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# Towing and Impound Fees

- Mari Dennis – Executive Director
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# Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA)

- The Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA) is committed to fairness and healing for crime victims, their families, and communities through leadership, education, and advocacy. By operating in an inclusive and compassionate manner, COVA creates solutions and positive change. COVA's vision is to be recognized as a national leader in building a collaborative environment where crime victims are given the opportunity to heal and restore balance to their lives.



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# COVA Programs

- Emergency Fund – direct financial assistance to crime victims through VOCA/ARPA funding
  - VOCA/ARPA sets parameters on financial assistance
- Human Trafficking Program – supports victims of human trafficking throughout the state with referrals and case management
- Victim Services Internship Program – provides internship with a stipend in the field of crime victim services
- Public Policy - strives to raise the understanding of victim issues within the consciousness of policy makers and the general public to a level where all victims are viewed with honor and respect and their rights are recognized
- Training and Technical Assistance – provides 40-hour training academies, education and training to agencies, webinars, and technical assistance
- Conference – annual 3-day conference to government agencies, district attorney offices, law enforcement, victim services field professionals, victim advocacy non-profit organizations, as well as crime victims and survivors



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# COVA Emergency Fund

- Funded by VOCA/ARPA grants
  - Direct assistance to victims regardless of engagement with law enforcement
  - Towing and impound can be provided financial assistance if crime was committed in the vehicle including:
    - Domestic violence assault in vehicle
    - Sexual assault in vehicle
    - Vehicular homicide



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# COVA Direct Assistance Towing & Impound

- 2020: \$7,218
- 2021: 9,888.50
- 2022: 4,374.76
- Total: 21,481.26
- Towing and impound fees paid by COVA are largely State VALE Funds and private donations
- No current funding opportunities to support towing and impound
- COVA doesn't track nonfulfilled requests

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# Previous Legislative Attempts

- HB23-1217 – Rep. Meg Froelich and Sen. Rhonda Fields
  - The bill requires a towing carrier to release a motor vehicle without demanding or accepting payment for any fee or charge associated with the tow or storage if the motor vehicle was towed without the owner's consent from public or private property and the tow was a result of the owner being a victim of a crime or the motor vehicle being stolen. The owner must provide appropriate documentation. To reimburse tow carriers for nonconsensual tows from private property, the bill creates an enterprise with a 5-person governing board. The enterprise will administer a voluntary reimbursement program for participating carriers. Under the program, a carrier collects a fee, sends it to the enterprise, and the enterprise reimburses the carrier for the cost of providing a law enforcement tow and storage based on average costs of providing the tow and storage.
- HB20-1107 – Rep. Tom Sullivan and Sen. Bob Gardner
  - The bill creates the victim towing and impound fee grant program in the division of criminal justice in the department of public safety. The division shall make a grant to a statewide nonprofit organization that serves victims of crime to reimburse a victim who has paid a towing or impound fee as a result of criminal activity.

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# Policy Questions

- COVA believes victims should not be required to pay for towing and impound fees related to their victimization
- Victim service funding is very limited by federal, state, and local grants based on grant requirements
  - How could the state support financial assistance for towing and impound fees?
- As the state leads the nation in motor vehicle theft, how is the state supporting these victims?
  - Motor vehicle theft is not a VRA crime
- What are the discrepancies across the state in waiving of towing and impound fees?
  - Currently, how does location change the policy for waiving or financial assistance for towing and impound fees?



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# Towing and Impound Fees in the News

- According to 9News in 2022
- In Aurora, the city contracts with M&M Towing. M&M Towing charges, at minimum, \$30 a day for storage, \$35 for notification and \$125 for a tow, according to the company. + ●
- In 2021, M&M Towing collected \$974,883.25 in fees from owners of stolen cars that had been recovered, according to a report from the city of Aurora. ○
- The [Denver County Vehicle Impound](#) has no fee for owners to recover stolen vehicles.
- Last year, the city of Denver towed 7,632 vehicles and didn't charge a fee for stolen vehicles to be recovered by their owners.
- In Lakewood, the city contracts with Ace Towing. Ace charges \$304, at minimum, to get a vehicle out of their lot.
- Ace towed 823 cars last year, totaling at least \$250,000 in fees.

- <https://www.9news.com/article/news/crime/impound-lot-fees-stolen-vehicles/73-244ce5a0-daf9-4693-8e15-dec1d970b304>



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- COVA's current capacity does not open the opportunity to provide financial assistance for statewide towing and impound fees
    - Staff capacity
    - Financial constraints, including grant limitations

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# Thank you!

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