

Addressing Victim and Witness Intimidation Through Relocation Assistance

February 15, 2023
2:00pm - 3:30pm ET



Many PSN sites identify victim and witness intimidation as a problem in their jurisdictions. Intimidation tactics discourage continued engagement with the criminal justice system and negatively impact crime victims, their families, community relationships, and crime investigations and prosecutions. Intimidation can instill fear and lead victims to experience psychological distress. For many, the threats of violence or retaliation necessitate emergency and sometimes long-term relocation to ensure safety of the victim and their family.

Relocation services vary by jurisdiction, require significant resources, and require a whole-of-community approach, particularly in regions with tight housing markets. Relocation programs may rely on a mixture of hotels, short-term housing, public housing, and other rentals to provide the best options for each victim. Victim service advocates frequently provide expansive case management services to victims in relocation programs to maintain communication, manage safety risks, and connect the victims to supportive services.

Discussion Topics

- General information on victim and witness relocation
- What districts should consider when expanding relocation services
- Innovative ways jurisdictions are addressing the needs of victims:
 - Detroit Ceasefire: A Detroit-based program that partners with faith leaders to provide emergency relocation to victims and witnesses
 - Philadelphia District Attorney's Office: State and local funding supports this Philadelphia program that provides relocation assistance to victims
- Various relocation services, the role of partner agencies in the community, and funding sources
- Significant challenges, how they were overcome, and lessons learned



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Speakers

Gabriella Alessi

National Center for Victims of Crime

Gabriella Alessi, Esq. is a Staff Attorney for the National Center for Victims of Crime. Gabby has been with NCVC for over two years, and currently manages the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Gabby also works on the Safety and Justice Challenge Initiative and the National Crime Victim Bar Association. Prior to joining the National Center, Gabby worked at the National Network to End Domestic Violence and the Reentry Ready Project at Convergence Center for Policy Resolution.

Gabby holds a Juris Doctorate and Graduate Diploma in Comparative Law from the Louisiana State University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from Tulane University. Gabby is currently pursuing her master's degree in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling at West Virginia University.

Tanesha Gordon

Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

Tanesha Gordon is the Supervisor of the Relocation Unit with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. She previously worked as a relocation coordinator, working in partnership with the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office to assist victims and witnesses in relocating to safe housing. Prior to working in relocation assistance, Ms. Gordon supported diversion programs for first time juvenile drug offenders under the direction of the Honorable Judge Abram Frank Reynolds by helping youth to achieve recovery goals and getting their records expunged. Ms. Gordon graduated from Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, PA.

Bishop Daryl Harris

Total Life Christian Ministries

Bishop Daryl Harris is the founding pastor of Total Life Christian (TLC) Ministries, Inc. in Detroit, MI. Under the charismatic leadership of this anointed man of God, TLC Ministries has become a transformational force in the city of Detroit. Bishop Harris has been able to provide hope and empowerment to families and others in Northeast Detroit and beyond for over twenty-three years.

Bishop Harris serves in the building of the Church by means of pastoring congregations, mentoring leaders, empowering members and providing professional counseling. He is also very passionate about the community and about empathic solutions to community issues. Most recently he is the Faith Based Director for Cease Fire; a joint law enforcement gang intervention effort to reduce crimes in the city of Detroit by reaching out to direct perpetrators of such crimes. He is also the founder and director of the Faith Based Coalition, a collaboration of ecumenical clergy in the community that responds to the needs of victims of violent crimes.

Bishop Harris has been married for 30 years to Wytrice Harris who joins him in ministry as the Pastor of TLC. Together they have two adopted and two biological children (boy-girl twins) and have been surrogate parents to many others. Bishop Harris holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Michigan and is currently working on a master's degree. He has also been honored with a Doctorate of Divinity from Faith Evangelical Christian Schools.

