

OVC NEWS & PROGRAM UPDATES

IMPROVING VICTIM SERVICES THROUGH INNOVATION



June 2015

OVC Awards More Than \$12 Million to Support Vision 21 Recommendations

OVC is pleased to announce that it has awarded \$12,755,760 in Fiscal Year 2014 Vision 21 grants. Through seven competitive solicitations, OVC has launched its Vision 21 program, an OVC call-to-action to address the needs of crime victims in a radically different way. Congress' allocation of 2014 Vision 21 funding, coupled with OVC's use of a portion of its discretionary funding from the Crime Victims Fund to support Vision 21 programs, fund 35 awards to state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations throughout the Nation. Their projects focus on building capacity through innovation, providing comprehensive legal assistance, and addressing continuing and emerging challenges facing victims and service providers.

Technology and mobility are of particular importance in achieving such transformative change in victim services. Thirteen grants address states' ability to improve victims' access to services by enhancing existing technology systems, building new platforms to increase access to resources, and improving accuracy in administrative reporting. Furthermore, the Vision 21 awards emphasize accessibility and connectivity in today's mobile world by funding awards to three organizations to develop applications that allow users to access victim services from mobile devices such as cell phones or tablets. These awards will enhance public awareness, outreach, and education by developing distinct mobile applications that connect victims with resources and services.

Aimed at reaching underserved victim populations, OVC funds projects that expand services to victims who would otherwise have difficulty accessing services, whether the victims are located in the U.S. or are U.S. citizens abroad. Awards support development of innovative Community Wellness Center projects as central organizing forces within three tribal communities. Two awards establish state-level demonstration sites that create a coordinated approach to addressing youth victimization. Another OVC program supports demonstration sites in developing strategies to identify and treat child and youth victims and to assist their families and caregivers. Additional awards augment victim legal assistance networks, providing technical assistance to comprehensive, collaborative networks that provide holistic legal assistance to victims of crime.

All seven grant programs embody the Vision 21 mission of transforming the crime victim services field to meet the challenges of the 21st century. All of the

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



OVC is pleased to present the summer 2015 edition of *News & Program Updates*, which focuses on implementation of innovative practices to ensure that the crime victim services field is equipped to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Inside, you will find details on several OVC programs throughout the Nation that foster the development of innovative practices by victim service organizations that provide cutting-edge approaches designed to meet emerging challenges in the field.

2014 saw the launch of OVC's Vision 21 grant programs. One article provides an overview of these 35 awards—made through competitive grant solicitations—to support a variety of projects. You will read about a program that provides direct assistance to victims who have never been served or for whom services are not easily available. You will also learn about awards supporting the development of mobile applications to connect victims with resources and services. OVC recognizes that embracing the benefits of technology—and the emerging methods to connect individuals with service organizations quickly through a click or swipe of a finger—enables providers to help more victims.

This newsletter provides an update on OVC's development of innovative initiatives, including:

- National Sexual Assault TeleNursing Center initiative;
- Human Trafficking Task Force e-bulletin and Web site;
- SANE-SART federal advisory committee report on improving the response to sexual violence in Indian Country;
- Needs assessment of VOCA State Assistance Administrator responses to financial fraud, elder abuse, and polyvictimization;
- OVC support of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Survey of Victim Service Organizations (NSVSO); and

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[Click here](#) to access previous issues of *OVC News & Program Updates* on topics such as responding to mass casualties, elder abuse, and serving children exposed to violence.

FY 2014 Vision 21 Grant Awardees by Category

• Building State Technology Capacity

Thirteen awards to the following VOCA state administering agencies—

- **California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP):** Online Access Project to provide an online application, online communication with law enforcement, and online access for claimants and providers to verify application and bill status.
- **Colorado Division of Criminal Justice:** Colorado Victim Compensation Database and Case Management Enhancement Project
- **Criminal Justice Coordinating Council:** State of Georgia Grants Management System Project
- **Florida Bureau of Victim Compensation:** Enhancing Victim Compensation Technology
- **Florida Office of the Attorney General:** Automated Victim Notification-Text Messaging Enhancement Project
- **Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority**
- **Montana Board of Crime Control**
- **New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety**
- **New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission:** Vision 21 Grant Application for a Victim Compensation and Grants Management System
- **Ohio Attorney General:** Improving the Statewide Grants Management System to Increase Its Efficiency and Resourcefulness
- **Rhode Island Office of the General Treasurer:** Technological Improvements to the Rhode Island Crime Victim Compensation Program
- **State of New Hampshire Department of Justice:** New Hampshire Victims Compensation Technology Improvements Project
- **Texas Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division:** Telemedicine Psychiatric Services for Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas

• Victim Services Mobile Application

Three awards to—

- **Family Service Association, Inc. (DBA: Family Services)**
- **National Indian Justice Center**
- **National Network to End Domestic Violence**

• Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth Technical Assistance Project

One award to—

- **National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**

• Using Technology to Expand National and International Access to Victim Services

Eight awards to—

- **Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center:** Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center
- **Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center:** Sexual Assault Support and Help for Americans Abroad
- **Identity Theft Resource Center:** Project RECLAIM (Readiness and Engagement for Crime Victims Through Leveraging Assistance, Information and Monitoring)
- **National Center for Victims of Crime:** VictimCONNECT, A National Crime Victim Helpline
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** Broadening Engagement and Connection Through Digital Advocacy
- **National Network to End Domestic Violence:** Apoyo Tecnologica (Technology Help and Support) Project
- **Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network:** Serving More Victims Online and by Phone Through the National Sexual Assault Hotline
- **Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network:** Expanding the National Sexual Assault Online Hotline for Under-served Spanish-Speaking Victims

• Tribal Community Wellness Centers: Serving Crime Victims' Needs

Three awards to—

- **Blackfeet Tribal Business Council**
- **Tulalip Tribes of Washington**
- **Wiconi Wawokiya, Inc.**

• Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth State Demonstration Project

Two awards to—

- **Virginia Department of Social Services**
- **Montana Board of Crime Control**

• Victim Legal Assistance Networks

Four awards to—

- **District of Columbia Office of Victim Services**
- **Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council**
- **Montana Board of Crime Control**
- **State of New York**

• Victim Legal Assistance Networks Technical Assistance Project

One award to—

- **National Crime Victim Law Institute**

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FY 2014 Vision 21 grants exemplify the principles presented in the *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Service Final Report* at http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21_Report.pdf. Released in 2013 after an intensive examination of victim services, the Report provides an original framework for enhancing and modernizing victim services. OVC looks forward to the implementation of the newly awarded FY 2014 projects—and sharing updates with you as grantees begin to make the goals of Vision 21 a reality. Visit <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/> for more information on Vision 21.

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- A variety of online trainings that victim service providers can access at any time at no cost.

Finally, we offer you a fascinating article penned by a victim's surviving family member, who describes the deep impact of a wrongful conviction on her family and herself.

We hope the articles in this issue are of value to your work. OVC will continue to provide updates on our efforts to support the mission of Vision 21 through innovative approaches for victim services providers. To move the crime victims field forward, we must continue to understand the needs of victims, develop new means of connecting with survivors, and provide them with services in ways that work best for them.

—Joye Frost, Director
Office for Victims of Crime

Service, Support, and Justice: An Evidence-Based Strategy to Enhance Law Enforcement Response to Victims

By William Petty, OVC Fellow

History

In 1999, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), with funding from OVC, held a national summit on victims of crime that included more than 100 representatives from the criminal justice field and allied professions. The final summit report highlighted seven critical needs of crime victims. It concluded that, "while law enforcement agencies alone cannot satisfy all of the seven needs, they play a major role in ensuring that victims' needs are broadly understood and consistently met."¹

Building on the summit outcomes and through the OVC-funded Improving Police-Based Victim Services project, IACP provided training and technical assistance to more than 1,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide. From this work, IACP realized that thousands of other departments could benefit from enhancing their response to victims of crime and that there needed to be a more systemic approach to achieving change. Consequently, OVC supported IACP's creation of a national strategy to bring about cultural transformation within America's law enforcement community, helping to move toward a philosophy and practice of enhanced victim response.

SEVEN CRITICAL NEEDS OF VICTIMS

- Safety
- Support
- Information
- Access
- Continuity
- Voice
- Justice

Stakeholder Engagement

IACP actively sought leadership input from the field by engaging a national multidisciplinary advisory group at four national informational forums that included law enforcement leaders and trainers, victim advocates, service providers, and survivors of crime. Information garnered from these efforts established the foundation for development of a draft strategy, published in 2005, that was subsequently field tested in pilot sites of various sizes. Based on lessons learned from the pilot tests, IACP finalized the draft and developed companion documents, which include an implementation guide, resource toolkit, and training supplement. Collectively, *Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims: A 21st Century Strategy (ELERV)*, released in 2009, highlights the seven critical needs of victims, identifies benefits and challenges agencies face in responding to victims, and presents core elements that enhance an agency's response to victims. Around the time of the release, OVC staff worked with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) personnel to place an announcement of the strategy and an (existing) link to the resources on the COPS Web site. The extent that law enforcement agencies across the Nation have adopted and implemented the strategy remains unknown but is generally thought to be low. Because the OVC funding ended in 2011, IACP had no resources to support further dissemination, promotion, or technical assistance.

Next Step: Evaluation

IACP and OVC strongly believe that the strategy and implementation tools are an excellent set of resources. Unfortunately, the implementation of the strategy never underwent scientific evaluation. Although IACP has considerable anecdotal information from the jurisdictions

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¹ International Association of Chiefs of Police, May 2000, *What Do Victims Want? Effective Strategies to Achieve Justice for Victims of Crime*, Washington, D.C.: IACP [p. iii].

Victims' Voices

The Debi Carter Case, Again

By Christy Sheppard

I have lived most of my life with the tragedy of the rape and murder of my cousin, Debi Carter. I say most of my life because I was 8 years old on December 8, 1982, when my mother had to deliver the news to my Aunt Peppy that Debi was dead. I also say most of my life because the subject of Debi's murder has been a headline for 32 years.

Five years after Debi's murder, two men were convicted in separate trials; one received a life term and the other received a death sentence. My Aunt Peppy never missed a day of either trial for Ron Williamson or Dennis Fritz. Day after day, she listened to the horrific details of how her daughter was beaten, raped, and fought back until her last breath. After the trials, Aunt Peppy felt as though she knew what had happened to Debi and that Williamson and Fritz were—without a doubt—the men that had murdered her daughter.

Twelve years after the convictions of Williamson and Fritz, the local paper reported that their DNA didn't match the samples from Debi's case and that they would be released from prison. We were all very upset and didn't understand how all the evidence stacked against Williamson and Fritz was now meaningless. On a cool Oklahoma morning in April 1999, we gathered at the district attorney's office with so many questions and [got] few answers from the DA.

The streets were packed with news trucks from local, state, and national news stations. We were confused as to why there was so much interest in a murder of a young woman that took place 17 years [ago]. As we entered the courtroom, we would soon realize this media frenzy was about Ron Williamson, Dennis Fritz, and the attorneys involved, with little to no mention of Debi Carter. As we listened carefully to the judge explaining that the DNA in this case didn't match Williamson's and Fritz's, we also learned—along with the rest of the world in open court—that there was a DNA match to a man by the name of Glen Gore, who had testified against Ron and Dennis. All that we thought we knew disappeared. In shock, we watched quietly as the two men who, we had been made to believe, murdered Debi and simply walked away. We were then escorted into another room and informed that the man whose DNA matched [that in] Debi's case had escaped from prison that day.

In the years to follow, there were civil suits, book deals for the exonerated men, and two more trials involving Gore. It became painfully clear that there was a lot more out there about what had happened to Debi than what we learned early on. I began to gather as much information for Aunt Peppy as I could find in order to help her better understand what really happened to her daughter. I felt that if

anyone deserved to know, it was Debi's own mother.

As we searched for more answers about Debi, we came to a new understanding of the innocence of Ron Williamson and Dennis Fritz. But with this new understanding also came frustration with the justice system as a whole, and how victims' families are treated. Shortly after Debi was murdered, the case was known as "The Debi Carter Case." Yet, as time moved on and both Ron and Dennis were arrested and charges were filed, it became "The Ron Williamson Case" or "The Dennis Fritz Case" or "The Glen Gore Case." The focus shifted from the victim to the accused. It seemed as though Debi became lost and her existence [was] just another piece of evidence.



Debi Carter, two days before she was murdered in December 1982.

Once Ron Williamson and Dennis Fritz had been cleared of murder, Glen Gore eventually came to trial, based on the same DNA evidence that had cleared Fritz and Williamson. This evidence proved that it was Glen Gore's DNA that was left at the scene. On June 24, 2003, Gore was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death, but his death sentence was overturned in August 2005. He was eventually convicted at his second trial on June 21, 2006, and sentenced to life without parole.

While feeling somewhat used and neglected during both the trial process and the exoneration process of Debi's case, there also came feelings of guilt. There was guilt that we somehow aided in the imprisonment of Ron and Dennis. We all truly hated these men, wished them harm and, in Ron's case, wanted to watch him die. There is no real way to apologize or take that hatred back.

So, now my Aunt Peppy has lived longer without her daughter than she got to live with her. She also lives with the feeling that she was a part of a broken system that sent two innocent men to prison for a murder they didn't commit. All in all, we live with a sense that justice has not been served, and we hope no other family experiences the pain and anguish we have carried all these years.

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On September 24, 2014, OVC hosted a roundtable discussion to determine how OVC can improve services to original victims in cases of wrongful convictions. Participants in the discussion represented the full spectrum of stakeholders in these cases and included prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement officials, criminal justice and community-based victim advocates, mental health professionals, and survivors who experienced the exoneration of their offender. Much of the discussion focused on victim notification, or how the original victim in the case is first notified that the criminal justice system may have convicted an individual who did not commit the crime.

How this information is conveyed to original victims can set the tone for their experience with the criminal justice system. Learning that the offender they thought was guilty may not be can trigger memories of the victimization and cause significant trauma. Notifications of this magnitude, when conveyed using trauma-informed, victim-centered practices, can minimize potential re-victimization and additional emotional and psychological harm.

Using the information gathered during the roundtable discussion, OVC plans to develop guidance for criminal justice professionals and community-based allies. This guidance will explain the steps required for sensitive notification in wrongful conviction cases and will list resources for support and services that victims may need in the immediate aftermath of being notified of a wrongful conviction.

The Victims' Voices column is a recurring feature of OVC News & Program Updates. Let us know if you or someone you know would like to share a story with the field about the journey from crime victimization. Our hope is that hearing directly from victims themselves will educate and inspire others. Victims' Voices contributors may choose to remain anonymous. Contact William Petty at William.Petty@usdoj.gov for more information.

The National Sexual Assault TeleNursing Center: Providing Support and Care for Victims in Remote and Challenging Areas

By Kristina Rose, Deputy Director, Office for Victims of Crime

The use of telemedicine to deliver health care in remote areas or challenging settings is not a new concept. According to the American Telemedicine Association, this technology has been around for the past 40 years and, in that time, has grown in popularity and usage. Telemedicine can reduce costs, expand the reach for health care providers and, in many cases, improve the quality of interactions with patients.¹ In 2012, OVC began to explore the use of telemedicine to deliver forensic-medical examination support for sexual assault patients in rural, tribal, military, and correctional communities.

Research suggests that jurisdictions that use Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) or Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFEs) to conduct forensic examinations of sexual assault victims contribute to higher prosecution and conviction rates.² Many jurisdictions around the country (nearly 600) have instituted SANE programs, which are often part of a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). These multidisciplinary teams usually include the SANE or SAFE, a prosecutor, a victim advocate, a law enforcement officer and, oftentimes, a crime lab. SANEs and SAFEs receive intensive classroom and clinical training, which covers evidence collection, injury detection methods, chain-of-evidence requirements, methods to avoid re-traumatizing a victim during an examination, and other topics related to both prosecutions and meeting the needs of sexual assault victims.

This collaborative approach for responding to sexual assault has produced numerous best practices that—

- Enhance the quality of health care for individuals who have been sexually assaulted;
- Improve the quality of forensic evidence;
- Increase law enforcement's ability to collect information, file charges, and refer an investigation to prosecution; and
- Increase prosecution rates over time.

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¹ American Telemedicine Association, www.americantelemed.org.

² See, for example, *Impact Evaluation of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program* (pdf, 129 pages), December 2003, and *Systems Change Analysis of SANE Programs: Identifying the Mediating Mechanisms of Criminal Justice System Impact* (pdf, 202 pages), January 2009.

Unfortunately, there are many jurisdictions within the United States that do not have access to trained SANEs, SAFEs, or SARTs because of the distance and lack of resources. Rural and tribal communities are particularly prone to these challenges. Even when professionals in these communities have received training, it can be very difficult to maintain an adequate number of trained medical personnel. Often, there are too few cases being reported to maintain a satisfactory level of training and competency. Without access to trained, compassionate, and competent SAFEs, sexual assault victims may experience additional trauma from the exam, the evidence may be collected incorrectly, or findings may be misinterpreted and ultimately impede the criminal investigation.

Telemedicine offers a manageable solution to problems associated with providing health care at a distance. Telemedicine technology uses video conferencing, remote monitoring equipment, and electronic health records to link patients in remote areas to medical providers located elsewhere. Many jurisdictions around the country are using telecommunication technologies to improve access to medical services that would not be available otherwise. This is evident in the area of child sexual abuse. States such as Florida, Georgia, California, and Utah are all using some aspect of telemedicine to deliver sexual assault forensic examinations to children in rural or tribal areas. A study conducted by the University of California-Davis

found that the use of telemedicine to assist in the examination of sexually assaulted children in rural communities resulted in significant positive changes in the methods of examination and evidence collection. This research indicated that telemedicine helped to improve the overall quality of the exams.

OVC, with assistance from the National Institute of Justice, issued a solicitation in 2012 to develop a national telemedicine center for sexual assault victims and provide support to four pilot sites. The goal of this project was to create an entity that could provide a community of support for sexual assault clinicians to increase their confidence, competence, and retention and to develop quality care for sexual assault patients. The grant was awarded to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health SANE Program.

After 2 years of training, protocol development, and equipment purchase and testing, the National Sexual Assault TeleNursing Center (NTC) formally opened its doors in the fall of 2014. The NTC is now able to provide 24/7 remote clinician-to-clinician assistance. The first pilot site to “go live” was the Naval Base at Twenty-Nine Palms, California. This hospital had just started a SANE program and felt that the support provided by NTC was just what they needed to improve and enhance their forensic-medical services to victims of sexual assault. A tribal site, the Hopi Reservation in Arizona, and a rural site, Lakeside Sutter Hospital in

California, have also been selected. The individuals directing those programs hope that this new service will encourage victims of sexual assault to come forward and report their assaults. These sites plan to go live in summer 2015. NTC hopes to add a correctional facility to its list of pilot sites in the near future.

No one entity can provide all of the expertise necessary to make such a venture successful. NTC is supported by numerous collaborative partners that provide subject-matter expertise in the area of victim advocacy as well as support from tribal, military, correctional, and rural communities. In addition, this project includes an evaluation component to document its development and ensure that it is being carried out in the manner in which it was intended.

OVC is energized by the outpouring of support and encouragement from the victim services field in introducing this innovative approach to reaching underserved victims of sexual assault. A report on the progress of NTC’s implementation is due in late 2015. OVC’s ultimate goal is to ensure that all victims of sexual assault have access to a trained SANE or SAFE and receive a forensic-medical exam performed by experts and with compassionate care. It is through cutting-edge approaches like the National Sexual Assault TeleNursing Center that sexual assault prosecutions can be successful, victims can receive appropriate treatment, and justice can be served.

³ Kristen J. MacLeod, M.D., et al., 2009, “Using Telemedicine to Improve the Care Delivered to Sexual Abused Children in Rural, Underserved Hospitals,” *Pediatrics*, 123(1): 223–8.

National Survey of Victim Service Organizations: Getting to Know Victim Service Providers

Law enforcement agencies, domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, social work agencies, and district attorneys’ offices have a wide range of missions, but they all share a common goal: serving victims of crime. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), with support from OVC and the Office on Violence Against Women, is conducting the National Survey of Victim Service Organiza-

tions (NSVSO), the first nationwide attempt to survey victim service organizations to determine how they are organized and funded, and what are their areas of need. The survey will provide comprehensive statistical information about the state of victim services in the United States and will yield critical data regarding the capacity of victim service organizations. Analysis of the NSVSO results will

identify whether there is a need to expand or change the way in which these organizations provide services, the types of victims that receive services, and determine whether victims are receiving the services they need.

The RAND Corporation, through a cooperative agreement awarded by BJS, will partner with the University of Chicago’s National

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that have implemented the strategy, there is no empirical evidence to support the argument that it is effective. An evaluation of the strategy is critical to furthering its implementation.

In 2014, OVC invested funding for a multiyear project. IACP serves as the technical assistance provider to three representative, mid-size law enforcement agencies as they develop and implement victim response strategies, which will include the reporting of crime data via the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).² The ultimate goals are to increase confidence and trust in law enforcement, improve their respective communities' perceptions of the importance of procedural justice, and enhance partnerships that support the diverse needs of crime victims. The National Institute of Justice will fund an independent impact evaluation and serve as the program evaluation coordinator. These investments are essential for rigorous evaluation and documentation of the outcomes for implementation of each site's strategic plan. OVC's long-range plan is to support the development of a national knowledge transfer method and to release the final product to the law enforcement field.

ABOUT NIBRS

The National Incident-Based Reporting System is a reporting system for reporting crimes known to the police. For each crime incident coming to the attention of law enforcement, a variety of data are collected and submitted to the FBI, such as the nature and types of specific offenses committed during the incident, characteristics of the victim(s), and information about the offender(s) and any other persons arrested in connection with the incident. NIBRS offers comprehensive information and nationwide data about crime incidents that might be of key interest to victim service providers, policymakers, and law enforcement. Read OVC's *National Incident-Based Reporting System: Using NIBRS Data to Understand Victimization* at <http://www.ovc.gov/pubs/NIBRS/> for more on the benefits of using NIBRS.

² To help advance the development of data and research concerning the crime victims field, OVC is supporting the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) effort to generate nationally-representative incident-based data on crimes reported to the police and other law enforcement agencies by increasing the number of agencies reporting NIBRS data.

Improving Federal Agency Response to Sexual Violence in Tribal Nations

Debra Whitcomb, Visiting Fellow, Office for Victims of Crime; Rebecca Murdock, Visiting Fellow, Office for Victims of Crime; Shannon May, Victims of Crime Project Manager, FBI

On November 14, 2014, representatives of OVC's National Coordination Committee on the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Sexual Assault Response Team (SANE-SART) Initiative (Committee) presented the Committee's *Report to the U.S. Attorney General on Improving Federal Agency Response to Sexual Violence in Tribal Nations: Issues and Recommendations* (Report) to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder. Created in 2011, the Committee's charge was to inform OVC and its federal, tribal, and nongovernmental partners of existing resources, challenges, and gaps related to sexual assault response and to make recommendations to the Attorney General for improving the federal agency response to sexual violence in AI/AN communities.

The Report discusses four critical issues: federal agency collaboration at the local level, Department of Justice (DOJ) personnel policy changes, DOJ grant solicitations and funding, and public safety and public health. Below are a few of the key recommendations:

- Develop district-specific, formal sexual violence guidelines in collaboration with federal and tribal partners.
- Strategically hire, train, and assess federal employees assigned to Indian Country-related positions.
- Facilitate the establishment of dedicated, sustained funding for tribal victim assistance programs.
- Facilitate victims' access to cultural, spiritual, and ceremonial practices in the aftermath of sexual violence.

This represents an historic moment. Decades, perhaps centuries of grassroots work has been done within tribal communities. . . . Now there is formal recognition that the coordination of federal and tribal efforts is a national priority.

— Sarah Deer, Committee Chair
Statement available at

<http://www.ovc.gov/archive/news.html>

- Recognize sexual violence as both a criminal justice issue and a health care issue.

With the understanding that these and other elements of an effective response to sexual violence are not entirely within the Attorney General's authority, the Report encourages collaboration and coordination among and between federal, tribal, and local agencies that investigate, respond to, and prosecute sexual violence cases. The recommendations address such concerns as identifying

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National Survey of Victim Service Organizations: Getting to Know

Victim Service Providers • CONTINUED FROM PG. 6

Opinion Research Center and the National Center for Victims of Crime to provide assistance with survey design, implementation, and data collection. BJS assembled a panel of expert victim service practitioners to assist in survey development, create a viable process for its administration, and serve as an advisory body.

The NSVSO is being administered in two phases. In Phase I, a broad online survey will be issued to a wide range of victim service organization leaders and staff throughout the country to capture the fundamental elements of victim service organizations. Questions will focus on—

- Victim service organization location and numbers served.
- Victim service organization funding.
- Victim service organization staff and volunteers.
- Victim populations served.
- Services provided.
- Technology capabilities.
- Challenges.

Before finalizing and releasing this broad survey later in 2015, BJS and its research partners are ensuring that the survey is designed and structured effectively. During the summer of 2014, researchers conducted cognitive testing through in-person and telephone interviews of staff from 18 victim service organizations to analyze the draft survey's content, wording, and length. Testing examined participants' understanding of the survey questions, the time it took to complete the survey, and other difficulties associated with taking the survey.

BJS' research team is using the cognitive testing results to improve the survey, after which a pilot study of the updated online form will commence. The pilot will involve a random sample of 300–500 victim service providers and will be designed to yield information about the administrative issues related to the form, including ease of use, participation and completion rates, length of time for survey completion, and functionality of the Web form. After incorporating lessons learned from pilot testing to improve and finalize the online form, the survey will be sent to 21,000 victim service providers by the end of 2015.

Results from Phase I of this broad survey should present a clearer picture of crime victim service organizations nationwide. These data will be used to design Phase II, the NSVSO Detailed Sample Survey, which will be issued to a subset of the organizations surveyed in Phase I—those victim service organizations most representative of the field by type, size, and victim population(s) they serve. This longer, more detailed survey will ask narrowly focused questions designed to capture a deeper understanding of these organizations' capacities and needs.

OVC anticipates that the data generated through both surveys will provide OVC and other stakeholders with statistics that will measure the extent to which they are effectively reaching and serving victims. The NSVSO should provide enhanced statistical information for federal agencies to use in making decisions that will support effective programs and identify existing gaps in services. It is only by learning more about the capacity of victim service organizations—and asking them directly about their areas of need—that OVC and its partner agencies can support the development of innovative victim services to meet emerging challenges in the field.

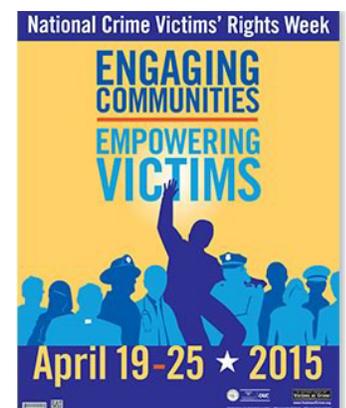
For more information about the survey, please visit <http://www.bjs.gov/content/nsvso.cfm>.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week — April 19–25, 2015

Each April since President Ronald Reagan proclaimed the first National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) in 1981, local communities throughout the Nation have held public rallies, candlelight vigils, and a host of other events to promote crime victims' rights awareness. This year's NCVRW was observed the week of April 19–25, 2015. Our theme, "Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims," highlights OVC's vision of reaching and supporting all victims. By engaging local leaders, organizations, and community partners, we can meet victims where they are and empower them throughout the healing process. Leveraging existing community resources will enable us to understand the needs of victims more fully and expand their options for services as they become survivors.

During NCVRW, on April 21, 2015, OVC hosted the 2015 National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony. The award ceremony honored 12 groups and individuals in 10 categories for their outstanding service in the field of advocating for victims of crime. This

year, OVC added an award category titled "Vision 21 Crime Victims Research" to recognize individual researchers or research teams that have made a significant contribution to the Nation's understanding of crime victims' issues. The findings from OVC's landmark initiative, *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Final Report*, underscore the importance of building a body of evidence-based knowledge as well as conducting both qualitative and quantitative studies that will help us better understand victimization trends, services, and behaviors and the efforts of law enforcement to protect victims of crime.



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each district’s guidelines regarding the use of forensic interviews for child and adolescent victims, and identifying the locations where victims can receive medical forensic exams. The Committee’s Report also addresses the need for U.S. Attorney’s Office staff and FBI personnel to participate in tribal multidisciplinary teams and SARTs or to assist with the creation of such teams.

The Report also advocates for policies to recruit, train, and reward prosecutors, investigators, and victim assistance personnel for developing and enhancing their skills to work successfully with tribal communities, emphasizing their sensitivity to tribal customs and leadership and their responsiveness to the many unique strengths and challenges of working in Indian Country.

Finally, the Report calls for changes in DOJ grant-making for tribes and increases in funding through the Victims of Crime Act. For more information about the National Coordination Committee and to download the full Report, visit <http://ojp.gov/ovc/AIANSane-Sart/advisorycommittee.html>.

The National Coordination Committee is composed of representatives from six national tribal organizations, five federal agencies, and experts in Alaska Native issues and forensic-medical exams. The Committee is one component of OVC’s AI/AN SANE–SART Initiative, which OVC established in 2010 to address the comprehensive needs of AI/AN adult and child victims of sexual violence. OVC funded two National Coordinators—one at the FBI and one at the Indian Health Service—to focus exclusively on coordinating efforts to support the Initiative.

In addition to the National Coordination Committee, other components of the AI/AN SANE–SART Initiative include the following.

Demonstration sites: OVC funds the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (Philadelphia, Mississippi), the Southern Indian Health



National Coordination Committee on the AI/AN SANE-SART Initiative Members and Designees, December 9, 2014

1st row, from left to right: Juana Majel Dixon, Linda Logan, Shirley Moses, Sarah Deer (Chair), Peggy Bird, Sarah Collins, Shannon May (Designated Federal Official)

2nd row, from left to right: Geri Wisner, Hallie Bongar, Lanisha Bell, Bea Hanson, Beverly Cotton, Kim Day, Donna Keeler, Karen Joyce-McMahon

Council, Inc. (a consortium of seven tribes headquartered in Alpine, California), and the Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation (Tuba City, Arizona) to build effective and sustainable victim-centered, multi-disciplinary sexual assault services and support from a victim’s initial point of contact through prosecution.

Training and technical assistance:

OVC provides Training and Technical Assistance to help demonstration site stakeholders develop MDTs and SARTs, including the development of memorandums of understanding among partners.

Evaluation: OVC supports external evaluators to help the three demonstration sites develop their capacity to conduct evaluations.

Based on the work of the National Coordination Committee and the experience of the demonstration sites, the Indian Health Service will publish a National Strategy to address

sexual violence in AI/AN communities, moving OVC closer to our vision that every AI/AN victim receives a comprehensive, victim-centered, and culturally relevant response to sexual violence.

My pledge to these dedicated leaders, and the insights they offered, will not merely go on a shelf—they will provide a solid basis for the Justice Department to take robust action. . . . Like my colleagues throughout the Justice Department, I feel a tremendous sense of urgency on this issue.

— From DOJ Blog post, “Responding to Sexual Violence in Indian Country,” by Attorney General Eric Holder, November 17, 2014, available at <http://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/responding-sexual-violence-indian-country-attorney-general-eric-h-holder-jr>

New Resources to Confront Human Trafficking

By Jean Bruggeman, Human Trafficking Fellow, Office for Victims of Crime

Human trafficking is a crime that affects all communities across the United States. Victims are men, women, and children. They are U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. They are your neighbors and mine. And they are forced to work in fields, restaurants, hotels, homes, bars, strip joints, massage parlors, and factories across the United States every day.

In the 15 years since the enactment of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, law enforcement, prosecutors, victim service providers, legal service providers, and communities

The **Human Trafficking Task Force E-Guide** (available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/>) outlines innovative and promising practices in multidisciplinary task force operations. As Attorney General Holder noted during his remarks at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference on October 27, 2014, on the release of the e-Guide, it “gives law enforcement and victim service providers the information and insights they need to respond effectively to crimes involving forced sex and labor. This updated resource will help strengthen anti-human trafficking task forces now in operation across the country.” It contains new and expanded information on victim identification, delivery of victim services, investigation and prosecution, and case studies and resources. This update of the 2011 e-Guide was developed by leaders in the field, including victim service providers, civil attorneys, law enforcement, and prosecutors. It is evidence-based and case-driven.

have come together to learn about this horrific crime and develop new approaches to identify and support victims and prosecute their traffickers.

Traffickers rob victims of their freedom, their income, and their dreams. But we can act to hold the traffickers accountable, stop the victimization, and support survivors. OVC knows that no one agency or organization, acting alone, can address this crime. Law enforcement and prosecutors at local, state, tribal, and federal levels may need to be involved, along with specialized victim service providers. A multidisciplinary team and a variety of investigative techniques are required to address the different manifestations of this crime. OVC is working hard to provide you with the tools you’ll need to do just that. We recently released two new resources that will help make your response efforts more effective. Be sure to bookmark the Human Trafficking Web site and download the new e-Guide for future use.

The new **OVC Human Trafficking Web site** at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/humantrafficking/> provides a wealth of information at your fingertips and is organized to optimize the user experience. This mobile-friendly resource is designed to provide access to a range of materials for law enforcement, service providers, survivors, and allied professionals—providing a common hub for all partners in supporting the victims and prosecuting the traffickers. OVC is also working on a new series of related training videos, scheduled for release in the coming year.

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week — April 19–25, 2015 • CONTINUED FROM PG. 8

Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, and OVC Director Joye E. Frost honored the following recipients:

- Karen Irene Kalergis — National Crime Victim Service Award
- Lisa Heth — National Crime Victim Service Award
- The Honorable Paul M. Herbert — Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services
- Mary Kay Inc. — Allied Professional Award
- Norman A. Gahn — Allied Professional Award
- LaWanda Hawkins — Volunteer for Victims Award
- Rebecca Campbell, Ph.D. — Vision 21 Crime Victims Research Award
- Laurel Wemhoff — Crime Victims’ Rights Award
- Matthew Richard Smith and Dr. Marcus Andrew Smith — Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award
- Suzanne Kay Breedlove — Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award
- U.S. Attorney’s Office-Middle District of Pennsylvania; U.S. Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture Money Laundering Section; and U.S. Postal Inspection Service-Harrisburg, Pennsylvania — Crime Victims Financial Restoration Award
- Ronald Cotton and Jennifer Thompson — Special Courage Award

Visit the OVC Gallery at <https://ovcnvrv.ncjrs.gov/Awards/AwardGallery/gallery-search.html> to learn more about the award recipients.

Though NCVRW 2015 is at an end, we encourage you to continue to promote victims’ rights and honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf throughout the year. Visit the 2015 NCVRW Online Resource Guide at www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2015 for tools to help you.

Learn more about NCVRW 2015 at www.ovc.gov/ncvrw and save the date for next year’s NCVRW, to be observed April 10–16, 2016.

Results of an OVC Needs Assessment: VOCA Administrators Discuss Financial Crimes and Elder Abuse

By Shelly L. Jackson, OVC Financial Fraud and Abuse Visiting Fellow

New types of crimes have continued to emerge since the passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA). The recent economic downturn and recession indicated a need for OVC to emphasize the importance of helping victims of financial crimes. In addition, crimes against older adults have gained notoriety. To determine whether and how VOCA State Assistance Administrators are responding to these crimes, as a Visiting Fellow I conducted a needs assessment to collect data on four types of emerging crimes: financial fraud of persons of any age, financial exploitation of older adults, elder abuse, and polyvictimization (victims experiencing multiple types of crimes simultaneously) in later life.

To conduct the eight-item needs assessment designed for this study, I held telephone interviews with VOCA State Assistance Administrators (or their program's point of contact) from each state and the District of Columbia from May through August 2013. My findings are discussed below.

Financial Fraud. Results revealed that services for financial crime victims (financial crimes generally, and elder financial exploitation specifically) were receiving less programmatic funding compared with programs serving victims of elder abuse and polyvictimization. What explains the lower response to victims of financial crime?

- VOCA focuses on violent crime.
- Some state policies prohibit the use of VOCA funding for services to victims of financial crime, although there is no federal legislative prohibition against using VOCA funds to assist financial crime victims.
- VOCA administrators reported receiving fewer grant proposals for financial victim services compared with grant proposals for other types of crime victim services.
- VOCA administrators explained that there are an insufficient number of victims in the financial crimes categories to warrant a discrete program (although victims of financial crimes are not formally tracked).
- VOCA administrators asserted that there are other government agencies that respond to financial crimes, such as the Attorney General's Office.

The study found that there is generally less understanding of the impact of financial crimes compared to the impact of violent crimes.

Elder Financial Exploitation. Although the victims of financial crimes suffer significant harm at any age, financial exploitation

can have devastating effects on older adults who may be unable to recoup their financial losses later in life.

Elder Abuse. Elder abuse has received increased attention in recent years, and the results of this needs assessment vividly reflect these trends. Although VOCA administrators reported a greater level of funding for and recognition of elder abuse (and polyvictimization) programs than financial fraud or exploitation programs, a review of the 2011 VOCA annual performance reports found that relatively few clients (less than 1 percent) of victim services programs are victims of elder abuse. Meanwhile, national prevalence studies indicate that more than 10 percent of older adults are victims of elder abuse. The difference between the national prevalence rate and victim services client rate suggests that victim service providers are not adequately reaching elder abuse victims. This assertion is partially explained by Adult Protective Services' handling of elder abuse cases. However, victims are clearly not receiving all of the services they need or are entitled to. It may be the case that older adults are unaware of, or unlikely to seek out, such victim services programs. There appears to be a greater need for outreach to these victims, which is consistent with the *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Final Report* (p. 28):

Victim services organizations and providers understand the importance of ongoing community outreach and education. Local residents need to be aware of the existence of support agencies in their community and the range of services provided, so that they know where to turn in times of need.

Polyvictimization. Interviews revealed that the term "polyvictimization" is not frequently recognized. However, when described as two or more forms of abuse occurring at the same time, VOCA administrators indicated that many of their clients would fall into this category.

Conclusions

Throughout the interviews, VOCA administrators identified insufficient federal funding as a challenge for victim services organizations. Echoing the findings of Vision 21, VOCA administrators uniformly stated that, without an infusion of new funds, expanding services for victims of emerging crimes will be difficult. Congress heard the plea and has raised the obligation limitation on the Crime Victims Fund in Fiscal Year 2015 from \$745 million to \$2.3 billion. With this infusion of new funds, the field is encouraged to recognize the needs of these underrepresented victims of crime and to respond in a meaningful and holistic manner.

Resources

TRAINING

Victim Assistance Training *Online* (VAT *Online*)



VAT *Online* is Web-based learning that combines core information and fundamental skills training for victim service providers to assist victims of crime more effectively and sensitively. The training was developed in conjunction with nationally recognized subject-matter experts and is funded by OVC.

The primary goal of VAT *Online* is to provide a high-quality, user-friendly training tool that teaches new victim service providers, in all types of victim service agencies, the basic knowledge and skills they will need to respond effectively to crime victims. A secondary goal is to provide the training at a time and place convenient to the learner, which is achieved through the Web-based format. The training is offered free of charge.

In 2014, VAT *Online* was updated and revised, and 19 modules are now available. Each takes 30–90 minutes to complete. Additional VAT *Online* modules that address specific crimes and the unique needs of special populations will be launched in the near future.

Find out more about VAT *Online* and register for training at www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspOnlineTraining.cfm.

OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy Leadership Institute

OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) Leadership Institute was created for victim service administrators and leaders



who wish to enhance their leadership skills and abilities. It is designed for experienced leaders as well as those new to leadership roles.

In years past, the Leadership Institute was delivered face-to-face over 5 days. To better expand the reach within the victim services field, we have updated our delivery methods. The Leadership Institute now uses a blended-learning approach that includes a combination of highly interactive, self-paced training and assignments and collaborative, facilitated Webinars led by nationally recognized subject-matter experts. In a 10-week time frame, participants learn theoretical concepts and practical skills to more effectively lead their organization, team, or workgroup. The training is offered free of charge, and CEUs are awarded for full participation.

The first blended-learning Leadership Institute, launched in April 2014, hosted 62 participants and received very positive feedback. A second Leadership Institute began in September 2014 with more than 100 participants. In 2015, OVC plans to

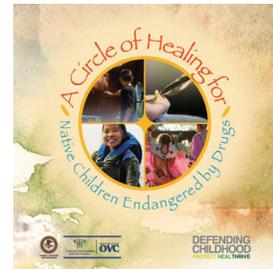
conduct the Leadership Institute for specific groups such as VOCA Administrators.

Find the latest information about the Leadership Institute and upcoming schedules at www.ovcttac.gov.

PUBLICATIONS

OVC Releases New Tribal Video Series

OVC released its new video series—A Circle of Healing for Native Children Endangered by Drugs—at the 14th National Indian Nations Conference: Justice for Victims of Crime. This seven-video series weaves together stories and cultural practices from across the Nation to show many of the ways children, families, and communities are healing from drug endangerment. These videos are intended to help develop awareness and provide examples of culturally relevant, victim-centered programs and approaches.



Visit www.ncjrs.gov/App/shoppingcart/ShopCart.aspx?item-NCJ%20248443 to order the videos and companion resource guide through NCJRS.

To receive *OVC News & Program Updates*, register via the National Criminal Justice Reference Service and select "Victims" as a topic of interest. Once you have registered, you will also receive important information from OVC and other OJP agencies related to—

- new funding opportunities,
- recently released publications,
- upcoming trainings and conferences,
- program initiatives, and
- much more!



ABOUT THE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Office for Victims of Crime is one of six components within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Led by Director Joye E. Frost, OVC is committed to enhancing the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to providing leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

Established in 1988 through an amendment to the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, OVC is charged by Congress with administering the Crime Victims Fund. Through OVC, the Fund supports a broad array of programs and services that focus on helping victims in the immediate aftermath of crime and continuing to support them as they rebuild their lives. Millions of dollars are invested annually in victim compensation and assistance in every U.S. state and territory, as well as for training, technical assistance, and other capacity-building programs designed to enhance service providers' ability to support victims of crime in communities across the Nation.

For more information, visit www.ovc.gov.

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Crime Victims' Service Awards

RECOGNIZING *extraordinary* INDIVIDUALS,
ORGANIZATIONS, TEAMS, AND PROGRAMS THAT
DEMONSTRATE *outstanding achievements* IN SUPPORTING
VICTIMS AND VICTIM SERVICES

NOMINATION PERIOD IS OPEN. PLEASE SUBMIT NOMINATIONS ONLINE.

SUBMIT A NOMINATION BY JULY 30, 2015

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