

Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation Formula Grant Program

FISCAL YEAR 2020 DATA ANALYSIS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Compensation (VC) Formula Grant program provides supplemental funding to state compensation programs across the United States and its territories through 54 State Administering Agencies (SAAs). State compensation programs offer financial compensation to individuals for expenses incurred as a result of a crime, distinguishable from restitution.¹ Compensation funding may be used for a range of expenses, such as medical and dental care, funeral and burial costs, mental health treatment, loss of income, childcare, relocation, and other specific uses, depending on the jurisdiction.

The data presented in this report includes all state compensation claims, regardless of the funding source. The percentage of VOCA funding provided to the states is set by statute. The annual grant amount is based on 75 percent of each state’s compensation payments from 2 years prior to the grant year.² In fiscal year (FY) 2020, \$133,896,000 was allocated to the VOCA VC Formula Grant program, a 3.5 percent decrease from FY 2019.³ Collectively, 54 states and territories received VOCA VC grants in FY 2020.⁴ These SAAs provided \$361,677,837—a 9.5 percent decrease from FY 2019—in compensation funding to 218,090 claims.

APPLICANT POPULATION

In FY 2020, a total of 239,688 people applied for compensation benefits. Of those, 82 percent were primary victims of crime whose victimization was the basis for the application. The other 18 percent were secondary victims of crime. Primary victims are individuals who suffered harm as a direct result of the crime. A secondary victim (also referred to as an indirect victim) is “a person who is impacted by a crime but who is not the direct victim of the crime; this is often a friend, family member, or significant other of a direct victim, or a member of the victim’s workplace or community.”⁵



Figure 1. Breakdown of Primary and Secondary Victims

¹ Restitution is payment made by the offender, as directed by the court, to cover expenses related to the crime that were incurred by the victim. For more information about restitution, visit this website: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga/victim-witness-assistance/understanding-restitution>.

² The VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021 was introduced during FY 2021. The bill added new sources of revenue for the Crime Victims Fund and made changes to formula grants supported by the Fund. The VOCA Fix increased the percentage—from 60 percent to 75 percent—of each state’s compensation payments to crime victims in the prior fiscal year. The VOCA Fix occurred during the analysis and development stages of this report. This current report focuses on FY 2020. (Retrieved on May 29, 2022, from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1652>).

³ In FY 2019, \$138,789,000 was allocated to the VOCA VC Formula Grant program.

⁴ The 54 states and territories are the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands did not receive VOCA VC Formula Grants in FY 2020.

⁵ Office for Victims of Crime. n.d. Glossary. Retrieved on March 18, 2021, from https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/model-standards/6/glossary.html#demo2_tip.

Age

Age was self-reported by 97 percent of primary victims who applied for compensation.

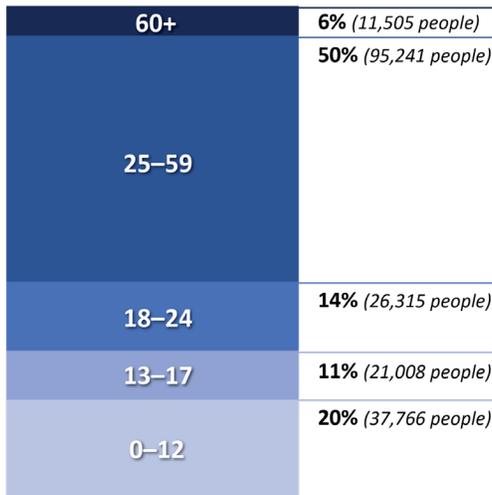


Figure 2. Primary Victims Percentages by Age Range⁶

Gender

Gender was self-reported by 98 percent of primary victims who applied for compensation.

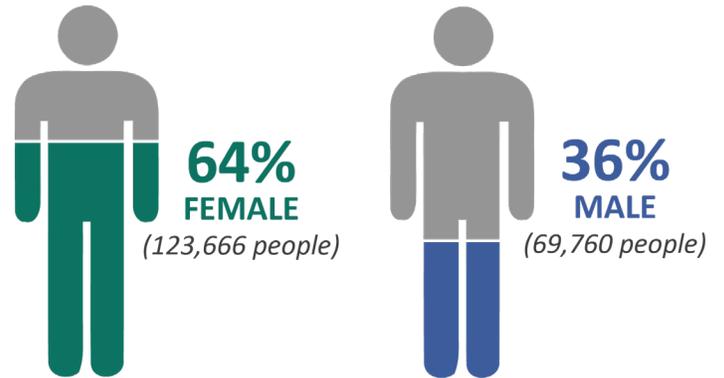


Figure 3. Primary Victim Percentages by Gender

Race or Ethnicity

Race or ethnicity was self-reported by 85 percent of primary victims who applied for compensation.

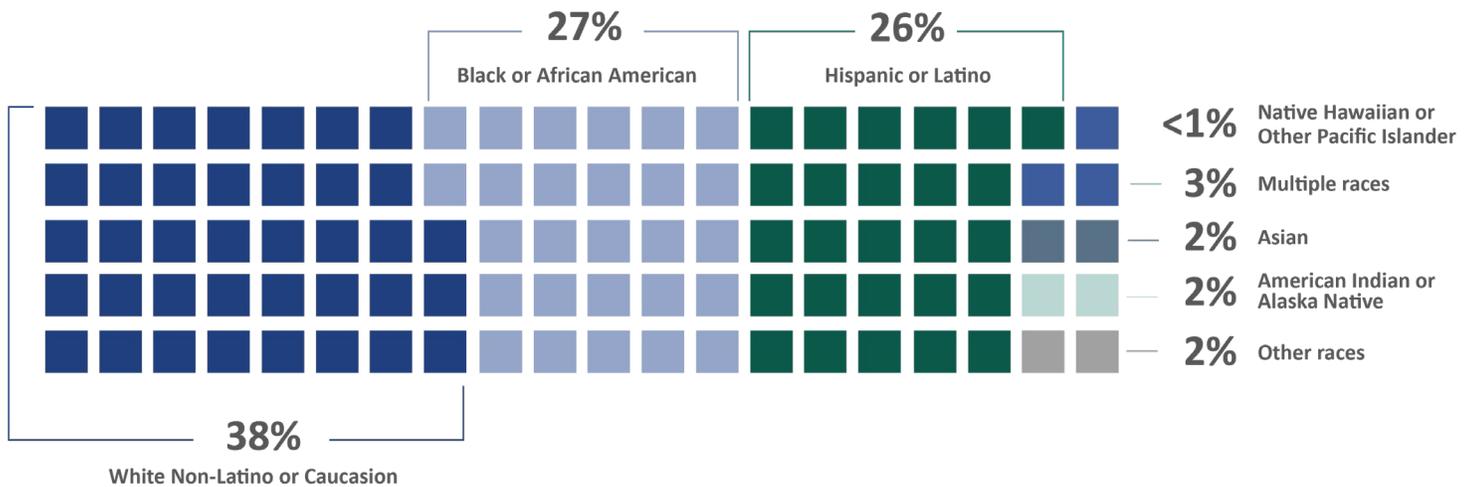


Figure 4. Primary Victim Percentages by Race/Ethnicity

Of the individuals who applied for compensation benefits in FY 2020, 64,399 were White Non-Latino or Caucasian, 44,793 were Black or African American, and 43,950 were Hispanic or Latino. This demographic breakdown is similar to the self-reported races and ethnicities in FY 2019.

⁶Due to rounding, percentages total 101 percent.

PAYMENT STATISTICS

Application Information⁷

In FY 2020, VOCA VC SAAs received 206,300 applications for compensation.⁸ VOCA VC SAAs approved 73 percent of applications and denied 27 percent of applications during the year.⁹ In addition, 74,051 applications for sexual assault forensic exams¹⁰ were processed through 21 SAA compensation programs and 33 SAAs indicated that they maintained a separate application process for forensic exams.



Reasons for denied applications

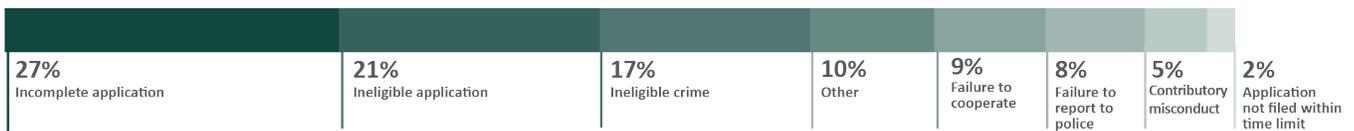


Figure 5. Percentages of Applications Approved and Denied¹¹

VOCA VC SAAs expressed challenges about standard public outreach and in-person awareness due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹² Particularly, they expressed concerns about the lack of volunteers, decreased funding, and shifting of existing funds as a result of newly incurred costs related to the pandemic. While many VOCA VC SAAs found it increasingly difficult to engage in pre-pandemic-level outreach efforts, a majority of organizations indicated that the use of social media and other virtual service delivery applications allowed them to continue conducting outreach efforts in their communities. VOCA VC SAAs engaged in numerous outreach efforts to improve awareness about their respective compensation programs. Several indicated that they distributed informational brochures and fliers through standard mail, conducted trainings and delivered presentations virtually, disseminated and aired public service announcements, and collaborated with other state-level stakeholders.

⁷ The number of applications approved or denied may include applications received during and prior to FY 2020. Depending on when the application was received and the type of compensation requested, decisions for applications received in FY 2020 might not be made until FY 2021.

⁸ The process for filing compensation applications differs among VOCA VC SAAs. In FY 2020, 22 VOCA VC SAAs reported that primary and secondary victims collectively file one application per crime, and 32 VOCA VC SAAs reported that primary and secondary victims file separate applications.

⁹ Depending on when the application was received and the type of compensation requested, the number of applications approved or denied may include applications received during and prior to FY 2020. As such, the total number of applications with decisions in FY 2020 was 211,120.

¹⁰ Victims of crime are never responsible for covering the costs of sexual assault forensic exams; the process for payment is determined by each state.

¹¹ Please note: Due to rounding, the percentage adds up to 99 percent.

¹² COVID-19 is caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2 and is part of the coronavirus family. The World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic in March 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19/basics-covid-19.html>.

In FY 2020, 30 VOCA VC SAAs reported a decrease in the number of compensation applications received. Among these SAAs, the primary reason for the decrease in applications was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that forced organizations to operate under serious restrictions. Some organizations temporarily closed as they followed guidelines set by their respective states. Other VOCA VC SAAs indicated that, although the COVID-19 pandemic led to decreases in the number of compensation applications during the third quarter, the lifting of restrictions in subsequent quarters brought victim service providers back to pre-pandemic levels of service delivery.

There were 23 VOCA VC SAAs that reported changes to laws, initiatives, or policies that affected their compensation program applications and decision-making. Examples included extending the timeframe for reporting a crime to law enforcement and for filing new applications, expanding upon the definition of family, and extending eligibility to victims of female genital mutilation. Additionally, some VOCA VC SAAs were able to increase compensation funding for victims of sexual assault and expenses related to funeral and burial services.

Claims Paid

In FY 2020, 218,090 claims were paid.¹³ Thirty-one percent of the claims paid were for assault victimizations, followed by child sexual abuse (28 percent), adult sexual assault or stalking (21 percent), and homicide (9 percent). This breakdown has remained consistent since FY 2015. Both the number of claims and total amount paid decreased from FY 2019, reflecting a 7 percent and 4 percent decrease in FY 2020, respectively.

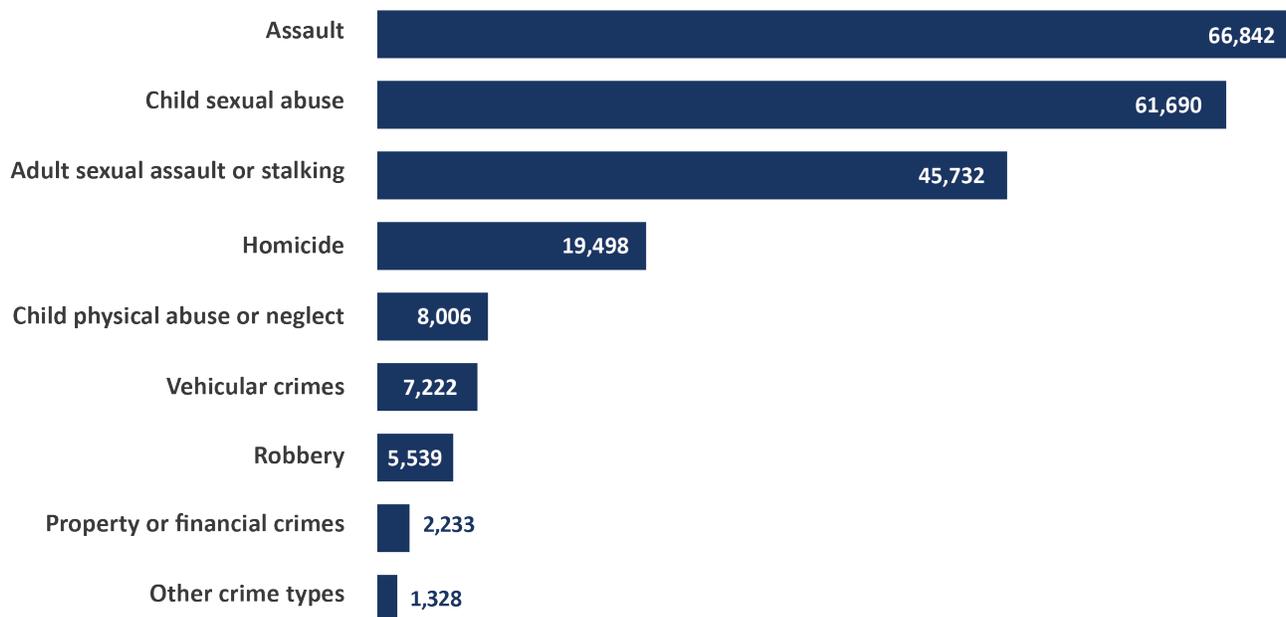


Figure 6. Numbers of Claims Paid by Crime Type

¹³ The current performance measures reflect the terminology “applications paid.” Claims can include primary and supplemental payments and there can be multiple claims from a single application. The number of applications approved, denied, or closed in FY 2020 may include applications received during or prior to FY 2020.

Types of Victimization Related to Crime Type

VOCA VC SAAs can report on five types of victimizations that were related to a crime type, if applicable. For example, a compensation claim for the crime of assault or child sexual abuse could be related to a victimization type of domestic and family violence. In FY 2020, 44,117 claims paid were related to specific victimization types.

VICTIMIZATION TYPE	TOP RELATED CRIME TYPES
Domestic and family violence 40,252 claims	Assault (28,378 claims) Child sexual abuse (4,121 claims)
Mass violence 1,543 claims	Assault (1,182 claims) Homicide (269 claims)
Elder abuse or neglect 1,153 claims	Assault (470 claims) Fraud or financial crimes (319 claims)
Bullying 683 claims	Assault (539 claims) Child sexual abuse (33 claims)
Hate crime 486 claims	Assault (382 claims) Homicide (43 claims)

Figure 7. Victimization Types and Related Types of Crime

Assault was the most common crime type related to victimizations with 28,378 assault claims paid in FY 2020. Assault was also one of the top two crime types related to each victimization type. The largest decrease among victimization types was bullying, with a 42 percent decrease from FY 2019 to FY 2020. Mass violence saw a 27 percent decrease from FY 2019 to FY 2020.¹⁴

Notable Trends and Issues

VOCA VC SAAs reported notable trends and emerging issues that affected their compensation programs. The most commonly reported topics included:

- Restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. VOCA VC SAAs expressed that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected organizations' ability to serve victims of crime, as they were forced to pivot to a telework environment and implement social distancing protocols. In some jurisdictions, this meant a closure of courts and other facilities that victims of crime regularly need to access.
- A decrease in the amount and frequency of court cost collections (e.g., fines, penalties, criminal assessments), resulting in less available state compensation funding. In some jurisdictions, this occurred as part of legislative changes or other mechanisms included within broader state and local criminal justice reform.
- An increase in staff turnover, shortages, and vacancies. As a result, this often led to a backlog of compensation applications, resulting in delayed payments to victims.
- A substantial shift and decrease in state funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic. VOCA VC SAAs mentioned an increased need and demand for housing resources, while noting that there was no available funding for these resources. Additionally, VOCA VC SAAs expressed that some unexpected costs—such as virtual service delivery implementation and staffing issues—incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic led them to shift funding resources amongst agencies.

¹⁴ OVC also administers the Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance program that provides funding and resources to jurisdictions that have experienced incidents of mass violence and terrorism. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/antiterrorism-and-emergency-assistance-program-aeap/overview>.

Total Amount Paid by Expense Type

Of the \$361,677,837 paid through compensation funding, 35 percent were used for medical/dental expenses, followed by funeral/burial expenses (17 percent), sexual assault forensic exams (15 percent), and economic support (14 percent), similar to FY 2019.

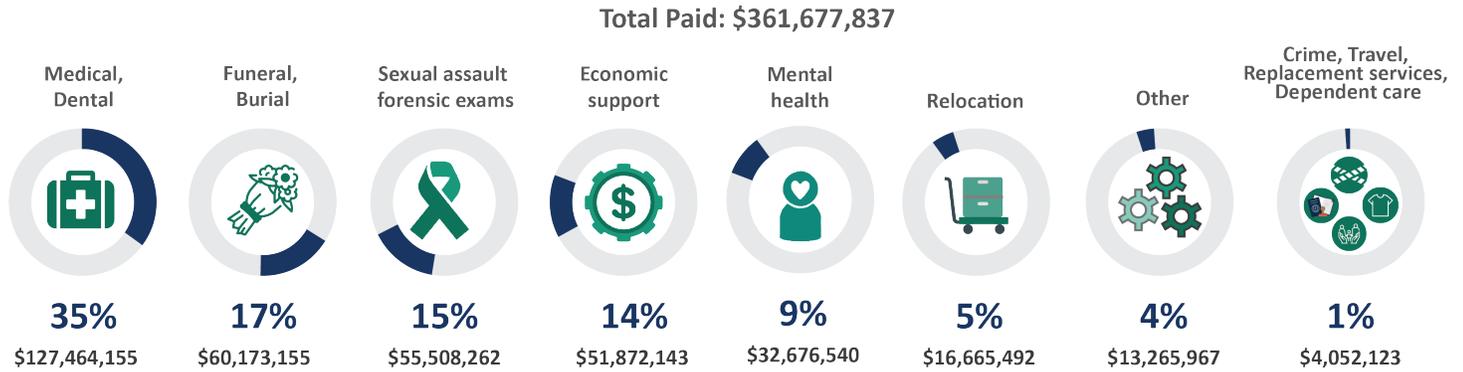


Figure 8. Distribution of Compensation Paid by Type of Expense



Medical or Dental Expenses

Medical/dental expenses were the largest expense type paid in FY 2020, totaling \$127,464,155 in compensation payments. Medical/dental expenses were the most common expense type reported for victims of all crime types, including assault, adult sexual assault/stalking, child physical abuse/assault, homicide, property or financial crimes, robbery, vehicular crimes, and other crime types.



Funeral or Burial Expenses

Funeral/burial expenses were the second largest expense paid in FY 2020, totaling \$60,173,155 in compensation payments. Homicide claims accounted for 91 percent of the funeral/burial expenses paid, followed by vehicular crimes and assault, representing 8 percent and 1 percent, respectively.



Sexual Assault Forensic Exams

Sexual assault forensic exams for victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse were the third largest expense type paid in FY 2020. States paid \$26,848,667 in compensation funds for child sexual abuse claims and \$28,659,595 for adult sexual assault/stalking claims, totaling \$55,508,262.



Economic Support

Economic support expenses were the fourth largest expense paid in FY 2020, totaling \$51,872,143 in compensation payments. Economic support provides payments to individuals who experienced monetary losses due to crime such as loss of income or support payments. Economic support was the most common expense type paid for assaults, homicides, and vehicular crimes. Similar to medical/dental expenses, compensation for economic support was paid to victims of every crime type.

Total Amount Paid by Crime Type

In FY 2020, \$361,677,837 was paid in compensation funds for all crime types. Of that, 42 percent of compensation funds paid were for assault victimizations, followed by homicide (20 percent), adult sexual assault/stalking (12 percent), and child sexual abuse (12 percent).¹⁵ This distribution is similar to how compensation funds were distributed across crime types in FY 2019.

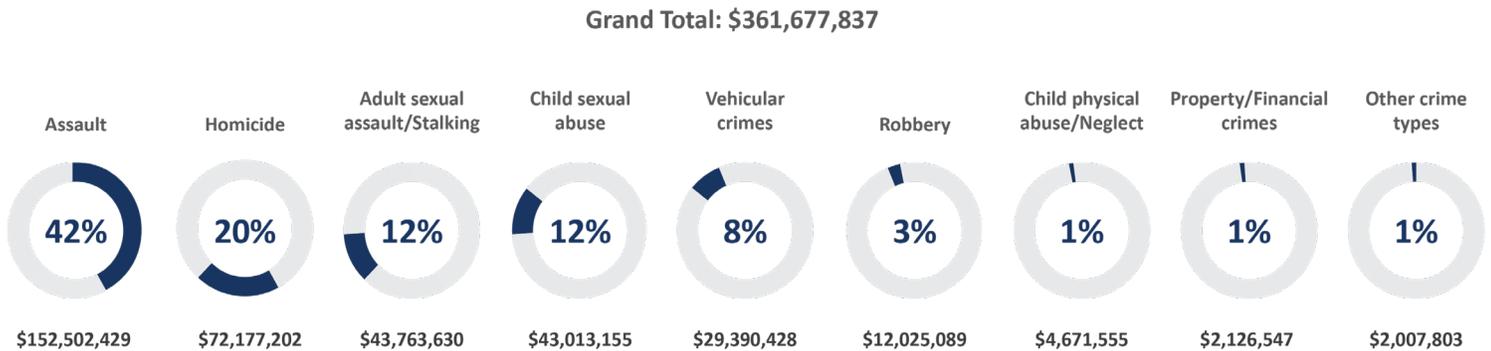


Figure 9. Distribution of Compensation Paid by Type of Crime¹⁶

In FY 2020, 28 VOCA VC SAAs reported compensatory funding for other crime types not specifically listed above. Some of the other crime types that were reported included violation of a court protective order, threatening/intimidation, disorderly conduct, purposeful transmission of a sexually transmitted disease, and online enticement of minors.¹⁷

Expenses by Most Common Crime Types

VOCA VC SAAs were asked to identify the total number of claims paid for each crime type and the total amount paid during the reporting period for each expense category by crime type. Assault, homicide, child sexual abuse, and sexual assault received the greatest amount of compensation payments in FY 2020.

Assault

In FY 2020, victims of assault received \$152,502,429 from 66,842 claims. Sixty-one percent of compensation funds for victims of assault were used for medical/dental expenses, followed by economic support (18 percent), relocation (8 percent), mental health (8 percent), and “other” expenses (4 percent).¹⁸



¹⁵ See appendix A for crime type categorizations.

¹⁶ Due to rounding, the aggregate crime type total is greater than the grand total.

¹⁷ Violation of court protective order and disorderly conduct were also commonly reported as other victimization types by VOCA Victim Assistance Formula Grant program State Administering Agencies in FY 2020.

¹⁸ The remaining 1 percent spanned the following expense types: funeral/burial, travel, dependent care, replacement services, and crime scene clean-up.

Survivors of Homicide Victims

Survivors of homicide victims received \$72,177,202 from 19,498 claims in compensation funding in FY 2020, represented the second highest amount of compensation funds paid by crime type.¹⁹ The majority of compensation funds for homicide claims were used for funeral/burial expenses (76 percent), followed by economic support (15 percent), mental health expenses (3 percent), and medical/dental (3 percent). Additionally, travel and “other” expenses each received 1 percent of compensation funds, respectively.²⁰



Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault

In FY 2020, victims of child sexual abuse and sexual assault received \$84,089,765 in compensation funding, a decrease of 5 percent over the total reported in FY 2019. Of that total, \$42,726,897 from 61,420 claims was provided to victims of child sexual abuse and \$41,362,868 from 44,394 claims to victims of sexual assault.

Among victims of child sexual abuse who received compensation, sexual assault forensic exams were the most common expense type (63 percent)²¹, followed by mental health (19 percent), and “other” expenses (7 percent).²²



Among victims of sexual assault who received compensation, sexual assault forensic exams were the most common expense type (69 percent), followed by mental health (11 percent), and medical/dental (10 percent).²³



¹⁹ Although the number of homicide claims paid (19,498) was less than the number of claims paid for assault, child sexual abuse, and sexual assault combined, it was still the second highest crime type receiving compensation funds.

²⁰ The remaining 2 percent spanned the following expense types: dependent care, relocation, crime scene clean-up, and replacement services.

²¹ Victims of crime are never responsible for covering the costs of sexual assault forensic exams; the process for payment is determined by each state.

²² The remaining 11 percent spanned the following expense types: medical/dental, economic support, relocation, travel, dependent care, replacement services, funeral/burial, and crime scene clean-up.

²³ The remaining 10 percent spanned the following expense types: other, economic support, relocation, travel, dependent care, replacement services, funeral/burial, and crime scene clean-up.

CONCLUSION

Crime victimization has wide-reaching consequences for victims, their family and friends, the community, and society in general. The unexpected financial costs associated with these consequences may cause additional harm to the affected individuals. The financial assistance in the amount of nearly \$361.7 million across 218,090 claims provided by VOCA-supported compensation programs to 197,624 primary and 42,064 secondary victims helped alleviate some of the fiscal and emotional burden experienced as a direct result of the crime experienced. The data reported by VOCA VC programs in FY 2020 demonstrate the continued support that these programs provide to victims and survivors of crime.

APPENDIX A: CRIME TYPE CATEGORIZATIONS

The Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation State Administering Agencies reported data on claimants who received funding in 16 crime types. The Office for Victims of Crime consolidated these 16 crime types into nine larger categories. The following list outlines the types of crimes that make up each category.

1. Adult sexual assault/stalking
 - Sexual assault
 - Stalking
2. Assault
3. Child physical abuse/neglect
4. Child sexual abuse
 - Child sexual abuse
 - Child pornography
5. Homicide
6. Other crime types
 - Human trafficking
 - Kidnapping
 - Terrorism
7. Property/Financial crimes
 - Arson
 - Burglary
 - Fraud/Financial crimes
8. Robbery
9. Vehicular crimes
 - DUI/DWI
 - Other vehicular crimes

APPENDIX B: EXPENSES PAID BY CRIME TYPE IN FY 2020

Crime Type	Claims Paid	Medical/Dental	Funeral/Burial	Economic Support	Sexual Assault Forensic Exam	Mental Health	Relocation	Other	Travel	Dependent Care	Replacement Services	Crime Scene Clean Up	Crime Type Total
Arson	317	\$137,389	\$80,044	\$120,288	\$0	\$43,551	\$151,324	\$13,353	\$3,076	\$55	\$720	\$5,743	\$555,544
Assault	66,842	\$93,242,048	\$486,856	\$27,243,797	\$0	\$12,110,207	\$12,131,309	\$5,804,281	\$565,621	\$634,681	\$190,770	\$92,859	\$152,502,429
Burglary	1,234	\$233,692	\$1,674	\$174,151	\$0	\$126,367	\$152,744	\$186,193	\$8,359	\$2,375	\$68,142	\$8,050	\$961,747
Child Physical Abuse/Neglect	8,006	\$833,498	\$108,059	\$368,976	\$0	\$2,418,000	\$259,959	\$615,633	\$54,053	\$11,515	\$1,502	\$360	\$4,671,555
Child Pornography	270	\$18,863	\$0	\$68,801	\$0	\$147,848	\$25,939	\$10,260	\$4,511	\$5,010	\$5,026	\$0	\$286,258
Child Sexual Abuse	61,420	\$2,201,226	\$6,000	\$845,629	\$26,848,667	\$8,192,086	\$1,089,811	\$3,100,984	\$337,084	\$62,693	\$41,529	\$1,189	\$42,726,897
DUI/DWI	2,723	\$6,264,071	\$1,685,236	\$3,140,691	\$0	\$215,472	\$14,200	\$260,364	\$103,671	\$51,241	\$7,356	\$475	\$11,742,778
Fraud/Financial Crimes	682	\$2,249	\$0	\$554,613	\$0	\$7,485	\$5,000	\$34,903	\$3,811	\$0	\$1,195	\$0	\$609,256
Homicide	19,498	\$1,955,850	\$54,505,586	\$10,790,611	\$0	\$2,439,685	\$252,974	\$1,030,304	\$662,088	\$358,676	\$14,404	\$167,024	\$72,177,202
Human Trafficking	310	\$24,687	\$0	\$166,820	\$0	\$331,846	\$61,928	\$40,740	\$528	\$0	\$2,372	\$0	\$628,921
Kidnapping	902	\$408,227	\$25,614	\$190,674	\$0	\$312,133	\$133,900	\$42,604	\$6,171	\$0	\$1,988	\$0	\$1,121,313
Other Vehicular Crimes	4,499	\$9,888,706	\$3,222,073	\$3,875,361	\$0	\$275,354	\$56,020	\$193,750	\$120,259	\$5,560	\$9,224	\$1,344	\$17,647,650
Robbery	5,539	\$7,853,321	\$50,995	\$2,055,108	\$0	\$1,227,923	\$385,328	\$289,799	\$34,334	\$0	\$121,509	\$6,773	\$12,025,089
Sexual Assault	44,394	\$4,235,735	\$1,017	\$1,364,077	\$28,659,595	\$4,357,619	\$1,265,157	\$1,279,726	\$131,435	\$9,561	\$52,817	\$6,128	\$41,362,868
Stalking	1,338	\$46,271	\$0	\$897,132	\$0	\$367,218	\$667,483	\$359,903	\$10,996	\$45,771	\$1,515	\$4,472	\$2,400,762
Terrorism	116	\$118,321	\$0	\$15,412	\$0	\$103,748	\$12,417	\$3,169	\$4,279	\$0	\$0	\$223	\$257,569
Grand Total	218,090	\$127,464,155	\$60,173,155	\$51,872,143	\$55,508,262	\$32,676,540	\$16,665,492	\$13,265,967	\$2,050,276	\$1,187,138	\$520,070	\$294,639	\$361,677,837