



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office for Victims of Crime

Washington, D.C. 20531

Dear Colleague,

It gives me great pleasure to present the *2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide*, developed by the Office for Victims of Crime in partnership with the National Center for Victims of Crime.

This year we mark an important milestone in the rights of victims. Our theme—*30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice*—honors the extraordinary achievements we have made on behalf of crime victims since the passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) in 1984.

Before this historic legislation was enacted, the world was very different for crime victims, their families, and communities. Local service providers who could meet victims' needs for support, counseling, or shelter were few. The criminal justice system too often failed to recognize victims' need to be included in the justice process. Crime victim compensation programs were not consistently available and had no source of federal support.

The Crime Victims Fund, which was established by VOCA, has propelled systemic change throughout the Nation, helping to create an infrastructure of support for victim services and compensation—one that relies not on taxpayer dollars but on fines and penalties paid by criminal offenders in the federal justice system.

For three decades, the Crime Victims Fund has provided support that is increasingly open, inclusive, and flexible. Over the years, the crime victims' field has opened its doors and customized services to a wider range of crime victims, including victims of color, victims with disabilities, American Indian and Alaska Natives, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender victims, children exposed to violence, labor and sex trafficking victims, and victims of elder abuse. Services for victims and survivors have become more inclusive, recognizing that we all have a part to play in their recovery—from the role played by multidisciplinary teams and allied professionals to that of the wider public. Service delivery has also become more flexible, meeting victims where they are as they move through the recovery process to rebuild their lives.

"30 Years" is not an invitation to rest on three decades of progress—although much has been accomplished—but a reminder of the work still before us in restoring the balance of justice to all those harmed by crime.

The Office for Victims of Crime looks forward to working with you to meet the challenges of the coming decades. We trust this guide will support your efforts to educate and motivate your communities about the importance of serving victims of crime—both during National Crime Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joye E. Frost".

Joye E. Frost
Director

Office for Victims of Crime