



LANDMARKS IN VICTIMS' RIGHTS AND SERVICES

Crime Victims' Rights in America: A Historical Overview

National Crime Victims' Rights Week creates an opportunity for communities to come together and reflect on the history of crime victims' rights. "Landmarks in Victims' Rights and Services" outlines this progress from 1965 to the present by highlighting—

- the creation and growth of local, state, and national victim service organizations,
- the passage of key federal and state legislation,
- notable court decisions,
- groundbreaking reports and studies, and
- advances in victim assistance approaches.

"Landmarks in Victims' Rights and Services" tells the story of our nation's capacity to help crime victims rebuild their lives.

Use these milestones to inform your speeches, op-ed columns, media interviews, and other education efforts. Craft "This Day in History" posts that are relevant to your social media networks. However you share this information, let it remind your community of how far we've come and provide inspiration for the work ahead—during National Crime Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year.

Key Federal Victims' Rights Legislation

1974	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
1980	Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act
1982	Victim and Witness Protection Act
1982	Missing Children's Act
1984	Victims of Crime Act
1984	Justice Assistance Act
1984	Missing Children's Assistance Act
1984	Family Violence Prevention and Services Act
1985	Children's Justice Act
1988	Drunk Driving Prevention Act
1990	Hate Crime Statistics Act
1990	Victims of Child Abuse Act
1990	Victims' Rights and Restitution Act
1990	National Child Search Assistance Act
1992	Battered Women's Testimony Act
1993	Child Sexual Abuse Registry Act
1994	Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act
1994	Violence Against Women Act
1996	Community Notification Act ("Megan's Law")
1996	Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act
1996	Mandatory Victims' Restitution Act
1997	Victims' Rights Clarification Act
1998	Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act
1998	Identity Theft and Deterrence Act
2000	Trafficking Victims Protection Act
2001	Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (established September 11th Victim Compensation Fund)
2003	PROTECT Act ("Amber Alert" law)
2003	Prison Rape Elimination Act
2003	Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act
2004	Justice for All Act , including Title I The Scott Campbell, Stephanie Roper, Wendy Preston, Louarna Gillis, and Nila Lynn Crime Victims' Rights Act
2006	Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act
2010	Tribal Law and Order Act

Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but **great actions speak to all mankind.**

– THEODORE ROOSEVELT (1858-1919)

1965

- The first crime victim compensation program is established in California.
- By 1970, five additional compensation programs are created in New York, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Maryland, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

1972

- The first three victim assistance programs are established:
 - > Aid for Victims of Crime in St. Louis, Missouri, (now the [Crime Victim Advocacy Center](#)).
 - > [Bay Area Women Against Rape](#) in San Francisco, California.
 - > [D.C. Rape Crisis Center](#) in Washington, DC.

1973

- The results of the first annual National Crime Victimization Survey are released. The survey, commissioned by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, asks U.S. household members about their exposure to crime. It is intended to complement the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) annual compilation of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies.

1974

- The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funds the first victim/witness programs in the Brooklyn and Milwaukee District Attorneys' Offices and seven other offices through a grant given to the National District Attorneys Association to establish model assistance programs for victims, encourage victim cooperation, and improve prosecution.
- The first law enforcement-based victim assistance programs are established in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Congress passes the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which establishes the [National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect](#). The new Center establishes an information clearinghouse and provides technical assistance and model programs.

1975

- The first "Victims' Rights Week" is organized by the Philadelphia District Attorney.
- Citizen activists from across the country unite to expand victim services and increase recognition of victims' rights through the formation of the [National Organization for Victim Assistance](#) (NOVA).



1976

- The [National Organization for Women](#) forms a task force to examine the problem of battering. It calls for research into the problem, along with money for battered women's shelters.
- The first national conference on battered women is sponsored by the Milwaukee Task Force on Women in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- In Fresno County, California, Chief Probation Officer James Rowland creates the first victim impact statement to provide the sentencing court with an objective inventory of victim injuries and losses.
- The first hotline for battered women is started by Women's Advocates in St. Paul, Minnesota.
- Women's Advocates and Haven House in Pasadena, California, establish the first shelters for battered women.
- Nebraska and Wisconsin become the first states to abolish the marital rape exemption.

1977

- The [National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards](#) is established by the existing 22 state victim compensation programs to foster a nationwide network of compensation programs.
- Oregon becomes the first state to enact a mandatory arrest law in domestic violence cases.

1978

- The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault is formed to combat sexual violence and promote services for rape victims.
- The [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) (NCADV) is organized as a voice for the battered women's movement on a national level.

- [Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.](#) (POMC), a self-help support group, is founded in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Minnesota becomes the first state to allow probable cause (warrantless) arrests in cases of domestic assault, whether or not a protection order has been issued.

1979

- Frank G. Carrington founds the Crime Victims' Legal Advocacy Institute, Inc., to promote the rights of crime victims in the civil and criminal justice systems. The nonprofit organization is renamed VALOR, the [Victims' Assistance Legal Organization](#), in 1981.
- The Office on Domestic Violence is established in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (later closed in 1981).
- The [World Society of Victimology](#) is formed to promote research relating to crime victims and victim assistance, advocate for victims' interests, and advance cooperation of international, regional, and local agencies concerned with crime victims' issues.

1980

- [Mothers Against Drunk Driving](#) (MADD) is founded after the death of 13-year-old Cari Lightner, who was killed by a repeat drunk-driving offender. The first two MADD chapters are established in Sacramento, California, and Annapolis, Maryland.
- Congress passes the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980.
- Wisconsin passes the first "Crime Victims' Bill of Rights."
- The first National Day of Unity is established in October by NCADV to mourn battered women who have died, celebrate women who have survived the violence, and honor all who have worked to end domestic violence.



- The first Victim Impact Panel is sponsored by [Remove Intoxicated Drivers](#) (RID) in Oswego County, New York.

1981

- President Ronald Reagan proclaims the first national “Crime Victims Week” in April.
- The abduction and murder of six-year-old Adam Walsh prompts a national campaign to raise public awareness about missing children and enact laws to better protect children.
- The Attorney General’s Task Force on Violent Crime recommends that a separate national task force be created to examine victims’ issues.

1982

- In a Rose Garden ceremony, President Reagan appoints members to the Task Force on Victims of Crime, which holds public hearings in six cities across the nation to focus attention on the needs of crime victims. The Task Force’s Final Report offers 68 recommendations that become the framework for the advancement of new programs and policies. Its final recommendation, to amend the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to guarantee that “the victim, in every criminal prosecution, shall have the right to be present and to be heard at all critical stages of judicial proceeding,” becomes a vital source of new energy to secure constitutional amendments for victims’ rights in each state.
- The Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982 brings “fair treatment standards” to victims and witnesses in the federal criminal justice system.
- California becomes the first state to amend its constitution to address the interests of crime victims by establishing a constitutional right to victim restitution.

- The passage of the Missing Children’s Act of 1982 helps guarantee that identifying information about missing children is promptly entered into the [FBI National Crime Information Center](#) (NCIC) computer system.
- Congress abolishes, through failure of appropriations, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration; many grassroots and system-based victim assistance programs close.

1983

- The [Office for Victims of Crime](#) (OVC) is established by the U.S. Department of Justice within the Office of Justice Programs to implement recommendations from the President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime. OVC establishes a national resource center, trains professionals, and develops model legislation to protect victims’ rights.
- U.S. Attorney General William French Smith establishes a Task Force on Family Violence, which holds six public hearings across the United States.
- U.S. Attorney General Smith issues the first *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*, which outlines standards for federal victim and witness assistance and the implementation of victims’ rights contained in the federal Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982.
- In April, President Reagan honors crime victims in a White House Rose Garden ceremony.
- The First National Conference of the Judiciary on Victims of Crime is held at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada, with support from the National Institute of Justice. Conferees develop recommendations for the judiciary on victims’ rights and services.
- President Reagan proclaims the first [National Missing Children’s Day](#) in observance of the fourth anniversary of the disappearance of six-year-old Etan Patz.



- Wisconsin passes the first Child Victim and Witness Bill of Rights.
- The [International Association of Chiefs of Police](#) Board of Governors adopts a Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and establishes a Victims' Rights Committee to focus attention on the needs of crime victims by law enforcement officials nationwide.
- Congress passes the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, which earmarks federal funding for programs serving victims of domestic violence.
- [Concerns of Police Survivors](#) (COPS) is organized at the first police survivors' seminar held in Washington, DC, by 110 relatives of officers killed in the line of duty.

1984

- The passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) establishes the [Crime Victims Fund](#), made up of federal criminal fines, penalties, and bond forfeitures, to support state victim compensation and local victim assistance programs.
- President Reagan signs the Justice Assistance Act, which establishes a financial assistance program for state and local government and funds 200 new victim service programs.
- The [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#) is established as the national resource agency for missing children. The Center was mandated as part of the Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984.
- The Task Force on Family Violence presents its report to the U.S. Attorney General with recommendations for action, including improving the criminal justice system's response to battered women and establishing prevention and awareness activities, education and training, and data collection and reporting.
- The National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984 is enacted, providing strong incentives to states to raise the minimum age for drinking to 21, saving thousands of young lives in years to come.
- The Spiritual Dimension in Victim Services in Charleston, South Carolina, is founded to involve the faith community in violence prevention and victim assistance.

- A victim/witness notification system is established within the [Federal Bureau of Prisons](#).
- Victim/witness coordinator positions are established in the U.S. Attorneys' Offices within the U.S. Department of Justice.
- [California State University, Fresno](#), initiates the first Victim Services Certificate Program offered for academic credit by a university.
- OVC establishes the National Victims Resource Center, now named the [Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center](#) (OVCRC), to serve as a clearinghouse for OVC publications and other resources.

1985

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$68 million.
- The National Victim Center (renamed the [National Center for Victims of Crime](#) in 1998) is founded in honor of Sunny von Bülow to provide a strong national voice on behalf of crime victims and to educate Americans about the devastating effect of crime on our society.
- The [United Nations General Assembly](#) adopts the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power that serves as the basis for victim service reform at national and local levels throughout the world.
- President Reagan announces the Child Safety Partnership to enhance private sector efforts to promote child safety, clarify information about child victimization, and increase public awareness of child abuse.



- The U.S. Surgeon General issues a report identifying domestic violence as a major public health problem.

1986

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$62 million.
- OVC awards the first grants to support state victim assistance and compensation programs.
- Two years after its passage, the Victims of Crime Act is amended by the Children’s Justice Act to provide funds specifically for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse.
- More than 100 victim advocates meet in Washington, DC, at a forum sponsored by NOVA, and formally agree to seek a federal constitutional amendment on victims’ rights.
- Rhode Island passes a victims’ rights constitutional amendment granting victims the rights to restitution, to submit victim impact statements, and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- MADD’s “[Red Ribbon Campaign](#)” enlists motorists to display a red ribbon on their automobiles, signaling a pledge to drive safely and soberly during the holidays. (This national public awareness effort has since become an annual campaign.)
- By year’s end, 35 states have established victim compensation programs.

1987

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$77 million.
- The National Victims’ Constitutional Amendment Network and Steering Committee are formed at a meeting hosted by the National Center for Victims of Crime. This initiative becomes instrumental in the passage of victims’ rights amendments throughout the United States.

- Security on Campus, Inc., (now the [Clery Center](#)) is established by Howard and Connie Clery, following the tragic robbery, rape, and murder of their daughter, Jeanne, at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. SOC raises national awareness about crime and victimization on our nation’s campuses.
- The [American Correctional Association](#) establishes a Task Force on Victims of Crime.
- NCADV establishes the first national toll-free domestic violence hotline.
- October is officially designated as [National Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#) to honor battered women and those who serve them.
- In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Booth v. Maryland* (482 U.S. 496) that victim impact statements are unconstitutional (in violation of the Eighth Amendment) when applied to the penalty phase of a capital trial because “only the defendant’s personal responsibility and moral guilt” may be considered in capital sentencing. Significant dissenting opinions are offered.
- Victims and advocates in Florida, frustrated by five years of inaction by their legislature on a proposed victims’ rights constitutional amendment, begin a petition drive. Thousands of citizens sign petitions supporting constitutional protection for victims’ rights. The Florida legislature reconsiders, and the constitutional amendment appears on the 1988 ballot.

1988

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$93 million.
- OVC sets aside funds for the Victim Assistance in Indian Country grant program to provide direct services to Native Americans by establishing “on-reservation” victim assistance programs in Indian Country.



- The National Aging Resource Center on Elder Abuse is established by a cooperative agreement among the American Public Welfare Association, the National Association of State Units on Aging, and the University of Delaware. Renamed the [National Center on Elder Abuse](#), it provides information and statistics on this issue of growing concern.
- *State v. Ciskie* is the first case to allow the use of expert testimony to explain the behavior and mental state of an adult rape victim. The testimony is used to show why a victim of repeated physical and sexual assaults by her intimate partner would not immediately call the police or take action. The jury convicts the defendant on four counts of rape.
- The Drunk Driving Prevention Act is passed, and all states raise the minimum drinking age to 21.
- Victims' rights constitutional amendments are introduced in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, South Carolina, and Washington. Florida's amendment is placed on the November ballot, where it passes with 90 percent of the vote. Michigan's amendment passes with more than 80 percent of the vote.
- OVC sponsors the first "Indian Nations: Justice for Victims of Crime" conference in Rapid City, South Dakota.
- Amendments to the Victims of Crime Act legislatively establish the Office for Victims of Crime, elevate the position of Director by making Senate confirmation necessary for appointment, and encourage state compensation programs to cover victims of domestic violence, homicide, and drunk driving. In addition, VOCA amendments, at the behest of MADD and POMC, add a new "priority" category for funding victim assistance programs for "previously underserved victims of violent crime."
- OVC establishes a Federal Emergency Fund for victims in the federal criminal justice system.

1989

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$133 million.
- In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms in *South Carolina v. Gathers* its 1987 decision in *Booth v. Maryland* that victim impact evidence and arguments are unconstitutional when applied to the penalty phase of a capital trial. Again, significant dissenting opinions are offered.
- The legislatures in Texas and Washington pass victims' rights constitutional amendments. Both are ratified by voters.

1990

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$146 million.
- Congress passes the Hate Crime Statistics Act, requiring the U.S. Attorney General to collect data on the incidence of certain crimes motivated by prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.
- The Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act, requiring institutions of higher education to disclose murder, rape, robbery, and other crimes on campus, is signed into law by President George H.W. Bush.
- Congress passes the Victims of Child Abuse Act, which features reforms to make the federal criminal justice system less traumatic for child victims and witnesses.
- The Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 incorporates a Bill of Rights for federal crime victims and codifies services that should be available to victims of crime.
- Congress passes legislation proposed by MADD to prevent drunk drivers and other offenders from filing bankruptcy to avoid paying criminal restitution or civil fines.



- The Arizona petition drive to place the victims' rights constitutional amendment on the ballot succeeds, and the amendment is ratified by voters.
- The first National Incidence Study on Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America finds that in a one-year period there were as many as 450,000 runaways; 127,000 thrown-aways; 438,000 children who were lost, injured, or otherwise missing; 4,600 children abducted by nonfamily members; and 114,600 children who were targets of attempted abduction by nonfamily members.
- The National Child Search Assistance Act requires law enforcement to enter reports of missing children and unidentified persons into the FBI's NCIC computer system.
- California becomes the first state in the country to pass a law against stalking, CA Penal Code Section 646.9.

1991

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$128 million.
- U.S. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) introduces the first Congressional Joint Resolution (H.R.J. Res. 247) to place victims' rights in the U.S. Constitution.
- [California State University, Fresno](#), approves the first bachelor's degree program in victimology in the nation.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime releases *America Speaks Out*, a report on the first national public opinion poll to examine citizens' attitudes about violence and victimization.
- In a 7-2 decision in *Payne v. Tennessee* (501 U.S. 808), the U.S. Supreme Court reverses its earlier decisions in *Booth v. Maryland* (1987) and *South Carolina v. Gathers* (1989) and rules that testimony and prosecutorial arguments commenting on the murder victim's good character, as well as how the victim's death affected his or her survivors, do not violate the defendant's constitutional rights in a capital case.
- U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr issues new comprehensive guidelines that establish procedures for the federal criminal justice system to respond to the needs of crime victims. The 1991 *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance* implement new protections of the Crime Control Act of 1990, integrating requirements of the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, the Victims of Child Abuse Act, and the Victim and Witness Protection Act.
- The [American Probation and Parole Association](#) establishes a Victim Issues Committee to examine victims' issues and concerns related to community corrections.
- The New Jersey legislature passes a victims' rights constitutional amendment, which is ratified by voters in November.
- Colorado legislators introduce a victims' rights constitutional amendment on the first day of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The bill is unanimously passed by both Houses to be placed on the ballot in 1992.
- In an 8-0 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Simon & Schuster v. New York Crime Victims Board* that New York's notoriety-for-profit statute was overly broad and unconstitutional. Notoriety-for-profit statutes had been passed by many states by this time to prevent convicted criminals from profiting from the proceeds of depictions of their crimes in the media or publications.



- The Washington Secretary of State implements the nation's first Address Confidentiality Program, which provides victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault an alternative, confidential mailing address and secures the confidentiality of two normally public records—voter registration and motor vehicle records.
- By the end of 1991, seven states have incorporated victims' rights into their state constitutions.

1992

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$221 million.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime releases *Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*, a groundbreaking study that includes data on rape frequency, victims' reporting rate to police, the impact of rape on victims' mental health, and the effect of media disclosure of victim identities on reporting rape to law enforcement.
- The [Association of Paroling Authorities International](#) establishes a Victim Issues Committee to examine victims' needs, rights, and services in parole processes.
- Congress reauthorizes the Higher Education Bill, which includes the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights.
- The Battered Women's Testimony Act, which urges states to accept expert testimony in criminal cases involving battered women, is passed by Congress and signed into law by President George H.W. Bush.
- In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*, strikes down a local hate crimes ordinance in Minnesota. The ordinance had prohibited the display of a symbol that one knew or had reason to know "arouses anger, alarm or resentment in others on the basis of race, color, creed, religion or gender," and was found to violate the First Amendment.

- Five states—Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, Missouri, and New Mexico—ratify victims' rights constitutional amendments.
- Twenty-eight states pass anti-stalking laws.
- Massachusetts passes a landmark bill creating a statewide computerized domestic violence registry and requiring judges to check the registry when handling such cases.

1993

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$144 million.
- Wisconsin ratifies its victims' rights constitutional amendment, bringing the total number of states with these amendments to 14.
- Congress passes the International Parental Kidnapping Act, which makes it a federal felony to remove a child from the United States or to keep a child outside of the United States with the intent to obstruct the lawful exercise of parental rights.
- President William J. Clinton signs the "Brady Bill," requiring a waiting period for the purchase of handguns.
- Congress passes the Child Sexual Abuse Registry Act, establishing a national repository for information about child sex offenders.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime launches INFOLINK (later renamed the "National Crime Victim Helpline"), a toll-free service that provides trained victim advocacy and support for victims of all types of crime.
- Twenty-two states pass anti-stalking statutes, bringing the total number of states with anti-stalking laws to 50, plus the District of Columbia.

1994

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$185 million.



- The American Correctional Association Victims Committee publishes the landmark *Report and Recommendations on Victims of Juvenile Crime*, which offers guidelines for improving victims' rights and services within the juvenile justice system.
- Six additional states pass victims' rights constitutional amendments—the largest number ever in a single year—bringing the total number of states with amendments to 20. States with new amendments include Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Maryland, Ohio, and Utah.
- President Clinton signs a comprehensive package of federal victims' rights legislation as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. The Act includes:
 - > The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which authorizes more than \$1 billion in funding for programs to combat violence against women.
 - > Enhanced VOCA funding provisions.
 - > Establishment of a [National Child Sex Offender Registry](#).
 - > Enhanced sentences for drunk drivers with child passengers.
- Kentucky becomes the first state to institute automated telephone notification to crime victims of their offender's status, location, and release date.
- OVC establishes the Community Crisis Response program, using the NOVA model, to improve services to victims in communities that have experienced a crime resulting in multiple violent victimizations.
- The [National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Network](#) proposes the first draft of language for a federal victims' rights constitutional amendment.
- The first class graduates from the [National Victim Assistance Academy](#) (NVAA) in Washington, DC. Supported by OVC, NVAA provides an academically credited, 45-hour curriculum on victimology, victims' rights, and other victim-related topics.
- *The Anatomy of Fraud: Report of a Nationwide Survey* by Richard Titus, Fred Heinzelmann, and John M. Boyle is published. The report is based on the first nationwide survey, conducted in 1991 by the National Institute of Justice, to determine the scope of fraud and its effects, with findings that an estimated \$40 billion is lost to fraud each year. One-third of the people surveyed reported that an attempt to defraud them had occurred in the previous year.
- The U.S. Department of Justice issues the revised *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*, which increases the accountability of federal criminal justice officials, directing that performance appraisals and reports of best efforts include information on guidelines compliance.
- The Beijing World Conference on Women issues a landmark call for global action to end violence against women.
- The U.S. Department of Justice creates the [Violence Against Women Office](#) to provide federal leadership in developing the national capacity to reduce violence against women and administer justice for and strengthen services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

1995

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$233 million.
- Legislatures in three states—Indiana, Nebraska, and North Carolina—pass victims' rights constitutional amendments that will be placed on the ballot in 1996.

1996

- The Crime Victims Fund reaches a historic high with deposits over \$525 million.
- Federal victims' rights constitutional amendments are introduced in both houses of Congress with bipartisan support.



- Both presidential candidates and Attorney General Janet Reno endorse the concept of a federal victims' rights constitutional amendment.
- Eight states ratify the passage of victims' rights constitutional amendments—raising the total number of such state constitutional amendments to 29 nationwide.
- President Clinton reaffirms his support of federal constitutional rights for crime victims in a Rose Garden ceremony attended by members of Congress, criminal justice officials, and representatives of local, state, and national victims' rights organizations.
- The Community Notification Act, known as "Megan's Law," amends the Child Sexual Abuse Registry law to provide for notifying communities of the location of convicted sex offenders.
- President Clinton signs the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, providing \$1 million to strengthen antiterrorism efforts, make restitution mandatory in violent crime cases, and expand compensation and assistance for victims of terrorism both at home and abroad, including victims in the military.
- OVC uses its new authority under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act to provide substantial financial assistance to the victims and survivors of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- The Mandatory Victims' Restitution Act, enacted as Title II of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, allows federal courts to award "public harm" restitution directly to state VOCA victim assistance programs. The Act makes restitution in federal cases mandatory, regardless of the defendant's ability to pay. It also requires federal courts to order restitution to victims of fraud.
- The VOCA definition of "crime victim" is expanded to include victims of financial crime, allowing this group to receive counseling, advocacy, and support services.
- The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) is established by Congress to provide crisis intervention, information, and referrals to victims of domestic violence and their friends and family.
- The Church Arson Prevention Act is enacted to respond to an increasing number of acts of arson against religious institutions around the country.
- The Drug-Induced Rape Prevention Act is enacted to address the emerging issue of drug-facilitated rape and drug-facilitated sexual assault.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, within the U.S. Department of Justice, issues the Juvenile Justice Action Plan, which includes recommendations for victims' rights and services within the juvenile justice system for victims of juvenile offenders.

1997

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$363 million.
- Congress passes the Victims' Rights Clarification Act of 1997 to clarify existing federal law allowing victims to attend a trial and to appear as "impact witnesses" during the sentencing phase of both capital and non-capital cases. President Clinton signs the Act, allowing the victims and survivors of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April 1995 to observe the trial and to provide input later at sentencing.
- A federal victims' rights constitutional amendment is reintroduced in the opening days of the 105th Congress with strong bipartisan support. The Senate and House Judiciary Committees conduct hearings on the proposed federal victims' rights constitutional amendment. While not endorsing specific language, Attorney General Janet Reno testifies at the Senate hearing in support of federal constitutional rights for crime victims.



- To fully recognize the sovereignty of Indian Nations, OVC for the first time provides victim assistance grants directly to Tribes in Indian Country.
- Congress enacts a federal anti-stalking law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997.
- Due to the large influx of VOCA funds in the previous fiscal year, OVC hosts a series of regional meetings with state VOCA administrators to encourage states to develop multiyear funding strategies to help stabilize local program funding, expand outreach to previously underserved victims, and support the development and implementation of technologies to improve victims' rights and services.
- OVC continues its support of the victims and survivors of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City by funding additional advocates, crisis counseling, and travel expenses for the bombing victims to attend court proceedings. When the venue of the trial is changed to Denver, Colorado, OVC provides funding for a special closed-circuit broadcast to victims and survivors in Oklahoma City.
- OVC releases *New Directions from the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century*, which assesses the nation's progress in meeting the recommendations set forth in the *Final Report of the 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime* and issues over 250 new recommendations from the field for the next millennium.
- Senate Joint Resolution 44, a new bipartisan version of a federal victims' rights constitutional amendment, is introduced in the Senate by Senators Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). The Senate Judiciary Committee subsequently approves S.J. Res. 44 by an 11-6 vote. No further action is taken on S.J. Res. 44 during the 105th Congress.
- Four new states pass state victims' rights constitutional amendments: Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, and Tennessee. The Supreme Court of Oregon overturns the Oregon state victims' rights amendment, originally passed in 1996, citing structural deficiencies.
- The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 is passed. Part E of this legislation, "Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus," is authorized through the year 2003 and appropriates a total of \$10 million in grant funding to the Violence Against Women Grants Office for Fiscal Year 1999. Another primary aim of this legislation is to reduce binge drinking and illegal alcohol consumption on college campuses.
- Congress enacts the Child Protection and Sexual Predator Punishment Act of 1998, providing for numerous sentencing enhancements and other initiatives addressing sex crimes against children, including crimes facilitated by the use of interstate facilities and the Internet.
- Congress passes the Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act, representing the first effort to systematically gather information about the extent of victimization of individuals with disabilities. This legislation directs the U.S. Attorney General to conduct a study on crimes against individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition, the Bureau of Justice Statistics is required to include statistics on the nature of crimes against individuals with developmental disabilities and victim characteristics in its annual National Crime Victimization Survey by 2000.

1998

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$324 million.



- The Identity Theft and Deterrence Act of 1998 is signed into law. This landmark federal legislation outlaws identity theft and directs the U.S. Sentencing Commission to consider various factors in determining penalties, including the number of victims and the value of losses to any individual victim. The Act further authorizes the Federal Trade Commission to log and acknowledge reports of identity theft, provide information to victims, and refer complaints to appropriate consumer reporting and law enforcement agencies.
- OVC provides funding to the U.S. Department of State to support the development of a Victim Assistance Specialist position to improve the quality and coordination of services provided to U.S. citizens who are victimized abroad.

1999

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$985 million.
- The proposed federal victims' rights constitutional amendment (Senate Joint Resolution 3, identical to S.J. Res. 44) is introduced in the 106th Congress.
- The fifth National Victim Assistance Academy is held at five university locations across the United States, bringing the total number of Academy graduates to nearly 1,000.
- OVC issues the first grants to create State Victim Assistance Academies.
- The [National Crime Victim Bar Association](#) is formed by the National Center for Victims of Crime to promote civil justice for victims of crime.

2000

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$777 million.

- Congress passes a new national drunk driving limit of 0.08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) with the support of MADD, other victim advocacy organizations, and leading highway safety, health, medical, law enforcement, and insurance groups. The new law, passed with bipartisan support, requires states to pass 0.08 "per se intoxication" laws or lose a portion of their annual federal highway funding.
- Congress reauthorizes the Violence Against Women Act of 2000, extending VAWA through 2005 and authorizing funding at \$3.3 billion over the five-year period. In addition to expanding federal stalking statutes to include stalking on the Internet, the Act authorizes:
 - > \$80 million a year for rape prevention and education grants.
 - > \$875 million over five years for battered women's shelters.
 - > \$25 million in 2001 for transitional housing programs.
 - > \$25 million to address violence against older women and women with disabilities.
- The [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) website is created by the U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, and the National White Collar Crime Center to combat Internet fraud by giving consumers a convenient way to report violations and by centralizing information about fraud crimes for law enforcement.
- Attorney General Reno revises and reissues the *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*, which mandates that every Department of Justice employee who comes into contact with crime victims receives at minimum one hour of training about victim rights laws and the guidelines.
- Victimization rates as reported in the National Crime Victimization Survey are the lowest recorded since the survey's creation in 1973.



- The Treasury Department conducts the National Summit on Identity Theft, which addresses prevention techniques, victims' experiences, and remediation in the government and private sector. The summit is the first national-level conference involving law enforcement, victims, industry representatives, and nonprofit organizations interested in the issue. At the summit, Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers unveils four new initiatives to address identity theft.
- A federal victims' rights constitutional amendment is addressed for the first time by the full U.S. Senate. Following two-and-a-half days of debate, the measure (S.J. Res. 3) is withdrawn for further consideration by its cosponsors, Senators Kyl (R-AZ) and Feinstein (D-CA), when it becomes apparent that the measure will not receive the two-thirds majority vote necessary for approval.
- Congress passes and the President signs the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. This new law significantly strengthens criminal enforcement, prosecution, and penalties against traffickers; provides new protections to victims; and enables victims of severe forms of trafficking to seek benefits and services available to other crime victims.
- Congress responds to the terrorist acts of September 11 with a raft of new laws providing funding for victim assistance, tax relief for victims, and other accommodations and protections for victims. As part of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act, a new federal victim compensation program is created specifically for the victims of September 11. The program includes many types of damages normally available only through civil actions, such as payment for pain and suffering, lifetime lost earnings, and loss of enjoyment of life. To receive compensation, claimants are required to waive their right to bring civil action for damages suffered as a result of the terrorist acts.
- Congress passes and President George W. Bush signs the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, a package of antiterrorism legislation that includes changes to the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), including increasing the percentage of state compensation payments reimbursable by the federal government and allowing OVC to fund compliance and evaluation projects.
- OVC augments state victim compensation funding to aid victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania; offers assistance to victims of the September 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon through the Pentagon Family Assistance Center; and establishes a toll-free telephone number and secure website for victims and their immediate family members.

2001

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$544 million.
- The National Crime Victimization Survey reports that victimization rates continue to drop, reaching a new low of 26 million victims for the year 2000.
- On September 11, 2001, two hijacked planes crash into the World Trade Center, another into the Pentagon, and a fourth into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing 2,974 victims and injuring countless others in the worst terrorist attacks on American soil.
- The Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act and Jennifer's Law increase the annual Crime Victims Fund set-aside for child abuse victims from \$10 million to a maximum of \$20 million, and allow the use of Byrne grant funds for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Jennifer's Law authorizes \$2 million per year through Fiscal Year 2002 for states to apply for grants to cover costs associated with entering complete files of unidentified crime victims into the FBI's NCIC database.



- New regulations, policies, and procedures for victims of trafficking dramatically change the response to this class of crime victims by agencies throughout the federal government, including the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and several U.S. Department of Justice agencies (the FBI, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and U.S. Attorneys' Offices).
- Congress appropriates approximately \$20 million to fund services to trafficking victims, including shelter, medical and mental health care, legal assistance, interpretation, and advocacy.

2002

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$519 million.
- OVC releases final program guidelines and an accompanying application kit for the [Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program for Terrorism and Mass Violence Crimes](#), which provides funding to compensate and assist victims of terrorism and mass violence that occur within and outside the United States.
- The [National Crime Victimization Survey](#) continues to show a decline in crime victimization. Violent crime victimization dropped 10 percent from the previous year, and property crime dropped 6 percent.
- President Bush attends the presentation of the National Crime Victims' Rights Week awards and announces the Administration's support for the proposed Crime Victims' Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- The [National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators](#) (NAVAA) is established. With OVC support, NAVAA provides technical assistance and training to state VOCA assistance administrators.
- OVC makes available the first Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) grants to grassroots, nonprofit and community-based victim organizations and coalitions to improve outreach and services to victims of crime through the support of program development, networking, coalition building, and service delivery.
- President Bush hosts the first White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children and announces his support for the Hutchison-Feinstein National AMBER Alert Network Act of 2002, which would help develop, enhance, and coordinate [AMBER](#) (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response). The Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs is designated as the National AMBER Alert Coordinator at the Department of Justice.
- By the end of 2002, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam have established crime victim compensation programs.
- *Our Vulnerable Teenagers: Their Victimization, Its Consequences, and Directions for Prevention and Intervention* is released by the [National Council on Crime and Delinquency](#) and the National Center for Victims of Crime. This [landmark report](#) documents the disproportionate representation of teenagers, ages 12 to 19, as victims of crime, and discusses promising prevention and intervention strategies.
- Congress passes federal legislation making the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), formerly known as the Violence Against Women Office, a permanent part of the Department of Justice, with a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed director.

2003

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$361 million.
- The Senate Judiciary Committee passes the federal victims' rights constitutional amendment to ensure basic rights to victims nationwide.



- Congress passes and President Bush signs the PROTECT Act of 2003—also known as the “AMBER Alert” law—which creates a national AMBER network to facilitate rapid law enforcement and community response to kidnapped or abducted children.
- The [American Society of Victimology](#) (ASV) is established at the first American Symposium on Victimology held in Kansas City, Kansas. The ASV serves as a forum for academics and practitioners on all topics related to victimology in partnership with the World Society of Victimology.
- The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 is enacted to track and address the issue of rape in correctional institutions and develop national standards aimed at reducing prison rape.
- Congress establishes January as National Stalking Awareness Month.
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline, operated by the Texas Council on Family Violence, receives its one millionth call.
- The [U.S. Postal Service](#) releases the Stop Family Violence postage stamp to raise money for domestic violence prevention programs.
- Congress appropriates \$22 million for the U.S. Department of Defense’s Family Advocacy Program, \$900,000 of which is for the National Domestic Violence Hotline Awareness, Intervention, and Prevention Campaign in the military services.
- The Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 is enacted to provide new protections against identity theft and help victims of identity theft recover their financial losses.

- Congress passes and President Bush signs the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act. Along with reauthorizing programs created under the first TVPA, this legislation strengthens prevention efforts, supports prosecution of offenders, simplifies the process by which victims are certified eligible for benefits, and allows benefits and services to be available for victims’ family members who are legally allowed to come to the United States. The legislation also creates a civil cause of action for victims of forced labor or forced prostitution.

2004

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$834 million.
- The U.S. Department of Defense Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault releases its report and recommendations for preventing sexual assault in the military and providing a sensitive response to victims. The recommendations include establishing a single office within the U.S. Department of Defense to handle sexual assault matters, launching an information campaign to inform personnel about services available to victims, and convening a summit to update the definition of sexual assault and address victim privacy concerns within the military context.
- The Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act is enacted, defining aggravated identity theft as stealing another person’s identity in connection with the commission of other specified felonies. The legislation also prohibits the court from ordering an offender’s sentence for identity theft to run concurrently with a sentence imposed on the same offender for any other crime.



- Congress passes and President Bush signs the Justice for All Act of 2004, which includes the Scott Campbell, Stephanie Roper, Wendy Preston, Louarna Gillis, and Nila Lynn Crime Victims' Rights Act, providing substantive rights for crime victims. The law provides mechanisms at the federal level to enforce the rights of crime victims, giving victims and prosecutors legal standing to assert victims' rights, authorizing the filing of writs of mandamus to assert a victim's right, and requiring the U.S. Attorney General to establish a victims' rights compliance program within the Department of Justice. The legislation authorizes \$155 million in funding over the next five years for victim assistance programs at the federal and state level. This omnibus crime legislation also provides funding for DNA testing, crime labs, sexual assault forensic examiners, and programs for post-conviction DNA testing.
- President Bush hosts the first national training conference on human trafficking, which brings together trafficking response teams of federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and victim service providers from at least 21 cities with a known concentration of trafficking victims. The conference emphasizes the importance of combating trafficking using a victim-centered approach.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime releases *Repairing the Harm: A New Vision for Crime Victim Compensation in America*, which examines compensation data from all 50 states, the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, and compensation programs in other countries. The report also recommends a framework for strengthening victim compensation in the United States.
- OVC and the Bureau of Justice Assistance initiate a program to establish teams of law enforcement task forces and victim services to respond to human trafficking. The primary goals of this program are to develop sustainable programs to combat human trafficking through proactive law enforcement and prosecution at all levels of government, to coordinate U.S. Attorneys' Offices' efforts, to collaborate with victim service providers, and to increase the identification and rescue of trafficking victims.
- The U.S. House of Representatives establishes the first congressional [Victims' Rights Caucus](#), co-chaired by Representatives Ted Poe (R-TX) and Jim Costa (D-CA). The mission of the Caucus is to elevate crime victim issues in Congress in a bipartisan manner, without infringing on the rights of the accused, and to advocate for crime victims' interests before the Administration and within Congress.
- The Department of Justice announces more than \$84 million in DNA grants nationwide as part of President Bush's Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology initiative. The initiative is designed to improve the nation's capacity to use DNA evidence by eliminating casework and convicted offender backlogs, funding research and development, improving crime lab capacity, providing training for all stakeholders in the criminal justice system, and conducting testing to identify missing persons.
- Attorney General Alberto Gonzales issues the revised *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*. The guidelines incorporate provisions for crime victims' rights and remedies, including those in the Justice for All Act, which had been enacted since the publication of the previous edition. The guidelines also address victim and witness assistance in human trafficking and identity theft cases.

2005

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$668 million.
- The U.S. Department of Justice establishes an online national sex offender registry that provides real-time access to public sex offender data nationwide with a single Internet search.



- The National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators releases the Crime Victims Fund Report, which highlights the Crime Victims Fund's contribution to the federal government's efforts to assist victims, analyzes the sources of deposits into the Fund, examines the issues involved in administering the Fund, and explores future challenges to the Fund's capacity to meet victims' needs.
- The [American Bar Association](#) (ABA) releases *Elder Abuse Fatality Review Teams: A Replication Manual*, developed by the ABA Commission on Law and Aging and funded by OVC, providing guidance to communities on establishing elder abuse fatality review teams that review deaths caused by or related to elder abuse.
- The U.S. Department of Justice issues its final rule implementing the victims' rights compliance provisions of the Crime Victims Rights' Act portion of the Justice for All Act. The rule establishes the [Office of the Victims' Rights Ombudsman](#) within the Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) to receive and investigate complaints relating to the provision or violation of the rights of crime victims. The rule also creates procedures for filing complaints, investigating complaints, and imposing disciplinary sanctions against employees when warranted.
- The U.S. Department of Defense announces a new sexual assault policy. The policy creates a military-wide definition of sexual assault, sets a baseline standard for prevention and response training for the armed services, and requires all military installations to have a sexual assault response coordinator with a staff of victim advocates. The policy also requires the establishment of a senior level of command to handle sexual assault cases and review any administrative discharges of sexual assault victims.
- Congress passes and President Bush signs the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005. This reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act increases focus on access to services by underserved populations; includes provisions for early intervention, prevention, and health care; and promotes a national commitment to keep women and children safe from fear and abuse. It:
 - > Creates the Sexual Assault Services Program, which is the first federal funding stream dedicated to direct services for victims of sexual assault.
 - > Provides housing resources to prevent victims from becoming homeless and ensure that victims can access the criminal justice system without jeopardizing their current or future housing.
 - > Establishes prevention programs that intervene early with children who have witnessed domestic violence, support young families at risk for violence, and change social norms through targeted interventions with men and youth.
 - > Improves the response to violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women, funding research and establishing a Tribal registry to track sex offenders and orders of protection.
 - > Creates a [National Resource Center on Workplace Responses](#).
- Congress passes and President Bush signs the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005. This law expands the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 by enhancing efforts to fight domestic trafficking in persons.

2006

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$650 million.



- During the National Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremony, OVC awards the first Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Awards to honor outstanding individuals whose leadership, vision, and innovation have led to significant changes in public policy and practice that benefit crime victims.
- President Bush signs the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. Along with increasing supervision of sex offenders, this wide-ranging legislation also extends the federal Crime Victims' Rights Act to federal habeas corpus proceedings arising out of state convictions, eliminates the statute of limitations for federal prosecution of certain sexual offenses and child abduction, and extends the civil remedy for child sex crime victims to persons victimized as children, even if their injuries did not surface until the person became an adult.
- Attorney General Gonzales launches Project Safe Childhood, aimed at ending Internet-based child sexual exploitation. This nationwide project creates locally designed partnerships of federal, state, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies together with community leaders to develop a coordinated strategy to prevent, investigate, and prosecute sexual predators, abusers, and pornographers who target children. All United States Attorneys are charged with taking the lead in designing a strategic plan for their community.
- The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit decides *Kenna v. U.S. District Court for the Central District of California*, in which the court considered whether the Crime Victims' Rights Act portion of the Justice for All Act gave victims the right to speak at sentencing hearings. The case involved a father and son who swindled dozens of victims. The defendants pled guilty to wire fraud and money laundering. More than 60 victims submitted victim impact statements. At the father's sentencing hearing, several victims spoke about the effects of

the crimes, but at the son's sentencing, the judge refused to allow the victims to speak. The court held that the district judge had made a mistake, and made three key points: (1) in passing the Crime Victims' Rights Act, it was the intent of Congress to allow victims to speak at sentencing hearings, not just to submit victim impact statements; (2) victims have a right to speak even if there is more than one criminal sentencing; and (3) the remedy for a crime victim denied the right to speak at a sentencing hearing is to have the sentence vacated and a new sentencing hearing held in which the victims are allowed to speak.

- The Department of Justice issues its final rule implementing the new [International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program](#) (ITVERP). This new federally administered program extends crime victim compensation to American victims of terrorism abroad, reimbursing them for direct, out-of-pocket expenses resulting from an act of terror.
- President Bush signs the Older Americans Act Reauthorization (OAA), which includes victim-related provisions. It requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop a long-term plan for a national response to elder abuse; improves access to programs and services under OAA by addressing the needs of older individuals with limited English proficiency; promotes multidisciplinary responses by states and Indian Tribes to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and preserves the long-term care ombudsman program.

2007

- For the first time ever, the Crime Victims Fund deposits surpass a billion dollars, totaling \$1.02 billion.



- Attorney General Gonzales and Federal Trade Commission Chairman Deborah Platt Majoras release the President's Identity Theft Task Force strategic plan to combat identity theft. Task Force recommendations include reducing the unnecessary use of Social Security numbers by federal agencies, establishing national standards requiring private entities to safeguard the personal data they compile and to notify consumers of any breach that poses a significant risk of identity theft, implementing a consumer awareness campaign, and creating a National Identity Theft Law Enforcement Center to coordinate law enforcement efforts and information to improve the investigation and prosecution of identity thieves.
- OVC makes the first payments of the ITVERP program to U.S. victims of international acts of terrorism, including the victims of: the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; the October 2002 Bali, Indonesia, nightclub bombing; the May 2003 bombing of expatriate housing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and the 2003 airport bombing in Davao City, Philippines.
- House and Senate Resolutions establishing September 25 as the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims coincide with the first annual national event held on Capitol Hill.
- OVC releases two guides on the rights of victims of perpetrators with mental illness, a long-underserved victim population. *Responding to People Who Have Been Victimized by Individuals with Mental Illnesses* sets out the steps policymakers, advocates, mental health professionals, and others can take to understand and protect the rights and safety of these crime victims. *A Guide to the Role of Crime Victims in Mental Health Courts* offers practical recommendations to mental health court practitioners about how to engage crime victims in case proceedings. Both publications were developed by the Council of State Governments' Justice Center.
- Congress passes the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008, which amends the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. This legislation extends funding for various programs to serve homeless youth, including programs to prevent the sexual abuse of youth. It includes a requirement for regular statistical reports on the problem.
- OVC releases the *Resource Guide for Serving U.S. Citizens Victimized Abroad*, an [online guide](#) to help U.S.-based victim service providers deliver comprehensive and effective services to victims of overseas crime. The guide helps service providers access resources abroad and in the United States.
- The Government Accountability Office (GAO) releases a report on the federal Crime Victims' Rights Act (CVRA). The report makes a number of recommendations to improve CVRA implementation, including making efforts to increase victims' awareness of mechanisms to enforce their rights, restructuring the complaint investigation process to promote greater independence and impartiality of investigators, and identifying performance measures regarding victims' rights.

2008

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$896 million.
- President Bush signs into law the Identity Theft Enhancement and Restitution Act as part of the Former Vice President Protection Act of 2008. This legislation permits courts to order restitution to cybercrime victims for the costs associated with identity theft, including the loss of time and money spent restoring their credit record.



- President Bush signs legislation requiring the Department of Justice to develop and implement a National Strategy on Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction, to improve the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, to increase resources for regional computer forensic labs, and to make other improvements to increase the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute child predators.

2009

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$1.75 billion.
- U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics releases the first national statistics on the prevalence of stalking in America. *Stalking Victimization in the United States* finds that 3.4 million persons identified themselves as victims of stalking in a 12-month period.
- President Barack Obama signs the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which includes supplemental funding for crime victim assistance and compensation, STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Violence Against Women formula grants, and transitional housing programs for domestic violence victims.
- President Obama issues the first White House Proclamation of National Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- President Obama names Lynn Rosenthal to the newly created position of White House Advisor on Violence Against Women.
- Congress passes and the President signs the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act of 2009 (FERA), expanding federal fraud laws to cover mortgage fraud, additional forms of securities fraud, and certain money laundering; and authorizing additional funding for investigation and prosecution of such fraud. The new law also establishes a Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission to examine the causes of the current financial and economic crisis in the United States and present its findings to the President and Congress in 2010.
- President Obama and the House of Representatives recognize the 15th anniversary of the passage of the Violence Against Women Act through a Presidential Proclamation and House Resolution.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, releases the first national report on crimes against persons with disabilities, based on the National Crime Victimization Survey. The report finds that the rate of nonfatal violent crime against persons with disabilities was 1.5 times higher than the rate for persons without disabilities. The report fulfilled the mandate of the Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, releases a report on a national survey on children's exposure to violence, the most comprehensive survey to date on this issue. The report includes findings regarding children's direct and indirect exposure to specific categories of violence, how exposure to violence changes as children grow up, and the prevalence and incidence of multiple and cumulative exposures to violence.



- President Obama establishes the Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, comprising more than 20 agencies, 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and state and local partners, to examine mortgage fraud, Ponzi schemes, tax fraud, predatory lending, credit card fraud, and more. Its goal is to improve efforts to investigate and prosecute significant financial crimes, ensure just and effective punishment for those who perpetrate financial crimes, recover proceeds for victims, and address financial discrimination in the lending and financial markets.
- Congress passes and the President signs the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. The Act extends the definition of federal hate crimes to include crimes based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; authorizes the Attorney General to provide assistance to state, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting hate crimes; and amends the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to include crimes motivated by gender and gender identity, as well as hate crimes committed by and against juveniles.
- President Obama signs the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act of 2010, legislation that mandates that cruise ship personnel promptly report serious crime on board ships to both the FBI and the U.S. Coast Guard, requires the cruise industry to comply with certain security provisions, and requires ships to be equipped with a video surveillance system and maintain a log book to record reporting of deaths, missing individuals, thefts, and other crimes.
- President Obama signs the Tribal Law and Order Act, designed to increase Tribal law enforcement agencies' power to combat crime on reservations and to increase the accountability of federal agencies responsible for public safety in Indian Country. The Act requires federal prosecutors to keep data on criminal cases in Indian Country that they decline to prosecute, and to support prosecutions in Tribal court by sharing evidence. It also increases the maximum sentence that a Tribal court can impose from one to three years in prison, expands training of Tribal law enforcement officers on handling domestic violence and sexual assault cases, calls for standardized protocols for investigating and prosecuting sexual assault, and provides Tribal police greater access to criminal history databases.

2010

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$2.4 billion.
- The Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force launches StopFraud.gov, which combines resources from federal agencies on ways consumers can protect themselves from fraud and report fraudulent activity. It also includes information about the task force activities.
- The Department of Justice releases its first National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction, designed to: increase coordination among the nation's investigators; better train investigators and prosecutors; advance law enforcement's technological capabilities; and enhance research to inform decisions on deterrence, incarceration, and monitoring. The strategy also includes a renewed commitment to public awareness and community outreach. The effort includes relaunching Project Safe Childhood, which marshals federal, state, Tribal, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute those who exploit children via the Internet, and to identify and rescue victims.



- President Obama signs the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010, which includes a requirement that the Coast Guard submit an annual report to Congress on sexual assaults involving members of the Coast Guard.

2011

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total nearly \$2 billion.¹
- President Obama issues the first White House proclamation of National Stalking Awareness Month. The President calls on all Americans to learn to recognize the signs of stalking, acknowledge stalking as a serious crime, and urge victims not to be afraid to speak out or ask for help.
- President Obama signs the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, to provide health benefits for those who suffered health injuries from living or working near the site of the collapsed World Trade Center or for first responders and cleanup workers at any of the sites of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It also extends the 9/11 victims' compensation fund for five years to allow the filing of new claims related to health injuries associated with debris removal at the crash sites.
- President Obama signs the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, which strengthens the military's response to sexual assault by requiring the development of a comprehensive policy for sexual assault prevention and response, and issues standards to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and response programs in each military branch.
- OVC launches [Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services](#), an initiative to expand the vision and impact of the crime victim services field.

- President Obama signs the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, which requires the Peace Corps to develop a comprehensive sexual assault policy, create an Office of Victim Advocacy and a Sexual Assault Advisory Council, and institute volunteer training on sexual assault, risk reduction, and response.
- President Obama signs the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, which includes provisions to prevent and respond to military sexual assault. The Act ensures that members and dependents who are victims of sexual assault have access to legal assistance and sexual assault advocates, whether the victim chooses unrestricted or confidential reporting of the assault. The Act also calls for timely action on a sexual assault victim's application for consideration of a change of station or unit to reduce the possibility of retaliation for reporting the assault, requires the development of training in sexual assault prevention and response, and makes other related changes.
- Attorney General Eric H. Holder revises and reissues *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*, the standards for officers and employees of the Department of Justice investigative, prosecutorial, correctional, and parole components in the treatment of victims of and witnesses to crime. The revisions clarified DOJ's responsibilities to provide mandated rights and services enumerated in the Crime Victims' Rights Act (CVRA) and the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act (VRRRA) as well as other statutory requirements.

2012

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$2.79 billion.
- Congress passes and President Obama signs the Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act of 2011, removing the requirement of Senate confirmation for 170 executive positions, including that of the Office for Victims of Crime Director.

¹ Actual deposits total \$1,998,220,205.15.



- Attorney General Eric H. Holder revises and reissues the *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance* to include guidelines that examine the unique requirements of vulnerable victims, including an update to address the scope of the federal child abuse reporting requirement under section 13031 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics, with funding from the Office for Victims of Crime, embarks on a landmark three-year research study on the victimization of persons with disabilities who are in institutional settings.
- Attorney General Eric H. Holder releases a final rule to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse in confinement facilities, in accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA). This landmark rule sets national standards for four categories of facilities: adult prisons and jails, lockups, community confinement facilities, and juvenile facilities. The rule is the first-ever federal effort to set standards aimed at protecting inmates in all such facilities at the federal, state, and local levels. Highlights include access to free forensic medical exams to all victims of sexual abuse and access to a victim advocate from a rape crisis center.
- The Unified Crime Report (UCR) definition of rape changes to include any gender of victim or perpetrator, as well as instances in which the victim is incapable of giving consent because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (including due to the influence of drugs or alcohol or because of age). The UCR definition is used by the FBI to collect information from local law enforcement agencies about reported rapes.
- OVC releases the final report of its *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services* initiative. The report creates a framework for addressing the challenges for the victim services field, making recommendations in four broad categories: support for the development of research; continued strategic planning in the victim assistance field; ensuring the statutory, policy, and programmatic flexibility necessary to address enduring and emerging crime victim issues; and expanding the field's capacity to meet the demands of the 21st century.
- Congress passes and President Obama signs the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 2013). The measure expands protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender survivors, Native American and Native Alaskan survivors, and teens and young adults. The reauthorization allows grant funds to be used to develop and promote legislation and policies that enhance best practices for responding to violence against women. It adds stalking to several grant programs, including Grants to Encourage Arrests, and to campus safety provisions for the first time. It ensures that sexual assault victims do not incur the cost of forensic exams by requiring jurisdictions to provide exams to victims free of charge and without any out-of-pocket expense (rather than victims being reimbursed after paying the cost themselves, permissible previously). The law also, for the first time, provides that Tribes will be able to exercise their sovereign power to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence non-Indians who assault Indian spouses or dating partners or violate a protection order in Indian Country.

2013

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$8.95 billion.



- Included in VAWA 2013 is the SAFER Act, which requires the U.S. Department of Justice to ensure that at least 75 percent of the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant funds are used to analyze backlogged sexual assault kits and expand the capacity of labs to test such evidence. It allows Debbie Smith grants to be used to conduct audits of untested sexual assault kits in law enforcement custody, as well as untested kits held by the labs. It also requires that protocols for the effective processing of DNA evidence be established within 18 months.
- The Trafficking Victims Protection Act Reauthorization is also adopted as part of VAWA 2013. Along with reauthorizing important grant programs, the law makes it a crime to destroy, conceal, or confiscate someone's passport for more than 48 hours for the purpose of smuggling or controlling that person. It also requires that state plans for foster care and adoption assistance include prevention measures and responses to the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in August releases a memo directing the immediate implementation of various measures to strengthen the military's sexual assault prevention and response programs. Victim-related measures include creating a program to provide legal representation to sexual assault victims throughout the justice process; providing commanders with options to assign or transfer a service member accused of committing sexual assault; and changing the Manual for Courts-Martial to allow victims to give input to the post-trial action phase of courts-martial.
- OVC releases updated regulations for the VOCA Assistance formula grants. The new regulations are designed to increase the effectiveness of such funding, through increased flexibility, a reduction in the administrative burden relating to the funding, broadening the types of services that can be funded, drawing attention to previously underserved populations of victims, and supporting the training of volunteers who provide direct services to victims.

2014

- The Crime Victims' Fund deposits total \$3.59 billion in Fiscal Year 2014.
- President Obama signs the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, which contains numerous reforms to address sexual assault in the military, including: requiring independent review of decisions not to refer charges for trial and limiting command discretion to modify court-martial findings; removing the statute of limitations on sexual assault; creating a Special Victims' Counsel to provide independent legal assistance to sexual assault victims; implementing anti-retaliation policies for victims who report sexual assault; and allowing victims to apply for a permanent change of station or unit transfer.
- The White House announces the release of the *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States*. The plan outlines steps federal agencies will take to identify all victims of human trafficking and implement a victim services network that is comprehensive, trauma-informed, and responsive.
- In January 2014, the White House Council on Women and Girls releases its report, "Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action." This report analyzes the most recent data on rape and sexual assault in the United States. It identifies who is at risk of victimization, examines the cost of sexual violence (to both survivors and communities), and outlines the criminal justice response. The report describes the steps that the Administration has taken to combat rape and sexual assault and provides recommendations for further action.



- Under a provision of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA 2013), the Department of Justice selects three American Indian Tribes for a pilot program to extend criminal jurisdiction in Indian country. VAWA 2013 recognizes that Tribes have a right to exercise special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction over certain defendants, regardless of their Indian or non-Indian status, who commit acts of domestic or dating violence in Indian country. This provision takes effect in 2015, but the pilot project allows selected Tribes to begin exercising special jurisdiction sooner.
- President Obama issues a Presidential Memorandum to establish the [“White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.”](#) The task force has begun to share best practices to increase transparency, enforcement, public awareness, and interagency coordination to prevent violence and support victims of sexual assault on college campuses. In April, the task force released its first report “Not Alone,” which provides recommendations to school administrations.
- President Obama signs the Kilahe Davenport Child Protection Act of 2013. This legislation directs the U.S. Attorney General to issue a state-by-state report on child abuse laws within six months, with a particular focus on penalties for cases of severe child abuse. The law also amends the federal criminal code to enhance penalties for child abuse committed by habitual offenders.
- President Obama launched the [My Brother’s Keeper](#) initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and to ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. The initiative comprises six milestones, the last one being “Keeping Kids on Track and Giving Them Second Chances.” A key goal of this milestone is to address the overrepresentation of African American and Latino men in the criminal and juvenile justice systems and reduce the rates of violence and victimization for all young people.
- Congress appropriates funding to implement some of the recommendations in *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services*. For the first time ever, OVC made awards to support initiatives such as capacity building at the state level and access to services for American citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents at the national and international level through innovative technology.
- President Obama signs the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014. This Act directs the Secretary of State to report annually to Congress on international child abduction cases and ensure that U.S. diplomatic and consular missions properly report these abduction cases. The Secretary of State will also establish Memoranda of Understanding with countries that are unlikely to join the Hague Abduction Convention and advise the President on countries that do not cooperate in or fail to resolve abduction cases.
- On August 8, 2014, President Obama signs the Victims of Child Abuse Reauthorization Act of 2013. This Act authorizes appropriations for children’s advocacy centers and the development of multidisciplinary child abuse investigation and prosecution programs. Additionally, the Act authorizes appropriations to national organizations that provide technical assistance and training to attorneys and professionals working with the criminal prosecution of child abuse cases.



- President Obama is joined by Vice President Biden, leaders from institutions of higher education, media companies, grassroots organizations, and celebrities to launch the “[It’s on Us](#)” public service campaign, which includes a personal commitment to help keep men and women safe from sexual assault. It is a pledge not to be a bystander, but to be part of the solution, to recognize that non-consensual sex is sexual assault, to identify situations in which sexual assault may occur, to intervene in situations where consent has not or cannot be given, and to create an environment in which sexual assault is unacceptable and survivors are supported. It’s on Us raises awareness about the problem of sexual assault on college campuses and invites everyone to be part of the solution.
- President Obama signs the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act on September 29, 2014. The Act requires states to develop policies and procedures to identify, document, screen, and determine appropriate services for children in foster care who are victims of, or at risk of, sex trafficking. The Act also mandates data collection and reporting by states and establishes a National Advisory Committee on the Sex Trafficking of Children and Youth in the U.S. to advise on policies to improve the nation’s response to the sex trafficking of children and youth.
- President Obama signs the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act on May 29, 2015. This legislation contains a variety of provisions aimed at improving the response to victims of trafficking, including: establishing the Domestic Trafficking Victims’ Fund, providing grant funds to enhance services for runaway and homeless victims, creating the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, and improving training for law enforcement, health professionals, and other service providers who work with trafficking victims. The Act also expressly recognizes child pornography production as a form of human trafficking.
- The White House releases the “Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States: Fiscal Years 2013 – 2014.” This status report documents the progress of federal agencies during fiscal years 2013 – 2014 to ensure that all victims of human trafficking in the United States are identified and have access to the services they need to recover. OVC serves as a co-chair in the Federal Strategic Action Plan’s development, along with the Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families and the Department of Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign.
- The White House convenes the 2015 White House Conference on Aging. Held once each decade to reflect on issues affecting America’s seniors, the Conference includes a focus on elder justice to address elder financial exploitation, abuse, and neglect, and announces numerous federal efforts involving research, reporting, training, outreach, and more.

2015

- The Crime Victims’ Fund deposits total \$2.64 billion in Fiscal Year 2015.
- President Obama signs the Fiscal Year 2015 Omnibus Appropriations Act, which releases \$2.36 billion from VOCA, almost quadruple the amount of funding released in 2014.



- The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) announces the launch of [“The Center for Changing Our Campus Culture,”](#) an online clearinghouse of resources related to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking on campus. This website provides the latest information, materials, and resources for campus administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as campus and community law enforcement, victim service providers, students, parents, and other key stakeholders.
- In coordination with the FBI’s Office for Victim Assistance and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism, OVC announces the release of [“Helping Victims of Mass Violence and Terrorism: Planning, Response, Recovery, and Resources.”](#) This online toolkit is designed to help jurisdictions implement a comprehensive, victim-centered response to incidents of mass violence by developing victim assistance protocols, addressing resources gaps, and creating and maintaining partnerships with stakeholders.
- The [White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault](#) releases a Resource Guide to support students, faculty, administrators, and communities around the country to prevent sexual violence and improve the response to violence at colleges and universities. The Resource Guide compiles guidance, tools, model policies and procedures, training and technical assistance, funding opportunities, and public messaging materials. The Task Force also releases a sample memorandum of understanding to assist campuses and law enforcement agencies in working together to protect students and address the needs of sexual assault survivors.
- OVC, in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, releases the [Supporting Male Survivors of Violence Demonstration Initiative](#), designed to enhance and support trauma-informed systems of care for male crime victims and, in particular, boys and young men of color. The initiative seeks to strengthen victim service providers’ knowledge and skills to produce innovative programs and practices that foster a better understanding among criminal and juvenile justice systems, and guide service providers regarding the rights and needs of these boys and young men.
- The U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launch a federal [Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium](#) to provide national training, technical assistance, and resource development on domestic violence and housing. The Consortium supports national training and technical assistance awards to develop resources and foster increased collaboration among domestic violence and homeless service providers to better address the critical housing needs of victims of domestic violence and their children.
- On November 25, 2015, President Obama signs the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016. This Act provides Special Victims Counsel (SVC) to victims of sexual assault, including non-civilian Department of Defense (DOD) employees. The Act also requires standardized training for SVCs, anti-retaliation and privacy protections for victims, and victim notification of the availability of an SVC. The Act also directs DOD to develop a plan to improve its response to sexual assaults against male employees.



- On December 15, 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice releases guidance on "[Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence](#)." This guidance is accompanied by a roundtable discussion and report, which provide recommendations from key stakeholders on improving the law enforcement response to victims of sexual violence, especially in vulnerable populations.
- President Obama signs the Consolidated Appropriations Act on December 18, 2015. This legislation reauthorizes the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, which provides health benefits and compensation to individuals who were injured or killed in September 11 rescue and recovery efforts and includes the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund as well. The Appropriations Act also establishes the Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund to pay civil judgments against certain foreign state sponsors of terrorism.
- The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) of the U.S. Department of Justice launches an initiative to reduce language barriers for underserved victims. The two-pronged approach addresses training and technical assistance for victim service providers and enhances OVC's ability to incorporate language access into its programs.
- The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) releases the "[National Protocol for Sexual Abuse Medical Forensic Examinations, Pediatric](#)" (Pediatric SAFE Protocol) on April 28, 2016. This protocol provides specific guidance on forensic medical examinations and outlines the need for a coordinated community response to sexual assault investigations.
- On May 5, 2016, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, publishes its research report, "[Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men](#)," which examines the prevalence of intimate partner and sexual violence and the impact of such violence on local communities. The study found that 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native adults have been victims of violence.

2016

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$1.48 billion in Fiscal Year 2016.
- On January 4, 2016, the White House announces a set of executive actions to address gun violence. Those actions include expanding and bolstering the background check system to cover certain sales that take place online and at gun shows, supporting research into firearm safety technology, and providing more funding for mental health treatment, FBI staff, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives agents.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics releases the "[Campus Climate Survey Validation Study](#)" in January 2016. This report presents the results of a nine-school assessment of undergraduate sexual victimization, including estimates of the prevalence of sexual assault, rape, and sexual battery during the 2014-15 academic year.
- President Obama signs the Native American Children's Safety Act on June 3, 2016. This Act provides protections for Native American children in foster care, including requiring that Tribes establish systems for criminal background checks and accessing tribal and state registries before placements.
- On June 14, 2016, the White House convenes the first [United State of Women](#) summit to examine issues of gender equality, including violence against women.



- The Office for Victims of Crime publishes a final rule on July 8, 2016, to implement the victim assistance formula grant program authorized by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984. This rule codifies and updates existing program guidelines to reflect statutory and policy changes since 1984. The final rule provides greater flexibility for state use of VOCA funds to support a continuum of victim services, including comprehensive legal assistance, transitional housing, relocation, and forensic interviews and medical examinations. It also clarifies support for underserved victims and eliminates a previous restriction against using VOCA funds to serve victims in detention and correctional facilities.
- The U.S. Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) announces more than \$3.2 million to help communities prevent domestic violence homicides. These funds will go to programs that seek to improve the criminal justice system's response to victims and that provide technical assistance and training. OVW also announces the addition of Miami and Winnebago Counties in Illinois as replication sites for the evidence-based Lethality Assessment Program model, which encourages victims to access domestic violence support and shelter services.
- The U.S. Department of Justice releases the "[2016 National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction](#)." The strategy provides a comprehensive assessment of the nature and scope of the crimes against children, including child pornography, sextortion, live streaming of child sexual abuse, child sex trafficking, child sex tourism, and sex offense registry violations. The report also includes an section on the unique challenges faced in Indian Country.
- Together, OVW and OVC award 10 grants totaling \$9.85 million to various national and local organizations to help implement the U.S. Department of Justice's Guidance on Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. The grants fund enhanced training and technical assistance across the nation, research and evaluation, and implementation resources for law enforcement agencies.
- OVW announces the launch of the National Domestic Violence and Firearms Resource Center website, "[Safer Families, Safer Communities](#)." The website is a part of a newly established resource center supporting the implementation and enforcement of firearm restrictions on domestic violence perpetrators in an effort to reduce domestic violence-related crimes involving firearms, particularly homicide.
- President Obama signs the Survivors' Bill of Rights on October 7, 2016, which ensures that sexual assault survivors who fall under federal jurisdiction have access to sexual assault forensic exams and information about the testing and results of that evidence. The law allows survivors to request that their kits be stored until the statute of limitations expires.
- The U.S. Department of Defense releases "[The DoD Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men](#)." Under this plan, the Department will convene a working group to address four objectives: developing an outreach plan, increasing understanding of how men experience assault, tailoring support services and health care to better meet men's needs, and developing metrics to track the plan's progress.



- On December 16, 2016, Congress reauthorizes the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act (first passed in 2007), which obligates the U.S. Department of Justice and, specifically, the FBI to examine the investigation and prosecution of criminal civil rights statute violations that resulted in a death prior to 1980. Previously, the Act pertained only to fatal statute violations prior to 1970. All authorities with jurisdiction are called to: coordinate, share, and discuss information pertaining to the Act with civil rights organizations, institutions of higher education, and DOJ entities; support the full accounting of all victims; hold accountable perpetrators of racially motivated crimes; keep families regularly informed about the investigation’s status; and develop a public repository of related documents disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act.
- President Obama signs the Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2016 on December 16. This wide-reaching legislation increases access to restitution, reauthorizes victim notification grants, reduces the rape-kit backlog by allocating funds for testing and auditing kits, and defrays costs associated with DNA testing after conviction.
- The [National Census of Victim Service Providers](#) (NCVSP) is the first-ever national count of all programs responding to victims and survivors of crime and abuse, providing the most comprehensive picture of the victim services field to date by identifying the size and scope of the victim services field. Funded by the Office for Victims of Crime and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, the NCVSP will capture basic information about the field, help reveal gaps and opportunities and result in the first national all-inclusive list of active victim service providers.
- The [Safe Housing Partnerships](#) website, a product of the Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium launched to provide useful resources and tools that support victim advocates and providers at the critical intersection of domestic violence, sexual assault, homelessness, and housing. Funded and supported by an unprecedented partnership between the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Housing and Urban Development, this multi-year Consortium brings together national, state, and local organizations to collaboratively build and strengthen technical assistance to both housing/homelessness providers and domestic violence service providers.
- Attorney General Jeff Sessions announces the creation of the U.S. Department of Justice Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety on February 28, 2017. Members are from Department agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Drug Enforcement Agency; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; and the U.S. Marshals Service.

2017

- The Crime Victims Fund deposits total \$6.58 billion in Fiscal Year 2017.
- The U.S. Department of Justice announces on January 9, 2017, the “Justice Department’s National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking,” as required by the 2015 Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. The National Strategy sets out a plan to improve coordination within the Department and develop strategies within each federal district to end human trafficking.



- OVC releases the [Vicarious Trauma Toolkit](#) on April 11, 2017. Designed to help victim service providers and first responders build resilient staff, the toolkit is based on research showing that vicarious trauma, left unaddressed, results in poorer quality response to victims and also contributes to staff burnout and turnover. The toolkit helps agencies assess their current capacity as a vicarious trauma-informed organization and then take steps to address gaps.
- In April, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) established the Victims Of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) office to acknowledge and serve the needs of crime victims and their families who have been affected by crimes committed by individuals with a nexus to immigration.
- The U.S. Department of Justice announces the National Public Safety Partnership on June 20, 2017. This new initiative aims to fight crime by pledging existing federal resources to 12 cities: Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; Buffalo, New York; Cincinnati and Toledo, Ohio; Houston, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Jackson and Memphis, Tennessee; Kansas City, Missouri; Lansing, Michigan; and Springfield, Illinois. The partnership provides a framework to enhance federal support for local jurisdictions in reducing gang and gun violence.
- The National Institute of Justice releases [National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits](#) on August 8, 2017. This report, developed by a multidisciplinary working group, focuses on a victim-centered approach to the collection of DNA evidence in sexual assault cases. It includes 35 recommendations for law enforcement, medical providers, victim advocates, prosecutors, and laboratories. The report was developed in response to the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act of 2013.

