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**Author: Carrie Markovitz, Lisa Magged**

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# HOPE II: Faith-Based and Community Organization Program Evaluation Study

## *Summary Report*

*Prepared for*  
National Institute of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
U.S. Department of Justice  
810 7th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531

*Prepared by*  
Carrie Markovitz, Ph.D.  
Lisa Magged, M.A.

Abt Associates Inc.



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Carrie Markovitz, Ph.D.  
Lisa Magged, M.A.



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## Introduction

Faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) are often in a unique position to address needs in their communities and, in particular, the needs of victims of crime. In terms of presence alone, FBCOs stand in direct contact with those having the greatest needs. Their proximity to and status within their communities provide them with relevant information about the challenges that families and individuals face; moreover, as trusted and respected members of their communities they are viewed as being particularly approachable by victims who seek comfort, guidance, and assistance in what are often sensitive matters during the most difficult times.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, FBCOs typically have expansive networks of dedicated volunteers from which to draw and on which to rely in providing social services. In fact, the growing field of research into social capital, which examines the interpersonal relationships within communities, suggests that networks supported by FBCOs transmit a range of community benefits in the form of positive social capital.<sup>2</sup> Lastly, preliminary data indicate that faith-based organizations have been effective in a variety of service areas and that much of their particular success is related to the sense of empowerment that is unique to faith-based activity.<sup>3</sup>

### Strengths of Faith-based and Community Organizations

- Trusted and respected in their communities
- Networks of dedicated volunteers
- Unique sense of empowerment among faith-based organizations

Along with these strengths, however, many FBCOs have needs that can affect their ability to thrive and survive. Although they may be in a better position to provide specific social services, they often lack the organizational capacity to

<sup>1</sup> Amy L. Sherman and Marc Stanakis, *Building Fruitful Collaboration Between Florida's Faith Communities and One Stop Career Centers*, Hudson Institute, Faith in Communities, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Carmen Sirianni and Lewis Friedland, *Social Capital and Civic Innovation*, paper presented at the social capital session of the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, August 20, 1995, Washington, DC, <http://www.cpn.org/>; and Mark Russell Warren, *Social Capital and Community Empowerment: Religion and Political Organization in the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Solomon and Matthew Vlissides, Jr., *In God We Trust?: Assessing the Potential of Faith-Based Social Services*, Progressive Policy Institute Policy Report, February 2001; Pew Charitable Trusts, *Religion and Social Policy Strategy Paper*, The Religion Program at Pew Charitable Trusts, March 2001; and Michael Wrigley and Mark La Gory, *The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Rehabilitation: A Sociological Perspective*, *Journal of Religion in Disability and Rehabilitation* 27 (1994): 40.

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do so effectively and have sustained impact. For example, small and growing FBCOs often lack basic leadership competencies such as strategic planning, management, and

### Needs of Faith-based and Community Organizations

- Lack organizational capacity
- Deficient in leadership and business competencies
- Lack institutional partnerships

staff/volunteer mobilization. Some groups severely lack business capacities such as effective operations management, administrative capability, or accounting systems. They may also be deficient in the capacity to monitor and evaluate their work, both for the purposes of program development and for reporting to possible funders and policymakers. Lastly, emerging or modest-scale FBCOs may not be well-positioned to develop the institutional partnerships that can prove vital to the success of a small organization, allowing it to focus on its core competency of delivering social service.<sup>4</sup>

In 2001, President George W. Bush launched a national initiative to expand federal funding opportunities for FBCOs through the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and Faith-Based and Community Centers in five of the major executive departments. In response to the President's initiative, and in an effort to promote greater and equitable participation of FBCOs in criminal justice programs, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) allocated funds to Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) in 2002. The HOPE program provided grants to grassroots faith-based and community victim service organizations to facilitate improvement of their outreach and services to crime victims. Three years later OVC launched the HOPE II grant program, which was similar to the HOPE program but directed funding specifically to FBCOs<sup>5</sup> that offer services to victims in urban, high-crime areas.

The specific purposes of the HOPE II grants were to:

- Increase training opportunities for service providers;
- Increase the ability of agencies to collaborate and form networks with other providers; and
- Increase the number of crime victims served in the target community.

Capacity building programs, such as HOPE II, address many of these areas, as their overarching aim is to equip participating organizations with the capability to acquire a sustainable stream of resources—including money,

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<sup>4</sup> C. W. Letts, W. P. Ryan, and A. Grossman, *High-Performance Nonprofit Organizations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999).

<sup>5</sup> The designation of faith-based and community-based organizations as such was self-identified by the organizations.

knowledge, and talent—and to develop clear goals and plans, which, when combined with resources, will enable them to deliver effective, sustained services.<sup>6</sup> The HOPE II program in particular called for the provision of both sub-granted funds and technical assistance to help small FBCOs make improvements in three specific areas of organizational capacity:

- Volunteer development and management;
- Community partnerships; and
- Services to victims of crime.

To advance the objectives of HOPE II, OVC opted for the use of an intermediary-based service delivery model that has become increasingly popular in supporting the work of FBCOs. To ensure that the intermediary had the skills and experience needed to fulfill the above-mentioned responsibilities, OVC required that the intermediary organization have both expertise in serving crime victims and a history of working with FBCOs. In August 2005, the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC)<sup>7</sup> was selected through a competitive process to serve in this intermediary capacity.

MCVRC's mission is "to ensure that victims of crime receive justice and are treated with dignity and compassion through comprehensive victims' rights and services." Today, MCVRC is one of the most successful grassroots organizations in the history of Maryland and has an established record of providing a range of services to individual crime victims including educating victims about their legal rights, supporting victims in attaining financial and legal assistance, and providing victims with court companions and personal counseling.

For the HOPE II program, MCVRC provided financial and technical assistance to 27 FBCOs.<sup>8</sup> Financial assistance consisted of \$50,000 awards to each FBCO to be

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<sup>6</sup> This formulation of nonprofit capacity is consistent with, for example: P. Brinkerhoff, *Mission-Based Management* (Dillon, CO: Alpine Guild, Inc., 1994); P. Drucker, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Practices and Principles* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1992); M. Hudson, *Managing Without Profit: The Art of Managing Third Sector Organizations* (London: Penguin Books, 1999); and C. W. Letts, W. P. Ryan, and A. Grossman, *High-Performance Nonprofit Organizations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999).

<sup>7</sup> After their daughter, Stephanie, was brutally murdered in 1982, Roberta and Vince Roper founded an agency bearing their daughter's name, the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation. This foundation later became the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center (MCVRC).

<sup>8</sup> Originally, 29 organizations were awarded a HOPE II sub-grant in May 2006. Subsequent to the award announcement, one of the awardees was found to be ineligible for funding, and during the sub-grant period, one of the sub-grantees was found to be in complete noncompliance and its participation was terminated, resulting in 27 sub-grantees.

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reimbursed to organizations after expenses were incurred.

Technical assistance was comprised of an initial 3-day training workshop provided by MCVRC and ongoing

technical assistance provided by consultants (i.e., "site mentors") to MCVRC on an as-needed basis. Sub-grants and technical assistance were provided over a 10-month period from June 2006 to March 2007.

### Elements of the HOPE II Grant Program

- \$50,000 sub-awards
- 3-day training workshop
- On-going TA from an intermediary organization

Approximately half of the 27 sub-grantees self-identified as faith-based and almost all of the organizations served urban areas. The HOPE II program was particularly interested in FBCOs that targeted underserved victim populations, also referred to as special populations, as determined by the type of crime committed or the victim's age, gender, ethnicity, disability status or sexual orientation.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the majority of all sub-grantees provided services to underserved populations. Forty-three percent of the organizations were under 5 years old, 52 percent were between 6 and 26 years old, and 4 percent were older than 26 years. The average revenue reported by the organizations was \$342,884 and the range of annual revenue (i.e., the difference between the lowest and highest amount) was \$1,506,944.

This report focuses on an evaluation of the HOPE II program and the subsequent results and recommendations. The remainder of this report proceeds as outlined below.

**The HOPE II Evaluation** provides a summary of the research objectives for the process and outcomes studies and additional detail regarding the evaluation methodology.

**Results from the Process and Outcomes Studies** are presented with respect to the three capacity areas that were the focus of the HOPE II grant—volunteer development and management, community partnerships, and services to victims of crime. Results pertaining to sustainable funding are also presented in order to discuss the potential for sustainability of capacity gains following the HOPE II grant.

**Recommendations** are offered for technical assistance providers, grantmakers, and future research based on the results and conclusions of both the process and outcomes evaluations.

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<sup>9</sup> Research findings and publications pertinent to underserved victims of crime are available on the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) website.  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/uc.htm>.

## The HOPE II Evaluation

Consistent with its commitment to performance measurement, DOJ integrated an evaluation component into the HOPE II program initiative sponsored by its research branch, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and conducted by policy research firm Abt Associates Inc. NIJ specified a two-phase evaluation strategy that required both a process study and an outcomes study to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. Sub-grantees were required to participate in the evaluation as a stipulation of their grant award.

The two-phase evaluation strategy addressed the following research objectives:

### Process Evaluation:

- Assess the process for distributing sub-grants and the extent to which they were instrumental in increasing the organizational and service delivery capacity of sub-grantees.
- Determine the type and quality of technical assistance provided to sub-grantees by the intermediary, MCVRC.
- Identify MCVRC's most effective strategies for promoting enhanced organizational and service delivery capacity among sub-grantees.

### Outcomes Evaluation:

- Assess the results of technical assistance provided to sub-grantees by MCVRC and the extent to which it enhanced their organizational and service delivery capacity.
- Identify specific areas in which sub-grantees experienced the greatest improvements in organizational and service delivery capacity and determine the factors that are most responsible.

In sum, the process evaluation was designed to gain a detailed understanding of the service delivery system as it was implemented by the sub-grantees with the support of MCVRC, while the outcomes evaluation was to determine the extent to which the financial and technical assistance received by sub-grantees increased their capacity to effectively deliver services to victims of crime. The process study was completed in fall 2007<sup>10</sup> and the outcomes study in fall 2008.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Markovitz, C., et al. (November, 2007). *HOPE II: Faith-based and Community Organization Program Evaluation, Process Study Report*. (Prepared under contract to the National Institutes of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice). Cambridge MA: Abt Associates Inc.

<sup>11</sup> Markovitz, C., et al. (September, 2008). *HOPE II: Faith-based and Community Organization Program Evaluation, Outcomes Study Report*. (Prepared under contract to the National Institutes of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice). Cambridge MA: Abt Associates Inc.

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The results of the *process evaluation* were based on four major data collection activities:

- Three site visits to MCVRC;
- Site visits to nine sub-grantees;
- A document review.



The visits to MCVRC took place between November 2005 and April 2007 and included interviews with MCVRC staff and site mentors. The initial site visit took place in November 2005 and coincided with the site mentor training and orientation; the second visit took place after

sub-grantees had been selected, and coincided with the 3-day sub-grantee training conference hosted by MCVRC; the third site visit was conducted at the end of the grant and served as a final debriefing with intermediary staff. In addition to site visits, the evaluation team had regular discussions with MCVRC to capture “real time” feedback and track the evolution of all grant activities. The second central source of data for assessing and documenting the implementation of the HOPE II program was a set of site visits to nine sub-grantees. This activity provided the opportunity to gather in-depth feedback on program implementation, operations, and administration from the ground level. MCVRC also provided relevant documents to evaluation staff, including training materials, sub-grantee quarterly reports, and the site mentors’ technical assistance logs.

The *outcomes evaluation* of HOPE II relied on a quasi-experimental research design<sup>12</sup> to explore the short- and long-term outcomes in capacity building observed among the 27 HOPE II sub-grantees when compared to a similar set of 29 organizations that applied for a sub-grant, but did not receive one (i.e., a comparison group). The selection criteria for forming the comparison group were designed to be similar to OVC’s sub-grantee selection process; however, it was not possible to manufacture an exact comparison group since no other applicants fulfilled all of the sub-grantee requirements for selection.

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<sup>12</sup> A quasi-experimental design is a type of evaluation whereby we form a comparison group which is similar to, but not exactly the same as the treatment group (which is only possible to achieve using random assignment). In identifying the comparison group we attempt to make it as similar as possible to the program or sub-grantee group.

The evaluation approach relied on data from two self-administered paper surveys and a web survey administered to both sub-grantees and comparison organizations at three points in time:

- Baseline: At application for a HOPE II grant;
- First follow-up: Upon exit from the HOPE II sub-grant (10 months after baseline); and
- Second follow-up: 10 months after sub-grantees exited HOPE II (20 months after baseline).

Short-term changes in major areas of capacity were assessed at the first follow-up and long-term accomplishments were examined at the second follow-up with a focus on sustainability of initial accomplishments.

### Formation of Organizational Levels

After interacting with the sub-grantees over the HOPE II grant period, it became apparent to MCVRC that the organizations tended to naturally fall into three categories based upon general organizational characteristics. Abt Associates further defined these categories into a three-level capacity continuum based upon characteristics and organizational capacity. This continuum was then applied to the organizations in the sub-grantee and comparison groups that participated in the two evaluation studies. As it was the goal to move sub-grantees to a higher level of capacity through their participation in HOPE II, this categorization provided a logical framework for researchers to assess organizational capacity growth. Exhibit 1 below illustrates the three-level capacity continuum and corresponding characteristics of sub-grantee and comparison organizations within each capacity level.

### Limitations of the Evaluation

As with all research, our evaluation design has some important limitations with which the reader should be familiar when considering the study results. Below we offer a brief explanation of these study limitations.

**Sub-grantee and comparison groups may be nonequivalent.** Because OVC selected all of the applicants that fulfilled its selection requirements, it was not possible to select a completely similar comparison group from the remaining applicant pool. Therefore, the sub-grantee and comparison groups are likely to be nonequivalent, leaving open the possibility for selection bias.<sup>13</sup> However, the results allow us to track the growth trajectories of the HOPE II

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<sup>13</sup> Selection bias refers to the possibility that differences in outcomes may be due to the different processes used to select sub-grantees and comparison organizations rather than due to the intervention.

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sub-grantees and to identify those areas which experienced the largest, sustained improvements. The comparison group, although nonequivalent, offers a contrast against which to assess the sub-grantee outcomes.

<b>Exhibit 1 Three-level Capacity Continuum Based on Sub-Grantee Characteristics at Baseline (i.e., Award of the HOPE II Grant)</b>			
	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<b>General Description</b>	Well-established	Emerging	Supported by a single individual for whom victim services is a calling
<b>Staff Composition</b>	Majority of full-time staff are paid  Infrastructure is stable and executive director is a full-time paid position	Mix of full-time paid staff and volunteers  Infrastructure largely dependent on executive director who is either paid part-time or full-time	Mainly volunteer-run  Infrastructure almost completely dependent on executive director, who is in most cases also unpaid
<b>Resources</b>	Have an adequate number of computers for their staff and software for keeping financial records	Tend to have fewer computers than would be adequate for their staff numbers and some organizations do not have financial software	Most organizations have two or fewer computers and no software for keeping financial records
<b>Funding</b>	Past experience in managing multiple funding streams, including federal grants	Some past success with funding but little experience managing federal grants	Little or no past experience managing grants or funds
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	Pre-existing community partnerships based on serving victims of crime	Some pre-existing community partnerships based on serving victims of crime	No partnerships based on serving victims of crime
<b>Potential Benefits of HOPE II (based on process evaluation findings)</b>	Program expansion through financial sub-award	Experience managing a federal grant	Experience managing funds; development of organization's basic structure and foundation

**Sample sizes were prohibitive.** The sample sizes in the outcomes study for the sub-grantee and comparison groups were limited to fewer than 30 cases each, and sample sizes continued to shrink with each additional data collection effort.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The response rate for sub-grantees was 100% at baseline and first follow-up and 82% at second follow-up. Although the response rate for the comparison group was 100% at baseline, it was only 52% at first follow-up and 42% at second follow-up.

Moreover, we conducted separate analyses within each of the organizational capacity levels (levels 1, 2, and 3), which further eroded sample sizes. In addition, the process study site visits to MCVRC and nine sub-grantees – only 1/3 of the sub-grantee universe – disproportionately inform the results described in this report.

**Results are self-reported.** The main sources of data for the outcomes evaluation were self-administered surveys and on-site interviews. The survey data were entirely self-reported by representatives from both the sub-grantees and comparison organizations, and the site visit data were self-reported and descriptive based on interviews with key staff at both MCVRC and the sub-grantee organizations. Although attempts were made to corroborate reported facts across multiple sources of data, the results reported in this document have not been independently verified, and, therefore, are not entirely conclusive.

## Results from the Process and Outcomes Studies

It is important to reiterate that the evaluation of the HOPE II grant program involved both a process and an outcomes evaluation. The process evaluation’s

purpose was to gain a detailed understanding of the implementation issues surrounding the application of the HOPE II sub-grants, and the purpose of the outcomes evaluation was to determine the extent to which the

### Areas of organizational and service delivery capacity examined:

1. Volunteer development and management
2. Community partnerships
3. Sustainable funding
4. Services to victims of crime

financial and technical assistance received by sub-grantees directly increased organizational capacity and indirectly increased the delivery of services to victims of crime. Therefore, it is important to consider the findings and conclusions on program implementation from the process evaluation as a context for interpreting the quantitative findings from the outcomes evaluation of all 27 sub-grantees.

In exploring the broad outcome of capacity, the process and outcomes studies examined accomplishments in three main areas of growth in organizational capacity, volunteer development and management, community partnerships, and sustainable funding, and one major area of service delivery capacity, services to victims of crime. Exhibit 2 provides further detail on the underlying rationale for focusing on these three major areas of organizational capacity, as described in OVC’s HOPE II Request for Proposals.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Major Areas of Organizational Capacity Building as Defined in the HOPE II Request for Proposals**

**Volunteer development and management.** One of the most straightforward strategies for an organization to increase services to clients is by increasing the scale of the organization's volunteer force. To this end, not only was the HOPE II intermediary to support sub-grantees in enhancing their volunteer programs, but the largest allowable use of HOPE II funds was for the salary of a volunteer coordinator to implement and oversee the proper recruitment, management, and development of volunteers.

**Community partnerships.** In addition to volunteers to increase services to victims, new partnerships with FBCOs, government agencies, advocates, and other social service providers are necessary for victims to receive a comprehensive array of services to meet all of their needs. As such, it was OVC's expectation that the HOPE II grant program would facilitate efforts by sub-grantees to develop relationships with other victim assistance organizations in their communities to identify critical gaps in service, build on existing resources, and develop collaborative, innovative solutions to respond to victims. OVC noted that it was particularly interested in creating new avenues of partnership between small faith-based and community organizations and law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and groups advocating on behalf of victims of crime.

**Sustainable funding.** Sustainable funding is crucial if victim service organizations are to have a lasting impact on victims' support services and crime reduction efforts in their communities. Therein, OVC also put forth an explicit mandate that the HOPE II intermediary help sub-grantees plan for the sustainability of their project efforts after the HOPE II grant period expired. Specific sustainability strategies were not specified, however, OVC did indicate that the intermediary was to include the strengthening of sub-grantees' organizational capacity. Also, the RFP soliciting sub-grantees advised applicants that the funds provided were to be used as seed money and explicitly requested applicants to outline their plans to leverage new sources of funding.

In reading the study results and discussion that follows, it is useful to consider an analytical frame based on the contrasting nature of capacity change that was found in the evaluation for Level 1 organizations (i.e. program expansion capacity) versus Level 2 and 3 organizations (e.g. program delivery capacity). Exhibit 3 provides an illustration for reference. To demonstrate, Letts, Ryan, and Grossman<sup>15</sup> describe how non-profits build their organizational capacity and explain how the nature of capacity change may be distinctive in organizations. HOPE II sub-grantees that are Level 2 and 3 organizations experienced changes in *program delivery capacity*, which is the starting capacity for non-profits through which organizational resources are focused on budgeting, project management, and the basic elements to ensure that the program and organization can function. Letts, Ryan, and Grossman explain that, "the organization is little more than a convenient venue where programs are implemented" (p. 20). In contrast, Level 1 sub-grantees exhibited changes in *program expansion capacity*, which is characteristic of organizations that have

institutionalized more formal mechanisms for operations, administering programs, and documenting performance. In this case, the organization’s function and performance become more dependent on organizational decisions and capacities beyond service delivery.

<b>Exhibit 3 Major Areas of Organizational Capacity Building as Defined in the HOPE II Request for Proposals</b>			
	<b>Capacity Profile Prior to HOPE II</b>	<b>Nature of Capacity Change During HOPE II<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Report Progress at End of HOPE II</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Volunteers: Existing capacity	Program Expansion – Growing the Organization by Leveraging Existing Capacity  	Volunteers: Institutionalized and refined programs, targeted recruitment of volunteers
	Collaboration: Strong pre-existing partnerships		Collaboration: Expansion of Existing partnerships
	Sustainability: Existing capacity		Sustainability: Stable. Leverage existing capacity
<b>Levels 2 &amp; 3</b>	Volunteers: Nascent or non-existent	Program Delivery – Creating Foundational Capacity to Establish the Organization and Program  	Volunteers: developed materials and/or process, untargeted recruitment
	Collaboration: Few or no partnerships		Collaboration: Expanded existing partnerships; created new partnerships
	Sustainability: Limited or unstable capacity		Sustainability: Remains unstable

<sup>a</sup> See Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, High Performance Non-Profit Organizations.

Below we offer our conclusions on the intermediary support of the HOPE II sub-grantees and the evidence for potential sub-grantee outcomes with respect to the three organizational capacity focus areas of the HOPE II program-- volunteer development and management, community partnerships, and sustainable funding-- and the service delivery capacity focus area-- services to victims of crime. The final section offers recommendations for future technical assistance providers and intermediaries, grantmakers, and researchers of programs designed to increase the capacity of small faith-based and community organizations.

<sup>15</sup> Letts, C., Ryan, W., & Grossman, A. (1999). *High Performance Non-Profit Organizations: Managing Upstream for Greater Impact*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

## Volunteer Development and Management

A main focus of the HOPE II grant was to improve volunteer programs at each of the sub-grantee sites. OVC understood that small organizations rely heavily on volunteers and that an effective means to grow the capacity of these organizations is a strong and organized volunteer program. The HOPE II grant covered the cost of a salary for a volunteer coordinator for all sub-grantees in the study, and a portion of the MCVRC training conducted at the beginning of the grant period focused on volunteer management. In fact, sub-grantees reported that they used the training materials on volunteer programs that were distributed by MCVRC, and they found the materials valuable in developing and improving their own volunteer programs. In addition, MCVRC, in collaboration with OVC, developed a job description for the volunteer coordinator that each of the sub-grantees adapted and used to advertise and hire for this position.

In the process evaluation, sub-grantees at all three levels made some progress in developing their volunteer programs, especially establishing and maintaining a full-time volunteer coordinator staff position. In addition to the existence of a volunteer coordinator, we also examined changes in the number of full-time and part-time volunteer staff reported by sub-grantees and comparison organizations.

**Volunteer programs in Level 1 organizations.** All of the Level 1 organizations visited in the process evaluation embraced a new emphasis on developing their volunteer programs. The HOPE II grant helped these organizations institutionalize their volunteer programs and provide needed structure for their volunteers. Most of the Level 1 organizations interviewed had not had a volunteer coordinator or a structured system for recruitment, training, and recognition of volunteers. While most of the Level 1 organizations recognized the need for a more formal volunteer program, they lacked the funds or staff to enact changes.

Hiring a volunteer coordinator was the primary outcome for Level 1 HOPE II sub-grantees related to volunteer program development. This is not unexpected given the fact that funding for a volunteer coordinator position was one of the largest allowable expenses under the HOPE II grant and was strongly encouraged when organizations were designing their HOPE II work plans. Process evaluation site visits showed that sub-grantees felt prepared to use a Volunteer Coordinator's time effectively once they had the HOPE II funds to support the position. The outcomes evaluation showed that Level 1 organizations took full advantage of this opportunity. There was a substantial increase between baseline (45%) and first follow-up (100%) in the percentage of Level 1 sub-grantees reporting a volunteer coordinator position in their

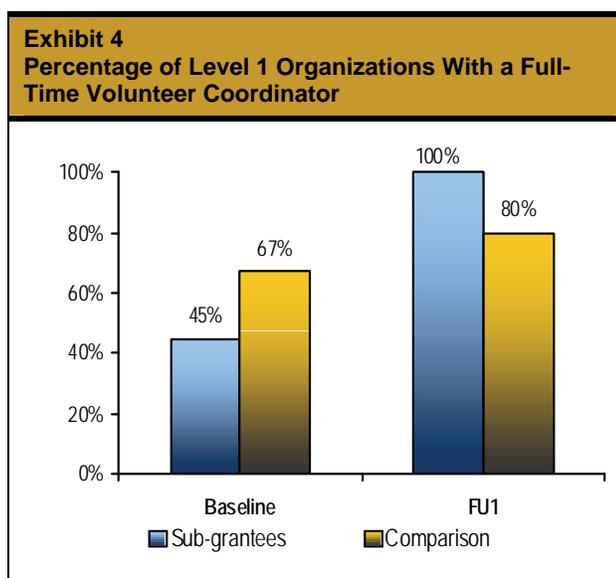
organizations. In contrast, a modest increase was observed among the Level 1 comparison organizations between baseline (67%) and first follow-up (80%).

Volunteer recruitment varied across Level 1 organizations, though the outcomes evaluation showed overall decreases in the average number of full-time volunteers and part-time volunteers reported by both Level 1 sub-grantees and comparison organizations.

However, the process evaluation site visits provide an important context for this dynamic. While some organizations reported an increase in volunteer engagement, for those organizations that already had a large body of volunteers, the goal was not to increase the number of volunteers, but the quality of volunteers. The volunteer coordinator at one sub-grantee organization that was visited recognized that the organization currently has as many volunteers as it has the capacity to supervise. However, the volunteer coordinator reports that, under HOPE II, the quality of the volunteers recruited has improved. Because she was given full-time responsibility for volunteers, the coordinator was able to focus on recruiting individuals with specific needed skills, daytime availability, and important connections to the communities they serve. The volunteer coordinator also focused on recruiting volunteers with specific language capabilities to help her meet clients' translation needs.

**Volunteer programs in Level 2 and 3 organizations.** Similar to Level 1 sub-grantees, hiring a volunteer coordinator was a primary outcome for Level 2 sub-grantees, however this was not the case with Level 3 organizations because most of them had volunteer coordinators at baseline. Level 2 organizations reported an 80% increase from baseline (20%) to the first follow-up (100%), while Level 3 organizations increased by 9% from baseline (82%) to first follow-up (91%). In contrast, Level 2 and 3 comparison organizations reported a decrease in the number of organizations with a volunteer coordinator.

Among Level 2 and 3 organizations, it was very common for the executive director to accept the volunteer coordinator salary from the HOPE II grant and take on the responsibilities of this position in addition to the usual



*One sub-grantee made substantial capacity gains in volunteer development over the course of the grant. At this particular organization, volunteers staff their hotline and act as a resource to victims of crime within the community. Through HOPE II, this sub-grantee developed a highly structured and substantive one-day training program for volunteers. The volunteer training program developed with HOPE II funds includes presentations from myriad community service providers, such as the police department, adult protective services, and the prosecutor's office, as well as sessions on the tenets of pastoral counseling and opportunities for role play. Volunteers at this organization reported that they attend multiple trainings even though they are not mandatory because the training program is so informative and useful to their efforts to assist victims of crime in their community.*

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responsibilities of an executive director. The organizations in this early stage of development did not have highly structured volunteer programs prior to HOPE II, so the executive directors who embraced the role of volunteer coordinator had a significant task to accomplish. While having the executive director take on this additional responsibility did not necessarily add capacity to organizations as they continued to be operated by a single focused individual, most of the Level 2 and 3 organizations in the process study made substantial progress in laying the foundation for a volunteer program within their agency by adapting several of the materials distributed at the MCVRC training, such as interview guides, background check forms, basic procedures for orienting and training new volunteers, and job descriptions.

Finally, the average number of full-time volunteers reported by Level 2 and 3 organizations in the outcomes evaluation increased across sub-grantee and comparison organizations, while the average number of part-time volunteers decreased across both groups. The increase in full-time volunteers is consistent with the process evaluation which showed that a majority of the HOPE II organizations interviewed reported that they increased their volunteer pool. However, it's notable that the process evaluation provides insight on the fact that, because most Level 2 and 3 organizations' volunteer programs were in their infancy, most of the organizations visited were unable to be selective in the types of volunteers that they recruited. This is in contrast with Level 1 organizations that, due to their pre-existing volunteer capacity, enhanced their volunteer programs by conducting targeted, selective volunteer recruitment efforts.

### Community Partnerships

OVC put forth an explicit mandate for HOPE II sub-grantee organizations to be involved in developing a network of comprehensive services linking their organizations to victim assistance communities. OVC envisioned that these networks would identify critical gaps in services, build on existing resources,

and develop collaborative, innovative solutions that improve communities' response to victims.<sup>16</sup>

In order to assess organizations' community involvement, the outcomes evaluation tracked the number of community partnerships and community engagement activities at the baseline and two follow-up survey periods. Most subgrantee and comparison organizations indicated they had experience with partnerships and community outreach activities prior to HOPE II (at baseline); thus, there was little movement in these areas over time across all organizations and levels.

Though the outcomes evaluation did not yield significant findings, the process evaluation provides additional depth and insight regarding the functions of organizations' partnerships and community engagement. Seven of the nine organizations visited in the process study created new and/or expanded existing partnerships through HOPE II grant activities.<sup>17</sup> Due to their pre-existing organizational capacity and partnerships, Level 1 organizations created or expanded far fewer partnerships through HOPE II than Level 2 and 3 organizations. Level 1 organizations built partnerships based upon referral relationships, and Level 2 and 3 organizations created partnerships based on both referrals and awareness-raising or educational activities. We discuss the details of the organizations' accomplishments in the area of partnerships by organizational level below.

**Community partnerships in Level 1 organizations.** Two of the three Level 1 organizations created or expanded partnerships under HOPE II that were referral relationships, including referrals from law enforcement and other social service agencies. These organizations had the benefit of strong pre-existing partnerships in the community and focused on creating new partnerships that grounded their HOPE II activities, though they did not need new partnerships to support the service provision of their organizations. It was not clear whether the partnerships of the other Level 1 organization were affected or expanded through HOPE II activities because, though there was no evidence of partnership expansion or development at the time of the site visit, this may have occurred at a later time.

**Community partnerships in Level 2 and 3 organizations.** Given the short duration of the HOPE II grant and the nascent status of most of the Level 3 organizations in the process study, the partnerships cultivated under HOPE II primarily enhanced the HOPE II sub-grantees' ability to fill service gaps and expand

*One HOPE II sub-grantee used partnerships to raise awareness and create a community-wide commitment to serving victims of crime. The organization expanded existing partnerships with at least eleven faith-based organizations. Each collaborating organization agreed to attend an educational forum on domestic violence for religious leaders organized by the sub-grantee and subsequently speak on domestic violence within their own organization, publicize the services of the HOPE II sub-grantee, and encourage volunteerism.*

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. RFP: The Helping Outreach Programs to Expand II Cooperative Agreement, Office for Victims of Crime, March 2005.

<sup>17</sup> It was unclear whether partnerships were cultivated through HOPE II activities at two of the nine organizations.

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existing resources. The ability for most of the sub-grantees to develop collaborative, innovative solutions to improve their communities' response to crime victims was very limited as organizations had to create goals that were both attainable during the grant period and that supported the stability of their organizations.

A majority of the Level 2 and 3 organizations in the process study expanded existing partnerships or created new collaborations through HOPE II, though the number of partnerships varied. Of the new partnerships, one organization developed eleven, another organization created five, while two organizations created one new partnership. New partnerships were for referrals, education, and awareness-raising activities. With limited human and/or financial resources, these organizations sought to publicize the existence of their organizations, educate the public on the issues they were addressing, and create or enhance a referral system to facilitate service delivery. Expansion of existing partnerships was largely to raise money or provide referrals. Of existing partnerships, one organization expanded over ten existing partnerships, one expanded two partnerships, and one expanded a single partnership.



Half of the Level 2 and 3 organizations created new referral relationships with a local police department and half created new referral relationships with other social service organizations in their communities in order to fill gaps in services. Four organizations provided educational and/or awareness-raising activities through new partnerships, including educational sessions on abuse prevention and victims' rights, elder abuse, the effects of violence, and domestic violence.

### Sustainable Funding

Though sustainability of HOPE II activities was an inherent goal of the HOPE II grant program for all grantees, in the process evaluation we found that the short duration of the grant period and the resulting intensity of activity meant that capacity prior to HOPE II (usually demonstrated by the Level 1 organizations) largely determined funding sustainability beyond the grant period. Specifically, we learned that Level 1 organizations had significant pre-existing financial and organizational capacity to sustain HOPE II activities beyond the grant period, while the practical realities for Level 2 and 3 grantees limited their ability to focus on sustainability.

In terms of revenue, in the outcomes study, we found increases in revenue for all three levels of sub-grantees both at first and second follow-up. However, although the Level 3 sub-grantees reported increases in revenue, they continued to achieve low total revenues (under \$100,000) compared to the other organizational levels, which is a concern for the sustainability of HOPE II activities. Despite these findings, a statistical test of significance<sup>18</sup> on increases in mean revenue found no statistically significant differences between the sub-grantees and the comparison organizations both at first and second follow-up periods.<sup>19</sup>

**Sustainability in Level 1 organizations.** Level 1 organizations were able to draw from existing financial and organizational capacity to create sustainability plans for HOPE II grant activities. These organizations had experience managing grants and had pre-existing stable sources of funding other than HOPE II, which is supported by findings that showed Level 1 organizations reported much higher average revenues than the Level 2 and 3 organizations prior to applying for HOPE II funds. In the process study, we found that Level 1 sub-grantees planned to sustain HOPE II activities through their other financial options, including the use of additional funding grants and/or through their general operating budgets.

**Sustainability in Level 2 and 3 organizations.** In contrast, a majority of Level 2 and 3 organizations faced uncertain futures and formidable challenges for sustaining HOPE II activities at the time of the process evaluation site visits. Staff at several organizations was hopeful that partnerships created or expanded through HOPE II would lead to collaborative grant writing or new funding sources, though at the time of the site visits there were no concrete funding possibilities. One organization had a pool of donations from religious centers to sustain operations, though it was unclear how the organization planned to obtain other funding in the future. Some sub-grantees had funding to sustain activities for a few months, while others were not able to apply for any grants during the HOPE II grant period, making it unlikely that activities would continue to be funded after HOPE II. If one of the organizations was unable to obtain new funding, the Executive Director reported that it may return to being an all volunteer organization operating at a more limited capacity. Only one organization applied for additional funding during the HOPE II grant period and planned to continue activities contingent upon funding decisions.

<sup>18</sup> An independent-samples t-test of means was used to test for statistical differences with  $\alpha = .05$ .

<sup>19</sup> At first follow-up, mean change in revenue for sub-grantees = \$59,967 and comparison group = -\$41,048 resulting in  $p = .58$ . At second follow-up, mean change in revenue for sub-grantees = \$84,098 and comparison group = -\$18,886 resulting in  $p = .52$ .

*One HOPE II sub-grantee leveraged an existing partnership to expand service and program capacity. Prior to HOPE II, this organization had an established service program in a local government agency to provide information to court users. Through HOPE II, this sub-grantee leveraged its success in the first program to obtain authorization to establish a partnership with another local government agency and expand this service program with a focus on serving crime victims. The HOPE II sub-grantee staff met with the key partner for the new initiative and described their ongoing relationships in the first government agency. The sub-grantee tailored the program to the needs of the new partner agency and they are very pleased with the services that have been established for crime victims in the new site.*

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Though the Level 2 and 3 grantees did not have much additional funding available, the HOPE II grant did provide some financial capacity that may contribute to their ability to obtain sustainable funding in the future. HOPE II provided these organizations with experience managing federal grants, tracking service provision, and fulfilling federal reporting requirements that may be valuable in their ability to obtain additional funding. In fact, in the outcomes study, more than 90% of the sub-grantees within all three organizational levels reported that, due to their participation in the HOPE II grant, they believed they were better able to manage grants and were more competitive when applying for other funding.

### Services to Victims of Crime

In addition to bringing about improvements in the organizational capacity of sub-grantees, the HOPE II grant program was designed to increase the service delivery capacity of organizations to effectively deliver services to victims of crime. As organizations expand, their capacity to offer more services and serve additional clients also increases. We measured service delivery capacity in the outcomes study by tracking changes in the average number of services provided to victims of crime and number of clients served.<sup>20</sup> The expansion of programs and services was also examined in the site visits from the process evaluation.

The average number of services offered and the average number of clients served somewhat increased for all three levels of sub-grantees by first follow-up and continued to increase through the second follow-up period at most organizational levels, while, in contrast, decreases in these numbers were reported by the comparison organizations by second follow-up at most levels. However, when changes in the mean number of clients served were statistically tested,<sup>21</sup> the results showed no significant differences for all sub-grantees



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<sup>20</sup> For most organizations in this study, clients served include victims of crime and other clients served by the organizations. As shown in Exhibit 4 in Chapter 3, approximately 70% of sub-grantee organizations and 62% of comparison organizations served a variety of clients, including crime victims; 30% of sub-grantees and 38% of comparison organizations serve crime victims exclusively.

<sup>21</sup> An independent-samples t-test of means was used to test for statistical differences with  $\alpha = .05$ .

and comparison organizations (i.e., without dividing organizations into levels) between the baseline and first and second follow-up periods.<sup>22</sup>

**Services to Victims of Crime in Level 1 organizations.** Despite the lack of significant findings, we learned in the process evaluation site visits that several Level 1 organizations did increase the services they offered and were able to serve more victims because of organizational expansions. One Level 1 sub-grantee expanded its services offered to victims, victims' families, and people charged with crimes and their families involved in their local family courts to include those involved in their criminal courts as well. Another sub-grantee used its HOPE II funds to expand from a public education and advocacy organization to a provider of direct services to all victims of crime in its urban area. Finally, another organization had never provided victims' services and began a domestic violence counseling service with its HOPE II funds. When the agency received the HOPE II sub-grant, the executive director began offering domestic violence counseling to victims and perpetrators.

**Services to Victims of Crime in Level 2 and 3 organizations** A potential reason for the lack of overall significant findings in the number of services offered and the number of victims served can be further identified in the process evaluation by examining the results for the Level 2 and 3 organizations. Although several Level 1 organizations reported the expansion of programs, which resulted in serving higher numbers of victims of crime, many Level 2 and 3 organizations, because of their low levels of existing capacity, reported that they had to focus short-term on the organizational capacity building activities of HOPE II, which precluded them from serving more victims. Therefore, increasing numbers of victims served was not necessarily a focus for all sub-grantees participating in the HOPE II program.

## Recommendations

The evaluation of the HOPE II grant program has important implications, particularly given the amount of funding devoted to similar initiatives and indications of bipartisan support for the continuation and expansion of these initiatives in the future. The information in this report has implications for funding and practice given trends toward the use of the intermediary model for grant management and also toward funding of faith-based and community initiatives. Funding agencies and technical assistance providers may learn of important ways for models of grant management and technical assistance to be modified and improved.

<sup>22</sup> At first follow-up, mean change in number of clients for sub-grantees = 18.29 and comparison group = 62.27 resulting in  $p=.79$ . At second follow-up, mean change in number of clients for sub-grantees = 10.65 and comparison group = -95.25 resulting in  $p=.43$ .

*One Level 1 sub-grantee reported that they would sustain their program activities through the organization's general operating budget with a plan to seek sustainable funding by leveraging its strong relationships with local government. The program has implemented data collection activities in order to capture statistics on service provision that can then be used to show the value added through program expansion. The sub-grantee will use this data in order to propose that the City Council fund new activities started with HOPE II funds (including their volunteer coordinator position).*

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To this end, below we describe the program model in terms of various characteristics of the grant and the intermediary model employed in the delivery of technical assistance. Based on these findings, we offer recommendations both to technical assistance providers and to future grantmakers of capacity building programs. Finally, we offer recommendations for future evaluations of capacity building efforts.

### For Technical Assistance Providers

#### Target sub-grantee training and technical assistance according to capacity needs.

For the purposes of the evaluation analysis, we organized sub-grantees along a three-level capacity continuum based on their characteristics and experience prior to receiving the HOPE II sub-grant. As discussed previously, MCVRC recognized that the HOPE II sub-grantees' technical assistance needs also

tended to vary by their existing level of capacity. In fact, for a new iteration of HOPE grants, MCVRC planned to organize sub-grantees into different tracks. One track would likely be for organizations similar to the Level 1 sub-grantees in HOPE II, which would be more experienced at managing grant funds. A second track would include developing or emerging organizations such as the Level 2 and 3 organizations in HOPE II. These organizations would receive more specialized assistance in grant management and basic organizational groundwork. We support MCVRC's plan to organize sub-grantees into different tracks for the delivery of technical assistance, and it is one of our recommendations that technical assistance providers of organizational capacity assign sub-grantees to multiple tracks, enabling them to tailor their training and sub-award program to organizations of differing capacity levels and needs.

#### Administer training and technical assistance through internal intermediary staff.

As mentioned briefly, at the core of the technical assistance delivery system set up by MCVRC was the use of site mentors to advise and coach sub-grantees. The site mentors were identified experts in the field of crime victim services. MCVRC hired three consultants with varying and extensive backgrounds in social work, crisis counseling, criminal justice work, community collaboration, organizational capacity, faith-based organizations,

#### Recommendations for Technical Assistance Providers

- Target training and technical assistance according to capacity needs
- Administer training and technical assistance through internal staff
- Provide more specialized technical assistance
  - Conduct formal needs assessments of sub-grantees
  - Create a technical assistance plan for each sub-grantee

and victims' services to serve as site mentors. A fourth site mentor was hired as a full-time staff person at MCVRC. Each site mentor was assigned to work with between six and eight sub-grantee organizations, and MCVRC assigned sites to each consultant by matching the sub-grantees with the consultants' background and experience.

The four MCVRC site mentors maintained varying levels of involvement with HOPE II sub-grantees and this inconsistency was reflected in the organizations' varied experiences. Several sub-grantees did not understand the role of the site mentor and expressed dissatisfaction with the level of technical assistance available. Many organizations indicated that they did not receive meaningful assistance or support from their site mentors. Despite the negative experiences of some sub-grantees, other organizations had a positive relationship with their site mentors and appreciated the guidance they received. Technical assistance for these organizations consisted of guidance for start-up implementation of the grant, including assistance with program requirements, grant writing, development of training and marketing materials, evaluating objectives and budgets, and answering questions as needed during the grant period.

Based on these findings, we concluded that the outside consultants hired to serve as site mentors were unable to provide uniform support to the sub-grantees. Therefore, we recommend the use of internal intermediary staff to manage sites and provide technical assistance, rather than consultants. Internal staff can be supervised more closely and receive support from the entire organization. This type of staffing configuration would support the close management of technical assistance provision, a quality assurance process, and consistent standards for technical assistance delivery.

**Specialized technical assistance from the intermediary.** An important finding from the process evaluation, which was supported by the findings from the outcomes evaluation, is that organizations varied in the consistency and intensity of technical assistance received from the intermediary and site mentors. For the most part, the nature of the relationship between the site mentors and their sub-grantees was not specified by MCVRC. Instead, in many



cases, the site mentor was expected to regularly check in with the sub-grantees and offer them the opportunity to initiate a dialogue. The sub-grantees were given responsibility for identifying areas of need and indicating how much or how little technical assistance they required. Based on these findings, we recommend taking measures to promote the successful delivery of technical assistance to organizations in future grant programs.

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A formal needs assessment should be conducted with all sub-grantees in order to document baseline levels of capacity and target areas for technical assistance provision. This needs assessment process should be designed and facilitated by the intermediary organization and based upon best practices for organizational capacity building. Sub-grantees' input may be considered in the needs assessment; however, sub-grantee recommendations alone are insufficient to inform technical assistance provision.

Finally, a technical assistance plan should be written up following the needs assessment to facilitate the delivery of services to sub-grantees. The sub-grantee organization should be well-informed regarding the needs assessment and technical assistance process in terms of: 1) how the assessment is conducted; 2) how the results of the process inform the provision of technical assistance; and 3) the scope of technical assistance that will be provided and the anticipated goals and outcomes. A technical assistance plan write-up following the needs assessment should facilitate this process.

### For Grantmakers

Based on the findings from both the outcomes and process evaluations, we offer the following recommendations for any future iterations of the HOPE II grant program:

#### Focus on improvements in specific areas of capacity.

The HOPE II grant was successful in specific, limited ways, and these enhancements imply a successful strategy for future grants. For example, the sub-grantees showed improvement in a central focus of HOPE II, the development and enhancement of a

volunteer program through the formation of a permanent, full-time volunteer coordinator position. The sub-grantees were strongly encouraged to create a volunteer coordinator position and were given both substantial funding and uniform technical assistance (such as sample job descriptions, volunteer program materials, etc.) during the grant period to create and support this position. Therefore, we concluded that when the grant program is focused on specific areas of growth across all sub-grantees, we are more likely to observe capacity changes in these targeted areas among larger numbers of sub-grantees. Otherwise, changes in capacity are too scattered and inconsistent to be able to enact changes across multiple grant recipients.

#### Recommendations for Grantmakers

- Focus on improvements in specific areas of capacity
- Award grants to organizations that have demonstrated ability to increase capacity
- Ensure an adequate amount of time for grant implementation
- Expand allowable expenses to include local training opportunities

### **Award grants to organizations that have demonstrated ability to**

**increase capacity.** OVC, with input from MCVRC, selected the final group of FBCO applicants to receive sub-awards. OVC developed certain criteria to determine eligibility for award. These criteria included: no prior Office of Justice Programs (OJP) or Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding; service in high-crime urban areas; and assistance targeted towards underserved victim populations.<sup>23</sup> However, once these criteria were applied, only 29 of the 181 applicant organizations were identified as eligible for a HOPE II grant. Since the original grant program was designed to serve 48 sub-grantees, all of the 29 organizations found to be eligible by OVC were awarded a HOPE II sub-grant, reducing the number of HOPE II sub-grants to 29 awards. Subsequent to the award announcement one of the awardees was found to be ineligible for funding, and during the sub-grant period, one of the sub-grantees was found to be noncompliant, resulting in 27 sub-grantees.

Because the process used for selecting sub-grantees severely limited the number of eligible applicants, the quality of grant applications, particularly the organizations' proposed plans for capacity building, were not a consideration in assigning awards, resulting in a sub-grantee class that was not uniformly likely to succeed. We found that it is important for grant recipients to have demonstrated some ability to grow their organization's capacity and to have a reasonable plan proposed for doing so. Otherwise capacity building funds and technical assistance may not be able to help very small or new organizations that still need to establish the basis for organizational change. Therefore, we recommend that future grantmakers consider the quality of grant applications, including the proposed plans for capacity building, in future capacity building grant distributions.

**Ensure an adequate amount of time for grant implementation.** From the beginning of the HOPE II grant, MCVRC had concerns about the short timeline for completing the project. The original timeline included a total of 6 months of technical assistance and funding for sub-grantees. MCVRC preferred 12-month timeline to provide technical assistance and to allow sub-grantees to achieve their capacity goals. The sub-grantee timeline was eventually expanded from 6-months to 10-months.

Despite the extension of the sub-grantee timeline, most sub-grantees in the process evaluation expressed concern that the timeline was inadequate for organizations attempting to start up operations or expand new programs. Like MCVRC, they believed that 10 months was not a long enough period for the necessary capacity building activities to evolve in order to promote funding

*The director of one small organization was particularly insightful in his comments on the funding and timeline for HOPE II: "It takes time to develop things and it's not possible to look for funding that will keep a program in place at the same time that they are getting the program up and running, especially for a grant focused on seed money.... Pulling services away when they exist is much worse than never having them in the first place."*

<sup>23</sup> Underserved victim populations are determined by the type of crime committed or the victim's age, gender, ethnicity, disability status or sexual orientation. Research findings and publications pertinent to underserved victims of crime are available on the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) website. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/uc.htm>.

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sustainability for HOPE II activities and to enact change within organizations' structures and procedures. In addition, several of the sub-grantees were unable to spend their entire \$50,000 sub-grant in the short time allowed.

Particularly for smaller organizations a common tension expressed was, given the constraints of the funding and timeline, implementation of grant activities meant a decision between the start-up of program activities and the search for sustainable funding. The lack of funds and time were frequently the cause of this conflict. Staff at organizations that did not have pre-existing capacity to support HOPE II activities were not able to implement grant activities and seek sustainable funding simultaneously. Further, one sub-grantee alluded to the fact that implementation and sustainability cannot simultaneously occur by saying that "you have to prove success before you can win funding." Another sub-grantee asserted that HOPE II grantees were not necessarily set up to succeed by expressing, "if you're only funding a program for less than a year then how concerned are you really [about sustainability]?"

The director of one small organization was particularly insightful in his comments on the funding and timeline for HOPE II: "It takes time to develop things and it's not possible to look for funding that will keep a program in place at the same time that they are getting the program up and running, especially for a grant focused on seed money.... Pulling services away when they exist is much worse than never having them in the first place." He explained that this situation can damage clientele and make them hesitant to seek out services from other similar organizations. He argued further that removing funds or not positioning a program for sustainability after the grant period may also have huge ramifications for an organization's ability to build relationships with clients.

We agree with both MCVRC and sub-grantee staff that more time should have been allowed for sub-grantees to enact their grant plans and spend down their sub-grants. Many organizations needed additional time up front to get their plans implemented before they could start spending down their funds. Additional time also would have been useful for obtaining new funding to sustain HOPE II activities.

### **Expand allowable expenses to include local training opportunities.**

Training and technical assistance was initiated with the start-up training conducted by MCVRC and was to be facilitated continuously throughout the grant period by each sub-grantees' site mentor. The initial training by MCVRC was targeted at organizations with very little capacity for organizational operations and, thus, was most useful to Level 2 and 3 organizations. A majority of the Level 2 and 3 organizations expressed satisfaction with the grant start-up training. In contrast, Level 1 organizations found the initial MCVRC training less useful because it was not targeted to organizations with more than a basic understanding of organizational development.

After the conference, site mentors were to continue providing training and technical assistance to sub-grantees. Sub-grantees were suppose to rely on their site mentors as a resource and were expected to consult with them as needed; however, expectations for the relationship remained unclear for many of the sub-grantees throughout the grant period.

Because several of the organizations had specialized needs sometimes unique to their own communities, we recommend additional flexibility in allowing sub-grantees to use funds for local training other than from the intermediary organization. It is difficult for one organization to be all things to a number of small organizations scattered across the country. In addition, several times sub-grantees described their program needs as unique to their communities and expressed a preference for a locally-based consultant who would be able to understand their local communities better.

## For Future Research

Future research is integral to building a knowledgebase for understanding the dynamics of capacity change in FBCOs and for supporting continuous improvement in the design of grant programs and technical assistance initiatives. To this end, we offer the following brief recommendations to researchers.

### **Evaluation planning should be coordinated with program design.**

We recommend that policymakers and grantmakers prioritize evaluation planning in conjunction with grant program design. Thereby grantmakers and evaluators will have the opportunity to

collaborate and fully consider the potential implications of grant program design decisions on outcomes. This strategic alignment will also ensure that evaluability considerations such as grant requirements and the sub-grantee selection process are taken into account in the planning stage with an outcomes perspective in mind.

**Mixed methods approaches are most useful.** In terms of evaluation methods, we strongly advocate a mixed methods approach to evaluating organizational capacity change. Organizational change is slow and incremental, and it is difficult to capture the small accomplishments of capacity change without having the dual perspectives of both an in-depth process study and outcomes study as components in a comprehensive evaluation.

### **Recommendations for Researchers**

- **Evaluation planning should be coordinated with program design**
- **Mixed methods approaches are most useful**
- **Measuring capacity changes takes time**
- **Categorize diverse organizations by initial level of capacity**

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**Measuring capacity changes takes time.** In assessing the growth of organizations it is important to remember that capacity building is a slow process. It takes time for managers and staff at FBCOs to convert new knowledge into new organizational practices. In a similar vein, given the complex needs of many FBCOs, the level of support provided by funders and intermediary agencies may only result in modest gains, especially when this support is provided over a short timeframe such as the 10-month duration of the HOPE II grant.

**Categorize diverse organizations by initial level of capacity.** Capacity building gains can be difficult to aggregate over a diverse group of organizations because: 1) organizations vary at the outset in their size, sophistication, and composition; and 2) they vary somewhat in their goals for capacity building. For example, we learned from the process evaluation that some HOPE II sub-grantees sought technical assistance that would increase their ability to serve more clients. In contrast, other sub-grantees made it their goal to operate more effectively and efficiently at their current scale. For some sub-grantees, direct service to victims of crime was a new capacity while for others it was an existing capacity. As a result, in our analysis we have made efforts to detect movement from a number of starting points (levels 1, 2, and 3) towards a variety of capacity building goals, needs, and priorities.



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## **Corporate Offices**

**Cambridge, Massachusetts**  
55 Wheeler Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138-1168

**Bethesda, Maryland**  
4550 Montgomery Avenue  
Suite 800 North  
Bethesda, MD 20814-3343

**Durham, North Carolina**  
Maplewood Building  
4620 Creekstone Drive, Suite 190  
Durham, NC 27703-8062

**Atlanta, Georgia**  
2200 Century Parkway, Suite 980  
Atlanta, GA 30345-3105