

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is to enhance the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to provide leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

As indicated in its mission statement, OVC is committed to building the capacity of crime victim services. During the 30 years following the passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984, the victim services movement has grown from a patchwork collective of individuals in disparate communities to an established professional field. This maturation of policies, practices, and programs has allowed victim service professionals to reach more victims—and help them rebuild their lives—than ever before. Justice for victims has become entrenched as policy not only in the criminal justice system but also throughout a wide range of professional disciplines—from social work to criminal justice and rape crisis counseling to law enforcement.

Although this progress is significant, we must continue to enhance services to address ongoing needs and emerging challenges. An estimated 6.1 million people experienced violent victimizations and 16.8 million individuals experienced property victimizations in the United States in 2013.¹ Victims, their families, and their communities often experience devastating physical, psychological, emotional, and financial consequences of these crimes. In FYs 2013 and 2014, the Crime Victims Fund (Fund) provided more than \$1.4 billion to support direct assistance to more than 7 million crime victims through a variety of services—from emergency food and shelter to crisis counseling and advocacy—as well as compensation for financial losses associated with the crime. Recipients of these services included victims of VOCA-designated priority crimes—domestic violence, sexual assault, and child maltreatment—and an array of other crimes that cause harm to individuals, families, and communities throughout the Nation.

The obligation limitation on the Fund was set at \$730 million in FY 2013 and \$745 million in FY 2014. In FY 2015, the obligation limitation on the Fund will be approximately \$2.36 billion. This greatly increased obligation limitation—the largest ever—will support efforts to move the victim services field forward into a new era of enhanced and innovative victim services. OVC is grateful that Congress recognizes the necessity of expanding the Fund’s obligation limitation, which will allow greater numbers of victims to receive direct services and enable more victim service providers to build their capacity to reach victims and serve them effectively.

The Need for Capacity Building

The victim services field must continue to evolve if it is to build and sustain capacity. Faced with a rising number of new and complex issues for victims—in addition to longstanding challenges—and the corresponding need to serve more victims, OVC in 2010 conducted the [Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Initiative](#), the first extensive examination of the victim assistance field in almost 15 years. The results of this comprehensive 2-year study were published in 2013 in the [Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Final Report](#) (Vision 21 Report), which addressed the political, policy, and philosophical challenges of transforming victim services in the 21st century. To drive this transformation, the [Vision 21 Report](#) provided four key recommendations:

1. Conduct continuous rather than episodic strategic planning in the victim assistance field to effect real change in research, policy, programming, and capacity building.
2. Support the development of research to build a body of evidence-based knowledge and generate, collect, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data on victimization, emerging victimization trends, services and behaviors, and enforcement efforts.
3. Ensure the statutory, policy, and programmatic flexibility to address enduring and emerging crime victims' issues.
4. Build and institutionalize capacity through an infusion of technology, training, and innovation to ensure that the field is equipped to meet the demands off the 21st century.

This holistic approach to improving the capacity of the field is necessary to reaching underserved victim populations, assisting survivors more effectively, and providing increasingly complex services.

The victim services field will develop and institutionalize its capacity to reach and serve all crime victims in need of help and support in the 21st century.



Implementation of Capacity Building

In response to the [**Vision 21 Report**](#)'s recommendation to build capacity in the crime victims field to better serve victims, OVC programming in FYs 2013 and 2014 focused on building capacity in a number of key areas. Through seven FY 2014 competitive solicitations, OVC awarded 35 Vision 21 grants, which represented \$12.5 million in funding that Congress appropriated specifically for Vision 21, together with OVC's use of a portion of OVC's discretionary funding from the Crime Victims Fund. These awards support projects that embody the mission of Vision 21—building capacity through innovation, providing comprehensive legal assistance, and addressing continuing and emerging challenges that face victims and service providers. From programs that focus on reaching underserved populations to those emphasizing the use of technology, the projects are designed to connect victim service providers with victims in new and innovative ways.

During FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC also expanded its training opportunities for the victim services field. Of particular note was our partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to respond to sexual assault in the military. Through a collaboration with DOD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), OVC continues to educate both military and community-based victim service providers through in-person trainings, offered both on and near military installations with high rates of sexual assault, and online trainings to help ensure that victims receive comprehensive and compassionate care.

Vision 21 revealed that we need more empirical information about victimization to serve victims more effectively. Basic questions about who is victimized, by whom, and what services survivors seek need answers. OVC is supporting a number of efforts conducted by our partner federal agencies to collect and analyze such data, which will enable policymakers and victim service organizations to develop programming and implement projects to meet victims' needs. OVC recognizes the increasing role that innovative technology plays in our society—especially with its capacity to serve victims in new ways. Victim service providers and the VOCA state administering agencies must build organizational capacity to support data collection and support victims through new and innovative means that still protect their rights to confidentiality and safety. OVC is focused on helping the field reach victims in all communities, no matter how underserved or isolated, and is funding programs that prioritize doing so. In FY 2014, OVC funded programs to develop mobile applications, or 'apps,' and increase use of social media to provide victims with information about available services through methods that work best for them.

But the benefits of technology also come with drawbacks. From child pornography and cyber stalking, to labor and sex trafficking, to identity theft and financial fraud, criminals can use technological advancements to perpetrate new crimes—and commit heinous acts in new ways. In addition to 'new' embodiments of crime, familiar challenges persist, such as child abuse, domestic violence, and sexual violence. OVC continues to support innovative methods of serving victims to meet these emerging and enduring forms of victimization.

The crime victim services field faces many challenges as it continues to advance victims' rights and help victims begin to heal. Service providers must fully understand the needs of victims, develop new means of connecting with survivors, and provide them with assistance in ways that work best for them. During FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC began implementing the strategic framework of the [**Vision 21 Report**](#) by launching

new programs, expanding the scope of existing initiatives, and continuing collaboration with partner agencies and organizations to develop innovative projects to enhance victim services. This Report to the Nation describes OVC's accomplishments during Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014 as we continue our commitment to Building Capacity Through Research, Innovation, Technology, and Training and turning the goals of Vision 21 into reality.

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013 National Crime Victimization Survey, www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv13.pdf.

Message From the Director

For more than 30 years, the Crime Victims Fund has been the bedrock of victim services. Since its establishment by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984, the Fund—consisting primarily of fines, bond forfeitures, and penalties from convicted federal offenders—has been directed to millions of victims and thousands of programs to help these victims heal.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) disbursed these non-taxpayer dollars to support more than 7 million crime victims in Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014. This report highlights OVC services and programs during this period, and their impact on victims, survivors, and communities throughout the Nation. In 2013, OVC released *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Final Report*, the culmination of a strategic initiative designed to spur the field into a new era of enhanced and innovative services. The programs and projects discussed in this report capture how OVC has begun to implement Vision 21's recommendations and our efforts to drive the field forward.



This transformation of victim services continues today. OVC would like to thank Congress for the increased level of funding it has provided for victim services in FY 2015. The approximately \$2.36 billion Congress has appropriated is the largest in the history of the Fund. This support, most of which will be directed to states, is critical to building capacity in the field to bring about real change for victim services. Through OVC's support of research, innovation, technology, and training, we can enhance efforts to reach more victims and help them as they rebuild their lives.

Joye E. Frost
Principal Deputy Director
Office for Victims of Crime

Exhibits

EXHIBIT 1. CRIME VICTIMS FUND CASH FLOW, FYs 2013 AND 2014 (IN \$ MILLIONS)

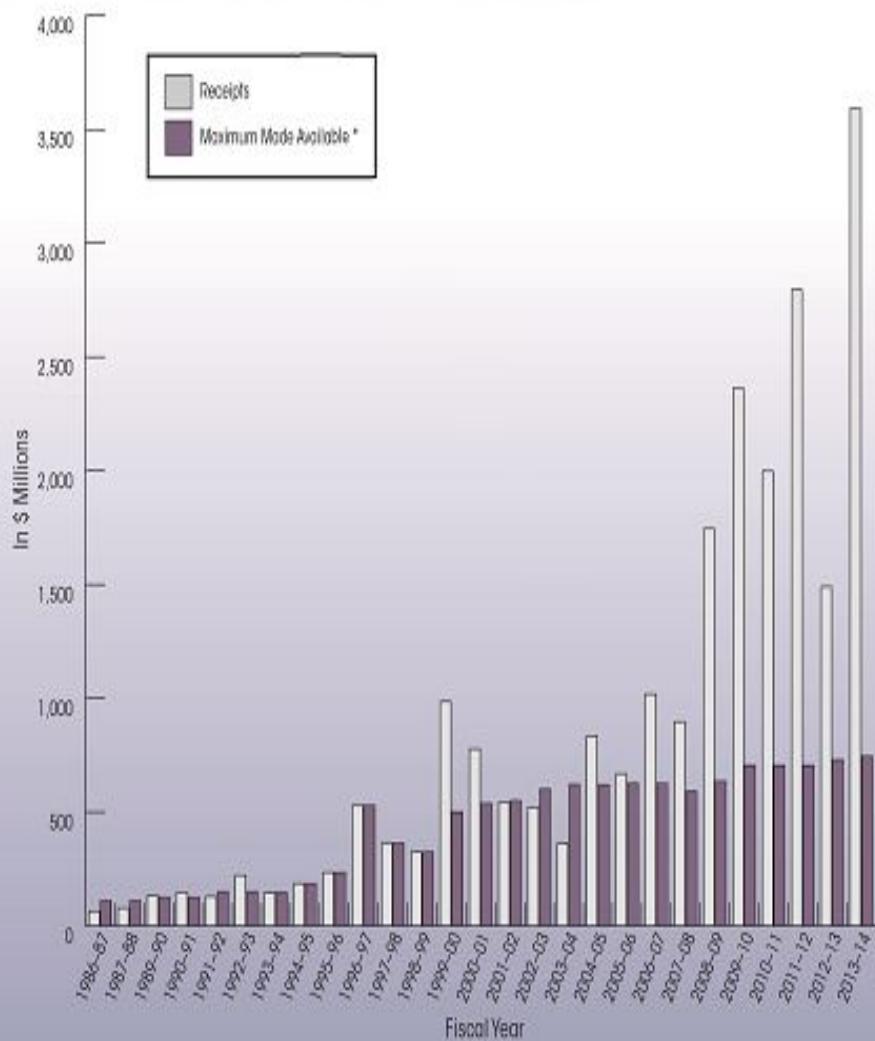
Income	FY 2013		FY 2014		
Deposits	\$1,489		\$3,591		
	Estimate	Actuals	Estimate	7.9% M&A*	Actuals
Obligation Limitation	730.0	730.0	745.0	57.7	687.3
Allocation Amounts					
Children's Justice Act	20.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
U.S. Attorneys' victim/witness coordinators	23.4	21.6	23.8	1.9	21.9
FBI victim assistance specialists	17.6	116.3	17.9	1.4	16.5
Victim notification system	4.8	4.4	4.9	0.4	4.5
OVC discretionary grants **	33.2	30.8	33.9	2.7	31.2
State victim compensation grants***	315.5	159.1	322.3	25.7	137.4
State victim assistance grants	303.5	428.1	322.3	25.7	455.8
Total Available for Allocation	730.0	677.4	745.0	57.7	672.4
Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve		50.0			50.0
Obligations		4.6			7.6

*In FY 2014, the Office of Justice Programs assessed 7.9 percent for management and administration.

**OVC spent approximately \$225,000 in 2013 and \$210,000 in 2014 for peer review.

***Of the amounts remaining in the Fund after the Children's Justice Act, U.S. Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Victim Notification System allocations, state compensation and state assistance are each allocated 47.5 percent and OVC discretionary grants are allocated 5 percent. State compensation grants are based on 60 percent of state payouts for compensation in the prior 2 years. If the amount available for obligation from the Fund is sufficient to provide full grants to each state compensation program, the remaining compensation funding is applied to state assistance grants and distributed proportionately among the states on the basis of state population.

EXHIBIT 2. CRIME VICTIMS FUND RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS



*When the Fund was authorized in 1984, a cap was placed on how much money could be deposited for the first 8 years (FY 1985 through FY 1993). Congress lifted the cap for FY 1994 through FY 1999. Starting in FY 2000, Congress placed annual caps on obligations to protect against wide fluctuations in receipts and ensure a stable level of funding in the future.

Source: Compiled from Office of Justice Programs data.

**EXHIBIT 3. NUMBER AND AMOUNT OF VICTIM COMPENSATION CLAIMS PAID IN FYs 2013 AND 2014,
BY TYPE OF CRIME**

Crime Category	Total Number of Paid Claims (FY 13 + FY 14)	Claims Related to Domestic Violence (FY 13 + FY 14)	Total Amount Paid (in \$) (FY 13 + FY 14)	Percentage Related to Domestic Violence
Assault	132,210 (67,218 + 64,992)	53,754 (26,963 + 26,791)	430,614,819 (218,202,771 + 212,412,048)	41 (40.66)
Homicide	29,369 (14,831 + 14,538)	2,622 (1,253 + 1,369)	119,772,572 (62,042,791 + 57,729,781)	9 (8.93)
Sexual assault	23,890 (13,489 + 10,401)	2,391 (1,491 + 900)	30,699,800 (17,996,638 + 12,703,162)	10 (10.01)
Child abuse (including physical and sexual abuse)	50,216 (26,097 + 24,119)	—	48,257,983 (25,779,888 + 22,478,095)	—
DWI/DUI	4,371 (2,243 + 2,128)	—	23,807,321 (12,398,297 + 11,409,024)	—
Other vehicular crimes	6,311 (3,106 + 3,205)	—	30,167,862 (15,023,590 + 15,144,272)	—
Stalking	1,732 (881 + 851)	909 (455 + 454)	1,905,948 (1,004,676 + 901,272)	52 (52.48)
Robbery	17,358 (8,894 + 8,464)	441 (240 + 201)	36,219,991 (18,656,173 + 17,563,818)	3 (2.54)
Terrorism	132 (73 + 59)	—	446,164 (330,137 + 116,027)	—
Kidnapping	1,179 (499 + 680)	334 (139 + 195)	2,000,098 (995,854 + 1,004,244)	28 (28.33)
Arson	452 (221 + 231)	89 (37 + 52)	846,422 (391,160 + 455,262)	20 (19.69)
Other	8,260 (4,165 + 4,085)	2,496 (1,086 + 1,410)	26,276,692 (15,834,844 + 10,441,848)	30 (30.25)
Total	275,470 (141,717 + 133,753)	63,036 (31,664 + 31,372)	751,015,672* (388,656,819 + 362,358,853)	23 (22.88)

*This amount represents both federal and state funding.

**EXHIBIT 4. STATE COMPENSATION PROGRAM BENEFITS PAID IN FYs 2013 AND 2014,
BY TYPE OF EXPENSE**

Crime Category	Total Benefits Paid (in \$) (FY 13 + FY 14)	Percentage of Total Benefits Paid
Medical and dental (excluding mental health)	411,417,182 (209,707,016 + 201,710,166)	51 (50.64)
Mental Health (including mental health-related prescriptions)	79,683,755 (39,846,339 + 39,837,416)	10 (9.81)
Economic support	101,431,083 (52,491,106 + 48,939,977)	12 (12.48)
Funeral and burial	88,665,726 (45,278,857 + 43,386,869)	11 (10.91)
Crime scene clean-up	2,159,315 (1,038,807 + 1,120,508)	0.0 (0.27)
Forensic sexual assault exams	79,233,393 (39,963,162 + 39,270,231)	10 (9.75)
Other	49,847,730 (25,738,206 + 24,109,524)	6 (6.14)
Total	812,438,184* (414,063,493 + 398,374,691)	100

*This amount represents both federal and state funding.

**EXHIBIT 5. VICTIMS SERVED BY VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN FYs 2013 AND 2014,
BY TYPE OF VICTIMIZATION**

Crime Category	Total Number of Victims Served (FY 13 + FY 14)	Percentage of Total Victims
Child physical abuse	364,314 (182,277 + 182,037)	5.0 (5.16)
Child sexual abuse	788,862 (416,592 + 372,270)	11 (11.18)
DUI/DWI	110,385 (55,947 + 54,438)	2 (1.56)
Domestic violence	3,254,926 (1,637,052 + 1,617,874)	46 (46.12)
Adult sexual assault	394,813 (193,700 + 201,113)	6 (5.59)
Elder abuse	77,201 (39,404 + 37,797)	1 (1.09)
Adults molested as children	96,613 (50,644 + 45,969)	1 (1.37)
Survivors of homicide victims	153,962 (77,978 + 75,984)	2 (2.18)
Robbery	377,678 (198,299 + 179,379)	5 (5.35)
Assault	579,478 (299,552 + 279,926)	8 (8.21)
Other	858,754 (365,914 + 492,840)	12.17
Total	7,056,986 (3,517,359 + 3,539,627)	100

**EXHIBIT 6. SERVICES DELIVERED TO VICTIMS BY VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
IN FYs 2013 AND 2014, BY TYPE OF ASSISTANCE**

Type of Assistance	Total Number of Victims Served (FY 13 + FY 14)	Percentage of Total Victims
Crisis counseling	2,552,411 (1,314,776 + 1,237,635)	9 (8.65)
Followup	4,798,639 (2,506,579 + 2,292,060)	16 (16.27)
Therapy	513,109 (272,614 + 240,495)	2 (1.74)
Group treatment and support	656,797 (351,412 + 305,385)	2 (2.23)
Shelter and safehouse	489,438 (260,459 + 228,979)	2 (1.66)
Information and referral (in-person)	3,418,878 (1,723,558 + 1,695,320)	12 (11.59)
Criminal justice support and advocacy	3,988,352 (1,810,749 + 2,177,603)	14 (13.52)
Emergency financial assistance	521,627 (306,587 + 215,040)	2 (1.77)
Emergency legal advocacy	861,018 (470,181 + 390,837)	3 (2.92)
Assistance in filing compensation claims	2,096,080 (1,088,411 + 1,007,669)	7 (7.11)
Personal advocacy	3,511,906 (1,657,663 + 1,854,243)	12 (11.91)
Telephone contact information and referral	4,567,622 (2,209,961 + 2,357,661)	15 (15.48)
Other	1,523,163 (784,038 + 739,125)	5 (5.16)
Total services delivered to victims	29,499,040 (14,756,988 + 14,742,052)	100

EXHIBIT 7. VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NATIONWIDE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Annual Performance Indicator	Total (FY 13 + FY 14)
Agencies funded	8,052 (4,050 + 4,002)
Subgrants funded	10,913 (5,255 + 5,658)
Victims served	7,056,986 (3,517,359 + 3,539,627)
Specific services to victims	29,499,040 (14,756,988 + 14,742,052)
Average number of services per victim	4.18 (4.20 + 4.16)

The Crime Victims Fund

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is charged by Congress with administering the [Crime Victims Fund](#) (Fund), a significant source of support for victim services throughout the United States. Established by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA), the Fund consists primarily of fines, special assessments, and bond forfeitures from convicted federal offenders. Without relying on American tax dollars, the Fund serves as a unique, self-sufficient source of support for thousands of programs in each U.S. state, the District of Columbia, and several territories each year. These programs provide direct services to victims; support programs designed to alleviate physical, psychological, emotional, and financial hardships; and help victims rebuild their lives.



Primary Sources of Revenue

EXHIBIT 1. CRIME VICTIMS FUND CASH FLOW, FYs 2013 AND 2014 (IN \$ MILLIONS)

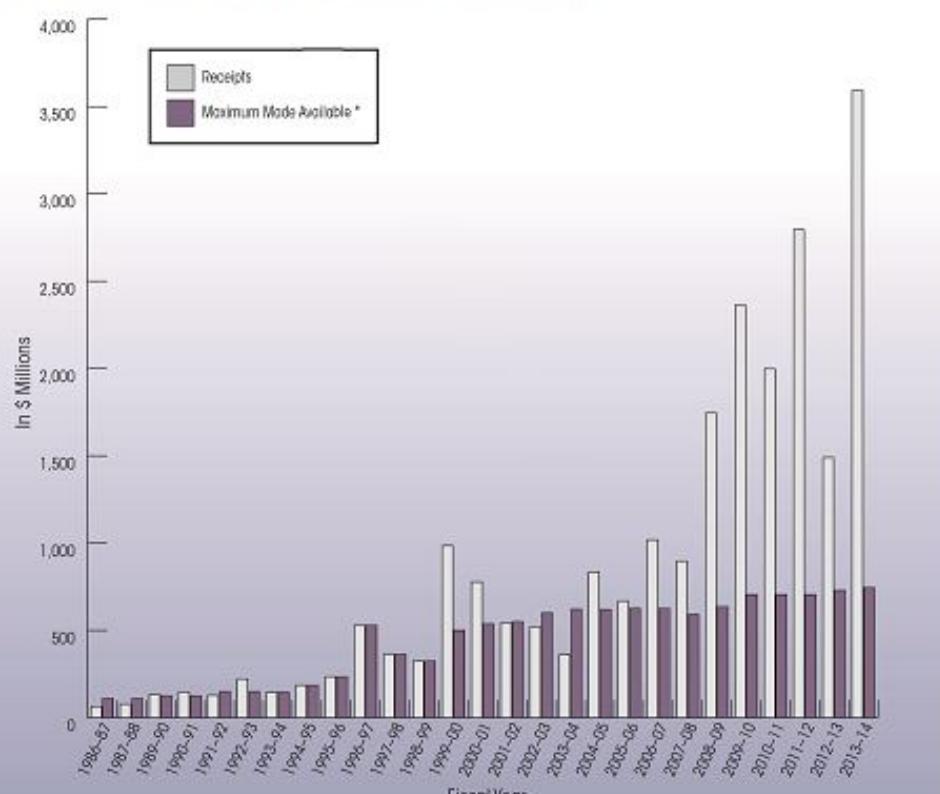
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EXHIBIT 2. CRIME VICTIMS FUND RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS



*When the Fund was authorized in 1984, a cap was placed on how much money could be deposited for the first 8 years (FY 1985 through FY 1993). Congress lifted the cap for FY 1994 through FY 1999. Starting in FY 2000, Congress placed annual caps on obligations to protect against wide fluctuations in receipts and ensure a stable level of funding in the future.

Source: Compiled from Office of Justice Programs data.

Click to view Exhibit 2 Federal revenues deposited into the Fund come from—

- Criminal fines from convicted federal offenders, with exceptions for funds related to certain

environmental, railroad, unemployment insurance, and postal service violations.

- Forfeited appearance bonds from convicted federal offenders.
- Special forfeitures of collateral profits from crime.
- Special assessments that range from \$25 for individuals convicted of misdemeanors to \$400 for corporations convicted of federal felonies.
- Gifts, donations, and bequests by private parties.

Fund Deposits Set New Benchmark

The FYs 2013 and 2014 reporting period saw the largest total deposits in the Fund's history. Almost \$3.6 billion (\$3,591,493,390) was deposited into the Fund in FY 2014, which made it the largest total recorded since the Fund became operational in 1985. Coupled with nearly \$1.5 billion (\$1,489,582,811) in 2013 deposits, the Fund received more than \$5 billion (\$5,081,076,202) during the reporting period to support victims of crime. With major fines and financial penalties continuing to be levied and collected, the Fund's deposit totals should provide a stable source of funding in the coming years.

Annual Obligation Limit and Allocation Process Determine Available Funds

When the Fund was authorized in 1984, a limit was placed on how much could be deposited into the Fund for the first 8 years. During this time, the annual obligation limit varied from \$100 million to \$150 million; actual deposits during this time varied from a low of \$62 million in FY 1986 to a high of \$221 million in FY 1992. The lifting of the obligation cap in 1993 allowed for the deposit of all criminal fines, special assessments, and forfeited bail bonds to support crime victim program activities. Starting in 2000, in response to large fluctuations in deposits, Congress placed an obligation limit on funds available for distribution, which was intended to maintain the Fund as a stable source of support for future services. The obligation limitation for 2013 was set at \$730 million and set at \$745 million in FY 2014.

For more detailed information about VOCA compensation and assistance, including the allocation process established by Congress, please refer to the [Crime Victims Fund](#). State-by-state allocations for [2013](#) and [2014](#) are available on OVC's [Web site](#).

VOCA Compensation and Assistance Statistics

OVC administers two Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) formula grant programs that support crime victim compensation and assistance—the cornerstone of support for victims throughout the Nation. These programs account for approximately 87 percent of the VOCA funds that OVC allocates annually. VOCA funding also supports victim-witness coordinators in U.S. Attorneys' Offices, victim specialists with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Federal Victim Notification System, and formula grants to states through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as provided by the [Children's Justice Act](#). Additionally, OVC's [Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Program](#) provides comprehensive and coordinated multidisciplinary responses to child abuse victims and their families in ways that are trauma-informed and culturally competent. OVC also awards discretionary grants in various program areas to meet emerging needs and fill gaps in existing services.

Compensation Statistics

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BY TYPE OF CRIME**

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**EXHIBIT 4. STATE COMPENSATION PROGRAM BENEFITS PAID IN FYS 2013 AND 2014,
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Funeral and burial	88,665,726 (45,278,857 + 43,386,869)	11 (10.91)
Crime scene clean-up	2,159,315 (1,038,807 + 1,120,508)	0.0 (0.27)
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**EXHIBIT 5. VICTIMS SERVED BY VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN FYs 2013 AND 2014,
BY TYPE OF VICTIMIZATION**

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Elder abuse	77,201 (39,404 + 37,797)	1 (1.09)
Adults molested as children	96,613 (50,644 + 45,969)	1 (1.37)
Survivors of homicide victims	153,962 (77,978 + 75,984)	2 (2.18)
Robbery	377,678 (198,299 + 179,379)	5 (5.35)
Assault	579,478 (299,552 + 279,926)	8 (8.21)
Other	858,754 (365,914 + 492,840)	12.17
Total	7,056,986 (3,517,359 + 3,539,627)	100

**EXHIBIT 6. SERVICES DELIVERED TO VICTIMS BY VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
IN FYs 2013 AND 2014, BY TYPE OF ASSISTANCE**

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Therapy	513,109 (272,614 + 240,495)	2 (1.74)
Group treatment and support	656,797 (351,412 + 305,385)	2 (2.23)
Shelter and safehouse	489,438 (260,459 + 228,979)	2 (1.66)
Information and referral (in-person)	3,418,878 (1,723,558 + 1,695,320)	12 (11.59)
Criminal justice support and advocacy	3,988,352 (1,810,749 + 2,177,603)	14 (13.52)
Emergency financial assistance	521,627 (306,587 + 215,040)	2 (1.77)
Emergency legal advocacy	861,018 (470,181 + 390,837)	3 (2.92)
Assistance in filing compensation claims	2,096,080 (1,088,411 + 1,007,669)	7 (7.11)
Personal advocacy	3,511,906 (1,657,663 + 1,854,243)	12 (11.91)
Telephone contact information and referral	4,567,622 (2,209,961 + 2,357,661)	15 (15.48)
Other	1,523,163 (784,038 + 739,125)	5 (5.16)
Total services delivered to victims	29,499,040 (14,756,988 + 14,742,052)	100

EXHIBIT 7. VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NATIONWIDE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Annual Performance Indicator	Total (FY 13 + FY 14)
Agencies funded	8,052 (4,050 + 4,002)
Subgrants funded	10,913 (5,255 + 5,658)
Victims served	7,056,986 (3,517,359 + 3,539,627)
Specific services to victims	29,499,040 (14,756,988 + 14,742,052)
Average number of services per victim	4.18 (4.20 + 4.16)

- In FYs 2013 and 2014, state compensation payments to 275,470 victims throughout the Nation totaled \$751,015,672 (exhibit 3), an amount that includes both federal and state funding.
- The majority of victims whose crime-related expenses were reimbursed were victims of assault (132,210), child abuse (50,216)—including sexual and physical abuse—and homicide (29,369) (exhibit 3).
- Costs related to medical and dental care accounted for 51 percent of the total expenses reimbursed, followed by costs associated with lost income and wages (13 percent) and funeral and burial expenses (11 percent) (exhibit 4).
- Victims of domestic violence accounted for nearly 41 percent of the total assault and homicide victim claims that were reimbursed during FYs 2013 and 2014 (exhibit 3).
- The average compensation payout per claim during the reporting period was approximately \$2,950 (VOCA National Performance Reports).

Assistance Statistics

- In FYs 2013 and 2014, a total of 7,056,986 crime victims benefited from \$655,441,166 in VOCA-funded assistance throughout the Nation (exhibit 5; VOCA National Performance Reports).
- Victims of domestic violence, who numbered 3,254,926, accounted for 46 percent of victims who received assistance during the reporting period (exhibit 5).
- Victims of child physical and sexual abuse numbered 1,153,176 (364,314 and 788,862, respectively), accounting for 16 percent of crime victims receiving assistance—second only to victims of domestic violence (exhibit 5).
- Other types of crimes resulting in a marked percentage of victims receiving assistance in FYs 2013 and 2014 included assault (8 percent), adult sexual assault (6 percent), and robbery (5 percent) (exhibit 5).
- Approximately 4,567,622 victims received telephone information and referral assistance following their victimization in FYs 2013 and 2014; an additional 3,988,352 victims received advocacy and support through the criminal justice system (exhibit 6).
- Other assistance, provided to almost 7 million victims each year of the reporting period, included

onsite information referrals, followup, crisis counseling, personal advocacy, and help in filing compensation claims (exhibit 6).

- VOCA assistance grants supported 29,499,040 specific services to 7,056,986 victims of crime in FYs 2013 and 2014. Many individuals need more than one type of assistance in the aftermath of victimization. During the reporting period, each victim received an average of 4.2 services, according to state-provided statistics (exhibit 7).

Please note that the statistics reported in this section reflect those contained in the 2013 and 2014 [**VOCA National Performance Reports**](#), which consolidate the information reported in the individual state and territorial reports.

VOCA Compensation Highlights

The [**VOCA Compensation Formula Grant Program**](#) provides funding to help crime victims recover from financial losses resulting from their victimization. Funds supplement a state's efforts to provide financial assistance and reimbursement to victims for crime-related out-of-pocket expenses, including medical and dental care, counseling, funeral and burial expenses, and lost wages and income. Compensation programs may also reimburse victims for other types of expenses related to their victimization, such as travel, temporary lodging, crime scene cleanup, and dependent care.

Compensation reports designate not only the number of claims paid in each crime category but also how many of these claims involved certain types of victimization, including, for example, domestic violence. This victimization was a factor in 63,036 incidents—23 percent of the compensation claims during FYs 2013 and 2014.

In FYs 2013 and 2014, state compensation benefits, which consist of both federal and state funds, totaled \$751,015,672, which supported 275,470 victims and survivors of crime as they struggled to cope in the aftermath of their victimization and rebuild their lives.



Stories From the States

- As the Nation's largest compensation program, the [**California Victim Compensation Program**](#) (CalVCP) continues to find ways to provide compensation to underserved victims in California. In FY 2013, OVC competitively funded CalVCP's partnership with the University of California-Berkeley to conduct a needs assessment to identify underserved victims who may be unable to access compensation or who have been hidden or overlooked in the past. CalVCP is currently implementing the recommendations identified by University of California-Berkeley and modifying their victim compensation applications, Web site, and other tools to better meet the needs of underserved victims—victims of human trafficking; individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ); youth; communities affected by gang violence; individuals with disabilities; immigrant communities; and frontier communities. CalVCP has ensured that all parts of the online compensation application are available in Spanish and has conducted initial development of an updated online application tool.

- The Iowa Crime Victim Assistance Division administers the [**Iowa Crime Victim Compensation Program**](#) and continually looks for ways to improve efficiency in the program's administration. Rather than deny incomplete compensation applications, the program designates eligible applications that are missing only administrative or technical details (such as a signature) as "[**eligible-no-pay**](#)." These applications are held for an indeterminate time and paid once the applicant provides the missing information. The eligible-no-pay designation is also used if a victim has no uncovered expenses at the time of approval. This designation recognizes that a victim could have crime-related expenses at a later time.

In FY 2013, OVC competitively funded the division's work with the University of Iowa to conduct a needs assessment, which identified emergency relocation and housing/utility assistance as two of the greatest unmet needs for victims in Iowa. The division will seek to add these two benefit categories to the Compensation Program and will create a standardized, reader-friendly registration packet to make the application process clearer to crime victims.

- The [**Vermont Victims Compensation Program**](#) uses a victim-centered approach to develop and implement policies and procedures that ensure a fair and consistent process for victims. The program provides interpreter services to nonnative English speakers to help them communicate, interact with, and access services; its toll-free telephone number allows for efficient and effective communication between victims, providers, and compensation staff. The program also has translated its Victims Compensation Application into French, Spanish, Bosnian, Somali, and Vietnamese.
- In FY 2013, OVC competitively funded the program's work with the Vermont Center for Justice Research to collect and analyze data on specific underserved communities and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, or have other functional disabilities, and older victims. The program is conducting a statewide needs assessment to identify gaps in services and determine the best methods to increase the program's responsiveness, efficiency, and accessibility. The program will use the results of the needs assessment to implement new technologies, practices, and policies to improve accessibility to compensation for all victims in Vermont.

VOCA Assistance Highlights

The [**VOCA Assistance Formula Grants Program**](#) supports more than 4,000 victim assistance programs throughout the Nation each year. Funding for these programs—which state administering agencies award through subgrants to local public agencies and local service providers—provides help for individuals, families, and communities to recover from both the initial trauma and the long-term effects of victimization.

Direct assistance to crime victims includes crisis counseling, telephone and onsite information and referrals, criminal justice support and advocacy, emergency shelter, therapy, and additional assistance. Funds may also be used to develop new programs that address emerging needs and gaps in services, which continue to be identified and assessed to improve assistance to victims.



Stories From the States

- The [**Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention**](#) is expanding Maryland's state hospital-based domestic violence programs from four to eight. Program services include screening for and documenting abuse, mandated reporting, crisis intervention, safety planning, emotional support, risk assessments, and referrals to community resources such as shelters and counseling. Maryland's programs also assist hospitals in training medical staff to recognize domestic violence and follow proper screening procedures. Screening programs may decrease hospitalizations, workplace costs and liability, misdiagnosis, and the high cost of specialty care. In addition, hospital staff are more likely to screen all patients for abuse when identifying abuse results in a simple in-house referral.
- To enhance communication with victims, claimants, and family members who struggle to speak, read, write, or understand English, the [**New York State Office of Victim Services \(OVS\)**](#) conducted a language proficiency survey of all victim assistance programs. The programs reported the capacity to communicate in more than 40 languages, which is a significant benefit given that, according to the 2015 Census, more than 13 percent of the population of New York has limited English proficiency. Many programs also have "I Speak" cards available at their locations so that victims can identify their preferred language. If no staff at the program speak their language, the program can contact OVS for assistance on behalf of the victim. OVS can access the survey information to determine if there is a trained victim advocate at another New York program who speaks that language and can relate to the culture. OVS can then contact the victim advocate to assist with services, compensation applications, and referrals.
- The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice maintains a [**Victim Rights Act \(VRA\) Compliance Program**](#) to ensure that victims of crime are afforded their state constitutional and statutory rights. A VRA specialist conducts an initial review of formal complaints, which are then submitted to the VRA Subcommittee for a final determination on whether a violation of the VRA occurred. Each year, more than 200 victims contact the program, and an average of 16 victims file formal complaints.

E-Bulletin Highlights Cutting-Edge VOCA Programs

OVC's e-bulletin, [**Innovative Practices for Victim Services: Report From the Field**](#) provides descriptions of some of the innovative practices implemented by VOCA victim assistance and compensation programs throughout the United States. Drawing on the first-hand experiences of state administrators and program staff from 25 states, the report focuses on programs in six key areas: needs assessment, systems advocacy and coordination, compensation, underserved populations, victims' rights and services, and technology. The e-bulletin is designed to encourage dialogue within the field to implement best practices and promote replication of such innovative programs in states throughout the country.



Transforming Victims Services Through Research & Evaluation

A key component of OVC's strategy to build capacity in crime victim services is supporting research that will inform implementation of program planning and provide more effective victim services. In the [**Vision 21**](#) Report, OVC recognized the need to "support the development of research to build a body of evidence-

based knowledge and generate, collect, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data on victimization, emerging victimization trends, services and behaviors, and victims' rights enforcement efforts.”² There is a dearth of data about crime victims, and more statistical information is needed to answer the following important questions:

- Who is victimized, by what crimes, and by whom?
- Who seeks and who does not seek services, and why?
- Which victims report crime to law enforcement, which do not, and why?
- How are victims' legal rights enforced in the United States?

Victim-related research is necessary to determine existing gaps, inform victim service organization programming and project implementation, and ensure that victims' needs are met. OVC recognizes the importance of supporting critical victim-related research conducted by our partner federal agencies. In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC funded the following Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and National Institute of Justice (NIJ) programs to collect and analyze quantitative data, build a body of evidence-based knowledge, and develop program evaluations for victim service organizations. These comprehensive studies will contribute significantly to the knowledge base of new and emerging aspects of victimization:

- [Data Collection From Persons With Disabilities](#)
- [Support for National Survey of Victim Service Organizations](#)
- [Understanding Crime Data](#)
- [Evaluation of Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network](#)
- [Evaluation of OVC-Funded Demonstration Program Sites](#)
- [Bridging the Gap in Victim-Related Research to Practice](#)

Data Collection From Persons With Disabilities

One of the most vulnerable groups of individuals are those with disabilities because their physical, social, or emotional conditions may limit their activities of daily life and restrict them from fully participating in the community or at school, work, or home.³ People with disabilities are nearly 50 percent more likely to experience violent victimization than those without disabilities.⁴ For youth between the ages of 12 and 15, the violent victimization rate is nearly three times higher for those with disabilities than those without them.⁵ OVC is funding a BJS study of [Criminal Victimization of Persons with Disabilities Residing in Group Quarters](#) (CVGQ), designed to analyze victim service organizations' ability to collect self-reported victimization data from people with disabilities who live in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and veterans' homes.

Support for National Survey of Victim Service Organizations

OVC funded BJS' first [National Survey of Victim Service Organizations](#) (NSVSO) to collect comprehensive statistical information about how victim service organizations are funded and organized, and discover their areas of need. The NSVSO is being administered in two phases. In Phase I, a broad, online survey will be issued to a wide range of victim service organization leaders and staff throughout the country to capture the fundamental elements of victim service organizations. Cognitive testing of the draft survey has been completed in preparation for the Web-based survey's release to 21,000 victim service providers by the end of 2015. After BJS has collected and analyzed the data, it will commence Phase II, issuing a longer, more narrowly focused form of the survey to the most representative victim service providers. For the most up-to-date information about the NSVSO, please visit BJS' [NSVSO Web site](#).

Understanding Crime Data

OVC's [Eight Benefits of NIBRS to Victim Service Providers](#) serves as an online resource to aid victim service organizations in understanding the importance of crime data in developing effective practices and solutions for victims. As a system for reporting crimes known to the police, NIBRS offers data about crime

incidents that may be of key interest to victim service providers, researchers, and policymakers—data that can be used to design more effective victim service programs. Currently, only sixteen states submit all of their crime data via NIBRS. In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC provided funding to help support BJS' National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X), a new initiative to develop a statistical system that can generate detailed national estimates of the volume and characteristics of crimes known to law enforcement. As a resource for the field, OVC's [e-Bulletin](#) describes how victim service providers can use such data to gain a better understanding of specific types of victimization, determine disparities between victims known to law enforcement and those receiving victim services, and identify underserved groups of crime victims.

Evaluation of Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network

OVC has funded NIJ to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the [Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network demonstration project](#) to track and document the grantees' planning and implementation milestones. Evaluators conducted a baseline study to measure experiences and perceptions of services prior to implementation. The evaluators are closely monitoring the implementation status of sites to determine when to close the baseline study due to services changing to a given threshold level.

Evaluation of OVC-Funded Demonstration Program Sites

OVC funded three nonprofit organizations under the FY 2009 Services for Domestic Minor Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Program to implement a comprehensive strategy for the provision of services to victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents under the age of 18. For 3 years, the funded organizations—[The Standing Against Global Exploitation \(SAGE\) Project](#) (San Francisco), [The Salvation Army STOP-IT Program](#) (Chicago), and [Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project](#) (New York City)—worked to identify and comprehensively serve trafficked youth and improve the community response to this population. The organizations also participated in an OVC-funded process evaluation administered by NIJ. The project's [final technical report](#) was released in February 2015; it includes information about the population of victims served by the demonstration sites, the ways in which the organizations engaged and served minors, and information about the successes and challenges that each organization faced. The report also includes corresponding recommendations and key considerations for serving youth who are victims of [human trafficking](#).

Bridging the Gap in Victim-Related Research to Practice

Social science research and evaluation may be greatly beneficial to crime victim assistance organizations in providing cost-effective and efficient services. OVC recognizes the need to aid the field in obtaining more knowledge and awareness about research and evaluation that can enhance victim services. To ensure that research and evaluation have tangible benefits for victim service organizations, researchers must develop ways to translate their results for a practitioner audience and to have practitioners inform their research efforts. OVC funded the [National Center for Victims of Crime](#) (NCVC) in FY 2013 to assess victim service providers' knowledge of and awareness about the value of research and evaluation to the field, and to determine researchers' interest in and capacity for making their findings accessible to crime victim stakeholders. NCVC, in partnership with the Urban Institute and the Justice Research and Statistics Association, is conducting a multifaceted assessment that includes a literature review of prior efforts to integrate research and lessons learned, interviews and surveys of researchers and practitioners, and an analysis of six case studies that involve efforts to integrate victim-related research and practice. Findings and recommendations will be published in a final report.

²Office for Victims of Crime, May 2013, Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Final Report, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, vii, http://ovc.ncirs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21_Report.pdf.

³Erika Harrell, Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009–2012—Statistical Tables, Washington, DC: U.S. Department

⁴BJS Press Release, Feb. 25, 2014, www.bjs.gov/content/pub/press/capd0912stpr.cfm.

⁵Ibid.

Innovative Practices

Innovation is the hallmark of the victim services field. The [Vision 21 Report](#) emphasized the key role of innovation in ensuring that practitioners are equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Support for cutting-edge programs—such as those that use technological advances and other innovation to foster collaboration and communication—allows victim service organizations to reach greater numbers of victims and help them more effectively. OVC supported a variety of programs in FYs 2013 and 2014 to develop new methods for meeting the emerging challenges that victims face—practices for reaching new victim populations, comprehensive techniques for providing enhanced services, and collaborative initiatives that foster improved responses to victim needs:

- [Comprehensive Pro Bono Legal Assistance](#)
- [Public/Private Partnerships To Address Human Trafficking](#)
- [HALOS Toolkit for Communities To Support Children](#)
- [Multidisciplinary Vicarious Trauma Toolkit](#)
- [National Sexual Assault TeleNursing Center](#)
- [Technological Support for Underserved Victims and U.S. Citizens Abroad](#)
- [Mobile Applications for Victim Services](#)

Comprehensive Pro Bono Legal Assistance

In FY 2012, in recognition of the preliminary findings of the Vision 21 initiative, OVC launched the [Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network Demonstration Project](#) to support six demonstration legal networks in providing comprehensive, wraparound, and holistic pro bono legal services to crime victims in an effort to meet the range of victims' legal needs. Legal wraparound networks were established in Alaska, Minnesota, California, Illinois, Colorado, and Texas. All of the sites conducted needs assessments and developed implementation plans for providing necessary legal services to crime victims. The networks have partnered with other organizations and government agencies and are providing legal services to crime victims. Additionally, OVC awarded funds to NIJ to conduct a simultaneous evaluation of the effectiveness of these six legal assistance networks.

In FY 2014, OVC awarded nearly \$2.5 million in Vision 21 funding to four VOCA Assistance formula grant-administering agencies and a technical assistance provider, the [National Crime Victim Law Institute](#), to expand its support of comprehensive legal assistance services. The four VOCA Assistance agencies are working with other government agencies and local service providers to identify crime victims' needs and implement comprehensive, wraparound, and holistic pro bono victims' legal assistance at the state, regional, and local levels.

NCVLI is working with all 10 of the legal assistance networks to facilitate information sharing among the networks, provide training on effective legal advocacy, address substantive legal issues, and document best practices.

Public/Private Partnerships to Address Human Trafficking

The [Partnership for Freedom](#), announced by President Obama in September 2012, is a public-private partnership between OVC, other DOJ components and federal agencies, and [Humanity United](#), a foundation that supports efforts to eliminate human trafficking and promote human rights. The Partnership has issued a challenge contest to develop innovative solutions that address human trafficking. The challenge, *Reimagine: Opportunity*, sought new ideas to improve and expand human trafficking victims'

access to housing, effective social services, and economic empowerment. Of the 169 applications received from 39 states, two winners were selected in the spring of 2014: the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Freedom Clinic and the Safe Shelter Collaborative, each of which received 2-year awards.

The MGH Freedom Clinic is establishing a comprehensive primary and preventive health care services model to deliver best-in-class, trauma-informed care to victims of human trafficking. The project will share “lessons learned” with health care providers throughout the country to improve their ability to identify and serve victims of human trafficking. The Safe Shelter Collaborative is using technology to enable victim service providers to locate available and safe shelters for human trafficking survivors. Additionally, through the use of crowdsourcing technology, the project is developing mobile applications that will allow private organizations and individuals anonymously to pay for survivors to stay in hotel rooms if appropriate shelters are not available.

HALOS Toolkit for Communities To Support Children

Founded in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1997, Helping and Lending Outreach Support (HALOS) connects caseworkers from the Charleston County Department of Social Services with faith-based and civic organizations, businesses, and donors. Although caseworkers are critical to keeping children and families safe, they often lack the resources to provide for a variety of additional needs, ranging from clothing to home utilities to summer camp. HALOS’ affiliated community organizations help to locate and provide these resources and opportunities to children and their caretakers.

To foster replication of the HALOS model in communities nationwide, in 2014, OVC released the [HALOS Strategy: Community Collaborations for Children](#) toolkit. Providing lessons learned and strategies for founding programs to support foster families and children in alternative placements, the toolkit explains the elements of program development, implementation, and sustainability and provides downloadable materials created by HALOS and partner organizations. The toolkit provides a framework for other communities to plan and successfully implement their own efforts to help children and families in need.

Multidisciplinary Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

Vicarious trauma—also known as secondary trauma, provider fatigue, or compassion fatigue—deeply affects those who work closely with victims of crime. Service providers experiencing this phenomenon may have “exhausted hearts, minds, bodies, and souls from helping survivors through their painful experiences.”⁶ OVC is funding Northeastern University’s [Institute on Urban Health Research and Practice](#) (IUHRP) to develop and test a national-scope training and technical assistance toolkit to support response to vicarious trauma and reduce its effects on victim assistance professionals, law enforcement personnel, firefighters, and emergency medical services providers, who may experience traumatic stress due to large-scale incidents of mass violence or exposure to an accumulation of traumatizing incidents. To develop the toolkit, IUHRP conducted a literature review; surveyed representatives of direct service providers across the Nation; conducted a gap analysis; and identified effective practices and produced a compilation of training and technical resources. The *Vicarious Trauma Toolkit (VTT): Support for Victim Assistance Providers, Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services Providers* was pilot-tested at seven sites throughout the Nation in early 2015, with a full release planned for later in 2015. A dedicated Web site will house the toolkit, which will be accessible at no cost to these organizations, allied professionals, and the public.

National Sexual Assault TeleNursing Center

Sexual assault victims require a trauma-informed approach to ensure that their needs are met. Research also suggests that using Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) or Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) to conduct forensic examinations of sexual assault victims contributes to higher prosecution and conviction rates.⁷ Access to SANE programs and other types of medical forensic expertise may be limited, particularly in remote areas. Telemedicine can provide care from a distance to expand access to treatment.

To facilitate the use of telemedicine to reach underserved victims of sexual assault, OVC, with funding from NIJ, funded the Massachusetts Department of Public Health SANE Program to establish the first telemedicine center to provide remote expert consultations by SANEs to clinicians caring for adult and adolescent sexual assault patients. Massachusetts SANEs will perform telemedicine consultations during sexual assault forensic exams at four pilot sites: Twenty-Nine Palms Naval Hospital, California; Hopi Health Care Center, Arizona; Sutter Lakeside Hospital, in Lakeport, California; and a correctional facility. Once operational, the National TeleNursing Center (NTC) will provide remote clinician-to-clinician assistance to the pilot sites 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Technological Support for Underserved Victims and U.S. Citizens Abroad

Many victims of crimes never report their victimization to law enforcement, and many victims live in locations where services are not easily available or accessible enough to provide full assistance, especially in remote areas of the U.S. or locations abroad.

The [**Vision 21 Report**](#) provided several recommendations for closing this gap in delivery of victim services, including the use of technology to improve and increase access. In FY 2014, through Congress' Vision 21 appropriation, OVC awarded eight grants, totaling more than \$3.8 million under the competitive solicitation, [**Vision 21: Using Technology to Expand National and International Access to Victim Services**](#). The following OVC-funded projects are using innovative uses of technology to provide direct assistance to victims, particularly those who have never been served or for whom services are not easily available, such as U.S. citizens who are victimized abroad:

- OVC funded the Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center (AODVC) to expand its services to U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents who are victims of domestic violence abroad by operating a 24-hour telephone hotline, Web site, live chat, and crisis e-mail service. Through a second grant, AODVC enacted the [**Sexual Assault Support & Help for Americans Abroad**](#) program, which expands international access to sexual assault services for victims living or travelling abroad through its Global Safety Net Program. AODVC is working to expand this program through marketing and rebranding efforts, including conducting awareness and media campaigns, redesigning its Web site, increasing its social media presence, and distributing posters and brochures nationally and internationally.
- OVC funded the National Domestic Violence Hotline to strengthen its capacity to provide services via text messaging and social media to ensure that victims can access live support immediately, and to engage in an awareness campaign to publicize the availability of these expanded digital services.
- OVC funded the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) to design and implement VictimConnect, a national service that will combine a traditional, phone-based hotline with a Web and online chat interface to provide comprehensive victim information, assistance, and referral services. NCVC, in partnership with the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), will leverage an advanced technology platform with NCVC's existing database of more than 14,000 victim service providers.
- OVC funded RAINN to expand the capacity of its National Sexual Assault Online Hotline, which victims can access via online chat or telephone. In addition to increasing its staff to reduce caller wait times, RAINN is improving its infrastructure to route callers who cannot be connected to local resources to RAINN's 24/7 call center, where staff can provide a variety of crisis intervention services. Through a second grant, RAINN is expanding its services for Spanish-speaking victims by staffing the online hotline at all times with trained bilingual staff who can provide culturally appropriate services, and developing a database for linguistically appropriate in-person referrals and expanding Spanish-language information on its Web site.
- OVC funded the Identity Theft Resource Center (ITRC) to produce mobile applications, or "apps," for mobile devices that provide guidance to individuals who believe they may have been the victim of

identity theft. ITRC has created 1-minute informational videos that will encourage victims to download the apps, which have been beta-tested and are expected to launch by the end of 2015.

Mobile Applications for Victim Services

To receive help in the aftermath of a crime, victims need to know what services are available and how to access them. Rapid developments in technology have led more individuals to use mobile devices than ever before—88 percent of Americans have a cell phone, and 57 percent have a laptop.⁸ Although some victim service organizations have thoroughly integrated technology into their services, many lack the infrastructure and expertise to use technological innovations effectively. The [Vision 21 Report](#) found a need for the field to address critical issues such as victims' safety, privacy, confidentiality, security, technological advances, and the need for new and improved tools.⁹ To address these findings, OVC awarded three grants under the competitive solicitation, [Vision 21: Victim Services Mobile Application](#). These projects will enhance public awareness, outreach, and education by developing apps for mobile devices that make resources and services available to victims with smartphones and personal mobile computers, or “tablets.”



⁶ Office on Violence Against Women blog, citing National Sexual Violence Resource Center, www.justice.gov/ovw/ovw-blog.

⁷ See, for example, Impact Evaluation of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program, December 2003, and Systems Change Analysis of SANE Programs: Identifying the Mediating Mechanisms of Criminal Justice System Impact, January 2009.

⁸ Office for Victims of Crime, May 2013, *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Final Report*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 25–31, http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21_Report.pdf

⁹ Ibid.

Direct Services

OVC funds direct services to victims through a variety of avenues:

- [State Formula Grants](#)
- [VOCA Statutory Set-Asides](#)
- [OVC Discretionary Funding](#)
- [Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve](#)

State Formula Grants

- **State victim compensation program formula grants** supplement state funds for reimbursing victims who suffer from victimizations for out-of-pocket costs resulting from the crime. Under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, each state compensation program receives an annual [victim compensation](#) grant. Although each state administers its program independently, most programs have similar eligibility requirements and offer comparable benefits.
- **State victim assistance formula grants** fund providers who supply services directly to victims.



The 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico each receive an annual VOCA [victim assistance](#) grant with a base amount of \$500,000; the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa each receive a grant with a base amount of \$200,000. Additional funds are distributed to states and territories on the basis of population. In each state and territory, VOCA assistance funds are awarded to local community-based organizations and public agencies that provide services directly to victims. A maximum of 5 percent of each year's state formula grant may be used for administration; the rest must be used to provide direct services to victims.

VOCA Statutory Set-Asides

A critical component of OVC's statutory mission is support of direct services to federal crime victims. This support helps individuals, families, and communities recover from the immediate harm and the long-term effects of victimization.

- **Victim-witness coordinators in U.S. Attorneys' Offices** assist victims of federal crimes and inform them about various issues, including restitution orders and their right to make oral and written victim impact statements at an offender's sentencing, in accordance with the [Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance](#).
- **FBI victim specialists** inform victims of federal crimes about case developments and proceedings, and direct them to appropriate resources, in accordance with the [Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance](#).
- The **Federal Victim Notification System** notifies victims of federal crimes of the release or detention status of offenders, the filing of charges against suspects, court proceedings, sentencing, and restitution.
- The **Children's Justice Act** provides formula grants to states through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and discretionary grants to tribes through OVC for services and programs to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

OVC Discretionary Funding

Up to 50 percent of OVC discretionary funding can support and enhance services to federal crime victims through support for tribal grants and positions at agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, DOD, and the National Park Service. OVC discretionary funding also supports demonstration programs that may provide direct services.

Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve

Created following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve funds emergency expenses—and other services for victims of terrorism or mass violence within the United States and abroad—through the following primary programs: the Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program, the International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program, the Crime Victim Assistance Emergency Fund at the FBI, and the Federal Crime Victims Assistance Fund for U.S. Attorneys' Offices.

Services for Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence

OVC collaborates with federal, state, and local partners to ensure that victims and survivors of domestic and [international terrorism](#) receive the physical, emotional, and financial support—including [emergency assistance](#)—that they need to rebuild their shattered lives.



We are grateful to OVC for its continued support in developing a response that is tailored to specifically address the physical and emotional injuries caused to so many individuals, their families, and our community as a whole by this tragedy.

—MOVA Executive Director Liam Lowney¹¹

OVC and Partners Provide Coordinated Response to Domestic Terrorism

The [Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program](#) (AEAP) provides assistance and compensation services for victims of domestic terrorism and intentional mass criminal violence, and assistance for victims of international terrorism. Funded activities may include compensation, emergency relief—including crisis response efforts—and both immediate and ongoing assistance. In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC provided the following support to communities to recover from incidents of mass violence and terrorism within the U.S.:

- On July 20, 2012, a gunman entered a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, and opened fire, killing 12 people and wounding 69 others. OVC awarded a [\\$2.9 million AEAP grant](#) to the Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS) in February 2013 to support victim services. Through the 3-year grant, CDPS is providing funding to additional Colorado agencies, including the 18th District Attorney's Office, the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance, the Aurora Mental Health Center, the Denver and Aurora Police Departments, and the Jefferson County and Arapahoe County Sheriffs' Departments, to assist the 1,500 victims.
- On December 14, 2012, after killing his mother, a gunman broke into the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, killing 20 students and six educators and wounding 12 students and two educators. OVC awarded two AEAP grants to the Connecticut Judicial Branch; one for crisis response for \$1.5 million and the other to support consequence management for \$7.1 million. Additionally, OVC awarded a \$775,914 AEAP grant to the Town of Newtown for additional consequence management expenses. These awards reimbursed organizations for crisis intervention services, trauma-informed care, select victim-related law enforcement expenses, counseling and other mental health services, some of the costs associated with moving students from Sandy Hook Elementary to a new location, select school hardening costs to help students feel safe and secure, and other services essential to victim healing.
- On January 29, 2013, in Midland City, Alabama, a gun-wielding individual stopped a school bus carrying 20 children. He killed the bus driver, kidnapped a 5-year-old boy, and held the boy hostage in an underground bunker for 6 days until he was rescued. OVC awarded a [\\$141,783 AEAP grant](#) to the Southeast Alabama Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in June 2013 to provide counseling to child victims in response to this traumatic event. The CAC, located in a small, rural county with modest resources, is providing trauma counseling and additional emotional and psychological services for these young children.

- On April 15, 2013, two pressure cooker bombs exploded near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three spectators and injuring hundreds. During the subsequent 4 days, the suspects killed a police officer and took a hostage (who later escaped) before one suspect was killed and the other apprehended. In January 2014, OVC awarded an [**\\$8,355,648 AEAP grant**](#) to the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) to reimburse victims, witnesses, and first responders to the bombings as well as residents of neighborhoods in which subsequent events occurred. MOVA will use these funds to reimburse incurred costs and support the future expenses of organizations providing crisis intervention services, trauma-informed care, socioeconomic support, wraparound legal services, and other victim assistance. Approximately 1,000 victims will need crisis counseling and other long-term recovery services.¹⁰

On April 18, 2013, in response to the Boston Marathon bombing, OVC, in cooperation with the FBI and the Office of Victim Assistance, activated its toll-free crisis hotline for 12 days. Staffed by clinical psychologists and operated by FEI Behavioral, the Family Call Center was able to provide support to the victims, family members, and community impacted by this tragedy. After the crisis activation ended, the Family Call Center continued to take calls from individuals affected by the bombing.

OVC Programs Support Victims of International Terrorism

OVC's International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP) reimburses eligible victims of [**terrorist incidents outside the United States**](#) for expenses associated with the victimization, such as out-of-pocket funeral and burial expenses; medical bills; mental health and crisis counseling; property loss, repair, and replacement; and miscellaneous costs, such as temporary housing, local transportation, phone calls, and emergency travel. ITVERP support to victims in FYs 2013 and 2014 totaled \$299,089 for 55 claims, including victims of the Westgate Mall Attack in Nairobi, Kenya, on September 21, 2013, and the U.S. Consulate Attack in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11, 2012. As of the end of FY 2014, ITVERP had paid claims for expenses related to 112 incidents in 33 countries.

In FYs 2013 and 2014, ITVERP launched a new [**Web site**](#) that includes a Fact Sheet, Frequently Asked Questions, updated resource links, and a [**video**](#) about the program as well as information about ITVERP eligibility requirements, reimbursement categories and covered expenses, and the claims review process. ITVERP also released a Claimant Feedback Tool in 2013 to collect information about the application and claims processes. Once a claim decision has been made, claimants are asked about their experience to help ITVERP staff enhance program administration and improve customer service. Also in FYs 2013 and 2014, ITVERP increased its efforts to increase awareness about the program and the available financial support. During the reporting period, ITVERP conducted direct outreach and distributed program materials to U.S. military installations around the world and to ten international nongovernmental organizations. OVC's annual [**ITVERP Report to Congress**](#) provides more detailed information about program services.

OVC Supports Emergency Assistance for Victims of Terrorism

As part of a DOJ-wide response to victims of terrorist acts within the United States and abroad, OVC provides funding to the Crime Victim Assistance Emergency Fund, administered by the [**FBI Office for Victim Assistance**](#), to support services for victims and their families, including emergency food, clothing, shelter, and temporary housing; emergency transportation for medical care and travel assistance to reunite family members with injured survivors unable to travel; repatriation of the remains of a deceased victim; transportation expenses of secondary victims; crisis counseling; and child and dependent care.¹² Additionally, OVC sets aside money each year through the Federal Crime Victims Assistance Fund to fund direct services that U.S. Attorneys' Offices request for victims of federal crimes. This fund pays for emergency shelter, emergency child care, crisis counseling, transportation to

court, and other critical direct services when local services are unavailable.¹³

Services for Tribal Communities

Isolation, poverty, high rates of crime, and a continuing lack of resources in many American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities—compounded by complex jurisdictional issues and cultural diversity among tribes—make this underserved population a critical focus for OVC. In coordination with a comprehensive DOJ initiative to increase engagement and action on tribal justice issues, OVC focuses its support on developing culturally appropriate programs and projects that reflect an understanding of tribal practices. In addition to funding innovative programs that provide services to AI/AN victims, OVC continues to support ongoing projects to provide critical training and technical assistance to service providers and allied practitioners in tribal communities.

Coordinated Tribal Assistance Program

DOJ's Coordinated Tribal Assistance (CTAS) program provides funding for federally recognized tribes, tribal consortia, and tribally designated organizations. OVC supports two programs within CTAS:

- The **Comprehensive Tribal Victim Assistance Program** supports tribal programs in responding to victims of crime, their families, and their communities and provides trauma-informed, culturally competent holistic services. Under this program, OVC awarded eight grants in FY 2013 and eight grants in FY 2014.
- The **Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Program** provides comprehensive and coordinated multidisciplinary responses to child abuse victims and their families in ways that are trauma-informed and culturally competent. Funds support tribal efforts to develop, enhance, and operate programs to improve the investigation, prosecution, and overall response to child abuse. Under this program, OVC awarded seven grants in FY 2013 and seven grants in FY 2014.

Bakken Region Demonstration Project

Through an interagency agreement, OVC has provided Vision 21 funding to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Justice Services (OJS), to implement a victim assistance project on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Fort Berthold sits at the heart of the Bakken Oil Boom region, where rapid growth in population has resulted in an resurgence of criminal activity that includes drug trafficking, sex trafficking, domestic violence, assault, and property crime. This project will enable BIA/OJS to hire and retain one full-time victim specialist to provide support, referrals, and other direct services to AI/AN victims of crime at Fort Berthold.

¹⁰Press release, "Attorney General Announces \$8.3 Million to Support Victims of Boston Marathon Bombings," U.S. Department of Justice, www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-announces-83-million-support-victims-boston-marathon-bombings.

¹¹Ibid.

See "Responding to Mass Casualties and Terrorist Attacks," OVC News and Program Updates, July 2011, http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/news/pdf/OVC_NPU_July_2011.pdf.

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Office for Victims of Crime, OVC Partnership with United States Attorney's Offices, Fact Sheet, https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc_archives/factsheets/usao-fct.htm.

Capacity Building

OVC's [**Vision 21 Report**](#) emphasized the necessity of building capacity in the crime victims field to better serve victims of crime. To help ensure that victim service organizations possess the capability to meet current and future crime victim needs, the Report recommended strengthening the following areas:

- Increased availability of funding;
- Organizational flexibility;
- Diversity in staffing and leadership; and
- Strengthening collaborations to further victims' rights and services.

OVC programming in FYs 2013 and 2014 focused on building capacity in a number of key areas. OVC funding supported efforts to strengthen service organizations' ability to reach underserved victim populations, from particularly vulnerable victim groups to those in rural and isolated areas to those who have experienced victimization abroad. Additionally, OVC maintained its commitment to supporting technical and training assistance, expanding existing offerings, releasing new opportunities, and making courses accessible for free online at any time. OVC also strengthened its collaborations with its federal, tribal, state, and local partners and other stakeholders to support comprehensive projects to assist victims in all walks of life and areas of the Nation, from military bases to Indian communities to inner-city neighborhoods.

The following accounts provide a snapshot of the many capacity-building program areas that OVC supported in FYs 2013 and 2014:

- [**Military Sexual Assault Initiative**](#)
- [**Programs To Combat Human Trafficking**](#)
- [**Programs To Support Tribal Communities**](#)
- [**American Indian/Alaska Native SANE-SART Initiative**](#)
- [**OVC Training and Technical Assistance**](#)

Military Sexual Assault Initiative

Victims of sexual assault in the military have several options for obtaining services in the aftermath of trauma. If victims report the incident within the military system, they have two reporting options: restricted reporting or unrestricted reporting.¹⁴ However, if victims prefer not to use military services, they instead can seek help through community-based service providers. OVC is committed to ensuring that such community-based victim service providers understand the military system and culture so that every victim receives comprehensive and compassionate care. OVC has teamed with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to address sexual assault in the military through in-person trainings—offered on and near military installations with high rates of sexual assault—and online trainings. These courses provide strategies for building partnerships with local military installations to address and respond to sexual assault. Through the establishment of a victim-centered framework, these trainings are designed to improve services to sexual assault victims and ensure that they receive appropriate support.

In-Person Training Addresses Military Culture and Sexual Assault

OVC has partnered with DOD to conduct an in-person course on military culture, justice system, and

services. The interactive curriculum, [**Strengthening Military-Civilian Community Partnerships to Respond to Sexual Assault**](#), developed in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the DOD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), teaches local service providers about military systems, culture, and laws under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). To ensure that the training is available where it is needed the most, the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center and SAPRO are promoting it to victim advocates near military sites that have a high incidence of sexual assaults. Fifty-one professionals—including community-based victim advocates, military sexual assault response coordinators, and judge advocates—were certified to conduct this course by the end of FY 2014. As a result, 127 civilian victim advocates were trained in 4 states in 2013 and nearly 600 civilian victim advocates were trained in 18 states in 2014.

The military community and civilian community were able to collaborate and form a cohesive team to better serve victims.

— Community-based victim advocate

Dynamic Online Training Supports Advocacy for Military Victims of Sexual Assault

OVC teamed with DOD SAPRO to develop the Advanced Military Sexual Assault Advocate Training (AMSAAT) for Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocates (VA). This [online training](#) combines OVC's expertise in learning development with DOD's broad range of SAPR advocacy capabilities and initiatives. The incorporation of a victim-centered approach builds a framework that improves the quality of responses to sexual assault victims by military professionals. This dynamic training works to support a military sexual assault policy that puts victims first so that they receive appropriate care. In FY 2014, a total of 1,135 individuals participated in this training.

¹⁴Restricted reporting enables a victim to seek medical care, counseling, advocacy, and legal services without notification to military command or an official investigation, whereas unrestricted reporting requires notification to military command and an official investigation.

Programs To Combat Human Trafficking

OVC has had a longstanding commitment to supporting survivors of human trafficking and multi-disciplinary task forces to combat this crime. OVC awarded the first federal grant to assist victims of trafficking in 1998. Two years later, the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 authorized funding for OVC to support victim service organizations to provide trauma-informed, culturally appropriate services for survivors of human trafficking. OVC intensified efforts in FYs 2013 and 2014 to strengthen the capacity of organizations that respond to the comprehensive needs of human trafficking survivors through:



- [**Enhanced Collaborative Model To Combat Human Trafficking**](#)
- [**Services for Victims of Human Trafficking**](#)
- [**Human Trafficking Strategic Action Plan**](#)
- [**Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide**](#)
- [**Mobile-Friendly Human Trafficking Web Site**](#)

Enhanced Collaborative Model To Combat Human Trafficking

Since 2004, OVC and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) have partnered to establish multidisciplinary Anti-Human Trafficking Task Forces. In 2010, OVC and BJA began funding the Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking Victim Services, which uses a holistic approach to respond to human trafficking. The task forces are designed to identify victims of all types of human trafficking—including sex and labor trafficking—address the individualized needs of victims through quality services, and investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases at the federal, tribal, state, and local levels.

At each site, the program supports a state, local, or tribal law enforcement agency and a victim service provider. OVC awards support the provision of a comprehensive array of culturally and linguistically appropriate direct services to trafficking victims identified within the task force's geographic area, while BJA awards support the coordinated efforts of local, state, federal, and tribal law enforcement to investigate and prosecute traffickers. During FY 2013, OVC provided nearly \$6.5 million in funding to seven task force service providers in California, Washington, Missouri, Virginia, New York, and Texas. In FY 2014, OVC and BJA undertook an intensive analysis of the enhanced collaborative model and examined how well the funded task forces were operating. Based on both qualitative and quantitative analyses, program improvements were made, and a new solicitation incorporating these improvements was issued in FY 2015.

Services for Victims of Human Trafficking

In FY 2014, OVC awarded nearly \$11.3 million in funding to 28 organizations through the Services for Victims of Human Trafficking Program, which awards funds to victim service providers to enhance the quality and quantity of services available to victims of human trafficking by enhancing interagency collaboration and a coordinated community response, and to provide high-quality services that address the individual needs of trafficking victims. These services include intensive case management, shelter and housing, food, medical and dental care, mental health treatment, support groups, interpretation and translation services, immigration and other legal assistance, literacy education, and job skills training. Through June 2014, OVC grantees provided services to 7,122 individuals identified as victims or potential victims of human trafficking.¹⁵

In FYs 2013 and 2014, funds were provided for Comprehensive Services, a full range of services that address the individualized needs of all victims—including U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and foreign nationals; adults and minors; males and females; and sex and labor trafficking victims—and for Specialized Services, direct services provided to subgroups of trafficking victims.

Human Trafficking Strategic Action Plan

In his remarks to the Clinton Global Initiative on September 25, 2012, President Obama pledged to “do even more to help victims recover and rebuild their lives. We’ll develop a new action plan to improve coordination across the Federal Government. We’re increasing access to services to help survivors become self-sufficient.”¹⁶ The first Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States 2013–2017 (SAP) fulfills that pledge and describes the steps that federal agencies will take to ensure that all victims of human trafficking in the United States are identified and have access to the services they need to recover and to rebuild their lives. The SAP focuses on providing and coordinating services for victims through four goals, eight objectives, and more than 250 associated action items for victim services improvements that federal agencies will achieve by the end of 2017. OVC represented DOJ as one of the co-chairs in the development of the SAP, 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 announced the formal release of the SAP on January 14, 2014, at a Survivor Forum and Listening Session hosted by OVC.

In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC played a key leadership role on the Victim Services Committee of the Senior Policy Operating Group of the President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in

Persons. The Committee is helping to ensure collaboration and cooperation across federal agencies and helping to coordinate the SAP's implementation, with the goal of identifying victims and providing them with appropriate services.

Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide

OVC and BJA launched an expanded [Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide](#) in 2014 to provide practical information on the creation and day-to-day operations of human trafficking task forces as well as essential knowledge needed to identify and assist victims effectively and to investigate and prosecute cases of human trafficking. The updated e-Guide—redesigned to make it easier for users to navigate the content and find information quickly—features new sections and strategies to strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration, increase victim identification, enhance victim-centered investigation, and build stronger prosecution strategies. Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., has stated that the expanded e-Guide “gives law enforcement and victim service providers the information and insights they need to respond effectively to crimes involving forced sex and labor.”¹⁷

Mobile-Friendly Human Trafficking Web Site

In 2014, OVC launched a new mobile-friendly [human trafficking Web site](#) that contains a wide range of information, including resources and research from the Federal Government, publications and products from OVC, local and national direct assistance information, and related funding opportunities for victims and survivors of human trafficking, victim service providers, law enforcement, and allied professionals. Human trafficking victim service providers and the public can access the Web site to learn about human trafficking; locate resources based on the specific types of services needed; watch, download, and share public service announcements; and read about OVC’s efforts to combat human trafficking. The Web site is most frequently accessed via mobile technology, and, consequently, is designed with tabs, layout, and readability for ease of use on wireless devices.



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Calculated using statistics from the *Attorney General's Annual Report to Congress and Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons for FY 2013* (5,756) plus the number of new victims enrolled in OVC grant programs between July 2013 and June 2014 (1,366).

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White House Press Release, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative

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Remarks by Attorney General Holder at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference, October 27, 2014, www.justice.gov/opa/speech/remarks-attorney-general-holder-international-association-chiefs-police-annual-conference

Programs To Support Tribal Communities

The [Vision 21 Report](#) emphasized the need for the field to address the historical, institutional, geographic, and cultural barriers that may prevent victims from receiving services. OVC is committed to responding to the critical need for victim-centered assistance throughout Indian Country. In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC supported community-based services for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) victims, and training and technical assistance for their service providers, through the following activities:

- [Demonstration Project at Flandreau Indian School \(2010–2014\)](#)
- [Tribal Community Wellness Centers](#)
- [14th National Indian Nations Conference \(2014\)](#)
- [AI/AN Training and Technical Assistance Program](#)
- [Vision 21: 2014 Linking Systems of Care for Children & Youth](#)
- [FY 2014 Vision 21: Building State Technology Capacity](#)

Demonstration Project at Flandreau Indian School

Since 2010, OVC has supported efforts to establish a culturally relevant, trauma-informed system of care for students at the Flandreau Indian School (FIS), a Bureau of Indian Education-operated boarding school in Flandreau, South Dakota. Students at the school represent tribes from across the Nation, and many students have experienced long-term exposure to violence, trauma, and victimization. Through the 5-year Interagency Agreement, FIS and OVC are collaborating to help ensure that these students receive essential support and tools to heal from their past experiences, learn healthy coping mechanisms, connect with their culture, and reach their full potential. Through this project, FIS integrated traditional cultural activities into its extracurricular offerings, provided students with an opportunity to participate in an equine-assisted therapy program, and supplied training to faculty and staff on how to recognize and appropriately respond to symptoms of trauma and victimization among FIS students.

We see so many kids that are living in the past instead of looking toward the future. Our job is to empower them—to show them that they have the power to change the direction of their lives and be successful.

— Priscilla Hovland, Program Administrator

Tribal Community Wellness Centers

Through Congressionally appropriated Vision 21 funding in FY 2014, OVC awarded grants to three tribes for innovative projects to develop community wellness, victim-centered strategies that include a Community Wellness Center as a central organizing force within the tribal jurisdiction. The program, [Vision 21: 2014 Tribal Community Wellness Centers: Serving Crime Victims' Needs](#), supports the development of needs assessments, strategic plans, and strategies to expand current crime victim assistance programs in ways that will address a broader range of victim challenges. This innovative approach addresses underlying factors—such as poverty, historical trauma, substance abuse, health disparities, and lack of economic and educational opportunities—that may contribute to violence in communities.

14th National Indian Nations Conference (2014)

OVC funded the [14th National Indian Nations Conference: Justice for Victims of Crime](#), held in December 2014 on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation in California. Coordinated by the [Tribal Law and Policy Institute](#), the conference has been held every 2 years since 1988 and serves as the largest DOJ-sponsored tribal conference. The 2014 conference theme, “Generational Voices Uniting for Safety, Justice, and Healing,” focused on various aspects of the human life cycle, particularly two of the most vulnerable groups: children and older adults. The conference welcomed more than 1,000

attendees—tribal leaders, victims, victim advocates, and volunteers from tribal communities as well as many federal and state agency leaders and staff—who led and participated in a myriad of workshops to discuss strategies for improving responses to these issues, including elder abuse through tribal laws, and forensic interviewing of child victims. In addition to the many dignitaries and leaders who addressed the conference, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director James Comey provided the keynote address, outlining their efforts to pursue and capture perpetrators in Indian Country and the FBI's commitment to helping prevent future crimes and serving the victims.



That is the essence of our job in the FBI—to ensure that justice is done for everyone in America: every man, woman, and child living in any part of this great land, including American Indian and Native Alaskan communities.

— FBI Director James Comey

In 2014, OVC released [A Circle of Healing for Native Children Endangered by Drugs](#), an innovative video series that shows examples of successful programs and practices developed by tribal communities and used throughout Indian Country to help drug-endangered AI/AN youth heal from trauma. Debuting at the [14th National Indian Nations Conference](#), the seven videos feature tribal leaders, service providers, and survivors who share testimonials to inform and guide tribal communities as they help traumatized children heal from the lasting consequences of exposure to drugs and alcohol in the home. The video series and companion resource guide are intended to stimulate discussion and inspire communities to come together to develop, enhance, and share their own responses to these issues and to help families recover from trauma and rebuild their lives. A preview of the video series is available on OVC's [Web site](#).



Children are our future. It's not too late to change this, to reverse the cycle.

— Lindon Duke, Cahto Tribal Police Chief

AI/AN Training and Technical Assistance Program

The OVC AI/AN Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Program supports OVC's [Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities](#) and [Comprehensive Tribal Victim Assistance Program](#) sites—funded under the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS)—and other tribal communities, as appropriate, to enhance their capacity to coordinate and provide a comprehensive array of culturally appropriate services to victims of crime, their families, and their communities. The incumbent TTA provider, [Unified Solutions Tribal Community Development Group, Inc.](#), has provided support to the 44 current CTAS grantees to continue to develop and deliver an appropriate approach for each site, integrating what is learned from site visits into the development of promising practices, successful partnerships, and interventions.

Vision 21: 2014 Linking Systems of Care for Children & Youth

In accordance with the findings in the [Vision 21 Report](#) and the [Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence](#), OVC awarded grants under the [Vision 21: 2014 Linking Systems of Care for Children & Youth](#) competitive solicitation in 2014. The initiative is designed to encourage relevant institutions, systems, and professionals to come together to design and carry out a coordinated approach to serving child and youth victims. The approach is designed to help

ensure that the various child-serving institutions and systems—including child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, and education—establish sustainable policies and practices to assess children and youth for victimization and provide comprehensive and coordinated services to address their needs. The initiative is divided into two phases—Phase I: Planning (1 month) and Phase II: Implementation (5 years, funded in 15-month increments)—and consists of three elements: state-level demonstration sites, technical assistance, and evaluation. OVC made its first awards for this program in 2014 by funding two state-level demonstration sites and a technical assistance provider. OVC also provided funding to the National Institute of Justice to [evaluate](#) the effectiveness of both the demonstration sites and the TA approach.

FY 2014 Vision 21: Building States' Technology Capacity

OVC continues to support state VOCA administering agencies' increased access to technology, victims' access to state resources, and the accuracy of agencies' administrative reporting. Under its [FY 2014 Vision 21: Building State Technology Capacity](#) program, OVC, through congressionally appropriated Vision 21 funding, provided \$2.4 million in grants to 13 state VOCA administering agencies with gaps in technology, that limited their ability to report accurate and timely data and adversely affected victims' ability to access resources. The awards support the use of technology to upgrade data-reporting systems, increase access to victim services, enhance electronic case management, streamline the administrative burden on service providers, and increase access to online, evidence-based training.

American Indian/Alaska Native SANE-SART Initiative

Sexual violence in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities remains at epidemic levels. Native Americans experience sexual assault victimizations at a rate of 2.5 times that of other races, and 1 in 3 AI/AN women will be a victim of rape during her lifetime.¹⁸ In 2010, OVC began a partnership with the [FBI Office for Victim Assistance](#) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) to enhance the response to victims of sexual violence in Indian Country. The [AI/AN Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Sexual Assault Response Team \(SANE-SART\) Initiative](#) continues to address the acute needs of tribal victims of sexual violence through focused efforts to build the capacity of tribal communities to provide coordinated, community-based, victim-centered responses. The 5-year project encompasses three demonstration sites, coordinators at IHS and the FBI, training and technical assistance, and support from the Attorney General's federal advisory committee and multidisciplinary groups—all committed to institutionalizing sustainable, culturally relevant, evidence-based practices to meet the needs of tribal victims of sexual assault.



Demonstration Sites

OVC and its federal and tribal partners have established three tribal demonstration sites at the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Southern Indian Health Council, and the Tuba City Regional Healthcare Corporation. Each site now operates functional SANE-SART programs that have the capacity to provide access to services for both child and adult victims of sexual assault. OVC continues to support each community with ongoing access to training and technical assistance to strengthen the programs and ensure their long-term viability.

Multidisciplinary Working Group

OVC established a multidisciplinary working group of Indian Country professionals, with experience in developing a coordinated community response to sexual violence, to assist in development of a national strategy to enhance the ability of tribal governments and their partners to respond to sexual violence. The first draft of the *National Strategy to Improve the Systemic Response to Sexual Violence in American Indian/Alaska Native Communities* was completed in early 2014. OVC, IHS, and the Office on Violence Against Women are currently reviewing the draft strategy and are planning for distribution of the final report.

National Coordination Committee

With the authorization of the Attorney General, OVC chartered the National Coordination Committee in 2011, under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, to solicit advice about the complex issues surrounding sexual violence responses in AI/AN communities and the unique cultural issues facing AI/AN adult and child victims of sexual violence. The committee—comprising representatives from six national tribal organizations and five federal agencies, an expert in Alaska Native issues, and an expert in medical forensic exams—finalized its [**Report to the U.S. Attorney General on Improving Federal Agency Response to Sexual Violence in Tribal Nations: Issues and Recommendations**](#) in 2014 and submitted it to the Attorney General. Key recommendations include:

- Improving federal agency coordination and collaboration at the local level by establishing district-specific guidelines;
- Modifying DOJ personnel policies to increase accountability in hiring, training, and assessing federal employees;
- Improving DOJ grant solicitations and funding to secure sustainable funding for tribal victim assistance programs; and
- Improving public safety and public health by prioritizing the response to sexual violence.

OVC continues to work with its partners within DOJ and other stakeholders to implement these recommendations to increase the response to sexual violence in Indian Country.

¹⁸National Institute of Justice, November 2000, *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings From the Violence Against Women Survey*, Research Report, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf>.

OVC Training and Technical Assistance

OVC maintained its commitment to building the capacity of victim service organizations and victim advocates through training and technical assistance. The OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) provides a range of training and technical assistance that support professional development of victim advocates, enhances services to the victim services field, and reaches underserved victims of crime. OVC TTAC offers training and technical assistance in a variety of settings and, in FYs 2013 and 2014, focused particularly on increasing courses and trainings available online:

- [**Victim Assistance Training Online**](#)
- [**Training by Request—Puerto Rico**](#)
- [**National Victim Assistance Academy Redesign**](#)
- [**Legal Assistance for Crime Victims Webinar Series**](#)
- [**Curriculum for Legal Service Providers on Elder Abuse**](#)
- [**State Victim Assistance Academies**](#)

- [Building Resiliency in Child Abuse Organizations](#)
- [Secondary Education: Integrating Crime Victims' Issues](#)

Victim Assistance Training *Online*

In FY 2014, OVC TTAC launched [Victim Assistance Training \(VAT\) Online](#), a foundational, Web-based victim assistance training program that provides victim service providers and allied professionals with fundamental skills and knowledge—as well as tools, services, and best practices—to enhance their ability to effectively meet the needs of victims. VAT *Online* contains four sections:

1. *Basics*: Foundational information for a wide spectrum of victim service stakeholders, including those working in victims' rights and the justice system.
2. *Core Competencies and Skills*: Modules that focus on communication skills, confidentiality, and advocacy.
3. *Crimes*: Training on characteristics, prevalence, and specific crimes, including sexual assault in the military and elder abuse.
4. *Special Populations*: Training to serve victim populations such as the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities; campus/university victims; elder crime victims; victims with substance abuse issues; victims with disabilities; American Indian/Alaska Native victims; and victims with mental health issues.

This free training, available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, engages participants through a variety of multimedia content, including videos and real-life scenarios. The first 19 modules were launched in FY 2014, and modules are scheduled for release in 2015 that address hate and bias crimes, assault, human trafficking, intimate partner violence, cybercrime, and identity theft. During the first year following the launch of VAT *Online*, there were 5,327 participants.

Training by Request—Puerto Rico

OVC TTAC—in collaboration with the DOD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, PASOS de las Mujeres, the Puerto Rico Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Paz Para La Mujer), and Fort Buchanan Army installation—hosted an interactive training-by-request for the curriculum, *Strengthening Military-Civilian Community Partnerships to Respond to Sexual Assault*. The program brought together 25 civilian victim advocates—including staff at rape crisis centers, community hospitals, Veteran's Affairs centers, local law enforcement, and military advocates—to build effective partnerships with local military installations to enhance and extend the system of support for sexual assault victims in the military.

National Victim Assistance Academy Redesign

OVC TTAC's National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) synthesizes cutting-edge developments in skills, knowledge, and theory to offer a multidisciplinary educational experience to the victim services field. Teams of nationally recognized scholars, researchers, and practitioners with in-depth practical experience teach each course. In FY 2014, OVC TTAC redesigned NVAA's classroom delivery method to transform the Academy into a blended-learning training that combines both self-paced and facilitated Web-based training. This interactive program is offered free of charge, and recorded sessions enable participants to



learn at their own pace and on their own schedule. The inaugural online [Leadership Institute](#), the hallmark of the transformed NVAA, provides comprehensive leadership training for victim service administrators and other leaders. The first offering in April 2014 hosted 62 participants, who learned theoretical concepts and practical skills to lead their organization, team, or workgroup more effectively. Of the 62 participants, 30 received continuing education units (CEUs). The Leadership Institute was also offered in the fall of 2014 to 102 participants, 23 of whom received CEUs.

This training has encouraged me to think differently, more holistically ... like a leader! It's challenged me and opened my eyes to things I didn't even realize I had neglected. I've become more mindful of my employees and their needs and also my reaction to others. I've learned about conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, so many great things to help me become a better professional!

– Participant, Spring 2014 NVAA Leadership Institute

Legal Assistance for Crime Victims Webinar Series

OVC TTAC's [Legal Assistance for Crime Victims](#) initiative provides TTA to attorneys in an effort to expand the availability of pro bono legal assistance for victims of crime. Through a partnership with the [National Crime Victim Law Institute](#) (NCVLI), the initiative's extensive Webinar series covers a wide range of topics intended to increase attorneys' knowledge about crime victims' issues and their capacity to provide no-cost legal representation to crime victims. In FY 2014, the initiative collaborated with the Victims Rights Law Center to provide a widely viewed two-part [Webinar series](#) on Title IX and campus sexual assault, which was intended for state and local sexual assault coalitions and programs throughout the country.

Curriculum for Legal Service Providers on Elder Abuse

OVC TTAC offered free, interactive, online elder abuse training for legal service providers, which included strategies for identifying and addressing the needs of individuals who may be experiencing elder abuse. In addition to providing a broad overview of elder abuse and its indicators, the course focused on practical and ethical approaches, domestic violence and sexual assault, and financial exploitation of elders. Intended for legal aid providers and other civil attorneys, the training incorporated an array of tools and resources, including interactive client scenarios and printable materials. During FY 2014, a total of 628 individuals participated in the training.

State Victim Assistance Academies

In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC continued to expand its State Victim Assistance Academies (SVAA) program. First introduced in 1988, SVAs provide fundamental, extensive, and academically based education and training for victim assistance providers, victim advocates, criminal justice personnel, and allied professionals who support crime victims. To meet the educational and training needs of victim service providers and allied professionals throughout the Nation, OVC TTAC offers technical assistance to prospective and established SVAs in designing, developing, and delivering high-quality SVAA training. By the end of FY 2014, OVC had funded SVAs in 45 states. TTAC's password-protected [SVAA online learning community](#) enables grantees to access OVC resources, upload materials to share, and engage providers at other SVAs.

Building Resiliency in Child Abuse Organizations

To build the capacity of organizations that help abused children, it is essential that service providers develop the ability to cope with the difficult situations they often encounter in helping this particularly vulnerable victim population. Providers must build mental strength, emotional fortitude, and resiliency to avoid secondary traumatic stress or burnout. OVC TTAC's blended training [Building Resiliency in Child Abuse Organizations](#), incorporates a variety of methods—including Webinars, independent study,

videos, and a 1-day, in-person session—to introduce strategies for establishing resiliency within these organizations through policies, supervisory techniques, and training. In FY 2014, these materials were downloaded 901 times.

Secondary Education: Integrating Crime Victims' Issues

In FY 2014, OVC TTAC released [Integrating Crime Victims' Issues Into College and University Curricula](#). This series of multidisciplinary educational materials is designed to broaden college and university students' awareness of criminal victimization's impact on victims and teach them about helpful responses to victims of crime. With funding from OVC, the University of Massachusetts-Lowell—along with its partners from the Universities of Massachusetts-Boston, Massachusetts-Dartmouth, and Massachusetts Medical School—developed these educational models for victim service providers and allied professionals, with the goal of further integrating victims' issues into the Nation's educational system.

This free online resource, which follows the release of resources from the [White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault](#), consists of curriculum kits and teaching materials. The tools include class exercises and sample assignments, a faculty involvement guide with steps to create a supportive learning environment and respond to student experiences with victimization, and templates for internship agreements to increase undergraduate and graduate student placements in victim services. All materials are fully customizable and designed for adaptation across multiple academic disciplines.

To coincide with the release of the materials, OVC TTAC sent e-blasts about the curricula to 161 OVC consultants affiliated with universities and 3,102 OVC TTAC listserv members. Through the end of FY 2014, the materials were downloaded more than 2,700 times.

Reaching All Victims

Some populations experience victimization at particularly high rates. Demographic, social economic, cultural, and institutional obstacles may make it difficult for certain groups of victims to access services. For these individuals—including American Indians/Alaska Natives; individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer; boys and young men of color; older adults; runaway and homeless youth; and victims with disabilities—services may be unavailable, inadequate, or unknown. Furthermore, developments in technology have fostered opportunities to commit certain crimes, such as identity theft and financial fraud, in the expanse of cyberspace. These emerging issues present new challenges to the victim services field. In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC increased its support for efforts to assist these vulnerable victim populations and develop comprehensive methods for providing them with the services they need. OVC's efforts to support underserved communities include:

- [Services for Transgender Victims of Sexual Assault](#)
- [Nationwide Network To Strengthen Services for Victims of Identity Theft](#)
- [Expansion of "Through Our Eyes" Video Series](#)
- [Enhancing Services to Young Men of Color](#)
- [The President's Sexual Assault Task Force](#)

Services for Transgender Victims of Sexual Assault

Transgender people experience extremely high rates of sexual violence, with approximately one in two being sexually abused or assaulted during their lifetimes.¹⁹ For too long, this population of victims has been marginalized and received minimal attention to their needs; yet transgender people are even less likely than other sexual assault survivors to access mainstream services because of fears of experiencing transphobia,—the common practice of services' segregation of clients by sex,—and apprehension about encountering disbelief or unwarranted curiosity from criminal justice or sexual assault professionals.²⁰

OVC funded FORGE—a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for the rights of transgender individuals and allies—to conduct four [demonstration projects](#) in sites around the country. The project

generated [**Responding to Transgender Victims of Sexual Assault**](#), an online guide to help educate those who respond to sexual assault victims about what it means to be transgender and how to provide these victims with accessible, appropriate care. Reflecting the perspectives of the transgender community, the online guide presents a wide array of information—from insight into the transgender experience to specific guidance for sexual assault service providers and advocates, law enforcement officers, medical and mental health care providers, and support group facilitators—in a user-friendly electronic format. It also includes practical tools to promote understanding and support of transgender victims, such as preferred language terms. The e-guide is designed to help victim service providers understand the needs of transgender survivors of sexual violence, provide appropriate services, and treat victims with respect.

Nationwide Network To Strengthen Services for Victims of Identity Theft

[**The National Identity Theft Victims Assistance Network \(NITVAN\)**](#) is a national network of coalitions focused on developing victim assistance training and outreach to enhance the ability of the members to provide direct services to victims of identity theft. Founded in 2010 with funding from OVC, NITVAN now provides several resources for victim assistance professionals, including victim advocates, attorneys, and law enforcement. In FY 2014, the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) began hosting these resources on its [Web site](#). OVC TTAC's [**Toolkit for Professionals**](#) provides strategies for improving and expanding services to victims of identity theft and forming a local coalition, as well as downloadable training materials and brochures that users can tailor to their own locations. NITVAN also offers a Resource Map with information about local agencies that offer legal services to identity theft victims, online legal self-help for clients in each state, professional identity theft networking opportunities, and state laws applicable to identity theft.

Expansion of “Through Our Eyes” Video Series

According to a 2009 study conducted by the DOJ/OJP Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 60 percent of children experience violence, and even greater numbers are exposed to emotional abuse and maltreatment in their communities, schools, and homes²¹. OVC's [**Through Our Eyes: Children, Violence, and Trauma**](#) video series discusses how crime, abuse, violence, and trauma harm children and highlights promising and effective interventions to help children heal.



Produced under the banner of the [**Defending Childhood Initiative**](#), the series now includes eight videos and four posters that address a number of critical aspects of child victimization, including the serious and long-lasting consequences of violence on children's physical and mental health; signs of exposure to trauma; the overwhelming cost of such maltreatment to families, communities, and the Nation; and the important role that community- and faith-based programs, services, and agencies play in protecting and helping children. A companion resource guide accompanies each video and directs users to related organizations, Web sites, and publications that describe the effects of violence and trauma on children and the benefits of proper support. Additionally, to facilitate access to the video series, OVC has expanded options for viewing the videos, all of which are available on YouTube and can be downloaded from the OVC [Web site](#) in three versions: QuickTime, Windows Media, and Closed Caption.

Enhancing Services to Young Men of Color

Recognizing that few victim service organizations possess the necessary expertise and resources to provide comprehensive services to young men of color, OVC currently funds two demonstration projects²² that focus on providing services to these victims—particularly young African-American and Latino men, who are more likely to experience violent victimization than men of other ethnicities—to identify issues,

promising practices, and innovative strategies that support these victims' needs and help prevent retaliation and re-injury.

In 2012, OVC began funding Drexel University's Healing Hurt People program, which serves as the headquarters of the [**National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs**](#) (NNHVIP), an international network of 27 hospital-based intervention programs that enhances existing hospital-based violence intervention programs and supports the development of emerging programs. NNHVIP ensures that intervention programs provide

training, technical assistance, pilot testing, and evaluation regarding psychological trauma, which can have long-lasting effects on victims of physical violence. Healing Hurt People, which operates in three Philadelphia hospitals, has developed Web-based trauma training—with a toolkit and resources that users can tailor to their needs—and its Web site offers a variety of resources to allied professionals. The program also sponsors annual national symposiums on trauma intervention programs.

In Crown Heights (Brooklyn), OVC is supporting the Fund for City of New York and Center for Court Innovation's [**Make It Happen!**](#) project, which is designed to connect high-risk youth with outreach workers who use motivational interviewing techniques and positive peer pressure to steer youth away from violence and toward healthy lifestyles. In 2012, OVC funded the Hidden Victims project of Make It Happen! that focused specifically on addressing the effects of psychological trauma. The Hidden Victims Project is establishing a support group that utilizes an empowerment curriculum based on best practices, conducting a community research study to document levels and types of victimization among high-risk youth, developing a trauma-informed toolkit, and creating a case management and referral protocol for victim service and mental health providers.

The President's Sexual Assault Task Force

According to a study published in the Journal of American College Health, 19 percent of undergraduate women surveyed had experience an attempted or completed sexual assault during college.²³ In response to this high rate of rape and sexual assault on college campuses, in January 2014, President Obama established the [**White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault**](#). Composed of officials throughout the executive branch of the Federal Government, the Task Force was charged with developing a coordinated federal response to rape and sexual assault at institutions of higher education and supporting efforts to enforce colleges' and universities' legal obligations to prevent and respond to these horrible crimes.

OVC leadership served on the Task Force and provided recommendations on how colleges and universities can prevent sexual assault and rape, enhance their support of survivors, and reach underserved victim populations. In May 2014, the Task Force launched [**NotAlone.gov**](#), which offers data and resources—such as OVC's [**Responding to Transgender Victims of Sexual Assault**](#) online guide—to assist with prevention efforts and responses to sexual assault on college campuses. In addition, OVC TTAC provided a [**series of Webinars**](#) on Title IX for victim advocates and state sexual assault coalition directors.



¹⁹ FORGE, 2005, "Sexual Violence in the Transgender Community Survey," unpublished data; G. Kenagy, 2005, "The Health and Social Service Needs of Transgender People in Philadelphia," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 8(2/3):49–56; G. Kenagy and W. Bostwick, 2005, "Health and Social Service Needs of Transgendered People in Chicago," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 8(2/3): 57–66.

²⁰ See *Why It Matters: Rethinking Victim Assistance for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Victims of Hate Violence and Intimate Partner Violence*, 2012, Washington, DC: National Center for Victims of Crime and National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 6.

²¹ D. Finkelhor, H. Turner, R. Ormrod, S. Hamby, and K. Kracke. 2009. [Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey](#). Bulletin. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; David Finkelhor, H.A. Turner, A. Shattuck, and S.L. Hamby, 2013, "Violence, Crime, and Abuse Exposure in a National Sample of Children and Youth: An Update," *JAMA Pediatrics* 167(7): 614–21.

²² National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2010, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html.

²³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sexual Violence Facts at a Glance, 2012, www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv-datasheet-a.pdf (citing Krebs CP, Linquist CH, Warner TD, Fisher BS, Martin SL. College women's experiences with physically forced, alcohol- or other drug-enabled, and drug-facilitated sexual assault before and since entering college. *Journal of American College Health* 2009; 57(6):639-647).

Public Awareness

In FYs 2013 and 2014, OVC expanded its efforts to provide information about victim services programming to a wide variety of groups—victim service organizations, allied professionals, and federal, tribal, state, and local agencies—as well as the victims and the public. In addition to OVC’s annual sponsorship of [National Crime Victims' Rights Week](#) (NCVRW) at the national and local levels, OVC continued to use innovative tools to raise awareness about victims’ rights and related projects. In recognition of the widespread use of mobile devices and social media channels, OVC continues to use developments in technology to interact frequently with stakeholders and regularly disseminate important information about victim services.

NCVRW Resources and Events

Each April during NCVRW, communities throughout the United States conduct public rallies, candlelight vigils, and various events to commemorate and promote awareness of the rights, needs, and services of victims of crime. Through a cooperative agreement with the [National Center for Victims of Crime](#) (NCVC), OVC releases a comprehensive resource guide, available [online](#) in English and Spanish, that includes a variety of promotional materials to heighten public awareness of crime victims’ issues. During NCVRW, OVC hosts the National Crime Victims’ Service Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., at which the Attorney General honors dedicated individuals and organizations for their visionary work to help victims of crime. Visit the [OVC Gallery](#) to view the ceremony and learn more about the speakers and award winners in 2013 and 2014.



NCVRW Community Awareness Projects

To support community participation nationwide in NCVRW, OVC’s Community Awareness Project (CAP) initiative funds grassroots organizations with up to \$5,000 for promotional activities. Since 2004, through funding from OVC, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators selects communities, through competitive grant solicitations, to implement CAPs. In FYs 2013 and 2014, more than 100 organizations, representing nearly every state, received support for innovative projects, including the following:

- In Noblesville, Indiana, Prevail, Inc.—an organization that provides education and support services to victims of crime—partnered with local agencies to host a Criminal Justice “Odyssey” Open House for 150 members of the community. This guided tour through the criminal justice system featured

presentations from law enforcement officers, victim service providers, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, prosecutors, and judges. Prevail, Inc., promoted the event through newspaper advertisements, newsletters, fliers, and posters.

- In the City of Farmington, New Mexico, the Farmington Police Department's Victim Assistance Program conducted a countywide media campaign using three digital billboards and posters, in English and Spanish, to promote NCVRW and local victim services. The Program distributed 50 NCVRW-themed posters in popular areas and community centers, and the billboard displays ran 8,000 times during the week.
- In Washington, D.C., the Network for Victim Recovery of the District of Columbia (NVRDC) conducted four Twitter town halls aimed at youth and other populations unlikely to attend an in-person event. Conducted on Wednesdays in April, the town halls focused on elder abuse, homicide, gender-based violence, and hate crimes. NVRDC also held four Metro Action Days to reach populations in high-crime areas who have less access to the Internet as well as a Community "Know Your Rights" Safety Expo featuring ways of receiving help after being victimized.

Human Trafficking Public Service Announcement

On January 14, 2014, OVC, along with other DOJ components and partner federal agencies, held a Human Trafficking Survivor Forum and Listening Session to gain insights from a diverse group of 20 victims of human trafficking. In response to public feedback regarding the draft [Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States 2013–2017](#)

—indicating that the Federal Government needs to consult with survivors when designing and implementing human trafficking outreach, services, and programs—OVC solicited statements of interest from human trafficking survivors to convene a diverse group with regard to geography, gender, and experiences. The participants shared their perspectives on ways for federal agencies to engage survivor groups and incorporate their insights into improving federal anti-trafficking efforts.



The Survivor Forum made me realize that I shouldn't be hiding at all, but rather be out of my shell, helping other victims and, law enforcement and government officials in fighting to end human trafficking. I am not frightened anymore to share my own stories if it's going [to] make any difference or even inspire other people. I will definitely do my part. Together, we will be much stronger to fight any form of trafficking. Let us all continuously support this campaign.

— Rob Verzo, Survivor Forum participant

As part of the Survivor Forum and Listening Session, OVC released a 1-minute [Faces of Human Trafficking PSA](#) in 2014 to raise public awareness of this heinous crime. Featuring eight diverse survivors of human trafficking, including men and women of multiple ethnicities, the PSA demonstrates how anyone can be a victim of human trafficking and that victims come from very diverse backgrounds and experiences. The PSA can be viewed on OVC's [Web site](#) and [YouTube page](#), where it is available with Hindi, Spanish, Tagalog, and Thai subtitles.

"I'm so much more than what happened to me."

— From *Faces of Human Trafficking PSA*

OVC Web Site and Web Forums

A significant proportion of visitors to the OVC [Web site](#) are crime victims and victim service providers. The

site provides an [Online Directory of Crime Victim Services](#) to help visitors locate nonemergency crime victim services, provided by nonprofit programs and public agencies, as well as other maps and online tools designed to connect victims, service providers, and allied professionals with state and local resources. Additionally, the site provides robust information about OVC programs and projects, grant opportunities, and victims' rights and also connects visitors to OVC publications, videos, and related products. The OVC [Web Forum](#) serves as an established online community—where victim service professionals can exchange information and interact with guest hosts who are nationally recognized experts in a wide variety of fields. Forums are held monthly and often underscore national awareness months, with a focus on relevant topics. Moreover, 35 percent of the visits to OVC's Web site come from mobile devices.

OVC's Social Media Presence

Today's communication technologies offer new methods for accessing information nearly instantaneously and from countless locations. OVC continues to make concerted efforts to use technology to provide information about victim services. In January 2013, OVC launched its social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). Victims, victim service providers, and allied professionals use these sites daily to find information about victim services and how and where to access them. With the touch of a screen or flick of a finger, visitors to OVC's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages can access the most current information about OVC—from the launch of new products promoting victims' rights to victim-related news to programs conducted by allied partners. More users are engaging with OVC each month: OVC's Facebook page has received more than 3,000 'Likes'; its Twitter account has more than 1,000 followers; and during an average month, OVC's YouTube channel receives between 5,500 and 7,000 video views.

OVC worked with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to support National Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week in January 2014 to address the needs of victims of identity theft. Tax identity theft accounted for more than 43 percent of the FTC's identity theft complaints in 2012, nearly doubling from roughly 24 percent in 2011. OVC conducted outreach through Facebook and Twitter that was designed to raise awareness about tax identity theft and provide consumers with tips on how to protect themselves. OVC also contributed to an FTC blog that addressed the importance of appropriate support for victims of identity theft.