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A MESSAGE FROM AD THOMPSON

All,

I hope you are doing well!

Before I answer your questions, I want to touch on the difference between a VSRT deployment and a VS surge when responding to a crisis situation. Over the last nine months we have noticed a shift in the types of crises we are being asked to respond to and an increase in requests to solely supplement the VS cadre in an AOR. The nature of the VS surges do not necessitate a VSRT

deployment due to the needs of the requesting field office and the nature of the crises. Some case examples include the Chesapeake Wal-Mart shooting (Virginia), the Half-Moon Bay shooting (California), and the most recent shooting at Michigan State University. The management team has discussed how to best address these types of VS-only requests. Moving forward, when a request comes in that only requires additional VS support, VPMU I/II will work first with the VSs in the AOR to determine the need. VPMU I/II will then canvass VSs in adjoining AORs to access their availability to respond. If we do not have enough VS resources from adjoining AORs to address the request, on-call VSRT VSs will receive an email from the VPMU I/II team canvassing for availability. If we still do not have enough resources from VSRT VSs, VPMU I/II will canvass the entire VS cadre. Depending on the needs of the response VPMU I/II will also decide if a PM or SPM should deploy as well based on a collective recommendation. We feel this will best address the needs of the field office and victims. This will also allow us to track VS surge requests versus VSRT requests. We will of course document all of this in more detail and make it available to all. We will also be providing a checklist for VSs to use when talking with their field office management about the specific needs of a crisis response to help us determine the most appropriate response type. These are the same types of questions I ask SACs when they call me to request our support.

Flexibility and adaptability are key as the nature of our environment is constantly changing and what worked for us in previous years, won't always work in the future.

As with a VSRT deployment, if we are canvassing to respond to a mass violence event, VSD will work with HRD to communicate traumatic leave options when the VS returns to their AOR. As a reminder, deployed personnel must obtain approval from their respective supervisors in order to utilize the optional administrative leave. VSD's guide to admin leave for critical incident support can be viewed in in the [PDF Administrative Leave Guide for VSRT and Critical Incident Deployments \(SOP\).pdf](#)

It's important to note, there may be times when we use the same canvass process when VSD is looking to surge VS resources for large scale events or case briefings where crisis intervention services are needed. For those types of requests, VSs should submit their comp time or OT requests (this is the VS's preference) as traumatic leave does not apply in these situations.

Now for the anonymous site!

EVAF Audit

We received a question regarding the Quarterly EVAF Audit Report, which was attached to the 01/20/23 newsletter. The submitter asked whether the report could include the amount of time it takes from initial EVAF request to an approval or denial decision. The submitter expressed concern that some EVAF requests may be pending for long periods of time.

In general, VS EVAF requests submitted through the standard EVAF Request Form are reviewed by the PM immediately (i.e., within hours). If the request is time sensitive, requestors are encouraged to call their PM (or on-call PM), in addition to submitting the EVAF Request Form. At times, the EVAF request requires additional details or documentation before a decision can be made, which can impact the timeline for a decision. If EVAF requestors have provided all requested details/documentation, but still have concerns regarding the status of a pending EVAF request, they are encouraged to raise it to the next level supervisor in VPMU I/II. Also if needed,

a unit can elevate a request to Kim, then myself if there are still unresolved questions regarding the approval at the unit level.

Additionally, we appreciate the feedback on the Quarterly EVAF Audit Report. PSU will evaluate whether the additional data point of average time from EVAF request to approval/denial decision can be included in the Q2 report based on the quality of the information being provided. If there are other recommendations or feedback regarding the content of the Quarterly EVAF Audit Report, please direct them to PSU UC Tracy Miller.

Crisis Response Canine (CRC) Expansion

A question was submitted inquiring about an update to the CRC expansion. VSD presented a CRC program enhancement proposal to OVC in July of 2022, and the enhancement request was formally included in VSD's budget request to OVC for FY23. VSD is still waiting to receive formal notification from OVC on the FY23 budget request, and we will not know if funding was provided for the CRC enhancement until we receive the OVC FY23 budget. We unfortunately do not have a date for the budget release, but we will keep the division apprised of any updates.

AGG-VWA Training

We received a question regarding the level of training VSD personnel will receive with the updated AGG-VWA guidelines going into effect March 31, 2023.

Under the AG Guidelines, "[a]ll Department personnel whose primary job responsibilities affect crime victims and witnesses, or who in the course of their duties are expected to come into contact with victims and witnesses" must complete a mandatory, *annual* training on crime victims and witnesses. The Training and Implementation Subcommittee of the Crime Victims' Working Group, in partnership with the Office of Legal Education (OLE) and Strategic Communications of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, has produced a training video that is mandatory for all covered personnel. Review of this training video will satisfy this year's victim-and-witness training requirement. Covered personnel will have 45 days from the release of the training video to complete the training.

It is very important to note that **these revisions do not have a major impact on how victim service providers perform their duties in the FBI.** EOUSA did provide a joint seminar to the newly established Victims Right Coordinators and VW coordinators. A majority of the seminar satisfied Continuing Legal Education requirements for attorneys so the majority of the seminar was not available to VW coordinators. As some of the changes to the AGG-VWA have imminent impact to the prosecution component of the department (timing of CVRA Rights, definition of a victim and those who are significantly harmed) EOUSA highlighted these changes.

VSD was proactive in informing the division of the impending changes by providing training to all personnel during the All Hands that highlighted the upcoming changes to the AGGVWA and the case law that influenced the changes. Please find attached the PowerPoint from the All Hands that was provided by Deborah Sills for your reference.

VSD will send out a survey to all of VSD after all have the opportunity to view the new training video. The survey will provide an opportunity to suggest areas that need further training. Once we review the survey results, we will work with OGC and Training Division to develop a plan to meet any further training needs.

Refresher Trainings

We received a question regarding whether VSD would consider offering refresher trainings on various topics throughout the year. In addition, if sessions could be recorded so that personnel have access to the information on a consistent basis to refer to when needed.

VSD is actively building out an internal development program that will include trainings, discussions, and brown bags on topics that affect the whole division. These development opportunities will focus on hard skills (such as navigating technical systems), soft skills (such as communication), and enrichment topics (such as guest speakers, case studies, strategy). Each UC was canvassed about potential needs in their units, and the information will be analyzed for commonalities to determine priorities. Internal development opportunities will begin this year with the plan to strategically grow the program in subsequent years based upon division feedback.

However, if you see a pressing need for training, please do not wait! If you have recommendations for unit specific training needs such as work role specific performance plan objectives, please discuss with your supervisor. Supervisors – please think at the division level and who would benefit from the training and ensure everybody it impacts has access. For example, if it impacts all VSs, don't just host a training for a region, coordinate a VPMU i/II training. If it impacts multiple units or the whole division, please work with Jamie to meet the need at the division level. If you believe there is a training gap that may affect the whole division, or you want to propose a development topic, please reach out to Training Coordinator Jaimie Swann. Trainings can be recorded and posted, so please discuss that with Jamie Swann as well.

Recusal from Case

We received a question regarding if VSs are allowed to recuse themselves from participating in a case if best practices are not being followed. In order to best answer this question, we would need to know from the submitter if failing to meet "best practices" alludes to a violation of the law, FBI policy, VSD SOPs, a standard imposed by a professional licensing organization, or the employee's own preferences. For the person who submitted, please either submit a second entry on the anonymous site with more detail, or reach out to Michelle Miller. Thank you!

Columbia Protocol Training

After receiving feedback from the first Columbia Protocol Training session on 2/7, Program Evaluation Coordinator Andrea Irwin met with the Columbia Team to share concerns captured in the survey and through her own observation – especially that the training was not as focused on implementation as had been requested. Based on that feedback, the Columbia team significantly modified the training to focus on implementation and the practicalities of the using the protocol. The training is now getting good reviews. Below is the email was sent to all the attendees of the pilot session/1st session providing this feedback and giving the option to attend a future session.

You are receiving this email as you attended the Columbia Protocol Training on 2/7, and you may have provided feedback. I want to share that we heard you, and we've worked with the Columbia Lighthouse Project team to modify the training. Training has been refocused to directly address each question individually and to provide more opportunity for role play, practice, discussion, and questions. There is still some background on the protocol, but nothing near the length that was presented on Tuesday. That said, I am taking a two-pronged approach to get the right information in front of you. I am working with IT to record one of the upcoming sessions, and will

provide that recording to this group only. I am also inviting anyone who wants to attend another session with the new format to do so... just email me and let me know what works for you and whether it's "full" or not, you will have a slot. There are sessions upcoming on 2/14, 2/16, 2/28, and 3/2. I am sorry that the training on Tuesday didn't meet many of your expectations, but I hope these steps to address and correct that will be helpful and appreciated. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Further, we want to remind everyone that this training is not the only exposure you will have to learning and practicing the Columbia Protocol. The goal of these initial sessions with Columbia Lighthouse Project team are to familiarize everyone with the standard, provide the opportunity to ask questions, observe the tool in action, and practice through role play as a starting point for launching this protocol as VSD's standard practice.

A live training with the Columbia team will be recorded in Bonaparte Auditorium and this video will be used for VSD onboarding and for refresher trainings.

Additional training on the Columbia Protocol, inclusive of opportunity to practice asking the questions, will be incorporated into the Needs Assessment trainings based on VSD's work with the Department of Defense on Standards of Practice. Finally, in addition to these opportunities to learn about and practice the protocol, regional meetings with your VS team will allow for opportunities to discuss times you have used the protocol and the successes and challenges of those experiences.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to either Andrea Irwin or Pam Elton; both are happy to discuss the protocol, the benefits of utilizing a standardized tool across all roles, and how this helps reduce risk to VSD employees, victims, and investigations.

Other Submissions

There are other submissions that we are still working on. Responses take a lot of time because we have to work with owning units and often other divisions to compile responses. Please ensure you are first asking your management chain questions before raising questions to me through the site. It is important that all levels of management have the opportunity to first provide you with a response, unless there is a reason you cannot ask the question. Where possible, I want to be fostering communication and trust at all levels. If the question is at the division level versus the unit level – then those are good ones to send up to me as well (for example changes to the AGG-VWA and division funding questions). Remember I always prefer a direct conversation, but the site is there in case you don't feel comfortable doing that.

Now for highlights!

Following the Michigan State University shooting, a retired agent with personal contacts involved in the shooting contacted me to pass along their appreciation for VSD's work and response, specifically noting the quick turnaround for availability of personal effects. The retired agent stated, "Returning property to victims may seem like a small piece to many people, but it has made a significant impact as recovery begins. Thank you for the important and tireless work you do..." An email was also received from a father of one of the deceased MSU students. This email highlighted the dedication, impact, and experience of the FBI (including VSD's VSs) he engaged with. He specifically noted how we went above and beyond, constantly and ensuring their family had what they needed and helped his family in many ways. Thank you to the VSs who supported

the victims of this attack: Carmen Kucinich, Nicole McGee, Melissa Novock, David Paul, Emily Stephani, Sierra Thomas, Patty Sinkiewicz, and Stacey Ann Sanders!

The Houston Field Office nominated the San Jose Clinic for the 2022 Director's Community Leadership Award, and they won! The San Jose Clinic is a leading healthcare provider with a mission to serve the uninsured and under-resourced in Houston. The HO VEs, Maria Rodriguez Armas and Elia Guzman, connected with this organization through the Human Trafficking Healthcare Consortium, which gathers leaders in healthcare, law enforcement, and support services to discuss current trends and best practices to combat human trafficking in Houston. There is a particular social worker who has worked with the VEs on a multitude of cases and has been an invaluable resource to victims, to include victims in the toughest of situations – one who had cancer and needed radiation, and one who had complications due to chronic malnourishment. It is always great to find ways to thank and support our partners, and I am very glad to see the San Jose clinic receiving the accolades it deserves!

VE Anne Darr was a guest speaker on the Let's Get Psyched podcast for National Human Trafficking Awareness month – [you can listen to the episode online!](#)

Finally, thank you all for voting on the climate patch ideas! The second patch (see attachment) is the winner! We will work with the print shop to determine how best to create and disseminate the patches to everyone in the division.

Please be sure to read about the CPVA reminders and updates, the article on policy reminders on FBI employee interactions with contractors and vendors, and if you haven't taken the Partner Engagement Survey yet, please see the link in the Communications section!

Regina

LEGAL

Issue: What types of immigration relief may be available to non-U.S. citizen crime victims?

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Answer: Several categories of immigration relief may be available to noncitizen victims of qualifying crimes, including human trafficking, domestic violence, and certain other violent crimes. Forms of relief include U Nonimmigrant Status, T Status, Continued Presence, and VAWA Self-Petitions for Lawful Permanent Resident Status.

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Discussion:

*Note: This discussion is a high-level introduction to the forms of immigration relief that may be available to non-U.S. citizen victims. **It for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for policy or specific legal guidance.** References to relevant policy can be found throughout the discussion and legal questions can be directed to your CDC's office or to OGC. FBI personnel are prohibited from offering legal advice to victims.*

Here is an overview of some of the most common forms of immigration relief that may be available to non-U.S. citizen victims. Each form of immigration relief has different requirements and a separate application process.

U Nonimmigrant Status (U Visa) may be available to noncitizen victims who have suffered physical or mental abuse as the result of a qualifying crime and who are cooperating with U.S. officials.

- Allows recipient to live and work in the United States.
- Enables other family members to obtain visas.
- Can provide a path to Lawful Permanent Resident status if criteria are met.

T Status (T Visa) may be available to victims of a severe form of trafficking in persons who are cooperating with U.S. officials.

- Allows recipient to live and work in the United States.
- Enables other family members to obtain visas.
- Can provide a path to Lawful Permanent Resident status if criteria are met.

Continued Presence (CP) is a discretionary law enforcement tool that can be used to permit victims of a severe form of trafficking to temporarily remain in the United States while they assist with an investigation/prosecution.

- Allows recipient to live and work in the United States temporarily during the investigation into the human trafficking-related crimes committed against them and during any civil action under 18 U.S.C. § 1595 filed by recipient against their traffickers.
- Initially granted for two years, can be renewed in two-year increments.
- Recipients may be eligible to receive public assistance benefits and services while in the United States.

VAWA Self-Petitions allow noncitizen victims of battery or extreme cruelty at the hands of a U.S. citizen or limited permanent resident (LPR) spouse or former spouse, parent, or child, to petition for adjustment of immigration status without the citizen/LPR abuser's knowledge, consent, or participation.

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Resource:

The Congressional Research Service recently published a [paper](#) on Immigration Relief for Noncitizen Crime Victims. The paper contains a detailed discussion of U Nonimmigrant status, as well as addressing other forms of immigration relief available to victims, including victims of human trafficking and domestic violence offenses.

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FBI Role:

The FBI may play multiple roles in the immigration relief process for noncitizen victims of federal crimes. Most relevant to VSD, victim services personnel may provide victims with referrals to legal counsel on immigration issues. However, victim specialists should be aware that FBI personnel are prohibited from offering legal advice to victims about immigration issues. For more information, see Victim Services Policy Guide 4.2.1.

Field offices may directly apply to DHS for Continued Presence (CP) on behalf of an eligible human trafficking victim. CP provides the victim with temporary authorization to remain in the United States while they provide information or assistance with a law enforcement investigation, prosecution, or sentencing. The FBI is required to appropriately monitor CP recipients while they remain in the United States. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Continued Presence Toolkit is available [online](#).

Additionally, field offices may complete declarations to assist non-citizens applying for U Visas and T Visas. These forms document a victim's eligibility for immigration relief and their cooperation with law enforcement. While an agent and his or her supervisor can complete a T Visa declaration, only an SAC or FBIHQ official can sign a U Visa declaration. FBI policy on T Visa declarations is contained in Civil Rights Policy Guide 4.12. FBI policy on U Visa declarations is contained in DIOG 3.4.2.10.

This newsletter entry does not address Significant Public Benefit Parole (SPBP), which may allow an individual (not limited to victims) to *enter* the United States to act as a CHS, serve as a material witness, stand trial as a defendant, or assist in an ongoing investigation or prosecution of human trafficking. If you encounter a SPBP question, contact your CDC's office or OGC.

Best,
Mackenzie Harmon
OGC/Investigative Law Unit

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

CPVA Reminders and Updates

Per the email sent on 28 December 2022, the CPVA NPF Collection List has moved to a SharePoint List located on the low-side [CPVA SharePoint site](#). As a reminder, your personalized list can be located by selecting the *NPF Needed* button in the right corner of the NPF Collection List and selecting your name. This SharePoint list is updated in real time, meaning that after you collect an NPF and serialize it to the CPVA Sentinel file (319-HQ-A2116397), you should receive an email from CPVA notifying you of its receipt and removal of the series from your NPF list.

The CPVA Program has made two new updates! First, NPFs in over 30 languages have been added to the [Forms page](#) of the [CPVA SharePoint site](#). Second, a [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) page](#) has been added. This page is continuously being updated as new questions arise that could be beneficial to our division. Below is a sample of some of the most commonly asked questions. Please check out the [FAQ page](#) to learn more!

- Who should I contact if I have questions about a CIR, and how long does it take to receive one?
- Who should I contact if I have questions about a VIR, and how long does it take to receive one?
- A case agent told me the case file number in the CIR is incorrect. How do I get it changed?
- What is a Law Enforcement Series POC? And why are some of them not FBI special agents?
- The victim of one of my assigned series is not located in my AOR. What do I do?
- Is there a way to learn more about the historical distribution of a series? *Hint: YES!*

Policy Reminders on FBI Employee Interactions with Contractors and Vendors

We understand at times, VSD employees may have interactions with outside contractors or vendors. To ensure adherence to FBI policy and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), the following are reminders of the dos and don'ts, as well as the consequences of improper employee interactions.

Dos:

- The contracting officer (CO) in the FBI's Finance and Facilities Division (FFD), is the primary FBI official responsible for ensuring acquisition laws and regulations are adhered to in conducting all procurements to include open and fair competition, adequate market research is conducted, any actual or apparent ethical improprieties are eliminated or minimized, and best value is achieved in every FBI procurement.
- **ONLY** a CO can legally bind or contract on behalf of the Government. The CO is the primary conduit of information between the FBI and contractors and vendors.
- Expanding the scope of existing contracts or determinations made regarding whether modifications, changes or additions may be made to an existing contract must be referred by FBI employees to the applicable CO.
- Any interaction between FBI employees and vendors should take place via the CO or with CO guidance to avoid any actual or appearance of impropriety, favoritism, or an unfair competitive advantage.

Don'ts:

FBI employees are prohibited from disclosing:

- Any information regarding anticipated future FBI needs or contracts, as such discussions will circumvent the competitive procurement process.
- Nonpublic information they obtain while performing their official duties.
- Contractor bid and proposal information or source selection information before the award of a contract.

FBI employees are also prohibited from making unauthorized commitments. Unauthorized commitments are created when FBI employees lacking delegated contracting authority bind the FBI by entering into agreements to purchase goods or services, either intentionally or not. Unauthorized commitments must go through ratification. Ratification is the formal process that takes place by an official with authority to approve the unauthorized commitment after specific determinations have been made. If it is determined that an unauthorized commitment cannot or should not be ratified, the unauthorized commitment must be referred to the Office of General Counsel (OGC), for advice as to whether remedies may be available through other nonprocurement claims procedures to compensate the vendor who entered the unauthorized commitment.

The employee who created the unauthorized commitment may become individually liable in his or her personal capacity for a dollar amount up to the stated contract value of the unauthorized commitment.

For additional information regarding this policy please see FBI Policy Directive 0157D: [Contact with Contractors and Vendors Policy Directive](#) and FBI Policy Directive 1241D/0302D: [Ratification of Unauthorized Commitments Policy Directive](#).

Inventory Season is Approaching!

Friendly reminder VSD HQ will be conducting annual inventory 03/07/23 – 03/09/23 and 03/14/23 – 03/16/23 from 9am-2pm in PSU space! Please refer to the email sent from MAPA Sierra Ledda for further details. MVSs/CAFI's received separate guidance and your respective field offices will be scanning your property.

Fun with Finance in February!

Please join PSU's Finance team @ "Coffee Time – Budget 101". Grab your coffee (or favorite non-alcoholic beverage) and join the PSU Budget Team every other Wednesday at 1pm EST. Why you ask? To gain more insight on various budget topics that may have stumped you along the way.

Topics covered will include, but will not be limited to:

- What in the world is EVAF?
- Can I use the Government Travel Account (GTA) for that?
- I'm taking that TRIP, how do I...?!?!?
- Just reimburse me already!
- What is RAPID?
- More Information about Debit Cards
- Oops, did I charge my Government Travel Card (GTC) for that?

And many more! Come prepared with questions! An invite will be sent to join via TEAMS to include a reminder leading up to each session. Already have a question? Please email [HQ-DIV42-VSD-FINANCE](#) and shout it out when your question is answered during Coffee Time – Budget 101!

VNS Mailbox

The Victim Notification System (VNS) Team at HQ has transitioned to using a shared mailbox instead of an email distro for VNS support. If you need any assistance from the VNS team, please send an email on either FBINET or UNET to [HQ_DIV42_VNS](#). The previous distro which was [HQ-DIV42-VSD-VNS](#) will remain active during the transition period and all messages will automatically be forwarded to the new shared mailbox to ensure no emails are missed.

Additionally, two new VNAs joined VSD: Ryan Lease has taken over Region 4, and Yolanda Nosakhare started on 02/13/23. Lizet Porter has officially joined the VOSS team.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to VNS Coordinator [Akram Sadoghianzadeh](#).

Broken Ties: Mending, Coping with Separation, Estrangement

Hosted by the National Family Support Technical Assistance Center, "Family Connections" is a virtual community for parents and caregivers who support loved ones facing substance use and mental health challenges. Families need credible resources, guidance on accessing help, and the opportunity to connect with others facing similar challenges. Monthly gatherings will focus on a specific topic, provide tips and tools, and offer the opportunity to network with other families. Family Connections takes place on the first Thursday of every month at 1:30 p.m. ET.

March Madness is Coming Soon!

Before accepting any free game tickets, entering a sports bracket/pool (even if just for "bragging rights"), or making any friendly wager on which team will win, read this reminder: [OIC - Ethics Guidance for Fantasy Sports Leagues.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.us\)](#). Remember, "gambling" (i.e., wagering something of value in a game of chance for a prize) is prohibited on Government/FBI time, using Government resources (e.g., FBINET/UNET or a Bureau-issued mobile device), or in a Government-owned or leased facility.

TECH CORNER

IT News of Interest

Are you interested in a daily roundup of the latest news in federal and industry IT, Big Tech and internet culture? The IT News of Interest newsletter is perfect for you. Available on UNet to FBI and DOJ employees, this newsletter provides a brief, daily snapshot of the tech landscape. Email itnoi@fbi.gov to subscribe.

Freeze List in Sentinel

Sentinel has incorporated the Freeze List for legal holds, eliminating the need to cross-reference cases in another application. Any casefile, subfile or serial subject to litigation or anticipated litigation will now display a prominent, red Freeze List icon. Email questions to the Office of General Counsel on FBI Net: HQ-Discovery_Counsel@fbi.sgov.gov.

Incentive Program Applications in EPAS

New EPAS application coming soon! Have you ever thought about applying for an FBI Incentive Program (e.g., SLRP, 3Rs)? If yes, then we need you! Incentives applicants must review and sign a Continued Service Agreement (CSA) once selected. The EPAS team needs testing participants to ensure the CSA process is intuitive and meets the needs of program managers and end-users. [If you'd like to be a participant, complete this survey.](#)

Weekly ESOC Briefings

Join the Enterprise Security Operations Center (ESOC) for weekly briefings Fridays at 9:30 a.m. ET to hear about cyber threats and areas of interest in FBI cybersecurity. The meeting is held via MS Teams and includes overviews and presentations from the Watch Floor, Cyber Threat Intelligence and Digital Forensics and Incident Response. Email esoc_operations@fbi.gov to be added to the meeting invitation.

VSATT Updates

Hello, everyone! The VSATT team has created a how-to video and step by step written guidance on grouping your top used services! You can access the video and documentation by clicking [here](#) or accessing the content directly in VSATT under the help navigation menu. If you have any tips or video suggestions, please send them to HQ_DIV42_VSATT_Help@fbi.gov.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Upcoming Training Events and Opportunities

For those at JEH, there are still opportunities to complete the Active Shooter Attack Prevention and Preparedness (ASAPP) Training. Sessions are being hosted on Tuesdays and Thursdays for open enrollment for the next few months. To register, please enroll in an available session on FBINET Virtual Academy by searching OPS-1025. Please note, sessions may be canceled due to low enrollment and registrants will be asked to sign up for a different session.

COMMUNICATIONS

Partner Engagement Survey

Thank you to everyone who has responded to the [Partner Engagement Survey](#)! There's still time to it if you haven't yet – deadline is 03/10/23. **All employees are requested to take this survey – this is not just for victim services providers.** This survey is long (sorry!!) but it will help us understand the landscape of partner engagement and better assist you moving forward through communications and training initiatives. If you have any questions, please reach out to Isabelle Solomon and Jaimie Swann.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

As announced in an email sent 12/16/22, VSD and HRD's Employee Assistance Unit (EAU) worked closely together to identify specific Employee Assistance Counselors (EACs) available to assist VSD personnel. EACs are licensed mental health professionals that can provide short-term counseling, education & training, and can also assist in finding external resources and referrals.

If you are interested in connecting with any of the EACs designated to support VSD, please call 202-324-5244 to schedule an appointment:

- [Tanisha Holmes, LPC](#) - is skilled in providing short-term solution focused counseling, critical incident responses, and wellness training. Her counseling specialties include grief support, self-esteem building, stress management, and resiliency. She welcomes opportunities to consult with veterans, individuals, groups, and managers.
- [Walter Mitchell Jr., Ed.M., LPC](#) - with over 30 years of experience in the mental health field, Walter has worked in emergency outreach, crisis intervention, critical incident stress debriefing, suicide intervention training, and providing services to military members, families, and leadership.
- [Ginnette Rivera Hernandez, Psy.D.](#) - is passionate about bringing healing to people who have been through traumatic or stressful experiences by helping people process and overcome trauma, mood disorders, anxiety, challenged family systems, grievance, and loss. Ginnette is also bilingual in English and Spanish and serves as the VSRS Program Manager.
- [Verniqueca Thomas, Ed.D, LPC, ACS](#) - has over 15 years of experience working in the community, private, and government practice with various mental health and substance use issues and with military service members and their families.
- [Lisa Solecki, LSWA](#) is the EAC for the Boston Division and has over 25 years of experience in Victim Services, if you are interested in connecting with someone that may have had similar experiences. Lisa has also offered her support to *any VSD employee* and may be contacted via email, office telephone (857) 386-2353, or mobile telephone (617) 874-7253.

If you are experiencing a crisis or emergency outside of normal business hours, you may also call 202-324-HELP to connect with the SIOC operator who can contact the on-call counselor for you.

Aimee Smith Special Advisor

What interested you in VSD, and what has your FBI career looked like thus far?

Why VSD? During a Special Advisor Annual Offsite in 2021, VSD colleagues were kind enough to do a deep dive on the division, and I remember being so impressed and so excited that the FBI was doing all of this incredible work. I especially remember learning about the evolution of the division, how CAFIs are instrumental in investigations, and how impactful the CRC program has been. I had also heard nothing but amazing things from the previous VSD Special Advisors, so I was thrilled when I learned of the opportunity to support the division.

I joined the FBI as a Special Advisor in 2019 and started out in the Human Resources Division working on the Special Agent Selection System, trying to better support Field Office Applicant Coordinators process their applicants through the many stages. In 2020, I moved to the International Operations Division, where I worked on different initiatives, but most notably, instituted the International Accompanying Spouses pilot so that FBI tandem couples can continue to both work if one is selected for a position at one of the FBI's Legal Attaché offices. I joined VSD three weeks ago and am working on the strategic initiative related to Older Victims of Crime, with the goal of working with the Cyber Division and the Criminal Investigative Division to better serve Older Victims of Crime.

Prior to the FBI, I worked for Xerox for many years in their Corporate Strategy, Finance Transformation, and Finance groups where I advised on M&A targets, worked on realignments, relocations, restructuring (any other re- you could think of), and managed strategic planning processes. While waiting through the ever-so-exciting background process, I also worked at Hilton in their Enterprise Risk Advisory group.

What is your favorite thing about being a special advisor?

I enjoy tackling difficult problems and adding value where I can. I recognize that I am not out in the field protecting the American people and upholding the Constitution, but I hope that by alleviating burdens, streamlining processes, or creating necessary programs, I can give others the time and space to do what they do best. I also love the ability to work with so many interesting and talented people across the Bureau!

What is something you'd like others to know about your role?

Special Advisors are internal consultants that are owned by the Resource Planning Office (RPO), but who rotate to different divisions to work on projects ranging from business process re-engineering and human resources to program management and strategic management. The projects vary greatly depending on needs of the divisions we serve. Bottom line is I am here to help, and I love learning about all of the remarkable things that VSD is doing! If you ever want to talk process improvement, organization, or simply need a neutral opinion on something, let me

know! I am also open to inputs and feedback while I scope the project related to Older Victims of Crime.

What do you do to PREVAIL/build resiliency/practice mindfulness?

This has been an evolution for me. A few years ago, I would have said exercise, bake, learn about wine, and organize (think The Home Edit or Marie Kondo). Now, after having two wonderful yet indefatigable boys, I try to focus on family and friends, practice mindful breathing (particularly during bath-time), and indulge in the occasional mani/pedi.

Thank you for your nominations so far! If you want to nominate a person or program for a future Spotlight, please email [Isabelle Solomon](mailto:isabelle@victims.org).

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IMPORTANT LINKS

- [VSD SharePoint Site](#)
- [VSD Templates](#) *please **SAVE AS** – do not edit in SharePoint*
- [Daily Reports](#)
- [Newsletter Archive](#)
- [VS Region Assignment](#)
- [CAFI Map](#)
- [TSJU International Regions](#)
- [VSD Org Chart](#)
- [Victim Specialist Directory](#)
- [VSD HQ Directory](#)
- [VSD Policy Guide](#)
- [PREVAIL](#)
- [PSU Portal](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Anonymous Site](#)