



Services to Crime Victims

- VOCA Victim Assistance
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- Indian Country (CJA and TVA)
- Terrorism and Mass Violence
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The 1984 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) authorizes OVC to administer two major formula grants that support state crime victim compensation and assistance programs—the mainstays of support for victims throughout the Nation. In FYs 2005 and 2006, nearly 7 million victims received state VOCA-funded assistance, with victims of domestic violence accounting for 52 percent of those served. In this reporting period, OVC distributed nearly \$350 million for assistance to crime victims.



VOCA VICTIM ASSISTANCE

The VOCA funds that OVC administers support thousands of assistance and compensation programs throughout the Nation, all sharing the same goal: to help victims of crime rebuild their shattered lives. Victim assistance funding—awarded through subgrants to state agencies and local service providers—is the most far-reaching and visible demonstration of OVC’s commitment to providing crisis intervention, counseling and social service support, and criminal justice advocacy to those in urgent need of compassionate assistance.

The growth of VOCA state assistance allocations over the years is a dramatic indicator of the overall expansion of programs that serve crime victims. In FY 1986, the first year of the program’s operations, federal VOCA allocations for victim assistance services totaled \$41 million. Twenty years later, in FY 2006, funding made available for victim assistance totaled almost \$400 million.³

In FYs 2005 and 2006, 6.9 million victims received VOCA-funded assistance channeled through more than 4,000 agencies each year. Seventy-seven percent of victims benefited from telephone referrals and information. Victims of domestic violence, who numbered 3.6 million, accounted for 52 percent of victims served in the biennial reporting period.

VOCA Direct Services to Crime Victims

VOCA-funded direct services encompass crisis counseling, telephone and onsite information and referrals, criminal justice support and advocacy, emergency shelter, and therapy. In addition to these services, funds may be used to develop new programs to address emerging needs and gaps in service. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC distributed \$349.5 million for victim assistance to—

- **Respond to the emotional and physical needs of victims.** Funds are used in virtually all states, for example, to operate domestic violence shelters in which battered women and children find refuge and get a fresh start.
- **Help victims and their families stabilize their lives after victimization.** Funds routinely pay for counseling and referral services for family members who are so overwhelmed by a loved one’s victimization they are unable to meet their regular responsibilities as a spouse, parent, or caretaker.

³Please note that the statistics reported in this section reflect those contained in the state performance reports as of March 22, 2007, and are not final because states may update grant information up to 4 years after the close of each fiscal year.

- **Help victims and victims' families understand, and participate in, the criminal justice system.** Funds help pay the salaries of trained advocates who explain the legal process to victims and accompany them to trials and other legal proceedings. Advocates also help victims prepare impact statements and ensure that their rights are respected throughout the justice process.
- **Provide victims with a measure of safety and security.** Local agencies often use VOCA assistance to replace or repair broken locks and windows on victims' homes so they will feel less vulnerable to repeat victimizations.

How Funds Are Distributed To Help Victims

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 6 territories received VOCA victim assistance funding in this reporting period (see appendix A for state and territory allocations). Allocations are determined using a \$500,000 base amount (except in the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa, where the base is \$200,000) plus a formula amount tied to population. States and territories award subgrants to service providers in the following categories:

- Criminal justice agencies within the government, including law enforcement agencies, courts, prosecution agencies, corrections agencies, probation offices, and others.
- Noncriminal justice agencies within the government, including social services, hospitals, mental health agencies, public housing agencies, and others.
- Private nonprofit organizations, including rape crisis centers, shelters, mental health organizations, religious organizations, hospitals, and others.
- Native American tribes or organizations, including on-reservation and off-reservation providers.

Funding for the reporting period supported 36 million specific services to 6.9 million victims of crime. Many individuals need more than one type of assistance in the aftermath of victimization. A rape victim, for example, may receive crisis counseling, support from an advocate during the forensic examination, assistance in seeking crime victim compensation benefits to cover crime-related expenses, and other types of support to aid in the healing process. In FYs 2005 and 2006, each victim received an average of five services (figure 4), according to state-provided service statistics.

During FYs 2005 and 2006, more than 5 million people (77 percent of victims) sought telephone and information referrals in the aftermath of their victimization—a critical resource for identifying other available sources of assistance (see figure 5).

"Until our son was kidnaped, we had never even set foot in a courtroom . . . We were so thankful for the adVOCAtE. He patiently answered our questions and explained in detail the many things we didn't understand."

—Parent of Missouri victim

OVC's Online Directory of Crime Victim Services, easily accessible via the agency's Web site, proved to be another important source of information about available services, with some 1.5 million hits recorded during FYs 2005 and 2006.

FIGURE 4. VOCA Assistance Program Nationwide Performance Indicators

Annual Performance Indicator	FY 2005	FY 2006
Agencies funded	4,336.0	4,355.0
Subgrants funded	5,647.0	5,084.0
Victims served	3,837,267.0	3,776,529.0
Specific services to victims	18,358,894.0	17,335,929.0
Services per victim	4.8	4.6

FIGURE 5. Services Delivered to Victims by VOCA Assistance Programs in FYs 2005 and 2006, by Type of Assistance

Type of Assistance	Number of Victims Receiving This Service	Estimated Percentage of Victims Receiving This Service
Telephone information and referral	5,318,441	77
Criminal justice support and advocacy	4,995,603	72
Onsite information and referral	4,365,225	63
Followup	4,329,397	63
Crisis counseling	4,236,821	61
Personal advocacy	3,106,861	45
Help filing compensation claims	1,682,884	24
Shelter or safe house stay	1,180,696	17
Group treatment and support	965,970	14
Emergency legal advocacy	829,830	12
Therapy	688,942	10
Emergency financial assistance	593,638	8
Other	3,963,620	57
Total service delivery	36,257,928	*

*Victims often need more than one service to aid their recovery. Therefore, this column will not total 100 percent.



In addition to the help found through telephone and information referrals, almost three-quarters of victims who sought assistance benefited from criminal justice support and advocacy services (72 percent); onsite information and referral services and followup assistance (63 percent each); and crisis counseling (61 percent). These are also the services most frequently delivered in the previous reporting period, FYs 2003 and 2004, which demonstrates the continuing need for these resources. The small percentage of victims seeking emergency financial assistance is an indicator of the important role the state crime victim compensation programs play in meeting the emergency financial needs of victims, as well as the states' increased capacity to process claims efficiently.

The 3.6 million domestic violence victims served by VOCA-funded programs in FYs 2005 and 2006 account for more than half (52 percent) of all victims served by VOCA-funded programs (figure 6). Victims of child sexual abuse and other assault victims were the next largest victim group served, at 10 percent each. Children victimized by physical and/or sexual abuse accounted for 14 percent of victims receiving assistance.

FIGURE 6. Victims Served by VOCA Assistance Programs in FYs 2005 and 2006, by Type of Victimization

Total Victims	Number of Victim Categories	Percentage of Victims Served
Domestic violence	3,608,012	52
Child sexual abuse	691,519	10
Assault	613,301	10
Adult sexual assault	475,515	7
Child physical abuse	285,499	4
Robbery	225,851	3
Survivors of homicide victims	223,070	3
Adults molested as children	156,519	2
DUI/DWI crashes	110,729	2
Elder abuse	94,588	1
Other	432,915	6
Total	6,917,518	100

In fact, domestic violence has been the most common crime for which victims seek assistance in virtually every reporting period for two decades. In recognition of the urgent need for services, the most frequently occurring crimes—domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault—are considered priority categories under the formula that states are required by statute to use in allocating VOCA assistance funding to providers.

Funding Focuses on Priority Needs

Each state is required to allocate a minimum of 10 percent of its VOCA assistance funds to serve victims in each of the three priority categories: domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. Another 10 percent must be dedicated to historically underserved victims of crime. States are allowed broad discretion in determining which groups fall into this category, but they typically include family members of homicide victims, adults molested as children, and victims of drunk drivers, physical assault, elder abuse, robbery, and kidnaping. The remaining 60 percent of funds are allocated in the way a state believes will be most beneficial to its crime victims.

Although OVC maintains minimum allocation requirements for priority areas, the actual needs of victims dictate that states exceed that minimum. Of the \$349 million in VOCA moneys used to fund projects for both priority and underserved categories of crime victims, \$274 million was used to deliver services in priority categories during the FY 2005–2006 reporting period (figure 7).

FIGURE 7. VOCA Assistance Allocations for Priority and Underserved Areas (in \$)

Service Area	FY 2005	FY 2006
Priority Areas		
Domestic violence	\$ 64,219,853	\$ 66,480,296
Child abuse	39,081,395	41,664,021
Sexual assault	29,278,225	33,658,498
Total priority services	\$132,579,473	\$141,802,815
Underserved Victim Areas		
Assault	5,921,130	6,647,494
Survivors of homicide victims	4,747,155	5,592,380
Elder abuse	4,402,695	4,727,405
Adults molested as children	4,313,510	4,581,487
DUI/DWI crashes	3,374,822	4,878,601
Robbery	3,091,158	3,402,722
Other violent crimes	9,718,008	9,770,076
Total underserved services	\$ 35,568,478	\$ 39,600,165
Overall Total Services	\$168,147,951	\$181,402,980

"I was married to a man who, when he decided to hit me, he did, when he decided to berate me with horrible words, he did, and when he decided to rape me, he did. The Family Crisis Center helped me Today, I say with pride, I will never be treated that way again."

—Texas victim

VOCA Funding: Priority Program Innovations

Although the specific types of services supported with priority funds vary by location and need, VOCA funding is critical to the expansion of effective outreach. A sexual assault program in the Tidewater area of Virginia, for example, organized a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) to serve five urban locations. More than 1,000 victims received services through the program in the first 6 months of 2006. According to the state's VOCA administrator, this represents "a huge increase over past years," when SART teams—and the specialized services they provide—were not as readily accessible to victims of sexual assault.

Similarly, the Domestic Violence Advocate Pilot Project implemented in Delaware in 2002 uses VOCA funding to expand its services statewide. The program places advocates within the child welfare system and uses a multidisciplinary approach to investigate and treat child abuse cases involving domestic violence.

A number of states use VOCA funding to reach the growing Latino population. For example, Abriendo Puertas, a domestic violence shelter in Delaware operated by bilingual staff, focuses on this group. The program also offers assistance to Latino families who choose to stay in their community rather than the shelter.

Overcoming language barriers is a priority in Hawaii, where an ethnically diverse population needs access to victim services. The Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney's Victim-Witness Kokua Services uses VOCA funds to contract with the Bilingual Access Line to provide translation services to non-English-speaking crime victims. The service is available to all victim service agencies in the county, including domestic violence shelters and sexual assault crisis lines.

Pennsylvania Agencies Pool Resources To Reach More Victims

In Philadelphia, four domestic violence programs make the most of their VOCA funds, pooling human and financial resources to improve services and streamline costs. Women in Transition and Women Against Abuse, together with the bilingual programs of the Lutheran Settlement House and Congreso de Latino Unidos, operate a toll free hotline that gives victims one number to call for various types of assistance in several languages.

Other Pennsylvania programs reach out to diverse victim groups. In FY 2005, the Center for Victims of Violence and Crime in Allegheny County called attention to African-American victims of domestic violence through a community symposium, "Black and Blue, Violence in the Lives of Black Women: A Call to Help and Healing."

Women Organized Against Rape in Philadelphia employs an Asian outreach counselor who speaks fluent Khmer. She helps provide culturally specific sexual assault counseling and networks with social workers, doctors, community activists, and Asian religious leaders to raise awareness of sexual violence and the unique cultural sensitivities associated with this type of victimization.

VOCA Discretionary Funding Supplements Formula Grants

Although VOCA formula grants to states account for the majority of funding made available for services to crime victims throughout the Nation, discretionary grants administered by OVC play an important role in funding programs to meet emerging needs and fill gaps in existing services.

Improving Services to Victims of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence has a profound effect on its victims. The majority of victims do not report the crime to law enforcement, so they do not benefit from available services or participate in the criminal justice system. In 2005, only 38 percent of these crimes were reported, according to a Bureau of Justice Statistics survey.⁴ Encouraging victims to seek the help they need and to participate in bringing their attackers to justice is a complex challenge that OVC continues to address.

Trained first responders—law enforcement officers, forensic nurses, advocates, and others—play a critical role for victims after a crime, helping them cope and eventually recover. OVC pioneered the U.S. Department of Justice’s support of the development of sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) and sexual assault response teams (SARTs). In FY 2006, the National Institute of Justice released a study supporting their effectiveness and expansion. One example of this effectiveness is that forensic exams performed by SANEs yield more DNA evidence than exams performed by other medical practitioners. When advocates and other members of a SART are involved, victims are also more likely to participate in the criminal justice process, resulting in more convictions.⁵

OVC focused on improving these services in FYs 2005 and 2006, supporting national conferences and programs to serve as resources and models for local SANE/SART programs in the future. They included—

- **Biennial National SART Training Conference.** In 2005, the Sexual Assault Resource Service of Minneapolis, Minnesota, held the third National Sexual Assault Response Team Conference in San Francisco, California. More than 900 forensic medical professionals, victim advocates, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, crime lab personnel, and other allied professionals attended the

⁴Shannan M. Catalano, September 2006, *Criminal Victimization, 2005*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 214644.

⁵M.E. Nugent-Borakove et al., May 2006, “Testing the Efficacy of SANE/SART Programs: Do They Make a Difference in Sexual Assault Arrest & Prosecution Outcomes?” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, NCJ 214252.

conference. The overall purpose of this biennial conference is to improve coordinated services to victims of sexual assault by facilitating SANE and SART program development; strengthening multidisciplinary team building; and enhancing victim care and criminal prosecution. Specialized workshops at the 2005 conference included utilization of DNA evidence, sex trafficking and sexual victimization in the context of labor trafficking, and responding to victims with disabilities.

- **National SANE Coordinator Symposium.** This event, coordinated by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape's National Sexual Violence Resource Center and the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, provided an opportunity for state, regional, territorial, tribal, and military SANE programs to share promising practices and capacity-building activities.
- **SART Toolkit.** This toolkit, being developed by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, will provide information and resources to help communities build or enhance SART services. A training curriculum and video will be produced to promote the development, implementation, and ongoing enhancement of a coordinated, multidisciplinary response to sexual assault. In addition to production of the curriculum and video, project objectives include conducting a national-scope review of existing resources for SART communities and assessing the state of SART development throughout the United States. The project is about to begin the pilot testing phase.
- **Missouri Sexual Assault Response Model.** The Missouri Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians is developing a model to establish statewide standardized certification, services, and resources for health care institutions as sexual assault resource centers. Under the new system, sexual assault victims will have access to high-quality services and resources, regardless of geographic location and time of day.
- **Strengthening Military-Civilian Community Partnerships to Respond to Sexual Assault Project.** The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape is developing a curriculum and toolkit for civilian rape crisis centers and state sexual assault coalitions to use in their work with military victims of sexual violence. A committee of civilians and military personnel has been established to inform the development process. Once developed, teams of military and civilian trainers will be taught how to implement the curriculum and toolkit.

Programs Focus on Crimes Against Children and Families

In addition to administering the formula grants authorized by the Children's Justice Act to effectively manage child abuse cases in Indian Country (see page 37), OVC

uses discretionary funding to help children whose well-being is put at risk—either by strangers or by family members.

In state performance reports, many VOCA administrators cited increased substance abuse as a concern in numerous communities, particularly the increased production and use of methamphetamine in small, clandestine laboratories where children are often present. Some children have been injured or killed in these circumstances, and more have been taken into protective custody to remove them from these dangerous environments. Toxic, highly flammable chemicals are used in the drug-making process, and addicted parents often neglect their children's health and well-being as well.⁶

In response to this growing threat to children, OVC is funding four major initiatives to address the issue of drug endangered children (DEC). First, a national DEC resource center has been funded to raise awareness of the problem by broadly disseminating information and providing a forum for experts in the field. The center also will bolster statewide efforts to support DEC task forces. Additionally, a national training program is being designed to support the development of a standardized training curriculum; an OVC-funded coordinator in the U.S. Attorney's Office will develop and implement a victim-focused initiative that includes school-based outreach; and an inter-agency agreement with the Drug Enforcement Administration will spearhead training and technical assistance to help combat the problem.

While some children are put in harm's way in their own homes, others are removed from their homes in defiance of the law. OVC supports a Victim Reunification Travel Assistance program to assist the left-behind custodial parent in cases of child abduction in violation of the U.S. law on International Parental Kidnaping of Children. The program, for which OVC provides discretionary funding, is supported through an interagency agreement with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and a cooperative agreement with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. In FY 2006, OVC provided assistance in 25 cases, which resulted in 27 children being reunited with their custodial parent.



⁶Karen Swetlow, June 2003, *Children at Clandestine Methamphetamine Labs: Helping Meth's Youngest Victims*, Bulletin, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, NCJ 197590.

Programs Build Capacity To Assist the Underserved

Finding new ways to reach underserved victims, including those isolated by geography, language, and cultural barriers, was a priority in FYs 2005 and 2006. State performance reports submitted annually by VOCA administrators underscored the need to provide services to people of diverse cultures, nationalities, and languages. At least 19 administrators said in FY 2005 that “language” or a lack of “bilingual” capabilities were barriers to service.

Bridging Cultural and Language Barriers

In each fiscal year of the reporting period, OVC’s Public Awareness in Underserved Communities discretionary grant program made available \$350,000 to nonprofit organizations and public agencies familiar with these groups. These grant-funded projects focus on raising awareness of victims’ rights and on how to access services among underserved populations, particularly in socially and linguistically isolated immigrant communities. Under this program, victim service organizations are partnering with ethnic media (radio, print, television) as well as ethnic- and faith-based organizations to produce appropriate public awareness campaigns on victimization issues, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and financial crimes.

The grant program received more than 100 applications in response to the first solicitation in FY 2005 and FY 2006, reflecting a large unmet need. Grantees were encouraged to work in conjunction with ethnic media outlets to develop effective strategies for raising public awareness and educating communities about available victim services.

OVC is also making available an increased number of public awareness and educational materials in multiple languages to provide more victims with information about their rights and available resources. The highly popular “Help” brochure series, which provides resources for victims of 10 prevalent crimes, is available online in Spanish, as are publications about OVC’s mission and promotional materials for its major event of the year, National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (see Public Awareness for more information). Other frequently requested publications are available in French, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese.

Reaching Out to Elderly and Rural Victims

Some underserved groups, including elderly victims and those living in rural or high-crime areas, may not face cultural barriers to service but lack access nevertheless. In FY 2006, several VOCA-funded initiatives were developed to remedy this situation:

“[This agency] has helped me reflect on my emotions and make decisions . . . there are a lot of people who need it, especially [minority] women who receive so much domestic violence.”

—South Carolina victim
(translated from Spanish)

Under an OVC discretionary grant, Baylor College of Medicine in Texas completed a curriculum for training medical professionals to identify and respond to elder abuse, including screening, assessment, and working with adult protective services and law enforcement. Also, OVC's Web site now features an online bulletin titled *Partnering With Faith Communities To Provide Elder Fraud Prevention, Intervention, and Victim Services*. This easily accessible resource highlights the collaboration between the Denver District Attorney's Office and more than 200 local faith-based groups.

OVC's Web site also features an electronic publication titled *Rural Victim Assistance: A Victim/Witness Guide for Rural Prosecutors* developed by the American Prosecutors Research Institute. The publication offers pointers for prosecutors' offices for improving information dissemination and assistance to victims in rural and isolated areas. As with other underserved populations, service providers are encouraged to "meet the victims where they are": A Connecticut organization, for example, teaches local hairdressers how to recognize the signs of domestic violence, how to report abuse, and how to approach possible victims.



Serving Victims in High-Crime Urban Areas

It might seem that city neighborhoods plagued by crime would have victim services readily available. In fact, high-quality, comprehensive services are often scarce or not easy to access.

To address this issue, OVC competitively funded the Urban High Crime Neighborhood Initiative in FY 2002, with 4-year demonstration projects in the Bronx, New York; St. Paul, Minnesota; Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Kansas; Los Angeles, California; and Shelby County/Memphis, Tennessee. In FY 2004, OVC funded an additional site in East St. Louis, Illinois, to replicate the concepts developed in the original demonstration project.

Initially, each site conducted a needs assessment and developed a strategic plan for improving services. In the third year of the project, grantees implemented the plans, which focused on providing new and improved services within their communities. In the fourth year, the sites continued to build service capacity and focused on how to sustain services past the 4-year initiative.



Today, based on the models established in the pilot cities, OVC is supporting the development of a replication toolkit that similar communities can use to build accessible services. With the Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) II project administered by the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, this initiative paves the way for more effective services where statistics indicate they are most urgently needed.

The Total Value of VOCA Assistance Funding

Although it's inaccurate to say that victim services wouldn't exist without VOCA funding—states contribute their own revenue as well—it may be assumed that, without VOCA funding, available services would be significantly reduced. An analysis of the FY 2005 and 2006 VOCA assistance subgrants showed that the purpose of nearly all subgrants was to continue a VOCA-funded project from a previous year (96 percent), and that the agency receiving the grant used the funds to maintain the base level of existing services (95 percent).

To further define how much victim service providers depend on VOCA funding, OVC informally asked a number of VOCA administrators the following question:

Strategic Planning Helps Reach the Underserved in Washington

Washington State, like a number of states, has employed strategic planning to significantly improve service delivery to its underserved residents. The State organized itself into 13 service regions, establishing a service center in each region. Victims of crimes other than domestic violence or sexual assault use those centers (some of which are virtual and some of which are actual physical locations) to access basic crisis intervention services, information and referrals, and legal advocacy. The State has also created a "14th region" to inform communities about the need to provide services to special populations, develop staff skills, and determine the best methods of delivering services.

This innovative model, funded solely with VOCA dollars, has made services more comprehensive and consistently available, especially for victims in rural areas. If those resources disappeared, the program would too, said the State's administrator.

“If VOCA funding ended tomorrow, what would be the impact on providing services to crime victims in your state?”

Their answers were strikingly similar. All believed that services would be sharply reduced (some discontinued altogether) and that the impact would be most damaging to already underserved populations. The Maryland administrator perhaps best summed up the feelings of the group:

Many programs would be unable to maintain the level of service that they currently provide, and would be able to instead provide only basic services to a limited number of people. Several programs, such as those that have limited resources or are in rural jurisdictions, would more than likely shut down as they could not afford to retain staff. Victims in certain areas of the state would have virtually no access to services.

The Pennsylvania administrator was especially concerned about the possibility that VOCA funding could be cut, writing that “the absence of VOCA funding would do irreparable harm to the majority of our VOCA-funded victim service agencies. In fact, it would probably destroy the service delivery infrastructure that Pennsylvania has built over the past two decades.”

Even victims of high-priority crimes would suffer. VOCA funds currently support an innovative program in Hawaii that pairs a victim service agency with schools in Weed and Seed areas. The service provider trains teachers and school counselors in how to respond to students who are affected by domestic violence, as well as provides counseling services. Without VOCA support, said the state administrator, this program and many others would have to be discontinued.

These anecdotal accounts demonstrate that even though VOCA funding complements state funding, it is an integral part of the foundation supporting the Nation’s victim services infrastructure. Significant fluctuations in funding in the future—which could result from reductions in deposits to the Crime Victims Fund, alterations to the Fund’s allocation procedures, or changes in the budgetary allocations for its funding—would severely limit the states’ ability to maintain current levels of service and perhaps to meet goals laid out in the 1984 Victims of Crime Act.

“Thank you for giving me time to heal my hurts, a comfortable bed to sleep on, and a little corner for my son and me to weather the raging storms. I really appreciate your extreme generosity to help me pick up the pieces of my life . . .”

—Montana victim



Funds authorized by VOCA and administered by OVC support crime victim compensation programs in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In the FY 2005–2006 reporting period, this compensation totaled \$838 million. Victims of assault, including domestic violence, accounted for more than half of all claims and often sought assistance for medical and dental care, the most common type of expense reimbursed. Nearly 20 percent of assault claims were related to domestic violence, attesting to the brutality and prevalence of this crime.



VOCA VICTIM COMPENSATION

While VOCA victim assistance helps crime victims cope with the physical, emotional, and administrative issues associated with a crime, VOCA victim compensation helps victims cope with the resulting financial losses. VOCA compensation grants supplement state efforts to provide financial assistance and reimbursement to victims, most frequently for medical and dental care in the aftermath of assault. Such expenses represent 53 percent of the total benefits paid to crime victims during the biennium.

State victim compensation programs are payers of last resort, reimbursing victims for qualified crime-related expenses when other resources such as private insurance, Social Security, and Medicaid, will not cover the losses. Although each state compensation program is administered independently, most programs have similar eligibility requirements and offer comparable benefits. The average payout per claim is approximately \$3,000. Some expenses, including those resulting from theft, damage, and property loss, are not covered by most states.

In FYs 2005 and 2006, state programs continued to face the challenge of finding sufficient funding to reimburse crime victims who requested compensation for services, as the number of claims grew in the face of reduced revenue sources. A combined total of \$838 million was paid to victims from federal and state revenues during this reporting period, consistent with total payouts to victims during the previous biennium.

How VOCA Compensation Works

When a crime occurs, a victim must first file a report with law enforcement. The victim or vendor rendering the service may file a claim with the state compensation program accompanied by the required supporting documentation established by each state. Either the victim or the vendor is reimbursed if the claim is approved.

The maximum award depends on individual state guidelines. Eligible expenses may include medical and dental care, counseling, funeral and burial expenses, lost wages, forensic sexual assault exams, and relocation expenses for domestic violence victims. Some states provide special allowances in cases involving victims of sexual assault.

Although the focus of compensation programs differs from that of assistance programs, the two are often complementary. For instance, B.J. Horn, Director of the Office of

Victims' Services in Pennsylvania's Commission on Crime and Delinquency, said that cooperation had been essential when a victim sustained severe mouth injuries from an aggravated assault.

His insurance company refused to pay for dental implants, claiming that such procedures were cosmetic. His victim service agency helped him obtain the documentation from the insurance company so he could file for crime victim compensation. They also helped him locate a dentist who was willing to do the services and work with the compensation program to be reimbursed.

States receive VOCA funding for victim compensation programs separately from the VOCA funding received for assistance. VOCA compensation funds are allocated using a formula that awards states 60 percent of total state funds paid out in compensation claims during the previous year. (As with assistance programs, states also are required to contribute their own funds to victim compensation coffers.) The result is a natural ebb and flow of VOCA funding levels as amounts rise and fall following years of greater and lesser expenses.

"During FYs 2005–2006, VOCA funds accounted for 43 percent of the total funds used by the Office of Victim Services for compensation payments to crime victims in the State of Connecticut. Without the availability of VOCA funds, payments to crime victims would be significantly reduced."

—Director, Connecticut Office of Victim Services

Trends in Compensation Reflect Prevalence of Assault, Related Domestic Violence

In FYs 2005 and 2006, states approved 407,139 claims for compensation. (See appendix B for a complete list of VOCA allotments.) In their annual performance reports, states distinguish between regular claims and forensic sexual assault claims, which are handled through a separate claims procedure. During the biennium, the totals for both types of claims, as well as the ratio of forensic to regular claims, remained fairly steady. Regular claims totaled 158,588 and 164,995 respectively, while claims for payment of forensic sexual assault examinations totaled 40,237 and 43,319. Claims for forensic exams accounted for nearly 20 percent of total claims for the reporting period, as shown in figure 8.

FIGURE 8. Number of New Compensation Claims Received in FYs 2005 and 2006

Fiscal Year	Regular Claims	Forensic Sexual Assault Claims	Total Claims
2005	158,588	40,237	198,825
2006	164,995	43,319	208,314

Victims of assault, including domestic violence, filed the highest number of claims, receiving \$487 million in compensation (figure 9), or 59 percent of the total compensation dollars awarded during the biennium. The second largest amount—\$138 million—was paid to survivors of homicide victims. Other large amounts included

payments of \$73 million and \$49 million to victims of drunk drivers and child abuse, respectively.

FIGURE 9. Number and Amount of Victim Compensation Claims Paid in FYs 2005 and 2006, by Type of Crime

Crime Category	Total Number of Paid Claims	Claims Related to Domestic Violence	Total Amount Paid (In \$)
Assault	140,718	46,825	\$487,360,384
Homicide	31,259	2,582	138,498,077
Sexual assault	21,613	1,366	24,370,178
Child abuse (including physical and sexual)	56,219	--	49,391,195
DWI/DUI and other vehicular crimes	14,038	--	72,738,249
Stalking	1,089	523	1,555,794
Robbery	12,381	--	33,253,582
Terrorism	1,688	--	5,123,691
Kidnaping	932	216	1,381,666
Arson	354	29	907,884
Other	12,022	3,071	23,802,332
Total	292,313	54,612	\$838,383,032

As one would expect given the prevalence of assault claims, the services most commonly reimbursed were medical and dental care (figure 10). Of the \$487 million paid out to victims of assault, \$460 million was awarded to cover medical and dental expenses—more than half of all approved compensation payments. Economic support—including compensation for lost wages—was the second most common form of reimbursement to all crime victim categories, at \$158 million. Funeral and burial

FIGURE 10. State Compensation Program Benefits Paid in FYs 2005 and 2006, by Type of Expense

Expense Category	Total in \$	Percentage
Medical/dental	\$459,884,946	53
Economic support	157,669,101	18
Funeral/burial	96,111,383	11
Mental health	69,714,137	8
Forensic sexual assault exams	37,195,986	4
Crime scene cleanup	715,685	1
Other	48,640,719	5
Total	\$869,931,957	100

expenses were third, at \$96 million. These figures are consistent with those of the previous reporting period, FYs 2003 and 2004, in which the same categories received the majority of compensation benefits from the program.

State performance reports specify not only the number of claims paid to each category of crime, but also how many of these claims involved domestic violence. This all-too-common victimization was a factor in 50 percent of claims related to stalking as well as 33 percent of assault-related claims. Domestic violence also was linked to a sizable number of kidnaping claims (23 percent) and sexual assault claims (16 percent). In addition, the crime was related to approximately 10 percent of all claims paid to survivors of homicide victims and arson. Overall, domestic violence proved to be a factor in nearly 20 percent of all compensation claims paid in the biennium, which is consistent with victim services statistics previously discussed in the VOCA Victim Assistance section of this report.

Since the VOCA crime victim compensation program made its first awards in 1986, payouts have grown as a result of increased public awareness of the programs' availability, greater outreach, and the presence of trained advocates to assist victims in applying for benefits. In addition, emerging crimes such as identity theft and the increasing incidence of other crimes like stalking have been incorporated into the overall system of payouts.

Stalking, for example, now victimizes more than 1 million women and nearly 400,000 men annually in the United States.⁷ The crime is a reliable predictor of violence: 81 percent of women stalked by a current or former partner are physically assaulted; 31 percent are also sexually assaulted.⁸ Although initially not a crime for which victims could be compensated, stalking has been incorporated into VOCA state compensation programs in response to the burgeoning need for support for these victims—as have identity theft, terrorism, and other crimes now on the rise.

VOCA Funds Make Compensation More Widely Available With Higher Payouts

Annual performance reports for the VOCA compensation funding program show that states most often use the money to (1) make compensation available to a larger number of victims and (2) increase the maximum amount for which victims may be reimbursed. Like VOCA assistance funding, VOCA compensation funding significantly expands the benefits that states are able to offer. VOCA compensation funding

⁷Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, April 1998, *Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, Research in Brief, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, NCJ 169592.

⁸Ibid.

represents some 37 percent of total payments to victims on an annual basis.

California reported in FY 2005 that with federal funding, the maximum compensation claim was \$70,000. Without federal funding, that amount would drop by half, to \$35,000. Idaho reported that VOCA funding enabled that state to double the funeral and burial benefit (now \$5,000) and expand family assistance benefits to cover the priority areas of domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault, as well as victims of kidnaping and homicide.

The compensation performance report asks states to identify if and how they use a specific portion of VOCA funding designated for administrative purposes (e.g., building and improving state systems for administering the compensation programs). Most of the 36 jurisdictions that used administrative funds in FY 2005 did so to pay for staff, rent, supplies, and other operational costs to improve services. Massachusetts developed and updated software to better track investigations and process claims. This use of funds addresses an ongoing problem cited in earlier fiscal years: outdated claims processing systems are a major hurdle in paying claims in a timely and efficient manner.

Other states use administrative funds to raise awareness of their programs and to communicate with emerging victim populations. Georgia created a bilingual program advocate position to provide Spanish-speaking victims with translation services, referrals, and assistance in completing compensation applications. Massachusetts used a portion of its funding to create brochures and pocket cards that explain compensation benefits. Other states funded advertising campaigns to inform victims of benefits that are available under their programs.

The Difference VOCA Makes, Victim by Victim

In the state performance reports, some VOCA administrators calculated the difference that VOCA funds made in the number of victims served. Hawaii reported that “VOCA funds increased our program’s ability to meet the needs of crime victims by providing funding to cover the crime-related expenses of almost 600 violent crime victims.”





Idaho, which used VOCA funds to cover approximately 35 percent of claims in FY 2006, estimated that this percentage accounted for services to 742 victims.

Other administrators recounted case histories to illustrate the difference VOCA funds make in helping victims on their individual path to recovery. In Iowa, a man was deliberately struck by a vehicle driven by another man, as a continuation of a dispute. The victim suffered facial fractures and lost an eye. The Iowa program paid \$12,610 in medical expenses, which included the cost of a prosthetic eye. Additionally, the program paid \$50 for clothing held as evidence and \$6,000 in lost wages.

Many state programs measure their effectiveness with followup surveys to recipients of services. During FY 2006, feedback from Minnesota's recipient survey indicated that 97 of respondents felt that staff were polite, professional, and understood their concerns. Eighty-five percent reported being satisfied with the benefits they received. In response to a North Dakota survey question, "Do you feel your trauma was reduced by the help of the program?" 100 percent of respondents answered affirmatively.

A sampling of comments from crime victims receiving compensation in Oregon demonstrated gratitude for assistance at a difficult time:

- "With everything I have had to deal with, the Crime Victims Compensation Program has been the easiest, quickest, and the least painful. Thank you and God Bless."
- "I am extremely grateful to have had these services available to me [at this] unfortunate time of my life. Thank you."
- "I appreciated the number of options given to me and the choice to participate in a spiritually based counseling program."

The Alaska administrator summed up the comments of many others who witness the difference VOCA funding makes in the lives of crime victims every day: "The funds have allowed many additional crime victims eligible for compensation to be compensated. Without these funds, there would be many more unserved or underserved victims."



Because of the disturbingly high rate of victimization in tribal communities and villages, OVC remains focused on the development of victim assistance programs primarily through two programs of funding: the Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Discretionary Grant Program and the Tribal Victim Assistance Discretionary Grant Program.



INDIAN COUNTRY (CJA AND TVA)

OVC is committed to providing culturally sensitive services in Indian Country, where it is estimated that the population experiences violence at more than twice the rate of the rest of the Nation.⁹ The poverty, isolation, and lack of victim services affecting many American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities and villages—as well as high crime rates—make these communities priority areas for OVC support.

Working with tribal communities on a government-to-government basis, in adherence to U.S. Department of Justice policy, OVC administers funding programs that are designed to specifically address issues that disproportionately affect AI/AN jurisdictions. These include the following:

- **The Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Partnerships for Indian Communities Discretionary Grant Program**, supported by the Crime Victims Fund, is intended to assist AI/AN communities in developing, establishing, and operating programs to improve the investigation, prosecution, and overall handling of cases of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and severe physical abuse, in a manner that increases support for and lessens additional trauma to the child victim.
- **The Tribal Victim Assistance (TVA) Discretionary Grant Program** provides federally recognized tribes with funding to establish permanent, accessible, and responsive reservation-based victim assistance in remote, rural areas where limited or no services exist.

CJA Grants Focus on Child Victims

CJA helps grantees provide child-centered, multidisciplinary services that share tribal, federal, and state resources. These specialized services aim to minimize trauma through sensitive investigative and judicial practices, tailoring standard procedures to better respond to the special needs and abilities of child victims.

The Children’s Justice and Assistance Act of 1986 was passed to provide states with funding to establish programs to effectively handle child abuse cases. In 1988, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act amended the 1984 Victims of Crime Act, authorizing the use of a

⁹Steven W. Perry, *American Indians and Crime: A BJS Statistical Profile, 1992–2002*, (December 2004), Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 203097.

portion of the state CJA funds to help tribal communities develop and establish programs to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse. Since 1989, OVC has funded approximately 243 individual grants to tribes and nonprofit tribal agencies through the CJA grant program. These tribal programs have made a number of systemic improvements in the handling of child abuse cases, including the following:

- Established, expanded, and trained multidisciplinary teams and child protection teams.
- Revised tribal codes and procedures to address child sexual abuse.
- Provided child advocacy services for children involved in court proceedings.
- Created protocols for reporting, investigating, and prosecuting cases of child sexual abuse.
- Developed working agreements that minimize the number of times a child is interviewed.
- Enhanced case management and treatment services.
- Offered specialized training for prosecutors, judges, investigators, tribal leadership, and other professionals who handle child sexual abuse cases.
- Created special child-centered interview rooms.
- Hired specialized staff to handle child abuse victim cases.

The CJA grant program makes \$3 million available annually to tribes and nonprofit tribal agencies for such purposes. Grantees receive funds over a 3-year period to support their efforts. In FY 2005, just over \$1.6 million in continuation funding was awarded to 10 tribes and tribal organizations. In FY 2006, OVC awarded 12 new organizations a total of \$2 million. (A complete list of grantees and award amounts appears in appendix C.)

CJA funding has been responsible for numerous improvements in services, including enhanced coordination among U.S. Attorneys' Offices, the FBI, and other federal and tribal agencies; an increase in the number of child protection teams; more culturally sensitive services; and increases in staff trained to handle child abuse cases. These grants support the program's overall goal—assisting AI/AN communities with developing, establishing, and operating programs that improve the investigation, prosecution, and overall handling of cases of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and severe physical abuse in a manner that increases support for, and lessens trauma to, the child victim.

*"Let us put our minds
together and see what a
difference we can make for
our children."*

—Chief Sitting Bull

CJA Partnerships Training and Technical Assistance

In addition to the grants awarded to tribes and organizations through the discretionary program, OVC also administers a CJA training and technical assistance (T&TA) grant. Funds awarded through this grant are intended to provide support, training, and technical assistance that help tribes improve their service structures.

OVC believes it is crucial that training and technical assistance be developed and delivered by AI/AN vendors. The Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI) was chosen to provide this service to CJA grantees. In FY 2005, OVC awarded the organization \$400,000 to provide T&TA to 13 CJA grantees, and in FY 2006, OVC awarded TLPI an additional \$500,000.

Training and technical assistance activities can include the development of resource materials, individual consultation and problem solving, and onsite assistance. Some of the T&TA accomplishments during FYs 2005 and 2006 include—

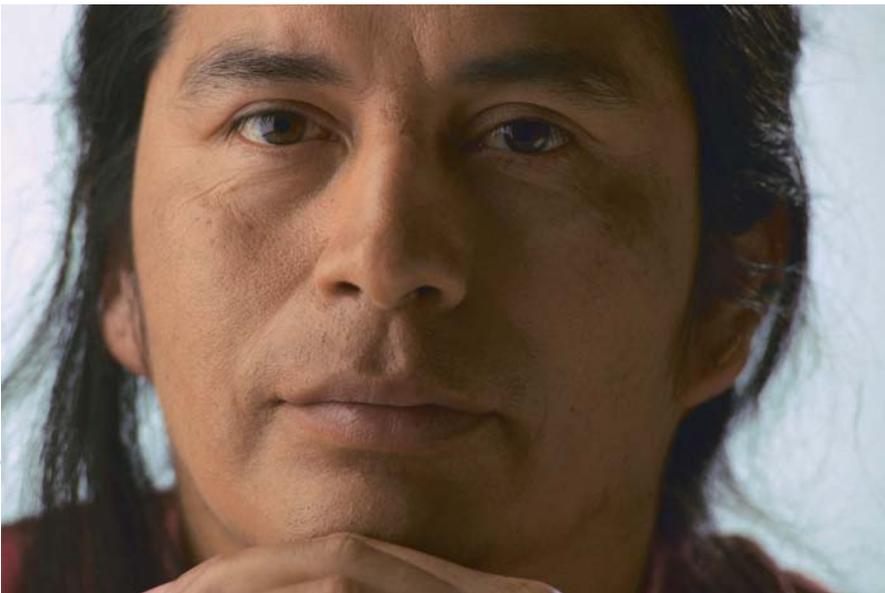
- Tribal-specific and culturally accountable training events delivered to approximately 480 people.
- Improved forensic interviewing and child sexual abuse investigation skills for law enforcement, prosecutors, and investigators, with better collaboration among agencies.

A CJA Success Story: The Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe

The Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe in Fallon, Nevada, began receiving its 3-year, \$496,000 CJA grant in FY 2003 (the final \$165,321 was awarded in FY 2005). The tribe used the funding to pursue a number of goals, including raising public awareness of child abuse and neglect and improving the reporting of these crimes.

Their T&TA provider helped the tribe provide training for community members about CJA, crime victims' issues, and mandatory reporting. The tribe also received information on relevant topics such as federal, state, and tribal jurisdictions, child abuse and neglect, the effects of family violence on child development, and child endangerment through substance abuse, particularly methamphetamine.

Federal law stipulates that an individual who has legal or other responsibilities for an Indian child's welfare through an Indian tribe or organization, tribal consortium, or on tribal lands, is legally required to report suspected child abuse. The tribe reports that heightening community awareness of this law has strengthened the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases.





- Increased understanding and cooperation among non-AI/AN groups working with tribal children, especially regarding the role and importance of tribal child advocates in the federal court system.
- Increased commitment of tribes to initiatives that would continue the efforts of the CJA grant-funded project after the funding period ends, as well as an increased willingness on the part of tribal leaders and elders to address child victimization.

TVA Grants Support Much-Needed Services

The Tribal Victim Assistance (TVA) Discretionary Grant Program is designed to improve the quality of direct services in remote communities. As with CJA grants, TVA grants are awarded to tribes over a 3-year period and are carefully focused. These programs serve victims of child abuse, elder abuse, driving while intoxicated, and gang violence, and the families of homicide victims.

TVA-supported services often focus on the immediate needs of crime victims such as hotline counseling; emergency food, clothing, transportation, and shelter; emergency legal assistance; and other emergency services needed to help restore the victim's sense of dignity and self-esteem.

TVA court-related services may include accompaniment to criminal justice offices and court, transportation and child care so that a victim may attend court, restitution advocacy, and assistance with victim impact statements. Other typical services range from securing the victim's home after a break-in to ensuring that mental health counseling is available. Costs associated with providing direct services—such as salaries and travel expenses—may be covered, as well as training for staff and materials for community outreach.

Through the TVA program, \$2.5 million was made available for use in FY 2005. Those funds were awarded as continuation funding to 24 tribal grant recipients across the Nation, with average grants of nearly \$102,000 each. In FY 2006, the program limit was increased to \$3.5 million, which was awarded to 30 new tribes in their first year of funding. The increased amount of funding allowed OVC to make awards to six tribes and tribal organizations, increase the average grant amount to \$123,397, and reach tribes not under federal jurisdiction. (A complete list of grantees and award amounts appears in appendix D.)

Grantees use the funding in multiple areas, as exemplified by the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas in Belcourt, North Dakota. The tribe used its FY 2005 TVA grant to sponsor the 9th Annual Family Violence Conference; continue its DUI Victim Impact Panel, which shows offenders firsthand the trauma and devastation experienced by DUI crash victims; and establish an Adult Protection Team to identify victims of elder abuse. The team also developed an Elder Abuse Code that was adopted by the tribe.

In FY 2003, OVC expanded the TVA program to extend eligibility for the first time to federally recognized tribes that are not under federal jurisdiction. More than 120 tribes fall under federal criminal jurisdiction, where crimes are investigated and prosecuted by federal agencies. An additional 430 federally recognized tribes exist, however. Crimes on these sovereign nations are prosecuted by tribal and state criminal justice agencies. Due to the expansion of the TVA program, in FY 2006, 30 grants were awarded across the Nation. OVC plans to continue reaching out to these tribes through the TVA grant program to better serve more tribal communities and victims of crime.

TVA Training and Technical Assistance

OVC awards a training and technical assistance grant to support TVA grantees. In FY 2005, Unified Solutions Coaching and Consulting Group, Inc., received \$500,000 to provide training and technical assistance to the 25 active TVA grantees. In FY 2006, an additional \$600,000 was awarded to Unified Solutions to continue its support of TVA grantees.

TVA's training and technical assistance objectives include assessing and addressing individual grantees' needs and incorporating the use of research-driven, culturally appropriate initiatives. Its priorities are to build the tribes' capacity to assess their own needs; learn to plan, implement, and sustain programs; and effectively report their progress and financial status. Other objectives include—

- Facilitating mentoring, communication, and information sharing among TVA programs.
- Assisting OVC in assessing the performance of TVA programs and conducting site visits, and in informing OVC of emerging issues that require new outreach efforts.
- Assisting OVC with related projects, including the VOCA–TVA Working Group, adapting other OVC-developed materials to address unmet needs in Indian Country, and coordinating AI/AN T&TA efforts with OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center.

“The VOCA–TVA Working Group brought together some organizations in New Mexico that were having a very difficult time working together. The national conference provided an opportunity to expand victim services in rural Indian Country and open the dialogue between victim assistance providers and tribal representatives.”

—Larry Tackman, Director,
Crime Victims Reparation
Commission, New Mexico

Tundra Women's Coalition Partnerships Increase Services

The Tundra Women's Coalition (TWC), a CCVIC/FBO* grantee, is a successful example of faith-based collaboration. With grant funding, the coalition has improved the faith-based counseling service in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Alaska Native communities by strengthening partnerships between victim service programs and faith-based organizations, spiritual leaders, and traditional healers. The coalition's efforts have contributed to a 50-percent increase in the number of faith-based victim counseling services available to tribal crime victims.

Prior to receiving the grant award, TWC did not have a working relationship with the faith community to provide faith-based counseling to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. The grant has changed the nature of that relationship, providing TWC with the ability to educate, train, and collaborate with the faith community. CCVIC/FBO funds have also enabled TWC to conduct family and faith conferences, the most recent held in FY 2006. Conference participants included attendees from all faith denominations, community members, social workers, victim advocates, counselors, Indian Child Welfare Act workers, medical providers, and law enforcement.

Significantly, a faith-based counseling referral system established by TWC will be able to sustain the program after the CCVIC/FBO grant ends.

*Counseling for Crime Victims in Indian Country by Faith-Based Organizations Program.

Nine TVA grantee communities received onsite training in FY 2005, with more than 350 service providers, allied professionals, and community members in attendance. A 3-day workshop on the Lummi Indian Reservation near Bellingham, Washington, "Compassion Fatigue, Burn Out, Work Place Violence, Self-Care," attracted 88 participants from the Lummi Nation and the neighboring Nooksack Tribe. The workshop focused on promoting program sustainability and collaboration among tribal service providers.

In FY 2005, the TVA T&TA project added 126 entries to its Online Resource Library for tribal victim advocates, law enforcement agencies, program managers, faith leaders, justice system professionals, and others interested in victim issues. The new materials cover domestic violence, sexual assault, program sustainability, child abuse, elder abuse, faith-related issues, and stalking.

An evaluation of the TVA program is now underway. In FY 2001, OVC transferred \$500,000 to the National Institute of Justice to conduct an evaluation of the Lummi Nation and the Passamoquoddy Tribe TVA programs. The results of the evaluation, which is expected to be completed in FY 2007, will provide invaluable information on the programs of TVA grantees and their relative success and potential for replication in other tribal communities.

Collaborations, Partnerships, and Connections

Ensuring adequate services in traditionally underserved areas such as Indian Country is an ongoing challenge. Whether isolated by culture or location, tribal areas often have few services, minimal training and technical assistance, underdeveloped response networks, and jurisdictional issues.

For American Indians and Alaska Natives, improving services has meant expanding—and improving—relationships among VOCA state administrators, tribal victim assistance directors, and OVC. Since 1999, a VOCA-TVA Working Group initiated and facilitated by OVC has promoted collaboration and partnerships among small groups of VOCA administrators and tribal service directors. Discussion among these groups focuses on improving outreach, coordination, and access to victim services and compensation. At the group's suggestion, OVC dramatically

ramped up this collaborative approach in FY 2006, hosting the first-ever National VOCA-Tribal Victim Assistance and Compensation Conference. More than 70 people attended the event.

A special feature of the conference—as pragmatic as it was symbolic of a new level of mutual respect and cooperation—was an exercise in which each TVA administrator was paired with the VOCA administrator from the state in which their tribal territory is located. Each pair was charged with developing a strategic action plan to—

- Increase states' awareness of the magnitude of under-service in Indian Country.
- Help tribal programs understand the VOCA funding application process, and help states understand how tribes complete their applications.
- Increase the number of compensation claims received and awarded to Native American and Alaska Native crime victims.
- Increase both groups' awareness of jurisdictional and cultural issues.

This planning exercise was a significant accomplishment within the context of often troubled relationships between tribal and state government personnel. Where a lack of understanding about culture and administrative process previously stood as a barrier to better victim services, these action plans now provide an impetus for communication and collaboration that meet, and respect, the needs of all involved.

Faith-Based Grant Program Expands Counseling Capacity

OVC continued to support its Counseling for Crime Victims in Indian Country by Faith-Based Organizations Program (CCVIC/FBO) in FYs 2005 and 2006. The initiative links faith-based organizations, spiritual leaders, and traditional healers with victim service programs in AI/AN communities. Like similar non-AI/AN initiatives supported by OVC, CCVIC/FBO helps both communities—the service community and faith leaders—understand the type of support that victims seek from each group, and how they can complement one another.

In FYs 2005 and 2006, \$250,000 in continuation funding was awarded to FY 2004 recipients, and \$250,000 was awarded to Unified Solutions Coaching & Consulting Group, Inc., to provide training and technical assistance.

Unified Solutions helps tribal victim assistance programs effectively integrate traditional healing and other faith-based counseling in their services using a faith-based online resource forum, site visits, distance learning, and collaborative agreements.



As Americans, both at home and overseas, grapple with the aftereffects of terrorism and mass violence, OVC lends a supportive hand by delivering comprehensive programs designed to meet the immediate and future needs of victims. When victims need assistance the most, these programs provide funding for an array of critical needs, such as emergency food, transportation, and clothing; mental health counseling; temporary housing; and out-of-pocket expenses related to victimization.



TERRORISM AND MASS VIOLENCE

Over the past several years, acts of criminal mass violence and terrorism have tragically affected U.S. communities and citizens around the Nation and abroad. The emotional impact of such experiences can be devastating, leaving victims and emergency personnel in need of mental health counseling and local governments in need of immediate and long-term services to reduce the symptoms of trauma immediately following the event and to help restore their citizens' sense of equilibrium on a longer term basis. OVC has the capacity to help communities and victims seeking assistance through three primary programs: (1) the Antiterrorism Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP); (2) the newly established International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP); and (3) Crime Victim Emergency Assistance Funds at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys.

After the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Congress amended VOCA to authorize the OVC Director to set aside up to \$50 million from the Crime Victims Fund in an Anti-terrorism Emergency Reserve account (Emergency Reserve). This funding resource is designated specifically for assisting victims of domestic or international terrorism and providing essential services to help local communities. The Emergency Reserve has been an essential resource for ensuring that victims of terrorism and mass violence receive the assistance they deserve, and it has kept funding for standard victim services from being diverted to respond to large-scale criminal catastrophes. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC set aside \$50 million each year for the Emergency Reserve, although not all those funds were expended in either year.

AEAP Serves Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence Within and Outside the United States

The Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) provides assistance to victims and communities reeling from terrorist attacks and other incidents of criminal mass violence. The funds, available to jurisdictions through a discretionary grant process, are designed to meet the needs of victims both within the United States and abroad. State victim assistance and victim compensation programs, public agencies (including federal, state, and local governments), and victim service and nongovernmental organizations are eligible to apply for funding. Since the program began in 2002, \$55 million in

"People must realize that [families of victims of terrorism] have a huge need to understand what's going on, to view the process, to humanize events."

—Widow of bombing victim

Short- and Long-Term Help Available to Victims Through AEAP

AEAP offers five categories of support to assist victims and communities following an incident of terrorism or mass violence, with each category targeting a specific phase in the aftermath of a crisis:

- **Crisis response grants** (emergency/short term, up to 9 months after the incident) provide funds to help victims build adaptive capacities, decrease stressors, and reduce symptoms of trauma immediately following the event.
- **Consequence management grants** (ongoing/longer term, up to 18 months after the incident) provide supplemental funding to help victims recover from the traumatic event and restore their sense of equilibrium.
- **Criminal justice support grants** (ongoing/longer term, up to 36 months after the incident) facilitate victim participation in an investigation or prosecution related to the incident.
- **Crime victim compensation grants** (available anytime in the aftermath of a crisis) provide supplemental funds to state crime victim compensation programs to reimburse victims for out-of-pocket expenses related to victimization.
- **Training and technical assistance** (available anytime in the aftermath of a crisis) and nonmonetary assistance (e.g., providing training through consultants) to help federal, state, and local authorities identify victim needs, coordinate services, develop response strategies, and address related issues.

AEAP funds has been used to meet a wide range of victim needs, including crisis counseling, temporary housing, and emergency transportation and travel.

AEAP Funds Extend Program's Services

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, thousands of New York City's firefighters and police officers suffered emotional and psychological trauma. As a result, more than 79,500 firefighters and police officers accessed crisis counseling services through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-funded Project Liberty. When FEMA's Project Liberty funding ended in September 2004, AEAP awarded the city \$4 million in consequence management funding so it could continue assisting its crisis responders.

During the reporting period, OVC's AEAP also provided crisis response and compensation support in the aftermath of the following acts of terrorism and mass violence:

- **Courthouse shootings and carjackings in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 11, 2005.** The Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and the Fulton County District Attorney's Office worked closely with victims, victims' families, and witnesses affected by the crime, helping those involved locate victim assistance services. OVC provided funds to help victims pay for expenses that were not covered by other resources, such as mental health counseling costs.
- **Red Lake, Minnesota, school shootings on March 21, 2005.** Following the tragedy, several high school staff members suffered posttraumatic stress disorder, and several teachers who resigned from their positions were unable to return to any type of work. With the aid of AEAP funding, the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board provided a variety of services to assist victims, including financial support for medical and mental health

counseling, funeral and burial expenses, and lost wages. By December 31, 2006, 103 applications had been submitted to the program, and \$359,366 had been paid to assist victims.

- **Platte Canyon High School shootings in Bailey, Colorado, on September 27, 2006.** OVC supplied funding to the State of Colorado to provide counseling to those affected by the shooting, in which one student was killed and six other hostages were reported to have been sexually assaulted. Currently, an AEAP grant supports four emergency/short-term, school-based employees, including a mental health counselor, an outreach and education coordinator, and a school administrative coordinator. The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice estimates that 1,300 individuals may suffer traumatic effects from the incident, including the immediate family members of the victims, Platte Canyon High School students and personnel, and emergency responders.
- **Nickel Mines Amish Schoolhouse shootings in Bart Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, on October 2, 2006.** Five students were killed in the Nickel Mines Schoolhouse shootings, and five others were seriously injured and transported to area hospitals. Emergency personnel assisted in many tasks that exposed them to trauma, including identification of dead victims, care and transport of injured victims, family and community care, and crime

OVC Publications Offer Guidance on Dealing With the Aftermath of Terrorism and Mass Violence

In addition to providing services and assistance to victims of terrorism and mass violence, OVC released several publications to aid crime victims and assist victim service providers and policymakers in improving their response to these victims. These publications provide practical guidance to help crime victims and their service providers better understand the psychological, emotional, and financial impact of terrorism; identify policy issues and make recommendations for improving the coordination of response to terrorism for policymakers and service providers; and offer guidance to criminal justice professionals responsible for ensuring that victims have access to judicial proceedings:

- *Responding to September 11 Victims: Lessons Learned From the States*
- *Coping After Terrorism: A Guide to Healing and Recovery* (reprint)
- *Directory of International Crime Victim Compensation Programs*
- *Providing Services to Victims Viewing a Trial at Multiple Locations*

See the OVC Web site (www.ovc.gov) for additional publications on this subject and ordering information.





scene cleanup. AEAP funding provided resources for outreach, therapy, counseling, support groups, and assistance for emergency personnel who were affected by the crime.

Reimbursement for Victims of International Terrorism

Although victims of terrorism outside the United States may have the same physical, emotional, legal, and financial needs as victims inside the country, their situation may be significantly complicated by their location and jurisdictional issues regarding the investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators. Families of international victims often face financial or administrative hardships in arranging to have the body of a loved one transported home. Survivors of terrorist events may face challenges in finding appropriate medical care and mental health counseling. Legal, political, and cultural barriers, and language—for family members of Foreign Service nationals—often pose further problems. The International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP) will alleviate some of the financial hardships these victims face.

Reimbursement of ITVERP Claims

The program reimburses eligible victims of terrorism outside the United States (for incidents occurring on or after December 21, 1988) for expenses related to that victimization. Eligible expenses are out-of-pocket costs related to funeral, burial, mental health counseling, and medical care; property loss, repair, and replacement; and miscellaneous expenses such as temporary lodging, local transportation, phone calls, and emergency travel. Reimbursement is not available for lost wages or nonmonetary losses, such as pain and suffering or loss of enjoyment of life. Applicants will find applications and instructions on the OVC Web site (www.ovc.gov/intdir/itverp/index.html).

Upon receipt of a claim for reimbursement, the Attorney General or his designee, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, determines whether an act of international terrorism occurred. To verify an applicant's claim, OVC reviews the victim's documentation of expenses incurred and any collateral sources that are available to the victim (e.g., insurance, Medicare or Medicaid, worker's compensation). The OVC Director approves the final award determination.

Because victims of terrorism abroad may have difficulty accessing the resources necessary to address their immediate financial needs, ITVERP allows victims to request an interim emergency payment. Victims may apply for an interim emergency payment if the time needed for OVC to review the claim would cause the victim or victim's family substantial hardship. Victims, or their family members, may use these emergency

"It is so painful to deal with these issues when all I want to do is mourn my husband. I appreciate the government's sensitivity to this by always getting back to me so quickly with information."

—Widow of terrorism victim in Saudi Arabia

awards to pay for immediate medical care, funeral and burial expenses, short-term lodging, and emergency transportation. To receive interim emergency reimbursement, however, the applicant's circumstances must meet specific eligibility criteria outlined in the ITVERP regulations.

OVC's Terrorism and International Victim Assistance Division staff established internal operating procedures for processing ITVERP requests for reimbursement prior to the program's implementation. In September 2006, final program regulations were published in the *Federal Register* and adopted in October 2006. During the program's first months of operation, staff reviewed and refined processes to better serve the program's applicants and ensure that requests for reimbursement are processed in a timely manner. Within weeks of ITVERP's implementation, the ITVERP Resource Center mailed 252 applications to potential claimants and, in January 2007, distributed sample application packets and program materials to the U.S. Attorneys' Offices.

In preparation for the receipt of claims, OVC—

- Secured a contract staff, which operates the ITVERP Resource Center, to provide quality and timely case management assistance. This support ranges from assisting victims with their application, processing the application and related materials, and verifying collateral sources to locating appropriate resources for applicants.
- Briefed various government agencies and international visitors on the ITVERP program.
- Collaborated with OJP's Office of the Chief Information Officer to develop both an interim and permanent database solution for case management and tracking victim claim information.
- Established various methods for communicating with the public and disseminating information about the program. OVC developed ITVERP Web pages on its Web site to disseminate application and program information to the public (www.ovc.gov/intdir/itverp/index.html). In addition, OVC created a designated ITVERP e-mail address and toll free phone line for receiving and responding to program inquiries.

ITVERP is an important link in the chain of services and assistance OVC has developed to help American citizens and government employees victimized by terrorism overseas. With the implementation of this program, the United States joins 36 countries in providing financial assistance to its citizens who fall victim to acts of international terrorism and closes the gap in service that has left past victims of international terrorism with limited or no viable resources to assist them or their family members.

“Funding from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) allowed us to provide timely and responsive assistance, especially the medevac support, to victims of terrorism overseas. OVC funding made the difference in the ability to access critically needed medical care, which had a direct impact on how well victims now function cognitively and physically. In one case, the funds enabled a young woman to say goodbye to her brother before he died.”

—Kathryn Turman, Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation,
Office for Victim Assistance

Crime Victim Assistance Emergency Fund for Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence Outside the United States

OVC provided funding to the FBI to establish a Crime Victim Assistance Emergency Fund (Emergency Fund) for assisting crime victims and their families who are victims of terrorism or mass violence occurring outside the United States. Through a memorandum of understanding, OVC and the FBI Office for Victim Assistance identified allowable services and support that the Emergency Fund covers. Services to victims address the immediate need for assistance when victims are unable to locate or find the necessary resources to obtain the help they need.

OVC and the FBI Office for Victim Assistance work collaboratively to ensure that resources are available to assist crime victims and their family members with minimal delay if a crime, reasonably believed to be the result of terrorism or mass violence, occurs overseas. From January 1 to December 31, 2006, using OVC funds, the FBI Office for Victim Assistance provided emergency crisis response assistance to 28 crime victims through this program. The services and support rendered ranged from helping to transport victims to appropriate medical facilities, to providing short-term lodging and travel assistance to help family members join their injured loved ones overseas, to providing emotional and logistical support.

In addition, OVC provided direct reimbursements to victims seeking emergency mental health services. Those who asked for help finding a mental health provider received it through an OVC contractor. This contractor also processed victims' and vendors' requests for reimbursement by reviewing them and preparing recommendations for the OVC Director about whether they qualify for OVC reimbursement. When the OVC Director approves the request for reimbursement for emergency mental health expenses, the U.S. Treasury issues payment. Now that ITVERP is operational—and can provide interim emergency payments—this protocol for providing emergency mental health services is being revised.

OVC is proud of the advancements it has made during the 2005–2006 biennium to respond to victims of terrorism and mass violence and of the collaborations and

Assistance Enables Witnesses To Attend Trial

On July 14, 2006, OVC authorized the use of up to \$25,000 in assistance for three Americans to travel to Jakarta, Indonesia, and participate as witnesses in trials against Anthonius Wamang and his coconspirators for the murders of and serious injury to U.S. citizens in a terrorist attack. One of the witnesses remained in Jakarta and acted in the capacity of a victim-family representative and recorder during the length of the proceedings. She represented the American victims and family members by reporting to them weekly about the trial's proceedings.

partnerships it has forged within the Department of Justice and with other federal, state, and nongovernmental agencies. In cases of terrorism and mass violence, the understanding, trust, and cooperative relationships that we at OVC have formed, and the implementation of ITVERP, have allowed us to *put victims first*, and offer them a system of service to meet their needs.

Trial of Zacarias Moussaoui in March 2006

In 2006, Zacarias Moussaoui was sentenced to life in prison for his role in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. To facilitate victim participation in the sentencing phase of the trial, OVC provided funding for six closed-circuit television (CCTV) sites from which victims' families could view the sentencing phase of the trial, as follows: Boston, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Alexandria, Virginia; Manhattan and Long Island, New York; and Newark, New Jersey. Participating in a trial of this nature may be quite stressful to victims and their families. Seeking to anticipate the potential mental health needs of victims and alleviate the potential burden on the United States Attorneys' Office (USAO) to provide for additional victim assistance services, OVC worked with the FBI's Office for Victim Assistance to have certified mental health counselors on call 24/7 at each of the CCTV sites and the courthouse to address emergency mental health needs and provide daily counseling for victims as necessary.

Prior to the Moussaoui trial, OVC also brought together federal partners (including representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Center for Mental Health Services, which has an agreement with FEMA to provide mental health services to disaster victims at FEMA's request; and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia) to confirm that appropriate mental health counselors would be available to provide onsite assistance to victims and surviving family members participating in victim impact meetings with the USAO. Because of OVC's coordination, mental health counselors were available to victims at no additional cost to the Government. Finally, OVC provided funds to the USAO to support staff travel to the Philadelphia and Boston sites and to victim impact meetings; for any posttrial victim debriefings, as necessary; and for victim-witness coordinators from other USAO districts to assist with victims prior to and during the penalty phase of the case, including at the CCTV sites.

"My wife and I want to express our appreciation to you and your colleagues for keeping us informed throughout this whole pretrial and trial period and for the love and understanding that you showed throughout the whole time."

—Family member of victim



To meet the acute needs of trafficking victims, OVC supports a number of outreach and educational efforts in order to develop and sustain collaborative networks among allied professionals, victim service providers, and local agencies, and to increase community awareness regarding trafficking issues.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Every year, between 600,000 and 800,000 people are transported across international borders to be systematically abused, sexually exploited, and brutalized. Most are women and children. Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, and its subsequent reauthorizations in 2003 and 2005, OVC is one of a number of coordinated federal agencies committed to providing much-needed services to these victims.

The passage of TVPA codified the State Department's intent to pursue a victim-centered approach to this crime, with equal emphasis on the "three Rs": rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration.¹⁰ Under TVPA, OVC receives specially designated government funds (an independent appropriation not associated with the Crime Victims Fund) to support the development or enhancement of emergency services to assist victims during the pre-certification period—the period of time after identification of a trafficking victim by law enforcement but before the victim is officially certified by the Federal Government to receive other benefits through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

To serve victims of human trafficking effectively, comprehensive service providers must consider the rescue through the eyes of the victim, who often does not speak English, lives in a continual climate of fear, and has been brutally treated with no regard for basic health, welfare, or human rights. Because traffickers often severely restrict the communication and movement of victims and also exploit their fear of the authorities, providers must work to establish trust with victims and provide a full range of services to help restore physical, mental, and emotional health. Once basic needs, such as shelter, medical care, and crisis counseling, are met and a mutually trusting relationship is established, victims will be much better equipped to fully participate in the investigative and prosecutorial process.

Discretionary Grant Program Focuses on Collaborative Networks

OVC established the Services for Trafficking Victims Discretionary Grant Program in 2002. Because no single agency can meet the multiple needs of trafficking victims, the program emphasizes creating and enhancing collaborative networks to provide

"One of the more insidious and brutal forms of victimization is human trafficking As many as 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States every year, where they are forced into prostitution, sweatshops, and domestic servitude."

—Regina B. Schofield,
Former Assistant Attorney General

¹⁰U.S. Department of State, June 2006, "Introduction," *Trafficking in Persons*, Report to Congress, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State. (See <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65983.htm>.)



comprehensive services and building a community's overall capacity to respond to victims.

This grant program awarded \$9.4 million to grantees in FY 2005 and \$3.5 million in FY 2006. Nearly all of that amount—some \$9.1 million—was dedicated to developing comprehensive services. The remainder was used to create and implement training and technical assistance resources for the grantees. (A list of grantees and award amounts appears in appendix E.)

Currently, 31 grantees are receiving TVPA funding to provide and enhance victim services. All grantees have a network of partnerships with other service providers and community-based organizations in

their area, as well as local law enforcement agencies. These networks ensure that victims' needs are met regardless of where or how they enter the system and that comprehensive, culturally competent services are available.

From January 1, 2005, through December 31, 2005, TVPA victim service grantees and their partners provided services to 692 trafficking victims.¹¹ Grantees also continued their education and outreach efforts, training 14,139 individuals—including 2,401 law enforcement officers—on the dynamics of trafficking, how TVPA defines trafficking, legal rights and services available for victims, and cultural considerations that affect response strategies. (Since the program's inception, grantees have trained 51,065 individuals, including 10,996 law enforcement officers.)

¹¹The most recent period for which data are available.

Victim Services Program Results in Trafficking Victim Rescues

Tapestri, a grantee based in Atlanta, Georgia, is an outstanding example of how a collaborative strategy breeds success. The organization conducts extensive outreach to raise awareness of human trafficking, including participating in radio and TV programs, providing information to ethnic newspapers, and distributing pamphlets. Staff members also educate the community on how to identify victims.

A participant in one of these sessions later used that knowledge to identify a trafficking victim in his church's congregation. The participant immediately contacted Tapestri staff, who met with the victim and provided the information to the FBI and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As a result, the victim received essential services and helped law enforcement investigate the case. Four months later, the FBI and ICE contacted Tapestri about two additional victims. The trafficker and other involved parties are now in custody, and additional cases will be opened—thanks to the agency's outreach and a concerned citizen.



Identity theft has fast become a crime of widespread proportions, affecting millions of U.S. households annually and costing victims billions in out-of-pocket expenses. To assist the victims of this prevalent crime, OVC has launched cutting-edge educational and demonstration programs intended to equip advocates and service providers with the necessary skills to help victims recover and enhance public knowledge about identity theft issues. OVC also participates in federal working groups in an effort to collaboratively seek solutions and implement effective strategies to address the needs of identity theft victims.



IDENTITY THEFT

Criminals employ numerous methods to steal an individual's personal and financial information. Rummaging through trash to obtain bank statements or preapproved credit applications, stealing wallets and purses, and using computer technology to obtain an individual's personal data are just a few of the methods criminals use to commit identity theft, a crime that often leaves victims feeling violated and frustrated as they repair damaged credit and cope with the emotional and financial toll caused by victimization. Nevertheless, consumers are not powerless against this criminal act, nor are they without recourse following victimization.

OVC recognizes the need to educate consumers about victimization issues, including informing them about actions they can pursue to restore their credit and prevent additional fraud. Thus, in FYs 2005 and 2006, in an effort to strengthen the federal response to this serious crime, OVC supported a number of educational, collaborative, and research activities to enhance the quality and availability of services for those seeking assistance and increase consumer awareness about identity theft victimization issues.

Initiatives Enhance Public Knowledge

When individuals fall victim to identity theft, it is important that they know they are not alone and that victim assistance services are available to help them rebuild their financial reputation. To increase public consciousness about identity theft issues, OVC offers several educational tools and resources to assist victims and to support the service providers, allied professionals, and law enforcement personnel who assist them. Via its Web site (www.ovc.gov), OVC offers relevant, up-to-date information about identity theft victimization and provides Web links to Government resources, national victim-serving organizations, and credit monitoring organizations to victims seeking assistance. The OVC Web site also provides an opportunity for victim assistance providers to discuss promising practices, best practices, and victim issues via its Web Forum, an online peer-to-peer discussion board. In FY 2006, as part of National Consumer Protection Week, OVC hosted an Identity Theft Web Forum during which both service providers and allied professionals discussed victimization issues with national experts on identity theft.

As part of its objective to help professionals and organizations strengthen their ability to assist identity theft victims, as well as to educate the Nation's consumers, OVC also supported the following educational initiatives during the reporting period:

- In collaboration with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), OVC disseminated an identity theft consumer awareness kit to more than 4,500 victim service programs, VOCA administrators, and national victim-related organizations.
- Through the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Institute for Law and Justice, OVC funded the development of a resource guide for victim service organizations about assisting identity theft victims. OVC plans to make the publication available to victim service programs in 2007.
- OVC provided training for diverse professionals who work with victims, including law enforcement, mental health providers, victim service providers, clergy, and allied professionals. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC offered identity theft workshops at several national conferences, including the 9th National Strengthening Indian Nations Conference and the 4th Federal Symposium on Victims of Federal Crime, and held an identity theft workshop via OVC TTAC in Dallas, Texas. This workshop is now included as ongoing training on the OVC TTAC Training Workshop Calendar (www.ovcttac.gov/calendar).

“Passport” Program Assists Identity Theft Victims

Repairing a damaged credit history caused by an identity theft can take victims a significant amount of time—time that victims may not have if they are applying for a job that requires a good credit history or applying for a low-interest loan or credit card. In some cases, victims may have difficulty proving that they are indeed the victim, rather than the perpetrator, and may face criminal charges for a crime they did not commit. Since FY 2005, victims in Ohio have had access to an innovative program that helps them deal with such issues as they set about the tedious task of restoring their credit, reputation, and foiling further fraudulent activities. The Identity Theft Verification Passport Program, an OVC-supported demonstration initiative, provides a means for victims to prove to law enforcement and creditors that their identity has been stolen. Under the program, once a police report is filed, law enforcement personnel enter the victim’s

information into a statewide database where it is then forwarded to other agencies that have the capacity to reduce the risk of additional fraud. The Identity Theft Verification Passport Program also offers victims a “passport,” which they can show to creditors and law enforcement when disputing fraudulent criminal charges or claims. The program has issued more than 600 passport cards to victims and conducted trainings for law enforcement, involving nearly 580 agencies. With support from NIJ, OVC is conducting an evaluation of the Passport Program and has plans to replicate it in other states, contingent on evaluation findings.



Working Groups Address Victimization Issues

As part of the federal effort to reduce identity theft and assist its victims, OVC participates in several national-level working groups that meet regularly, including the Identity Theft Subcommittee of the White Collar Crime Committee to the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, the Federal Interagency Working Group on Identity Theft, the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices National Strategic Policy Council on Cyber and Electronic Crime, the International Chiefs of Police/Bank of America (private/public partnership) Work Group on Developing a Nationwide Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Identity Crime, and the National District Attorneys Association's Joining Forces to Combat Identity Theft Advisory Group, to help examine current trends and policies and to discuss myriad identity theft issues such as victimization, prevention, outreach, and research.

In support of the Bush Administration's efforts to tackle the crime of identity theft, the Office of Justice Programs established the OJP Identity Theft Initiative, a working group that OVC chairs. During FY 2006, this working group provided input to several subcommittees responsible for developing recommendations for the President's Task Force on Identity Theft. In FY 2006, the task force issued an interim report, and in April 2007 (during National Crime Victims' Rights Week) issued its final report, which offers the following insights into this widespread crime, the needs of its victims, and responses that help meet those needs.

Key Recommendations

- Improve Government/public sector handling of sensitive personal data.
- Develop alternate means of authenticating identities.
- Encourage the Administration to support an amendment to the federal restitution statutes allowing victims to be compensated for time spent rectifying the consequences of identity theft.
- Develop a universal police report that a victim of identity theft can complete, print, and take to a local law enforcement agency for verification and incorporation in the police department's report system.

Visit [IDTheft.gov](http://www.idtheft.gov) for more about the Task Force and to read the entire report (<http://www.idtheft.gov/>).

With the assistance of the OJP Working Group, OVC plans to diligently explore opportunities to address these report findings via technical assistance, information dissemination, and demonstration efforts.



In 2004, President Bush signed into law comprehensive legislation intended to protect the rights of federal crime victims. With passage of this landmark legislation, OVC renewed its commitment to uphold and defend the rights of victims, allocating resources for educational tools, training initiatives, and innovative programs to improve the enforcement of victims' rights.



UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS

Over the past two decades, the criminal justice system has evolved to encompass the rights of victims, as well as defendants. Although inequalities still exist, in 2004, the Nation took a significant step toward ensuring the rights of all victims with the passage of the Crime Victims' Rights Act (CVRA)—a milestone achievement for the countless crime victims, victim advocates, and service providers who have tirelessly worked to incorporate the concerns of victims into the judicial system. Although CVRA applies only to federal crime victims, in the future, OVC hopes to encourage and provide technical assistance to states to use the legislation as a model for enacting state laws that provide victims with the same safeguards afforded to victims under CVRA.

CVRA not only grants victims specific rights but also provides mechanisms for enforcing these rights. With the passage of this historic legislation, OVC has strengthened its commitment to increasing professional awareness about victims' rights issues and assisting victims as they pursue their rights under the law. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC supported multiple initiatives intended to educate the justice community about the rights of victims, facilitate victim access to the judicial system, and document promising practices in the delivery of victims' rights.

Initiatives Support Enforcement of Victims' Rights

Although CVRA provides certain rights to victims, unless implemented and enforced these protections are of little value to the victim of crime. To promote compliance with CVRA, additional provisions of the legislation direct the Attorney General to designate an administrative authority within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to receive and investigate complaints relating to the violation of acts that protect crime victims. In adherence to this provision, DOJ established the Office of the Victims' Rights Ombudsman within the Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA). OVC has provided assistance to this new office by reviewing complaint forms, evaluating procedures for how to file a complaint, coordinating translation of the forms into Spanish, and assisting with the conversion of the forms for posting on the department's Web site to ensure the broadest possible dissemination about this new enforcement mechanism.

The department also revised the *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance (AG Guidelines)*, which includes not only new protections set forth in CVRA

but also specific guidance on assisting child victims, and victims of terrorist attacks, human trafficking, identity theft, and domestic violence. To increase awareness about the revised *AG Guidelines*, as well as CVRA requirements, OVC helped fund numerous EOUSA initiatives designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of federal employees working with crime victims. In FYs 2005 and 2006, with OVC support, EOUSA developed the training video *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*, conducted several training events, printed 9,500 copies of the guidelines and sent them to the 94 U.S. Attorneys, and sponsored a training broadcast via the Department of Justice Television Network. OVC plans to provide funding to EOUSA to support a training coordinator position to help facilitate the development and delivery of victim-witness training for federal prosecutors and victim-witness coordinators housed in the 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices.

Enhancing Judicial Knowledge About Victims' Rights

Because effective legal representation strengthens victims' confidence in the judicial system, OVC continues to support the National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI) project. As a national demonstration initiative, NCVLI has established nine legal clinics that will provide direct pro bono legal services to help crime victims assert their rights in court. NCVLI competitively selected several organizations around the country to establish the victim legal clinics. Eight of the clinics will provide representation for victims in state court, and one will provide representation for victims in federal court. In FY 2006, NCVLI and its legal clinics trained hundreds of law students in victims' rights issues, as well as thousands of attorneys and service providers. During the course of the initiative, NCVLI has held five annual conferences and plans to convene its sixth in 2007. At the end of the multiyear demonstration program, NCVLI

hopes to develop replication materials for other organizations interested in starting legal clinics in their communities.

In addition to developing legal clinics, NCVLI is expanding a nationwide network of crime victim attorneys through its National Alliance of Victims' Rights Attorneys (NAVRA). As part of the project, NCVLI issues a semiannual newsletter that provides attorneys and others with information about victims' rights and convenes a national training conference for attorneys who litigate on behalf of victims. Since OVC began funding the project, NAVRA membership has grown from 16 to 333.

Law enforcement agencies are the first responders for most reported crimes. Because they frequently are the only contact victims have with the criminal justice system, it is critical that they respond in both a sensitive and effective manner. Thus, OVC has provided funding for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to design and implement a national strategy to create systemic change in law enforcement's response to crime victims. The project's mission is to guide policies, standards, and training in state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies throughout the United States to substantially enhance the culture and practice of serving victims' needs.

With this funding, IACP has developed the draft national strategy and currently is pilot testing it in three law enforcement agencies. Following the pilot test, IACP will refine the strategy and develop a toolkit of resources for replication based on the law enforcement sites' experience.

NAAG Symposium Provides Networking Opportunity

Attorneys general offices throughout the Nation provide a wide range of services that assist victims directly and indirectly; however, staff within these victim assistance programs rarely have an opportunity to discuss innovative programs and promising practices with each other. In FY 2006, OVC awarded the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) a discretionary grant so it could design and implement a 2-day national symposium to promote networking and an ongoing exchange of information among victim service professionals within attorneys general offices throughout the United States. The symposium, held March 26–27, 2007, in Arlington, Virginia, attracted approximately 56 victim service professionals, who learned about the wide range of services provided to victims through the various attorneys general offices. Attendees of this event are exploring the creation of a network of attorneys general victim service providers and identifying mechanisms for sharing useful resources.