

**SECTION 16-3-1620.** Crime Victims' Ombudsman of the Office of the Governor; Office of Victim Services Education and Certification. [SC ST SEC 16-3-1620]

(A) The Crime Victims' Ombudsman of the Office of the Governor is created. The Crime Victims' Ombudsman is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

(B) The Crime Victims' Ombudsman of the Office of the Governor shall:

(1) refer crime victims to the appropriate element of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, or both, when services are requested by crime victims or are necessary as determined by the ombudsman;

(2) act as a liaison between elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, victim assistance programs, and victims when the need for liaison services is recognized by the ombudsman; and

(3) review and attempt to resolve complaints against elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, or both, made to the ombudsman by victims of criminal activity within the state's jurisdiction.

(C) There is created within the Crime Victims' Ombudsman of the Office of the Governor, the Office of Victim Services Education and Certification which shall:

(1) provide oversight of training, education, and certification of victim assistance programs;

(2) with approval of the Victim Services Coordinating Council, promulgate training standards and requirements;

(3) approve training curricula for credit hours toward certification;

(4) provide victim service provider certification; and

(5) maintain records of certified victim service providers.

(D) Public victim assistance programs shall ensure that all victim service providers employed in their respective offices are certified through the Office of Victim Services Education and Certification within the Office of the Crime Victims' Ombudsman.

(1) Private, nonprofit programs shall ensure that all victim service providers in these nonprofit programs are certified by a Victim Services Coordinating Council approved certification program. Victim Services Coordinating Council approval must include review of the program to ensure that requirements are commensurate with the certification requirements for public victim assistance service providers.

(2) Victim service providers, serving in public or private nonprofit programs, employed on the effective date of this chapter are exempt from basic certification requirements but shall meet annual continuing education requirements to maintain certification. Victim service providers, serving in public or private nonprofit programs, employed after the effective date of this chapter are required to complete the basic certification requirements within one year from the date of employment and to meet annual continuing education requirements to maintain certification throughout their employment.

(3) The mandatory minimum certification requirements, as promulgated by the Crime Victims' Ombudsman, may not exceed fifteen hours, and the mandatory minimum requirements for continuing advocacy education, as promulgated by the Crime Victims' Ombudsman, may not exceed twelve hours.

(4) Nothing in this section shall prevent an entity from requiring or an individual from seeking additional certification credits beyond the basic required hours.

Source: <http://www.scstatehouse.gov>

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