

## CHAPTER 5

### BUILDING CAPACITY AND DEVELOPING PROGRAMS



The victim service field has evolved to include some 10,000 organizations with skills, capacity, knowledge, and resources that vary considerably in the delivery of services to victims and the promotion of victims' issues. OVC is committed to providing organizations with the necessary training, technical assistance, and other material resources to—

- Help build their capacity to develop strategic, long-term plans.
- Recruit and retain qualified staff and volunteers.
- Assess client needs and evaluate service delivery outcomes.
- Network with other victim service organizations, criminal justice agencies, allied professionals, and the faith community.
- Establish multiple funding sources to increase long-term continuity of operations.
- Sustain the delivery of high-quality services to victims.

OVC is also attentive to emerging areas of victimization, such as cybercrime, human trafficking, drug-facilitated sexual assault, fraud aided by electronic technologies, elder abuse, and domestic and international terrorism and mass violence, which place new demands on OVC's training and technical assistance capabilities. To respond to various victims' needs, OVC is committed to training providers, criminal justice personnel, allied professionals, and the faith-based community in the basics of victims' rights as well as in more advanced issues that address the complexities of

the victimization experience. At the victim roundtables, victims recommended cross training providers, criminal justice personnel, and allied professionals to enhance their collaborative efforts to meet victims' needs.

OVC identified and supported several cutting-edge initiatives intended to improve victim access to services, educate victims and allied professionals about victims' rights, and improve the quality and delivery of services by offering tools, training, and technical assistance to the field on various topics. Some of the topics include assisting victims with disabilities, responding to the needs of children at risk for victimization, addressing the needs of elderly victims, improving access to services for unserved and underserved victim populations in rural and urban settings,

facilitating victim access to the criminal justice system, and supporting community-based grassroots organizations' expansion efforts. Many efforts were augmented and enhanced by resources available through OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center.

### **OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center**

As the victim service community strives to meet the challenges of serving victims of an increasing variety of crimes in a rapidly evolving environment, access to effective training, technical assistance, and relevant information is in high demand and of great value to the field. OVC created the Training and Technical Assistance Center in 1998 to serve as a centralized point of contact for local, state, tribal, and federal



agencies to access OVC's training and technical assistance resources. TTAC's mission is to bridge the gap between knowledge, experience, and practice to help the still-evolving victim service field successfully meet the challenges of an increasingly complex environment. TTAC's activities are coordinated through three core functions:

- Needs assessment.
- Capacity building.
- Evaluation.

TTAC pursues its capacity-building function by serving as a facilitator for a broad-based learning community composed of victim service providers, advocates, and allied professionals from across the country, including all OVC state formula and discretionary grant recipients. This community works to identify and promote best practices to ensure top-quality victim services throughout the field. Since its inception, TTAC has delivered training to agencies and organizations on various victim services and related topics; provided technical assistance in areas such as strategic planning, program development, management, evaluation, and policy and procedure development; operated a speakers bureau to identify speakers for conferences, focus groups, and other meetings; and developed a consultant pool of experts to support victim initiatives nationwide.

During the biennium, TTAC contractors fulfilled a range of requests for training, technical assistance, and speakers for victim-focused conferences and workshops. The most frequently requested topics for training and technical assistance included child victimization, elder abuse, domestic violence, victims with disabilities, traumatic grief, victim impact, professional development, and program development.



Among the more recent requests were those related to victimization of Muslims, domestic violence in the military, and incidents of mass violence and terrorism.

TTAC plays a crucial role in advancing OVC's national training agenda. TTAC developed and offers the Professional Development Institute (PDI), which consists of five modules addressing leadership, strategic planning, human resources, evaluation, and implementation. In FY 2003, TTAC reviewed and updated the PDI curriculum, which will be offered through the TTAC Training Calendar. TTAC also worked collaboratively with consultants in the field to develop and deliver training and technical assistance on a strategic planning toolkit. The kit functions as a guide for victim service organization administrators to identify goals and develop strategies to accomplish these goals.

TTAC also invests considerable effort advancing Indian Country initiatives. Efforts have included adapting a sexual assault training curriculum for use in Indian Country and providing developmental support for the establishment of an American Indian and Alaska Native Victim Assistance Academy to

serve the educational and professional needs of victim service providers in Indian Country.

In FY 2003, TTAC advanced several key innovations. The office—

- Assembled a consortium of victim assistance experts to identify the critical training and technical assistance needs of the field, to guide TTAC's development of priority initiatives, and to extend TTAC's outreach to the field.
- Developed and implemented the OVC TTAC Information System (OTIS) as an integrated management information system that allows staff to process incoming requests and match identified needs with appropriate resources (e.g., speakers, technical assistance providers, trainers, topical materials, scheduled training events).
- Established an interactive, user-friendly Web site ([www.ovcttac.org](http://www.ovcttac.org)) that provides access to best practices, curricula, publications, and other related materials.
- Developed a national training calendar for education and professional development opportunities offered throughout the year.
- Established and implemented core performance standards for the design, delivery, and evaluation of training and technical assistance, with a strong emphasis on integrating adult learning principles.
- Used train-the-trainer approaches and technology to disseminate resources nationwide.
- Identified and adapted existing training and technical assistance resources, arranged for peer reviews of publications, and prepared and disseminated materials and curricula on best practices.



## National and State Victim Assistance Academies

In addition, OVC continues to support the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) and State Victim Assistance Academies (SVAAs) as excellent sources of basic and advanced specialty training. Since its inception in 1995, NVAA has offered an academically based curriculum that emphasizes foundations in victimology and victims' rights and services to nearly 2,000 victim service professionals from every state and territory and 7 foreign nations.

The three primary goals of NVAA are to—

- Develop and implement a comprehensive, research-based, foundation-level course of academic instruction that provides victim advocates with

cutting-edge knowledge about victim assistance and the victimology field.

- Provide high-quality, intensive education and training to victim service providers, advocates, and professionals from federal, state, local, and tribal settings.
- Create a training model that can be adapted and integrated into institutions of higher learning and other venues, particularly the State Victim Assistance Academies.

NVAA offers a 40-hour research-based course of study and produces a comprehensive NVAA text that has grown to cover more than 38 subject areas. The interactive course of study includes lectures, working

and discussion groups, exercises, computer laboratories, faculty mentoring groups, and self-examinations.

The 2002 NVAA also included a live satellite training broadcast, "Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence: A Continuum of Care." OVC sponsored the broadcast with the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization and Eastern Kentucky University.

The NVAA approach serves as a model for SVAAAs in developing foundation-based training in partnership with academic institutions. The SVAA curriculum is based on the NVAA course curriculum and text. OVC launched the SVAA initiative in 1999 with the award of competitive discretionary grants to Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah. Each site received supplemental OVC awards in FY 2002 for their third and final year of funding. In FY 2002, OVC awarded funds to Arizona, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, and Oregon to establish SVAAAs. Each SVAA site develops a planning committee, establishes a partnership with an academic host university, formulates the student selection criteria, assesses the specific needs of the respective state, and develops, implements, and evaluates the training program. OVC strongly encourages the development of similar initiatives in other states, with the goal of creating a national network of state academies.

**The Professional Development Institute addresses leadership, strategic planning, human resources, evaluation, and implementation.**

### **Basic Victim Advocacy Web-Based Training Course**

Although training efforts such as those delivered via TTAC, NVAA, SVAAAs, and other OVC discretionary grant projects reach a large number of victim service providers and allied professionals, scores of providers do not have access to OVC and other training offerings. In addition, budgetary and time constraints prevent many people from taking advantage of

these opportunities. OVC's goal is to seed the development of SVAAAs in every state; however, until every state has a training academy for victim service providers, there is a need for an alternative, affordable, user-friendly source of victim advocacy and services training for community- and system-based providers to take at their convenience. In FY 2003, OVC allocated funding to develop and test accessible online training that gives victim assistance providers the knowledge and skills to identify and effectively respond to the basic needs of all victims. This online Web course will focus on the "how-to" of victim services and advocacy, including guidance on working within culturally diverse communities beginning in 2005.

### **Targeted Professional Development for Criminal Justice and Social Services Personnel**

The network of professionals who come in contact with victims crosses a multidisciplinary spectrum of victim service providers and advocates, criminal justice personnel, allied professionals, and the faith community. OVC strives to improve the response of criminal justice practitioners to victims' needs and rights. Law enforcement personnel are frequently the first responders to reach victims, intervene in crisis situations, and provide referrals to appropriate service providers. OVC supports a number of efforts to improve the response of law enforcement to victims. One initiative is building the capacity of law enforcement agencies nationwide by providing technical assistance, disseminating a quarterly newsletter, and developing a model brochure and Web page on victims' issues. OVC funding has supported the development of a series of handbooks for law

enforcement on responding to various victim populations. A companion training video will follow the handbooks. Two OVC-funded demonstration projects support the improvement of victim services in rural law enforcement agencies. Finally, a curriculum developed with OVC funds will be used to train law enforcement on how to collect DNA evidence in sexual assault cases.

Meanwhile, OVC is funding a multiyear project called Victim-Oriented Policing through the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to create systemic change among law enforcement agencies in their response to victims. In the first year, IACP will begin planning to design and implement a national strategy. A national advisory group of law enforcement leaders, victim advocates, and victims will focus and guide the project. To obtain critical input that supports the planning process, IACP will host four national forums on the issue of police-based victim services. It also plans to convene a

**Online training  
has the potential to  
expand dramatically  
the network of trained  
professionals committed  
to "putting victims first."**



focus group of armed services leaders who have instituted cultural change within military operations units to offer advice and guidance. Based on the feedback, IACP will design a national strategy for law enforcement leaders to move their agencies toward changing—in both philosophy and practice—their approach to victims.

In FY 2003, OVC launched a 4-year Judicial Training Project to develop and pilot test a curriculum on victimization issues for judges and other court personnel including probation officers. The training curriculum will include learning modules that address the impact

of crime on victims and their families, victims' rights, the use of technology to improve victim access to the criminal justice process, and victim safety. Additionally, OVC funding will support the development of a bench book for judges on victims' rights law and recommended procedures, and a compendium of promising practices.

Corrections-based programs for victim assistance were virtually nonexistent until the 1980s. The corrections community either did not view victims as part of their constituency or inappropriately diverted victims to programs with a primary focus on offender rehabilitation. Although victim services in correctional settings now exist in every state, some continue to be offender, not victim, focused. In recent years, OVC has become increasingly proactive in advancing the delivery of quality victim-focused services by corrections-based victim service providers. OVC supported the Association of State Correctional Administrators' (ASCA) development of a policy manual for victim service programs in state correctional agencies and its dissemination to the ASCA membership. In addition, OVC established a partnership with the National Institute of Corrections and the Corrections Program Office (now part of OJP's Bureau of Justice Assistance) to ensure that each state corrections victim services coordinator receives annual state-of-the-art training on various victims' issues and is given timely information on models and promising practices that can be adapted to improve services. In FY 2002, training topics included fundamental victims' rights, victim notification, restitution, safety planning for victims, outreach to victims, and program evaluation.

Social workers are among the key allied professionals who address victims' needs. OVC supported the



efforts of the National Association of Social Workers, Inc., to increase the capacity of social workers to respond effectively to victims of violent crime and their families by conducting an awareness campaign, developing and delivering specialized training, and integrating victimization issues into professional and continuing social work education.

### **Supporting Initiatives To Improve the Implementation of Victims' Rights**

OVC recognizes that victims' rights promised by statute are merely illusory unless implemented and defended. OVC supports multiple initiatives to educate and support victims, victim advocates, victim/witness coordinators, prosecutors, judges, courts, and victims'

rights attorneys. A number of OVC initiatives facilitate victim access to the criminal justice system and document promising practices in delivering victims' rights. To foster the replication of a national model at the state and federal levels, the National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI) is establishing eight clinics at the state level to enforce victims' rights from case intake through resolution. NCVLI intends to partner with law schools and other nonprofit organizations to uphold victims' rights and help victims with the challenges they face in getting information and participating in the criminal justice system. NCVLI will also train attorneys on victims' rights and effective legal strategies for victims and has taken steps to enhance collaboration among attorneys by establishing the National Alliance of Victims' Rights Attorneys.



OVC also supports efforts by the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc., to document and institutionalize successful advocacy processes, models, and practices that result in improved state compliance with victims' rights and increased access to needed services. Project findings and recommendations will be summarized in a report that will provide information, promising practices, and principles to assist advocacy organizations in other states that want to maximize compliance with victims' rights laws.

In addition, OVC recognizes the importance of providing state legislators with more detailed analysis of how to address victims' issues. In 2002, OVC initiated the State Legislature Victim Education Project, which is being conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). This project will educate

the Nation's state and territorial legislators about victims' needs by compiling, publishing, and distributing a legislator's guide, and providing substantive descriptions of key areas of state law that address victims. For more details, visit NCSL's Web site at [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org).

### **Training the faith-based community to help victims**

Many Americans call on religious leaders for spiritual guidance, support, and information in times of personal crisis. The President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative aims to "identify and work to eliminate improper federal barriers to effective faith-based and community-serving programs through legislative, regulatory, and programmatic reform." In addition to providing VOCA funding to numerous faith-based victim assistance programs nationwide, OVC is developing specialized training and educational curricula for faith-based practitioners to increase their involvement in helping victims and improve their understanding of victims' needs.

OVC continues to support the Faith Community Professional Education Initiative to integrate victimization content into clergy education. Victim Services 2000 (VS2000)—a community collaborative approach/model for delivering victim services—and the Denver Seminary are identifying schools of professional religious education that represent a broad range of faiths to review and pilot test this curriculum to educate practitioners in the faith community.

The faith community members' role as crisis responders takes on even greater significance when it is joined with that of law enforcement, the criminal justice system's first responders to crime. Chaplains in law

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enforcement agencies are uniquely positioned to guide the law enforcement response to victims, but many agencies do not use chaplains in this role. Many chaplains are not trained to respond to a broad range of victims. In FY 2002, OVC initiated the Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Services to Crime Victims Project to modify an existing curriculum and develop a law enforcement-based model for providing chaplaincy services to victims of violent crime. The project is intended to help chaplains respond to victims and support and improve the law enforcement response to victimization. The curriculum will be piloted in Chicago, Washington, D.C., Boston,

Philadelphia, and New York in 2004. An example of how the program works is described below. This and other examples can be found at [www.altrue.net/site/sacchaps/](http://www.altrue.net/site/sacchaps/) under the "Stories" link.

One evening a high school senior was stabbed to death. Two chaplains spent the entire next day at the student's school helping his friends begin to come to grips with the tragedy. When two of his friends expressed growing agitation with others who "disrespected" his death, a chaplain headed off the potential for additional violence by transporting these students home. School administration expressed its appreciation for the chaplaincy's services throughout the day, saying "Your caring presence made a positive difference for the students and staff."

For more details on this project and other OVC faith-based initiatives, please visit OVC's Web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc).

### **Supporting homicide survivors throughout the grieving process**

OVC funded two projects at the Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle, Washington, to support survivors of homicide. One project, the Homicide Support Project, trained multidisciplinary personnel from six cities in how to assist families in the aftermath of homicide in ways that lessen the long-term psychological impact for survivors; help family and friends of victims cope with their grief and devastation, and teach them skills for restoring control of their lives; counsel families to come together, support

each other, and regain a sense of order; and create a model for professionals to share information and coordinate services.

The second project, Training for Community-Based Grief Centers, supports the development of protocols to establish grief centers to work with victims of violent crimes, including terrorism and mass violence, in five pilot communities. An advisory group of traumatic grief experts and faith-based practitioners guided the grantee in helping the communities develop strategies for coping with homicides resulting from terrorism and mass violence.

### **Helping Outreach Programs to Expand**

The victims' field has a rich heritage of grassroots organizations dedicated to helping victims cope with trauma. Such grassroots, nonprofit organizations are often staffed by volunteers and housed in donated space or private residences. In communities lacking formal agency support for victims, local police turn to these organizations when they need to house a battered wife and her children or to counsel a sexual assault victim in the middle of the night. Some victims feel more at ease seeking assistance from grassroots organizations than pursuing options available at larger agencies. These organizations are a critical component of OVC's strategy to reach out to unserved and underserved populations.



During the victim roundtable discussions, OVC realized that a growing body of grassroots and community-based victim organizations and coalitions are not linked to mainstream victim services programs and do not have access to traditional funding for services, outreach, and networking. In 2002, OVC announced the availability of Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) grants, allowing organizations that do not receive federal VOCA victim assistance grant funding to apply for a one-time award of up to \$5,000. As of mid-November 2003, OVC has awarded funds to more than 200 organizations. HOPE grant recipients have used these funds to establish a larger support network for victims. Funds have been used to—

- Purchase office equipment, supplies, postage, and phone services.
- Produce public service announcements, brochures, newsletters, and library displays.
- Translate outreach and other resource materials into the native languages of immigrants.



- Provide emergency room personnel and hospital social workers with pertinent materials.
- Publicize victim services among the faith communities.
- Develop a video for survivors of drunk-driving victims describing the grieving process, court procedures, and available resources.

### Children at risk for victimization and exposure to violence

Children are at risk for victimization and exposure to violence in their homes, schools, and communities. OVC staff keep abreast of new developments by participating in the Federal Task Force on Missing and Exploited Children and the National Institutes of Health Interagency Child Abuse and Neglect Working Group. OVC also supports discretionary projects that build the capacity of practitioners to advance best practices in assessing and treating child victims, and investigating and prosecuting these cases. Several notable project accomplishments include—

- *Safe Harbor: A School-Based Victim Assistance/ Violence Prevention Program*, which offers intervention and prevention strategies that address individual and social factors in violent incidents. This program, funded primarily by OJP’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), was replicated at 10 school sites.
- *Guidelines for the Psychosocial Treatment of Intrafamilial Child Physical and Sexual Abuse*, developed by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and the Harborview Medical



Center in Seattle, Washington. The guidelines translate research into practical recommendations for assessing and treating child abuse victims and serve as a standard to assess the quality of care offered to victims. In addition to broadly disseminating the guidelines to the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, MUSC also incorporated the best treatment practices into the training curriculum developed at its Institute for Professional Training on Mental Health Treatment for Child Victims and Witnesses, which also received OVC support.



## Responding effectively to elderly victims' needs and rights

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that between 1995 and 2020 the population of individuals ages 65 years and older in the United States will increase about 59 percent, and by 78 percent for individuals ages 85 and older. Many states will have increases well beyond these national projections. As the elderly population increases, so will the number of potential victims of elder fraud and abuse. OVC is highlighting this issue nationwide to increase public and practitioner awareness of the problem, to provide effective services to victims of elder fraud and abuse, to increase efforts to investigate and prosecute elder fraud and abuse cases, and to develop and implement strategies to prevent future victimization.

With funding provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, OVC competitively solicited applications for Field-Generated National Impact Projects (FGNIP) focused on elder fraud in FY 2001. OVC sought to generate innovative ideas for responding to predatory lending, home solicitation, financial exploitation, telemarketing fraud, and other forms of fraud against the elderly. In FY 2002, OVC launched the following three FGNIP Elder Fraud projects:

- The Denver District Attorney's Office, in partnership with local faith-based institutions, is developing the Senior Care Program. The demonstration program provides community-based, comprehensive, and immediate services for elder financial crime prevention, detection, reporting, and victim support.
- Legal Services of Eastern Michigan is developing and field testing a comprehensive training model to provide a range of targeted audiences (e.g., law enforcement, bankers, and senior center directors)



with information on the various types of elder fraud, the legal rights of elderly victims, and promising practices in terms of interventions and advocacy.

- Sam Houston State University is developing a case study of the financial exploitation of elders that may be more likely to occur in the wake of natural disasters such as tropical storms and tornadoes. The study will provide data about this relationship for victim advocates, crisis response teams, police, prosecutors, courts, and the media.

In addition, OVC continued to support the following initiatives, which heightened bank personnel vigilance against elder fraud and increased Latino awareness of telemarketing fraud:

- The Oregon Department of Human Services developed and disseminated statewide training and information for bank personnel on recognizing and responding to financial fraud against the elderly.

- The National Hispanic Council on Aging conducted a national public awareness campaign to increase the elderly Latino population's knowledge about how to protect themselves from telemarketing fraud.

Elders in our community are at heightened risk for financial fraud scams and are considered an underserved and particularly vulnerable population. To highlight this issue, OVC supported the National Elder Abuse Summit, which was convened by the National Center on Elder Abuse in December 2001. The summit brought key leaders together to create a consolidated, prioritized National Action Agenda on Elder Abuse to address the needs of abused and at-risk elders living in community settings and institutions.

OVC also supported the following targeted initiatives to develop elder abuse training:

- Baylor College of Medicine is developing and pilot testing a curriculum on identifying and responding to elder abuse. It is targeted to academic and other physicians in a range of fields, including emergency, family, internal, and geriatric medicine, and other health care professionals. The curriculum will cover topics such as the nature of victimization, screening, assessment, appropriate interventions, and working with adult protective services and law enforcement.
- The American Bar Association (ABA) is seeking to enhance the ability of advocates to provide services to victims of elder abuse by developing, testing, and disseminating a model curriculum on elder abuse.
- ABA, working with the National Association of Adult Protective Services Administrators, is undertaking an initiative to enhance the development of multidisciplinary fatality review teams. These



teams, which work to identify the cause of fatalities in order to inform prevention policy, have been used in the areas of child abuse and domestic violence, but are only beginning to develop in connection with elder abuse. The project supports four demonstration projects and the development of a replication guide.

### **Serving victims with disabilities**

OVC is committed to providing victims with disabilities with full access to appropriate, effective victim services. To do so, victim service providers must understand the victimization experience from the perspective of victims with disabilities. In February 2003, OVC released two complementary videos produced by Video/Action. The first video, "Serving Crime Victims With Disabilities: Meet Us Where We



Are,” presents first-person accounts describing how crime affects people with disabilities and the types of services and support victims received. The second video, “Serving Crime Victims With Disabilities: The Time Is Now,” helps providers learn to reach out and serve people with disabilities. The companion resource guides list national organizations in the field and national disability service and advocacy organizations.

OVC also supported the following key initiatives to increase professional awareness, provide practitioner training, develop promising practices and models, and guide law enforcement officers in dealing with victims with disabilities:

- The Arc Riverside convened the ninth national and second international Riverside Conference on Abuse of Children and Adults With Disabilities in Riverside, California. The goal was to create an expanding network of professionals skilled in working with victims with disabilities and individuals who acquire disabilities due to victimization. Training focused on increasing collaborative partnerships at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- OVC transferred funds to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support the Violence Against Children and Adults With Disabilities—Effective Prevention and Intervention Strategies Conference. The conference was developed and administered by the State University of New York Upstate Medical University.
- SafePlace, a domestic violence and sexual assault service center in Texas that created a Disability

**In FY 2003, OVC released two videos to help service providers understand the victimization experience from the perspective of victims with disabilities.**

## VICTIMS WITH DISABILITIES: A TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCE GUIDE

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities and the Wyoming INstitute for Disabilities (WIND) have compiled a searchable online database of information describing training programs and products that focus on victims with disabilities. Users will find information on book listings, training manuals, videos, and onsite training programs. The database is a useful tool for anyone interested in available training and technical assistance resources related to the victimization of people with disabilities. The Victims of Crime with Disabilities: A Training and Technical Assistance Resource Guide can be found at [wind.uwyo.edu/resourceguide](http://wind.uwyo.edu/resourceguide).

**The *First Response To Victims of Crime Who Have a Disability* handbook tells law enforcement officers how to interact with victims who have Alzheimer's disease, mental illness, mental retardation, and other disabilities.**

Services Program in 1996, was awarded funding to work with 10 victim assistance organizations nationwide to develop promising practices and models for serving victims. SafePlace will provide funding and training and technical assistance to enhance the organizations' ability to provide comprehensive, accessible services to victims. Sites are located in Worcester, Massachusetts; San Diego, California; Ulster County, New York; Doylestown, Pennsylvania; Tallahassee, Florida; Lafourche Parish, Louisiana; Atlanta, Georgia; Northampton, Massachusetts; Carbondale, Illinois; and Tucson, Arizona.

- The Senior and Disabled Services Division of the Oregon Department of Human Services completed a project to address Underserved Populations of Victims of Abuse in Oregon. This project specifically targeted people with disabilities and American Indians.
- The National Sheriffs' Association published *First Response to Victims of Crime Who Have a Disability*. This handbook offers law enforcement officers guidance on how to approach and interact with victims who have Alzheimer's disease, mental illness, or mental retardation, or who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing. It is estimated that 17 percent of the U.S. population has one of these disabilities. This publication was one of the most requested documents during the biennium.

Statistical information on the extent to which persons with disabilities are victimized is not assessed in the BJS National Crime Victimization Survey. However, under the Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act, BJS is working to develop the capability to measure crimes against people with disabilities and incorporate that information into its survey.

## Responding to sexual assault victims

OVC has provided strong leadership in promoting the development of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs). A SANE is a registered nurse who has had advanced education and clinical training in forensic examination of sexual assault victims. SANE programs have made a profound difference in the quality of care provided to sexual assault victims. At the same time, SANEs conduct comprehensive forensic evidence collection that results in more effective investigations and prosecutions. OVC strongly recommends the inclusion of SANEs as an integral component in multidisciplinary teams or SARTs. The Office on Violence Against Women, which also supports SANE and SART programs, has collaborated with OVC to develop various sexual assault initiatives. During the reporting biennium, OVC supported several key SANE/SART accomplishments:

- OVC funded the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services to address the viability of a mobile SANE unit to provide medical forensic service to sexual assault victims in a rural area and to develop an implementation plan.
- In May 2001, the Minneapolis-based Sexual Assault Resource Service (SARS) convened the First National SART Training Conference in San Antonio, Texas. The conference was attended by more than 700 members of SARTs from 47 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, and Saipan. OVC also supported the second national conference in May 2003 in New Orleans, Louisiana, with almost 800 SART members attending. SARS is evaluating the impact of single versus multiple SART interviews on survivors of sexual assault. These two models are practiced in

different jurisdictions and professional opinions vary as to whether the single interview is the least upsetting, or whether multiple interviews are the most therapeutic for the victim. The evaluators will also examine how variations in the assault history noted in each model impact the prosecution of the case.

OVC is also supporting other specialized training in the sexual assault area:

- SARS is developing and testing a core training curriculum for sexual assault victim advocates and counselors. The curriculum, which is based on



scientific literature about the impact of sexual assault on victims and effective treatments, promotes practices proved to be most effective when responding to victims. TTAC is adapting the *Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training Manual* to produce a trainer's guide specifically for teaching sexual assault victim advocates and counselors who work with victims in Indian Country.

- SARS is enhancing the systemic forensic response to victims of sexual assault by developing and disseminating state-of-the-art training and technical assistance for law enforcement and other first responders on the collection and use of DNA evidence in sexual assault cases.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists will develop, field test, and distribute a curriculum on providing compassionate care to women with histories of sexual assault to all obstetric/gynecology residency programs in medical schools nationwide.
- The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center is developing basic multidisciplinary and advanced legal training materials that address the integration of civil legal assistance in the community response to victims of sexual assault. These materials will be disseminated primarily via the Internet.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) is updating its 1993 publication *Looking Back, Moving Forward: A Guidebook for Communities Responding to Sexual Assault* and converting it into a Web-based, self-directed learning resource.

### **Recognizing victims of family violence in medical practices**

During the reporting biennium, OVC's discretionary program activity in family violence concentrated on



educating medical professionals on how to recognize and react to victims of family violence in their examining rooms. Often, victims will not bring up the topic, but doctors may observe physical signs of injury or indications of emotional distress. To further explore the issue of family violence, OVC supported the following:

- The American Medical Women's Association adapted the successful education curriculum entitled "Improving the Health Care Response to Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual for Health Care Providers" to serve as an interactive educational program available online. This curriculum was originally developed by the Family Violence

Prevention Fund and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

- The Family Violence Prevention Fund implemented *Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence: Consensus Recommendations for Child and Adolescent Health*. These guidelines provide specific recommendations to help pediatricians screen for and respond to domestic violence and to educate parents about the impact of family violence on children.

### **Increasing cultural competency in victim service delivery**

In dealing with victims of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, it is important to always treat individuals with courtesy and respect. However, a service provider becomes more culturally competent as he or she better understands how victims' reactions to the victimization experience, acceptance of services,

and preferred healing processes may vary in keeping with their respective cultures. OVC supported the National Multicultural Institute's development, testing, evaluation, and refinement of its curriculum on cultural considerations when assisting victims of sexual and physical violence. This program was designed to increase the cultural competency of victim advocates, law enforcement officers, and prosecutors who work with culturally diverse populations.

To open the lines of communication with non-English-speaking persons, OVC translated a number of frequently requested publications into Spanish, French, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, and Traditional Chinese. In 2002, with OVC support, NCVV produced the OVC Help Series of 10 brochures providing information for victims, service providers, and the public. NCVV produced this series in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese.





### Reaching out to victims in urban neighborhoods

Although victimization rates are typically elevated in inner-city, or so-called high-crime, areas, the availability and accessibility of comprehensive victim services in those areas are often lacking. In FY 2002, OVC initiated funding for two multisite initiatives to better serve victims in high-crime neighborhoods. The first focuses on planning and developing communitywide approaches, and the second establishes networks of faith-based and secular victim assistance programs.

- The Urban High Crime Neighborhood Initiative was launched by OVC at six pilot sites in the Bronx, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Kansas; Los Angeles, California; Shelby County, Tennessee; and St. Paul, Minnesota. These jurisdictions are undertaking efforts to establish or improve victim services in a high-crime neighborhood. During the first year, all sites conducted a needs assessment to identify gaps in both

services and interventions, and began developing a strategic plan to foster multidisciplinary collaborations to improve victim service. To support the pilot sites, TTAC developed tools, such as needs assessment surveys and stakeholder discussion group protocols, and delivered ongoing technical assistance.

- Recognizing that many victims reach out to their clergy and faith-based communities for help with healing and finding needed resources, OVC seeks the active involvement of the clergy and faith-based organizations in improving the urban community's response to victims. OVC competitively selected the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center to administer a collaborative response to victims in five high-crime, urban communities. Under this initiative, each community establishes a network of faith-based victim assistance programs that collaborate with each other and with secular victim assistance programs to provide and enhance services to victims. This includes developing a directory of faith-based victim assistance programs and recruiting and training volunteers from churches, mosques, and synagogues to provide services to victims.

### **Addressing the needs of rural victims**

Despite the increase in victims' rights and services over the past two decades, many victims still struggle to discover what rights they have, what services and resources are available, and how to access those

services and resources—as services are often fragmented or unavailable in the victim's community. In rural areas, additional obstacles affect the availability, timeliness, and quality of services for victims. These barriers include long distances, geographic isolation, limited funding and resources, a lack of information about victimization, and social attitudes that may discourage victims from seeking the help they need.

Law enforcement officers are often the first to approach victims after a crime occurs and may be the only contact victims have with the criminal justice system. In many rural areas, law enforcement officers are confronted with limited resources for services that are important in helping victims begin the emotional, physical, and financial healing process. Rural law enforcement agencies need help identifying resources and promising practices to creatively and economically meet this challenge.

In FY 2002, OVC competitively announced the Victim Services in Rural Law Enforcement initiative. OVC selected the Alabama Attorney General and NSA to develop and administer a 4-year project that integrates a strong victim assistance component into rural law enforcement agencies. Funding will be used for planning community needs assessments, implementing plans, and developing or significantly enhancing each community's ability to help victims, including the quality of the first response to victims by law enforcement.

## CHAPTER 6

### EDUCATING THE PUBLIC AND ASSISTING THE FIELD



#### **National Crime Victims' Rights Week**

OVC coordinates the annual commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) every April to recognize individuals and organizations that demonstrate outstanding service in supporting victims and victim services. To increase public awareness, OVC funds the development of a resource guide for use and adaptation by local communities during the weeklong celebration. Each year, OVC conducts an extensive nomination and review process to identify exemplary recipients of the National Crime Victim Service Award and the Crime Victims Fund Award. The Service Award is the highest federal honor bestowed on outstanding advocates, many of whom are victims serving as role models and offering inspiration to others in the field. The Fund Award recognizes outstanding federal employees whose work contributes to deposits in the Fund.

The 2001 award ceremony marked the first time both awards were presented at the same event. Attorney General Ashcroft presided over the ceremony held in the Russell Senate Office Building. In 2002, President Bush joined Attorney General Ashcroft to present the awards and announce the administration's support for the proposed Crime Victims' Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. For detailed information regarding the award recipients' accomplishments, please visit [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ncvrw/welcome.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ncvrw/welcome.html).



## Informing the Field

Over the past decade, OVC has witnessed substantial growth in the victims' field and an increase in the variety of issues facing victims and those who serve them. OVC has seen an expansion of the roles and responsibilities of allied professionals; a proliferation of research, evaluation, and statistics on the impact of crime; implementation of victims' rights; and expanded delivery of services to victims. For the field to continue to advance, it is essential that OVC empower victims and victim service providers by facilitating the exchange of information at the local, state, national, and international levels. OVC offers vital information dissemination primarily through the OVC Resource Center (OVCRC) and OVC's Web site.

### OVC Resource Center

OVC established a national victims' clearinghouse in response to a recommendation contained in the 1982 Final Report of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime that stated "the Federal Government should establish a federally based resource center for victim and witness assistance." OVCRC's core objective is to provide information and resources to the field and to work with national, international, state, military, and tribal victim assistance and criminal justice agencies, and other professional organizations, to support their efforts in promoting fundamental rights and comprehensive services for all victims. OVCRC has a broad mandate in terms of its practitioner focus that includes federal, state, local, and tribal agencies serving victims and victim service providers; private nonprofit victim service organizations; victim advocacy organizations; victims' rights organizations; and researchers and educators.

As a component of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), OVCRC is part of the most



comprehensive criminal justice library in the world. Each year, OVCRC acquires more than 500 new victim-related documents for the NCJRS collection. OVCRC produces, collects, maintains, and disseminates information and resources for victims, victim service providers, and allied professionals. As of April 2003, 5 of the top 10 most frequently requested items from the NCJRS Online Ordering System were OVC documents and products. The number one item was the *2003 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide*. Also among the top 10 were three videos: two about serving crime victims with disabilities ("Meet Us Where We Are" and "The Time Is Now") and "Victims Speak Out: Help, Hope, and Healing" (and discussion guide). During the biennium, a monthly average of 5,300 hits were recorded on the NCJRS "Victims of Crime" Web page.

OVCRC prides itself on responsive customer service. Information about victims is available 24 hours a day through the Internet and Fax-on-Demand system. When a requester asks OVCRC for help, information specialists will tailor a response based on the requester's needs by using regional and national

victimization statistics, research findings, and a network of victim advocates and organizations. During FYs 2001 and 2002, OVCRC fulfilled 37,839 requests (an average of 1,577 per month) by phone, e-mail, fax, mail, the NCJRS Online Ordering System, and other methods. Beginning in November 2000 (when the NCJRS Online Ordering System was launched) through September 2002, OVCRC fulfilled 20 percent of requests directly through the NCJRS Online Ordering System. OVCRC also responds to inquiries from the field via the online "Ask OVC" feature on our Web pages. OVCRC staff responded to 1,573 "Ask OVC" e-mail inquiries during the reporting period. About 22 percent of the e-mail inquiries were from victims who most frequently indicated child abuse, fraud, domestic violence, or homicide as the type of victimization they experienced. Of the 77

requests to assist victims of terrorist events, 40 were received in September 2001.

OVCRC staff attend local, state, and national conferences to share appropriate OVC resources and promote dialog about emerging issues in the field. OVCRC also provides publications and resource materials for training workshops, seminars, and conferences on request. In FYs 2001 and 2002, OVCRC supported 256 conferences, with OVC solo exhibits at 13 conferences, NCJRS "consolidated" exhibits at 50 conferences, and document support at 193 conferences. In FY 2002 alone, OVCRC disseminated 143,807 copies of OVC publications. For a complete list of OVC products published during the biennium, please see appendix F. For a list of all OVC products, visit [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/welcome.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/welcome.html).

**For the field to continue to advance, it is essential that OVC empower victims and victim service providers by facilitating the exchange of information at the local, state, national, and international levels.**



## Online Directory of Crime Victim Services

OVCRC provides support to OVC on numerous other special assignments. For instance, OVCRC staff helped create an online Directory of Crime Victim Services for use by victims and service providers. The directory lists providers who address various victims' needs. A demonstration directory containing resources from three states and Canada was displayed at the 28th Annual NOVA Conference in August 2002. OVCRC staff asked participants for feedback and direction on how to improve its usability to the field. Launched on October 31, 2003, the directory offers a centralized, searchable database of victim assistance programs nationwide and also allows new programs to enroll.

## OVC Web site and listserv capabilities

The OVC Web site is another way OVC provides information and leadership to the field, both domestically and internationally. The Web site ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc)) is accessed by victims, victim advocates, VOCA administrators and subrecipients, discretionary grantees, educators, policymakers, and the public. The Web site provides a wealth of information to visitors, including the following:

- “What’s New” announces recently released publications, videos, and current OVC initiatives.
- “Grants and Funding” explains each of OVC’s major funding opportunities and includes the “Discretionary Toolbox”—a new, one-stop resource for information on current funding opportunities, compliance and monitoring requirements, and financial information for current and future OVC grantees.
- “Help for Victims” offers Internet links to resources of interest to victims, including OVC’s Directory of Crime Victim Services.
- “Publications” provides an annotated list of OVC publications that can be downloaded. Through this page, users may also view clips for select video products and public service announcements so users can better understand their content and usefulness to the field.
- “Resources for International Victims” offers information on global and international issues for victims, including frequently-requested OVC publications in foreign languages such as Spanish, French, Traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese.

OVC’s Web site content continues to grow, as do the number of users who access the site. OVC has seen a tremendous increase in visitors accessing the site since its creation in 1997, and from June 2002 to October 2003, saw a 55-percent jump in visitors to the site. The top three pages visitors access on OVC’s Web site are the “Help for Victims” page (which offers links to information resources on 29 topics such as terrorism and mass violence, campus crime, stalking, and identity theft), the “Grants and Funding” page, and the “Publications” page.

OVC continues to use listservs to communicate with VOCA administrators and subgrantees about new OJP developments, including technology enhancements; opportunities for training, including state academies; and grant funding announcements. In addition, OVC has a listserv for organizations considering applying for funding. This listserv is used to notify

**“Thanks so very much for taking the time to provide such exhaustive information. It is a great assistance to have the information in order to properly respond to program inquiries.”**

—Carmela Welte  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
of National CASA Association

members when solicitations are posted on the Web site and provides further information on changes to OJP's new Grants Management System. OVC also developed a new logo tagline, which is "Putting Victims First."

## **National Public Awareness and Education Campaign**

Public policy is shaped by public opinion, and to fulfill its leadership role, OVC must work with victims to make their voices resonate throughout the Nation. OVC launched the National Public Awareness and Education Campaign to increase the public's awareness of and support for victims' rights, issues, and services. This project, which is being conducted by Justice Solutions, will develop quality, user-friendly resources for victim service professionals. In addition, the campaign will build the capacity of victim service organizations to develop and sustain ongoing public awareness and victim outreach activities at the community level. For more information, please visit [www.justicesolutions.org](http://www.justicesolutions.org).

## **Victims' Rights Education Project**

OVC funded the Victims' Rights Education Project (VREP), conducted by the National Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment Network (NVCAN), to assess the implementation of victims' rights legislation in 12 states. NVCAN will examine 10 core rights

available to victims in each state. The project will then develop informational materials for the general public explaining rights available to crime victims. When completed, the project will provide public education materials that can be adapted by state and local community-based programs to inform victims of their rights and how to assert their statutory and state constitutional rights. For more information, visit NVCAN's Web site at [www.nvcn.org](http://www.nvcn.org).

## **Oral History Project**

The victims' movement is a contemporary example of positive social evolution. Over 30 years, the movement has grown from infancy to a national agenda for putting victims first. In the past 20 years, the Federal Government has accepted responsibility for national leadership by first convening the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime in 1982 and then establishing OVC to administer the Crime Victims Fund. OVC recognizes that many movement leaders creatively contributed to this evolution. Under the OVC Oral History Project, key contributors to the success of the victims' movement will be interviewed about their involvement in advancing policy and practice. The project will produce special reports, videotaped documentation of the oral history of America's victims' movement, and accessible archives.