

Contact: [Susie Frenzel](#), Division Director

DIVISION SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES

Mission and Purpose

The Division of Victim Assistance and Forensic Science (VAFS) was created to uphold the rights of victims of crime and provide victim-centered support to those who have been impacted by crime. We support the criminal justice system and those it serves through science, training, and services. Through our efforts, we aim to enhance public safety, prevention efforts and community trust in Alaska.

Division-wide priorities

1. **Strengthen Coordination Across the Department:** As a newly established Division, a primary focus is integrating programs into a coordinated, trauma-informed organization while preserving each program's unique statutory responsibilities. Current efforts emphasize increased collaboration across units, reducing operational silos, sharing resources where appropriate, and creating consistent policies, training, and communication practices.
2. **Enhance Services to Victims and Survivors and Strengthen Non-Profit Partners:** Through technical expertise, clear communication, and coordination providing partners with practical guidance, useful tools to better serve victims and survivors.
3. **Improve Public and Stakeholder Communication:** Working to close the loop between the services we provide and the responses to of how they are being received. Increase accessibility of services within the Division to stakeholders including hosting regular listening sessions
4. **Maintain Forensic Science and Lab Capacity:** Continue to provide impartial, high-quality forensic science, in a timely, customer focused manner that underpins Alaska's criminal justice system.

Evaluation & reporting

- Annual Division Report & Presentation: Published and/or presented each year with accomplishments, data, and upcoming goals.
- Biweekly meetings: Held with unit leads to assess implementation progress and course correct.
- Stakeholder Feedback: Conduct annual surveys with stakeholders to assess service effectiveness.

Structure

VAFS includes six independent components with distinct statutory authorities, functions, and organizational structures. The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) and Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) are governed by statutorily established boards, and the Missing Persons Clearinghouse, also established in statute. The Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory operates as a large, specialized forensic science entity under the Division.

The Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Unit and the Victim Navigator Program are smaller components managed directly within the Division. Each component maintains its specific programmatic responsibilities while working within the Division's overall structure and priorities.

VAFS Includes:

- Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA)
- Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB)
- Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Lab
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) Unit
- Victim Navigator Program
- Missing Persons Clearinghouse (MPCH)

ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARIES & PRIORITIES BY UNIT

Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA)

Contact: [MaryBeth Gagnon](#), Executive Director

Mission & Purpose: CDVSA promotes the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault and provides safety for Alaskans victimized or impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault through funding and coordinating a statewide system of crisis intervention and support, and by demanding perpetrator accountability.

CDVSA's work centers on supporting victim services statewide, managing grants, coordinating with shelters, tribal partners, and local and federal agencies, and completing required state and federal reporting.

Structure: CDVSA is Alaska's primary grant administering agency for services and training related to victim assistance. It is governed by an appointed 11-member statewide Council and provides oversight as established under AS 18.66.010.

CDVSA staff are responsible for the administration of the Council's programs, including grant management, fiscal and program monitoring, federal and state reporting, planning, and coordination with funded agencies and partners. The distinction between Council authority and staff responsibilities is important to CDVSA's operation: certain decisions require Council action, while routine administrative and programmatic functions are handled by staff. The winter and spring months are the busiest due to legislative activity, preparation for the grant cycle and federal reporting deadlines.

Funding: CDVSA manages over \$20 million in funding each year. A significant portion of these funds are pass-through awards issued from federal grants. All grant programs managed by CDVSA run on a 3-year grant cycle, with occasional extensions. All follow State Fiscal Years (July-June).

Victim Services Grant Program: Consists of both federal and state grants that provides funding for Alaskan organizations to provide emergency shelter, crisis response, advocacy, mental health support, legal assistance, and other supportive services for victims of violent crime, particularly victims of domestic violence and sexual assault

- Current grant cycle for subgrantees: SFY 2024-SFY 2027
- Grant requires annual continuation applications
- Next competitive application for subgrantees will be due spring of 2027

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Grants included	Description of Grant	Grant Timeline for CDVSA
Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Assistance Grant <i>Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice</i>	Supports direct services for victims of crime including crisis counseling, shelter, advocacy, therapy, and referrals.	October-September Applications annual, typically due in April
Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) Grant <i>Office of Violence Against Women, Department of Justice</i>	Supports direct intervention and related supportive services for victims of sexual assault	August-July Applications annual, typically due in April
Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Grant <i>Office of Family Violence and Prevention Services, Department of Health and Human Services</i>	Supports immediate shelter, supportive services, and prevention initiatives for victims of domestic and dating violence	October-September Applications annual, typically due in January
General Funds <i>State of Alaska</i>	Supports shelter, crisis response, and supportive services for victims of violent crime	July-June No application required

Prevention Grant Program: Consists of state grant funding to support prevention programs within Alaskan organizations to address the root causes of domestic violence and sexual assault, including community outreach, awareness campaigns, and youth programming to support shared protective factors.

- Current grant cycle for subgrantees: SFY 2026-SFY 2028
- Grant requires annual continuation applications
- Next competitive application for subgrantees will be due spring of 2028

Grants included	Description of Grant	Grant Timeline for CDVSA
General Funds <i>State of Alaska</i>	Supports prevention services to address domestic violence and sexual assault across the state	July-June No application required

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Battering Intervention/Prison-Based Grant Program (BIP/PBP): Consists of state grant funding to support structured, evidence-based battering intervention programs- both prison-based and community-based- to address and prevent violent behavior in family relationships.

This is the last year CDVSA will manage this grant. Statutory authority is held at Department of Correction, and they will fully manage these programs starting in SFY2028.

- Current grant cycle for subgrantees: SFY 2027
- Grant requires annual continuation applications
- No future applications

Grants included	Description of Grant	Grant Timeline for CDVSA
General Funds <i>State of Alaska</i>	Supports battering intervention and prison-based programs to address and prevent perpetrators of domestic violence	July-June No application required

STOP (Services*Training*Officers*Prosecutors) Grant Program: Consists of federal grant funding to support training initiatives to enhance the community capacity to responding to domestic violence and sexual assault in an effective, trauma-informed manner. The grant dictates a specific allocation of funding, and where it goes- 30% to Victim Services (with 10% supporting culturally specific organization), 25% to law enforcement, 25% for prosecutors, and 5% to state and local courts. The remaining 15% is used to support the statewide Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) trainings occurring twice a year.

- Current grant cycle for subgrantees: SFY 2027
- No applications required (sole source due to required allocations of grant)

Grants included	Description of Grant	Grant Timeline for CDVSA
STOP (Services*Training*Officers*Prosecutors) Grant <i>Office of Violence Against Women, Department of Justice</i>	Supports training programs to enhance community response to domestic violence and sexual assault	July-June Applications annual, typically due in April

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CDVSA Priorities:

- Maintain grant capacity - Sustain CDVSA's funding and ability to administer existing state and federal grant programs. Continue to meet associated reporting and oversight requirements.
- Secure additional prevention funding - Identify opportunities to strengthen and expand funding for statewide DVSA prevention efforts.
- Develop a statewide prevention strategy - Establish a coordinated statewide approach to prevention efforts.
- Distribution of responsibilities regarding the State's VAWA STOP Plan
- Strengthen Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) leadership and coordination-
Maintain and strengthen statewide training opportunities for professionals responding to sexual assault.
- Continue Victim Services regulations revisions (13 AAC 90.10-190).

Key Considerations

- 1) Federal Funding - There is a decrease in available federal funding while costs of services continue to rise.
- 2) Federal Audits – Increased federal audits and additional required monitoring at a time with limited staff capacity has strained staff capacity.
- 3) Capacity - CDVSA is currently at or over-capacity, which prohibits applying for additional federal funds due to capacity issues in managing the funds and reduces the ability to host statewide trainings and events.
- 4) Staffing – Like many other agencies, CDVSA experiences high staff turnover and a lack of longevity.
- 5) Council Membership – Currently has two vacant public member seats.

Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB)

Contact: [Victoria \(Tory\) Shanklin](#), Executive Director

Mission & Purpose: VCCB is a small agency which provides financial assistance to victims of violent crime and their families when they suffer crime-related expenses or losses. These expenses include medical and mental health treatment, funeral expenses, lost wages, and other crime-related needs when they are not covered by insurance, restitution, or other available resources. VCCB works closely with victims and their families, as well as with service providers and non-profit advocacy agencies throughout the state.

Highlights: Over the last three years, VCCB reduced average application processing time by more than 90% - from over three months to approximately one week.

Structure: VCCB is Alaska's crime victim compensation program in accordance with state (AS 18.67) and federal requirements (28 CFR Part 94). VCCB is governed by a small, specialized board including one mandated attorney and one medical professional. Members of the board and the executive director are appointed by the governor. In 2023 the legislature approved two additional FTE's and VCCB increased staff size for the first time in nearly 50 years. No additional funding was provided for these positions. VCCB currently employs a staff of four.

Funding: VCCB's primary funding source is the Crime Victim's Compensation Fund (CVCF) which is comprised of PFD's forfeited from offenders due to incarceration. Because of this, agency funding can fluctuate significantly. Calculations are based on incarceration rates two years prior. Last year, VCCB received General Funds (GF) to aid in the fiscal gap from the year prior. Additionally, VCCB receives a 75 percent federal match from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund on all monies paid by the agency directly on behalf of victims.

VCCB Priorities

- Regulations updates: The board is currently in the process of updating a number of regulations to reflect more efficient and victim-centered administration.
- Increase outreach and application rates.
- Continue to improve application processing timing and efficiencies.

Key Considerations:

- **Funding stability** - VCCB's primary funding source is subject to significant annual fluctuations. VCCB also does not have designated funding for staff, all funds pull from the same "pot" which means when we fund staff, we have less to distribute to victims.
- **Statutory changes:** Required to expand program to include reimbursements for sexual assault examinations – maximizes federal match.

Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory (SCDL)

Contact: [David Kanaris](#), Forensic Science Laboratory Administrator 2

Mission & Purpose: SCDL provides scientific support to the criminal justice system to help create a safer Alaska. Services Include: Forensic Biology (DNA casework & CODIS), Seized Drugs, Toxicology (blood/breath alcohol), Latent Prints, Firearm/Toolmark, Footwear Impressions, Crime Scene Investigation, and statewide Breath Testing calibration.

SDLC produces impartial, high-quality forensic science that underpins Alaska's criminal justice system. We analyze evidence, generate court-ready case reports, testify as expert witnesses in trials across the state of Alaska, train Law Enforcement and legal partners, and collect and share data that informs statewide policy.

Highlights:

- >11,000 evidence items of evidence submitted annually;
- ~4,000 scientific case reports generated;
- ~100 expert testimonies statewide; hundreds of hours of partner training

Structure: The Crime Lab led by the Forensic Science Laboratory Administrator houses approximately 49 employees to include Forensic Scientists, Forensic Technicians and several support staff. The Crime Lab moved under this new division to better align forensic services with statewide victim support efforts and strengthen coordination with the division.

The Crime Lab also manages the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking Program, which allows survivors to securely check the status of the sexual assault kits as they move through the process. This transparency helps reduce uncertainty and supports victims by keeping them informed.

Funding: The Crime Lab is primarily funded through General Funds. The Crime Lab also receives grant funding that supports equipment and supplies, including the CEBR DNA Backlog Reduction Grant, the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant and the Alaska Highway Safety Office Toxicology Grant.

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Lab Priorities:

- **Standardize turnaround times (TATs) across disciplines:** Continue work toward the strategic plan targets of less than 90 days for DNA and physical evidence, less than 30 days for Chemistry, and no cases exceeding 180 days.
- **Firearm/Toolmark and DNA capacity:** Complete analyst training and assess potential policy changes around submissions. Continue to improve TAT for DNA without compromising sexual assault TATs.
- **Technology and workflow:** Evaluate instrumentation, LIMS improvements, lean methods, and other technology to improve workflow and capacity.
- **Customer focus and transparency:** Improve communication and training regarding reports and non-testing decisions; develop public-facing performance metrics.
- **Quality and consistency:** Continue implementation of national standards, quality assurance, standard operating procedures, testimony training, and bias mitigation.

Key Considerations:

- **Maintain sexual assault kit timelines:** Maintain DNA staffing and overtime flexibility to meet statutory sexual assault kit timelines.
- **Rapid DNA / Booking:** Coordinate with DPS IT and Department of Corrections on Livescan integration roadmap; quantify duplication savings. This is a necessary precursor to implementing Rapid DNA at booking.
- **CODIS duplication (70%):** Support real-time integrated Livescan at booking and policy alignment to reduce redundant submissions and enable future Rapid DNA at booking.
- **Crime Scenes:** See FY28 budget request.
- **Supreme Court Order 2038:** Has led to an increase in testimony and especially in last minute/urgent discovery requests. Improvements were made in FY26 regarding implementing rush request lists with LAW and an improved discovery procedure that leads to stability and less duplicative requests.
- **Breath alcohol instruments:** Validate and deploy a fleet of new breath alcohol instruments statewide. Instruments are being delivered this month after having been purchased using a \$1.3m capital appropriation.
- **Digital forensics:** Digital forensics is the fastest growing area of forensic science. Currently this is less regulated and exists outside of the space of other forensic disciplines in Alaska that have a heavy focus on quality assurance, transparency and documentation. There are certainly advantages in terms of speed that come with the current structure of work; however, there are also risks. Attention should be paid as to when, not if, the transition to bringing this service under the SCDL should occur.
- **Leadership and retention:** Compensation alignment and retention in top management roles to avoid voluntary demotions and preserve leadership stability. Artificial compression of the forensic scientist job series to four ranges instead of the recommended five could lead to lower retention rates.
- **Human performance drug toxicology:** The state lacks a permanent testing solution for human performance drug toxicology. The SCDL facilitated an interim solution to outsource this testing to private company in DUI cases. LAW has not fully seen the impacts of this on testimony at the time of writing.
- **Security/compliance for web forms & LIMS cloud migration:** Ensure CJIS/PII controls, SSO, security plan ownership, and vendor engagement to avoid data/chain of custody risks.

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Unit (DVSAU)

Contact: [Susie Frenzel](#), Division Director

Mission & Purpose: The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit is the statewide lead trainers and subject matter experts on domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, child abuse, and human trafficking. It coordinates and delivers evidence-based training for law enforcement across Alaska and provides technical assistance on policy, legislation, and investigations to the department and municipal law enforcement agencies. The unit also trains victim service providers and justice partners to ensure consistent, trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices that strengthen coordination, improve victim safety, and support effective investigations.

Highlights:

- DVSAU provided 65 training sessions, totaling 487 hours in SFY 2026.
- DVSAU trained a total of 2,530 participants including 1,799 law enforcement officers in SFY 2026.

Priorities:

- Deliver consistent, high-quality training to law enforcement statewide, including rural and remote communities.
- Provide training and support to service providers, victim advocates, medical providers and tribal partners to align practices to improve outcomes.
- Review cases through case audits to identifying gaps, improve reporting and documentation, and supporting standards statewide.
- Provide technical assistance to state troopers and municipal law enforcement agencies on best practices, legislation and investigations.

Victim Navigator Program

Contact: [Susie Frenzel](#), Division Director

Mission & Purpose: The Victim Navigators supports the Department of Public Safety, State Troopers, assigned to trooper cases, by maintaining direct, reliable contact with victims and witnesses of crimes against a person, providing them with required rights information, coordinating services and logistics, and assisting the troopers with non-investigating tasks.

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The Victim Navigators are trauma informed trained and ensures victims receive, timely, and consistent support throughout the criminal justice process.

Highlights:

- The Victim Navigator program supported 999 cases and recorded 6,026 victim contacts in SFY 2026.

Priorities

- Maintain direct and consistent contact with victims to ensure clear communication with victims and keep them informed about the status of their case.
- Assist the Alaska State Troopers with non-investigating tasks, that help reduce the workload for the troopers.
- Navigators coordinate services, referrals, and logistics to ensure victims receive timely and reliable assistance throughout the criminal justice process.

Missing Person's Clearinghouse (MPCH)

Contact: [Susie Frenzel](#), Division Director

Mission & Purpose: MPCH tracks all reported missing persons cases within Alaska. It serves as the central repository for records regarding both juvenile and adult victims and serves as the gateway into various national missing persons databases.

Highlights:

- MPCH received approximately 1,281 missing persons and runaway reported incidents for SFY 2026.
- There are currently 1,368 active missing cases dating from 1952 to 2026.

Priorities

- Improve DNA collection participation
- Engage more families
- Ensure timely NAMUS/CODIS entry
- Secure sustainability for ongoing DNA testing
- Create procedure handling future DNA collection

DIVISION WIDE - UPCOMING TRAINING 2026/2027

October 2026

Rural Law Enforcement Training-Bethel

Training focused on best practices for responding to domestic violence and sexual assaults in rural communities.

- For Village Police Officers, Village Public Safety Officers, Tribal Police

Department of Corrections Academy

Domestic Violence Response Education on the dynamics of domestic violence and lethality indicators while supervising offenders

- For Correctional Officers, Probation Officers, Municipal Correctional Officers

Lunch & Learn-Virtual

Arresting Domestic Violence Perpetrators in their home.

- Law Enforcement Officers

Breath Test Supervisor School

Certification class for law enforcement agency points of contacts.

- Law Enforcement Officers

Alaska Law Enforcement Training Academy

Forensic Science awareness and crime scene training for future law enforcement.

- Law Enforcement Officers

November 2026

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Multi-Disciplinary Training - 4 day

Advanced multi-disciplinary training that prepares professionals to respond effectively to acute sexual assault cases. Agencies benefit from stronger SART coordination, improved interagency collaboration and more consistent, victim-centered responses.

- Advocacy, Law Enforcement, Paralegals, Medical and Prosecutors

Alaska Police Standards Council Recertification-Sitka Academy

Focused on best practices for responding to domestic violence and sexual assaults.

- Alaska State Troopers and Municipal officers who have previously been certified as law enforcement officers.

December 2026 / January 2027

Strangulation-2 Day Virtual Course

Non-fatal strangulation has been identified as a key indicator for risk of lethality in domestic violence cases. This advanced course offers an in-depth and multi-disciplinary approach to these types of assaults.

- CDVSA funded victim service providers, Alaskan forensic medical providers, Department of Law prosecutors, paralegals, DPS Navigators, APSC Certified Municipal Officers, Alaska State Troopers, and VPSOs.

February 2027

Forensic Experiential Trauma Interviewing (FETI) 3-day course

Science based, trauma informed interviewing methodology that helps interviewers gather accurate and comprehensive information from individuals who have experienced high stress or traumatic events, while thoughtfully minimizing the risk of traumatization.

- Alaska State Troopers and Municipal Officers

January-March 2027 *(Training dates have not yet been finalized for the year)*

Department of Public Safety (DPS) Academy-Sitka

- Alaska Law Enforcement Training (ALET) Domestic Violence Response (2 times a year)
- Alaska Law Enforcement Training (ALET) Sexual Assault Response (2 times a year)
- Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) Recertification for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Response (1 time a year)

Interior Law Enforcement Academy in Fairbanks

- Domestic Violence Response (2 times a year)

DOC Training Academy in Palmer

- Domestic Violence Response (3 times a year)

Rural Law Enforcement Training-Bethel

- Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Response Training (2 times a year)

Additional Training

Strangulation Response -2-day Virtual Course (*Offered 2 times a year*)

Domestic Violence Response Refresher Training-Virtual (*Every 2 years*)

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Training (*2 times a year in Anchorage*)

KEY PARTNERS

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DIVISION OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND FORENSIC SCIENCE

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U.S. Department of Justice – Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)

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Office of Administrative Hearings

General Contact

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Alaska Court System

General Contact

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FY28 Budget Proposals

Component/Unit	Proposal	Approx. Cost
VCCB	Fully fund staff positions	\$250K
CDVSA	Prevention	\$1.5M
LAB	Budget (RDU) move under VAFS	\$0
LAB	Service Contracts/Essentials	\$1.1M
VAFS	Division Operations Manager	\$200K
VAFS	Navigators	\$127K
MPCH	Funding for specialized DNA testing	\$65K
DVSA	Funding for training	\$200K
LAB	Instruments	\$20K
LAB	Facilities maintenance support	\$100K
VAFS	3 Vehicles for Navigators	\$81K
VAFS	Navigator Specialist	\$153K
LAB	Rapid DNA	\$1.1M
LAB	Drug Toxicology	\$7.1M

**The order and ranking of the budget items were provided to our Administrative Services Division. Additional information or further details on the prioritization can be provided upon request.*