender and his or her needs. This includes shuttle mediation, in which negotiations are carried out over the phone with the mediator relaying information back and forth, and surrogate mediation. Often program staff feel a victim’s voice “is needed at the table” in these situations. Other victims may be recruited to attend, or a community member may participate to help the youth understand the impact and ripple affect of his or her actions.

Flow of Cases

Lane County RJP tracks annual statistics in terms of cases closed rather than case referred. In fiscal 1999, a total of 118 referred cases were closed; these included cases which had been open at any time during the fiscal year. Four of these were deemed inappropriate for service; in another 28 cases, the offender declined participation, and four cases were not further developed because of victim refusal. This left a total of 82 youths who successfully completed participated in RJP during the fiscal year.

Mediations

Of the 115 cases closed in FY 1999 by the Lane County RJP, a total of 82 were successfully resolved through mediation services, representing 69.5% of all cases closed for the year. About half of these sessions involved the actual victim of the youth's offense; the rest were conducted through one of the alternatives described above.

Most mediations are facilitated by two volunteers. Mediators begin with an introduction; one example was “this is an opportunity to make things right again — the offense has kind of created a negative hole. This is an opportunity to fill it up with something good.” They cover the ground rules of respect and listening, explain confidentiality and obtain signatures on the agreement to mediate, clarify that they are not lawyers and cannot make decisions, and re-affirm that the mediation process is voluntary.

Most often the offender is asked to begin because it can help set the victim at ease if the offender is willing to apologize and give his/her own account of the offense. However there is no set rule. “Sometimes when they get in the room one is more brim full and needs to go first because they’re not in a listening posture” (RJP Coordinator). The flow is typically first to cover the facts and feelings on the date of the actual offense, then to turn to each party’s thoughts and feelings since. Following this the session turns to
identifying the harms or negative consequences of offense, including its impact on others. The final phase of the mediation focuses on what can be done to repair the harm. If an agreement is reached, this is written up and all parties sign it.

**Outcomes and Follow up**

Lane County DYS operates a community service program which is typically utilized for youths on FAA’s and probation. RJP youth may occasionally carry out their community service through this arrangement but usually they are encouraged to develop their own opportunity; victims may have input into this process during the mediation if they wish. RJP maintains a list of community service sites which have been utilized in the past and has materials to help guide the youth through the process of setting up the service. This is conceptualized as part of the overall goal of restoration, creating a close parallel to the skills a youth will eventually need to locate and apply for an actual job.

The 82 negotiated agreements fell into the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary Restitution</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No further action needed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteer responsibility for the case ends when the mediation is over and an agreement has been signed. The RJP Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the completion of community service and restitution. When a youth is using community service to pay the victim, the RJP Coordinator receives the report of the youth’s hours and submits vouchers so the victim can be paid. Youth who are paying directly send their money orders to RJP and the RJP Coordinator logs them in and sends them on to the victim. RJP sends a monthly progress report to DYS on all contracts in progress.

Outcome for the 82 agreements was as follows:

65 cases completed terms (79.3%)
10 cases partially complete (12.2%)
7 never started (8.5%)

**Comments from Participants:**

“You think maybe you can make a difference. I was a teacher’s aide in school, I could understand these kids. I’ve had teenage kids myself.” (Victim)

“I just think it’s a better way to deal with young people. I also believe in community service, giving back to the community they were helping to destroy.” (Victim)

“I Participated because I didn’t want a felony on my record.” (Offender)

“It was easier and cheaper than going through court. It’s good to give it some time, be in a controlled environment and work it out. It puts the person who was violated in a position to have a say. It’s especially good for young teenagers — it can screw up lives having a felony over their head.” (Offender)

“It was fair. I had already apologized. It taught me responsibility.” (Offender)

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Multnomah County has the combined distinction of being the smallest county in Oregon, comprising 464 square miles, and having the largest population, at roughly 647,000. Long and narrow, it lies across the south bank of the Columbia River at the mouth of the Willamette and includes much of Oregon’s largest city, Portland, which has a population of 512,000; the remainder of the county is largely suburban. Development is already fairly saturated across the county; its overall growth in the last decade was only 11%, compared to 17% for the city of Portland itself. The largest single employer is the microchip producer Intel Corporation. As a major urban center, Portland is well rated as highly livable in a variety of national surveys.

**Sponsorship and Setting**

Resolutions Northwest is a private non-profit (501-C-3) Community Dispute Resolution Center [CDRC] offering family mediation, school mediation, and training and education programs in addition to the Juvenile Victim Offender Mediation services. Other community mediations services such as small claims, neighbor-to-neighbor, landlord tenant and mobile home court mediation are offered through Portland and East County CDRC’s.

Resolutions Northwest [RNW] is housed in Multnomah County’s new and spacious Juvenile Justice Complex in Northeast Portland. This complex includes courtrooms, detention, probation, victims services, Department of Family Services, and the Court Appointed Special Advocate [CASA] program in addition to RNW. The complex is a secure facility requiring all who enter to walk through an upright scanner and place any bags on a conveyor belt for scanning. The RNW offices comprise four staff offices and two carrels on the same wing as the CASA program; additional meeting rooms on this wing as well as elsewhere in the building are
available for mediation sessions, which are held at the facility on regularly scheduled evenings. Mediation rooms typically contain a central table with chairs.

History

Resolutions Northwest had its beginning in 1984 when the St. Vincent De Paul Society of Portland wished to see a Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) established in the Portland area. A small grant helped a cadre of volunteers make a beginning, and VORP of Multnomah County became a 501-C-3 in 1985. The program continued to operate on a volunteer basis through the late 1980’s. Referrals began to increase dramatically in the early 1990’s, mushrooming to 600 in 1992. In 1995, the agency expanded into school and peer mediation services and changed its name to Resolutions Northwest. Parent-Adolescent mediation services were added in 1998.

From its inception in 1984, the primary emphasis of RNW services was diversion of juveniles from the justice system. The major focus of the diversion program at present is first time offenders who have committed class C felonies. In 1999, RNW obtained additional funding to expand its services to mediate restitution in adjudicated cases; the purpose of the new service was to increase the number of youths who successfully complete their restitution obligations, to decrease probation extensions and violations over restitution issues, and to provide a more meaningful and satisfying process for both youths and victims. Both property and low level assault cases are included in the adjudicated case referrals.

Purpose and Mission

“Resolutions Northwest strengthens personal and community responsibility by promoting constructive conflict resolution through mediation services, education and training.” (Board Member Notebook statement). In the words of the Director, the primary goal is that “safe communication happens between the parties. If there’s an agreement, that’s fine; if not, that’s fine, too. We provide the opportunity for them to talk.” A major value underlying many aspects of the program is to promote neutrality. So, for example, there is no shuttle mediation; if a victim requests it, RNW is more likely to offer a telephone conference. “There’s no way to communicate without putting your own stuff in it, short of direct quotes” (staff). Surrogate victims are not utilized; “the reason we get the referral is for the victim and offender to meet.” (Staff) “The results are not mine, they belong to the families.” (Volunteer). “The goal is to get them to talk to each other.” (Volunteer)

Staffing And Budget

The total staff of Resolutions Northwest includes six positions and 4.96 FTE. The full time RNW Executive Director devotes 33% of her time to the VOM program. In addition, there is a Director of Mediation Services and two VOM specialists who function as case managers, one for diversion cases and one for adjudicated cases; the total FTE specifically for VOM is 2.83. Total budget for the most recent fiscal year was $176,000, but the budget for the upcoming year has been reduced to $126,000. A cadre of 81 volunteers are on the roster, of whom 57 were active in the last calendar year, contributing 798 hours to VOM. The center conducts frequent mediation training sessions to maintain a highly qualified pool of volunteers to meet its needs. Volunteers conduct all the VOM mediations; case managers are responsible for case development and follow up.

Volume and Characteristics of Case Referrals

Resolutions Northwest tracks most of its statistics by case, which consists of each offender/victim pair; some information is also available by unduplicated offender. In calendar year 2000, a total of 432 cases involving 337 offenders and 342 victims were referred to the RNW victim offender mediation program. Fifty eight percent of the offenders were adjudicated youth (n=196) referred to work out restitution agreements which are entered in dispositional hearings; the remaining forty two percent were diverted youth (n=141), who will have no further record if they successfully complete the RNW mediation program. Adjudicated youth tend to have a slightly higher number of victims per offender, at 1.4, than diverted youth, at 1.1, with the result that the 278 adjudicated cases comprise sixty four percent of the total cases. The remaining 154 diverted cases are thirty six percent of the total. The top four offense categories for each of the two types of caseloads are summarized below.

### Adjudicated Cases, Top Four Offenses for Calendar 2000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Diverted Cases, Top Four Offenses for Calendar 2000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UUMV</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Mischief</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender of Offenders:

- Male: 261 (77.4%)
Juvenile Victim Offender Mediation in Six Oregon Counties ~ Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking

APPENDIX C 14

Race/Ethnicity of Offenders:
- African American: 81 (24.0%)
- Asian: 17 (5.0%)
- Caucasian: 202 (60.0%)
- Hispanic: 31 (9.2%)
- Native American: 5 (1.5%)
- Unknown: 1 (.3%)

Juvenile Justice Service Context
Perhaps the most unique feature of the Multnomah program context is simply its size and available resources. The County Juvenile Department has been consistently committed to diversion for more than a decade and a number of programs and procedures are in place. First time misdemeanors are typically referred out by the Department to Family Centers across the county, where the youth and his or her family can receive relevant services. Currently most of these cases are not mediated, though the Department is exploring a pilot program to refer the mediation component of appropriate cases to RNW simultaneously with making the Family Center referral. The County also has an extensive Community Service Program and a Project Pay Back, through which youth can earn money doing community service to pay restitution to their victims.

Referral Sources, Criteria and Process
The diversion component of RNW’s VOM program is focused on first-time Class C Felony offenders. All Juvenile Department referrals meeting this criteria are eligible to be referred into the RNW VOM program. If they negotiate a successful agreement with their victim and complete the terms of their contract, there will be no permanent record of the offense with which they were charged and it will be automatically expunged when they turn eighteen, provided there are no further incidents. After Department intake staff elect to refer a case, the Department sends a referral letter to both the victim and the offender. This letter clarifies the options available to both the victim and the offender and briefly explains the purpose of mediation “to work out a satisfactory agreement between the youth and the victim.” Department staff also fill out a VOM referral form; these are picked up daily by RNW staff.

Procedures for the newer adjudicated cases are similar. The referral typically takes place after the offender has been offered a plea agreement and before the dispositional hearing; the hope is that the offender and the victim will successfully negotiate a restitution agreement which can be entered at the hearing. Referral in these cases is made by the District Attorney’s office and is entered on the pre-trial offer form; the Juvenile Department sends a letter to the victim and forwards the referral to RNW.

Intake Procedures
Unique among the six sites in the present study, RNW does not conduct pre-mediation meetings with either offenders or victims. This format evolved in the early 1990’s when referrals suddenly skyrocketed. It was first begun as a time saving measure to enable the same numbers of staff and volunteers to handle a dramatically increased caseload, but has come to be valued as a means of maintaining total mediator neutrality and circumventing mediator influence on the process and outcome. According to RNW staff, the rate of participant satisfaction, negotiated agreements and completed agreements did not change when the new procedures were instituted.

Within two days of receiving the referral, RNW sends a letter offering a mediation date, requesting the participants to call to confirm their attendance or request a different date, and inviting them to call with any questions they have. Included with the letter are an information sheet entitled “A Few Facts About Mediation” and an RNW brochure. Preparation from this point forward is “up to what they ask or seek,” (staff), and is carried out entirely by staff. In this way the volunteers who will mediate the case “aren’t getting information that would influence them or make them form opinions.” The RNW VOM program does not currently track the amount of time involved in case development.

Flow of Cases
Multnomah County tracks annual statistics by cases closed in a given year. For fiscal year 1999, a total of 433 referred cases were closed; these included new referrals and any other cases open at any point during the year. Of these a total of 75 were deemed inappropriate for mediation. An additional 61 cases were resolved through other means, typically through being handled in court. This left a total of 292 cases in which the victim and offender were to be contacted and invited to participate in mediation. One party or the other was unavailable in 24 of these cases; in another 132 cases, either the victim or the offender declined to participate. Of the remaining 136 cases, a total of 113 came to mediation; 23 were not mediated and not resolved.

Mediations
Of the 433 cases referred into Resolutions Northwest for FY 1999, a total of 113 came to mediation; this represented 26.1% of all referrals and 42.2% of unresolved cases in which the parties were invited to participate in mediation. Mediations are held once a week on pre-set weekday evenings at the RNW offices. Two staff are always present to greet volunteers and participants, to brief volunteers, to handle building matters and room assignments, to provide any necessary mid-stream supervision or trouble shooting.
and to go over contracts before the final signing. Always present at the mediation are the offender and the victim; for younger
offenders, a parent is typically present as well. Parties are welcome to bring a support person who usually keeps an observer role.
The mediator begins with introductions and gives a brief description of the purpose and process. The confidentiality agreement is then
read and signed; any notes taken during the mediation by any of the parties, including the mediators, will be destroyed. The offender
is then invited to describe the offense from his or her perspective. This is done both because it is chronologically how the event
began, and to foster a neutral climate. “For victims who might berate, that would shut down a mediation and it would be hard to
recover” (staff). The victim is then invited to share his or her account and the parties are encouraged to talk with one another. Often
the mediator may be relatively inactive during this middle phase.

The question of what can be done to make it right is more open ended in the diverted cases, where a wide range of
options may be explored and decided upon. In addition to community service and specific restitution amounts, contracts have
included such things as an apology, orally or in writing; working directly for the victim; school attendance, grades or homework;
repair of damaged property; and donations to non-profit organizations. In adjudicated cases, the matter has been referred specifically
to mediate restitution. As a volunteer noted, “the biggest difference is that adjudicated people come looking for money or expecting to
pay money. The victims have come through court and know who the offender is.”

Outcomes and Follow up

In calendar year 2000, RNW facilitated a total of 92 mediation sessions resulting in 83 new mediation contracts. As a staff
member noted, “if we can get them to the table, they can usually resolve it.” A large majority (90.3%, n=102) of the 113 cases that
came to mediation resulted in contracts, leaving only 11 (9.7%) unresolved.

RNW mediation specialists provide the follow up and monitoring of contract completion for successfully negotiated
contracts. Payments are sent to RNW and logged before being sent on to the victim; if a payment is two days late, staff will call and
talk the situation over with the youth. Typically cases will not be referred back to court until they have gone for at least two months
without making a payment or an arrangement. Seventy six of the ninety contracts open during the year were successfully completed,
for a completion rate of 84.4%. Fourteen contracts were breached, or 15.6%. A total of $17,401 in restitution money was successfully
collected and paid out to victims; RNW offenders completed a total of 604 hours of community service.

Comments from Participants:

“I want to be a part of the solution. I always want to have the youth go first. Otherwise they get on the defensive. It opens
up doors and I can ask, where in the process could you have met your needs with a different choice?” (Victim who volunteers to
represent her employer in juvenile VOM)

“Meditating has value for my company. People see the company as personal, not just a business; the situation gets resolved;
and we get to interpret our goals and our costs. That can change youth attitude: they take ownership, this is your community, part of
where you live.” (Victim representing municipal employer)

“The mediators didn’t have to say much. We were having a good mediation, adult to adult.” (Offender)

“I got to resolve it without a lawyer or court. It was a federal offense, and now it won’t show up on my record. I learned
don’t do anything till you know what it is.” (Offender)

POLK COUNTY PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Polk County, with a population of about 60,000, lies in the North Willamette Valley west of Salem and east of the Coastal
Range, some 60 miles south of Portland. The county comprises 745 square miles with the primary industries being agriculture, forest
products, heavy manufacturing and education. The county seat of Dallas, with a population of 12,000, is located about 13 miles west
of Salem. Other towns include Monmouth (8300) and Independence (6000). Much of the county is rural in nature, with some
suburban development closer to Salem. The county is experiencing considerable growth, with an overall population increase of 21%
in the decade between 1990 and 2000.

Sponsorship and Setting

Polk County VORP/CMS is a private non profit (501-C-3) Community Dispute Resolution Center [CDRC] encompassing a
range of community mediation services. In addition to juvenile victim-offender mediation (Victim Offender Reconciliation Program,
or VORP) the agency offers parent teen mediation, neighbor-to-neighbor, adult VORP, school mediation, and occasional mediation in
landlord/tenant disputes.

The program is housed in a tiny one-room office provided in-kind by the Mennonite Church of the Brethren in Dallas, three
blocks west of Main Street. In addition to the office and utilities, the church makes available other meeting space for mediations,
takes, board meetings and other functions of the center. Mediations are held in other locations across the county when needed for
the convenience of participants or other reasons.

Four desks, each with phones and two with computers, are fitted efficiently around the perimeter of the office space. At any
one time there may be three or four people working simultaneously; conversations are kept at low volume to avoid distracting others
who may be on the phone. The work pace is as tightly fit together as the office contents. Staff and volunteers continually respond to
new referrals, track upcoming mediations, negotiate schedules, monitor contract agreements and respond to phone calls. The tight
quarters also provide for continuous role modeling, debriefing and supervision; everything being carried out is visible and audible, and questions and suggestions flow readily and comfortably around the room.

History
Polk County VORP is one of the oldest VOM programs in Oregon, having been started by the Mennonite Church which now houses it in 1984. Training in the Elkhart, Indiana VORP model was obtained from Mark Chupp and six adult cases were referred in the first year. The roots and vision of “peace with justice” stemming from this tradition are evident in the development of the program over time. With the advent of legislation creating community mediation services and the Oregon Dispute Resolution Commission, Polk County VORP opted to become a CDRC. In the words of the current director, “We chose to come in under Community Mediation Services to be able to offer a continuum of prevention, to prevent people from needing VORP down the line. The benefit is that it can integrate our services; the cost is the danger of VORP being perceived as indistinguishable from the rest of the services.” A volunteer echoed a similar theme in comments regarding the present study: “I hope nobody’s going to conclude “X” is the best model.”

Purpose and Mission
“The mission of Polk County VORP/CMS is to provide an opportunity for victims and offenders, family members, and neighbors to be reconciled through peaceful dialogue and negotiated settlements.” [Official mission statement]. This focus on opportunity and process is consistently reflected in the language used by staff and volunteers to describe what they do. “We control the process, they control the outcome. If I have ideas, it’s not my business, it’s theirs. We have to assure that this is a safe process (volunteer).” “The only strategy is the strategy we always have, and that is trusting the process” (Director)

Staffing and Budget
A full time director and two part time staff run the VORP/CMS office, for a total of 2.65 FTE. There is no secretary or receptionist; all staff answer phones, send letters, and handle questions. A total of 20 volunteers, trained in basic mediation and in VORP, are affiliated with the center; in any given year about half are involved as mediators. Volunteers are assigned cases at intake; they carry out case development, including contacting the parties, conducting pre-meetings with the offender and the victim, scheduling the mediation, and serving as mediator. In fiscal 1999, volunteers contributed over 900 hours of service. Staff also carry a VORP mediation caseload, in addition to community education, training, public relations, and other types of mediation.

The total budget projected for the year July 2000 through June 2001 is $71,300. The Center has developed a broad funding base which includes the Polk County Juvenile Department (30%), United Way (23%), donations (17%), Polk County Crime Prevention Plan (17%), ODRC (9%), and the Polk County General Fund (4%).

Volume and Characteristics of Case Referrals
Using MadTrack, statistics are kept on the number of cases (defined as each potential victim/offender combination) referred. For the year ending June 30, 2000, a total of 241 juvenile justice cases were referred. Summary statistics are available for the gender, race and age of the juvenile offenders:

Gender:
Male 73%
Female 27%

Race/Ethnicity:
White 78%
Hispanic 13%
Native American 2%
African American 1%
Unknown 6%

Age:
6 - 12  16%
13 - 15  49%
16 - 17  26%
18 - 21  10%

Juvenile Justice Service Context
Within the last two years, Polk County has developed a county wide diversion program called “Sanction Courts” as a resource for local police departments to refer youth with less serious violations. Each community has established a panel of citizens who listen to the parent and the child and make a recommendation for disposition. Polk County VORP has made a concerted effort to have VORP board members or volunteers appointed to Sanction Court panels as a means of helping to assure that cases appropriate for mediation at this level can be identified and referred.
Referral Sources, Criteria and Process

All cases referred into the juvenile VORP program come through the juvenile justice system. If there has been a problem with a youth but there is no chargeable offense, any subsequent mediation will be handled through another program such as school or parent/teen mediation. A youth in such a case is not technically an “offender.” The vast majority of referrals are from the Polk County Juvenile Department; however both the sanction courts and local police jurisdictions occasionally also refer. Most cases are referred to VORP pre adjudication and are kept on informal supervision by the juvenile department until the final VORP report is received. In most instances, any required community service component will already have been established by the Juvenile Department before the case is referred for mediation. A few cases are adjudicated and referred by the judge as part of the court order (dependent on victim willingness) to establish restitution. Beyond admission of responsibility for the offense, referral criteria are purposefully minimal; Polk County VORP/CMS is willing to look at any situation and work together to determine whether it can appropriately be brought to mediation.

For FY 1999, 75.1% of the referrals were for misdemeanors and 24.9% for felonies. Offenses included assault, burglary, criminal mischief, curfew, harassment, menacing, nuisance, reckless endangering, theft, trespassing, unauthorized use of motor vehicle, and unauthorized use of a weapon. Overall 66.8% were for property offenses, 28.2% were offenses against persons, and the remainder were classified as “other.”

Intake Procedures

The Juvenile Department sends a letter to both the offender’s family and the victim explaining that the case has been referred to VORP. Once the referral information is received from the Juvenile Department, staff assigns the case and the mediator attempts to contact both parties within one week of receiving the referral. Standard practice is to meet face-to-face with the offender and his or her family first. This usually takes about an hour; the youth is invited to share his or her account of the event and offer potential solutions. Parental input is sought after the youth has been heard from. Following this meeting, if the youth has agreed and the case is seen as appropriate for mediation, a similar meeting is conducted with the victim, to hear the victim’s story, obtain an accounting of the losses, and explain the mediation process.

Staff and volunteers comment on the importance of this in-person preparation for both safety and neutrality. “Preparation allows both sides to bring their best thinking to the meeting. What will it take to make us each whole” (Staff). “Let people vent in meetings before the mediation — usually no one has listened to either one before” (Volunteer). “If I can meet with them beforehand, I have the opportunity to recognize if I have a problem. I can see if it would be harder for me to control my disklike for this kid, I can meet with them beforehand, mediators will often ask permission to share a quote with the victim as a means of encouraging victim participation. A major reason for meeting with the offender first is to learn the youth’s level of remorse and responsibility. If this is forthcoming, mediators will often ask permission to share a quote with the victim as a means of encouraging victim participation. A further benefit identified by those interviewed is that the youth can tell the complete story in a less defensive environment and begin to develop a relationship of trust with the mediator; mediators can then use this knowledge and relationship to help draw the youth out during the mediation session if need be. The pre-meeting with the victim is seen as additionally important for determining what it will take to make the victim feel safe in an encounter with the offender who caused them harm.

In some instances, the parties are not willing to meet together but are interested in seeking resolution outside of court. Polk County VORP facilitates a shuttle type of mediation in these cases, totaling 7.9% of all referrals.

Flow of Cases

A total of 241 new cases were referred to Polk County VORP in fiscal year 1999; 24 of these were still pending at the end of the year. Of the remaining 217 cases, 9 were deemed inappropriate for mediation, and either victims or offenders were unavailable in another 28 cases, leaving 180 to be developed. Either the victim or the offender declined to participate in a total of 45 cases (18.7% of the total referrals). Of the remaining 135 cases, 19 were resolved through other program services without receiving mediation; 7 were not mediated and not resolved; and a total of 109 cases were mediated.

Mediations

Of the 241 cases referred into Polk County VORP for FY 1999, a total of 109 were convened in mediation sessions. This figure represents 45.2% of all cases referred, and 60.5% of the cases in which the victim was invited to participate in mediation. Mediators typically convene the sessions around a table. Present are the offender and a parent or parents, the victim, and victim parents if the victim is also a juvenile. Presence of others (support persons, juvenile staff) is rare. Lawyers are excluded from attending. Cases involving multiple offenders and/or multiple victims are typically handled in a single large session which is likely to involve co-mediators.

Introductions cover the confidentiality agreement, which must be signed, and an overview of the process. Most often, the offender is invited first to give an account of the offense. “If we begin with the victim and the victim takes a blaming stance, that could just put down the offender further. This way the offender gets to take ownership on a level field. The offender’s story is voluntary, fresh, and undoctored; it doesn’t have to be reactive to what the victim has said and doesn’t have to get defensive.” (Director) Once the offender’s account is complete, the victim is invited to share his or her story and ask questions. Often the mediator takes a background role at this stage, allowing the conversation to flow back and forth between the parties.
Mediators make clear the session is not a “fact finding” enterprise. Often parties disagree about particular elements of the situation; those interviewed emphasized that a restorative solution can still be found. “What can he learn’ has a higher priority than the facts: his choices, the consequences, what he can do with his future” (staff).

When the facts and feelings about the offense appear to have run their course, mediators help move the focus to the question of how to make it right. There are no set protocols or rules for this phase of the process. Both parties have input into possible ideas for repairing the harm that has been done. Monetary restitution is a frequent outcome but is usually not the goal (except when so ordered in adjudicated cases). “Restitution often seems to be the least important thing for the victims” (volunteer).

Often, the major components of the contract which results have more to do with the youth’s future than with specific restitution to the victim. If monetary restitution is a component, the mediator will explore with the youth what the mechanisms can be to take responsibility for earning it; there are programs run by the county which enable youth to carry out community service-type work and receive payment which can be sent to the victim. The actual community service activity can be arranged through the Juvenile Department program but is often developed creatively by the participants in the mediation session. Non monetary components of contracts may involve completing an education or taking other steps towards a productive future; providing specific services to the victim; working in a setting similar to the one in which the harm was done; or staying in touch with the victim by letter about the progress of the youth’s life. Once the parties reach agreement, the mediator writes down the elements of the contract and both parties sign it. Each party receives a copy, a copy is kept in the VORP program office, and a copy is sent to the Juvenile Department.

Outcomes and Follow up

Monitoring compliance with contract terms and collecting restitution to pay out to victims is handled by staff at the VORP office rather than by the volunteers. The monitoring process is relatively low key once arrangements have been made. If a youth is late with a payment, staff follow up with a phone call to find out what is happening, and may negotiate with the victim if there are extenuating circumstances; but major responsibility for compliance is up to the youth.

For the year ending June 30, 2000, a total of 109 cases were mediated. Of these, 108 were successfully resolved (99.1% of mediations, 44.8% of referrals), and one was mediated and not resolved (.9% of mediations). In many resolved cases, no contract is necessary; victims are often satisfied with just an apology. Contracts negotiated in the Polk County VORP program have a 97% completion rate. Polk County VORP offenders paid out $1266.93 in restitution in FY 1999, and contributed 62 community service hours negotiated in mediation in addition to the community service hours assigned by the Juvenile Department.

Comments from Participants

“The preparation was splendid. They ran us through how it was gonna go. Did a good job asking probing questions.” (Offender parent)
“Victims have the right to see who was in their stuff.” (Offender)
“I think it was fair. It was really mild what I did. But I didn’t really like it (the mediation). I don’t like sitting and talking with people I’m in trouble with.” (Offender)
“I felt really good that I came up with part of the solution.” (Offender)
“VORP is really good for the small things. It alleviates court cost and saves taxpayers money.” (Victim)
“Over the fifteen years I’ve been involved, that was the only way we were ever getting any money back. Circuit court might make them pay, city court doesn’t. It’s more cost effective for us to seek the money through mediation than through a civil process.” (Victim/store representative)