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## News

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### Victim's Assistance Program takes hit



**Carleta Weyrich**  
Reporter

Controversial cuts in federal Victim's of Crime Act funding have trickled down to create a loss of operation funds in the local victim's assistance program.

"I received notification from the Ohio Attorney General the Adams County program will receive a 15-20 percent cut," said Kim Newman, victim liaison for the Adams County Crime Victim Assistance Program. "With a budget of \$50,000, our funding could be cut as much as \$10,000."

Newman said use of the funding includes being with the victims during criminal proceedings, providing cell phones to victims, providing 24-hour access to assistance, transporting victims, interceding with a victim's employers and referring them to counseling services.

"Its an amazing job, to get the victim's through the process, to heal and empower them," Newman said. "A conservative estimate would be 300 families a year are served through this office."

The Ohio Crime Victims Assistance program is responsible for the administration of the state grant program, the State Victims Assistance Act (SVAA) and the federal grant program, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). A provision was made for compensation to victims of violent crimes for their losses. The funds are provided to eligible crime victims assistance programs operating in public and non-profit agencies located throughout Ohio, including the one operated through the Adams County Prosecutor's Office.

VOCA was established through the recommendation of President Ronald Reagan's 1982 Task Force on Victims of Crime. The task force recommended that the funds come directly from collection of fees and fines from federal convictions, with no tax dollars used. The recommendations became law when VOCA was approved by Congress and Reagan in 1984. In 1988, it became a permanent law. Unfortunately, the fund has a cap on how much money can be put into it.

Congressman Ted Poe, of Texas, founder and co-chair of the bi-partisan Congressional Victim's Rights Caucus, testified in February before the



**Mike Pell**, president and CEO of First State Bank of Adams County, presents a donation for the Crime Victim Assistance Program to Kimberly Newman, victim liaison, at the Adam County Prosecutor's Office.

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House Committee on the Budget against a move in Washington, D.C. to lower the cap or even abolish the fund, which has a budget of \$1.7 billion this year.

"Victims should not be forced to wage an annual fight over a fund that was created for their sole benefit," he said.

Locally, Newman is doing what she can to make up for the loss of revenue by applying for grants and looking for other avenues of funding.

"The Crime Victim Assistance Program in Adams County is in dire need of funding," said Newman. "The program is asking for financial assistance through companies, organizations and individuals wishing to give to the local program."

For more information, please contact Newman at (937) 544-3600. The address for the Adams County Crime Victim Assistance Program is 110 West Main Street, Room 112, West Union, Ohio 45693.




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