

Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation

Writing a Comprehensive Annual Report

November 2022



Announcements



- This session is being recorded. A copy of the slides will be sent to all participants after the presentation.
- All participants are automatically muted upon entering the session.
- Type your questions in the Q&A box and the team will respond.
- Type comments and responses to the presenter and participants in the chat box.
- After the event is over, feel free to send us feedback about your experience or other topics you would like to see covered.
- If you experience technical difficulties during this webinar, send a private chat message requesting assistance to Harif Balogun.

Webex Chat Practice



From where are you joining?

Post your answer in the chat box.

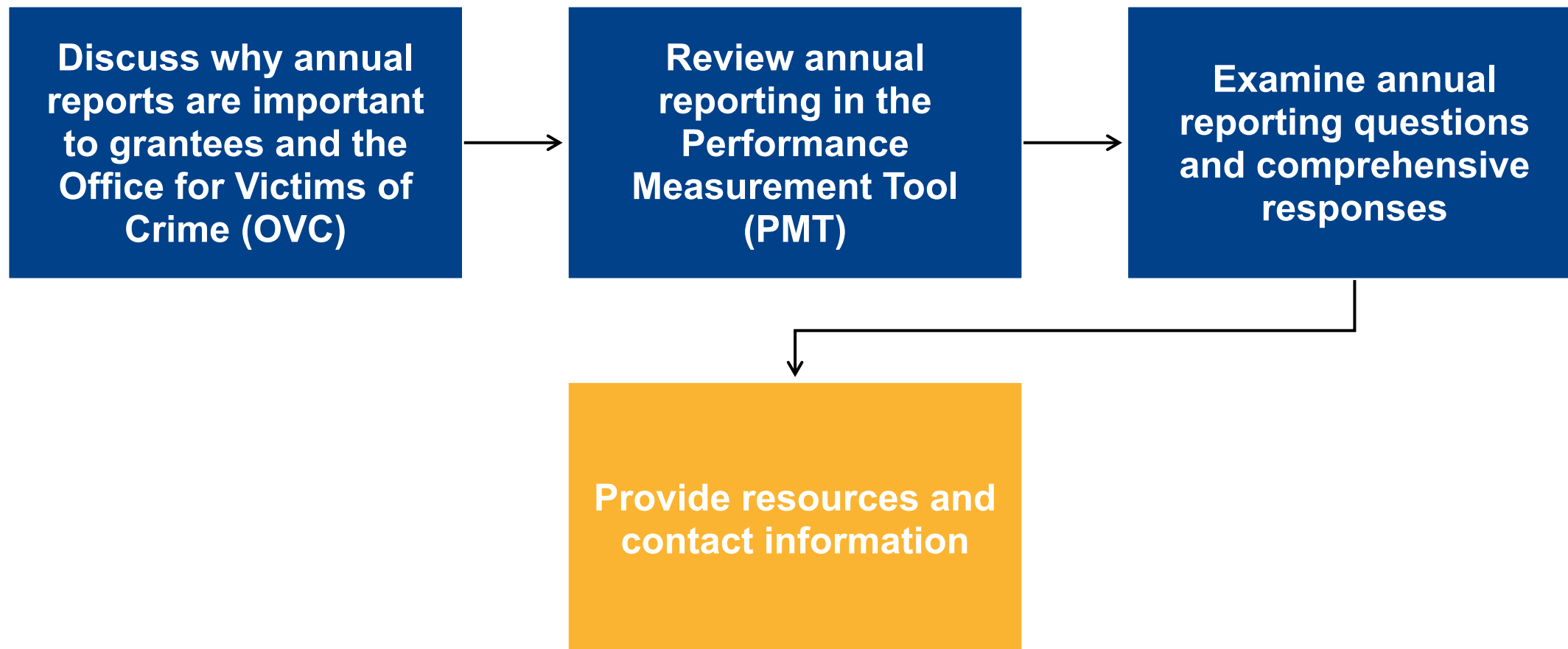
Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation

Writing a Comprehensive Annual Report

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Overview



How Are Annual Reports Used?

Comprehensive Annual Reports and State Administering Agencies



Reflect Learn

What has occurred with the Victim Compensation program throughout the last year:

- Data increases and decreases
- Application process and timelines

Analyze Explore

- Trends
- Staffing
- Successes and challenges
- Changes in legislation

Consider

What to do with this knowledge:

- Share with leadership, stakeholders, and the public
- Changes on the programmatic, administrative, and fiscal level

Comprehensive Annual Reports



Assist

- Grant managers understand what is going on at the state level around compensation services and funding.
- Grant managers evaluate future needs within states and across the country.

Explain

- The quarterly qualitative data collected and reviewed to better support states in the future.
- Challenges, accomplishments, and changes taking place on the state level that may help inform future decisions on the federal level.

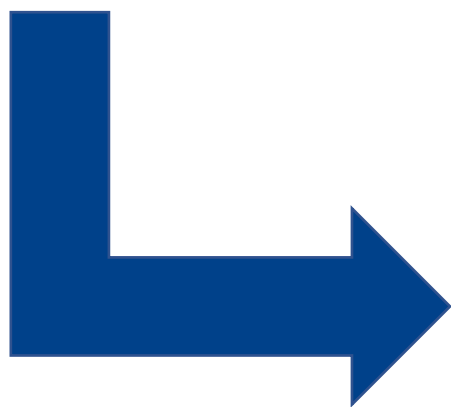
Fund

- Future work and awards to support victim services, specifically compensation for crimes experienced.
- Advocate for increasing funding based on needs across the country.



Performance Measure Data

- I. Population Demographics
- II. Performance Measures
- III. Payment Statistics by Crime Type



Grantee specific successes and challenges



Data increases and decreases



New initiatives, projects, deliverables, and resources



Statewide or local community specific highlights

Impactful Annual Reporting



Describe

- Adverse conditions that affected goals or objectives throughout the year.
- Significant outreach efforts and how funds were publicized on state and local levels to raise victim awareness of available services.

Indicate

- The status of program goals and objectives, whether the state fiscally and programmatically completed those goals and objectives, and any unmet needs.
- Any legislative efforts that led to the continuation of funding and services for the state.

Highlight

- Collaborative victim services and multidisciplinary response efforts.
- Actions that took place to address any increases and decreases in services.

Annual Reporting in the PMT Tips and Tricks

Annual Report Tips and Tricks



- The annual report covers grant activities for the entire federal funding year
 - Language: *“In Fiscal Year 2022 Quarter Q3 and Q4, **Organization X** completed...”*
 - Avoid using first person pronouns.
 - Be specific and use concrete examples and evidence from PMT data.
- Create your responses of 5,000 characters in a Word document using plain text only, then copy and paste each answer into the PMT.
- Be sure to frequently save your responses.
- Yes – every question needs an answer.
- No – N/A is not an acceptable answer.

Annual Report Tips and Tricks



- Do not include personally identifiable information in your report. This includes any information that could be compiled to identify an individual, not just the individual's name or social security number.
- Ensure narrative responses do not exceed the character limit and are not cut-off when pasted into the report.
- Do not include hyperlinks to news or media, as they may expire or require registration or subscriptions to view. Instead, provide a summary of the news story or media appearance.

Things to Consider When Developing Responses



- What major accomplishments were achieved using grant funding over the past year?
- What areas of opportunity were identified?
- Are any changes occurring in your organization, statewide or on the local level, that affected the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) compensation award deliverables?

Things to Consider When Developing Responses



- Are there any quantitative performance measures that should be addressed in the narrative responses?
- After reviewing the data reported during the fiscal year, were any increases or decreases identified?
- Did any significant changes take place regarding how applications are processed?

**Annual Reporting
Questions 1 through 12**

Questions 1 and 2 – Quantitative



1. Explain any significant change in the number of applications received during the reporting period.
2. The average length of time to process an application for claim eligibility for compensation. (Processing time is based on a state's established procedure.)
 - A. Count days from time of receipt of application to decision. (Count days based on the state's established procedure.)
 - B. Explain your state's procedure for processing an application, from time of receipt to decision.

Questions 1 and 2 – Quantitative



1. Explain any significant change in the number of applications received during the reporting period.

Ensure that the response—

- Includes (if possible) quantitative information about changes to applications received, whether the change is specific to crime types or victim populations, and potential causes driving the change.
- Describes the cause behind the increase or decrease in length of time to process a claim.

Questions 1 and 2 – Quantitative



1. Explain any significant change in the number of applications received during the reporting period.

Example: The state compensation program experienced a XX% increase in the number of new applications received during Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 compared to FY 2020 and a XX% increase compared to FY 2019 (pre-pandemic). Applications received by the state compensation program increased significantly during the year as stay-at-home orders related to COVID-19 were lifted. There was an overall increase in crime, especially homicides, in FY 2021 as compared to FY 2020.

Questions 1 and 2 – Quantitative



2. The average length of time to process an application for claim eligibility for compensation – B. Explain your state’s procedure for processing an application, from time of receipt to decision.

Ensure that the response—

- Provides enough information for the reader to have a general understanding of your program’s claims process.
- Summarizes processes for receipt of applications, information gathering, coordination with other partner entities, eligibility determinations, expense payments, and recovery efforts.

Questions 1 and 2 – Quantitative



2. The average length of time to process an application for claim eligibility for compensation – B. Explain your state’s procedure for processing an application, from time of receipt to decision.

Example: 1) New applications are received and entered into a database by a Claims Processor. 2) New workloads are evaluated for eligibility by the Claims Examiner and missing documentation is requested. 3) Claims Examiners submit reviewed claims with decision recommendations to the Claims Supervisor. 4) The Claims Supervisor reviews all claims for accuracy and submits claim decision and supporting documentation to a five-member board. 5) The board reviews all claims for approval or denial leading to an interim decision. Interim decision is mailed to the claimant. 6) The claimant has 15 days to appeal an interim decision to the board. Appealed interim decisions result in hearings. The result of any hearing may be to affirm, modify, or reverse the interim decision. 7) After the 15 days has elapsed, the interim decision is forwarded to the Executive Director/Designee to be reviewed and signed resulting in a final decision.

Questions 3 and 10 – Surveys and Outreach



3. Does your state have a victim satisfaction survey?

A. Yes/No (If Yes, go to B; if No, go to Question 4).

B. Number of victim satisfaction surveys distributed during the reporting period.

C. Number of victim satisfaction surveys completed during the reporting period.

D. Number of surveys that indicated satisfaction with the victim compensation program during the reporting period.

10. Explain any public outreach efforts to improve awareness of your program.

Questions 3 and 10 – Surveys and Outreach



10. Explain any public outreach efforts to improve awareness of your program.

Ensure that the response—

- Fully describes the topic, format, and frequency of the efforts.

Questions 3 and 10 – Surveys and Outreach



10. Explain any public outreach efforts to improve awareness of your program.

Example 1: As a result of COVID-19, all compensation trainings are currently online and available to advocates at anytime. Pre-COVID, the state compensation program had two staff who trained advocates and child assessment center staff about compensation. These two staff traveled throughout the state, visiting rural counties and communities in order to train advocates about compensation in district attorney offices, non-profits, tribal communities and child assessment centers. In addition to the compensation training online, the program will launch a quarterly online Q&A to answer questions from advocates regarding the compensation program. We are also preparing to send out our first quarterly newsletter to all advocates.

Example 2: New and current VOCA victim assistance-funded contractor staff attended trainings on the state compensation program during the report period. All trainings were held virtually. Materials related to the state compensation program were emailed to attendees prior to each training. Throughout the report period, materials on the state compensation program continued to be distributed to the agencies. The state compensation program issued a public service announcement about the victim compensation program to coincide with National Crime Victims Rights Week. The announcement was issued in English and in Spanish for distribution to radio stations throughout the state.

Questions 4 and 8 – Impact



4. Describe any emerging/major issues or notable trends that were encountered in your state that had an impact on your program's ability to meet the needs of crime victims during the reporting period.

8. Were there any laws, initiatives, or policy changes in your state regarding victim compensation during the reporting period? If yes, briefly describe them and their impact.



Questions 4 and 8 – Impact



4. Describe any emerging/major issues or notable trends that were encountered in your state that had an impact on your program's ability to meet the needs of crime victims during the reporting period.

Example (notable trend): During the reporting period, the state compensation program received an additional XX applications for compensation compared to FY 2020. The state compensation program noted that the number of applications received from, or referred by, community-based victim services programs increased by over XX claims. This represents a XX% increase in the number of referrals from community programs compared to FY 2020. The program provided numerous outreach and training activities to service providers, and the results can be seen with the increase in applications from their program clients.

Questions 4 and 8 – Impact



8. Were there any laws, initiatives, or policy changes in your state regarding victim compensation during the reporting period? If yes, please briefly describe them and their impact.

Ensure that the response—

- Summarizes new laws, initiatives, or policy changes. Do not copy and paste statute or regulation language directly into the narrative response.
- Includes effective dates and specific citations so that the law or regulations can be reviewed.
- Describes agency efforts to inform the victims or field about the new law, initiative, or policy.

Questions 4 and 8 – Impact



8. Were there any laws, initiatives, or policy changes in your state regarding victim compensation during the reporting period?

Example: During the report period, two of the statutes that govern the state compensation program (SCP) were amended. 1) In cases of sexual assault and human trafficking, criminal incidents do not have to be reported to law enforcement. The SCP may consider a claim eligible if a disclosure of the incident was made to certain professionals as defined in statute. A legislative change, effective for applications received after June 2021, added employees of child advocacy centers to the professionals list. In child advocacy centers, professionals that work with victims and their relatives have many different job titles that did not always match the list of professionals in the statute. With this statute change, the victim does not have to disclose to another source if they have already been working with, and disclosed the incident, to the child advocacy center employee. This statute change allows the SCP to obtain the disclosure timelier, and the victim does not have to go through the process of disclosing the incident to another professional. 2) In cases of domestic violence, criminal incidents do not have to be reported to law enforcement. Prior to June 16, 2021, the SCP could only consider a claim eligible if a disclosure of the incident was limited to a certified domestic violence counselor or certified sexual assault counselor, or when a restraining order or civil protection order was granted in superior court. A legislative change, effective for applications received after June 2021, expanded the list of professionals that domestic violence victims may disclose to, to match the sexual assault and human trafficking list of professionals. The SCP can now accept disclosures for domestic violence victims from many more professionals to assist the SCP with determining the eligibility of a claim.

Questions 6 and 7 – Improvements



6. Describe any notable activities during the reporting period that improved the process of victim compensation services.
7. Describe in detail ways in which your state used VOCA administrative funds and the impact of these funds on the state's ability to improve victim compensation services during the reporting period.



Questions 6 and 7 – Improvements



6. Describe any notable activities during the reporting period that improved the process of victim compensation services.

Example: The state compensation program continues to improve our online submission of applications for victims and their family members. As indicated in past reports, victims can submit their applications online. Those applications are received within minutes of hitting the submission button. The state compensation program has continued to make modifications to improve the portal in order to make it intuitive and convenient for victims and advocates who might be assisting a victim with a compensation application. The program also has a tutorial on our website to assist victims and applicants with registering in the portal. The state compensation program also created an online compensation training that is available to advocates. As a result of COVID-19, all trainings are currently online and available to advocates and child assessment center staff. The program is currently developing a quarterly online Q&A for advocates who require clarifying questions after taking the online training. Additionally, the program is preparing its first newsletter that will be sent to advocates on a quarterly bases.

Questions 6 and 7 – Improvements



7. Describe in detail ways in which your state used VOCA administrative funds and the impact of these funds on the state's ability to improve victim compensation services during the reporting period.

Example: The program utilizes VOCA administrative funds to pay a portion of three compensation staff salaries. We also use administrative funds to send new staff to online victim assistance trainings through the State Victim Assistance Academy. We also send some staff to a yearly diversity conference and other staff to a Child Abuse Summit. We send staff to these conferences in order to keep them apprised of any system changes or issues that might affect the work that we do within the compensation program. These trainings also expand staff knowledge of victimization, trauma-informed victim services and victim advocacy.

Question 9 – Coordination Efforts



9. Describe system coordination efforts with prosecutors, law enforcement, courts, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, tribal systems, the State VOCA Victim Assistance Coordinator, or other key personnel within the criminal justice system in your state to reduce barriers to victims who may apply to receive victim compensation.

Ensure that the response—

- Focuses on specific activities that were initiated or conducted during the reporting period; do not speak only to general collaborative efforts. This can include specific presentations, resource tool development, working group creation, etc.
- Includes any feedback from coordination efforts and how or if that impacted your agency's processes.



Question 9 – Coordination Efforts



9. Describe system coordination efforts with prosecutors, law enforcement, courts, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, tribal systems, the State VOCA Victim Assistance Coordinator, or other key personnel within the criminal justice system in your state to reduce barriers to victims who may apply to receive victim compensation.

Example 1: The state compensation program has excellent working relationships with all of the above mentioned community partners. The program is constantly offering education and assistance to our community partners to maintain strong working relationships with everyone. Our VOCA assistance team is in the same office as VOCA compensation, so we are easily accessible to answer questions that come up regarding compensation.

Example 2: SCP staff work closely with court-based victim services advocates to obtain crime information, when necessary, and/or court proceedings dates, from the state's attorney's office. SCP contacts law enforcement agencies yearly to confirm that we have their most updated contact information. We also send the agencies a list of our current forms/publications to confirm they have our most recent information and ask them what forms/publications they need. SCP staff also teaches a 4-hour program at municipal and state police department training academies.

Questions 5, 11, and 12 – Additional Questions



5. Describe in detail efforts taken to serve victims of federal crime during the reporting period. (A victim of federal crime is a victim of an offense that violates a federal criminal statute or regulation. Federal crimes also include crimes that occur in an area where the federal government has jurisdiction, such as Indian reservations, some national parks, some federal buildings, and military installations).
11. List any other outcome measure(s) that are reported to the governor, legislature, or other state entity that have not been reported in this submission. Provide the actual measure(s). The data may be reported separately in your progress report.
12. Provide any additional comments that are helpful to improving the victim compensation state and/or federal program.

Questions 5, 11, and 12 – Additional Questions



5. Describe in detail efforts taken to serve victims of federal crime during the reporting period.

Example: The state compensation program has had an exceptional working relationship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) victim specialists and the U.S. Attorneys' Office (USAO) victim specialists for several years. If the compensation program receives an application that indicates a federal crime, staff will contact the FBI or USAO victim advocates in order to obtain information regarding the criminal case. In most instances, there a report will not be available; however, the state program, together with the FBI victim specialists, created a submission form years ago that is filled out by the investigating agent(s) and then forwarded to our office in order for the claims examiner to make a determination regarding eligibility. The FBI and USAO victim advocates are excellent resources for victims of federal crimes in the state and they make every effort to contact staff prior to assisting with the submission of an application from a victim of a federal crime.

Questions 5, 11, and 12 – Additional Questions



11. List any other outcome measure(s) that are reported to the governor, legislature, or other state entity that have not been reported in this submission. Provide the actual measure(s). The data may be reported separately in your progress report.

Example: The outcome measures reported to the legislature include the percentage of compensation determinations made within 90 days of receipt of the compensation application. The number of claims determined within the 90-day target goal is 98% and the program achieved 90% during the last reporting period. The factors affecting our results could be new staff being hired and trained. Training new staff takes at minimum 6 months and the program hired our fifth claims examiner.



Summary, Resources, and Feedback

Summary



1. Make your responses powerful and effective.
2. Work on responses as a team.
3. Be specific. Use evidence from quarterly PMT data reports.
4. Explore OVC's online resources for you and your team on OVC performance measures and hold each other accountable.





How Can We Help?

Need a quick answer? Start with printed resources:

- List of all performance measures
- User guides for the PMT system
- OVC Dictionary
- Online pre-recorded trainings



Have a more in-depth question?

- Schedule a “Welcome to OVC Performance Management” session for new staff members or a team training session.
- Call/email the PMT Helpdesk with specific questions about submissions or measures.
- Schedule a 30-minute Webex session with an OVC Training and Technical Assistance Specialist to review your reports and answer questions about specific measures.

Contact Information



OVC PMT Helpdesk

Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Eastern
Toll free number: 1-844-884-2503**

Email:

ovcpmt@usdoj.gov

Website:

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/funding/performance-measures>

*** Appointments are available outside of normal business hours by request.*

JustGrants

5:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Eastern
Toll free number: 1-833-872-5175

Email:

justicegrants.support@usdoj.gov

Website:

<https://justicegrants.usdoj.gov/>



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