



## CHAPTER 3

# Victim Funding in Indian Country

Each year, OVC dedicates resources to programs and training that meet the unique needs of American Indian and Alaska Native victims. This support is administered through the Tribal Victim Assistance Program (TVA) and the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Partnerships for Indian Communities Grant Program, and includes expanding the network of reservation-based victim assistance programs, providing training, and developing resources that help victims understand tribal and federal criminal justice systems, their rights, and the services available to them.

Developing and enhancing victim services in Indian Country poses special challenges. Often, Indian Country communities are in remote areas where few or no services exist, are economically depressed, and are rooted in a traditional culture that views victimization and victim services in nontraditional ways. Programs must address these elements to be valuable and effective resources for the victims who live there.

### **Tribal Victim Assistance Program**

The Tribal Victim Assistance Program provides federally recognized tribes with funding to establish permanent, accessible, and responsive reservation-based victim assistance programs in areas where there are no services or only limited services for victims. The program encourages tribes to plan and implement programs that provide direct services to victims of child abuse, homicide, elder abuse, driving while intoxicated, and gang violence. Services include counseling, referrals, emergency funds, court accompaniment, and compensation assistance.

The latest *American Indians and Crime* report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, published in December 2004, reveals that American Indian and Alaska Native people are victims of crime more frequently than any other race in America. It is estimated that American Indians experience 1 violent crime for every 10 residents age 12 and older. American Indians age 12 and older are more than twice as likely to experience rape, sexual assault, and simple assault, and almost three times more likely to experience an aggravated assault compared with all races in America.

In FYs 2003 and 2004, TVA provided \$5.1 million in support to 25 tribes in 15 states, with an average annual award per tribe of approximately \$100,000. About \$850,000 of the overall award amount was designated for training and technical assistance. In FY 2003, OVC added \$500,000 in funding to support services to tribes that are not subject to federal criminal jurisdiction. Four programs were funded—two in Alaska and two in California.

### **Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Grant Program**

The Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Grant Program is rooted in the Children's Justice and Assistance Act of 1986, which was enacted to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse. Under the current VOCA allocation structure, 15 percent of the \$20 million allocated for this purpose each year is retained by OVC for use in Indian Country.

In FYs 2003 and 2004, 24 tribes in 15 states received CJA funding to help communities improve the investigation, prosecution, and overall handling of severe child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse. The grants—which in this reporting period totaled \$1.9 million in FY 2003 and \$1.5 million in FY 2004—are made directly to tribes and tribal nonprofit agencies to establish, expand, and train child protection teams and multidisciplinary teams; revise tribal

codes and procedures to address child sexual abuse; and develop protocols for reporting, investigating, and prosecuting child sexual abuse cases. Grant funding is also used to provide specialized training for prosecutors, judges, law enforcement personnel, criminal investigators, child protection and social service workers, mental health personnel, and other allied professionals who handle child sexual abuse cases; develop procedures for establishing and managing child-centered interview rooms; and establish special prosecution units. CJA is the only source of federal funding for Indian tribes that focuses on these issues. Nearly half of CJA funds were earmarked for training and technical assistance, including the Indian Nations Conference, development of an Indian Country Victim Assistance Academy, district-specific conferences, and other training efforts. OVC believes this training is important because it focuses on improving quality and enhancing capacity to serve American Indian victims.



### **Michigan**

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians has established a Multidisciplinary Team that consists of the U.S. Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Michigan Family Independence Agency, the State of Michigan, and Anishinaabek Family Services to evaluate and assess child abuse cases.

### **Minnesota**

The U.S. Attorney's Office is working with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians to strengthen victims' rights and services in northern Minnesota.

## Recognizing Traditional Culture

Like victims in other segments of society, victims in Indian Country frequently turn to spiritual leaders for support. American Indian and Alaska Native spiritual leaders and traditional healers are often experienced with issues arising from social problems—but not with the particular dynamics of victimization. Victim assistance programs, in contrast, possess the resources for responding to victims' needs, but may not be able to address the spiritual crisis brought on by a criminal act.

In FY 2004, OVC announced a new grant program that combines both resources while respecting cultural issues. The Faith-Based Counseling for Crime Victims in Indian Country Discretionary Grant Program encourages collaboration among victim service programs, traditional healers, and other faith-based clergy, as well as the use of traditional healing services as a resource for victims. It also recognizes that many American Indians and Alaska Natives looking for guidance choose traditional healing instead of, or in addition to, Western counseling services. Traditional healers are revered and respected members of tribes, and their services often benefit victims who seek their help. This type of support has been endorsed by tribal victim service providers, tribal government council members, victim assistance administrators, and victims, and it is viewed as an effective means for overcoming cultural barriers that prevent victims from seeking assistance.

Cultural sensitivity is also increasingly a part of the training and technical assistance offered for advocates and allied professionals. For example, OVC is supporting the development of an American Indian and Alaska Native Victim Assistance Academy to address issues that

have a special impact in Indian Country, as well as training that highlights key elements of traditional culture as they affect evidence-gathering in sexual assault cases. Both efforts will ultimately put victims more at ease as service providers demonstrate knowledge of the culture and awareness of victims' concerns.

## Programs Bridge Isolation

In addition to being separated from comprehensive and easily accessible victim services by culture, Indian Country communities are also separated by geography. The relative isolation of American Indian and Alaska Native populations has resulted in sporadic service availability, with some areas having no victim services at all. Remote locations also make communication difficult, and as a result, many American Indians and Alaska Natives are unaware of their rights as victims, the resources available to them, or even the status of their cases.

As a result of geographical isolation, initiatives that make services more accessible are especially valuable to Indian Country victims. The Forensic Telemedicine Equipment and Training Program, for example, helps Indian Health Service clinics and service units develop the ability to transmit photographs of injuries sustained by child victims to other medical facilities for review. As a result, victims can receive diagnoses and treatment recommendations they otherwise would not have access to. Other programs provide advocacy and court accompaniment to help Indian Country victims understand the justice process and keep them informed about developments that affect their cases—helping victims feel more confident they are being treated fairly and more willing to participate fully in the process.

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## Victim Assistance Academies Serve Indian Country

To better meet victims' needs in Indian Country, OVC has funded the development of an American Indian/Alaska Native Victim Assistance Academy (AI/ANVAA), a derivative of the popular National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA). Like NVAA, AI/ANVAA provides victim advocates and allied professionals with a foundation-level course in victims' issues and assistance strategies such as providing appropriate services, identifying when to refer victims to professional counselors, minimizing multiple interviews, preparing victims for court appearances, and helping victims complete compensation forms. But unlike NVAA, AI/ANVAA presents information within the context of American Indian and Alaska Native culture.

"The centrality of spirituality in tribal communities is integrated throughout the curriculum, says Jerry Gardner, Executive Director of the Tribal Law and Policy Institute, which developed and pilot tested the academy in 2004.

The AI/ANVAA places special emphasis on active participation in the learning process—a preferred way of learning among Native populations—and incorporates the unique cultural, legal, jurisdictional, and spiritual issues that arise in tribal communities. In the past, says Gardner, Native students who have attended NVAA and state academies have voiced concerns about isolation, lack of understanding of the needs of crime victims in tribal communities, lack of cultural sensitivity to Native issues, and a lack of discussion or understanding of the jurisdictional issues involved in Indian Country.

Jurisdiction—and the factors that determine it—are one of the central focuses of the academy. "Victims of crime are often confused by the jurisdictional maze presented by a combination of federal, state, and tribal laws, says Gardner. "Victim service providers must be able to help victims deal with representatives of these jurisdictions. Other academy topics include the multigenerational effects of victimization in Indian Country, improving advocates' ability to identify their own tribal and community history as it relates to victimization issues, and enhancing the ability to provide community-based, culturally appropriate support for victims.

Graduates of the academy take away not only a better understanding of the jurisdictional issues facing victims, but also the skills needed to work in a more collaborative manner with state and federal law enforcement and criminal justice personnel. As a result, they are better equipped to help victims access services. Non-Native providers, conversely, gain much-needed cultural knowledge.

Since the pilot test of the academy, students have expressed gratitude for the training opportunity. One evaluation, says Gardner, read, "This type of training is so needed in tribal communities that may still lack law enforcement or tribal court systems and victim advocacy.

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## Enhancing the Service Infrastructure

To bring the level of services available in Indian Country in line with that outside of Indian Country, OVC supports a number of training and technical assistance initiatives, particularly as they apply to family violence and child abuse. The cultural, economic, and geographic conditions present in Indian Country can make identifying and responding to these crimes especially problematic.

Training sessions typically focus on program planning and implementation, skill-building for victim advocates, program outreach and coordination,

mentoring support, compliance with victims' laws, development and dissemination of resource materials, and multidisciplinary strategies for investigating and prosecuting cases. Some training is site specific while other training is offered through regional and national conferences. In addition to strengthening the service infrastructure within Indian Country, frequent training opportunities—particularly through conferences—also provide opportunities for state, federal, and tribal officials to present models for maximizing resources, and a forum for victim service providers who work outside Indian Country to learn about cultural differences and the unique needs of Indian Country victims.



## CHAPTER 4

# Programs Offer Support for Victims of International Trafficking

The U.S. Department of State estimates that between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year for forced prostitution and labor. Whether trafficked into this country for forced prostitution or labor, victims are subjected to a wide range of human rights abuses. Traffickers lure victims—predominantly poor, unemployed, or underemployed women and children—with false promises of good jobs and better lives. They later exercise multiple forms of control to ensure that victims cannot seek help or escape their enslavement. Traffickers typically seize victims' legal documents; charge excessive fees for housing, food, and other basic needs; and force victims to work long hours with minimal or no pay and under brutal and inhuman conditions. Due to extreme social isolation, language barriers, and the fact that trafficking flourishes in markets that have a high demand for cheap, unskilled labor, victims are often below the radar screen and are virtually undetected in the communities in which they live and work. Victims and their families are also subject to threats by traffickers; physical, psychological, and sexual abuse; and starvation. Some examples of common enslavement situations include migrant farm work, sweat shop labor, domestic servitude, and forced begging.

OVC supports efforts by victim service providers to identify trafficking victims and help them rebuild their lives in the United States. This assistance is authorized by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (TVPRA) under an appropriation to the U.S. Department of Justice, and funded through OVC's Services for Trafficking Victims Discretionary Grant Program. Efforts funded under the auspices of this Act prevent trafficking overseas, protect victims and help them reestablish their lives, and prosecute traffickers under stiff federal penalties. Meanwhile, changes in TVPRA authorized additional monies to combat trafficking and renew the Federal Government's commitment to identifying and assisting victims. These changes also authorized victims to bring federal civil suits against traffickers for actual and punitive damages.

Under OVC's discretionary grant program, grantees help victims in the "precertification period," the period of time when victims have been removed by law enforcement or escaped from their abusive environments, but are not yet "certified" to receive other benefits through

HHS. TVPRA programs help grantees build a solid core of victim-centered services that provide assistance and advocacy for victims. Direct services available to victims include shelter/housing and sustenance; medical, dental, and mental health care; special services for child/juvenile victims; interpreter/translator services; criminal justice system-based victim advocacy; case management; legal services, including immigration advocacy and explanation of legal rights and protections; social services advocacy and explanation of benefit entitlements/availability; literacy education and/or job training; outreach services directed toward immigrant populations; and transportation.

Funding under this program also supports community collaboration building to improve efforts to identify and serve trafficking victims; training local law enforcement, social service providers, and the public on trafficking; and outreach to immigrant communities to engage their cooperation in identifying victims.

### **Community-Based Programs Meet the Immediate Needs of Victims**

The needs of trafficking victims are overwhelmingly complex and profound. To meet the acute needs of victims, communities must join forces to expand their network of services and build new sources of support. Once free from enslavement, victims have a plethora of needs—medical and dental care, counseling, housing, financial help, language interpreting services and ESL instruction, immigration and legal advocacy, and job skills—that must be addressed.

OVC recognizes these needs and funds comprehensive service programs that meet the health, social, and legal needs of victims with funding appropriated under TVPRA. These programs offer victims a safe environment where they can begin to regain their health and sense of self. In addition, these programs also prepare victims for independence by ensuring access to ESL classes and job training. TVPRA-funded programs rely on collaboration and networking between community agencies to accomplish these goals.

### **Outreach Efforts Train First Responders and Raise Awareness**

Although the welfare of trafficking victims is a priority, identifying victims is critical and remains a challenge. Victims are often afraid of law enforcement, and law enforcement officers often do not recognize trafficked persons as victims. Victims also face language and cultural barriers, threats against them or their families in their country of origin, social isolation, and intense scrutiny by their traffickers, which limit their ability to seek help independently.

OVC has taken a leadership role in supporting training and outreach efforts that raise awareness of trafficking and how first responders can better meet victims' needs. Since the first awards were presented in January 2003 and additional funding was made available in FYs 2003 and 2004, OVC has funded 21 grant projects to provide emergency and long-term services to trafficking victims and 1 project to provide technical assistance to OVC grantees who serve trafficking victims. From inception through December 2004, TVPRA-funded programs have served 557 trafficking victims and provided training and educational briefings to some 24,600 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers; attorneys; social service providers; advocates;



medical and mental health professionals; and community members. Training topics include the dynamics of trafficking, the legal definition of trafficking under TVPA, legal rights and services for victims, and cultural and linguistic considerations in serving victims.

OVC also played a key role in developing and administering a workshop on identifying and serving victims of human trafficking at the DOJ-sponsored "Human Trafficking Into the United States: Rescuing Women and Children" conference in July 2004, where President George W. Bush addressed more than 500 attendees. OVC's workshop offered guidance on how to build multidisciplinary teams to uncover and investigate trafficking, use proactive law enforcement strategies to rescue victims, prosecute traffickers, and incorporate existing protocols into trafficking response models.

The increased level of awareness of the issue and victims' needs enables law enforcement, victim service providers, and other allied professionals to respond quickly and appropriately when trafficking victims are identified. Enhanced inter-agency collaboration, both before and during an investigation, helps first responders create a coordinated timely response. This shortens the amount of time necessary to rescue trafficking victims, meet their immediate needs, provide them with needed services, and build a case against the traffickers.

## **Collaboration Addresses a Continuum of Needs**

Since February 2004, OVC has worked closely with HHS, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and several DOJ agencies, including the Civil Rights Division (Criminal Section), EOUSA, and the National Institute of Justice, to coordinate OVC's grant program as well

## **Connecticut**

Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons is charged with investigating allegations of trafficking and evaluating the state's progress in preventing trafficking, protecting and assisting victims, and prosecuting offenders.

## **Hawaii**

Governor signs law creating new penalties for offering, selling, or booking so-called "sex tours, which encourage travel for purposes of prostitution and contribute to the trafficking of persons.

## **Missouri**

Governor signs laws creating the crime of trafficking in stolen identities.

as a comprehensive response to human trafficking that includes instruction in how to treat victims appropriately. Collaborative activities have included preparing presentations about human trafficking for a national conference, administering a victim services coordination working group between HHS and DOJ, and supporting HHS in implementing its national public awareness campaign.

OVC is also collaborating with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to create new human trafficking task forces or to supplement existing trafficking victim service providers with additional funds in areas where a BJA-funded task force already exists. This collaborative effort seeks to engage state and local law enforcement and victim service agencies in developing task forces to investigate, identify, and rescue victims of human trafficking.

Emergency and transitional housing for trafficking victims is a critical need, especially for victims of sex trafficking. In May 2004, with OVC funding, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and

***The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking in Los Angeles opened the first-ever shelter dedicated to trafficking victims.***



Trafficking in Los Angeles opened the first-ever shelter dedicated to trafficking victims. Clients at the shelter have access to a computer lab, job training, a legal clinic, and ESL courses, as well as access to weekly meetings and workshops.

Through its grant program, OVC will continue to increase the public's awareness and understanding that human trafficking is slavery and a fundamental violation of human rights.

## Training and Technical Assistance Program Helps Grantees Get Started

When new types of victimization emerge, they require new methods of response—including new protocols, service models, documentation forms, and work relationships.

To help agencies in these areas, OVC has funded Safe Horizon, a nonprofit agency in New York City, to provide training and technical assistance for OVC grantees that serve trafficking victims. “Our job is to be the neutral party that knows what’s available and what works, and that can point grantees to the information they need, says Florrie Burke, Senior Director of the agency’s Anti-Trafficking and SOLACE Program for Survivors of Torture and Refugee Trauma.

The assistance offered through Safe Horizon takes many forms, including one-on-one telephone calls, referrals to other grantees or resources, monthly conference calls with multiple grantees, workshops and training sessions, site visits, mentoring programs, and case consultation. Specific needs vary according to the type of agency and program, but requests have covered safety planning, service delivery, capacity building, case management, advocacy, and working with the legal system.

“For example, a program may say, ‘We don’t know how to do an intake or assessment. So we’ll send them sample forms, says Burke. “If we can’t answer someone’s request, we will find people who can and put them in contact with each other. This type of approach is particularly helpful for new programs because it helps prevent them from “reinventing the wheel. Recently, Burke explained to a new grantee how his agency could adapt protocols developed by others instead of creating its own from scratch.

“He found that to be tremendously helpful, she says.

Of all the topics addressed by Safe Horizon, collaborating with law enforcement and other criminal justice officials has been of particular interest—most likely because of the integral role that law enforcement plays in trafficking cases. Burke encourages all grantee agencies that host training sessions to invite local and federal law enforcement officials.

“We make [training sessions] multidisciplinary because that’s how you have to work the case. Victims can’t get rights and benefits without law enforcement signoff, she says.

Safe Horizon is adapting to the already changing needs of the new field. It has developed a mentoring manual to match new and established grantees, and is creating protocols for responding to the media and working with prosecutors when they request that victims’ families be brought to the United States for support.



## CHAPTER 5

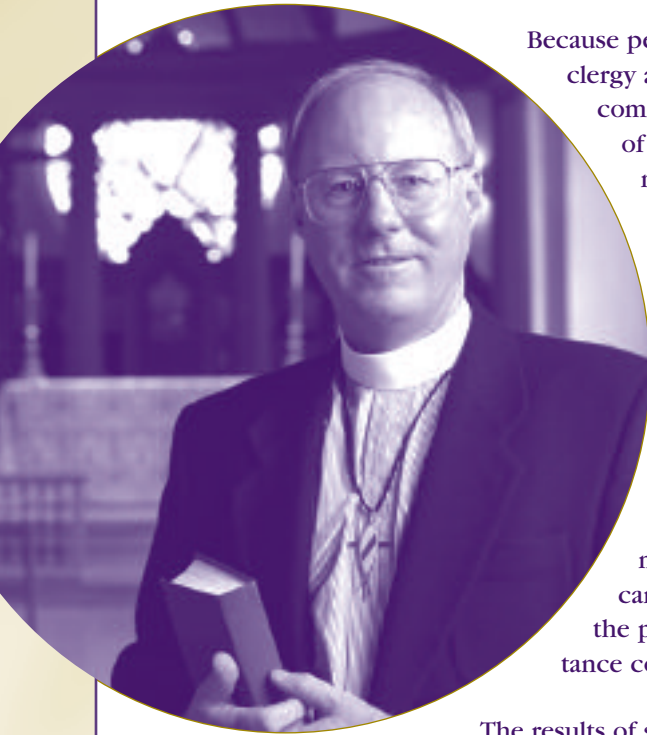
# Collaboration With the Faith Community Expands Victim Services

OVC has a long history of helping the faith community respond to the needs of crime victims. Since 1982, when President Ronald W. Reagan's Task Force on Victims of Crime first identified the religious community as a vital and largely untapped source of support for victims, OVC has supported projects that bring together the faith-based and victim assistance communities. In the late 1980s, OVC funded training on the needs of crime victims for parish clergy and hospital chaplains in high-crime areas. In the late 1990s, it funded outreach and educational efforts between the Denver Seminary and the victim services community. Post-September 11, OVC funded the Law Enforcement Chaplaincy in Sacramento, California, to provide crisis counseling for victims and family members affected by the attacks. In 2002, OVC began its Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) Grant Program, making outreach funds available to faith-based victim organizations and coalitions that lack access to other funding streams.

Throughout the FY 2003–2004 reporting period, OVC continued to support the faith community by providing funding and administrative support for initiatives that enhance victim outreach, training and education for faith leaders, response protocols, and partnerships between faith-based service providers and law enforcement. Twenty-eight programs in 21 states received OVC assistance, and 32 more programs received funding through the HOPE grant program.

Many of the programs were funded through OVC's new Faith-Based or Community Organizations and Victim Services Discretionary Mini-Grant Program, which significantly expanded OVC's capacity to engage the faith community. Launched in FY 2004, the program awards grants to community and faith-based organizations located in Weed and Seed communities and other areas with high rates of violent crime. These funds are used to improve outreach efforts and existing victim assistance programs, and to promote coalition building between the faith and victim assistance communities.

## Faith-Based Resources Add Value to the Victim Service Field



Because people frequently turn to clergy and religious leaders for comfort and guidance in times of crisis—such as the aftermath of victimization—the faith and victim assistance communities are natural partners. OVC's support of this partnership helps bridge the gap between where people may seek support or confide in someone that they have been victimized (the faith community), and where they can receive help to address the problem (the victim assistance community).

The results of such a partnership can significantly improve the experience of victims who turn to religious leaders for assistance. For example, a clergyperson who is knowledgeable about victim resources is better able to make appropriate, informed referrals. As a result, immigrant, non-English-speaking, and other underserved victims are more likely to find the information and assistance they need.

### OVC-Funded Initiatives Emphasize Training and Outreach for Faith Community

Awareness of victim issues and resources is essential in building relationships between faith communities and victim assistance providers. Although most clergy and religious leaders are skilled

counselors, not all of them are fully aware of the different types of victimization or the impact that victimization can have on a person's life.

OVC is addressing this by supporting a number of initiatives that educate and train clergy in victim issues, responses to victims, and assistance resources. OVC recently awarded funds to the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin to support a day-long training session for Milwaukee faith-based organizations on victim service delivery practices, victim compensation, and intervention and advocacy resources. In Virginia, Citizens Against Sexual Assault of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County is training faith leaders on how to respond to sexual abuse. These efforts increase the likelihood that clergy will be able to identify victims and refer them to appropriate resources.

The Clergy Against Senior Exploitation Partnership—for which OVC provides administrative support—has shown that this type of collaboration works. An FY 2004 evaluation of the Denver, Colorado-based program found that clergy and religious leaders who participated in the program's training on elder financial abuse significantly improved their understanding of the issues involved and the appropriate intervention strategies. Before the training, only 7 percent of local clergy and other leaders were aware of the elder fraud problem; after the training, 70 percent reported being well-informed.

Other initiatives are focusing on raising awareness of victims' issues and resources among faith congregations and the larger faith community membership, particularly in immigrant and non-English speaking communities. More than 15 programs feature public outreach activities coordinated through partnerships

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with faith-based organizations. These projects include educational videotapes directed toward battered immigrant women, translation of brochures and booklets into other languages, presentations, Web sites, and public service announcements.

## **Programs Increase Access to Services**

With support from OVC, faith-based organizations have also expanded the number of services available to victims and the number of ways to access them. Some organizations, such as the Alpha and Omega Metaphysical Church of Faith in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, are partnering with victim assistance providers to establish assistance and information centers within area churches, mosques, and temples, or to develop service directories and referral networks.

Efforts such as these are extremely valuable not only because they increase the

## **Illinois**

Governor creates a task force to protect children from the effects of violent and sexually explicit video games. The task force will collect information about the impact of violent and sexually explicit video games on children, inform the governor of parents' concerns, and make recommendations about how to educate the public about this issue. The task force consists of parents, clergy, community leaders, teachers, child advocates, and medical experts.

scope and reach of services available, but also because they provide additional points of entry into the victim assistance network. Victims who are reluctant to seek help directly from a provider—for example, a domestic violence victim who fears going to the police or to a shelter, or who simply doesn't know how to address her problem—may instead find information and referrals in the familiar and trusted environment of her faith community.

## Grant Program Lends HOPE to Domestic Violence Victims

Little things mean a lot. This sentiment—which lay at the heart of the Helping Outreach Programs to Expand Grant Program—could not be more true than at the Time To Fly Foundation, a faith-based organization dedicated to helping women and children overcome the effects of domestic violence.

The Washington, D.C.-area group offers a three-step program that teaches women in abusive environments about healthy relationships, communication, and boundaries, as well as day-to-day survival skills, such as financial planning and nutrition. The program also teaches similar principles to children, who often accompany their mothers to the instructional sessions.

“We give women practical tools for getting their lives back on track, whether they [are victims of] physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse,” says founder and President Michele R. Jones. “And while the moms are learning at their level, children are learning similar principles at their level so everyone can go home and address the issues together.”

Since Time To Fly was established in 2001, it has relied primarily on referrals from shelters, area churches, women’s centers, area police departments, and past participants to build awareness of its services. This began to evolve in late 2003 and early 2004.

Using an OVC HOPE grant of \$5,000, Time To Fly significantly increased the number of women and children it was able to serve, the level of training for its volunteers, and the number of resources used for outreach activities. The grant’s impact was especially important because the organization relies on volunteers to staff its programs.

“We know the demand [for our program] is out there, but the big thing is having the resources to provide the education and training. This helped us solidify the infrastructure,” says Jones.

In addition to strengthening the program internally, the growing number of participants also means that word-of-mouth exposure will increase. “Volunteers are your best promoters,” says Jones. “They know what worked for them, and they share it with someone else.”

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## CHAPTER 6

# Victim Assistance Strategies Meet the New Needs of Terrorism Victims

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks had a profound effect on the victim service community—one that forced providers to look at terrorism, and their responses to it, in new ways. The unprecedented level of victim need overwhelmed established emergency response plans and protocols. State compensation programs struggled to determine who was eligible for payments and to process claims, and few service providers felt adequately prepared to deal with the number of people afflicted by grief and posttraumatic stress disorder.

In FYs 2003 and 2004, OVC supported a number of initiatives to better organize local, state, and national victim resources, and to establish protocols for responding to possible attacks in the future. This “be prepared” approach emphasizes collaborative strategies that improve the capacity of first responders and service providers to assist victims efficiently and effectively.

### **Meeting Identifies Promising Practices, Recommends Improvements**

The September 11 attacks pushed victim services to previously unseen limits. In addition to exposing logistical weaknesses in emergency response plans, they revealed a tremendous need for resources that address the massive emotional and psychological trauma caused by terrorism or mass violence.

In December 2003, OVC began documenting the frontline experiences of states and nonprofit organizations that received emergency funding to address the immediate and long-term needs of September 11 victims. The group of state VOCA administrators began by identifying specific practices that were helpful to victims and that could be easily incorporated into response protocols at the local, state, and federal levels—for example, professional and volunteer alliances, hotlines, helplines, family assistance centers, mental health counseling, support groups, and community healing rituals. The group then continued by highlighting problems and shortcomings in the existing system and recommending improvements.

## New Strategies for Assisting Victims

The information gathered from September 11 grantees has influenced a number of OVC initiatives that provide victims with information and services immediately following a terrorist incident. Most efforts have focused on making different types of services available in one place,

such as through a database or a family assistance center established near the scene of an incident. This service strategy significantly improves the victim experience by allowing them to address multiple needs at one time, in an environment where everyone is affected by the same tragedy.

OVC has also established a database that would store the names and contact information of victims of terrorism abroad who may be eligible for assistance through the agency's

International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP). OVC is also pursuing the development of case management software that would more efficiently notify victims of their eligibility for benefits and expedite the processing of claims.

## Preparation and Coordination Are Keys to Faster, More Effective Mobilization

Because the emotional and psychological effects of September 11 were so far reaching, OVC has continued its efforts to develop subject-specific training for victim assistance providers and other allied professionals to whom victims look for comfort and guidance following a tragedy (e.g., clergy, mental health providers, and other faith-based counselors). It is anticipated that the comprehensive course developed in collaboration with HHS will improve these professionals' ability to help victims cope with their losses, as well as the professionals' ability to cope with the demands of their work in such extreme situations.

Other OVC activities have addressed gaps in the overall response structure; for example, OVC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are in the process of formalizing their respective roles in a memorandum of understanding, and OVC has provided language for the National Response Plan describing the type of assistance it offers to victims in the wake of emergencies, disasters, terrorism, or mass violence. OVC has also refined its own internal



## Remembering Pan Am 73

On September 5, 1986, Zaid Safarini, of Jordan, and three other men dressed as armed airport security guards boarded Pan Am Flight 73 during a stop in Karachi, Pakistan. Once onboard, they used their automatic weapons to take control of the aircraft. The ensuing 16-hour siege left 21 people dead, including 2 American citizens, and scores of injuries. Many of the surviving passengers and families of those killed were able to watch a federal court judge sentence Safarini to 160 years in U.S. prison on May 13, 2004.

protocol for responding to terrorism and mass casualty crimes. The new procedures clarify the steps to be taken by OVC management and staff upon notice of a criminal disaster or terrorist attack, including coordination responsibilities with other federal agencies, states, and emergency relief organizations.

## **Assisting Victims of Terrorism Outside the United States**

In addition to the efforts made to address domestic terrorism, OVC continued throughout FYs 2003 and 2004 to support services for U.S. citizens who become victims of terrorism outside the United States. This support, which is authorized by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-386), allows OVC to reimburse and provide emergency financial assistance to victims for expenses associated with their victimization, and to assist victims with other needs such as travel and transportation, crisis counseling, and advocacy support.

Because OVC believes strongly in a victim's right to participate in the trial of his or her attacker—and the restorative power of that action—at the request of the U.S. Attorney, OVC helped pay the travel expenses of more than 60 victims and families who attended the Washington, D.C., sentencing of the lead hijacker, Zaid Safarini, in the 1986 hijacking of Pan Am Flight 73. This marked the first time that the victims, their families, and next of kin had the opportunity to participate in a U.S. trial of one of the men responsible for this crime; and it was also important for victims to feel a sense of justice.

OVC is also overseeing the development of new print resources to help victims navigate compensation and assistance programs in other countries. A new edition of the *International Crime Victim Compensation Program Directory*, jointly compiled in FY 2004 by OVC and the U.S. Department of State, will give victim advocates a guide for advising victims if the country where they were victimized offers a program that may reimburse them for their losses.

***OVC continued throughout FYs 2003 and 2004 to support services for U.S. citizens who become victims of terrorism outside the United States.***



## Centralized Case Management Helps Victims Find Their Way

One of the most comforting things in the middle of tragedy is knowing where to turn for support and guidance. For victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks, one of those places was the PA Sept 11 Victim Assistance Program.

The centralized case management system used by the program—which is supported by OVC funds and administered by the Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA) for Bucks County, Pennsylvania—has emerged as a promising practice for dealing with large-scale victimization.

Lori Sywenski, Victim Services Manager at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, says the system assigns a dedicated case manager to each victim family, and that case manager becomes the family's first point of contact throughout the assistance process. The management services included an initial home visit with the family to organize essential documents like birth and death certificates, insurance policies, and other legal papers, posttraumatic stress disorder assessments, referrals to counselors or other outside help, assistance completing paperwork and navigating the federal compensation process, and accompaniment to case-related events such as unemployment hearings.

“A lot of unemployment or disability hearings in New York State were held in Harlem, and people were having a hard time getting public transportation to the hearing site because they weren't familiar with New York City, she says. “Our managers would accompany them and help them find their way and provide emotional support throughout the process.

One of the biggest advantages of centralized case management is that it avoids what Sywenski calls “service splintering. In instances such as September 11, when many agencies offer services to many victims, it's easy for victims to become disoriented among the varying programs and acronyms, and not be aware of a critical service or benefit. As a result, victims have difficulty choosing which agency can help them, and some victims give up on finding help at all.

By contrast, the PA Sept 11 Program allowed victims to contact their case manager for help that fit their needs. “We knew where to refer them, and there was no guessing whether or not they were being served, she says. “People started to trust the program. What we found was that after a year or two, people stopped opening mail from agencies they didn't recognize unless the September 11 agency gave those groups its approval.

The project continues to be a vital source of support for victims of the tragedy. Many victims now have children becoming eligible for tuition assistance and the case management assistance related to those benefits.