

Celebrating 25 years of VOCA

*Training, Education,
and Outreach*

Putting Victims First

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL *Assistance Center*

CHAPTER 10



As the Nation's leading resource for services to victims of crime, OVC is committed to ensuring that every victim has access to a trained, educated, and knowledgeable service provider. To achieve that goal, OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) provides education, training, and leadership programs to people working at all levels in the field of victim services. For FYs 2007 and 2008, OVC TTAC's comprehensive slate of technical assistance projects, programs, trainings, and educational materials broadened the spectrum of opportunities offered to providers of services to crime victims.

National Victim Assistance Academy

The National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) is a comprehensive training event, offered along three distinct tracks—Foundation-Level, Professional Skill-Building, and Leadership—that are designed to meet the needs of individuals with varying levels of experience and at different phases of their careers in victim services and advocacy. The Academy integrates the latest advances in skills, knowledge, and theory to offer an unparalleled skills-based educational experience. All courses are taught by teams of nationally recognized scholars, researchers, and practitioners with in-depth practical experience.

The NVAA was held December 9–14, 2007, in Linthicum Heights, Maryland, and again May 4–9, 2008, in St. Louis, Missouri. Participants for both events totaled 213. The next NVAA trainings are scheduled for March in Texas and August in Kentucky.

OVC TTAC recently received approval from the International Association for Continuing Education and Training to offer continuing education units (CEU) for trainings sponsored by OVC. Beginning in March 2009, participants will be eligible to receive CEUs for their attendance and completion of tracks 1, 2, or 3.

Victim Assistance Training Online

OVC launched Victim Assistance Training Online (VAT *Online*) in September 2007, at the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia. Since its launch, more than 4,430 people have registered for the online training.

VAT *Online* is a 35-hour, Web-based foundation-level victim advocacy training program that offers victim service providers and allied professionals the opportunity to acquire the basic skills and knowledge they need to better assist victims of crime. Specialized information is also provided to meet the needs of specific victimized populations.

Online Advocate/Counselor Training

Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training (SAACT) is a Web-based downloadable curriculum for trainers designed to teach advocates how to provide competent, effective crisis intervention services to victims and survivors of sexual assault. Modules cover an overview of advocacy, the realities and impact of sexual assault, procedures to follow in common situations, techniques to support recovery, and compassion fatigue and

self-care. Since its launch in July 2007, the Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training download site has been visited 10,990 times.

New Online Curricula

OVC TTAC continues to expand the availability of training resources online with the anticipated release of three more curricula (downloadable or interactive) during 2009—including *Ethics in Victim Services*, *ID Theft*, and *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn*.

Online Training Self Assessment Tool

The Training Self Assessment Tool (TSAT) was launched in September 2008 to assist individuals and their organizations in assessing their training and technical assistance needs by guiding them through seven major areas of interest. The TSAT can help identify areas that need development and improvement, as well as craft a framework for designing targeted responses through effective training, technical assistance, or peer support options. TSAT was used as the model for an Online National Needs Assessment Survey slated for release during 2009.

OVC Training for Service Providers

OVC TTAC delivered 26 training workshops between October 2006 and September 2008, with a total of 730 participants. Although the online version was launched in July 2007, the *Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training* remains the most popular onsite training workshop, with 49 individuals attending in the spring and 47 in the fall.

“Compassion Fatigue,” “The Ultimate Trainer,” “Providing Culturally Competent Services to Victims of Crime,” and “Responding to School Violence” continue to be very popular offerings. This comment from a participant sums up what many say about the workshops:



I strongly recommend this course to other advocates. Well worth the time and cost investment. Really liked how we learned a concept and were asked to apply it. Great group of participants. I really enjoyed getting to know and work with them. I also liked the many activities we approached in small groups. [The instructors] created a warm and comfortable environment in which to learn. Thank you!!

Recent additions to the training workshop schedule include “Enforcing Victims’ Rights,” which debuted on October 29–30, 2008, in Charleston, South Carolina, and “Supporting Children Living with Grief and Trauma: A Multidisciplinary Approach,” which was introduced December 10–11, 2008, in Los Angeles. Both received high praise from participants. After the “Enforcing Victims’ Rights” workshop, everyone voiced his or her appreciation for the workshop, and one advocate’s comment seemed to resonate with the group as a whole, “Coming into this training I was feeling like I was a pretty poor advocate. I didn’t feel like I was doing all that could be done for my victims, but I didn’t know what else I could do to help them. After going through this training I feel like I have the tools that I need to go back and be a much better advocate for them.”

State Conference Support

OVC supports eligible agencies and organizations that sponsor state conferences focusing on enhancing victim services. Since October 2006, OVC awarded support totaling \$256,397 to 20 state conferences in 15 states across the country.

National Conference Support

Since October 2006, OVC has awarded support totaling \$523,254 to 13 national conferences for the following organizations: San Diego Family Justice Center; Florida Attorney General’s Office; National Center for Victims of Crime; National Organization for Victim Assistance; Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape; National Association

of Victim Service Professionals in Corrections; National Protective Services Association; End Violence Against Women International; Parents of Murdered Children, Inc.; and the International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies.

OVC created the National Conference Support Program to provide financial support to help national nonprofit organizations host conferences on crime victim issues. Participants in some of these conferences have shared their feelings about that support:

Thank you so very much for providing the opportunity for my son and I to attend the conference this year, 2008, by your kind donation. We are very excited to be able to be a part of this wonderful organization that has given us so much support and help during our time of grief.

—Rebecca B.

Please accept my sincere gratitude for funding the scholarships, and I thank you and the Office for Victims of Crime for giving the victims of homicide a voice and the survivors a listening ear.

—Astrid L.

Professional Development Scholarships

OVC approved 399 Professional Development Scholarships, totaling \$329,295 in FYs 2007 and 2008, for victim service providers to attend victim-focused trainings and conferences. The Professional Development program provides up to \$1,000 in scholarships for individuals and up to \$5,000 for multidisciplinary teams of victim service professionals seeking continuing education opportunities. The scholarships are intended to help significantly increase the knowledge or skills of service providers in many disciplines who work at public, nonprofit, or faith-based organizations that lack adequate funds to support needed training for their staff members.

INFORMATION

Resources

CHAPTER 11

Effective information networks are vital to the advancement of the victim assistance field. In FYs 2007 and 2008, OVC continued to provide support to the Nation's victim service professionals by creating, funding, and delivering informational and educational products and tools to improve services to crime victims. OVC also is committed to making tools, services, and information available directly to all victims in as many accessible formats as possible.

While OVC TTAC coordinates OVC's training and technical assistance activities, the OVC Resource Center (OVCRC) manages its information publishing and dissemination efforts. The input that OVCRC receives influences the strategic development of future publications, products, and other efforts to make information more accessible—through OVC's Web site, print media, and multimedia products. The general public, victim service providers, and allied professionals alike use the Resource Center's tools to access information. From toll free conversations with information specialists to requests for information using the "AskOVC" online feature, OVCRC analyzes inquiries and makes recommendations to OVC about emerging trends in the field of victim assistance.

Information and Knowledge Management

Accessing OVC's products became even easier during the FY 2007 and 2008 period. When victims or service providers visit the OVC Web site, they can access the documents, tools, curricula, videos, and supporting materials they need in a "self-service" fashion. In addition, OVCRC disseminates OVC's products and information via three methods:

- **Hardcopy dissemination**—OVCRC disseminates thousands of publications and multimedia products to providers, advocates, and victims each year. The center disseminated 77,944 products in FY 2007, and 74,837 products in FY 2008. Most hardcopy products were distributed to key OVC constituencies, including VOCA administrators, victim service providers, and victimization researchers via one of two cost-effective methods: (1) bulk mailings of high-profile products

such as the *NCVIRW Resource Guide*; and (2) multimedia exhibits at state and local events targeting underserved providers, advocates, and victims such as those in Indian Country and rural municipalities.

- **Conference support**—OVCRC provides onsite support at professional events throughout the country. OVCRC staff members also represent the agency at events targeted to smaller, state-wide audiences. Staff participated in 52 onsite events in FY 2007 and 37 events in FY 2008. In addition, OVCRC coordinates publication support for 8 to 10 State Victim Assistance Academy events annually.
- **Requests for information**—OVCRC information specialists processed more than 1,500 inquiries through the “AskOVC” service in FYs 2007 and 2008, primarily from crime victim service providers, victim advocates, victims (and their affiliates), and other parties concerned with victim assistance policies and practices.

Online Presence Provides Flexibility

Traditional training events require that service providers take time they often don't have to attend classes and workshops. To address time and resource limitations, OVC increased its efforts to make information and training resources easily available to users via www.ovc.gov. That way, more providers can get the information they need when they want it, learn at their own pace, and return online as needed for more assistance and training.

The Web tools developed and maintained by OVCRC meet a wide range of needs in the field. They include—

- **OVC's HELP for Victim Service Providers Web Forum.** The OVC Web Forum is an online community where victim service professionals exchange information and share best practices. An average of 3,745 unique users visited the forum at least one time during FYs 2007 and 2008. Currently, visitors may participate in discussions on 26 topics. In FY 2005, the Guest Host series was added to the Web Forum, through which the Nation's experts answer questions about best practices in victim services. Since then, OVCRC has scheduled and moderated more than 50 Guest Host Sessions on topics including intimate partner stalking, teen victims of dating violence, sexual violence on campus, and victims of commercial sexual exploitation. In FY 2008, the Web Forum added a transcript feature that allows participants to download and print specific Guest Host Session discussions. Visit the Web Forum at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ovcproviderforum/index.asp>.
- **OVC's National Calendar of Events.** This online calendar lists upcoming conferences, workshops, and notable victim assistance-related events. A special feature allows service providers and allied professionals to include their organizations' events. OVC's National Calendar of Events continues to grow in popularity. In 2008, an average of 3,425 individuals visited it every

Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor TRAINING
A DOWNLOAD CENTER

Announcing a New Online Resource

OVC's Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training (SAACT) teaches advocates how to provide effective crisis intervention services to victims and survivors of sexual assault. Delivered across the country as part of OVC's Training Schedule for Victim Service Providers, OVC is also now making this popular course more widely available by putting it online so that rape crisis centers can train their own staff and volunteers. Components of the training include trainer and participant materials, PowerPoint slides and vignettes, and a customizable agenda.

SAACT is available on OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) Web site. OVC TTAC is the nexus of a learning community focused on strengthening the capacity of victim assistance organizations throughout the country. It draws on the expertise of a network of consultants and seasoned victim service professionals with firsthand experience in designing and delivering customized responses to satisfy a variety of training and technical assistance needs.

Visit OVC TTAC at www.ovcttac.org/saact/ to check out the SAACT Download Center.

month. For 2007 and 2008, more than 650 events appeared on the calendar. To view the calendar, visit <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ovccalendar>.

- **OVC's Online Directory of Crime Victim Services.** This directory, which includes almost 11,000 programs, continues to be a valuable resource for victims searching for nonemergency services and for providers seeking referral resources. During FYs 2007 and 2008, on average, 2,938 unique visitors accessed the directory at least one time. As with OVC's online calendar, its Online Directory of Crime Victim Services invites service providers to post relevant information about their organization. New enhancements made in FY 2008 include download and print capabilities, more sorting options, and a service that allows subscribers to receive alerts when new programs are added; the enhancements also allow more organizations to be considered for inclusion in the directory. Visit OVC's online directory at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices>.
- **Crimevictims.gov.** This Web site offers a wide range of information to victims needing assistance, providers seeking additional training, and volunteers looking for opportunities to help victims. The site provides numerous resources, including toll free numbers for national victim service organizations and a searchable database for locating victim assistance programs worldwide. Visit the Web site at www.crimevictims.gov.

Products Respond to Needs of the Field

For almost 25 years, OVC has produced a broad range of publications that inform and educate crime victims, service providers, and the general public about victims' rights, issues, and resources. Advances in technology make it possible to provide information more efficiently and cost effectively—particularly via the Internet. In FYs 2007 and 2008, virtually every new OVC publication was available through its Web site, while some print versions continued to be available

through OVCRC or as downloadable resources to ensure access to everyone. Online products have the advantage of being relatively inexpensive to revise and update in addition to being highly accessible.

To meet its ongoing commitment to being *the* resource for affordable and convenient victim advocacy and services training, OVC continues to allocate funding for developing accessible online training guides. During FYs 2007 and 2008, OVC released *Building a State Victim Assistance Academy—Vermont's Experience* and *Implementing SANE Programs in Rural Communities*, a guide for helping rural communities to develop their own mobile sexual assault nurse examiner programs. Both of these guides are available online in their entirety. Service providers and other professionals now have access to quality training programs, handbooks, and a variety of guides at the click of a mouse.

During 2008, OVC received recognition for two print/online resources: The *Helping Outreach Programs to Expand* brochure won the MarcCom 2008 Honorable Mention Award in the direct mail/brochure category and the *National Crime Victims' Rights Week Online Resource Guide* won



the 2008 Government Standard of Excellence Web Award.

OVC also developed and released several video productions during the reporting period. The most popular titles, *Faith-Based Responses to Crime Victims*, *Responding to Victims of Human Trafficking*, and *First Response to Victims of Crime*, demonstrate OVC's commitment to making materials fully accessible to users with disabilities. All

of these videos include full captioning and audio enhancements, making them state of the art for accessibility.

Readers are invited to browse through the Publications section of OVC's Web site for a complete list of resources, with summaries and cover photos. A complete list of OVC's curricula, products, and publications released in 2007 and 2008 may be found in appendix G.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Campaigns

CHAPTER 12

OVC is committed to ensuring that victims' rights are recognized throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems and that victims' voices are consistently heard throughout the Nation. As part of this effort, OVC supports public awareness and outreach programs that raise consciousness among victims, survivors, and communities about victims' rights and services. OVC-designed initiatives build capacity to promote victims' rights and services at the national, state, and local levels. In FY 2007 and FY 2008, OVC's message of help, healing, and justice reached millions through agency-supported events, partnerships, and innovative local initiatives.

Awards Honor Individuals in the Field

As the discipline of crime victim services has grown over the years, so has the number of remarkable individuals and organizations that significantly contribute to its success. Each April, the Nation recognizes National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW), which honors victims, survivors, allied practitioners, and dedicated crime victim service providers. NCVRW is also an important opportunity for the victim services field to reflect on its progress, recommit to its mission, and promote greater awareness of victims' issues.

Each year, as a prelude to NCVRW, OVC hosts the National Observance and Candlelight Ceremony and the National Crime Victims' Rights Week Awards Ceremony to pay tribute to crime victims and those who serve them. Held in Washington, D.C., both events provide a national platform for victims to share their inspirational stories of triumph over tragedy. In 2007 and 2008, OVC was honored to host guest speakers, both of whom were homicide survivors who turned their personal tragedies into incredible advocacy on behalf of crime victims. In 2007, Mark Lunsford, father of Jessica Marie Lunsford and founder of the Jessica Marie Lunsford Foundation, was the keynote speaker at the National Observance and Candlelight Ceremony. His story of unthinkable loss mesmerized the crowd, yet his message of action and advocacy to protect children from child predators was most powerful. Similarly, in 2008, Dominick Dunne, accomplished

author, investigative journalist, and host of TruTV's *Power, Privilege, and Justice*, spoke of his daughter Dominique's murder 16 years earlier and his experience with the criminal justice system as his daughter's killer proceeded through the system. His experience reminds people that although there has been progress in treating crime victims compassionately and fairly throughout the justice process, there is still work to do.

Survivors Turn Tragedy Into Triumph

Mark Lunsford

Mark Lunsford's life was irrevocably changed on February 24, 2005, when his 9-year-old daughter Jessica was kidnaped from their home in Homosassa, Florida. Following a 3-week investigation, a repeat sex offender was arrested and confessed to the kidnaping, rape, and murder of Jessica Marie Lunsford. By turning his grief into action, Mark Lunsford has made it his life's mission to never let another child suffer at the hands of a child predator. Mr. Lunsford has worked tirelessly to raise awareness and to fight for tougher laws, including Florida's Jessica Lunsford Act and the Adam Walsh Act.

Dominick Dunne

In 1983, in Los Angeles, California, a small group of homicide survivors was drawn to one another through word of mouth and by a common bond of loss and pain. Together, these grieving parents cofounded Justice for Homicide Victims, one of the Nation's first homicide support groups. The driving force was Ellen Griffin Dunne, Dominick's wife, who was also trying to cope with the unimaginable grief following the murder of their beloved daughter Dominique. While Justice for Homicide Victims was giving a voice to homicide survivors in California, Dominick Dunne was magnifying crime victims' voices on a much larger scale. As an author, he began writing about the criminal justice system, and the injustices that most victims endured—beginning with his own family's painful experiences with the trial of Dominique's murderer. Through his many books and his column in *Vanity Fair*, Mr. Dunne continually reminds people that anyone can become a victim of crime and that the impact of an individual crime extends far beyond the victim.

New Online Nominating Process

Because compassionate, highly skilled service providers and allied practitioners play a vital role in sustaining the Nation's victim assistance programs, OVC conducts an extensive process to identify individuals and organizations that demonstrate outstanding service to crime victims each year. In FY 2007, OVC launched a new Web site that offers users an easy-to-use online service for submitting nominations for the National Crime Victims' Service Awards (<https://ovcnvrv.ncjrs.gov/awards/default.html>). Nominations can now be evaluated and their status tracked online as well. In addition, a new NCVRW awards page, with links to all previous award recipient information is available on the OVC Web site.

National Crime Victims' Service Awards

The National Crime Victims' Service Awards are the most prestigious federal honor bestowed on crime victim advocates, many of whom are victims serving as role models, volunteers, and allied professionals who inspire others in the field. At the National Crime Victims' Rights Week Awards Ceremony, the Attorney General honors individuals and programs for their visionary work in eight award categories: the National Crime Victim Service Award, the Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services, the Volunteer for Victims Award, the Allied Professional Award, the Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award, the Crime Victims Fund Award, the Federal Service Award, and the Special Courage Award. During the 2007 NCVRW Awards Ceremony, OVC awarded 15 awards; in 2008, it awarded 9.

A Sampling of Outstanding NCVRW Award Recipients

2007 Allied Professional Award

ADT Security Services AWARE Program

Since 1992, ADT Security Services, Inc., has offered a life-saving program to help decrease incidents of domestic violence. The ADT AWARE Program (Abused Women's Active Response Emergency) is active in more than 177 communities nationwide and is credited with helping to save the lives of more than 31 victims of domestic violence. This program has given many other victims the means and peace of mind to escape an abusive partner. The ADT AWARE Program is a coordinated effort among ADT Security Services, local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, domestic violence shelters, and social service agencies. Through the AWARE Program, ADT provides home security systems and emergency necklace pendants free of charge to domestic violence victims for as long as the need exists. Participants are screened for eligibility by partnering community organizations and must meet the following criteria: victims must be in imminent danger of attack; they must have a restraining order or other active order of protection against the abuser; and they must be willing to prosecute and testify against the batterer in court if the batterer is apprehended as a result of the use of the ADT system. The program has made significant strides in giving victims needed security, while bringing in professional, volunteer, and support staff, and the result of this progress is that victims of domestic violence who get these services have an increased chance of survival.

2007 Special Courage Award

Debra Puglisi-Sharp

On April 20, 1998, Debra Puglisi-Sharp's husband was killed in their home, and his murderer abducted, assaulted, raped, and held Debra hostage in his house for more than 100 hours. On the fifth day of her abduction, while the perpetrator was at work, she was able to free herself and find her way to a phone. She called 911 even though she could not read the numbers on the phone without her glasses. An enhanced 911 phone system in her area was able to pinpoint her location, enabling police rescue. Since the crime, Ms. Puglisi-Sharp has not only worked to move on with her life, but has dedicated herself to helping other crime victims. She actively supports the Sexual Assault Network of Delaware and participates with

Contact Lifeline, the local rape crisis center in Delaware. Puglisi-Sharp was appointed to the 911 Enhancement Board by Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner and served as its public representative for 5 years. She fervently believes in public education and awareness, reminding citizens that they need to remain informed of Global Positioning System capabilities in their particular area in case of an emergency.

2008 Crime Victims Fund Award

Treasury Offset Program

The Treasury Offset Program (TOP) is a centralized debt collection program designed to assist agencies in collecting delinquent debt owed to the Federal Government. TOP matches delinquent debtor files against outstanding debts, and when a match occurs, funds in the form of federal tax returns, annual annuities, and Social Security payments, to name a few, are intercepted to offset any outstanding debt owed to the Federal Government. Until 2003, TOP was not available for the offset of criminal debts; however, with a small investment of \$50,000 of funding from the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Attorneys' Offices throughout the Nation—through each office's Financial Litigation Unit (FLU)—can now access TOP for the collection of criminal debt owed to the United States and nongovernment victims of federal crime. Since TOP became available to the FLUs, collections have totaled more than \$7.9 million. In 2007 alone, TOP recovered \$5.2 million for fines deposited into the Crime Victims Fund and for restitution owed to crime victims. TOP has proved itself as a valuable enforcement tool for criminal monetary judgments.

2008 National Crime Victim Service Award

Dr. Nora Baladerian

Since 1971, Nora Baladerian has made the problem of abuse of people with disabilities her life's work. In the early 1970s when she began working on this issue, there was virtually no information available and no funding to ameliorate the problem. Today, because of Dr. Baladerian's passion and dedication, the abuse of people with disabilities is a nationally recognized issue, and millions of federal and state dollars are allocated to address this problem. Dr. Baladerian has authored several internationally distributed guidebooks

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A Sampling of Outstanding NCVRW Award Recipients (continued)

for professionals, parents, and individuals with disabilities, and written more than 50 articles related to the abuse and neglect of children and adults with disabilities. She has convened 10 national conferences and one online conference on the same subject. Dr. Baladerian is an expert in the following areas: evaluating cases of suspected sexual abuse, conducting assessments with children and adults who have developmental disabilities, and providing clinical intervention. Her work, including the OVC-funded *Victims with Disabilities: The Forensic Interview*, has helped debunk the myth that

crime victims with developmental disabilities cannot be good witnesses. Dr. Baladerian's work has affected policies and practices in many areas, including school campus policies; mandatory reporting; minimum standards for responding to child abuse calls; and protocols and practices for investigators, prosecutors, protective services caseworkers, and victim advocates. Victim services in California and throughout the Nation provide more consistent services to crime victims with disabilities and to crime victims who acquire a disability due to an act of violence because of her lifetime of advocacy.

Victim service is tough work, and it's not getting any easier. You don't get paid a lot. You don't get a lot of applause—except today. There are no easy days, and you can't just leave it at the office at the end of your shift. That's why the men and women we recognize today—and so many of you in the audience—deserve our sincere thanks for what you do.

—U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., National Crime Victims' Rights Week Awards Ceremony, April 24, 2009

Tools Help Communities Promote NCVRW

First observed more than 25 years ago, when President Ronald Reagan called for a national event to honor victims of crime, NCVRW is still observed in cities and towns throughout the Nation. To help local communities coordinate events tailored to their own needs, OVC produces an annual resource guide to promote victim awareness. The guide, which features a brief DVD that introduces the current year's theme, includes suggestions for media involvement, tips for strengthening organizational efforts to support victims, and strategies for maximizing community awareness of victims' rights and issues.

OVC distributed approximately 12,000 NCVRW Resource Guides nationwide in 2007 and 15,000 in 2008. Online distribution of the material was significantly higher in 2008, with 118,668 full downloads of the Resource Guide, up from 26,000 in 2007. In 2008, OVC introduced a 30-second PSA that could be tagged with a local organization's contact information and played on local broadcasts. Although OVC does not currently have a mechanism to track how often or in what media markets it was played, the PSA was downloaded more than 2,150 times from the OVC Web site and indirectly. Anecdotally, OVC learned that community groups uploaded these resources to YouTube, a video sharing site.

U.S. Postal Inspection Service Helps To Raise Awareness

In 2007 and 2008, OVC continued its successful collaboration with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to raise awareness of victims' rights and services by displaying NCVRW-themed posters in more than 15,000 post offices throughout the country that serve almost 8 million customers a day. This campaign was augmented by providing take-away cards with toll free numbers for national victim service organizations in each participating post office. In addition, the take-away cards were included in every postal stamp order processed by the U.S. Postal Service's stamp

fulfillment center during the month of April. One sign of this campaign's success is that the National Center for Victims of Crime reported a 30-percent increase in calls to its hotline in early April 2007. In 2008, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), a national sexual assault organization, reported an 11.5-percent increase in calls to its telephone hotline and a 13-percent increase in visits to its Online Hotline shortly after the postal campaign was unveiled.

Raising Community Awareness

To further encourage communities to participate in NCVRW, OVC supports the NCVRW Community Awareness Projects initiative, providing up to \$5,000 for public awareness events and activities at the local level. In FYs 2007 and 2008, OVC selected more than 100 applicants from virtually every state to receive financial support for their high-profile, low-cost projects. For the first time in 2008, awards of up to \$10,000 went to 11 different states for statewide community awareness projects.

National Day of Remembrance

September 25 was established as a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims as a result of the unanimously passed resolutions by the U.S. Senate on October 16, 2007 (S. Res. 326), and the U.S. House of Representatives on May 14, 2007 (H. Res. 223). This day honors the memories of murder victims and recognizes the impact of homicide on surviving family members and loved ones. On September 25, 2007, with support from OVC, the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) and Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc. (POMC), sponsored the first annual National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims. The event took place at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., in the Caucus Room of the Russell Senate Building. More than 500 participants attended the observance, and several members of Congress spoke at the event, including Senators John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Jon Kyl (R-Arizona), and U.S. Representatives Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), Debbie

Local Communities Observe NCVRW

OVC's NCVRW Community Awareness Projects make it possible for many cities and towns to participate fully in NCVRW. OVC relied on a committee comprising the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators and state VOCA administrators to assist in the selection process. In FYs 2007 and 2008, funding enabled agencies to expand their public awareness campaigns to incorporate innovative activities to inform the public about victims' issues and local services.

- In Shreveport, Louisiana, the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office worked with the fire and police departments, crime victim assistance organizations, juvenile court departments, and legal services to promote NCVRW through three billboards in 2007. They also created a calendar that contained victim service information for the community.
- In 2007, the Aetna Foundation Children's Center at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford, Connecticut, worked with community victim service organizations and Deaf service organizations to promote NCVRW. The efforts and outreach primarily targeted the Deaf community. A public service announcement was created in American Sign Language that defined the different types of victimizations, victims' rights, and the services that are available. The week ended with a sneak peak of a film for the Deaf community on child abuse and neglect. Sign language interpreters were available at every event.
- For the 2008 NCVRW, the Council on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in Sioux City, Iowa, held a week-long media campaign that advertised how and where victims of violence could receive assistance. The campaign included 56 television ads; 326 radio public service announcements in English and Spanish; online newspaper advertisements; color ads in English and Spanish newspapers; and posters distributed throughout the community.
- In Detroit, Michigan, the Children's Center of Wayne County sponsored a forum titled "Justice for Victims . . . Justice for All: Letting You Know We Care" during the 2008 NCVRW. The forum was designed to alert families and community members about the services available to them. The event kicked off with a candlelight ceremony in the children's garden of the center.

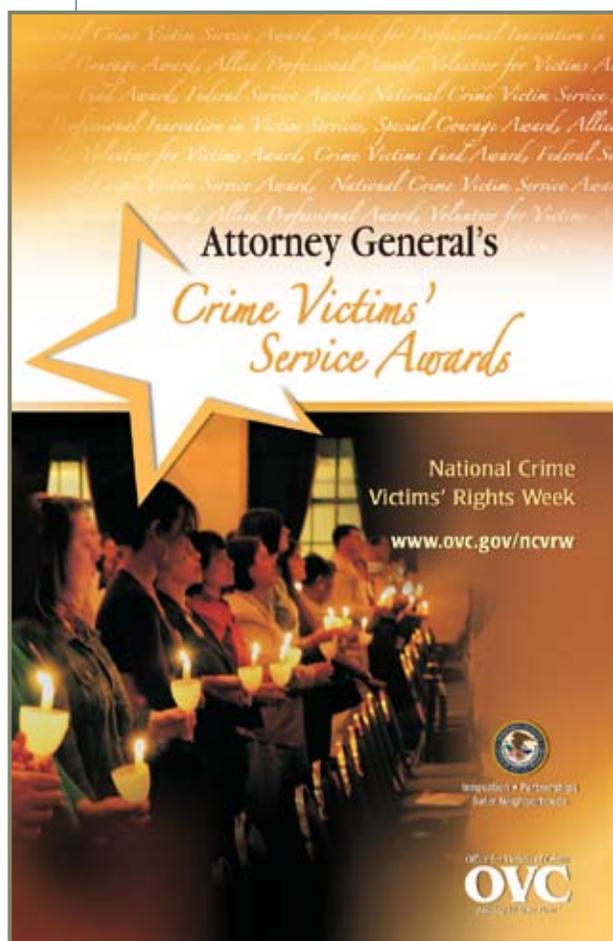
Wasserman Shultz (D-Florida), and John Shadegg (R-Arizona).

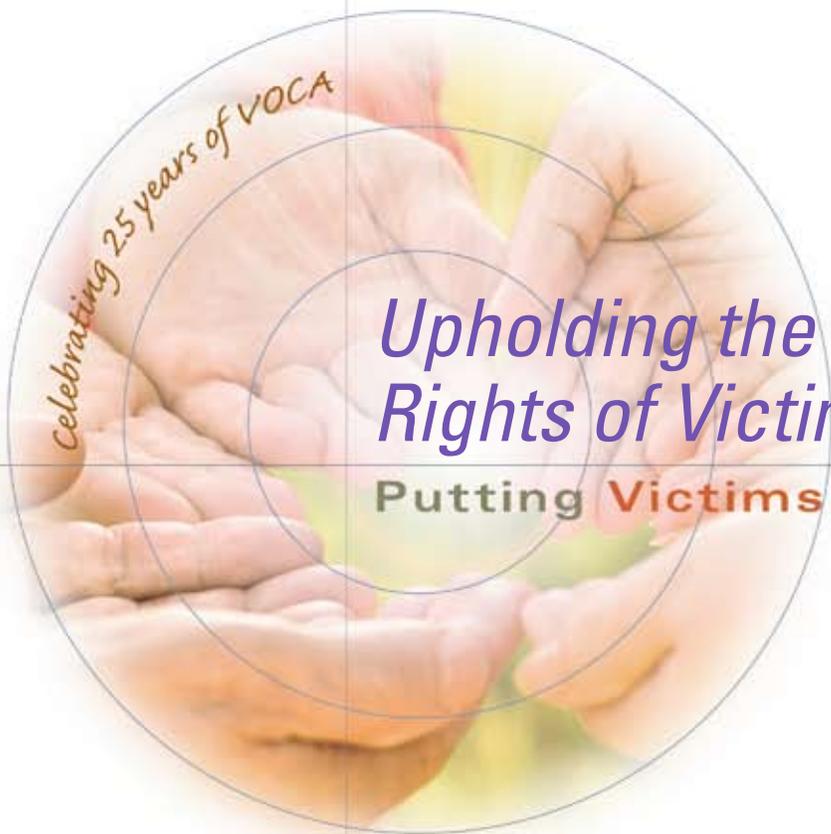
On September 25, 2008, with support from OVC, POMC sponsored the second annual National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. More than 200 people attended, representing victim advocates and homicide survivors from throughout the country. Several members of Congress spoke at the event, including Congressmen Steve Chabot and Ted Poe (R-Texas).

Raising Awareness in Underserved Communities

OVC continues to support demonstration projects focused on raising awareness of crime victims' rights and issues in traditionally underserved communities that are challenged by language barriers and social and cultural isolation. In FY 2007, OVC funded five organizations that supported the development of outreach campaigns on issues related to domestic violence and sexual assault. The campaigns were conducted in multiple languages, including Chinese, Hindi, Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish, French, Sonike, Wolof, Puler, Fulani, and other languages spoken by African immigrants. In FY 2008, four organizations received funding for similar initiatives targeting crime victim awareness issues related to intimate partner violence in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer populations; covictims of homicide, domestic violence, sexual assault, and teen dating violence in a tribal community; and domestic violence in rural, migrant communities.

The Sauti Yetu Center for African Women, Inc., illustrates one example of the work being done under this program. The center links victims of family, domestic, and sexual violence in New York City's highly marginalized African immigrant community to culturally aware and linguistically appropriate services through a multilingual media campaign, peer educators, and partnerships with ethnic associations, businesses, and religious leaders. The grantee is designing illustrations to be used on materials to convey the campaign's message to women who do not read or write and is developing a system of color beaded necklaces to alert other women of the need for assistance.





*Upholding the
Rights of Victims*

Putting **Victims** First

THE CRIME VICTIMS'

Rights Act

CHAPTER 13

OVC continues to support national-scope efforts to advance crime victims' rights throughout the country. These efforts aim to implement and enforce state victims' rights laws through various approaches. In FYs 2007 and 2008, OVC continued its support of projects that educate the criminal justice community and victim service providers about the rights of victims and facilitate victim access to the criminal justice system. OVC funding supports the establishment and enhancement of legal clinics that provide direct representation to victims in criminal court; education and training on victims' rights issues; building the capacity of private attorneys throughout the country to represent victims pro bono in criminal court; efforts to establish state victims' rights compliance programs; and the development of a comprehensive online database of federal, state, and tribal victims' rights laws.

Advancing Victims' Rights With Representation

In the past three decades, thousands of victims' rights laws have been enacted in the states. Additionally, laws have been passed at the federal level, including the Crime Victims' Rights Act (CVRA), passed in 2004. CVRA's landmark legislation grants federal crime victims specific rights and provides mechanisms to enforce these rights. These laws have not always been recognized as they should be by the criminal justice system, however. Since FY 2002, in an effort to ensure that the rights enumerated in these laws are afforded meaning, OVC has funded a national, cohesive effort aimed at building the capacity for direct pro bono legal representation of victims in criminal court.

With OVC funding, the National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI) initially undertook a multiyear demonstration project to support victims in the enforcement of their rights (primarily in state courts), through the creation of several victim legal clinics and other measures. In FY 2006, NCVLI established three clinics that represented victims in federal criminal court exclusively. In FYs 2007 and 2008, OVC grants under the Crime Victims' Rights Enforcement Project built substantially on these NCVLI efforts, supporting the advancement of crime victims' rights laws at the state, federal, and tribal level. The Crime Victims' Rights Enforcement

Project supports the enforcement of federal victims' rights laws under the CVRA, as well as enforcement of state and tribal victims' rights laws.

Additional FY 2008 funding will be supporting three new clinics, which were selected competitively, to begin providing direct services to victims. NCVLI provides intensive technical assistance, training, and support to all the clinics. Under the projects, NCVLI and the legal clinics also undertake education, training, and technical assistance on victims' rights issues nationally, regionally, and locally. In FYs 2007 and 2008, NCVLI and its legal clinics trained hundreds of criminal justice professionals, victim service providers, and attorneys in victims' rights issues. During the course of the initiative, NCVLI held seven annual training conferences for attorneys litigating on behalf of victims and will convene its eighth in 2009.

Additionally, NCVLI provides assistance and support to nonclinic attorneys throughout the country who represent crime victims in the enforcement of their rights. NCVLI is expanding a nationwide network of crime victim attorneys through its National Alliance of Victims' Rights Attorneys. As part of this project, NCVLI produces a semi-annual newsletter to provide attorneys and others with information about victims' rights.

In FY 2007, in addition to the grant awarded to NCVLI, OVC awarded grants to two other organizations to establish legal clinics. The Southwest Center for Law and Policy received funding to establish a legal clinic in Oklahoma to represent American Indian victims of crime. An award to The Justice League of Ohio supported the establishment of a legal clinic to represent victims of crime in Ohio.

Guidelines on Victim and Witness Assistance

The provision of victims' rights enumerated in the *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance* requires that DOJ personnel

provide services and rights to victims of crime. Under the guidelines, a victim is a person directly or proximately harmed as the result of the commission of a federal offense or an offense committed in the District of Columbia if the defendant is charged in District Court. Services are provided to victims who have suffered direct physical, emotional, or pecuniary harm as a result of a crime. Some provisions apply to witnesses to crime.

In 1983, Attorney General William French Smith issued the first set of guidelines, which outlined the standards for federal victim and witness assistance, and for implementation of the victims' rights contained in the Victim and Witness Protection Act. Since that time, the guidelines have been revised periodically to incorporate new legislative provisions. The latest edition was published in 2005.

History of the Guidelines

The legislative and statutory basis for the requirements enumerated in the *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance* include—

President's Task Force of 1982. The task force determined that innocent victims of crime are overlooked by the system of justice, and concluded that sustained efforts are needed by federal, state, and local governments to restore balance.

Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982 (VWPA). This legislation was amended and expanded in the Victims of Crime Act of 1984. Congress recognized the inadequate treatment of crime victims in the criminal justice system. This legislation was enacted to enhance and protect the necessary role of crime victims and witnesses in the criminal justice process and to ensure that the Federal Government does all that is possible, within the limits of available resources, to assist victims and witnesses of crime.

Congress instructed the Attorney General to develop and implement guidelines for DOJ that were consistent with the purposes of the Act. Congress

then set forth the objectives of the guidelines, which include the provision of victims' rights (e.g., notification about protection, services, and major case events; consultation with the government attorney). The Attorney General was instructed to ensure that all federal law enforcement agencies outside DOJ adopt guidelines consistent with the purposes of VWPA.

A list of victims' rights, commonly referred to as the "victims' bill of rights," are codified at 18 U.S.C. § 3771 (a). Congress also defined a group of services that federal agencies have the responsibility to provide to crime victims. The basic list of responsibilities appears in 42 U.S.C. § 10607.

The Crime Control Act of 1990 later stated that services "shall" be provided. Specialist provisions dealing with certain types of victims and crimes appear elsewhere in Titles 42 and 18 (e.g., provisions for child victims appear in 18 U.S.C. § 3509).

Subsequent legislation that expanded or amended provisions of victims' rights includes the following:

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 established mandatory restitution for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and exploitation, and telemarketing fraud.

The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 expanded mandatory restitution for all crimes committed in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code (18 U.S.C. § 3663 A).

The Victims Rights Clarification Act of 1997 gave victims the right to attend a trial even though they may testify during the sentencing portion of the trial (18 U.S.C. § 3510).

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 protects immigrant victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other crimes (22 U.S.C. § 7101–7110; 8 U.S.C. § 1101 (a) (15)(U)).

The Justice for All Act of 2004 expanded and recodified the victims' bill of rights and included sanctions for employees who do not make reasonable efforts to afford victims their rights.

Upholding the AG Guidelines

The guidelines apply to DOJ components engaged in the investigative, prosecutorial, correctional, or parole functions within the criminal justice system. DOJ agency components, including the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, ATF, and the U.S. Marshals Service, as well as prosecutors with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Prisons, and the U.S. Parole Commission, are required to adhere to the guidelines.

For agencies outside of DOJ, the Attorney General mandates that all federal agency personnel involved in the detection, investigation, and prosecution of crime shall make their best efforts to see that crime victims are notified of and accorded the following rights (18 U.S.C. § 3771(a)):

- The right to be reasonably protected from the accused.
- The right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public court proceeding, or any parole proceeding, involving the crime or any release or escape of the accused.
- The right not to be excluded from any such public court proceeding, unless the court, after receiving clear and convincing evidence, determines that testimony by the victim would be materially altered if the victim heard other testimony at that proceeding.
- The right to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding in the district court involving release, plea, or sentencing, or any parole proceeding.
- The reasonable right to confer with the attorney for the government in the case.
- The right to full and timely restitution as provided in law.

- The right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay.
- The right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy.

The guidelines require that the Attorney General designate certain DOJ personnel who will be responsible for identifying victims of crime and for performing the services described in the guidelines as they apply to their sections or divisions.

The guidelines provide DOJ policy guidance that incorporates statutory requirements and rules of criminal procedure related to the treatment of victims for the investigation, prosecution, and correctional phases of the federal criminal justice system. For example, investigative agency personnel are directed to identify victims and notify them about the investigation. The guidelines elaborate on the additional rights of certain special populations of victims, including child victims; victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; victims of terrorism and other mass casualties; victims of human trafficking; and victims of identity theft. For example, the guidelines specify which DOJ personnel are required to report suspected cases of child abuse, and identify sanctions for personnel who fail to report suspected cases. The guidelines also explain the required procedures and practices related to the collection of restitution for victims of crime.

Reporting on Compliance

The agencies that uphold the guidelines are required to submit an annual *Mandatory Reporting of Compliance with the AG Guidelines* report to OVC no later than February 15. OVC compiles the reports and submits a comprehensive report for review by the Attorney General. The comprehensive report must include the annual work plans and performance appraisals of relevant personnel who are required to implement the victims' rights and services provisions and evaluate adherence or

nonadherence to them. It must include disciplinary sanctions, up to and including suspension and termination of employment for willful or wanton failure to comply with provisions of federal law pertaining to the treatment of crime victims. All personnel guided by the guidelines must attend a mandatory training of not less than 1 hour concerning the guidelines and victims' and witnesses' rights.

VictimLaw Provides Easy Access to Legislation

In light of the thousands of crime victim-related state statutes and dozens of state victims' rights constitutional amendments that have been enacted, in 2003, OVC funded a multiyear project to develop and refine a comprehensive online database of federal, state, and tribal victims' rights laws. *VictimLaw*, launched in April 2007 by the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC), provides accurate, up-to-date information about the rights of victims, including more than 15,000 statutes (state and federal), tribal laws, constitutional amendments, court rules, administrative code provisions, attorney general opinions, and summaries of court decisions related to victims' rights.

VictimLaw provides instant access to a wide range of previously hard-to-find legal information. Although all states have extensive bodies of legal rights for victims of crime, locating this information was previously arduous and time consuming. Between April 2007, when the database was launched, and the end of September 2008, the database received 10,495 unique hits and nearly 1,100 user accounts had been created.

With FY 2008 funding, NCVC will continue to operate, update, and expand *VictimLaw* and will provide training and market *VictimLaw* to potential users. To access *VictimLaw*, visit www.victimlaw.info.



Celebrating 25 years of VOCA

Looking Forward

Putting Victims First

Looking Forward



Not so long ago, crime victims suffered and tried to mend their broken lives alone. They were counseled to “just put it behind you.” To be a victim was to feel shame—often made worse by blame: “You must have done something to provoke the attack.” Three decades ago, comfort from well-meaning loved ones was the most that America’s crime victims could hope for.

The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 stands as a landmark for victims’ rights and services and the start of a new era for victims throughout the Nation. The law confirmed that victims have a rightful place in the criminal justice system and that they should be assisted in the long and painful journey toward physical, emotional, and financial well-being. For 25 years, OVC and countless organizations and individuals have worked to establish and uphold the rights of victims and to strengthen the laws that protect and serve them in their darkest moments. Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done.

During FYs 2007 and 2008, OVC and a dedicated network of service providers were challenged to meet the needs of more crime victims with significantly reduced resources. Although millions of victims benefited from a broad range of services, financial resources were stretched to the breaking point in many communities. OVC’s mission of promoting justice and healing for all victims sometimes seemed far out of reach.

Today, there’s a renewed commitment by our national leadership to expand these resources so that more crime victims receive the help they need and deserve. In 2007, deposits to the Crime Victims Fund exceeded \$1 billion for the first time, and action has been taken to ensure that all funds are used on behalf of victims. In January, members of the Congressional Crime Victims’ Rights Caucus reintroduced the Victims of Crime Act Preservation Fund Act of 2009, intended to safeguard the Fund by preventing future attempts to eliminate balances. Furthermore, Fund allocations for FYs 2009 and 2010 are being increased after 2 years of marked reductions. OVC also received \$100 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This one-time funding, together with the increased annual appropriations, is expected to restore funds for victim assistance to pre-2007 levels and provide substantially increased support for compensation and assistance through the end of the decade.

Each year, the crime victims' field is challenged to serve an increasing number of victims of the most prevalent crimes (domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse), while responding to victims of new and emerging crimes. Victims can't ask for help if they don't know it's available, so we are intensifying our attempts to educate the public about victims' rights and accessible services. Some types of victimization need increased recognition and service, such as those experienced by older Americans who suffer abuse, assault, and financial predation—tragically, most often at the hands of loved ones. OVC is producing a variety of materials to teach service providers how to recognize and respond to elder abuse in an effort to assist these vulnerable individuals.

Connecting with victims is essential in order to effectively assist them. Part of OVC's mission is providing first responders with training materials to help them understand and communicate with victims who have various types of disabilities. In addition to producing several major training guides in the past 2 years, OVC will host its first national professional training conference on the subject in the fall of 2009.

In 1984, few people could have predicted how technology would transform our lives. OVC has steadily embraced technology, particularly the Internet, to disseminate information more efficiently at a lower cost. Today, virtually all of OVC's publications are released on our Web site, a practice with benefits for the environment as well as for audiences. We are also proud that an increasing number of our educational materials, particularly multimedia products, include special accessibility features so that all may learn on a more level playing field.

Unfortunately, there is another side to this remarkable technological revolution. Cybercrime—identity theft, financial fraud, and Internet pornography, among others—is growing at an alarming rate. Many perpetrators are overseas, making it difficult, if not impossible, to prosecute them. OVC is supporting the field's response to

cybercrime with numerous tools described in this report, as well as an interactive curriculum on identity theft slated to go online this summer.

Terrorism and mass violence are in the news with increasing frequency in these tense times. Trafficking in human beings for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation is slowly emerging from the shadows. The victims of these crimes need skilled, compassionate care, and both the justice system and the victim service network are making progress in identifying their needs and improving services to them in difficult, sometimes violent circumstances. Additionally, OVC remains committed to reaching out to more victims who, due to their socioeconomic status, language barriers, or other factors, historically have had limited or no access to rights and services.

We understand that real progress takes patience and determination. In 1984, a victim of sexual assault was not likely to pursue justice and, all too frequently, was revictimized by participating in the system. There are still thousands of men and women who do not report their assault for a variety of reasons, so they fail to get the help they need to heal. Progress may seem slow, but it is steady: 20 years ago, only 1 in 9 rape victims was willing to report the crime; now, it is estimated that 1 in 4 will report it.¹⁰ Clearly, there is much work to be done to ensure that all crime victims ask for help . . . and to make certain that help is accessible when they do.

As we move into the future, OVC is committed to expanding victims' rights and services, promoting collaborative relationships within and among communities, developing and sharing promising practices in the victims' field, and anticipating emerging areas of victimization and responding to them. We are grateful for the network of service providers, advocates, private and public partners, and others who continue to stand up for crime victims. Together, we will realize our vision of justice for all victims, one day at a time.

¹⁰Rand, M., and S. Catalano, 2007, *Criminal Victimization, 2006*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.