

## Victim Assistance Academy for North Dakota (VAAND)

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Academy Coordinator

The Victim Assistance Academy for North Dakota (VAAND) offers a rare opportunity to live, work, study, and interact with allied professionals who routinely work with victims of all crimes. The Rural Crime and Justice Center (RCJC) at Minot State University received funding from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to facilitate a State Victim Assistance Academy (SVAA) within ND. The goal of the OVC is to assist states in developing effective strategies for establishing their own SVAA as a means to increase the knowledge of victim service personnel. The first SVAA was funded in Michigan in 1998. As of 2009, 34 states have received funding to develop a SVAA.

The purpose of the VAAND is to provide comprehensive training to those professionals who interact with victims of crime in order to provide quality services in North Dakota. The academy is a week-long (40 hour) course, designed to meet the entry-level educational and training needs of professionals working with crime victims. Our mission is to develop, implement, and maintain a statewide structure to expand and enhance the level of skills and knowledge for those who interact with victims of crime.

Instructors for the academy include field experts from around the State and University faculty members. An intensive and comprehensive North Dakota focused text covering a variety of subjects has been developed to serve as the Academy's curriculum. Subject areas to be covered at the 2010 academy include: Basic Advocacy Skills, Ethical Considerations, Collaboration, Domestic Violence, Child Victimization, and Working with People with Disabilities and the Aging Population. Available credit options for the VAAND include Law Enforcement – POST Credit, CEU/CLE's, Social Work, Addiction Counselor, Licensed Counselors, and undergraduate college credits.

Our inaugural VAAND was held at Minot State University in June of 2009. Here is what some of the 2009 VAAND graduates had to say about their academy experience: *"I gained knowledge in areas I was unfamiliar with and have a better understanding of victims as they relate to my work."* – Assistant State's Attorney. *"What a great opportunity. You are given a chance to view how the other phases of victimology work. A well rounded overview of how we all need to work together for the welfare of the victim."* – Law Enforcement. *"I feel that a lot of small details went into the planning of the week that made it very successful. I learned a lot about victim's services and was able to network."* – Restorative Justice. *"I learned new skills and info, met new people in the field of victim assistance."* – Victim Services.

The VAAND encourages the attendance of individuals with at least one year of work experience from victim service organizations and other allied professions who routinely work with crime victims. **The 2010 VAAND will be held June 6-11, 2010 on the campus of Minot State University.** In order to be eligible for selection to the academy, candidates must submit a completed application. Applications can be located on the VAAND website: [www.minotstateu.edu/rcjc/vaand\\_home.shtml](http://www.minotstateu.edu/rcjc/vaand_home.shtml), or by contacting Nancy Murphy at 800-777-0750 ext. 3447 or 701-858-3447. Email: [nancy.murphy@minotstateu.edu](mailto:nancy.murphy@minotstateu.edu). **The deadline for VAAND applications is April 2, 2010.**

Due to the success of the inaugural VAAND, we are currently conducting an advanced academy needs assessment survey. We are considering hosting a two day advanced academy in the fall of 2010. Please check the VAAND website for further updates.

The vision of the VAAND is to provide consistent and quality services to victims of crime in North Dakota. For more information or questions on the academy please go to our website at [www.minotstateu.edu/rcjc/vaand\\_home.shtml](http://www.minotstateu.edu/rcjc/vaand_home.shtml) or contact:

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