

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS IN AMERICA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The impressive accomplishments, struggles, and victories of the past 32 years of America's victim assistance discipline are incorporated into this summary document, which for the first time reflects findings from the OVC Oral History Project sponsored by Justice Solutions, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, the National Association of Crime Victims Compensation Boards, and the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators. It can be reproduced as a document on its own, or incorporated into speeches, brochures, and other public outreach activities sponsored during NCVRW and throughout the year. States can also consider developing their own historical overview that highlights state-specific achievements that have advanced victims' rights and services.

THE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

Since 1983, OVC has provided vision, leadership, funding, and substantial support to community- and system-based victim assistance programs, as well as to allied professions, to enhance victims' rights and services. Key landmarks in public policy and program development are included in this summary, which can be utilized as a stand-alone document or incorporated into other victim and public outreach efforts sponsored during 2004 NCVRW and throughout the year.

THE CRIME VICTIMS FUND: TWO DECADES OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Since 1985, the Crime Victims Fund, established by the Victims of Crime Act passed in 1984, has provided over \$5.5 billion to support victim assistance and services. Key accomplishments of the Crime Victims Fund are detailed in this document, which should be utilized to commemorate the 20-year anniversary of the passage of VOCA in conjunction with 2004 NCVRW. Victim assistance programs that have benefited from the VOCA fund should emphasize the difference that VOCA has made in the lives of victims and survivors for the past two decades.

Crime Victims' Rights in America

An Historical Overview

"The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created – created first in mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination." John Schaar

1965

- The first crime victim compensation program is established in California.
- By 1970, five additional compensation programs are created – New York, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Maryland, and the Virgin Islands.

1972

- The first three victim assistance programs are created:
 - Aid for Victims of Crime in St. Louis, Missouri.
 - Bay Area Women Against Rape in San Francisco, California.
 - Rape Crisis Center in Washington, DC.

1974

- The Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funds the first victim/witness programs in the Brooklyn and Milwaukee District Attorneys' offices, plus seven others through a grant to the National District Attorneys Association, to create model programs of assistance for victims, encourage victim cooperation, and improve prosecution.
- The first law enforcement-based victim assistance programs are established in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Indianapolis, Indiana.
- The U.S. Congress passes the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which establishes the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN). The new Center creates an information clearinghouse, and provides technical assistance and model programs.

1975

- The first "Victims' Rights Week" is organized by the Philadelphia District Attorney.
- Citizen activists from across the country unite to expand victim services and increase recognition of victims' rights through the formation of the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA).

1976

- The National Organization for Women forms a task force to examine the problem of battering. It requests research into the problem, along with money for battered women's shelters.
- Nebraska becomes the first state to abolish the marital rape exemption.
- The first national conference on battered women is sponsored by the Milwaukee Task Force on Women in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- In Fresno County, California, Chief Probation Officer James Rowland creates the first victim impact statement to provide the judiciary with an objective inventory of victim injuries and losses prior to sentencing.
- Women's Advocates in St. Paul, Minnesota starts the first hotline for battered women. Women's Advocates and Haven House in Pasadena, California establishes the first shelters for battered women.

1977

- The National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards is established by the existing 22 compensation programs to

promote the creation of a nationwide network of compensation programs.

- Oregon becomes the first state to enact mandatory arrest in domestic violence cases.

1978

- The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA) is formed to combat sexual violence and promote services for rape victims.
- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is organized as a voice for the battered women's movement on a national level. NCADV initiates the introduction of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act in the U.S. Congress.
- Parents of Murdered Children (POMC), a self-help support group, is founded in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Minnesota becomes the first state to allow probable cause (warrantless) arrest in cases of domestic assault, regardless of whether a protection order had been issued.

1979

- Frank G. Carrington, considered by many to be "the father of the victims' rights movement," founds the Crime Victims' Legal Advocacy Institute, Inc., to promote the rights of crime victims in the civil and criminal justice systems. The nonprofit organization was renamed VALOR, the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization, in 1981.
- The Office on Domestic Violence is established in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, but is later closed in 1981.
- The U.S. Congress fails to enact the Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and federal funding for victims' programs is phased out. Many grassroots and "system-based" programs close.

1980

- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is founded after the death of 13-year-old Carl

Lightner, who was killed by a repeat offender drunk driver. The first two MADD chapters are created in Sacramento, California and Annapolis, Maryland.

- The U.S. Congress passes the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980.
- Wisconsin passes the first "Crime Victims' Bill of Rights."
- The First National Day of Unity in October is established by NCADV to mourn battered women who have died, celebrate women who have survived the violence, and honor all who have worked to defeat domestic violence. This Day becomes Domestic Violence Awareness Week and, in 1987, expands to a month of awareness activities each October.
- NCADV holds its first national conference in Washington, D.C., which gains federal recognition of critical issues facing battered women, and sees the birth of several state coalitions.
- The first Victim Impact Panel is sponsored by Remove Intoxicated Drivers (RID) in Oswego County, New York.

1981

- Ronald Reagan becomes the first President to proclaim "Crime Victims' Rights Week" in April.
- The disappearance and murder of missing child Adam Walsh prompts a national campaign to raise public awareness about child abduction and enact laws to better protect children.
- The Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime recommends that a separate Task Force be created to consider victims' issues.

1982

- In a Rose Garden ceremony, President Reagan appoints the Task Force on Victims of Crime, which holds public hearings in six cities across the nation to create a greatly needed national focus on the needs of crime victims. The Task Force Final Report offers

68 recommendations that become the framework for the advancement of new programs and policies. Its final recommendation, to amend the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to guarantee that "...the victim, in every criminal prosecution, shall have the right to be present and to be heard at all critical stages of judicial proceedings....," becomes a vital source of new energy pushing toward the successful efforts to secure state constitutional amendments through the 1980s and beyond.

- The Federal Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982 brings "fair treatment standards" to victims and witnesses in the federal criminal justice system.
- California voters overwhelmingly pass Proposition 8, which guarantees restitution and other statutory reforms to crime victims.
- The passage of the Missing Children's Act of 1982 helps parents guarantee that identifying information about their missing child is promptly entered into the FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer system.

1983

- The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is created by the U.S. Department of Justice within the Office of Justice Programs to implement recommendations from the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime. OVC establishes a national resource center, trains professionals, and develops model legislation to protect victims' rights.
- The U.S. Attorney General establishes a Task Force on Family Violence, which holds six public hearings across the United States.
- The U.S. Attorney General issues guidelines for federal victim and witness assistance.
- In April, President Reagan honors crime victims in a White House Rose Garden ceremony.
- The First National Conference of the Judiciary on Victims of Crime is held at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada,

with support from the National Institute of Justice. Conferees develop recommendations for the judiciary on victims' rights and services.

- President Reagan proclaims the first National Missing Children's Day in observance of the disappearance of missing child Etan Patz.
- Wisconsin passes the first "Child Victim and Witness Bill of Rights."
- The International Association of Chiefs of Police Board of Governors adopts a Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and establishes a victims' rights committee to bring about renewed emphasis on the needs of crime victims by law enforcement officials nationwide.

1984

- The passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) establishes the Crime Victims Fund, made up of federal criminal fines, penalties and bond forfeitures, to support state victim compensation and local victim service programs.
- President Reagan signs the Justice Assistance Act, which establishes a financial assistance program for state and local government and funds 200 new victim service programs.
- The National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984 is enacted, providing strong incentives to states without "21" laws to raise the minimum age for drinking, saving thousands of young lives in years to come.
- The first of several international affiliates of MADD is chartered in Canada.
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is created as the national resource agency for missing children. Passage of the Missing Children's Assistance Act provides a Congressional mandate for the Center.
- The Spiritual Dimension in Victim Services is founded to involve the faith community in violence prevention and victim assistance.

- Crime Prevention Week in February is marked by a White House ceremony with McGruff, the crime-fighting mascot of the National Crime Prevention Council.
- The Task Force on Family Violence presents its report to the U.S. Attorney General with recommendations for action, including the criminal justice system's response to battered women; prevention and awareness; education and training; and data collection and reporting.
- The U.S. Congress passes the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, which earmarks federal funding for programs serving victims of domestic violence.
- The ad-hoc committee on the constitutional amendment formalizes its plans to secure passage of amendments at the state level.
- Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) is organized at the first police survivors' seminar held in Washington, D.C. by 110 relatives of officers killed in the line of duty.
- The first National Symposium on Sexual Assault is co-sponsored by the Office of Justice Programs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, highlighting on the federal level the important needs of victims of rape and sexual assault.
- A victim/witness notification system is established within the Federal Bureau of Prisons.
- The Office for Victims of Crime hosts the first national symposium on child molestation.
- Victim/witness coordinator positions are established in the U.S. Attorneys' offices within the U.S. Department of Justice.
- California State University, Fresno initiates the first Victim Services Certificate Program offered for academic credit by a university.
- OVC establishes the National Victims Resource Center, now named the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center (OVCRC), to serve as a clearinghouse for OVC publications and other resource information.

1985

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$68 million.
- The National Victim Center (renamed the National Center for Victims of Crime in 1998) is founded in honor of Sunny von Bulow to promote the rights and needs of crime victims, and to educate Americans about the devastating effect of crime on our society.
- The National Institute of Mental Health and NOVA sponsor a services, research and evaluation colloquium on the "Aftermath of Crime: A Mental Health Crisis."
- The United Nations General Assembly passes the International Declaration on the Rights of Victims of Crime and the Abuse of Power.
- President Reagan announces a Child Safety Partnership with 26 members. Its mission is to enhance private sector efforts to promote child safety, to clarify information about child victimization, and to increase public awareness of child abuse.
- The U.S. Surgeon General issues a report identifying domestic violence as a major public health problem.

1986

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$62 million.
- The Office for Victims of Crime awards the first grants to support state victim compensation and assistance programs.
- Two years after its passage, the Victims of Crime Act is amended by the Children's Justice Act to provide funds specifically for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse.
- Over 100 constitutional amendment supporters meet in Washington, D.C. at a forum sponsored by NOVA to refine a national plan to secure state constitutional amendments for victims of crime.
- Rhode Island passes a constitutional amendment granting victims the right to

restitution, to submit victim impact statements, and to be treated with dignity and respect.

- Victim compensation programs have been established in 35 states.
- MADD's "Red Ribbon Campaign" enlists motorists to display a red ribbon on their automobiles, pledging to drive safe and sober during the holidays. This national public awareness effort has since become an annual campaign.

1987

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$77 million.
- The National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Network (NVCAN) and Steering Committee are formed at a meeting hosted by the National Victim Center.
- Security on Campus, Inc. (SOC) is established by Howard and Connie Clery, following the tragic robbery, rape and murder of their daughter Jeanne at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. SOC raises national awareness about crime and victimization on our nation's campuses.
- The American Correctional Association establishes a Task Force on Victims of Crime.
- NCADV establishes the first national toll-free domestic violence hotline.
- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month is officially designated to commemorate battered women and those who serve them.
- In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Booth v. Maryland* (482 U.S. 496) that victim impact statements are unconstitutional (in violation of the Eighth Amendment) when applied to the penalty phase of a capital trial as "only the defendant's personal responsibility and moral guilt" may be considered in capital sentencing. However, significant dissenting opinions are offered.
- Victims and advocates in Florida, frustrated by five years of inaction on a proposed constitutional amendment by their legislature,

begin a petition drive. Thousands of citizens sign petitions supporting constitutional protection for victims' rights. The Florida legislature reconsiders, and the constitutional amendment appears on the 1988 ballot.

1988

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$93 million.
- OVC sets aside funds for the Victim Assistance in Indian Country (VAIC) grant program to provide direct services to Native Americans by establishing "on-reservation" victim assistance programs in Indian Country.
- The National Aging Resource Center on Elder Abuse (NARCEA) is established by a cooperative agreement among the American Public Welfare Association, the National Association of State Units on Aging, and the University of Delaware. Renamed the National Center on Elder Abuse, it continues to provide information and statistics.
- *State v. Ciskie* is the first case to allow the use of expert testimony to explain the behavior and mental state of an adult rape victim. The testimony is used to show why a victim of repeated physical and sexual assaults by her intimate partner would not immediately call the police or take action. The jury convicts the defendant on four counts of rape.
- The Federal Drunk Driving Prevention Act is passed, and all states raise the minimum drinking age to 21.
- Constitutional amendments are introduced in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, South Carolina, and Washington. Florida's amendment is placed on the November ballot, where it passes with 90 percent of the vote. Michigan's constitutional amendment passes with over 80 percent of the vote.
- The first "Indian Nations: Justice for Victims of Crime" conference is sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime in Rapid City, South Dakota.

- VOCA amendments legislatively establish the Office for Victims of Crime, elevate the position of Director by making Senate confirmation necessary for appointment, and induce state compensation programs to cover victims of domestic violence, homicide, and drunk driving. In addition, VOCA amendments added a new "priority" category for funding victim assistance programs at the behest of MADD and POMC for "previously underserved victims of violent crime."
- OVC provides funding for the first time to the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards to expand national training and technical assistance efforts.
- OVC establishes a Federal Emergency Fund for victims in the federal criminal justice system.

1989

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$133 million.
- In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms in *South Carolina v. Gathers* (490 U.S. 805) its 1987 decision in *Booth v. Maryland* that victim impact evidence and arguments are unconstitutional (in violation of the Eighth Amendment) when applied to the penalty phase of a capital trial as "a sentence of death must be relevant to the circumstances of the crime or to the defendant's moral culpability." Again, significant dissenting opinions are offered.
- "White Collar Crime 101" is published, which begins a national dialogue about implementing rights and resources for victims of fraud.
- The legislatures in Texas and Washington pass their respective constitutional amendments, which are both ratified by voters.

1990

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$146 million.
- The U.S. Congress passes the Hate Crime Statistics Act requiring the U.S. Attorney

General to collect data of incidence of certain crimes motivated by prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity.

- The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act, requiring institutions of higher education to disclose murder, rape, robbery, and other crimes on campus, is signed into law by President Bush.
- The Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990, which features reforms to make the federal criminal justice system less traumatic for child victims and witnesses, is passed by the U.S. Congress.
- The Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 incorporates a Bill of Rights for federal crime victims and codifies services that should be available to victims of crime.
- U.S. Congress passes legislation proposed by MADD to prevent drunk drivers and other offenders from filing bankruptcy to avoid paying criminal restitution or civil fines.
- The Arizona petition drive to place the victims' rights constitutional amendment on the ballot succeeds, and it is ratified by voters.
- The first National Incidence Study on Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children in America shows that annually, over one million children fall victim to abduction.
- The National Child Search Assistance Act requires law enforcement to enter reports of missing children and unidentified persons in the NCIC computer.

1991

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$128 million.
- U.S. Representative Ilena Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) files the first Congressional Joint Resolution to place victims' rights in the U.S. Constitution.
- The Violence Against Women Act of 1991 is considered by the U.S. Congress.
- California State University, Fresno approves the first Bachelors Degree Program in

Victimology in the nation.

- The Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights Act is introduced in the U.S. Congress.
- The results of the first national public opinion poll to examine citizens' attitudes about violence and victimization, *America Speaks Out*, are released by the National Victim Center during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.
- In a 7-2 decision in *Payne v. Tennessee* (501 U.S. 808), the U.S. Supreme Court reverses its earlier decisions in *Booth v. Maryland* (1987) and *South Carolina v. Gathers* (1989) and rules that testimony and prosecutorial arguments commenting on the murder victim's good character, as well as how the victim's death affected his or her survivors does not violate the defendant's constitutional rights in a capital case.
- The Attorney General's Summit on Law Enforcement and Violent Crime focuses national attention on victims' rights in the criminal justice system.
- The U.S. Attorney General issues new comprehensive guidelines that establish procedures for the federal criminal justice system to respond to the needs of crime victims. The 1991 *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance* implement new protections of the Crime Control Act of 1990, integrating the requirements of the Federal Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, the Victims of Child Abuse Act and the Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982.
- The first national conference that addresses crime victims' rights and needs in corrections is sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime in California.
- The first nationwide survey is conducted to determine the scope of fraud and its effects, which finds that an estimated \$40 billion is lost to fraud each year. One-third of the people surveyed report that an attempt to defraud them had occurred in the previous year.
- The first International Conference on Campus Sexual Assault is held in Orlando,

Florida.

- The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) establishes a Victim Issues Committee to examine victims' issues and concerns related to community corrections.
- The International Parental Child Kidnapping Act makes the act of unlawfully removing a child outside the United States a federal felony.
- The Spiritual Dimension in Victim Services facilitates a conference of leaders of 13 religious denominations to plan ways in which these large religious bodies can increase awareness of crime victims' needs and provide appropriate services.
- The New Jersey legislature passes a victims' rights constitutional amendment, which is ratified by voters in November.
- Colorado legislators introduce a constitutional amendment on the first day of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Fifteen days later, the bill is unanimously passed by both Houses to be placed on the ballot in 1992.
- In an 8-0 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Simon & Schuster v. New York Crime Victims Board* that New York's notoriety-for-profit statute was overly broad and, in the final analysis, unconstitutional. Notoriety-for-profit statutes had been passed by many states at this time to prevent convicted criminals from profiting from the proceeds of depictions of their crime in the media or publications. States must now review their existing statutes to comply with the Supreme Court's decision.
- The Washington Secretary of State implements the nation's first Address Confidentiality Program, which provides victims of domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault an alternate, confidential mailing address, and offers confidentiality for two normally public records: voter registration and motor vehicle records.
- By the end of 1991, seven states have incorporated victims' rights into their state

constitutions.

- OVC provides funding to the National Victim Center for Civil Legal Remedies for Crime Victims to train victim advocates nationwide about additional avenues for victims to seek justice within the civil justice system.

1992

- The Federal Crime Victims fund deposits total \$221 million.
- *Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*, published during National Crime Victims' Rights Week by the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center and the National Victim Center, clarifies the scope and devastating effect of rape in this nation, including the fact that 683,000 women are raped annually in the United States.
- The Association of Paroling Authorities, International establishes a Victim Issues Committee to examine victims' needs, rights and services in parole processes.
- The U.S. Congress re-authorizes the Higher Education Bill, which includes the campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights.
- The Battered Women's Testimony Act, which urges states to accept expert testimony in criminal cases involving battered women, is passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush.
- In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court – in *R.A.V. vs. City of St. Paul* – strikes down a local hate crimes ordinance in Minnesota.
- Five states – Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, Missouri, and New Mexico – ratify constitutional amendments for victims' rights.
- Twenty-eight states pass anti-stalking legislation.
- Massachusetts passes a landmark bill creating a statewide computerized domestic violence registry and requires judges to check the registry when handling such cases.

- The first national conference is convened, with support from OVC, that brings together representatives from VOCA victim assistance and victim compensation programs.

1993

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$144 million.
- Wisconsin ratifies its constitutional amendment for victims' rights, bringing the total number of states with these amendments to 14.
- President Clinton signs the "Brady Bill" requiring a waiting period for the purchase of handguns.
- Congress passes the Child Sexual Abuse Registry Act, establishing a national repository for information about child sex offenders.
- Twenty-two states pass anti-stalking statutes, bringing the total number of states with anti-stalking laws to 50, plus the District of Columbia.

1994

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$185 million.
- The American Correctional Association Victims Committee publishes the landmark *Report and Recommendations on Victims of Juvenile Crime*, which offers guidelines for improving victims' rights and services within the juvenile justice system.
- Six additional states pass constitutional amendments for victims' rights – the largest number ever in a single year – bringing the total number of states with amendments to 20. States with new amendments include Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Maryland, Ohio, and Utah.
- President Clinton signs a comprehensive package of federal victims' rights legislation as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. The Act includes:
 - Violence Against Women Act, which authorizes more than \$1 billion in funding for programs to combat

- violence against women.
 - Enhanced VOCA funding provisions.
 - Establishment of a National Child Sex Offender Registry.
 - Enhanced sentences for drunk drivers with child passengers.

- Kentucky becomes the first state to institute automated telephone voice notification to crime victims of their offender's status and release date.

- OVC establishes the Community Crisis Response (CCR) program, using the NOVA model, to improve services to victims of violent crimes in communities that have experienced crimes resulting in multiple victimizations.

1995

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$233 million.

- Legislatures in three states – Indiana, Nebraska, and North Carolina – pass constitutional amendments that will be placed on the ballot in 1996.

- The National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Network proposes the first draft of language for a federal constitutional amendment for victims' rights.

- The U.S. Department of Justice convenes a national conference to encourage implementation of the Violence Against Women Act.

- The first class graduates from the National Victim Assistance Academy in Washington, D.C. Supported by the Office for Victims of Crime, the university-based Academy provides an academically credited 45-hour curriculum on victimology, victims' rights and myriad other topics.

- The U.S. Department of Justice issues Attorney General Guidelines for victim and witness assistance.

- The Beijing World Conference on Women issues a landmark call for global action to end violence against women.

1996

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund reaches an historic high with deposits over \$525 million.

- Federal Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendments are introduced in both houses of Congress with bipartisan support.

- Both presidential candidates and the Attorney General endorse the concept of a Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment.

- Eight states ratify the passage of constitutional amendments for victims' rights – raising the total number of state constitutional amendments to 29 nationwide.

- The Community Notification Act, known as "Megan's Law," provides for notifying communities of the location of convicted sex offenders by amendment to the national Child Sexual Abuse Registry law.

- President Clinton signs the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, providing one million dollars to strengthen antiterrorism efforts, making restitution mandatory in violent crime cases, and expanding compensation and assistance services for victims of terrorism both at home and abroad, including victims in the military.

- The Office for Victims of Crime uses its new authority under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act to provide substantial financial assistance to the victims and survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing.

- The Mandatory Victims' Restitution Act, enacted as Title II of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, allows federal courts to award "public harm" restitution directly to state VOCA victim assistance programs. As a result of the new sentencing guidelines, judges can require federal offenders in certain drug offense cases to pay "community restitution." The Act also requires federal courts to order restitution to victims of fraud.

- The VOCA definition of "crime victim" is expanded to include victims of financial crime, allowing this group to receive counseling, advocacy, and support services.

- The National Domestic Violence Hotline is established to provide crisis intervention information and referrals to victims of domestic violence and their friends and family.
- OVC launches a number of international crime victim initiatives, including working to foster worldwide implementation of a United Nations declaration on victims' rights and working to better assist Americans who are victimized abroad.
- The Church Arson Prevention Act is signed into law in July, in response to increasing numbers of acts of arson against religious institutions around the country.
- The Drug-induced Rape Prevention Act is enacted to address the emerging issue of drug-facilitated rape and sexual assault.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), within the U.S. Department of Justice, issues the Juvenile Justice Action Plan that includes recommendations for victims' rights and services for victims of juvenile offenders within the juvenile justice system.

1997

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund reaches its second highest year in fund collections with deposits totaling \$363 million.
- In January, a federal victims' rights constitutional amendment is re-introduced in the opening days of the 105th Congress with strong bipartisan support.
- In February, OVC convenes the first National Symposium on Victims of Federal Crimes. Coordinated by the National Organization for Victim Assistance, the symposium provides intensive training to nearly 1,000 federal employees who work with crime victims around the world.
- In March, Congress passes at historic speed the Victims' Rights Clarification Act of 1997 to clarify existing federal law allowing victims to attend a trial and to appear as "impact witnesses" during the sentencing phase of both capital and non-capital cases. Supported by the Justice Department, President Clinton immediately signs the Act, allowing the victims and survivors of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City to both observe the trial that is scheduled to begin within days, and to provide input later at sentencing.
- In April, the Senate Judiciary Committee conducts hearings on the proposed federal constitutional amendment. While not endorsing specific language, Attorney General Janet Reno testifies in support of federal constitutional rights for crime victims.
- In June, President Clinton reaffirms his support of federal constitutional rights for crime victims in a Rose Garden ceremony attended by members of Congress, criminal justice officials, and local, state, and national victims' rights organizations. Also that month, the Judiciary Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives conducts its first hearing on the proposed amendment.
- To fully recognize the sovereignty of Indian Nations, OVC for the first time provides victim assistance grants in Indian Country directly to the tribes.
- A federal anti-stalking law is enacted by Congress.
- Due to the large influx of VOCA funds in the previous fiscal year, OVC hosts a series of regional meetings with state VOCA administrators to encourage states to develop multi-year funding strategies to help stabilize local program funding, expand outreach to previously underserved victims, and to support the development and implementation of technologies to improve victims' rights and services.
- OVC continues its support of the victims and survivors of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City by funding additional advocates, crisis counseling, and travel expenses to court proceedings for the bombing victims. When the venue of the trial is changed to Denver, Colorado, OVC provides funding for a special closed-circuit broadcast to victims and survivors in Oklahoma City.
- A comprehensive national training

conference for VOCA compensation and assistance programs is hosted by the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards and the National Organization for Victim Assistance with support from OVC. VOCA representatives from all 50 states and every territory are in attendance.

- During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, OVC officially launches its homepage, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc, providing Internet access to its comprehensive resources about victims' rights and services.
- *New Directions from the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century* is published by OVC. It assesses the nation's progress in meeting the recommendations set forth in the Final Report of the 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, and issues over 250 new recommendations from the field for the next millennium.

1998

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$324 million.
- Senate Joint Resolution 44, a new bipartisan version of the federal Victims' Rights Amendment, is introduced in the Senate by Senators Jon Kyl and Dianne Feinstein. The Senate Judiciary Committee subsequently approves SJR 44 by an 11-6 vote. No further action is taken on SJR 44 during the 105th Congress.
- Four new states pass state victims' rights constitutional amendments: Louisiana by a voter margin of approval of 69 percent; Mississippi by 93 percent; Montana by 71 percent; and Tennessee by 89 percent. Also in 1998, the Supreme Court of Oregon overturns the Oregon state victims' rights amendment, originally passed in 1996, citing structural deficiencies.
- In April, representatives from system and community-based organizations meet in St. Louis for OVC's Fraud Victimization Focus Group. Participants call for increased awareness, research, accountability, and services for victims of fraud and identity theft. OVC's "Victims of Fraud & Economic Crime" publication results from this focus group.
- PL 105-244, the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, is passed. Part E of this legislation, "Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus," is authorized through the year 2003, and appropriates a total of \$10 million in grant funding to the Violence Against Women Grants Office for fiscal year 1999. Another primary aim of this legislation is to reduce binge drinking and illegal alcohol consumption on college campuses.
- The Child Protection and Sexual Predator Punishment Act of 1998 is enacted, providing for numerous sentencing enhancements and other initiatives addressing sex crimes against children, including crimes facilitated by the use of interstate facilities and the Internet.
- The Crime Victims with Disabilities Act of 1998 is passed, representing the first effort to systematically gather information about the extent of victimization of individuals with disabilities. This legislation directs the Attorney General to conduct a study on crimes against individuals with developmental disabilities within 18 months. In addition, the Bureau of Justice Statistics must include statistics on the nature of crimes against individuals with developmental disabilities and victim characteristics in its annual National Crime Victimization Survey by 2000.
- The Identity Theft and Deterrence Act of 1998 is signed into law in October. This landmark federal legislation outlaws identity theft and directs the U.S. Sentencing Commission to consider various factors in determining penalties, including the number of victims and the value of losses to any individual victim. The Act further authorizes the Federal Trade Commission to log and acknowledge reports of identity theft, provide information to victims, and refer complaints to appropriate consumer reporting and law enforcement agencies.

1999

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total a record \$985 million.
- On January 19, 1999, the Federal Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment (Senate Joint Resolution 3, identical to SJR 44) is

introduced before the 106th Congress.

- The Victim Restitution Enforcement Act of 1999 (S. 145), sponsored by Senator Abraham Spencer and introduced in the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 19, 1999, is officially titled a Bill to Control Crime by Requiring Mandatory Victim Restitution. Components of the proposed bill include establishment of procedures regarding the court's ascertaining of the victim's losses; requirement that restitution to victims be ordered in the full amount of their losses without consideration of the defendant's economic circumstances; and authorization of the court, upon application of the United States, to enter a restraining order or injunction, require the execution of a satisfactory performance bond, or take any other action necessary to preserve the availability of property or assets necessary to satisfy the criminal restitution order.

- On January 20, 1999, Senator Joseph Biden introduces the Violence Against Women Act II, a bill that extends and strengthens the original 1994 Violence Against Women Act. Key provisions of this bill would: (1) strengthen enforcement of "stay away" orders across state lines; (2) boost spending for more women's shelters; (3) end insurance discrimination against battered women; (4) extend the Family and Medical Leave Act to cover court appearances by battered women; and (5) target the "acquaintance rape drug," Rohypnol, with maximum federal penalties.

- The fifth National Victim Assistance Academy is held in June at five university locations across the United States, bringing the total number of Academy graduates to nearly 1,000.

- OVC issues the first grants to create State Victim Assistance Academies.

- The National Crime Victim Bar Association is formed by the National Center for Victims of Crime to promote civil justice for victims of crime.

2000

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits

total \$777 million.

- The U.S. Congress passes a new national drunk driving limit of 0.08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) with the strong support of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other victim advocacy organizations, as well as leading highway safety, health, medical, law enforcement, and insurance groups. The new law, passed with strong bipartisan support, requires the states to pass 0.08 "per se intoxication" laws or lose a portion of their annual federal highway funding.

- In October, the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 is signed into law by President Clinton, extending VAWA through 2005, and authorizing funding at \$3.3 billion over the five-year period. The Act:

- Authorizes \$80 million a year for rape prevention and education grants.
- Expands federal stalking statutes to include stalking on the Internet.
- Authorizes \$875 million over five years for battered women's shelters.
- Provides \$25 million in 2001 for transitional housing programs.
- Provides funding totaling \$25 million to address violence against older women and women with disabilities.

- The Internet Fraud Complaint Center Website, www.ifccfbi.gov, is created by the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National White Collar Crime Center to combat Internet fraud by giving consumers a convenient way to report violations and by centralizing information about fraud for law enforcement.

- Victimization rates as reported in the National Crime Victimization Survey are the lowest recorded since the survey's creation in 1973.

- The Treasury Department conducts the National Summit on Identity Theft, which addresses prevention techniques, victims' experiences, and remediation in the government and private sector.

- In April, the Federal Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment (SJR 3) is addressed for the first time by the full U.S. Senate. On April 27, following two-and-a-half

days of debate, SJR 3 is withdrawn for further consideration by its co-sponsors, Senators Kyl (R-AZ) and Feinstein (D-CA), when it becomes apparent that the measure would not receive a two-thirds majority vote necessary for approval.

- The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 provides for: immigrants who have been victimized in the most severe fashion with the ability to remain longer in the United States and, in some cases, receive Federal and state assistance; protections for certain crime victims, including violence against women; and a comprehensive law for law enforcement agencies that will enable them to pursue the prosecution and conviction of traffickers.
- In November, the National Victim Assistance Academy launches its Advanced Topic Series with an offering of “The Ultimate Educator: Maximizing Adult Learning Through Training and Instruction”.

2001

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$544 million.
- The National Crime Victimization Survey results for 2000 are released, showing that victimization rates continue to drop, reaching a new low of 25.9 million victims.
- There were 3047 victims killed in the terrorist attacks on American soil on September 11, 2001: 2175 males and 648 females died at the World Trade Center; 108 males, 71 females, and 5 unknown died at the Pentagon; 20 males and 20 females died in the plane crash in Somerset County, PA; and countless others were injured by these terrorist attacks.
- Congress responds to the terrorist acts of September 11 with a raft of new laws, providing funding for victim assistance, tax relief for victims, and other accommodations and protections for victims. A new federal compensation program specifically for the victims of September 11 was created as a part of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act. The program included many types of damages normally available only through civil actions, such as payment for pain and suffering, lifetime lost earnings, and loss of enjoyment of life. To receive compensation, claimants must waive their right to bring civil action for damages suffered as a result of the terrorist acts.
- As a part of the package of antiterrorism legislation called the USA Patriot Act of 2001, changes are made to the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), including increasing the percentage of state compensation payments reimbursable by the federal government, and allowing OVC to fund compliance and evaluation projects.
- OVC augments state victim compensation funding to aid victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania; offer assistance to victims of the September 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon through the Pentagon Family Assistance Center; and establish a toll-free telephone number and secure web site for victims and their immediate family members.
- The reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA) is passed into law, and authorizes VAWA at \$3 billion through FY 2005. It reauthorizes key programs included in the original VAWA, and makes some improvements, including:
 - Authorizing grants for legal assistance of victims of domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault.
 - Providing funding for transitional housing assistance.
 - Improving full faith and credit enforcement and computerized tracking of protection orders.
 - Strengthening and refining protections for battered immigrant women.
 - Authorizing grants for supervised visitation and safe visitation exchange of children.
 - Expanding several areas of the key grant programs to cover violence that arises in dating relationships.
- The Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act and Jennifer’s Law maintain the annual Crime Victims Fund set-aside for child abuse victims at \$10 million, and allows the use of Byrne grant funds for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Jennifer's Law authorizes \$2 million per year through FY 2002 for states to apply for grants to cover costs associated with entering complete files of unidentified crime victims into the FBI's NCIC database.

- Regulations for victims of trafficking are adopted, providing a wholesale change in the way the federal government responds to a class of crime victims, affecting policies and procedures at the Department of State, the Department of Health and Human Services, and several Department of Justice agencies, including the FBI, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and U.S. Attorneys offices.

2002

- The Federal Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$519 million.
- The National Crime Victimization Survey for 2001 continued to show a decline in crime victimization. Violent crime victimization dropped 10% and property crime dropped 6%
- All 50 states, District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam have established crime victim compensation programs.
- The National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) is created. With OVC support, NAVAA provides technical assistance and training to state VOCA assistance administrators.
- A "National Public Awareness and Education Campaign" is sponsored by OVC in conjunction with Justice Solutions, Parents of Murdered Children, and the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization to promote the scope and availability of victims' rights and services nationwide.
- OVC sponsors a series of regional roundtables to hear first-hand from victims and survivors about their experiences with the criminal and juvenile justice systems.
- The first "Helping Outreach Programs to Expand" grants are made available to grassroots, nonprofit, community-based victim organizations and coalitions to improve

outreach and services to victims of crime through support of program development, networking, coalition building, and service delivery.

2003

- The Office for Victims of Crime celebrates its 20th anniversary of service to crime victims and those who assist them.
- The Senate Judiciary Committee passes the Federal Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment to ensure basic rights to victims nationwide.
- Congress makes the Office on Violence Against Women (formally the Violence Against Women Act Office) a permanent independent office within the Department of Justice.
- The PROTECT Act of 2003 – also known as the "Amber Alert" law – creates a national network of AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) to facilitate rapid law enforcement and community response to kidnapped or abducted children.
- Congress passes the Prison Rape Elimination Act - designed to track and address the issue of rape in correctional institutions.
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline receives its one millionth call.

"Crime Victims' Rights in America: An Historical Overview" was originally compiled in 1992 by Anne Seymour of Justice Solutions, Dan Eddy of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, and John Stein of the National Organization for Victim Assistance. It is updated annually in the Office for Victims of Crime National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide. Special thanks is extended to Steve Derene, Director of the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, for his ongoing contributions to this Project.

OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME – 2004

TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF PROVIDING LEADERSHIP AND ASSISTANCE TO CRIME VICTIMS/SURVIVORS AND THOSE WHO SERVE THEM

1983

The field addressed only basic victim issues.

There was no *Victims of Crime Act* (VOCA) funding; the first deposits in 1985 totaled \$68,312,955.

VOCA authorized only three programs: victim compensation; victim assistance; and services to victims of federal crimes.

The initial VOCA grants in 1986 funded less than 1,500 sub-grantees.

There were just a handful of national organizations addressing crime victims' needs and concerns.

In 1984, VOCA and funding at HHS (under the *Preventative Health and Human Services* block grant and the *Family Violence Prevention and Services Act*) were the principal sources for funding for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

There were 38 state crime victim compensation programs.

The Office for Victims of Crime was headed by an Attorney General appointee.

2004

The field is "basic and beyond," addressing new issues such as terrorism, cybercrime, identity theft, hate violence and stalking.

Deposits into the VOCA Crime Victims Fund in 2003 totaled \$519,466,480, with over \$5.5 billion collected since the inception of the Fund.

VOCA now authorizes victim compensation; victim assistance; services to federal crime victims; training, technical assistance, and demonstration grants; programs to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases; assistance for victims of domestic terrorism; the international terrorism victim compensation program; assistance to American citizens victimized abroad; a federal victim notification system; and funding for victim assistance staff for U.S. Attorneys, the FBI, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

VOCA now provides funding to more than 4,000 sub-grantees.

There are more than 30 national organizations that address a wide range of victims' rights and issues, including the needs of many victim-specific populations.

VOCA and the Health and Human Services funding available in 1984 are now joined by *Violence Against Women Act* (VAWA) funding to address the needs of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Compensation programs exist in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. Territories; and for victims of international terrorism.

The OVC Director is now on a par with all other Office of Justice Programs offices, with a Presidential appointee (requiring advice and consent of the U.S. Senate) as its Director.

KEY LANDMARKS

1983

The U.S. Department of Justice creates a unit in the Office of Justice Assistance, Research and Statistics (OJARS), the predecessor of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), to implement the recommendations of the 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime. The Chair of the Task Force, Lois Haight Herrington, is named Assistant Attorney General over this agency.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is created administratively by the U.S. Department of Justice within the Office of Justice Programs to implement recommendations of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime.

For the first time, the President of the United States honors crime victims in a White House Rose Garden ceremony during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

1984

The *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)* is passed and establishes the Crime Victims Fund that is comprised of federal criminal fines, penalties and bond forfeitures; VOCA provides funding for victim assistance and victim compensation.

The Office for Victims of Crime is established by statute, and the OVC Resource Center (OVCRC) is established.

OVC hosts the first national symposium on child molestation.

OVC funds victim/witness coordinator positions (both full- and part-time) in each U.S. Attorney's Office within the U.S. Department of Justice.

The first national symposium on sexual assault is hosted by OVC.

1985

OVC provides input to the development of the "United Nations International Declaration on the Rights of Crime Victims and the Abuse of Power."

OVC issues the first guidelines for formula grant programs in its "Compensation Notice of Program Guidelines" and "Assistance Notice of Program Guidelines."

1986

OVC awards the first grants to support state victim compensation and assistance programs.

VOCA is amended by the *Children's Justice Act* to provide funds specifically for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse, and to address child abuse in Indian Country.

1987

A position is funded at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to train all federal law enforcement officers about their responsibilities to victims under federal law.

OVC provides the first funding for direct services to victims of crime on Indian reservations in response to a multiple victim child sexual abuse case.

The Compensation Final Guidelines and Assistance Final Guidelines for formula grant programs are issued by OVC.

1988

The first grants for victim assistance to Indian Nations are provided by OVC.

The first “Indian Nations: Justice for Victims of Crime” conference is sponsored by OVC in South Dakota.

VOCA amendments legislatively establish the Office for Victims of Crime, and elevate the position of Director to a Presidential appointment with Senate confirmation required.

OVC establishes a Federal Emergency Fund for victims in the federal criminal justice system.

OVC funds the first Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Protocol.

The OVC Director testifies before the President’s Commission on HIV to advocate for the right and needs of sexual assault and sexual abuse victims to address their concerns about possible exposure to HIV/AIDS.

OVC provides funding for the first time to the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards to expand national training and technical assistance efforts.

1990

OVC funds the first national conference that addresses crime victims’ rights and needs in corrections in California.

1991

The Attorney General’s Summit on Law Enforcement and Violent Crime focuses national attention on victims’ rights in the criminal justice system.

The first conference of leaders from 13 religious denominations is held with support from OVC to address ways in which inter-faith communities can increase awareness of victims’ rights and needs.

For the first time, OVC addresses victims’ rights throughout civil justice processes through the “Civil Remedies for Crime Victims” regional conference series and text.

OVC develops and distributes to all federal law enforcement and prosecutors' offices the new "Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance."

1992

OVC and the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards host the first-ever joint victim compensation and victim assistance conference.

OVC develops an automated Subgrant Award Database.

1994

OVC establishes the Community Crisis Response (CCR) program, using the NOVA model, to improve services to victims of violent crimes in communities that have experienced crimes resulting in multiple victimizations.

1995

OVC responds to domestic terrorism following the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, OK.

OVC funds the first National Victim Assistance Academy (held every year since then in multiple university sites across the nation).

1996

OVC responds to international terrorism following the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia.

The *Antiterrorism Act* authorizes the Antiterrorism and Emergency Reserve Fund.

OVC launches a number of international crime victim initiatives, including working to foster worldwide implementation of a United Nations declaration on crime victims' rights and working to better assist Americans who are victimized abroad.

1997

OVC launches its home page on the World Wide Web: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc

"New Directions from the Field" is published, which includes over 250 recommendations from the field for the new millennium, and "Five Global Strategies" to implement victims' rights and services.

OVC for the first time addresses victims' rights and services in the juvenile justice system through its "Improving the Juvenile Court Response to Victims of Juvenile Offenders" national training and technical assistance project.

OVC awards its first demonstration project to establish a comprehensive, seamless system of victim services -- Victim Services 2000.

OVC supports a project to implement a customized victim notification system for victims of crime in federal jurisdictions.

The first National Symposium on Victims of Federal Crimes is sponsored by OVC.

To fully recognize the sovereignty of Indian Nations, OVC for the first time provides victim assistance grants in Indian Country directly to tribes.

OVC representatives join the United States Delegation to the United Nations Commission on Criminal Justice and Crime Prevention. OVC plays a leadership role in the development of an "International Victim Assistance Training Manual" to implement the *U.N. Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*.

OVC publishes the first *Legislative Sourcebook*, a comprehensive compendium of victims' rights laws in all states.

1998

The Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) is established.

OVC responds to international terrorism following the bombings of U.S. Embassies in Africa.

OVC releases a series of resources to assist victims of fraud developed by a federal working group that was sponsored by Police Executive Research Forum.

OVC convenes a Fraud Victimization Focus Group as part of the Economic Crime Summit in St. Louis, Missouri and issues an *OVC Bulletin* that highlights its findings.

1999

OVC assists victims of the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, with trial attendance and victim support.

OVC funds the first Professional Development Institute at the NOVA conference.

OVC funds the first State Victim Assistance Academies.

OVC provides funding and support to respond to the victims and witnesses of the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado.

OVC leads an interagency working group to develop a protocol for responding to terrorism cases.

OVC conducts the first evaluation of formula grant programs.

2000

OVC revises and issues the *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*.

The VOCA/Victim Assistance in Indian Country working group is established by OVC.

OVC provides funding to support a victim assistance program for American citizens victimized abroad through the U.S. Department of State, American Citizen Services (ACS).

The National Victim Assistance Academy, sponsored by OVC and the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization, launches its "Advanced Topic Series."

OVC offers assistance to the victims of the terrorist bombing of the USS Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen.

OVC publishes "Responding to Terrorism Victims: Oklahoma City and Beyond."

2001

OVC augments state victim compensation funding to aid victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania; and establishes a toll-free telephone number and web site for victims and their immediate family members.

OVC offers assistance to victims of the September 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon through the Pentagon Family Assistance Center.

OVC establishes a listserv for VOCA state administrators and for VOCA sub-grant recipients.

OVC sponsors the first national training conference for sexual assault response teams (SARTs), including sexual assault nurse examiners.

2002

OVC receives appropriated funds for services for the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*.

The first grants are provided to the newly formed National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA).

The first satellite teleconference to address effective victim assistance responses to terrorism is sponsored by OVC in conjunction with the National Victim Assistance Academy.

OVC sponsors a series of regional roundtables to hear first-hand from victims and survivors about their experiences with the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

The first "Helping Outreach Programs to Expand" grants are offered by OVC.

OVC Director John Gillis hosts a series of regional roundtables of victims, survivors and service providers to determine victims' most important needs for services and rights.

A "National Public Awareness and Education Campaign" is sponsored by OVC in conjunction with Justice Solutions, POMC, and the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization to promote the scope and availability of victims' rights and services nationwide.

OVC sponsors its first "Visiting Fellow" through the new OVC Fellowship Program.

2003

The first National Observance to commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) is held in Washington, D.C. with remarks provided by Attorney General John Ashcroft.

The first training scholarships are offered by OVC via the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center to attendees at the POMC, NOVA and MADD conferences, and NCVC training institutes.

The first grants to communities to support local NCVRW victim awareness and public outreach activities are funded for NCVRW 2004.

OVC showcases its web-based, online victim services directory at the NOVA and NAVAA/NACVCB conferences.

OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME
Putting Victims First

FIVE GLOBAL CHALLENGES FOR THE FIELD

1. To enact and enforce consistent, fundamental rights for crime victims in federal, state, juvenile, military, and tribal justice systems, and administrative proceedings.
2. To provide crime victims with access to comprehensive, quality services regardless of the nature of their victimization, age, race, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, capability, or geographic location.
3. To integrate crime victims' issues into all levels of the Nation's educational system to ensure that justice and allied professionals and other service providers receive comprehensive training on victims' issues as part of their academic education and continuing training in the field.
4. To support, improve and replicate promising practices in victims' rights and services built upon sound research, advanced technology, and multidisciplinary partnerships.
5. To ensure that the voices of crime victims play a central role in the Nation's response to violence and those victimized by crime.

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Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center
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Office for Victims of Crime Training and
Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC)
10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400
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The Crime Victims Fund: TWO DECADES OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“In 1984, we found a criminal justice system seriously out of balance serving only judges, attorneys and defendants, and ignoring, mistreating and blaming innocent victims of crime. The enactment of VOCA and the establishment of the Office for Victims of Crime in the U.S. Department of Justice balanced our criminal justice system with justice for all.”

**THE HONORABLE LOIS HAIGHT,
CALIFORNIA SUPERIOR
COURT JUDGE AND CHAIR,
1982 PRESIDENT’S TASK FORCE
ON VICTIMS OF CRIME**



One of the central recommendations of President Ronald Reagan’s 1982 Task

Force on Victims of Crime was the establishment of a Federal fund to provide financial assistance to state crime victim compensation programs and local victim assistance programs. The Task Force justified Federal involvement in what are traditionally state and local responsibilities on two grounds. First, most of the then-37 jurisdictions (36 states and the District of Columbia) provided compensation to Federal crime victims, but funding for those victims might cease if state programs encountered financial difficulties. Second, the Task Force observed that a substantial amount of Federal funds were made available to help states build prisons and educate and rehabilitate prisoners. As the Task Force’s *Final Report* noted, “If the Federal government will step in to assist state prisoners, it seems only just that the same Federal government not shrink from aiding the innocent taxpaying citizens victimized by those very prisoners the government is assisting.”⁽¹⁾

The Task Force recommended that the money for the Federal fund come *not*

from taxpayers, but from collections of Federal criminal fines and penalties, forfeitures, special assessments, and related revenue.

These core concepts, as envisioned in the *Final Report* of the President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime, became law in October 1984 when the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) was enacted. VOCA created the Crime Victims Fund (the Fund), which is comprised of most Federal criminal fines, forfeited appearance bonds, newly created special assessments on Federal convictions, and proceeds from a newly established Federal “Notoriety for Profit” law.⁽²⁾ Although its scope has expanded since 1984, the heart of the Fund remains to support state crime victim compensation and local assistance programs.

Since 1985, more than \$5.5 billion has been deposited into the Fund. Seventy-seven percent of these funds have been distributed to states and territories as grants to support state crime victim compensation programs (\$1.2 billion) and local direct victim service providers (\$3.1 billion). Annual deposits into the Fund skyrocketed from \$62 million in 1986 to nearly \$1 billion in 1999.

“VOCA funds are not just about changing people’s lives, but about empowering victims to take back control of their lives. Through my 15 years of working with domestic violence victims and surviving family members of homicide victims, I have found that the VOCA Fund is an equalizer of justice for all crime victims.”

**DR. PATRICIA ANN DAVENPORT,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
OUR HOUSE, INC., GREENVILLE, MS**

“The assistance that the VOCA Fund provides for funeral expenses, counseling, and other support services to assist this nation’s families of homicide victims is critical in helping these survivors rebuild their lives.”

**DAN LEVEY,
NATIONAL PRESIDENT, PARENTS OF
MURDERED CHILDREN, INC.**

“The Crime Victims Fund has, for 20 years, supported significant efforts to assist victims and survivors of crime, and has helped build capacity among victim service and allied justice programs to improve how victims are treated in our Nation.”

**JOHN GILLIS,
DIRECTOR, OFFICE FOR VICTIMS
OF CRIME, U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF JUSTICE**

Yet VOCA’s impact on the field of victims’ rights and services goes far beyond the distribution of monetary resources. VOCA served as a critical catalyst to establish, expand, and enhance services. Only 37 jurisdictions had crime victim compensation programs in 1984; today, thanks mainly to VOCA, every state has a program. And, because of VOCA, all programs offer compensation to eligible victims regardless of their state of residence or whether they are the victim of a state or Federal crime.

VOCA also set off a proliferation of direct services to assist victims of all types of crimes. When it began distributing funds in 1985, fewer than 1,500 local programs received financial support from VOCA. Now, some 4,000 programs are providing direct services to more than three million victims annually. In addition to statutorily required services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse, VOCA also supports assistance for survivors of homicide victims, adults molested as children, and for victims of drunk-driving crashes, stalking, robbery, hate crimes, identity theft, kidnaping, elder abuse and exploitation, and terrorism. VOCA provides compensation for funeral expenses, crisis intervention, emotional counseling, and self-help groups, and supports various services, including shelter, support throughout the criminal or juvenile justice process, emergency financial assistance, legal assistance, and victims’ rights compliance programs, among others.

VOCA assistance programs reach out to all parts of our nation, into rural and urban communities and on American Indian reservations and military installations. VOCA has grown to meet the needs of victims of domestic and international terrorism, and by its support of services in U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and Federal Bureau of Investigation field offices, to victims involved in the Federal and state criminal justice systems. VOCA assistance funds have been used to expand the application of advanced technologies, such as automated victim notification systems, to broaden the availability of critical, often life-saving services in a cost-effective manner.

Enacting VOCA in 1984 was a driving force for systemic change at the Federal, state, and local levels, and in the nonprofit sectors. By focusing much-needed attention on the plight of crime victims, VOCA brought victims and victim advocates together with criminal justice professionals, mental health practitioners, members of the faith communities, and other allied professionals to identify ways to improve the treatment of victims. The new recognition given to crime victims is evidenced by the literally thousands of new laws, including state constitutional amendments. If the past 20 years are indicative of the future, then VOCA will continue to play a crucial role in making a significant difference to improve rights and services for all crime victims in our nation.

ENDNOTES

¹ Final Report, President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime, 1982, p. 43-44.

² Notoriety for Profit laws, also called “Son of Sam” laws, seek to divert offenders’ proceeds from contracts depicting crimes to victims or victim programs. Some versions of these laws have been declared unconstitutional and their use extremely limited.