

Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program

FISCAL YEAR 2016 DATA ANALYSIS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program provides funding to support victim assistance programs within the United States and the District of Columbia, as well as the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. State administering agencies subgrant funds to local public and community-based agencies which offer services directly to victims of crime. Funds may also be used to develop programs that address emerging needs, gaps in services, or training for victim service advocates. In fiscal year (FY) 2016, more than \$2 billion was allocated for the VOCA Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program. Fifty-six grantees funded 8,572 subawards to 6,327 unique organizations, which provided assistance to 5,245,303 victims of crime in FY 2016.

DEMOGRAPHICS

VOCA-funded victim service organizations reported demographic information on individuals who received assistance. Many individuals self-reported on age, gender identity, and race/ethnicity, but others did not provide this information to service providers or the provider was otherwise unable to track this information.¹ There were 4,738 organizations that did not track and/or report some or all of their demographic data over the course of FY 2016.

Age: The individuals served who self-reported their age represent 58 percent of all individuals served. Based on data reported by the grantees, the majority of individuals receiving assistance during FY 2016 were between ages 25 and 59 at the time of victimization (figure 1). This is to be expected given the wide span of ages encompassed in this category. The next two most common age groups served were victims ages 0–12 and 18–24. Most funding recipients offer programs that support victims across all age ranges. Even service providers who do not tailor their programs to specific age demographics are called upon to be versatile in offering victim services that are accessible and developmentally appropriate to victims of different ages, given the different developmental stages and needs of young people and the unique needs of elderly victims.

Age of Individuals Served

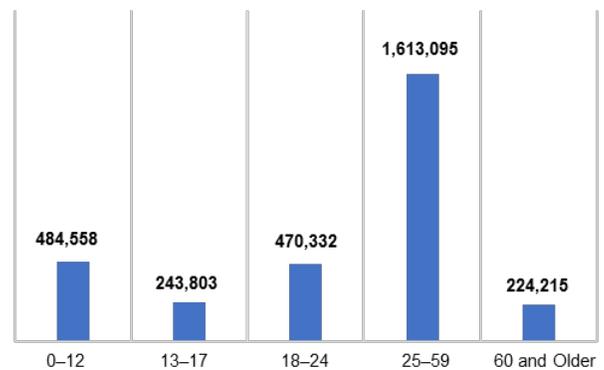


FIGURE 1

Gender Identity: When asked to report one’s gender identity, individuals were given the options of female, male, or other. Those who self-reported their gender identity represent 64 percent of the individuals served. There were 11,743 individuals who selected “other,” and they were then provided the opportunity to further describe their gender identity. Some of the responses received included transgender, intersex, non-conforming, non-binary, gender questioning, and hermaphrodite.

¹ Demographic information includes only data self-reported by individuals and does not include victims whose demographics were not tracked or not reported. Organizations may not track demographic information because victims may be served anonymously or organizations may be in the process of enhancing their data collection processes.

In FY 2016, approximately 72 percent of the individuals assisted by VOCA-funded victim service providers were female (figure 2). This is a large percentage considering the statistical data on violent crime victimization. In 2016, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported that the prevalence rate of violent crime victimization, which comprises aggregated and simple assault, rape or sexual assault, and robbery, was higher for males than the rate for females and that the numbers of males and females who were victimized were not statistically different.^{2,3} This difference in figures may suggest that females are more likely than males to seek assistance from victim service organizations. OVC supports numerous initiatives and efforts to support VOCA administrators and their subgrantee direct service providers in outreach, including the National Resource Center on Reaching Underserved Crime Victims, launched in 2016.

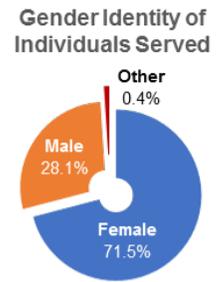


FIGURE 2

Race/Ethnicity: VOCA-funded victim service organizations collected self-reported race/ethnicity data (figure 3). Individuals were able to identify as multiple races or other. Individuals who self-reported their race/ethnicity represent 58 percent of the individuals served. Comparing victim data reported by these organizations to BJS data on violent crime victims adds further insight into how and whether victim services are reaching different racial/ethnic groups. In 2016, White Non-Latinos/Caucasians constituted 64 percent of violent crime victims,⁴ but they made up only a reported 53 percent of new victims served by VOCA-funded providers. In contrast, Blacks/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos constituted 13 percent and 15 percent of violent crime victims, respectively,⁵ but made up 22 percent and 18 percent of the individuals served by victim assistance providers as reported through the Performance Measurement Tool (PMT) system. The figures reported by VOCA-funded victim service organizations indicate the level of engagement victim assistance providers have with these populations.

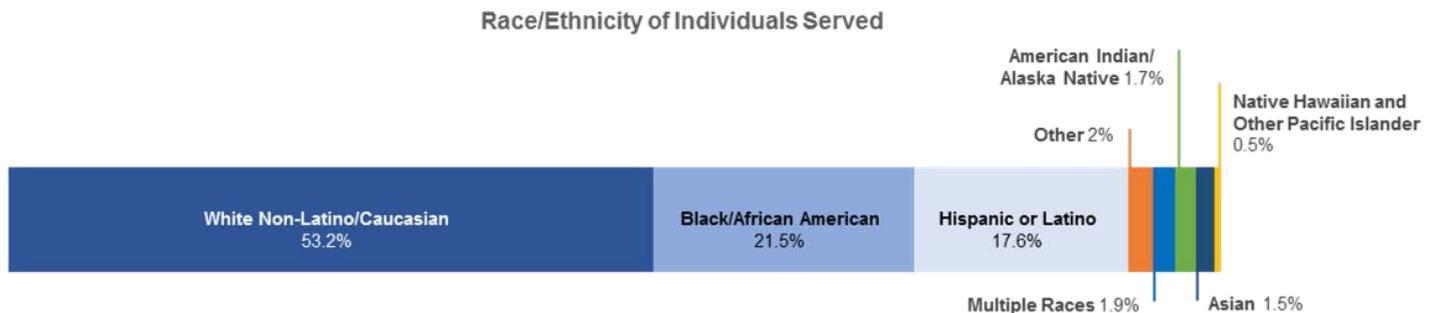


FIGURE 3

² Truman, Jennifer L. and Rachel E. Morgan. December 2017. *Criminal Victimization, 2016*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6166>.

³ BJS data are collected annually on nonfatal crimes (both reported to law enforcement and not reported) against individuals age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households. VOCA Victim Assistance program data are collected quarterly from grantees based on information reported by victim service providers funded through the program. Crime types collected in BJS and VOCA Victim Assistance data do not match exactly; readers should bear this in mind when comparing VOCA Victim Assistance data to any external data source.

⁴ Truman and Morgan. *Criminal Victimization, 2016*.

⁵ Ibid.

Other Classifications: Individuals were also given the opportunity to self-identify in seven special classification categories: deaf/hard of hearing; homeless; immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ); veterans; victims with disabilities (cognitive/physical/mental); and victims with limited English proficiency.⁶ Among victims served, 5 percent reported having cognitive/mental/physical disabilities; 4 percent reported limited proficiency with the English language; and 4 percent reported being homeless.

While victims of crime generally may experience barriers to receiving assistance, individuals with a special classification listed above may face additional challenges to receiving vital victim services. For example, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey, a household-based survey which does not capture victimization in institutional settings, individuals with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to experience a violent victimization than those without a disability.⁷ If a victim with a disability is largely dependent on another person, he or she may need to disclose the victimization to that person and rely upon that person for transportation to a victim service provider and/or to describe the incident to staff. This dependency is especially problematic in cases where the caregiver may be involved in the victimization. Victim service organizations can assess their ability to support victims in these special classification categories and to collaborate with other subject matter experts and providers specializing in these areas to support goals such as engagement of language interpreters, availability of print and online information for those with visual impairments or limited English proficiency, and the accessibility of their physical location.

TYPES OF VICTIMIZATION

VOCA-funded victim service organizations reported the number of individuals who received services based on victimization type. Every individual was counted at least once by the type of victimization he or she experienced. Funding recipients were also asked to provide the number of individuals who presented with multiple types of victimization. There were 714,120 individuals who received services from VOCA-funded organizations who presented multiple types of victimizations, representing 14 percent of total victims served. Among the victimization types,⁸ domestic and/or family violence was the most prevalent category (figure 4).

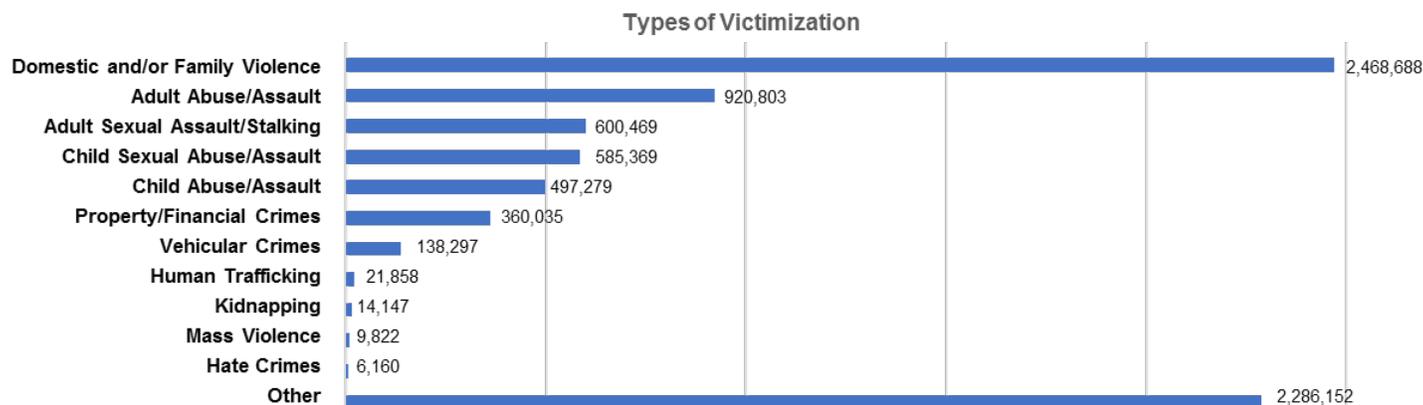


FIGURE 4

⁶ Individuals may select more than one category within this section.

⁷ Harrell, Erika. July 2017. *Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2015 – Statistical Tables*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5986>.

⁸ See appendix A for details on these categories of victimization.

VOCA-funded victim service organizations do not serve only direct victims of crime; they support secondary victims as well. For example, the impact that homicide has on families can be seen when comparing the number of individuals murdered—16,459 per the 2016 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Report (UCR)⁹—and the number of survivors of homicide victims seeking help—57,685 survivors were supported by a VOCA-funded victim service organization in FY 2016. The traumatizing effects of a homicide on family members of the deceased can last for years. Survivors of homicide victims may seek ongoing support from victim service providers to manage grief, navigate law enforcement investigations and court proceedings, or access other resources such as assistance in applying for victim compensation for lost wages and other supports.

For hate crimes, funding recipients were asked to provide additional detail which gives insight into the motivations for those crimes. Data from VOCA-funded victim service organizations are similar to findings from the FBI UCR. Per the 2015 UCR, 59 percent of hate crimes were motivated by racial bias, followed by religion (20 percent), sexual orientation (18 percent), and then gender identity (2 percent).¹⁰ Among victims served through VOCA-funded organizations, race/ethnicity was the main motivation, followed by sexual orientation, then gender/gender identity. While religion was the second most common reason for hate crimes reported by the FBI, it was rarely reported as motivation by victims seeking assistance from a VOCA-funded organization. However, these hate crime statistics may be largely undercounted due in part to variation in states' definitions of hate crimes, which may cause confusion; the difficulty associated with proving hate crimes; and the potential that a hate crime may overlap with other crime types.¹¹

Within the victimization category of “other,” some of the responses from VOCA-funded organizations included community violence, emotional abuse, gang violence, and violation of court-order protection. These types of victimization often accompanied other forms of victimization and point to the complexity inherent in addressing victims' needs. For example, community and gang violence point to challenges in the larger environment, beyond victimization involving a single perpetrator or incident.

⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “2016 Crime in the United States.” Ucr.fbi.gov. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/tables/table-10> (accessed September 28, 2017).

¹⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation. “2015 Hate Crime Statistics.” Ucr.fbi.gov. https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/topic-pages/victims_final (accessed September 8, 2017).

¹¹ Schwencke, Ken. December 2017. “Why America Fails at Gathering Hate Crime Statistics.” *ProPublica*. Retrieved February 1, 2018 from <https://www.propublica.org/article/why-america-fails-at-gathering-hate-crime-statistics>.



SPOTLIGHT: YOUNG PEOPLE

In FY 2016, of the organizations that received VOCA victim assistance funds, 500 served only individuals under age 18. Of these organizations, 91 (18 percent) were Court Appointed Special Advocate organizations. The data reported by this subset of providers feature some differences in victimization types and services when compared to the data of all providers taken together.

Among the 500 organizations, the most common victimization type encountered was child sexual abuse/assault, followed closely by child physical abuse or neglect (table 1). VOCA-funded victim assistance organizations also report on issues specifically affecting young people such as bullying and teen dating victimization. The number of young people seeking service for bullying and teen dating victimization is relatively low, potentially because it is difficult to track bullying, as it overlaps with other crime types.

Types of Victimization Affecting Young People

VICTIMIZATION TYPE	NUMBER OF YOUNG VICTIMS WHO PRESENTED THE TYPE	PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG VICTIMS WHO PRESENTED THE TYPE
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE/ASSAULT	27,205	48.1%
CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT	25,286	44.7%
DOMESTIC AND/OR FAMILY VIOLENCE	5,743	10.2%
BULLYING	527	0.9%
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY	296	0.5%
HUMAN TRAFFICKING: SEX	235	0.4%
TEEN DATING VICTIMIZATION	203	0.4%
OTHER VICTIMIZATION	2,316	4.1%

TABLE 1

For child and youth victims, information and referral was the most common service provided, followed by emotional support or safety services (figure 5). Personal advocacy/accompaniment was a much higher percentage of services provided for young people compared to the overall population of victims. Young people may rely on victim advocates to help explain processes in a way they can understand and may require special considerations to help them navigate and access age-appropriate services. Meanwhile, criminal/civil justice system assistance was a much lower percentage for young persons compared to the overall population of victims. As minors, young people have certain needs that may be very different from adult victims, and VOCA assistance data give a snapshot of those differences among these organizations.

Services Provided to Young People vs. All Victims

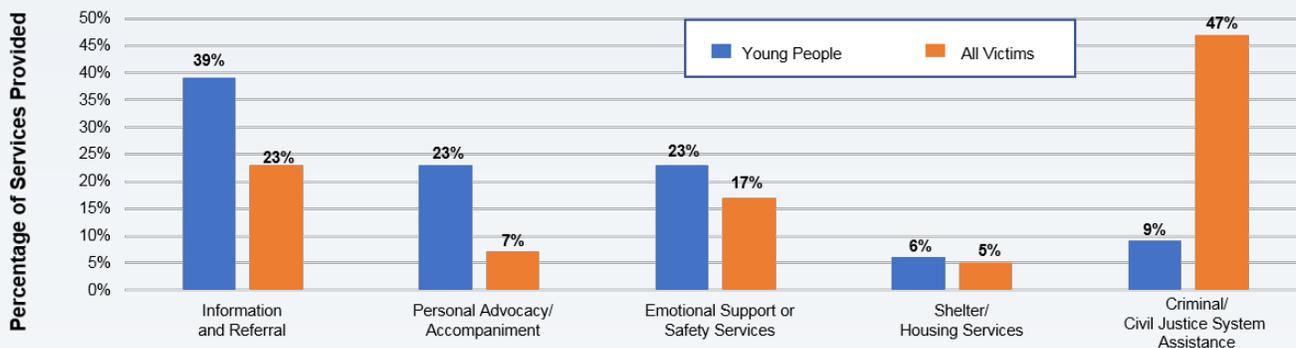


FIGURE 5



SPOTLIGHT: DOMESTIC AND/OR FAMILY VIOLENCE

The most common type of victimization served was domestic and/or family violence (D/FV), with 2,468,688 individuals served across all VOCA-funded victim service organizations. Looking at organizations that focus on serving D/FV victims provides an indication of the services most commonly used. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, there were 2,648 VOCA-funded organizations that served 100 percent D/FV victims. Within these organizations, the most common service provided was emergency shelter (provided 698,158 times), followed by referral to other services (452,199), crisis intervention (444,600), hotline counseling (436,980), and individual counseling (416,120).

There are similarities among the characteristics of D/FV victims served through VOCA and among D/FV victims in the population as a whole. Among the population of D/FV victims served by those VOCA-funded organizations in FY 2016, 85 percent were female. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 2006 and 2015, 76 percent of victims of nonfatal domestic violence overall were female.¹² For the overall population of nonfatal domestic violence victims, White Non-Latino/Caucasian was the racial/ethnic group most served by VOCA-funded organizations at 68 percent of victims, followed by Black/African-American (14 percent) and Hispanic/Latino (10 percent) groups.

There were differences between the larger general categories of services provided to D/FV victims by VOCA-funded organizations compared to overall victims (figure 6). Emotional support or safety services was the largest general category of services provided to D/FV victims compared to criminal/civil justice system assistance for all victims.

Services Provided to Domestic/Family Violence Victims vs. All Victims

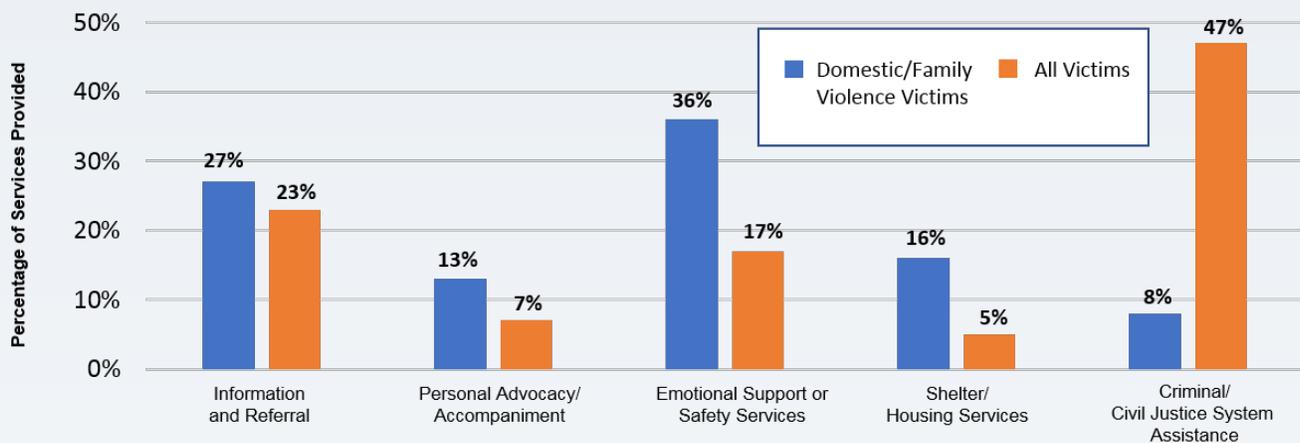


FIGURE 6

Services provided by these organizations differ from those provided by the entire population of VOCA-funded victim service providers. For example, across all VOCA-funded organizations, the most common service provided was event notification, followed by information on victims' rights, and information on the criminal justice process. Because D/FV victims are in close proximity to and may be financially dependent on their attackers, these victims have greater need for emergency services and crisis intervention to leave a violent domestic situation. These differences in the types of services provided point to the particular needs of D/FV victims and how these providers are offering the most relevant services to D/FV victims.

¹² Truman, Jennifer L. and Rachel E. Morgan. December 2017. Criminal Victimization, 2016. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6166>.

DIRECT SERVICES

Crime imparts a number of detrimental outcomes on victims and their families. Victims frequently suffer from negative emotional/psychological outcomes such as depression,¹³ but the impact of crime can be much more far-reaching. Victims may also suffer financially, physically, and socially. As such, victims of crime can have multiple dimensions of needs to be addressed through VOCA-funded services.

Services provided to victims are reported in five main categories and multiple subcategories.¹⁴ VOCA-funded victim service organizations were asked to report on the number of individuals receiving services in each main category and the number of times each subcategory of service was provided (figure 7).

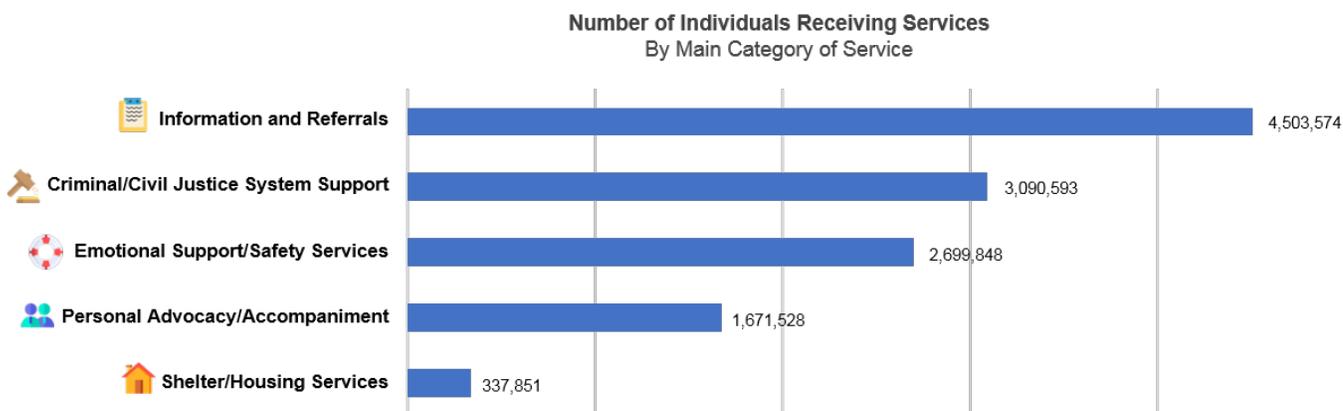


FIGURE 7



Agencies offering **information and referrals** assist victims by providing information about the criminal justice system and an individual's rights as a victim. Individuals may also be referred to other victim assistance programs for additional resources and support. Information about victims' rights was provided to individuals 3,495,282 times, making it the most requested service within this category and the second most commonly provided service overall. Providing information about criminal justice processes was offered 3,108,351 times, the second highest within this category and third most requested service overall. Additionally, 1,980 subgrantee organizations indicated that they would refer individuals receiving assistance to the VOCA Victim Compensation Program.



Criminal and civil justice system support includes activities concerning legal assistance, for example, direct representation in court proceedings. Victims of crime can receive assistance with impact statements, notification services, orders of protection, restitution, and more. Legal advice and representation regarding both civil and criminal matters may be provided, as well as advocate accompaniment to court and law enforcement and prosecutorial interviews. Notification of criminal justice events was provided 17,782,166 times to victims of crime, making it the most commonly provided service within this category and overall.

¹³ Newmark, Lisa C. 2004. *Crime Victims' Needs and VOCA-Funded Services: Findings and Recommendations from Two National Studies*. Alexandria, VA: The Institute for Law and Justice. Retrieved September 8, 2017, from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/214263.pdf>.

¹⁴ See appendix B for a list of all main categories with their subcategories.



Emotional support or safety services largely involves crisis intervention, individual and group counseling, and various forms of therapy. Crisis intervention and individual counseling were the two most common services, provided 2,678,438 and 1,973,947 times respectively to victims of crime. Emergency financial assistance is also included in this category, providing emergency funding for clothing, food, medical equipment and medications, safety services (e.g., changing locks), and transportation.



Personal advocacy and accompaniment encompasses a range of services relating to coordination of assistance services (e.g., child care or transportation), interventions with employers or landlords, interpreter services, and general support. Individuals can request accompaniment while undergoing emergency medical care, interviews with law enforcement personnel, and medical forensic exams. Individual advocacy and transportation assistance were the most requested services within this category in FY 2016.



Shelter and housing services offer victims of crime emergency shelter (including placement in safe houses), relocation assistance, and transitional housing. Emergency shelter was the most common service, provided 2,056,497 times to victims of crime. As previously noted, emergency shelter was provided more frequently for victims of family/domestic violence compared to the general victim population.

Figure 8, below, summarizes the number of times specific services were provided to victims.

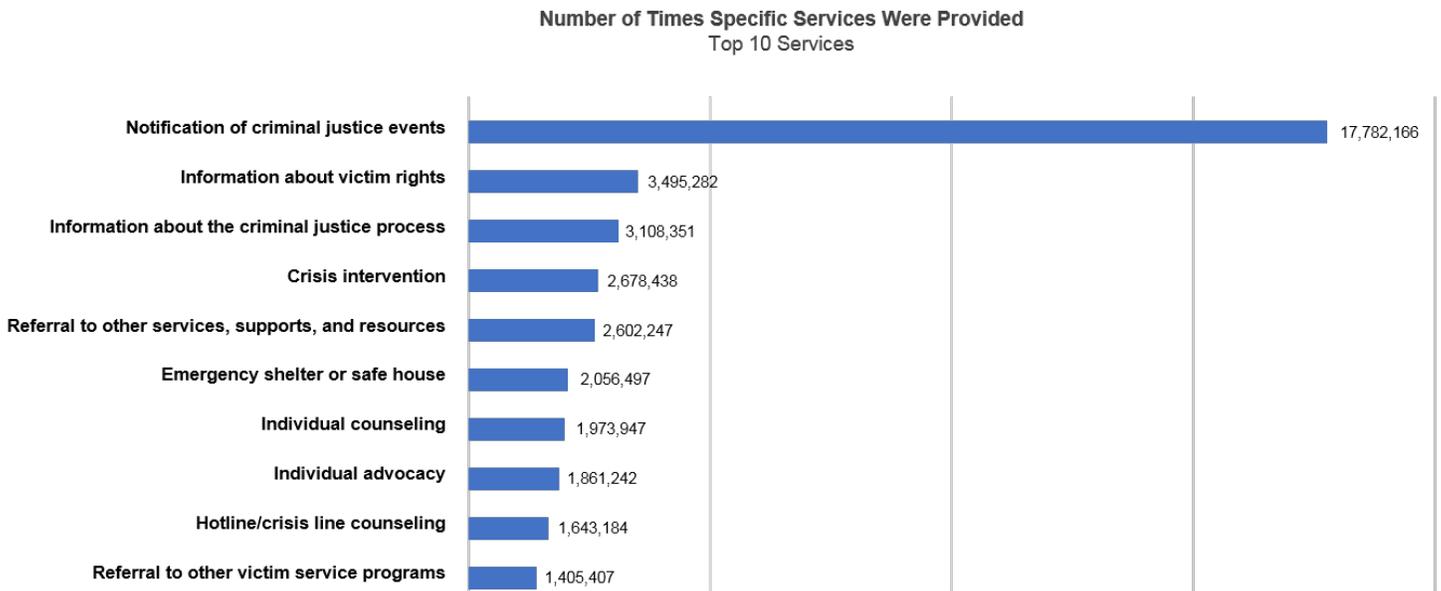


FIGURE 8



CONCLUSION

Victims are a diverse group, encompassing all ages, ethnicities, races, and special classifications, and their needs are just as diverse. The rich data collected from VOCA Victim Assistance grantees allow OVC to better understand how grant funds are used to support victims of crime. The data collected in FY 2016 demonstrate that the VOCA Victim Assistance Program has a wide and increasing reach. VOCA Victim Assistance funds supported 5.2 million individuals, an increase of 41 percent from FY 2015. This increase in victims served is due in part to the additional 4,542 agencies that were funded in FY 2016.

OVC shares the nationwide grantee data included in this annual report because of the valuable role data play in supporting effective program implementation and resource allocation to maximize the impact of grant funds. Data can help organizations identify strategic goals, reflect on service population demographics and needs, find gaps in services, and better understand service demands. VOCA Assistance State Administering Agencies (SAA) and local-level actors are in the best position to understand their unique state needs and provider organizations, but these nationwide data provide additional insight to inform SAAs in the planning and implementation of their VOCA assistance programs.

APPENDIX A: TYPES OF VICTIMIZATION

Subgrantees reported data on individuals who received services based on 26 presenting victimization types. These types as reported by subgrantees were compiled into the 12 main victimization types presented in figure 4, Types of Victimization. The following list outlines the types of victimizations which make up each category.

- **Adult abuse/assault**
 - Adult physical assault (*includes aggravated and simple assault*)
 - Elder abuse or neglect
 - Robbery
 - Survivors of homicide victims
- **Adult sexual/stalking**
 - Adult sexual assault
 - Adults sexually abused/assaulted as children
 - Stalking/harassment
- **Child abuse/assault**
 - Bullying (*e.g., verbal, cyber, or physical*)
 - Child physical abuse or neglect
 - Teen dating victimization
- **Child sexual abuse/assault**
 - Child pornography
 - Child sexual abuse/assault
- **Domestic and/or family violence**
- **Hate crimes**
 - Hate crime: Racial/religious/gender/sexual orientation/other
- **Human trafficking**
 - Human trafficking: Labor
 - Human trafficking: Sex
- **Kidnapping**
 - Kidnapping: Custodial
 - Kidnapping: Noncustodial
- **Mass violence**
 - Mass violence (domestic/international)
 - Terrorism (domestic/international)
- **Other**
- **Property/financial crimes**
 - Arson
 - Burglary
 - Identity theft/fraud/financial crime
- **Vehicular crimes**
 - DUI/DWI incidents
 - Other vehicular victimization (*e.g., hit and run*)

APPENDIX B: DIRECT SERVICES

The Direct Services section (beginning on page 7) describes the types of services provided to victims by subgrantees. There are five main categories of services in which subgrantees are asked to report the total number of individuals who received services. Within each main category, there are several subcategories of services on which subgrantees are asked to report the number of times each service was provided. The main categories of services, and the subcategories within each, are provided below.

- **Information and Referrals**
 - A1. Information about the criminal justice process
 - A2. Information about victim rights, how to obtain notifications, etc.
 - A3. Referral to other victim service programs
 - A4. Referral to other services, supports, and resources (*includes legal, medical, faith-based organizations, address-confidentiality programs, etc.*)

- **Personal Advocacy/Accompaniment**
 - B1. Victim advocacy/accompaniment to emergency medical care
 - B2. Victim advocacy/accompaniment to medical forensic exam
 - B3. Law enforcement interview advocacy/accompaniment
 - B4. Individual advocacy (*e.g., assistance in applying for public benefits, return of personal property or effects*)
 - B5. Performance of medical or nonmedical forensic exam or interview, or medical evidence collection
 - B6. Immigration assistance (*e.g., special visas, continued presence application, and other immigration relief*)
 - B7. Intervention with employer, creditor, landlord, or academic institution
 - B8. Child or dependent care assistance (*includes coordination of services*)
 - B9. Transportation assistance (*includes coordination of services*)
 - B10. Interpreter services

- **Emotional Support or Safety Services**
 - C1. Crisis intervention (*in-person, includes safety planning, etc.*)
 - C2. Hotline/crisis line counseling
 - C3. On-scene crisis response (*e.g., community crisis response*)
 - C4. Individual counseling
 - C5. Support groups (*facilitated or peer*)
 - C6. Other therapy (*traditional, cultural, or alternative healing; art, writing, or play therapy, etc.*)
 - C7. Emergency financial assistance (*includes emergency loans and petty cash, payment for items such as food and/or clothing, changing windows and/or locks, taxis, prophylactic and nonprophylactic medications, durable medical equipment, etc.*)

- **Shelter/Housing Services**
 - D1. Emergency shelter or safe house
 - D2. Transitional housing
 - D3. Relocation assistance (*includes assistance with obtaining housing*)

- **Criminal/Civil Justice System Assistance**

- E1. Notification of criminal justice events (*e.g., case status, arrest, court proceedings, case disposition, release, etc.*)
- E2. Victim impact statement assistance
- E3. Assistance with restitution (*includes assistance in requesting and when collection efforts are not successful*)
- E4. Civil legal assistance in obtaining protection or restraining order
- E5. Civil legal assistance with family law issues (*e.g., custody, visitation, or support*)
- E6. Other emergency justice-related assistance
- E7. Immigration assistance (*e.g., special visas, continued presence application, and other immigration relief*)
- E8. Prosecution interview advocacy/accompaniment (*includes accompaniment with prosecuting attorney and with victim/witness*)
- E9. Law enforcement interview advocacy/accompaniment
- E10. Criminal advocacy/accompaniment
- E11. Other legal advice and/or counsel