

Expanding the Circle

*Angie McCown, Director
TDCJ Victim Services Division*

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, as well as the month we commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Therefore, it seems important that we have a conversation regarding the Me Too movement. Social activist Tarana Burke created the phrase "Me Too" as part of a grassroots campaign to promote empowerment through empathy among women of color who had experienced sexual abuse. Ms. Burke will be the keynote speaker at the 2018 National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA) Conference in Jacksonville, Florida in August. In a media interview, Ms. Burke stated that this movement allows survivors to say, "I am not ashamed and I am not alone" and allows survivor to survivor communication that says, "I see you, I hear you, I understand you, and I am here for you."

This is not to be confused with the #MeToo movement which actress Alyssa Milano created as a social media awareness campaign around sexual harassment and/or

sexual assault in the workplace to demonstrate the magnitude of the problem. This campaign has certainly publicized the issue, however it is concerning that someone might disclose this status on social media without having the support to process it, or that a victim may receive unwanted #MeToo posts on their social media page.

Although sexual harassment and sexual assault are not the same thing, themes of gender oppression and sexual objectification run through both. Consider the definition of objectification, treating a person as a commodity without regard to their humanity or dignity. This can apply to both victims of sexual assault and of sexual harassment.



This brings us to the theme for 2018 National Crime Victims'



Angie McCown

Rights Week: Expanding the Circle – Reaching All Victims. Part of the campaign this year includes a series of public awareness posters titled, "You Are Not Alone". This seems to resonate with the original Me Too movement, both are reaching out to all victims, including those who have been silent about their victimization to say you are not alone and there is support for you.

As we plan for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Crime Victims' Rights Week under the spotlight of the Me Too and #MeToo movements, let us be thoughtful about our path of expanding the circle and reaching all victims. ★

Table of Contents

Page 1	Message From the Director
Page 2	Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
Page 4	National Crime Victims' Rights Week
Page 6	Texas Board of Criminal Justice
Page 7	Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles
Page 8	2018 Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance
Page 10	TDCJ Victim Services Division Update
Page 12	TVAT Online Enhancement

The

VICTIM'S INFORMER

TAASA - Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division is proud to provide you with an e-mail notification service. E-mail notifications may be retrieved directly from your computer, mobile device, or wherever internet access is available. E-mail notifications are time sensitive and notify you of changes in an offender's status.

Being a current Victim Notification System registrant will not automatically register you for this e-mail service. To register, contact the Victim Services Division at 800-848-4284 or visit our website at www.tdcj.texas.gov and complete the victim notification form. You continue to have the option to receive notifications by letter, e-mail, or both.

We would like to encourage all victim services providers who utilize the Victim Notification System to elect to receive e-mail notifications only, whenever possible.

APRIL IS
—SEXUAL ASSAULT—
AWARENESS MONTH 

Sexual Assault
Awareness Month

#SAAM

By: Ted Rutherford, Communications Director, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

In January, the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) released guidelines designed to help institutions and schools focus on sexual harassment prevention strategies. The leading voice for ending sexual assault in Texas outlined holistic sexual harassment prevention strategies, with an emphasis on key areas including leadership, policy, and training.

The eight-page white paper, titled “Assessing Sexual Harassment Response and Prevention Strategies After #MeToo,” answers an important question.

“We reached a turning point in 2017, and we find ourselves asking, ‘What’s next?’” said TAASA Executive Director Rose Luna. “If we are going to end sexual violence, we cannot rely on the same policies and prevention approaches that have brought us to this point.”

Luna said incidents of sexual harassment and other demeaning behaviors at the workplace indicate a failure of leadership. Leadership is the true cornerstone of sexual harassment prevention, and harassment is more likely to continue without a demonstrated

continued on next page

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

EMBRACE YOUR VOICE THIS APRIL

continued from previous page

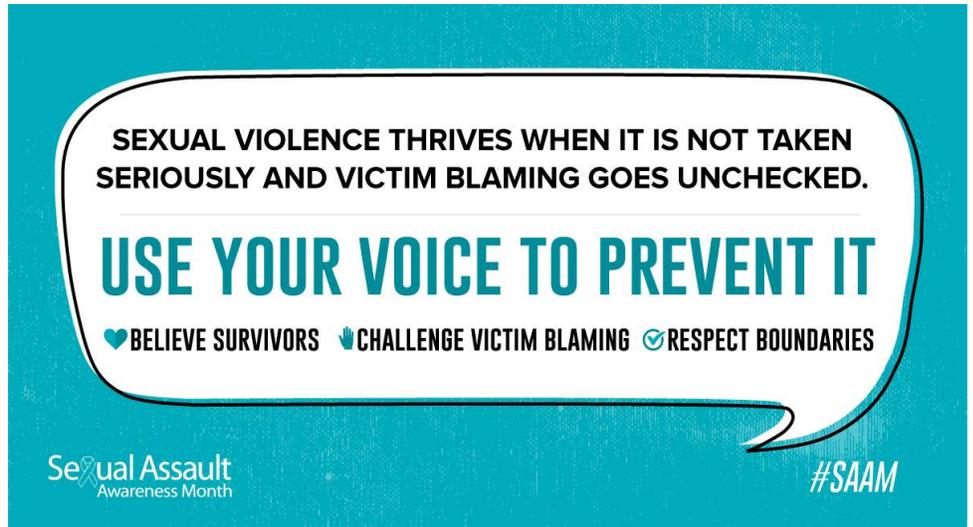
commitment to eliminating it.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recommends a comprehensive harassment policy that includes: clear policies prohibiting harassment supported by managers and staff, accessible evidence-based training, sufficient resources, proactive steps to eliminate risk factors, multiple and easily accessible avenues for reporting harassment, a process to protect against retaliation, and assurances that the organization will take immediate and proportionate action if harassment is found to have occurred.

“The anti-discrimination policies many institutions have in place are necessary, but not sufficient, to end harassment and abuse,” Luna said, adding that it is incumbent upon leaders to recognize their role in setting the tone.

If society hopes to build on the progress that has already been made, we must commit to long-term strategies to improve the cultures of our workplaces and institutions.

“At this pivotal moment, when many are reassessing their roles in preventing and responding



SEXUAL VIOLENCE THRIVES WHEN IT IS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND VICTIM BLAMING GOES UNCHECKED.

USE YOUR VOICE TO PREVENT IT

♥ BELIEVE SURVIVORS ♣ CHALLENGE VICTIM BLAMING ✓ RESPECT BOUNDARIES

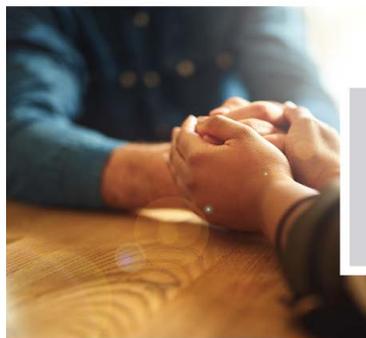
Sexual Assault Awareness Month #SAAM

to sexual harassment, we urge organizational leaders to begin with this premise: eliminating sexual harassment is not equivalent with mere legal compliance,” Luna added.

The full white paper can be found on the TAASA web site

here: http://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TAASA_whitepaper_sexual-harassment.pdf.

For more information about Sexual Assault Awareness Month please visit <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam/sexual-assault-awareness-month>. ★



VICTIMS ARE NEVER TO BLAME

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

#SAAM



EXPAND THE CIRCLE REACH ALL VICTIMS

By: Wendy Williamson, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW), proclaimed in 1981 by President Ronald Reagan, is a weeklong observance every April in which our nation joins together to honor crime victims and survivors, and those who advocate on their behalf. NCVRW is a time to acknowledge the devastating impact of crime on victims and communities in the United States. It's an opportunity to devote our

collective energies to ensure that victims are not forgotten within the justice system. It also serves as an opportunity to recognize those who serve crime victims as critical partners in our collective efforts to promote safety and justice for all. NCVRW for 2018 will be commemorated April 8-14. "This year's theme-Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims-emphasizes the importance of inclusion in victim services.

This year's theme addresses how the crime victim field can better ensure that every crime victim has access to services and support, and how professionals, organizations, and communities can work in tandem to reach all victims."¹

¹ Excerpted from <https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw/index.html>. Accessed 1/26/18.

In proclaiming the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, President Ronald Reagan said, "For too long, the victims of crime have been forgotten persons of our criminal justice system. Rarely do we give victims the help they need or the attention they deserve. Yet the protection of our citizens - to guard them from becoming victims - is the primary purpose of our penal laws. Thus, each new victim personally represents an instance in which our system has failed to prevent crime. Lack of concern for victims compounds that failure."



Click this box to view
Texas Crime Victims' Rights

continued on next page



For more information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week, please visit <https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw/>.



The Texas Board of Criminal Justice - Who Are They and What Do They Do?

By: Derrelynn Perryman, Texas Board of Criminal Justice

The nine member Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ) is appointed by the governor to oversee the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), which provides confinement, supervision, rehabilitation, and reintegration of the state's convicted felons.

In 2015 the Governor appointed me to the Board. My background is in victim services, and I chair the Victim Services Committee. The board members, who are appointed for staggered, six-year terms, are responsible for hiring the executive director of the department and setting rules and policies which guide the agency. TBCJ members also serve as the Board of Trustees for the Windham School District within the TDCJ. In this capacity, they are responsible for providing general oversight and the hiring of the school system's superintendent.

Windham School District provides appropriate educational programs to meet the needs of the eligible offender population, thus reducing recidivism by assisting offenders in becoming productive members of society.

There are TDCJ divisions which report directly to the Board. They are the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) with oversight of the Investigations Department,

the Internal Audit Division, and the office of State Counsel for Offenders. In addition, the PREA Ombudsman is appointed by and reports directly to the Board.

The OIG investigates allegations of criminal activity and misconduct that have an impact on TDCJ programs, personnel and resources, including allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse.

The Internal Audit Division is responsible for examining and evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the agency's system of internal controls and the quality of agency performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities.

The State Counsel for Offenders provides indigent offenders who are incarcerated in TDCJ with legal counsel or representation that is independent of the TDCJ.

The PREA Ombudsman monitors the agency's efforts to eliminate sexual abuse and sexual harassment in TDCJ correctional facilities.

The Board also has several committees in addition to the Victim Services Committee. They include the Audit and Review, Business and Financial Operations, Correctional Institutions, Health Care, Human Resources, Legal,

Community Corrections, and Rehabilitation and Reentry Programs Committees.

As a Board Member I have the opportunity to observe and visit with TDCJ staff at all levels, talk with inmates, visit and observe the units and parole offices, and take a deeper look into the operations of our system. I have learned so much in my first two years about the people and programs that make up TDCJ and the many very positive outcomes we are seeing. You can find out more about the Board, including our meeting schedule, here: www.tdcj.texas.gov/tbcj. Meetings are open to the public and I encourage victims and victim families to attend our meetings to find out more about what's going on with TDCJ. You may also email me if you have questions at tbcj@tdcj.texas.gov, addressing your email to my attention. ★



Derrelynn Perryman

Texas Board of Pardons & Paroles

Interviews and Accompaniment Services

By: Libby Hamilton, Victim Liaison, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles

As we've highlighted in previous articles, the Texas Government Code grants a victim the right to speak with the lead voter of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) when the offender is being considered for release to parole or mandatory supervision. Some victims prefer to speak to the lead voter by phone, and others request to appear in-person. The purpose of these interviews is to express views on the offense, the offender, and the effects the crime has had on the victim.

Please note that when discussing Board interviews, we utilize the definition of "victim" found in Section 508.117(g) of the Texas Government Code¹, including the victim/survivor of the present offense, guardian of a minor victim, or close relative of a deceased victim for certain offenses.

In this edition we wanted to look more in-depth at a specific part of Section 508.153(b)² which focuses on the number of victim interviews the BPP is required to grant during a parole review. Understandably there are often several people who want the opportunity to express their opinions; however, in the interest of time, travel, or other circumstances, it may be more convenient to designate a single person to present the group's/family's views.

Section 508.153(b) specifies that the BPP may request that a sole representative appear. However, we acknowledge that all interested parties deserve privacy and may not be in contact with one another. In the interest of confidentiality, BPP staff members are trained to never confirm or deny if others have requested an interview, and we do our best to accommodate all interview requests from statutorily defined "victims". Keep in mind that this statute does not limit the number of those who can submit written statements. All letters, emails, and faxes received by both victims and concerned citizens are accepted and placed in the offender's file for review by the voters.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the accompaniment services offered by the BPP Victim Liaison and the TDCJ Victim Services Division (VSD) Regional Victim Services Coordinators. Depending on staff schedules and availability, someone is almost always available to accompany a victim to a BPP office for moral support and assistance in navigating the parole review process. There are parole panels located in Amarillo, Angleton, Austin, Gatesville, Huntsville, Palestine, and San Antonio. If the lead voter is not located in an area close to you, we may be able to facilitate a video conference from an office that's

more convenient.

Please feel free to call (512) 406-5833 with additional questions, or visit the Board's website for some helpful FAQs at <http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/bpp/VictimLiaison/VictimFAQ.html>. ★

1

Sec. 508.117. VICTIM NOTIFICATION

(g) In this section:

(3) "Victim" means a person who:

(A) is a victim of sexual assault, kidnapping, aggravated robbery, or felony stalking; or

(B) has suffered bodily injury or death as the result of the criminal conduct of another.

2

Sec. 508.153 STATEMENTS OF VICTIM

(b) If more than one person is entitled to appear in person before the board members or parole commissioners, only the person chosen by all persons entitled to appear as the persons sole representative may appear.

2018 Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance

By: *Natacha Pelaez-Wagner, Director, Texas Victim Services Association*



The Texas Victim Services Association (TVSA) is the professional membership association for victim services providers in Texas. Founded in 1997, our mission is “support, education and recognition of victim service providers”. To this end, we strive to provide quality professional development and training to our state’s victim service professionals, and to elevate the visibility and credibility of victim services as a career choice in Texas.

TVSA takes pride in our many collaborative partnerships with state, regional, and local victim services providers. To this end, we are working in partnership with the TDCJ VSD to provide a continuum of victim assistance academy training in Texas, through our respective foundational and advanced victim assistance academies.

TDCJ VSD, through its Crime Victim Clearinghouse, houses our state’s foundational academy for victim assistance, the Texas Victim Assistance Training (TVAT), for victim services providers with less than three years of experience.

To continue training for victim services providers beyond the foundational curriculum, TVSA serves as our state’s advanced academy provider, through its Texas Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance in management and leadership. (TAAVA).

By focusing on management and leadership in victim assistance programming, the advanced academy is providing continued professional development for those individuals who already have a strong background in working directly with victims. According to the Office for Victims of Crime there are 46 victim assistance academies across the country providing basic level victim assistance training. Texas is one of only eight offering an advanced academy and, through TVSA, is now distinguishing itself further by filling a need for leadership and management training specific to the victim assistance field.

“We are excited to see the growth and expansion of TVSA’s Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance to support new managers and supervisors,” said Lisa Tieszen, Consultant with the State Victim Assistance Academy Resource Center, funded by the Office for Victims of Crime and housed at the National Center for Victims of Crime. “The SVAA Resource

Center is particularly interested and excited about this innovative training which expands the realm of victim assistance academies from the traditional focus on comprehensive basic skills for working directly with crime victims to a broader focus of assisting victims through skilled program management, supervision and leadership.”

Limited to 60 participants, this year’s advanced academy will be an intensive learning experience with interactive and hands-on learning opportunities. In addition, the academy will be limited to victim assistance professionals with three or more years of experience. Providing management training to victim assistance providers who are already in the field will create a pool of new and future managers who not only have an understanding of the challenges and related skills needed to provide direct victim services, but who have training on what it takes to manage projects and supervise staff. Not only does this type of training support individuals in their career growth, but it also benefits programs, which ultimately benefits victims too.

“I believe that it has been tradition in this field to take someone who is skilled at working directly with

continued on next page

2018 Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance

continued from previous page

victims, put them in charge of a program and expect them to figure it out; usually while training their replacement or handling some of their old responsibilities at the same time,” said Torie Camp, TVSA board member and Chair of the advanced academy planning committee. “That’s a disservice to our programs, advocates and victims. This training changes that.”

The 2018 Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance will be held June 27-29 at the Center for Child Protection in Austin. For more information on the academy, or to receive an application when it becomes available, please email director@txvsa.org.



For more information about the 2018 Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance, please visit <http://www.txvsa.org/>.



Texas Victim Services Association (TVSA) was founded in 1997 by two visionaries in the field who wanted to create a place just for victim service providers where they could learn, share, and network.

Vision: TVSA promotes the delivery of a full range of consistent, high-quality, professional services to crime victims, their families, and communities.

Mission: The mission of TVSA is support, education, and recognition for victim service providers.¹

¹ Excerpted from <http://www.txvsa.org/>. Accessed 1/18/18.

TDCJ Victim Services Division Update

By: Wendy Williamson, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse

New Managers in the Victim Services Division

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division (VSD) is excited to announce that we have two new Managers in our leadership team.

Amanda Gage, Manager - Programs Amanda graduated from Texas State University in 2002 with a Bachelor's of Science. She knew she wanted a career with the State of Texas and landed her first position 12 years ago with TDCJ as a Parole Officer. Amanda started as a Parole Officer in Waco, and later transferred to Austin. She held the position of Parole Officer for 5 years before

obtaining supervisory positions in the area of officer supervision and the Electronic Monitoring Program. She continued to seek career advancement with TDCJ and in December of 2017 landed the position of Manager of Programs. Programs consists of Victim Offender Mediation Dialogue (VOMD) and the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse (TxCVC).

Amanda is always ready for new challenges. She came to VSD to broaden her criminal justice knowledge, and the opportunity to serve victims appealed to her. She felt her 12 years of experience with offender management would

aid her in overseeing the programs section of VSD. She is eager to contribute her knowledge and experiences to the VSD. She has a compassionate demeanor which will be very beneficial in her role as Programs Manager. We are very excited to have Amanda on board!

VOMD: 512-406-5929

vsd.vomd@tdcj.texas.gov

TxCVC: 512-406-5931

tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov



VOMD Program

The TDCJ VSD VOMD program, in accordance with Code of Criminal Procedure art. 56.13, provides an opportunity for victims or surviving family members of violent crime to initiate an in-person meeting with the TDCJ offender responsible for their victimization.

Creative alternatives to mediation are also an option, and typically include a letter written by the victim. For more information, please visit the VOMD page at <http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/vomd.html>.

Clearinghouse

The TxCVC provides training and technical assistance to criminal justice and victim services professionals and direct services to crime victims. The goal of the TxCVC is to provide focus, leadership, and coordination necessary to continue and improve services so that victims are afforded their rights and all possible assistance.

The TxCVC was established and operated by the Governor's Office in 1983 until its official transfer to the TDCJ VSD in March of 1996.

TxCVC Services:

- Victim Impact Statement (VIS) Form
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Direct Services for Crime Victims
- Publications/Resources

For more information, please visit the TxCVC page at <http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/txcvc.html>

Amanda Gage, Manager - Programs

continued on next page

TDCJ Victim Services Division Update

continued from previous page

Tammy Stockton, Manager - Notification Tammy's career with TDCJ began 28 years ago in the Parole Supervision department. She took an interest in Victim Services and landed her first position with the VSD as a Clerk III in the Notification Section. For the last 17 years, she's been dedicated to the VSD Notification Section. Tammy has a kind, nurturing demeanor. In a recent conversation, she stated, "Victims are what matter to me. Compassion and empathy come natural to me, and because of those traits my job became something I've thoroughly enjoyed. Although I wish there wasn't a need for victim services, it is very rewarding to have the ability and opportunity to help victims through their traumatic situation in any way I can. It's a great feeling to be able to help make things better for victims." Tammy has been, and continues to be, a valuable asset to VSD.

For more information about the VSD Notification Section, please visit <http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/index.html#notification>. ★

**TOLL FREE
HOTLINE**

800-848-4284

Hotline
Rights
Status
Referral
Offender
Location
Protest
Victim
Restitution
VIS
Notification
VNS

WHAT DOES NOTIFICATION DO?

Toll Free Hotline:

Hotline staff and analysts assist callers by providing information about offender status and location, parole eligibility, parole review process, protest process, special condition requests, restitution information and referral, victims' rights, and victim services.

Correspondence:

The correspondence staff process materials from victims and concerned citizens, generate letter notifications, process victim impact statements, process notification failures and monitor daily notification outflow.

Notification Registration

The Victim Notification System (VNS) provides registrants with notifications (via e-mail, letter or both) regarding offenders. TDCJ VSD also offers text notification for statutory victims of offenders who are on parole supervision. In addition to the written and text notification services, the VSD offers automated telephone services. For more information, please contact Notification at 800-848-4284 or victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov.



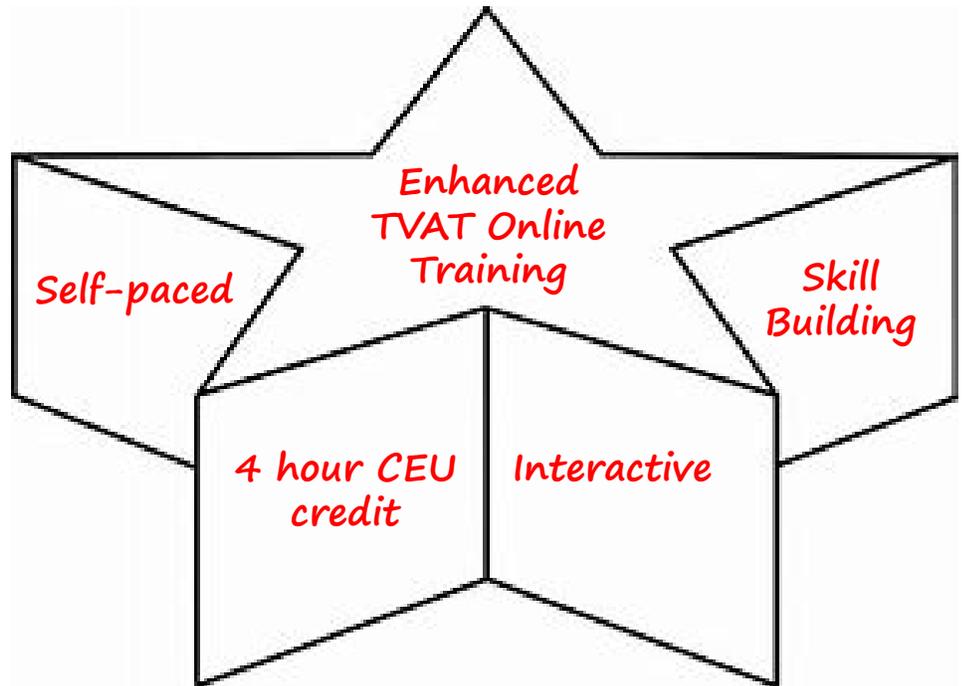
Tammy Stockton, Manager - Notification

TVAT Online Enhancement

Enhanced TVAT Online Training

The TxCVC is pleased to announce enhancements to TVAT Online! The training guides a new victim services professional through the process of serving victims effectively. Many agencies utilize TVAT Online in their new employee training and orientation process. The training also provides an opportunity for seasoned victim services professionals to refresh their skills and learn about legislative changes. TxCVC utilized stakeholders to develop the original TVAT Online and to assist with the enhancements.

Upon completion of all four modules, a certificate with CEU information will be provided. We hope that you will take the time to view the modules so you can see how beneficial the training is for all victim services professionals.



4 Modules



Ethics



Crime Victims' Rights



The Role of the Victim Services Professional



Safety Planning



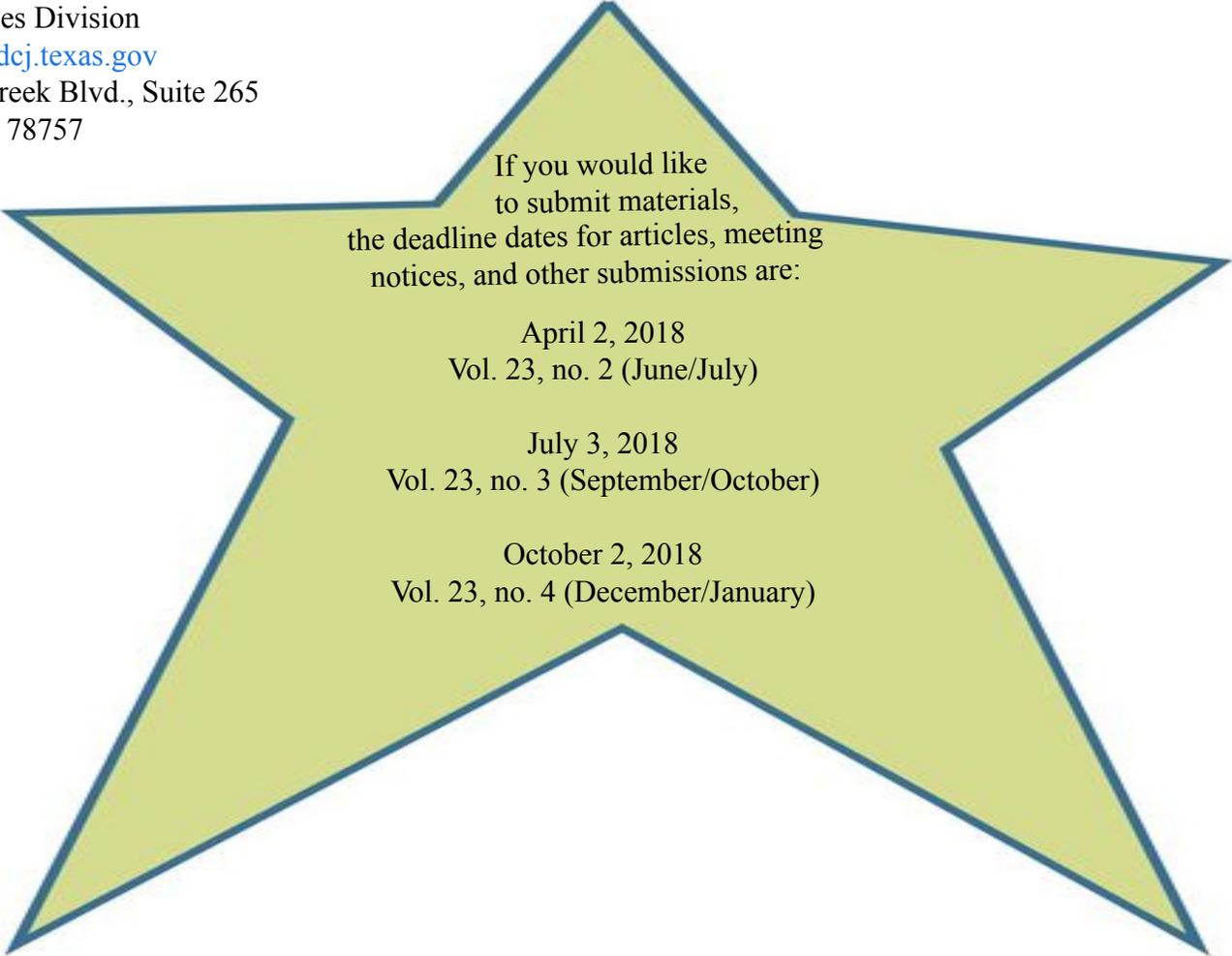
INFORMATION ABOUT *THE VICTIM'S INFORMER*...

The Victim's Informer e-newsletter is published quarterly. Articles, meeting notices, and other submissions should be sent to the TDCJ Victim Services Division, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, 8712 Shoal Creek Blvd, Suite 265, Austin, Texas 78757-6899; faxed to 512-452-0825; or e-mailed to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov. If you would like to submit materials, the deadline dates for articles, meeting notices, and other submissions are identified in the box on this page. For questions or comments, please call us at 800-848-4284 or 512-406-5931.

Please Note:

You may access the publication at the TDCJ VSD website. If you wish, we will notify you via e-mail each time The Victim's Informer becomes available on the TDCJ VSD website and provide an electronic link to The Victim's Informer. Send your e-mail address to: tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov.

Angie McCown, Director
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Victim Services Division
victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov
8712 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 265
Austin, Texas 78757



If you would like to submit materials, the deadline dates for articles, meeting notices, and other submissions are:

April 2, 2018
Vol. 23, no. 2 (June/July)

July 3, 2018
Vol. 23, no. 3 (September/October)

October 2, 2018
Vol. 23, no. 4 (December/January)