



*The Battered Women's Justice Project, a national resource center for civil and criminal justice highlights "Promising Practices in Domestic Violence" — innovative approaches within the civil and criminal legal response to domestic violence that promote victim safety and offender accountability. They feature local, programmatic responses that narrow the gaps between policy and practice. For more information, visit [www.bwjp.org](http://www.bwjp.org).*

## **Kentucky VINE Services Puts Public Safety First**

In February 1996, the Kentucky Department of Corrections implemented the first-ever statewide victim notification system. This system now includes data from county jails, prisons, mental health facilities and juvenile detention centers. VINE is managed by the Office of Victim Services.

### **Kentucky VINE Historical Perspective:**

On the evening of December 6, 1993, Mary Byron sat in her car in the parking lot of a Louisville Mall. It was her 21st birthday and Mary was leaving her job at the salon to head home. As she sat there waiting for her car to warm up, her former boyfriend approached the driver's side door and fired 7 shots, at point blank range, into Mary's head and chest.

Unfortunately, Mary had no idea she was in danger. She thought her former boyfriend was still in jail on charges of raping, assaulting, and stalking her earlier that year. Because of the nature of the charges, Mary's family had asked jail staff to notify them if he was going to be released. That call never happened, therefore Mary and her family had no knowledge of his release, until it was too late.

Due to the persistence and determination of Mary's parents and the community, a system was designed with the intention of never letting this type of tragic incident happen again. That system was called V.I.N.E. (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) and it was implemented in Jefferson County in 1994, exactly one year after Mary's death.

### **Kentucky VINE Today:**

KY VINE Services has grown tremendously since its birth in 1994. Kentucky VINE Services now offer three important services: Offender Status, Statewide Court Hearings, and Protective Order. The Office of Victim Services took over VINE Protective Order late in 2008. In March of 2009, Court Hearings were implemented statewide to include all misdemeanor and felony cases.

### **Offender Status:**

Notifications include: advance release (up to 14 days), release from custody, parole, shock probation, escape, furlough, parole eligibility, death, transfer from county jails, home incarceration, return to custody, sex offender conditional discharge, and release by court order.

### **Court Hearings:**

- Alerts registrants to upcoming court hearings and scheduling changes of ongoing court cases.
- Court cases are available for statewide registrations on all misdemeanor and felony cases.

**Protective Order:**

- Alerts petitioners of the active status of the order and gives them the information they need in order to seek safety or call police if the respondent violates the terms of the order.
- Provides petitioners, law enforcement, victim advocates, and judges with immediate access to protective order information via phone or Internet.

The Kentucky Office of Victim Services is committed to assisting victims and survivors throughout the duration of their offender's incarceration and supervision. They are dedicated to ensuring that crime victims are treated with dignity and respect.

A victim's need for assistance does not stop once an offender has been sentenced. In fact, it continues throughout an offender's incarceration, and OVS is the arm of Corrections which handles those requests for assistance.

Victim advocates from OVS work with victims daily as they attempt to locate information about their offender. We also travel the state to educate those involved in the criminal justice system about the KY VINE services: Offender Status, Court Hearings, and Protective Orders – with the goal that all victims are aware of the protection the service offers.

In addition to managing the Commonwealth's KY VINE Services programs, the Office of Victim Services also provides essential, victim-related services including: explanation of inmate release dates and release type; restitution information; awareness training for criminal justice and other victim service professionals; referrals and victims' rights services.

The Kentucky Attorney General's office maintains a list of frequently asked questions about VINE.

While we are featuring Kentucky, the first state to implement VINE statewide, many other states and counties are also using this technology.

For more information about court and protective order notifications services, please contact:

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For more information about how this project works in Kentucky, contact:

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