



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 12, 2011

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #260

Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) (DOA -- Justice Information System Surcharge and Corrections -- Community Corrections)

[LFB 2011-13 Budget Summary: Page 36, #1 and Page 148, #5]

CURRENT LAW

Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) is a service that allows crime victims and the public to access information about the custody status of offenders who are housed in county jails and receive automated notification if the status of the offender changes.

GOVERNOR

Create a program revenue appropriation and authorize expenditure of \$511,900 PR in 2011-12 and \$692,600 PR in 2012-13 for the Department's Office of Victim Services and Programs to support county costs associated with VINE. The funding would also support creation of the VINE Protective Order system, which would provide registrants with automated notification of the status of restraining orders. Funding for the new appropriation would come from the justice information systems surcharge fee receipts appropriation, a new appropriation under the Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) to receive all justice information surcharge revenue.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The VINE service provides timely information about the location and custody status of criminal defendants and convicted offenders housed in county jails. Victims and other citizens can register by phone or online to receive automated telephone and/or email notifications when there is a change in the offender's custody status. The service is available in English, Spanish, or Hmong. In Corrections' budget request, the Department indicated that between April, 2009, and May, 2010, 1,847 individuals registered to receive VINE notifications. As of March, 2011, 6,358 individuals have registered for VINE services. Corrections provided the following data regarding the VINE system for the period of April, 2009, through March, 2011:

VINE Statistics*

Registrations	6,358
Telephone Notifications	3,796
Email Notifications	4,056
Telephone Searches	7,316
Online Searches**	225,703

*Includes a total of 45 county jails that have activated the system.

**Includes the public access website (www.vinelink.com) and the password protected system available to selected jail staff and victim witness professionals (www.vinewatch.com)

2. In 1996, Corrections received a \$59,000 Information Technology Investment Fund grant from the Department of Administration to implement the VINE system. In 2009, Corrections received a \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) to implement the service in all Wisconsin counties and within the Department of Health Services. Funding for the grant ends in June, 2011. Corrections also received a \$500,000 grant from USDOJ to enhance the VINE system to include notifications to victims in the event restraining orders are served to domestic violence offenders. This grant ends in June, 2011, as well. Corrections has a contract with Appriss Inc. to provide VINE services associated with hosting and operating the system. Corrections indicates that 46 counties have implemented VINE, 19 counties are in the process of implementation, and seven counties are considering whether or not to implement the service. The system is expected to be fully implemented within the Department of Health Services by the end of May, 2011.

3. The bill would provide \$511,900 PR in 2011-12 and \$692,600 PR in 2012-13 for ongoing maintenance costs for the implementation of VINE and establishing the VINE Protective Order system. Under the bill, OJA would transfer funding from its new justice information systems surcharge receipts appropriation to the Department's new victim notification appropriation. Funding would cover monthly service fees, hardware/software monitoring and support, contract administration, and training and outreach to victims, victim advocacy groups, law enforcement and the general public about the usage of VINE. According to the Department:

"Funding of WI-VINE and the WI-VINE Protective Order service is of serious concern to the stakeholders: the State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin counties, victim advocates, law enforcement and crime victims and their families and the general public. The implementation grant is ending and, while a large number of the Wisconsin counties have implemented WI-VINE, several counties will not implement or continue activation of WI-VINE services unless continued ongoing funding is provided by the State.

Counties, which have implemented WI-VINE, are very concerned about the ongoing support costs that they will incur if a new funding mechanism is not made available when the grant funds are gone. The VINE Protective Order service enhancement grant is also ending in June 2011 and funding for those county ongoing support costs are also needed."

4. It should be noted that the funding calculations assume a 6% increase in 2012-13 at the time of contract renewal with Appriss Inc. However, the contract specifies a maximum increase of 4% at the time of contract renewal. If funding calculations are adjusted for a 4% increase instead of a 6% increase, the bill could be modified by -\$10,300 in 2012-13. [Alternative 2]

5. Considering the benefits the notification system provides to victims, law enforcement, and the general public, the Committee may wish to approve the provision in order to maintain the VINE service and create the VINE Protective Order system. However, there may be concerns about funding the system through program revenue from the justice information system surcharge. The bill would create a new justice information fee receipts appropriation under OJA to receive all revenue from the surcharge. The new appropriation would allocate the surcharge revenue to 11 specified appropriations, including the new victim notification appropriation. However, if collected revenues from the surcharge are insufficient to cover all appropriated amounts, the appropriation would face a deficit. In order to avoid this potential issue and the potential impact on victim notification, the Committee may wish to fund the provision utilizing general program revenue (including the funding modification identified above). [Alternative 3]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to create a program revenue appropriation and authorize expenditure of \$511,900 PR in 2011-12 and \$692,600 PR in 2012-13 for the Department's Office of Victim Services and Programs to support county costs associated with VINE. The funding would also support creation of the VINE Protective Order system, which would provide petitions with automated notification of the status of restraining orders. Funding for the new appropriation would come from the justice information fee receipts appropriation, a new appropriation under OJA to receive justice information surcharge revenue.

2. Adopt Alternative #1 with the modification of -\$10,300 PR in 2012-13 associated with a 4% increase in costs, instead of a 6% increase in costs.

ALT 2	Change to Bill Funding
PR	- \$10,300

3. Delete the Governor's recommendation, and instead provide \$511,900 GPR in 2011-12 and \$682,300 GPR in 2012-13 for the VINE service and VINE Protective Order system.

ALT 3	Change to Bill Funding
GPR	\$1,194,200
PR	<u>- 1,204,500</u>
Total	- \$10,300

4. Delete provision.

ALT 4	Change to Bill Funding
PR	- \$1,204,500

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