



2004

Twentieth anniversary of VOCA. Congress enacts the Justice for All Act.



2000

Congress enacts the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA).



1998

Congress enacts the Crime Victims With Disabilities Act.



1996

Congress enacts the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Mandatory Victim Restitution Act.



1994

Congress enacts the Violence Against Women Act.



1984

Congress enacts the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which establishes the Crime Victims Fund.



1983

U.S. Department of Justice administratively creates the Office for Victims of Crime.



1982

President Reagan commissions a Task Force on Victims of Crime.



Office for Victims of Crime
Report to the Nation

2005

Fiscal Years 2003–2004

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgmentsiii
Message From the Directorvii
Crime Victims Fund Supports Victim Services	1
Funding State Victim Assistance Efforts	5
Victim Funding in Indian Country	17
Programs Offer Support for Victims of International Trafficking	23
Collaboration With the Faith Community Expands Victim Services	27
Victim Assistance Strategies Meet the New Needs of Terrorism Victims	31
Meeting the Needs of Priority Victims	35
Strategies Address Growing Impact of Identity Theft	41
Victims' Rights and Services Continue the Reagan Legacy	45
Looking Back, Moving Forward	51
APPENDIX A. VOCA Victim Compensation Allocations in FYs 2003 and 2004	55
APPENDIX B. VOCA Victim Assistance Allocations in FYs 2003 and 2004	57
APPENDIX C. Tribal Victim Assistance (TVA) Allocations in FYs 2003 and 2004	59
APPENDIX D. Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Grant Program Allocations in FYs 2003 and 2004	61
APPENDIX E. Services for Trafficking Victims Discretionary Grant Program Allocations in FYs 2003 and 2004	63

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

For more than 20 years, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has remained dedicated to helping victims understand and assert their rights. It has worked tirelessly to give victims a more prominent presence in the criminal justice system, and to help them access the many services available. OVC continues to make a noticeable difference in the victims field by upholding victims' rights and improving services. In Fiscal Years 2003 and 2004, OVC emphasized work on many fronts, including human trafficking, identity theft and fraud, international terrorism, sexual violence, faith-based collaborations, victims' rights and services, and Indian Country.

This *Report to the Nation 2005* highlights OVC's focus areas from October 1, 2002, to September 30, 2004, and important initiatives that extend into Fiscal Year 2005. The initiatives undertaken in each area support the missions of the Office of Justice Programs, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Attorney General's Management Initiative, and the President's Management Agenda—all of which focus on providing victims with greater access to justice through the enforcement of federal laws, representation of individual rights, and efforts to prevent, reduce, and control crime.

As OVC marked the 25th commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) in April 2005, it also paused to celebrate the legacy of President Ronald W. Reagan. This year's NCVRW observance was dedicated to President Reagan because of his rich legacy in promoting victims' rights and services. In the most fundamental ways, President Reagan gave the field a solid foundation on which it could grow and provided strong leadership. His 1982 Task Force on Victims of Crime focused national attention on victims' needs for the first time and recommended federal legislation that created the Crime Victims Fund, which supported key programs authorized by the Victims of Crime Act. The legislation was also the impetus for creating OVC.

This report, which outlines the priorities and accomplishments of the biennium, is a testament to President Reagan's vision. Each section summarizes victims' needs in that area and how OVC is helping to meet them. Also included in the report are notable recent events by states on behalf of crime victims. Though not supported by OVC funding, these events illustrate the tremendous momentum the field has built over the years, and identify significant milestones that may affect how services are delivered to many victims in the future.

Ongoing updates about specific OVC-supported initiatives are available via the OVC Focus On series, an electronic companion to the report that details significant activities OVC has initiated and supported.

I hope you find the initiatives and accomplishments outlined in the *Report to the Nation 2005* informative and insightful. OVC truly believes that the victim should come first and, through our ongoing efforts, we will continue to make this happen.

John W. Gillis
Director



CHAPTER 1

Crime Victims Fund Supports Victim Services

Funding for all of the victim assistance and compensation programs supported by OVC comes from the Crime Victims Fund (the Fund), a unique account made up of criminal fines, forfeited bonds, penalties, special assessments, gifts, bequests, and donations. It was established by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA), and is designed to be a self-sufficient source of program support that requires no funding from taxpayers.

Each year, Fund moneys—up to a congressionally designated limit that was established to minimize the impact of fluctuations in the overall Fund balance on grant recipients—are distributed through formula grants and set-asides defined by VOCA to a variety of state, tribal, and federal victim programs. In FYs 2003 and 2004, these included—

- **State victim compensation programs**, which reimburse victims of violent crimes for out-of-pocket expenses that result from the crime.
- **State victim assistance programs**, which support direct victim service providers.
- **OVC discretionary grants**, which fund training and technical assistance activities, program evaluations, demonstration projects, compliance efforts, and fellowships and internships.
- **Victim/witness coordinators in U.S. Attorneys' Offices**, who inform victims about a variety of issues, including restitution orders and their right to make oral statements at sentencing.
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation victim specialists**, who keep victims of federal crimes informed of case developments and proceedings, and direct them to appropriate resources.
- **The Federal Victim Notification System**, which provides a means for notifying victims of the release or detention status of offenders, the filing of charges against suspected offenders, court proceedings and outcomes, and sentence and restitution information.

- **The Children's Justice Act**, which supports services and programs to improve the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse and neglect cases in Indian Country.
- **The Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve**, which funds emergency expenses and other services for victims of terrorism or mass violence within the United States and abroad.



FY 2003 and 2004 Fund Activity

Distributions

OVC distributed approximately \$1.2 billion in Fund moneys during FYs 2003 and 2004. Almost 85 percent of these funds were allocated to state compensation and assistance programs, with another 5 percent going to OVC discretionary programs (figure 1). The remainder was distributed among the Executive Office for

United States Attorneys (EOUSA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Victim Notification System (VNS).

The most notable shift in Fund activity was a significant increase in victim compensation program funding, which rose 90 percent from FY 2001–2002 levels. The jump was due primarily to a change in the grant formula that increased the amount of money each state receives. Previously, each state had been awarded compensation funding equal to 40 percent of the state-funded compensation benefits it paid out during the preceding year. However, effective in FY 2003, that funding level rose to 60 percent. A continuing trend toward more compensation claims and higher average claim amounts also contributed to the increase.

Although the increase in compensation program funding meant that more resources were available to help victims pay for crime-related expenses, it had an adverse effect on funding for state victim assistance programs that support direct services. Erratic funding patterns

FIGURE 1. Crime Victims Fund Cash Flow, FYs 2003 and 2004 (in \$ millions)

Income	FY 2003	FY 2004
Deposits	\$519.5	\$361.3
Total available funds*	1,331.8	1,093.3
Amount Available for Allocation (the Cap)	617.6**	671.3**
Expenditures		
Children's Justice Act	20.0	20.0
U.S. Attorneys' victim/witness coordinators	18.3	20.6
FBI victim assistance specialists	10.4	19.7
Victim notification system	5.1	5.1
OVC discretionary grants	28.2	31.5
State compensation grants	164.9	186.1
State victim assistance grants	353.0	339.0

* Includes new collections, unobligated balances, carryover funds, and other adjustments.

** FY 2003 funds include \$17.6 million and FY 2004 funds include \$50 million for the Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve.

in recent years have made it difficult for assistance programs to plan for new services and sustain existing ones. FYs 2003 and 2004 were especially difficult. Funding fell by \$30 million in 2003 as the allocation process absorbed the impact of changing the compensation grant formula, and increased only negligibly in 2004.

That drop in funding has cast new attention on a problem that increasingly affects the amount of money available for assistance programs: the position of those programs in the allocation process (figure 2). Currently, assistance programs receive the total amount of funds remaining after all other set-asides and formula grants have been distributed. As a result, assistance programs are likely

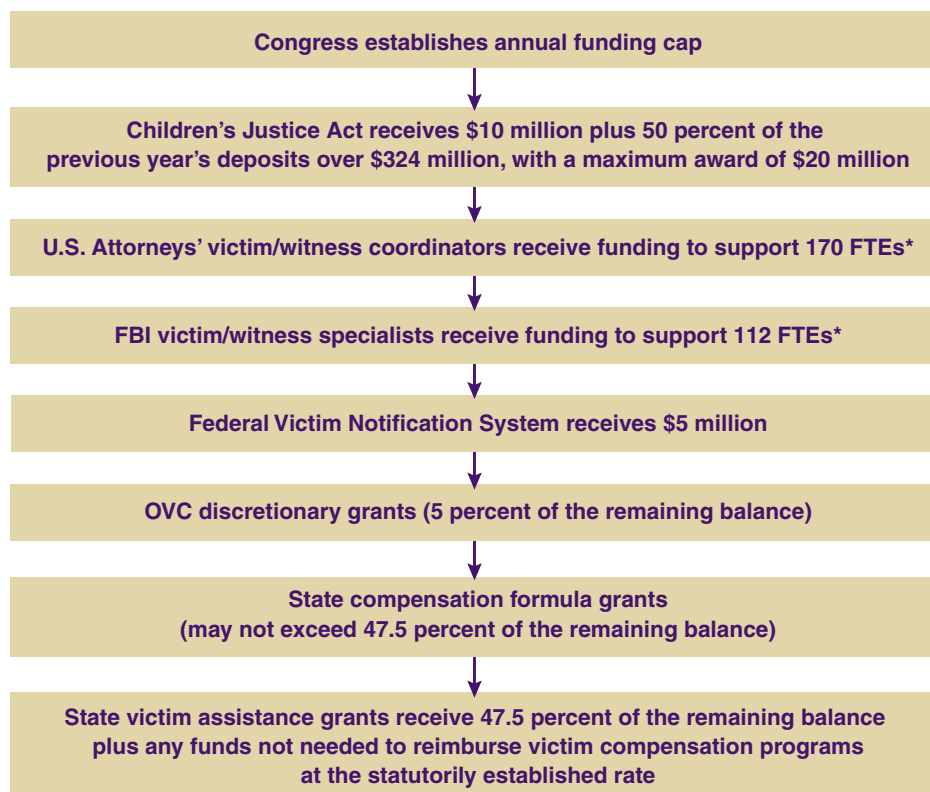
to receive increases in funding only when funding levels remain steady for all programs. If funding increases for another program area, as it did for compensation programs in FY 2003, assistance programs suffer most immediately and dramatically.

Deposit Patterns

Slightly less than \$1.2 billion was deposited into the Fund in FYs 2003 and 2004. Most of that money was received in 2004 as a result of three large case settlements that included fines totaling \$520 million. Without these settlements, FY 2004 deposits would have been only \$313 million, and the 2-year deposit total just \$675 million.

A relatively small number of large cases with fines of more than \$100 million have taken annual Fund deposits on a roller coaster ride.

FIGURE 2. Crime Victims Fund Allocation Process



* Full-time employees.

Georgia

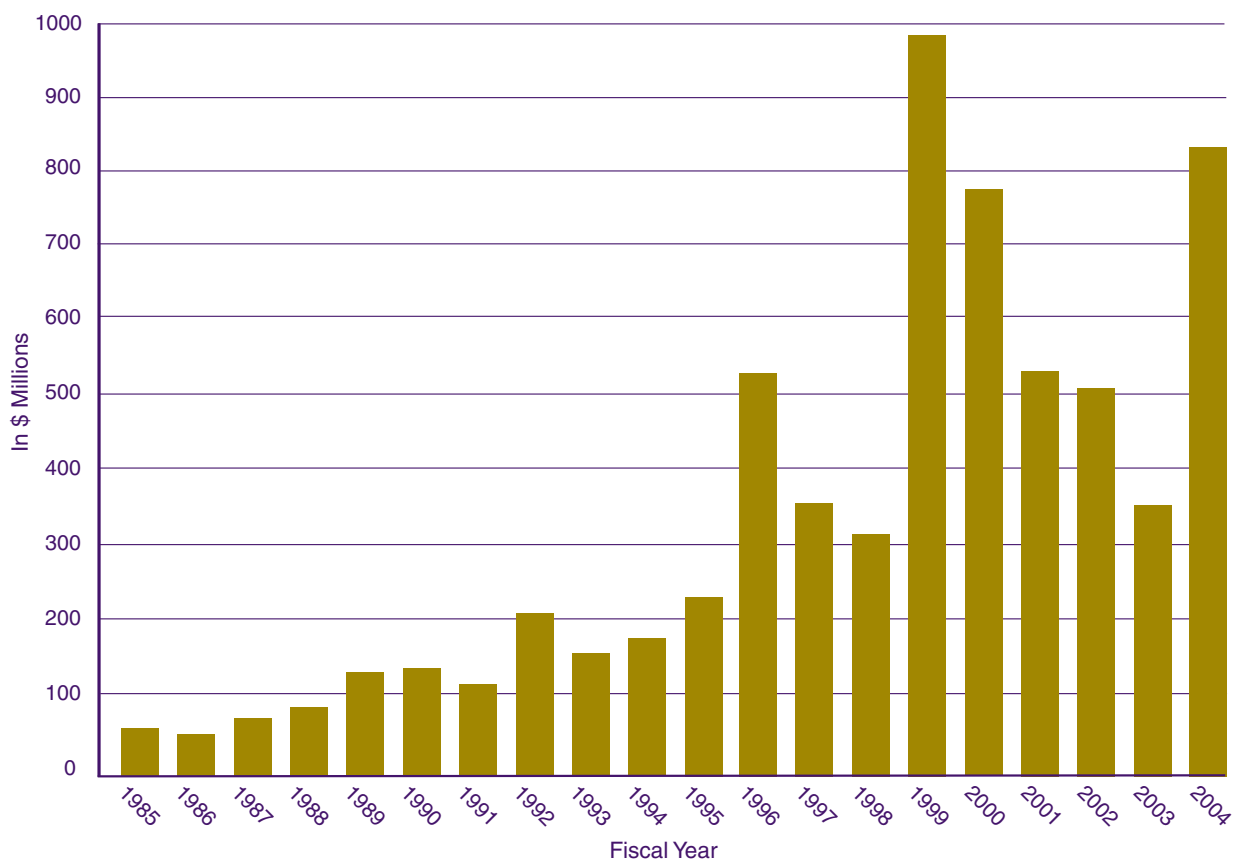
Governor proposes “The Crime Victims Restitution Act of 2005” to strengthen victims’ rights to restitution and civil recovery from convicted defendants. If passed, the bill would make full restitution to victims mandatory for all adult or juvenile offenders, permit the ordering of interest on the restitution amount, and enhance the state’s ability to collect restitution.

Oregon

Governor announces plans to accelerate the criminal background check process, create a criminal history registry to alert elder care providers when applicants have criminal records, and increase training for bank employees on financial exploitation of elderly people.

The significant fluctuations in deposit levels between 2003 and 2004 continue an ongoing pattern that has affected the Fund for a number of years (figure 3). Since 1996, a relatively small number of large cases with fines of more than \$100 million have taken annual Fund deposits on a roller coaster ride of steep increases followed by declines. The result has been a significant increase in available resources—45 percent of all Fund deposits since FY 1996 have come from large cases—and expansion of the number of programs supported by the Fund.

FIGURE 3. Crime Victims Fund Deposits



Source: Compiled from Office of Justice Programs data.



CHAPTER 2

Funding State Victim Assistance Efforts

As the Nation's flagship agency in the victims' rights movement, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) supports thousands of programs that raise awareness of victims' issues, promote compliance with victims' rights laws, provide training and technical assistance to victim service providers and allied professionals, and offer basic victim services. It does these things with one goal in mind: to help victims of crime rebuild their identities and lives following victimization.

OVC priorities are to address the evolving needs of the field and fill gaps in service. In FYs 2003 and 2004, this meant dedicating resources to programs for trafficking victims, establishing ties with the faith community, refining systems and services designed to serve victims of terrorism and mass violence, reaching out to small grassroots service providers, and expanding service networks in Indian Country. OVC accomplished these goals by supporting direct victim services, training and technical assistance, resource development, and the strategic use of technology.

Victim Compensation and Assistance

The 1984 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) authorizes OVC to administer two major formula grants that support state crime victim compensation and assistance programs. *Victim compensation* grants supplement state efforts to provide financial assistance and reimbursement to victims for costs associated with a crime, and to encourage victim cooperation and participation in the criminal justice process. *Victim assistance* grants support the provision of services that (1) respond to the emotional and physical needs of victims, (2) help primary and secondary victims stabilize their lives after a victimization, (3) help victims understand and participate in the criminal justice system, and (4) provide victims with a measure of safety and security (e.g., covering the cost of broken windows and repairing or replacing locks). Both programs use moneys from the Crime Victims Fund, a self-sustaining fund that comprises criminal fines, forfeited bonds, penalties, special assessments, gifts, bequests, and donations that was established by VOCA to address victims' needs (see "Crime Victims Fund Supports Victim Services" for details).

Together, victim compensation and assistance grants made up more than 85 percent of all funding administered by OVC during the biennium. Slightly more than \$1 billion was distributed through these two programs, including approximately \$518 million in FY 2003 and \$542 million in FY 2004.

Victim Compensation Trends and Issues

Victim compensation programs reimburse victims for state qualified crime-related expenses when no other resources—such as private insurance—cover their losses.

Once a claim is processed, payment is sent directly to either a victim or servicing vendor.

Approximately \$351 million in VOCA compensation funds were allocated to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 2 U.S. territories in FYs 2003 and 2004. Most states received between \$1 million and \$5 million, with the median award amount for the 2-year period at some \$2.2 million.

A state-by-state breakdown of compensation award amounts is provided in appendix A.

The overall amount of VOCA compensation funding—\$351 million—was up 90 percent from FY 2001–2002. The sharp increase was largely a result of changes to the formula by which the grant amount is calculated. Previously, each state had been awarded compensation funding equal to 40 percent of the state-funded compensation benefits it paid out during the preceding year. Effective in FY 2003, that funding level rose to 60 percent. This increase allowed states the option of awarding payment to a greater number of individuals or increasing the claim benefit.

The trend to increase claim amounts was highlighted in an OVC-funded study of trends in VOCA compensation and assistance funding that was completed in 2004, which also identified trends toward higher numbers of compensation claims and higher claim amounts as reasons for increased compensation costs. The study attributed the change to greater public awareness of compensation benefits, assistance staff that are better skilled at identifying compensation opportunities and helping victims take advantage of them, and the rising cost of services that may be eligible for reimbursement.

A closer review of VOCA compensation claims shows that 171,912 claims were approved in FY 2003, with an average payout of \$2,500 each. These benefits were most often used to cover medical and dental expenses incurred as a result of assault. Assault cases gave rise to the largest number of claims, and accounted for both the largest number of paid claims (73,280) and the largest total payout amount (\$227,433,870). Under the assault category, nearly 84 percent of all paid claims were domestic violence-related claims. Sixty-five percent of all VOCA compensation claimants were adult victims ages 18–64, 31 percent were youth age 17 or younger, and 4 percent were elderly victims age 65 or older.

In FY 2004, 170,739 claims were approved at an average payout of slightly more than \$2,400. Once again, assault cases accounted for the majority of paid claims (82,100) and total payout amount (\$235,123,978). Domestic violence-related claims under the assault category dipped slightly to 83 percent, while percentages for the claimants' ages were largely unchanged from the previous fiscal year.

VOCA compensation programs continue to meet various challenges. Identifying and meeting the needs of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse victims continue to be major issues for



compensation programs, according to Dan Eddy, Executive Director of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards. “States are covering medical expenses, counseling, and other recovery costs [and also] paying for the relocation of domestic violence victims to safer residences,” he says. In Florida, the domestic violence relocation benefit “is the number one priority due to the potential danger a domestic violence victim may face,” says Gwen Ford Roache, Chief of Florida’s Bureau of Victim Compensation. “Emphasis is put on [the] ‘immediate need’ to relocate [victims] to a safe environment. Each relocation claim is processed as an emergency award and a check is in the hands of a victim within two workdays.”

Another challenge that most victim compensation programs face is adequate funding. “Cuts and reductions in [state] funding [or resources that will decrease eligible payouts] at the same time the program has experienced a large growth in claims received” is an ongoing challenge, says Jason Barber, Assistant Director of Oregon’s Crime Victims Assistance Section. “We are also seeing more and more claimants without insurance who are more dependent on the compensation program for all of their medical needs. This makes claims management more challenging as we attempt to pay only crime-related treatment,” he notes.

Meanwhile, trying to pay claims more quickly and efficiently continues to be an ongoing hurdle for compensation programs even as states are working to improve their claims processing through automation. Some states have recently transitioned from a manual processing system to a paperless system in an effort to streamline the process and compensate victims more quickly.

District of Columbia

Law extending unemployment compensation to victims who voluntarily or involuntarily leave work as a result of domestic violence goes into effect.

Pennsylvania

Governor signs legislation expanding the list of crimes for which victims can receive compensation and changes the application deadline to 2 years within discovery of the crime.

Finally, several state compensation programs are focusing on outreach and training efforts to reach more victims and to educate more professionals in the victim services field on the specifics of the state program, preparing and expediting claims, and the latest developments in technology and legislation. The successful outreach efforts have also added to the challenge of how to use existing compensation resources.

Victim Assistance Trends and Issues

Unlike compensation, victim assistance funding is awarded through subgrants to state victim agencies and local service providers.¹ The funds benefit victims by supporting the delivery of direct services and enabling the development of new programs that address existing and emerging needs.

FY 2003–2004 VOCA victim assistance funding—which was distributed to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 5 U.S. territories—was down nearly \$30 million from previous levels. (A discussion of the factors related to this can be found in the first section, “Crime Victims Fund Supports Victim Services.”) VOCA grant awards during the biennium

Each relocation claim is processed as an emergency award and a check is in the hands of a victim within 2 workdays.

¹ Please note that some figures in this section, particularly in figures 4, 5, and 6, are current as of February 18, 2005. The figures are not final because FY 2003 victim assistance grants do not close until FY 2007, and FY 2004 grants do not close until FY 2008.

VOCA grant awards totaled \$709 million and supported more than 4,000 agencies.

totaled \$709 million (appendix B) and supported more than 4,000 agencies. In 2003, VOCA-funded victim service agencies provided more than 16 million services to an estimated 3.8 million victims, 49 percent of whom were victims of domestic violence. In FY 2004, more than 17.8 million services were provided to some 4.1 million victims, 47.3 percent of whom were victims of domestic violence.

VOCA subgrants support various types of services—including crisis counseling, therapy, shelter, criminal justice support, referrals, and emergency legal and financial assistance—which are determined in part by a formula and in part by individual state needs. VOCA requires that states allocate 40 percent of their VOCA assistance funds to support services for the following priority populations: sexual assault victims, domestic abuse victims, child abuse victims, and underserved victims of violent crime (10 percent of the allocation is designated for each group). OVC gives states broad discretion to decide which victim populations fall within the underserved category.

They may include the survivors of homicide victims, adults molested as children, and victims of drunk-driving crashes, physical assault, elder abuse, robbery, and kidnaping. States may then award the remaining 60 percent of funds to support programs that serve victims of other crimes.

Programs serving victims of domestic violence received the largest amount of VOCA funds directed toward priority and underserved areas in both fiscal years: \$78.3 million in 2003, and \$39.5 million in 2004 (figure 4). The \$78.3 million awarded in 2003 accounted for 39 percent of all VOCA assistance funding awarded that year. Another 18 percent of FY 2003 funds—\$36.5 million—was directed toward sexual assault services. Similar percentages were spent on domestic violence and sexual assault services in FY 2004. A survey of selected state VOCA administrators found that VOCA funding fills an essential need in addressing victim needs in this area.

Joseph Hood III, Division Director of Grants Administration for the Criminal

FIGURE 4. VOCA Assistance Allocations for Priority and Underserved Areas (in \$)

Service Area	FY 2003	FY 2004
Priority Areas		
Child abuse	\$39,449,700	\$25,126,040
Domestic violence	78,359,449	39,515,283
Sexual assault	36,515,608	23,306,755
Total Priority	\$154,324,757	\$87,948,078
Underserved Victim Areas		
DUI/DWI crashes	\$5,351,833	\$2,283,580
Survivors of homicide victims	5,166,347	3,115,547
Assault	6,481,945	3,990,081
Adults molested as children	5,217,430	3,707,736
Elder abuse	5,512,346	3,346,676
Robbery	3,190,974	2,135,973
Other violent crimes	11,189,434	6,358,100
Total Underserved	\$42,110,309	\$24,937,639
Total	\$196,435,066	\$112,885,717

Justice Coordinating Council in Georgia, says VOCA is the second major funding source of domestic violence programs behind the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). VOCA and HHS money work in partnership and fund all the shelters in the state and provide a complete array of services (preventing domestic violence, helping women transition back to work, counseling, and accompanying victims to court). Georgia VOCA funds help prosecutors' offices in almost every county pay for domestic violence advocates who assist victims through the judicial system, including helping them get protective orders. In some instances, Hood says, funds are used to provide victims with legal aid. Some projects also help with counseling for victims and their children, especially emergency counseling (e.g., when they are leaving their home).

In Iowa, a large portion of VOCA funds—far above the mandated amount—goes to domestic violence and sexual assault programs (the state funds both programs together).

According to Virginia Beane, Grant Administrator for the Crime Victim Assistance Division in the Iowa Department of Justice, all Iowa VOCA funds go to direct services. Most of the domestic violence programs have their own shelters; the vast majority of the funds go to staffing the shelters. Most of the programs funded by Iowa's VOCA money are well established and have been funded for years.

In 2 years, the number of victims served by domestic violence programs in the state increased more than 5 percent, but the number of women and children who stayed at shelters decreased by slightly less than 8 percent. In 2002, 20,688 victims were seen and 4,762 women and children were sheltered; in 2004, 21,780 victims sought services and 4,396 women and children stayed in shelters.

Beane describes Iowa's multitiered certification program for domestic violence advocates: Almost all advocates have been trained on the first tier, and many have received training on other tiers. The training has helped advocates become more professional and more aware of the types of victims who are eligible to receive services through VOCA funding. The quality of services also has improved, and as a result victims are not in the system as long.

The State of Oregon issued 44 grants for essential domestic violence services in FY 2004. Connie Gallagher, Administrator of the Crime Victims Assistance Section in the Oregon Department of Justice, describes how the state funds noncompetitive grants to provide programs with funding stability and competitive grants to help programs address issues such as special populations. Gallagher says that her office is constantly trying to improve cultural competency and services for domestic violence victims. For example, her office has joined the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) administrator in a joint cultural competence program.

Gallagher explains how VOCA shares a single domestic violence data collection instrument with the other two state domestic violence funders. Additionally, they have developed common outcome measures they use to discuss domestic violence measures throughout the state. She notes that this developed because state sources of domestic violence funding requested information on safety; that is, whether women who leave shelters received a safety assessment and a safety plan. Since collecting the data, they have seen an increase in women who have safety plans.



A review of the number of grants that support services for specific victimizations also reflects the importance of VOCA funding to domestic violence victims (figure 5). More than 2,000 subgrants supported domestic violence initiatives in FY 2003, and more than 1,400 in FY 2004. Subgrants for child sexual abuse and child physical abuse were ranked second and third, respectively.



Most subgrants awarded during this reporting period were to private nonprofit victim assistance agencies such as hospitals, rape crisis centers, mental health agencies, shelters, and religious organizations (figure 6). They received 2,158 grants in FY 2003, more than twice the number awarded to government agencies both inside and outside the criminal justice system. (Government recipients include law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, probation offices, corrections officials, social services, mental health providers,

and hospitals.) The same was true in FY 2004, though the overall number of grants was less—1,254; government agencies received 619. The types of agencies in the private nonprofit category that received the most assistance were shelters and rape crisis centers, which in both years made up roughly half of recipients in the group—again emphasizing the importance of VOCA funding to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Prosecutors and law enforcement entities received the largest number of subgrants awarded to service providers in the government sector, receiving more than 75 percent of those awards each year.

Subgrant recipients in both 2003 and 2004 overwhelmingly used VOCA assistance funding to continue already established services. Relatively few VOCA recipients used the funds to begin new victim service projects or to expand existing projects.

In both years, VOCA assistance subgrants were most often intended to provide crisis counseling, assistance with filing compensation claim forms, and referrals to other service providers. More than 4.6 million victims received referral information either by telephone or in person in

FIGURE 5. Number of VOCA Assistance Subgrants, by Type of Victimization

Type of Victimization	FY 2003	FY 2004
Child physical abuse	1,752	1,123
Child sexual abuse	2,097	1,286
DUI/DWI crashes	875	555
Domestic violence	2,286	1,413
Adult sexual assault	1,745	1,095
Elder abuse	1,188	782
Adults molested as children	1,398	891
Survivors of homicide victims	1,026	679
Robbery	899	591
Assault	1,145	760
Other violent crime	812	476
Other	279	1

FIGURE 6. Number of VOCA Assistance Subgrants, by Implementing Agency

Type of Implementing Agency	FY 2003	FY 2004
<i>Criminal Justice—Government</i>	902	543
Corrections	13	6
Court	42	28
Law enforcement agency	262	196
Probation	28	8
Prosecution	535	284
Other	22	21
<i>Noncriminal Justice—Government</i>	108	76
Hospital	9	4
Mental health	5	1
Public housing	0	0
Social service	40	29
Other	54	42
<i>Private Nonprofit</i>	2,158	1,254
Hospital	35	15
Mental health agencies	120	76
Rape crisis	476	250
Religious organization	18	20
Shelter	752	406
Other	757	487
<i>Native American Tribe or Organization</i>	36	20
On reservation	30	16
Off reservation	6	4

FY 2003. More than 2.2 million received followup services; 2 million received criminal justice support and advocacy, such as accompaniment to court appearances; and 1.7 million received crisis counseling (figure 7).

Although most VOCA subgrant recipients used the moneys to continue existing programs, some launched innovative new strategies for addressing previously underserved victim populations. The South Carolina Department of Public Safety, for example, has awarded VOCA victim assistance grant funds to support a victim advocate position within the state's department of natural resources (DNR). Because DNR is charged with enforcing state hunting and boating laws, it is also responsible for ensuring that people who

are victimized when those laws are broken are informed of their rights and provided services. The victim advocate serves this function, providing victims of negligent hunting or boating incidents, reckless homicide, boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and property crime with crisis intervention services, court accompaniment, information and referrals, followup home visits, and assistance with filing for victim compensation. (Additional information about OVC's priorities and initiatives related to enforcing and expanding victims' rights appears in the section "Victims' Rights and Services Continue the Reagan Legacy.")

Looking forward, grantees have identified a number of trends that will require increased attention in coming years. They

More than 4.6 million victims received referral information either by telephone or in person in FY 2003.

FIGURE 7. Number of Victims Served by VOCA Assistance Subgrants, by Type of Assistance

Type of Assistance	FY 2003	FY 2004
Assistance in filing compensation claims	773,420	813,005
Crisis counseling	1,784,588	1,855,996
Criminal justice support and advocacy	2,085,534	2,047,193
Emergency financial assistance	194,502	245,261
Emergency legal advocacy	414,501	418,047
Followup contact	2,294,840	2,160,493
Group treatment	470,645	480,406
Personal advocacy	1,385,031	1,375,350
Information and referral (by telephone)	2,599,722	2,908,716
Information and referral (in person)	2,089,112	2,346,796
Shelter/safe house	461,077	432,162
Therapy	340,978	315,512
Other	1,885,191	2,410,625

As state contributions have become smaller, victim assistance programs have become increasingly dependent on VOCA funds.

include greater interaction with non-English speaking victims, victims with disabilities, and victims with mental health conditions, as well as meeting the ongoing needs of elderly victims. A portion of future awards will be dedicated to developing strategies and programs that address the unique needs of these populations, further expanding the overall impact of VOCA funds. As state contributions have become smaller, victim assistance programs have become increasingly dependent on VOCA funds. Prospective future reductions in VOCA assistance funding may pose challenges for individual service providers as they work to develop new programs while maintaining their current levels of service.

The concern over funding was reiterated in interviews with VOCA administrators in Georgia, Iowa, and Oregon. In Iowa, for example, a lack of sustained funding has negatively affected rural grants. As a result, rural agencies are having a hard time providing the same level of services to the same number of victims. VOCA funding—in combination with other

resources—has been instrumental in supporting the programs as best it can, but it cannot cover all the costs needed to sustain previous service levels. Beane, of Iowa, says her division is encouraging programs to merge to save on expenses, and is looking closely at their funding to determine which mergers would work best.

Hood, of Georgia, adds that his state needs to sustain sufficient funding to maintain the same level of services for domestic violence victims and have stability in crime victims funding. Currently, his office is getting many more requests for services than it has funding for. Eventually, he would like to see some growth in services, but his office has been unable to fund new positions.

Gallagher's comments reiterate both Beane's and Hood's concerns that funding is key. In the past three biennia, state funding for domestic violence in Oregon has decreased, which Gallagher says is the reason why VOCA funding is so important.

Discretionary Funding Accomplishments and Issues

OVC awards discretionary grant funding to develop training, education, and technical assistance; emphasize public education and awareness; enhance victims' rights; implement victim services; highlight the use of technology; and establish promising practices and demonstration projects. Discretionary funding is distributed primarily from the Crime Victims Fund, although some moneys are secured through other sources such as OVC's Services for Trafficking Victims Discretionary Grant Program. OVC awarded nearly \$60 million through competitive and noncompetitive grants and cooperative agreements with public agencies and private nonprofit organizations in FYs 2003 and 2004. Enhancing ties with the faith community, establishing services for trafficking victims, reaching out to emerging grassroots service providers, developing resources for victims of terrorism and mass violence, and promoting the implementation of victims' rights are priorities.

Connecting With Faith Communities

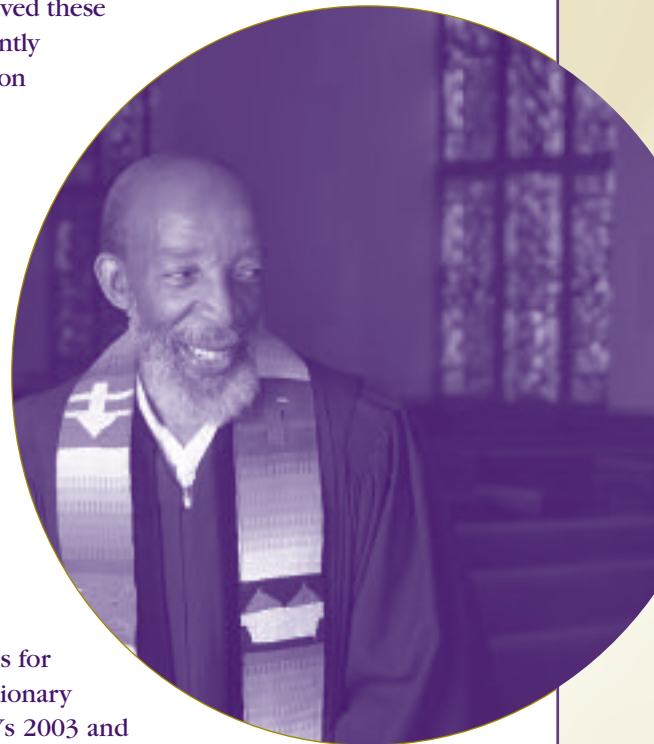
OVC shares in the belief that the faith community can play an important role in serving victims. In that spirit, OVC significantly expanded the ways in which it supports faith-based victim initiatives in FYs 2003 and 2004. Throughout the biennium, OVC continued to support collaborative projects between the faith and victim assistance communities that are designed to improve the response of faith-based practitioners to victims of crime. The initiatives work toward a variety of goals, including helping faith-based organizations establish victim service programs, network with secular victim service programs, and train both victim service providers and members of the faith community on how they

can work together to meet victims' needs. OVC also continued its support of faith-based programs through the Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) Grant Program and launched the Faith-Based or Community Organizations and Victim Services Discretionary Mini-Grant Program. The mini-grant program supports alliances between faith organizations and victim service providers in high-crime areas by inviting groups located in Weed and Seed communities to apply for grants of up to \$15,000. Twenty organizations received these grants in FY 2004, significantly expanding OVC's connection with the faith community.

More information about OVC priorities and initiatives involving the faith community appears in the subsection "OVC-Funded Initiatives Emphasize Training and Outreach for Faith Community."

Building Trafficking Resources

OVC continued its Services for Trafficking Victims Discretionary Grant Program through FYs 2003 and 2004, funding direct services, community outreach, and training for a broad cross-section of allied professionals who are likely to encounter trafficking victims. Nearly \$15 million was awarded to support 20 projects to provide comprehensive and supplemental services (see appendix E for a breakdown of funds awarded in FYs 2003 and 2004). Additional grant funding of \$400,000 was made to support a centralized training and technical assistance effort for OVC direct service grantees. Most grantee initiatives focus on providing trafficking victims with essential services, including shelter, medical care, and counseling, during the "precertification period"—that is,



the time between when they are removed from their abusive environments and when they are certified as eligible to receive benefits through HHS. More information about specific OVC-funded programs related to human trafficking appears in the section “Programs Offer Support for Victims of International Trafficking.”

Grassroots Outreach

In FY 2003, OVC held a series of roundtable meetings with victims and victim advocates throughout the United States, from which it learned of a growing

body of grassroots, nonprofit, and community- and faith-based victim service organizations and

coalitions. Most of the organizations—though they provide essential services—are not linked to mainstream victim service programs, and do not have access to traditional funding for services, outreach, and networking. In response, OVC created

the Helping Outreach Programs to Expand

(HOPE) Grant Program to

provide small amounts of money

to these agencies for the purpose of enhancing their outreach to victims.

Grant applicants may receive one-time awards of up to \$5,000 to develop program literature, produce newsletters, train advocates and volunteers, support victim outreach efforts, and purchase necessary office equipment. Approximately \$1.6 million was made available for this initiative in FYs 2003 and 2004; a total of \$1.5 million was distributed to

318 organizations. Due to the apparent success of this initiative, OVC issued a HOPE II solicitation in FY 2005 to increase the development and capacity of faith- and/or community-based organizations to respond to underserved victims in high-crime urban areas. Under the HOPE II Grant Program, OVC will allocate \$3 million to an organization that will support activities through subawards of up to \$50,000.

Promising Practices and Demonstration Programs

Nine agencies received discretionary funding to set up demonstration projects that model promising practices in the field. These programs serve a wide range of victims, including victims with disabilities, elderly victims, sexual assault victims, victims in rural areas, and victims in urban high-crime areas.

Although the funding was not awarded in either FY 2003 or 2004, OVC has in the past year realized important results from its post-September 11 assistance activities. In 2003, a meeting of the VOCA administrator agencies that received crisis response grants and other subsequent funding was convened to discuss their experiences. The discussion identified a number of promising practices for responding to terrorism and mass violence that OVC will pursue in future years, as well as valuable recommendations for improving the response process. To document the states' challenges, lessons learned, and promising practices in responding to victims' needs, OVC supported the development of *Responding to September 11 Victims: Lessons Learned From the States*, a report released in April 2005 during National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW).



Technology Becomes More Prominent

Throughout FYs 2003 and 2004, OVC and its grantees explored how technology can improve and streamline services. Several states are working toward paperless systems for processing compensation claims, while another is developing an automated application process for assistance grants. Technology is also being applied to case management and outreach. With OVC support, Parents of Murdered Children, Inc., created a Web-based resource directory of grassroots victim service providers in

the United States. Outreach to these providers is part of an ongoing OVC effort to establish a larger support network for victims and to support emerging providers with resources. Other grantees have focused on using technology as a tool to build resources. Online resource databases have become valuable referral tools, and online training and technical assistance has greatly expanded the number of advocates who can participate by eliminating many of the traditional barriers to participation, including travel expenses and time constraints.