



Victim Offender Reconciliation Program
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FIVE AREAS OF EXCELLENCE: Winner of 2006 El Pomar Award for Excellence

One: Begun in '95 with a handful of volunteers and a \$5,000 start-up grant, SLV-VORP has used the past decade to grow a lean and flexible infrastructure suitable to its mission. This includes a creative blend of private and public partnerships, while maintaining our grassroots values of volunteerism and in-kind support from local faith communities. We have a roster of talented volunteers. Our office, utilities, furnishings and training spaces are all in-kind donations. This combination of financial and human capital allows us to function effectively with a lean staff and budget, even in tight economic times.

Two: Our service area includes a broad rural expanse of 8000 sq. miles. Covering 6 counties, we relate to six different courthouses, county law enforcement agencies, & social service departments; 14 small school districts; and multiple municipal entities. Also, many Valley families live in poverty, without reliable vehicles or phones. Despite these challenges, we offer free, convenient services to youth & their victims – including school & home visits, after-hours appointments, & mediations at their choice of locations – in all 6 counties. Nine school districts in 5 counties also receive our training and consulting services.

Three: Despite being a small program, we meet all key Standards of Performance of the National Association for Community Mediation:

- a. We train and utilize community volunteers to provide mediation services;**
- b. Our staff, board and volunteers represent the geographic, ethnic, religious and language diversity of the San Luis Valley.**
- c. We offer services that are culturally appropriate and competent for all our communities, and reduce physical or economic barriers to such services.**
- d. We offer educational activities that promote the values and practices of healthy conflict resolution and restorative justice.**
- e. We have developed collaborative initiatives to effect positive systemic change, on key issues affecting youth in our schools and juvenile justice system.**

Four: We can demonstrate significant impact on the lives of youth. For example, through an initiative with concerned church leaders & parents, we assisted the Alamosa School District over a 3-year period to reduce expulsions disparately impacting middle school Latino youth. With introduction of restorative options, expulsions dropped from a high of 28, to 11 in the 2d year, and only 4 this year.

Five: Families and schools consistently rate our services as excellent, on written evaluations provided after each mediation session and training event.