



Department of Justice

164405

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1995

OVC
202/307-0703

OVER \$1 BILLION AWARDED TO HELP CRIME VICTIMS FROM THE CRIME VICTIMS FUND

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Payments by criminals to a federally run crime victims fund has passed the \$1 billion mark since the program was established 10 years ago, the Department of Justice announced today. The money is distributed to victim compensation and assistance programs operated by the states.

Fiscal year 1995, which ended September 30, marked the 10th year that the Department's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) awarded grants to states to pay for services that help victims of crime recover physically and financially. States receive funding through OVC's victim assistance and victim compensation programs, which work in partnership with comparable state programs.

"OVC programs don't cost taxpayers a cent," said OVC Director Aileen Adams. "The Crime Victims Fund makes people who commit crimes pay for services that help victims of crime to heal. There is a real sense of justice about the way it works."

Between 1986 and 1995, OVC awarded \$557,483,450 to states for victim assistance programs. This funding has helped nearly 3,000 victim service programs, including rape crisis centers,

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domestic violence shelters, child abuse treatment programs, and services for surviving family members of homicide victims.

OVC also awarded \$480,603,429 between 1986 and 1995 to support state victim compensation programs. This funding has been used by the states to help victims recover from many financial burdens they incur as a result of crime, such as medical services, mental health counseling, lost wages and funeral costs. Compensation also assists victims with burdens often not covered by insurance such as the purchase of eyeglasses and prosthetic devices.

"In one year, more than two million crime victims received care, intervention, counseling, and support from staff and volunteers working in our federally funded assistance programs," said Adams. "This represents great progress in the last decade, but the day we will really celebrate is when **every** victim of crime is guaranteed access to the services they need for justice and healing."

The Crime Victims Fund was created by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, as amended. Originally there was a ceiling on the amount of funds that could accumulate and be paid out to states to help victims. The ceiling was removed in 1992. Concentrated efforts by U.S. Attorneys to collect penalties from federal offenders resulted in a record \$185 million for the fund in

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fiscal 1995. This allowed OVC to send over \$150 million to the states to help pay for direct services for victims, including almost \$65 million for victim compensation.

More information regarding the Crime Victims Fund and the Office for Victims of Crime can be obtained by calling the Department of Justice Response Center's toll-free number, 1-800/421-6770.

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