



Training, Education, and Outreach

- Training and Technical Assistance
- Public Awareness
- Information Resources



OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center seeks to bridge the gap between knowledge, experience, and the practice of victim assistance to help the field meet the growing challenges of a complex service delivery network.

Toward this end, OVC developed a comprehensive training strategy in FY 2006 to set forth goals and objectives, identify resources, and define target audiences as well as strategic partners.

During the biennium, OVC TTAC continued to broaden and enrich training opportunities for victim service providers.



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

As service providers strive to meet the needs of a greater number of victims affected by an ever-increasing variety of crimes, access to a broad range of training, technical assistance, and relevant resources is in high demand. OVC is the leading federal resource for victim-related information. Service providers, allied professionals, and advocates rely on the agency's Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) for state-of-the-art training, technical assistance, and information about new developments, trends, and best practices.

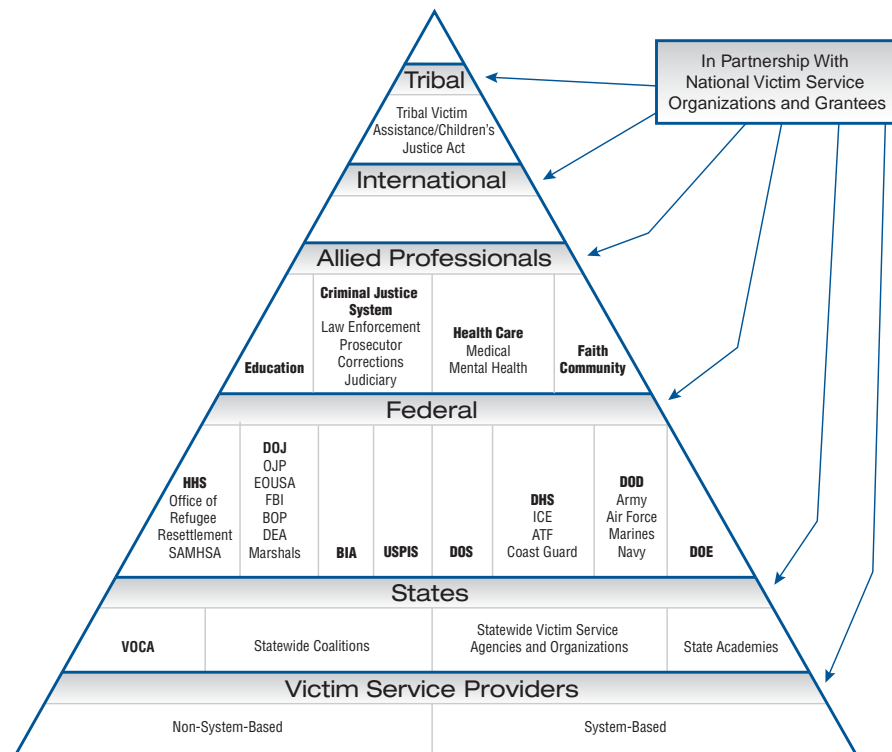
OVC Develops New Training Strategy

To help meet the growing, diverse needs of the victim service community and allied professionals, OVC developed a comprehensive training strategy in FY 2006 to set forth training goals and objectives, identify resources and points of access, and define target audiences as well as strategic partners (see figure 11). OVC's new training strategy incorporates five major objectives. OVC strives to ensure that the following goals are sustained in each and every training and technical assistance that is developed and disseminated. Each must—

- Support the enforcement of victims' rights.
- Improve the quality of service delivery to crime victims.
- Integrate crime victims' issues into all levels of the Nation's educational system, starting with institutions of higher education and including membership organizations.
- Replicate promising practices in victims' rights and services.
- Reflect victims' voices.

OVC TTAC Builds Service Capacity

The Training and Technical Assistance Center was created in 1998 as a centralized point of contact for service providers, agencies, and others seeking to access OVC's training and technical resources. Since its inception, OVC TTAC's core functions have

FIGURE 11. OVC Training and TA Constituents

Training Mission Statement: OVC is committed to providing comprehensive and quality training and technical assistance to victim service providers and allied professionals to improve the delivery of services and enforcement of rights for crime victims and to maximize limited training and technical assistance resources through collaboration and the creation of partnerships at the international, tribal, federal, state, and local levels.

included needs assessment, capacity building, and evaluation—always working with the ultimate goal of improving the quality and availability of services for crime victims.

Curricula Tailored to Provider Needs

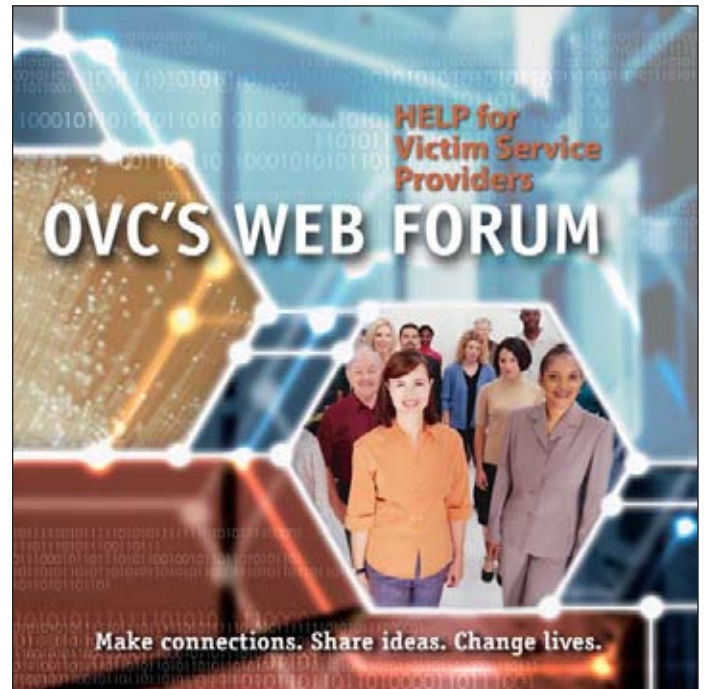
The organic nature of its activities makes OVC TTAC uniquely responsive to the victim services field. As new types of victimization emerge, OVC funds services to address them. After evaluating information gaps and implementation issues, OVC TTAC develops relevant training curricula, such as the Victim Assistance Training Online (VATOnline) course and the revised National Victim Assistance Academy (see page

70). These training programs are subsequently administered to additional providers, whose comments and suggestions help to further refine content, format, and presentation. OVC TTAC uses this looping cycle to continually improve educational programs in all service and administrative areas, so that training is tightly fitted to the needs of recipients. A wide range of print, Web, and electronic media products support this outreach.

In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC TTAC launched new training programs on—

- Needs assessment and evaluation.
- Basics of strategic planning (including a strategic planning toolkit).
- Capacity-building fundamentals for tribal victim service providers.
- Mental health response to mass violence and terrorism.
- Provision of culturally competent services to victims of crime.

To maximize its effectiveness, OVC TTAC works with a network of more than 400 highly qualified consultants, mentors, and practicing professionals to develop and administer training and technical assistance. These experts may be called on to present training programs, identify speakers for conferences and workshops, and participate in OVC's Web Forum as guest hosts (for more about the Web Forum, see page 84). This network enables OVC to respond efficiently to requests for assistance on emerging problems. For instance, OVC TTAC recently presented a workshop on domestic violence at a U.S. military base after increased incidents of domestic violence surfaced as service members returned from the war zone. OVC TTAC also received numerous technical assistance requests concerning stalking, a crime that may be just one of multiple forms of victimization employed by a perpetrator and which sometimes escalates to violence.



Support That Enriches Training Opportunities

OVC TTAC helps victim-serving agencies develop and present their own programs. Other groups benefit through OVC's State Conference Support Program and the National Conference Support Program, both launched in FY 2005. These programs support public or private nonprofit organizations and other eligible organizations that host conferences on victims' issues by paying for expenses related to speakers and trainers, meeting space, and conference materials. Each program also allows the sponsoring agencies to use a portion of the funds for scholarships that enable victims, allied professionals, and service providers to attend. In FYs 2005–2006, OVC TTAC supported eight state conferences and seven national conferences, including the National Organization for Victim Assistance's Annual North American Victim Assistance Conference, the National Center for Victims of Crime's First National Conference, and the World Society of Victimology's 12th International Symposium on Victimology.

Preparing Future Leaders

In 1995, OVC launched the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA), a vigorous 40-hour, foundation-level training program blending academicians and practitioners in a university-based course on victims' issues and needs across all types of victimization. In addition to providing high-quality intensive education and training to victim service providers using a theory-to-practice model, the program aspires to create a training model that can be adapted and integrated into institutions of higher learning and other venues.

A formal evaluation of NVAA was completed in 2003. The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the Academy model and its impact on students, institutions of higher learning, and the victim services field. The findings were generally positive; however, respondents concluded that the NVAA structure did not meet the diverse needs of all participants for advanced, skill-based training. Based on this feedback, OVC began a comprehensive redesign of the curriculum based on a nationwide needs assessment to improve training materials to better meet participants' needs. In FY 2006, 30 advocates and service providers from three select states participated in a pilot test of the revised curriculum and provided additional feedback. The new NVAA is expected to be launched in 2007 and will include distinct tracks tailored to the level of each attendee's expertise:

- **Foundation-level training** will provide a broad understanding of the victim services field and lay the groundwork on which to build a career.
- **Specialized training** will focus on specific, timely topics that have a direct impact on providers' work.
- **Management training** will help participants develop the skills they need to move from a provider role into a managerial role.

Concurrent with the redesign of NVAA, OVC continues to expand the State Victim Assistance Academy (SVAA) program, with the goal of having an SVAA in every state by 2010. Although modeled after NVAA, each SVAA tailors its content to reflect the specific needs and laws of its state (see sidebar: State Victim Assistance Academies Tailored to Individual States). By the end of FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC had funded SVAA in 25 states, including new academies in Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Washington, and Puerto Rico. Technical assistance for establishing SVAA is provided through OVC TTAC. OVC hosts cluster meetings of SVAA representatives annually.

State Victim Assistance Academy Helps Advocates Gain Certification

OVC's SVAA program offers a weeklong, intensive foundation course in victimology and victims' rights and services. Operated through partnerships with academic institutions, SVAA is designed to meet the entry-level training needs of a broad range of victim service providers and allied professionals and to reflect the priorities of individual states.

Thanks to the SVAA program, two victim advocates at My Sisters' Place, an Oregon domestic violence shelter, are now certified as intermediate victim service specialists. Zaidali Botello and Karen Shores earned this credential through the Crime Victims' Assistance Network, an organization composed of service providers and allied professionals, which promotes victim services and advocates for the rights of crime victims in Oregon.

For Botello and Shores, the SVAA experience increased their expertise and, thus, their value to the community. They received specific training in child and elder abuse, crisis and trauma, cross-cultural communications, sexual assault, and stalking. "The 40-hour training was beneficial in several ways," said Shores. "It helped me feel more educated on some issues that are not always brought up at [other] trainings. I'd been working for several years when I went, and I still came away with a wealth of knowledge. Becoming certified also made me feel as though I am recognized for the work I do."

“OVC TTAC has paved the way for Ohio to address the needs for more direct services to underserved victim populations On behalf of [the Lifting Victims project], we thank you.”

—Program Coordinator,
Ohio Department of
Rehabilitation and Correction

Training Strategies Reach Underserved Audiences

Expanding the number and scope of training opportunities is a key part of improving services. So, too, is expanding the number of providers who can attend them. OVC uses a number of tools to reach underserved audiences, who, for economic and logistical reasons, find it difficult to participate in training events. This is of special importance because these providers may work in areas of great need, although with underdeveloped services.

Scholarship Program Aids Victim Service Providers and Victims

OVC TTAC administers two scholarship programs: the Professional Development Scholarship Program and the State Crime Victim/Survivor Scholarship Program. The first awards up to \$1,000 to individuals or up to \$5,000 to multidisciplinary provider teams to continue their education. More than 400 people attended training events as a result of the Professional Development Scholarship Program in FYs 2005 and 2006.

The State Crime Victim/Survivor Scholarship Program offers a similar benefit to eligible crime victims and survivors. Funds are awarded to organizers of state conferences who, in turn, offer scholarships that reimburse some or all expenses associated with attendees’ registration fees, transportation, lodging, meals, and other incidental

State Victim Assistance Academies Tailored to Individual States

SVAAAs have developed innovative training programs to meet the specific needs of their communities and to sustain the academy once federal funding has ended:

- The Idaho Victim Assistance Academy offers both advanced and basic academies in alternate years.
- Maine and New Hampshire convened the only dual-state academy in conjunction with the University of Southern Maine. As a result of the university’s involvement with the academy initiative, it will offer the academy as an undergraduate course in 2008.
- A first for SVAAAs, Puerto Rico had its curriculum delivered in Spanish.
- Virginia collaborates with both the private University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University, a state-supported university, which makes it one of a few states with more than one academic partner working collaboratively on the SVAA effort.
- In FY 2006, Maryland approved an SVAA as a state budget line item and established an SVAA alumni association.

expenses. The opportunity to learn more about the field can help committed victims become better equipped to return to their communities as powerful advocates for the rights of other crime victims. In FYs 2005–2006, OVC TTAC awarded 416 Professional Development Scholarships and 228 State Crime Victim/Survivor Scholarships.

Training To Meet Specific Needs in Indian Country

OVC training programs that serve American Indians and Alaska Natives are supported by two funding streams dedicated to victim services in those regions: the Tribal Victim Assistance (TVA) Discretionary Grant Program and the Children’s Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities (CJA) Discretionary Grant Program. As outlined in chapter 6, CJA funds help tribes develop, establish, and operate mechanisms that improve their investigation, prosecution, and handling of child abuse cases (particularly sexual abuse). Training and technical assistance efforts focus specifically on building multidisciplinary responses to crime and result in—

- Better understanding and cooperation among those individuals who work with tribal children but are not of American Indian or Alaska Native descent themselves, especially regarding the role and importance of tribal child advocates in cases adjudicated in the state and federal court systems.
- An increase in collaborative investigations of child sexual abuse cases among tribal, federal, and state agencies.
- Tribe-specific, culturally appropriate training events.
- Specialized training for law enforcement officers and allied professionals who handle child sexual abuse cases.
- Enhanced awareness and support for efforts to address child victimization.
- Increased commitment to the protection and healing of traumatized children.

TVA funds are used for developing culturally appropriate training curricula; facilitating mentoring, communication, and information sharing among TVA programs;

“I want to thank OVC for the scholarship to attend ‘Providing Culturally Competent Services to Victims of Crime’ . . . I can’t wait to implement changes in our Victims Assistance Program, based on this helpful information.”

—Victim Services Coordinator,
Glendale Police Department



and otherwise improving the quality of services for victims in remote tribal communities. A number of advancements were made in FYs 2005 and 2006, including the first National VOCA-Tribal Victim Assistance and Compensation Conference (see page 43) and the publication of a bimonthly electronic newsletter *E-Opportunities*. The newsletter is published by Unified Solutions Coaching & Consulting Group, Inc. (see page 43). A valuable tool for expanding training opportunities in Indian Country, *E-Opportunities* features funding, training, and research opportunities available to American Indian and Alaska Native populations and is distributed to 41 individuals and organizations, including the TVA community and other vested persons.

District-Specific Training in Indian Country

In FYs 2005 and 2006, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA), with OVC support, sponsored more than 10 district-specific training conferences in Indian Country. The conferences brought together federal, state, and local law enforcement and victim assistance providers who work in Indian Country to focus on issues pertinent to the tribes in the region. Subjects that were addressed in these conferences included family violence and child exploitation, methamphetamine and drug-endangered children, sexual assault and stalking, Internet crimes, identity theft, and human trafficking.

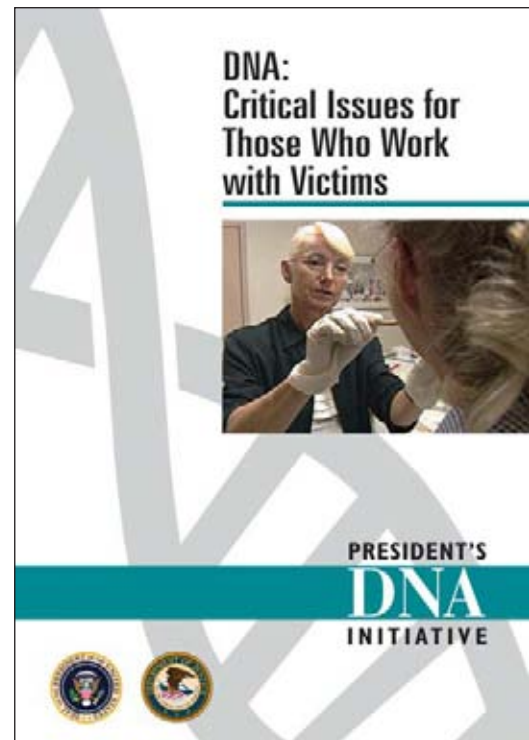


DNA Training Initiatives Educate Victim Services Field

DNA evidence has evolved into a valuable tool for crime victims, law enforcement, and others seeking truth and justice. In criminal cases, DNA technology links offenders to violent crimes, provides evidence in previously closed or unsolved cases, and exonerates innocent convicted offenders. Because of DNA's significance in solving crimes, service providers need to be knowledgeable about how DNA affects victims' cases. Thus, OVC has produced the DVD *DNA: Critical Issues for Those Who Work With Victims* to raise awareness of DNA matters among victim advocates, criminal justice practitioners, and others who work with crime victims. The DVD highlights such issues as collection and preservation of evidence, what victims can expect as a case moves forward, victim participation in the justice process, and cold case investigations.

The DVD was produced under the auspices of the President's DNA Initiative, which provides funding, training, and assistance to ensure that forensic DNA reaches its full potential for solving crimes, protecting the innocent, and identifying missing persons. OVC premiered the DVD in conjunction with National Crime Victims' Rights Week in 2007.

OVC also provided funding for the Sexual Assault Resource Service to develop and pilot test a curriculum for law enforcement and other first responders about collecting and using DNA evidence in sexual assault cases. The curriculum, to be released in late 2007 or early 2008, has been extensively tested in dozens of communities around the country, training primarily law enforcement officers but also sexual assault nurse examiners and victim advocates.





OVC's public awareness and outreach programs raise public consciousness about issues affecting crime victims while informing victims of their rights and the services and resources that are available to assist them. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC's message of hope, healing, and justice reached millions throughout the Nation through agency-supported events, partnerships, and innovative local initiatives.



As the primary voice for crime victims at the federal level, OVC supports a broad range of programs to raise public awareness of and promote victims' issues. This leadership—via funding, resource development, and active partnerships—focuses attention on emerging areas of victimization, such as identity theft and elder fraud, and underscores the ongoing need for assistance to victims of child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and other prevalent crimes.

The effects of these activities are seen most clearly at the grassroots level. Public awareness campaigns, service referrals, and collaborative programs represent outreach in action, resulting in more victims seeking assistance, better informed service providers, and greater public awareness of the needs and rights of crime victims.

In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC supported a number of initiatives. All emphasize the importance of victims' rights, support efforts to make services more accessible, and lend crime victims the assistance necessary to rebuild their shattered lives.

Nation Pays Tribute to Victims and Advocates

Each April, the Nation recognizes National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVWRW), which honors victims, survivors, allied practitioners, and dedicated service providers. It is also an important opportunity for the victim services field to reflect on its progress, recommit to its mission, and promote greater awareness of victims' issues throughout the Nation.

As a prelude to NCVWRW, OVC hosts a national candlelight observance and an awards ceremony to pay tribute to crime victims and those who serve them. Held in the Nation's capital, both events provide a national platform for victims to share their inspirational stories of triumph over tragedy. In 2005 and 2006, OVC was honored to host guest speakers who have become powerful advocates. In 2005, Trisha Meili, author of *I Am the Central Park Jogger: A Story of Hope and Possibility*, shared her journey of survival and healing and, in 2006, Sharon Rocha, mother of murder victims Laci Peterson and unborn grandson Conner, spoke movingly about her tragic experience as a survivor of homicide victims and her efforts to gain passage of fetal homicide legislation (see sidebar: Empowered Advocates Inspire Others).

"I am humbled when I see people who have suffered so much able to stand up and take action. It makes me even more determined to do whatever I can, too. When people like Mark (Lunsford) dedicate themselves to preventing other families from experiencing the pain his family has experienced, it would be shameful for the Department of Justice not to be truly dedicated to the same goal. We are dedicated to this cause."

—Attorney General
Alberto Gonzales, speaking
at the NCVRW 2007
Awards Ceremony

Because compassionate, highly skilled service providers and allied practitioners play a vital role in sustaining the Nation's victim assistance programs, each year OVC conducts an extensive process to identify individuals and organizations that demonstrate outstanding service to victims. At the NCVRW Awards Ceremony, the Attorney General honors individuals and programs for their visionary work. During the NCVRW 2005 Awards Ceremony, OVC announced a new award category, the Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award, to honor an individual whose work on behalf of victims has led to significant changes in public policy and practice. In 2006, the first award was given to Jeffrey R. Dion for his grass-roots advocacy efforts that resulted in the enactment of 13 bills into law in Virginia on behalf of crime victims. (For more information about NCVRW and the awards, visit www.ovc.gov.)

First observed more than 25 years ago, when President Ronald Reagan called for a national event to honor victims of crime, today NCVRW is observed in cities and towns across the Nation. To help local communities coordinate events tailored to their

Empowered Advocates Inspire Others

Trisha Meili

Known to the world for years only as the Central Park Jogger, Trisha Meili revealed in 2003 that she was the person who was savagely beaten and raped in New York City's Central Park in April 1989.

Hospitalized with injuries that included loss of 75 percent of her blood, she seemed unlikely to survive. Against all odds, Trisha emerged from a 12-day coma to begin a long journey toward healing. In her memoir, *I Am the Central Park Jogger: A Story of Hope and Possibility*, she recounts the outpouring of kindness from the public, family, friends, and others as she relearned how to do simple tasks such as getting dressed.

Trisha revealed her identity so she could speak publicly about her experience and encourage others, as she did during NCVRW in 2005. She continues to volunteer at universities, sexual assault centers, and hospitals and to speak about her personal story of survival in the aftermath of a vicious crime.

Sharon Rocha

After her daughter, Laci, and unborn grandson, Conner, were murdered in 2002, Sharon Rocha became an outspoken advocate for victims. Channeling her heartache into a mission to help others, Sharon lobbied for the passage of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. The legislation, which makes it a crime to harm a fetus during an assault, was signed into law by President Bush in 2004 and is known as Laci and Conner's Law. Sharon shared her story in *For Laci: A Mother's Story of Love, Loss, and Justice*.

A tireless advocate, Sharon collaborates with the Stanislaus County (California) District Attorney's Office to develop state laws that give crime victims and their families better access to the court process.

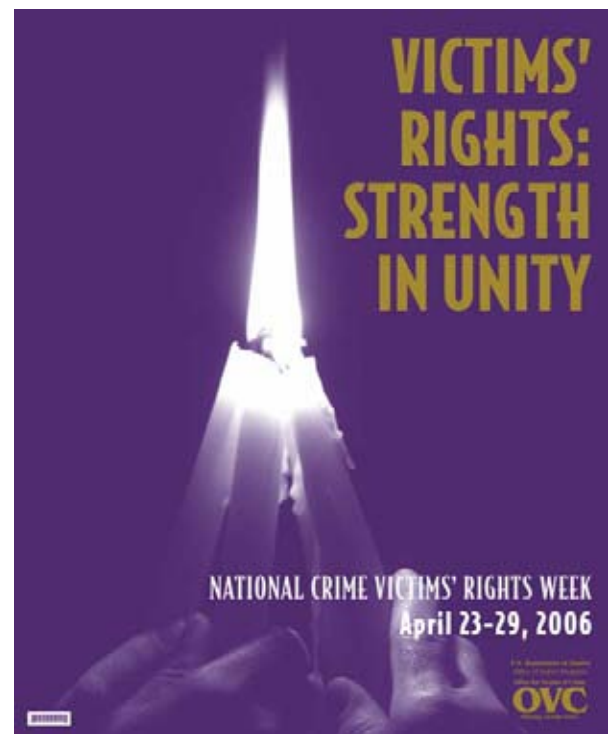
own needs, OVC produces an annual resource guide with a variety of tools to promote victim awareness, including a brief DVD to introduce the current year's theme. The guide includes suggestions for involving the media, tips for strengthening organizational efforts to support victims, and strategies for maximizing community awareness of victims' rights and issues.

To further encourage communities to participate in NCVRW, OVC supports the NCVRW Community Awareness Projects initiative, providing up to \$5,000 for public awareness events and activities at the local level. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC selected more than 60 applicants in virtually every state to receive financial support for their high-profile, low-cost projects (see sidebar: Local Communities Observe NCVRW).

Millions of Americans learned about NCVRW in 2006 through a unique partnership between OVC and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), a component of the U.S. Postal Service. Posters highlighting the theme, "Victims' Rights: Strength in Unity," were displayed in more than 11,000 post offices serving an estimated 7 million customers daily. Post offices also distributed cards that listed the toll free numbers of national victims' rights organizations and other criminal and juvenile justice resources.

OVC Launches National Education Campaign

As part of its national strategy to expand awareness of victims' issues and the role of VOCA and the Crime Victims Fund, OVC supported the National Public Awareness and Education Campaign through a grant to Justice Solutions, Inc. A major accomplishment to date is the development of a public service announcement (PSA) series for broadcast on national, regional, and local TV stations. The PSAs were played 8,979 times by 107 stations in 38 states by the end of FY 2005—a market value of more than \$2.2 million in air time. The PSAs also aired 20,417 times on 72 cable stations in 24 states, resulting in an estimated market value of \$1.125 million in cable air time. In addition, the PSAs were available on OVC's Crimevictims.gov Web site, launched in 2005 (www.crimevictims.gov). (For more information about this site, see page 85.)



Local Communities Observe NCVRW

OVC's NCVRW Community Awareness Projects make it possible for many cities and towns to participate fully in NCVRW. OVC relied on a committee composed of VOCA state administrators to assist in the selection process. In FYs 2005 and 2006, funding enabled agencies to expand their public awareness campaigns to incorporate innovative activities used to inform the public about victims' issues and local services.

- In South Lake Tahoe, California, the Womenspace Unlimited South Lake Tahoe Women's Center held a masquerade ball in 2005. Participants wore masks symbolizing the shame, fear, and embarrassment so many crime victims experience. Later, attendees unveiled their faces in a show of support for victims. According to Executive Director Nichole Loftis, "This grant gave all participating agencies the opportunity to work together toward the common cause of educating the community about available resources for victims."
- In 2006, the Van Buren County Prosecuting Attorney's Office in Paw Paw, Michigan, collaborated with the county's Domestic Violence Coalition and the sheriff's Victim Services Unit to sponsor a local high school rock opera about the effects of bullying on children. Other outreach included creation of a Memory Wall displaying the names of county homicide victims.
- To kick off NCVRW in 2006, the Rice County Attorney's Office in Faribault, Minnesota, held a Passport to Justice fair to share information about victim services. More than 200 participants visited exhibits and had their "passports" stamped. Now, said Meredith Erickson, Senior Assistant Rice County Attorney, "The community is much more aware of what we can do to help."

"This movement is one that everyone should be able to identify with. Everyone is one or two people away from victimization in this country. And most people know someone who has been victimized."

—Norman Early, Esq.,
the Oral History Project,
on the Victims' Rights Movement

Project Documents Movement's History

In 2002, OVC awarded a cooperative agreement to Justice Solutions to develop the Oral History Project to document the history and significant accomplishments of the crime victims' movement in three areas: people, policy, and programs. Justice Solutions conducted more than 60 hours of video interviews with 55 individuals, capturing the progress of the victims' rights movement. This project was part of ongoing efforts to legitimize the victim assistance discipline as a true civil and social service rights movement and to enhance its standing in the eyes of historians, academicians, and policymakers. The intent of the project was to develop archives related to the victim assistance movement, which would be housed both in a university setting and on the Internet to allow easy access to the project by a wide range of constituents, including researchers, academicians, victim assistance providers, news media personnel, and students.

Justice Solutions selected the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, to host the Oral History Project. The university maintains in its library archives a hardcopy collection of documents with historical significance to the crime victim services field (including, but not limited to, text, photographs, video, and audio formats) and hosts the online version of the project, available to public users of the archive, at <http://vroh.uakron.edu>.

Programs Focus On Immigrant Communities

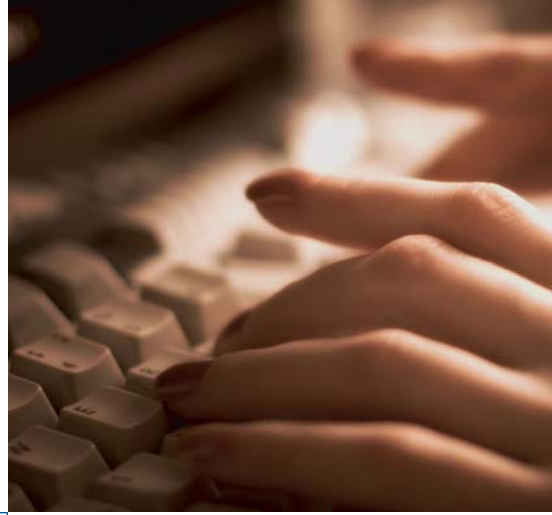
Continually seeking inventive approaches to serving crime victims, OVC funds the development of national training and demonstration projects that promote best practices for improving victim assistance and promoting the public's awareness of issues.

In FY 2005, OVC developed a new public education program to raise awareness of crime victims' rights and services among underserved communities with limited English proficiency. To support, expand, and improve access to existing services, OVC awarded funding to five organizations to help them develop culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach. In FY 2006, OVC awarded funding to seven organizations for similar initiatives.

One grantee, the Minnesota Council on Crime and Justice (MCCJ), focuses on the large Somali community in Minneapolis-St. Paul. In partnership with Somali community leaders, victim service organizations, Somali newspapers, and local law enforcement, MCCJ created a wide-scale campaign to raise awareness of victims' rights and the community resources available for victims of street crimes. The materials, printed in Somali, are distributed at community events and Somali-owned businesses.

In FY 2005, OVC funded the ¡Basta Ya!: No Lo Permitas (Enough! Don't Permit It) campaign in Austin, Texas, to increase awareness about victims' rights and services within the Spanish-speaking community. Through radio PSAs, newspaper advertisements, and metrobuses displaying the ¡Basta Ya! ads, the 8-week campaign encouraged Spanish-speaking crime victims to call 211 for victim assistance information. Four thousand dollars in grant funds was used to purchase 94 radio spots. The actual value of the radio campaign is \$6,000, which is one and a half times the OVC-supported investment.





Effective information networks are vital to the advancement of the victim assistance field. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC lent strategic support to the Nation's victim service professionals—developing and delivering comprehensive, high-quality informational tools to support and strengthen services to crime victims as well as making services and other resources more readily available to victims themselves.



INFORMATION RESOURCES

While OVC TTAC coordinates OVC's training and technical assistance activities, the OVC Resource Center (OVCRC) manages its information publishing and dissemination efforts. Like OVC TTAC, OVCRC's activities are organic in nature: the input it receives influences the strategic development of future information and efforts to make information more accessible—through OVC's Web site, print media, or multimedia products. The general public, victim service providers, and allied professionals alike use the Resource Center's tools to access information. From toll free conversations with information specialists to requests for information using the "Ask OVC" online feature, OVCRC analyzes and makes recommendations to OVC on emerging trends in the field of victim assistance.

Information and Knowledge Management for the Field

OVCRC administers OVC's information publishing and dissemination program via three methods:

- Request activity—OVCRC information specialists received more than 10,000 inquiries in FYs 2005 and 2006, primarily from crime victim service providers, victim advocates, victims (and/or their affiliates), and other parties concerned with victim assistance policies and practices. The most frequent inquiries regarded NCVRW nomination forms and funding available for local NCVRW Community Awareness Projects; OVC publications such as the *No More Victims* brochures and *Victims Speak Out/Victim Impact* videos; availability of and eligibility for grant and compensation programs; and statistics on victimization trends, especially with respect to child abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault.
- Hardcopy dissemination—In support of OVC's ongoing efforts to advance knowledge in the victim assistance field, OVCRC disseminates several thousand publications and multimedia products to providers, advocates, and victims. OVCRC disseminated 84,315 products in FY 2005 and 95,309 products in FY 2006. Most hardcopy products were distributed to key OVC constituencies, such as VOCA administrators, victim service providers, and victimization researchers via one of two cost-effective methods.

1. Bulk mailings of high-profile products such as the NCVRW Resource Guide.
 2. Multimedia product displays at state and local events targeting underserved providers, advocates, and victims such as those in Indian Country and rural municipalities.
- Conferencing activity—OVCRC staff represent OVC at various conferences, workshops, and meetings attended by victim service providers throughout the country. Recently, OVC has directed OVCRC staff to represent the agency at events targeted to smaller, statewide events. As a result, there has been a 19-percent increase in the number of statewide conferences featuring OVCRC-staffed exhibits from FY 2005 to FY 2006. In addition, OVCRC coordinated publication support for seven State Victim Assistance Academy events in both FY 2005 and FY 2006. Taken together, the proportion of overall OVCRC conferencing activity dedicated to state events rose from 38 percent in FY 2005 to 54 percent in FY 2006.

Online Presence Lends Flexibility to Information Availability

Traditional training events require that service providers take time away from work for travel and attendance—flexibility that many providers and allied professionals, especially in small grassroots organizations, don't have. To address these limitations, OVC continued to enhance its online presence in FYs 2005 and 2006, making information and training resources available around the clock via www.ovc.gov. As a result, more providers can access information at a convenient time, learn at their own pace, and bookmark helpful pages for future reference.

The Web tools developed and maintained by OVCRC meet varying needs of the field. They include—

HELP for Victim Service Providers
OVC Message Board to Help Exchange Lessons and Practices (HELP) in Victim Services

News | About the Forum | How To Participate | Host Bios | Calendar | Help | FAQs

Welcome to the OVC HELP for Victim Service Providers Web Forum—a place where victim service providers and allied professionals can connect to peers, share ideas about best practices, and help change lives.

If you are a victim of crime in need of assistance, please [Ask OVC](#).

Choose a topic below and start making the connections that can make a difference.

OVC NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ▶ U.S. Attorney General Honors Extraordinary Victim Service Providers (04/30/07)
- ▶ Identify Theft Information Now Offered Through ID Theft.gov (04/26/07)
- ▶ Resources Available for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (04/25/07)
- ▶ NCVIC Launches New Legal Database: VictimLawInfo (04/25/07)
- ▶ Announcing New Publications and Products From OVC (04/23/07)
- ▶ More news and announcements

Discover the OVC Calendar of Events.

TOPIC	DISCUSSIONS	POSTS	LAST POST
Child Victims	45	76	10/17/2006
Children Exposed to Domestic Violence	67	94	03/13/2007
Crime Victim Compensation and Best Practices	28	80	02/05/2007
Cultural Sensitivity in Victim Services	45	55	10/20/2006
Domestic Violence	50	102	10/18/2006
Identity Theft Prevention	16	17	02/08/2007
NCVIRW Awareness Campaign	35	52	01/24/2007
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	39	49	10/25/2006
Services for Immigrant Victims	0	0	
Serving Crime Victims with Disabilities	36	44	08/11/2007
Serving Victims of Impaired Driving	21	25	12/15/2006
Serving Victims of Stalking	22	30	03/14/2007
Sexual Assault Response Teams	20	42	04/06/2007
Sexual Assault Through Multidisciplinary Response	20	34	03/18/2007
Standards and Certification	21	29	03/28/2007
Substance Abuse and Victimization	1	0	
Teen Dating Violence	0	0	
Victim Compensation	8	12	03/09/2007
Victims' Rights	31	55	01/15/2007

QUEST HOST

May 23, 2007
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET
Laura Gabelent and Bob Lowery on Addressing Cases With Missing or Unidentified Victims
▶ [Ask your questions.](#)

May 29, 2007
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET
Stephanie Froese and Helga West on Providing Peer Support to Disaster Survivors
▶ [Ask your questions.](#)

Each month the Nation's experts answer your questions about best practices in victim services. View the April discussion with Dr. Linda Ledray and Elise Turner on Sexual Assault Response Teams.

[View Past](#) | [Calendar](#) | [How To Participate](#)

Guest host sessions will begin promptly at 2 pm and end at 3 pm (eastern time). No registration required.

E-Alerts Stay up-to-date with new OVC Web Forum discussions and topics. Get E-Alerts today!

SEARCH

Topics:

Full Text | All Topics | Available Items | Available Items of Unlisted Children | Ask Theft and Towed Cars

Keyword:

From: To:

OVC's HELP for Victim Service Providers Web Forum. An average of 3,832 individuals per month have visited the OVC Web Forum at least one time since it was launched in August 2004 as an online community where victim service professionals could exchange information and share best practices. Currently, visitors may participate in discussions for 24 topics. In FY 2005, the Web Forum was further enhanced by the addition of a guest host series. Twice a month, OVC TTAC has a national expert available to answer questions on a timely topic. Many of these sessions are tied to public awareness campaigns,

but they also reflect current trends and issues of special concern to service providers—stalking, identity theft, domestic violence, campus security, and much more. Visit the Web Forum at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ovcproviderforum/index.asp>.

- **OVC's National Calendar of Events.** This online calendar lists upcoming conferences, workshops, and notable victim assistance-related events. A special feature allows service providers and allied professionals to include their organizations' events. To view the calendar, visit <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ovccalendar>.
- **OVC's Online Directory of Crime Victim Services.** This online directory continues to be a valuable resource for victims searching for nonemergency services and for providers looking for referral resources. Since January 2005, on average, 2,408 people per month have visited the directory at least one time. As with OVC's online calendar, the directory invites service providers to post relevant information. Visit the directory at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices>.
- **Crimevictims.gov.** This Web site, which won an Award of Excellence from the National Association of Government Communicators in 2005, offers a wide range of information to victims needing assistance, providers seeking additional training, and volunteers looking for opportunities to help victims. The site provides numerous resources, including toll free numbers for national victim service organizations and a searchable database for locating victim assistance programs worldwide. Visit the Web site at www.crimevictims.gov.



Publications and Products Respond to Needs of Victims and Providers

For more than 20 years, OVC has produced a broad range of publications to inform and educate crime victims, service providers, and the general public about victims' rights, issues, and resources. Although this objective remains unchanged, technology is making it possible to provide information more efficiently and cost effectively—particularly via the Internet. In FYs 2005 and 2006, virtually every new

OVC publication was posted on the agency's Web site, although some print versions continued to be available through OVCRC or as downloadable resources.

The proliferation of new media offers OVC a wider choice of formats for conveying information. In FY 2006, for example, OVC distributed a comprehensive training package for social workers on a mini CD-ROM for ease of use. Another product, *A Multimedia Program for Physically Injured Crime Victims*, used several media to provide hospitalized victims with practical information about recovery, including a DVD to be viewed while in the hospital and a brochure to take home. Online products share the advantages of being less labor intensive and relatively inexpensive to revise and update.

To meet the need for an affordable, convenient source of victim advocacy and services training, OVC has allocated funding to develop accessible online training that teaches providers how to identify and respond to the basic needs of all victims. A popular workshop on training sexual assault advocates, for example, is in production as a downloadable curriculum on the OVC TTAC Web site. Another Web course will focus on the "how-to" of victim services and advocacy, including how to work within culturally diverse communities. Via OVC's online training programs, service providers will have access to quality training programs at the click of a mouse.

Many of OVC's publications are produced by grantees to fill gaps in information and address emerging types of victimization, and are profiled in this report by subject area. One such gap—involving faith communities in serving the needs of victims—is a priority that, during FYs 2005 and 2006, yielded publications to guide faith communities in helping to prevent fraud against the elderly and offer guidance to faith leaders wishing to build their expertise in helping members through the trauma of victimization. Now in production is a collection of best practices for faith-based organizations and communities. Previously identified gaps resulted in valuable tools to help serve disabled victims, respond to elder abuse, and inform terrorism victims of their rights, among other pressing issues.

Readers are invited to browse through the Publications section of OVC's Web site for a complete list of resources, with summaries and cover photos. You may also wish to visit "Focus On 2007," which summarizes programs cited in this report as well as a number of programs not included in the report. "Focus On 2007" is available online at www.ovc.gov.



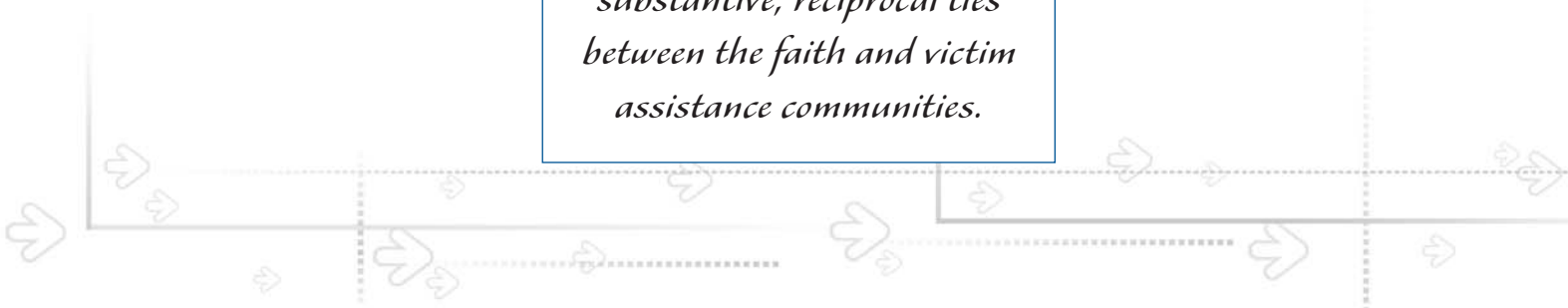
Collaboration and Partnerships

- Faith-Based Initiatives
- Action Partnerships
- Interagency Collaborations



To heal from the emotional wounds caused by victimization, victims often seek spiritual support and other assistance from the faith community. Although clergy are trained in how to assist members of their congregations with spiritual matters, they may not be aware of assistance programs that can help victims of crime with the recovery process.

Similarly, victim service providers may lack knowledge about resources within the faith community that can assist victims of a particular faith with their spiritual needs. Committed to bridging this gap in services, OVC is dedicating increased energy and resources toward building substantive, reciprocal ties between the faith and victim assistance communities.



FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES

In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC continued to support training programs that educated service providers about the spiritual needs of victims and, in turn, equipped faith leaders with the skills and resources they need to guide victims to appropriate assistance programs. To improve victims' access to effective, comprehensive services, OVC also continued to support faith-based and community partnerships at both the national and local levels.

OVC funds numerous educational programs that work to strengthen victim support systems within the faith community, including the Faith Community Professional Education Initiative (FCPEI) demonstration project, a partnership between the Denver Seminary and Denver Victim Services 2000. To integrate victim training into seminary curricula, FCPEI developed a graduate-level curriculum that provides clergy with practical information about victimization and teaches them how they can assist victimized members of their congregations. The curriculum can be used either as a formal academic class or an intensive continuing education course. It will be available for both Web-based and classroom instruction and will be disseminated to schools of theology throughout the Nation.

OVC also funds the Community Crisis Intervention: Volunteer Responder Basic Training Curriculum. A 2-year initiative developed by the U.S. Community Chaplaincy through its Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Services to Crime Victims project, the curriculum will be used to teach volunteer law enforcement chaplains how to provide nonsectarian support and services, such as death notifications, to victims of violent crime and to improve law enforcement response to victimization.

Ensuring the steady progression of victim services is of primary concern for OVC, highlighted by its support of alliances among community, government, and professional organizations. In South Carolina, for example, OVC supports a model of community collaboration, the Helping and Lending Outreach Support (HALOS) program. With OVC funding, it has expanded from a small grassroots organization into an independent nonprofit agency. HALOS—in collaboration with private citizens and community, business, medical, and faith-based organizations—provides services for abused and neglected child victims served by the Charleston County Department of Social Services (DSS). HALOS pairs a DSS case manager with a faith, civic, or business group, and together they address the academic, self-esteem, and financial needs that cannot be met by DSS and Medicaid. Because of HALOS' success, and inquiries from other

"When I was a caseworker with the Department of Social Services 30 years ago, we had a list of providers in the community to call when we needed help for a client—I can remember calling up to 10 resources before I could get one to say 'yes, I'll try to meet that need.' So HALOS has reduced the number of calls to one. Our caseworker today can make a call to their partner with HALOS and make a request and receive what they need for that family."

—Odessa Williams,
Charleston County DSS Director

Good Samaritans Repair Lives in Alabama

A single mother with a disability, who recently moved to Mobile, Alabama, to care for her aging parents, awakened one morning to the sounds of breaking glass and strange voices in her living room. In the wake of the break-in, a Good Samaritans volunteer enlisted a local company to replace the broken window left by the burglars, prompting the victim to say, "I will sleep a little better tonight."*

Serving the immediate needs of crime victims is an important step toward helping them recover, but many communities lack the financial and human resources to provide this assistance. In Mobile, the OVC-funded Good Samaritans Volunteer Assistance Program addresses this issue with a strong network of caring citizens.

A collaborative effort among the Mobile County District Attorney's Office, faith-based organizations, businesses, and law enforcement, Good Samaritans dispatches trained volunteers to offer spiritual and emotional support, secure homes, make referrals, explain the court system to victims, and help them to access compensation. Serving the area's most vulnerable victims—elderly residents, individuals with disabilities, single mothers, and women living alone—the program is a recipient of Volunteers of America's national Excellence in Human Services Award. The program, says Project Director Martha Simmons, "is a special way to reach out to senior citizens, who are in the most need and are welcoming of services."

Good Samaritans is producing a *Program Handbook and Basic Volunteer Training Guide* for other communities interested in building a similar network.

*Martha Simmons, "Working Together for Crime Victims," *The Prosecutor*, July–August 2005.

communities about how to start their own programs, OVC is providing funding to replicate the program in five communities, two of which will be outside South Carolina. Replication sites will be selected through a competitive application process.

To further support connections between faith-based and victim assistance communities, OVC convened a meeting in November 2005 of faith-based grantees to discuss issues related to building victim assistance resources. Building capacity and sharing resources were grantees' primary concerns, and their input helped identify what additional types of funding would be most useful. OVC also used the meeting to educate participants about promising projects and emerging issues such as human trafficking.

OVC recognizes that faith- and community-based organizations are often trusted members of their communities that offer significant services to crime victims. When coping with issues such as domestic abuse, rape, or the homicide of a family member, victims may turn first to these familiar faces. In addition to individual grant awards, OVC supports organizations through a HOPE II cooperative agreement with the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC). Under this agreement, MCVRC solicited proposals to establish subgrantee sites in urban, high-crime areas throughout the United States to assist underserved victims of crime. In FYs 2005 and 2006, \$5 million was made available for this initiative to fund each site with up to \$50,000 for 12 months. Services that sites provide include emotional support, personal advocacy, help filing compensation claims, crisis counseling, and referral services.

HOPE Grants Support Community Agencies

Helping grassroots organizations build the capacity to serve crime victims is a major focus for OVC. At roundtable discussions with advocates and victims in 2002 and 2003, OVC learned of community- and faith-based organizations and coalitions that were not linked to mainstream programs and, thus, lacked access to funding resources. Often, such groups needed only modest funding to raise their services to effective levels.

In response, OVC offers Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) grants that provide up to \$5,000 each to such organizations and coalitions to help them improve their outreach and services to crime victims. During the biennium, OVC increased funding for recipients to \$10,000. HOPE funds may be used to develop program literature, including newsletters and brochures; train victim advocates; support victim outreach; and recruit volunteers. In FYs 2005 and 2006, \$2 million was made available for this initiative; \$526,220 was distributed to 193 organizations.



Grant Supports Stop the Silence Public Awareness Campaign

Through community outreach and media advocacy, the nonprofit organization Stop the Silence is working to prevent child sexual abuse—a crime that affects thousands of children in the United States each year—and to treat the victims of this scourge.

With the assistance of a \$5,000 HOPE grant, the Maryland-based organization disseminated a public service announcement (PSA) to television stations, movie theaters, radio stations, and other media outlets throughout the United States, reaching an unprecedented number of people in a short time. Additionally, special arrangements were made with the local NBC station in Washington, D.C., to air the PSA during *Dr. Phil*, *Ellen*, and the evening news hours for several weeks.

As a result of the PSA, Stop the Silence received numerous requests for assistance, noticed increased public awareness about child sexual abuse issues and its organization, and generated other funding possibilities for its comprehensive work.





One of the most effective ways to reach a large group of people is to go where they already gather. OVC did just that in FY 2005 with the program it calls Action Partnerships With Membership and Professional Organizations. The program established cooperative agreements with association and membership chapters to advance victims' rights through awareness campaigns as well as training and technical assistance.



Action Partnerships specifically targeted grantees that were in a position to further educate service providers, allied professionals, and the general public in efficient and creative ways. In FY 2005, for example, OVC made funding available for the Howard County, Maryland, Chapter of the Autism Society of America (ASA) to develop a national education program focusing on the special needs of autistic victims. Howard County ASA plans to develop the curriculum with ASA's national office and the Law Enforcement Awareness Network of the United States, and to make it available to local service providers and law enforcement professionals.

Other Action Partnerships include the following:

- **The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)** will collaborate with **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)** to train emergency room physicians in appropriate death notification practices when violent crime is the cause. MADD and ACEP will also develop training materials and an instructional pocket card that will be distributed to 197 emergency medicine residency programs nationwide.
- **New York Women in Film and Television (NYWIFT)** held a "Filmmakers Forum for Crime Victim Sensitivity" in Los Angeles, California, and New York City with leaders in film and television who wanted to learn about portraying crime victims in a sensitive, appropriate manner. NYWIFT also created a Web site featuring the forum (www.filmakersforum.org).
- The Protecting Victims' Right to Privacy project, headed by **Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS)**, is strengthening the ability of victim advocates and sexual assault coalition professionals to improve the confidentiality of their services and assist victims with privacy rights. As part of the project, CONNSACS developed and hosted a free Web seminar series on topics concerning privacy and confidentiality (www.connsacs.org/Confidentialitywebinars.htm).

OVC Teams With National Organizations To Produce Victim Assistance Information

In addition to projects funded through the Action Partnerships program, OVC works with other organizations to produce victim assistance materials, with information tailored to specific professional audiences:



- The **American Red Cross** coauthored a booklet with OVC that explains to Red Cross workers the rights and needs of crime victims, tells them how to assist victims of terrorism and mass violence, lists OVC services, and explains types of victim assistance.
- The **National Sheriffs' Association**, having previously produced for OVC two guides for law enforcement officers on working with crime victims, is now completing an updated and expanded guide that will help officers build skills in how best to approach and assist victims of crime.
- The **American Bar Association** copublished a replication guide on developing multidisciplinary fatality review teams to help inform policy on preventing elder abuse.
- OVC provided discretionary grants to the **National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators** (NAVAA) and the **National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards** (NACVCB) so they may produce publications specifically for managers and staff who administer VOCA victim assistance formula grants and VOCA victim compensation formula grants at the state level. The goal of these grants was for NAVAA and NACVCB to develop complete, comprehensive, and usable orientation toolkits for use by current and future state VOCA administrators and staff. The toolkits include relevant information, resources, and practical tools to assist states in administering the VOCA formula programs in a compliant and successful manner. Both toolkits will be released in hardcopy and electronically in 2007.

Survivors of Young Homicide Victims Benefit From OVC Scholarships

Parents of Murdered Children (POMC), Inc., is a nonprofit organization that provides the ongoing emotional support needed to help parents and other survivors facilitate the reconstruction of a "new life" and to promote a healthy resolution. Not only does POMC help survivors cope with their acute grief, it also helps survivors deal with the criminal justice system. In existence since 1978, POMC furthers the mission of OVC by always putting victims first.

OVC provides scholarships to POMC that enable homicide survivors or those who work with homicide survivors to attend the POMC National Conference. Approximately 400 people participate in the conference each year. Survivors leave the conference better equipped to cope with their loss and having gained the tools needed to assist other survivors of homicide.

Groups Discuss Victims' Rights Issues

In May 2005, OVC met with grantees who were undertaking projects related to victims' rights, providing a forum where these organizations could exchange information and explore ways in which they might collaborate with each other. OVC also invited other stakeholders' groups to participate in the discussion to facilitate collaboration among OVC, its grantees, and other organizations that have an interest in victims' rights issues. One stakeholder group represented was the Victims Committee of the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section. The discussion was highly productive and ultimately led to representatives of grantee organizations becoming involved in the ABA committee leadership and participating in the committee's discussion of its future direction.



In addition to its leadership role in the field, OVC is an active voice on behalf of victims within federal workgroups, task forces, and interagency partnerships. These efforts keep victims' issues at the forefront of policymaking decisions and optimize the use of Federal Government resources as they apply to the victim services field.



INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIONS

OVC collaborates with other federal agencies to support their victim service efforts. Among these agencies are the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Department of Defense, the Postal Inspection Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as other federal agencies with criminal justice responsibilities.

OVC has worked with the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, to share information on the effective implementation of the Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Grant Program. This relationship has provided unique insight and guidance on the issues and promising practices involved with providing victim services in Indian Country.

Through the Federal Liaison Working Group, OVC coordinates and communicates with federal victim assistance providers. This group helped plan OVC's Fourth National Symposium on Victims of Federal Crime and has been instrumental in sharing information and developing resources essential to victim advocates and coordinators in the field. The expertise of this working group has been useful in training other agencies on how to develop a victim assistance program.

The international nature of human trafficking, in particular, lends itself to collaborative action. Since 2004, OVC and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a sister agency within the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, have shared their respective subject-matter expertise to expand local-level antitrafficking activities. The agencies' two-pronged strategy includes—

- Identifying locations that need assistance, and forming and training task forces of local and state law enforcement officers, victim service providers, and representatives from related federal agencies.
- Establishing and funding trafficking-specific victim services in the identified areas.

BJA established 42 multidisciplinary task forces, which, by the end of FY 2006, had worked collaboratively with 30 OVC-funded trafficking projects. Each law enforcement task force coordinates its efforts with relevant trafficking projects to ensure that victim services are available for all victims.

Ongoing efforts to serve victims of human trafficking have led to productive relationships with the Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) section of the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Division and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Through OPDAT, OVC briefs international visitors regularly about how it administers services for victims of trafficking. With ORR, OVC continues to refine protocols for navigating the complex needs of trafficking victims. In FY 2005, the agencies sponsored a joint meeting of 75 grantees to discuss challenges and accomplishments, and receive further training and technical assistance.

During the reporting period, OVC collaborations and partnerships had a significant impact on the field. Community- and faith-based initiatives expanded outreach activities, while other efforts increased professional and public awareness of victims' issues. In the future, OVC will continue to support partnerships at all government levels as it makes every effort to provide communities with the resources needed to improve services for all victims of crime.



Looking Forward



OVC looks forward to continuing its ongoing role as the Nation's primary source of support for victims' rights and services . . . the representative of all those who tirelessly work to make sure that their neighbors devastated by crime are helped and heard as they navigate the difficult path from victim to survivor.

*—John W. Gillis
Director*



LOOKING FORWARD

This biennium marked the end of the developmental stage for several major demonstration efforts that OVC initiated in previous funding periods. In FY 2007 and beyond, OVC will focus on the implementation and replication of these groundbreaking efforts to advance crime victims' rights and improve the services available to victims. In its efforts to vigorously pursue the enforcement of victims' rights, OVC funded two initiatives that made major progress during the biennium: the National Crime Victim Law Institute and the Victims' Rights Database of Laws. OVC also supported DOJ efforts to implement requirements contained in the Crime Victims' Rights Act. Each of these efforts has yielded outcomes that have moved the victim services field closer to its vision of equal access to justice for crime victims. OVC will continue to support these and other efforts that advance victims' rights and help public and private entities fulfill their obligation to the Nation's crime victims.

OVC is committed to serving as the voice of unserved and underserved crime victims, as it demonstrated when it took the lead in 1988 in advancing the rights and services of crime victims in Indian Country. OVC continues to do this and to deliver culturally appropriate training and technical assistance to service providers and advocates in Indian Country. It also continues to expand outreach and increase funding to tribal communities and to adapt and replicate promising practices in Indian Country.

Likewise, OVC was at the forefront of efforts to respond to victims of human trafficking when, in 2003, it made its first awards to fund services for this unserved victim population. Today, OVC has a network of services and assistance it has developed for human trafficking victims and the service providers and advocates who help them. These include the law enforcement task forces funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance that are working in the trenches to meet these vulnerable victims' needs and hold offenders accountable. In the coming biennium, OVC will continue to serve as the "voice" for unserved and underserved crime victims, many of whom have been marginalized because of their economic standing, gender, nationality, or type of victimization.

When OVC established the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) in 1995, it had no idea of the groundswell of support it would have for integrating crime victims' issues into the Nation's educational system, or the resulting efforts of advocates and service providers to professionalize the field of victim service by independently establishing certification and credentialing programs. The professional standards

(www.sc.edu/ccfs/training/consortium.html) developed by a consortium of national leaders in the victim services field with OVC funding provided to the University of South Carolina's College of Social Work, Center for Child and Family Studies served as a foundation for these efforts. OVC's efforts to develop and deliver quality training and education propelled these efforts to the next level by empowering states to create their own training academies for service providers and advocates.

OVC is proud of its leadership role in the creation of 29 state victim assistance academies modeled after NVAA. OVC is committed to providing all 50 states and the District of Columbia with the resources they need to define, establish, and deliver comprehensive training and educational opportunities for service providers, advocates, and allied professionals in their state. In FYs 2005 and 2006, OVC initiated efforts to redefine the goals and strategy of NVAA to better respond to the training and educational needs of victim service providers, advocates, and program managers that extend beyond the mission and goals of the state academies. OVC is committed to using NVAA to educate and train victim service providers on special and emerging victim issues, and to deliver the first ever training targeted exclusively toward program managers who oversee and direct the efforts of an estimated 10,000 victim service programs nationwide.

Every April, OVC demonstrates its pride in survivors of crime and those who help them when it coordinates National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW), which also serves to educate the public about crime victims' rights. Over the past 2 years, OVC has expanded its public education and awareness activities by hosting discussions among specialists and professionals in the field through its online Web Forums, supporting community partnerships, and partnering with other federal agencies to draw attention to the needs of victims of identity theft, sexual assault, drunk driving, and teen dating violence.

OVC will continue to identify opportunities to raise awareness about the impact of crime on victims and surviving family members, the rights of crime victims, and the services that are available to help advocates and service providers respond to crime victims' needs. OVC's national information clearinghouse, the OVC Resource Center, and its Training and Technical Assistance Center are key vehicles in identifying trends and supporting outreach efforts. Both are vehicles that OVC will continue to use to support its outreach, education, and awareness efforts.

One of OVC's greatest challenges has been to redirect and re-empower community and grassroots organizations on behalf of crime victims. During the biennium, OVC implemented several initiatives to reinvigorate grassroots organizations and provide them with access to federal resources. Efforts such as Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) grants, NCVRW Community Awareness Projects, and the Public Awareness and Underserved Community Initiative represent OVC's commitment to

improving access to and participation in federal funding for addressing crime victimization. OVC also has increased its interest in and involvement with the faith community in addressing victim issues.

OVC believes that the active involvement of grassroots organizations and statewide coalitions is critical to its mission *to enhance the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and provide leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all crime victims*. Hence, OVC will continue to identify opportunities and provide resources for public-private efforts, particularly those efforts that engage grassroots, community, and faith-based organizations. These partnerships maximize scarce resources, help create a unified voice for crime victims, and promote coordination and collaboration in the delivery of services and enforcement of victims' rights.

OVC is pleased with the progress it has made on behalf of our Nation's crime victims during this biennium. But new frontiers and opportunities for promoting justice and healing for victims of crime still exist at the federal, tribal, state, and local levels. We are grateful for the collaborative partnerships we have forged with national victim organizations, including Parents of Murdered Children, the National Center for Victims of Crime, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, the National Crime Prevention Council, Justice Solutions, the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, the National Sexual Assault Resource Center, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, the National Victims Constitutional Amendment Network, the American Society of Victimology, and the World Society of Victimology.

It is through all of our efforts and leadership that we are "putting victims first." Our combined efforts ensure that the voices of victims play a central role in our respective response to crime and victimization. In the future, we look forward to continuing to pursue opportunities to work collaboratively to chart new directions and to document the rich history and accomplishments of the victim services field.