

Organizational History

North Central Victim Services and **Center City Crime Victim Services** joined their efforts to serve Center City and North Philadelphia neighborhoods. The merging of these two victim service agencies formed Central Division Victim Services whose mission it is to provide a safe, prosperous, and resilient community with a focus on advocating for safe neighborhoods while supporting survivors of trauma due to violence. Before merging, both community-based victim services had a long history of serving and responding to victims of crime in many diverse populations.

Center City Crime Victim Services (CCCVS) was founded in 1989 under the umbrella of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). They worked through the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office to provide victim services to Philadelphia's 6th and 9th police districts. Center City Crime Victim Services was originally located at 1216 Arch Street with a Director and a Victim Advocate to provide victim rights and services. The agency became an independent non-profit organization in 1997 with a Board of Directors. The agency also expanded their staff to include a Court Advocate and volunteers who assisted with increasing services at their new location at 1515 Chestnut Street. In 2010, CCCVS created the position of a Mandarin-speaking Victim Advocate to serve Asian-Americans in Center City's Chinatown neighborhoods. The agency relocated once more to a co-working space, CultureWorks, located at 1315 Walnut Street. In 2015, CCCVS created an LGBTQ Victim Advocate position that provided services and information on victims' rights to the LGBTQ community. Center City Crime Victim Services continued to provide victim services until 2018 when new opportunities arose.

North Central Victim Services (NCVS) originated through a neighborhood church in 1997. They also worked through the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, to provide victim services to crime victims within Philadelphia's 22nd police district. Philadelphia's District Attorney's Office reached out to Temple University's Center for Social Policy and Community Development (CSPCD) to plan, initiate, and facilitate victim services in North Philadelphia's 22nd police district. Through a year of engagement and nurturing, the CSPCD created an Advisory Board with a mission statement to, officially, create North Central Victim Services (NCVS). The agency hired qualified staff, recruited volunteers while cultivating community outreach, provided community awareness, and raised agency funds. NCVS officially opened as a community-based non-profit organization in July of 2002 to provide victims' rights and services in the 22nd police district. Located on 1415 N. Broad Street, NCVS' Director and Advocate served clients until 2013. Relocating in 2013, to 1722 Cecil B. Moore Avenue, expanded the number of volunteers (Support Advocates) as well as collaborations with a number of neighborhood organizations.

These collaborations increased community awareness of victims' rights and increased services to include survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. In 2015, NCVS joined a collaborative with Temple Trauma Center, Northwest Victim Services, and East Division victim service agencies to respond to crime victims that entered into the trauma center. In 2016, NCVS launched an initiative to support violence against women and hosted the first Women's Empowerment Conference. The initiative led to empowering women through a program called Women on the Rise. In 2017, NCVS hosted its first National Crime Victim Rights Week (NCVRW) with a Kickball Challenge where four elementary schools and four law enforcement entities serving the 22nd police district came together to play kickball. The purpose of this challenge was to build trust between our youth and law enforcement officers. By 2018, NCVS grew to include a Director and three Victim Advocates, and relocated to its current location on 1538 Cecil B. Moore Avenue and two neighborhood satellite locations.

In 2018, Center City Crime Victim Services and North Central Victim Services' Executive Directors discussed the benefit and opportunity to join forces. In December of 2018, both agency Board of Directors formed an official Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to form a merger committee to explore increasing capacity and resources in delivering victims' rights and services to Philadelphia's 6th, 9th, & 22nd police districts. On December 14, 2019 both Center City Crime Victim Services and North Central Victim Services approved the Articles of Amendment to merge the two organizations. After a year of research and board leadership, the merger finalized its mission to establish Central Division Victim Services. On January 2, 2020 Central Division Victim Services launched as one organization serving the 6th, 9th & 22nd Police Districts.