

Vision 21 Accomplishments

The goal of the Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services initiative, supported by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, is to expand the vision and impact of the crime victim assistance field. Beginning in 2010 and continuing for more than 18 months, Vision 21 projects examined the current framework of the victim assistance field in the United States and explored new and existing challenges facing the field. The *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Final Report* is the result of this collective examination—the first in 15 years—and seeks to transform the treatment of crime victims in this country.

Major issue areas:

- **Lack of data and research on victims and victimization.** OVC has funded a number of research and evaluation initiatives to help fill these data gaps and inform future program development so that victims can be served effectively.
- **Lack of capacity to serve all victims.** OVC has undertaken a variety of steps to support and build the capacity of those who work in the field, including service providers, advocates, criminal justice professionals, allied practitioners, and policymakers.
- **Innovation to address enduring and emerging challenges of the crime victims field.** Innovative responses are needed to address traditional and new issues and challenges, including understanding the changing demographics in the United States, the impact of globalization, advances in technology, and serving victims of evolving crimes (cybercrime, elder abuse, environmental crimes, human trafficking, and identity theft).

Accomplishments:

- Expansion of the evidence base of the victim assistance field through—
 1. funding to the Bureau of Justice Statistics to support—
 - establishment of a national Victim Service Research Program, which includes the first National Census of Victim Service Providers and the National Survey of Victim Service Providers, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) redesign, and the National Survey of Hospital Victim Services, resulting in new sources of data that can address questions about victimization, victim help-seeking behaviors, the types of crimes by which they are victimized, the perpetrators of those crimes, and a range of statistics on the organizations that serve victims,

- the NCVS Subnational Program, which creates a more complete picture of crime and safety beyond national-level estimates to generate state-, county-, and city-level estimates on the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization; the likelihood of victimization for the population as a whole; and the likelihood of victimization for segments of the population such as women, the elderly, members of various racial or ethnic groups, city dwellers, and other groups,
 - supplements to the NCVS on fraud, identity theft, and stalking, and
 - the National Victimization Statistical Support Program, which provides scientific and technical support for statistical and methodological research, statistical analyses, documentation, and dissemination.
2. funding to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) for key research and evaluation initiatives on—
 - the overlap between the victim and those who victimize,
 - understanding violent victimization experiences of at-risk groups,
 - a longitudinal cohort study of interpersonal violence among college-age women and men,
 - a National Baseline Study of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women,
 - a study on national victimization of tribal youth,
 - restorative justice,
 - financial costs of crime victimization,
 - understanding the broader impacts of mass violence in communities,



- identity theft, and
 - bias crimes.
3. program evaluation of key initiatives such as Wraparound Legal Assistance Networks and the Evaluation of the Systems of Care Initiative.
 4. expansion of performance metrics for Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Formula State Victim Assistance and Compensation programs that will demonstrate how the states are using their greatly increased funding while providing clear accountability for grantees. Preliminary feedback shows that—
 - several states are increasing victim assistance resources for domestic violence programs, sexual assault programs, and Child Advocacy Centers, and
 - several states are establishing new programs for victims of elder abuse, victims of human trafficking, and victims from marginalized populations.
- Capacity building through discretionary funding to—
 1. support victims in AI/AN communities,
 2. support the technology infrastructure needs of state VOCA compensation programs,
 3. support state VOCA victim assistance training and technical assistance,
 4. expand legal assistance to victims through Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Networks and Vision 21 Victim Legal Assistance Networks, and partner with the Department of Justice’s Elder Justice Initiative to provide the Corporation for National and Community Service with legal assistance to victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and
5. collaborate with NIJ and the Department of Defense on building capacity to serve victims of sexual assault.
- Innovation to equip the field to meet the demands of the 21st century through—
 1. advanced technology initiatives.
 - OVC has supported the development of mobile applications that provide crisis support services to victims and also provide long-term, research, and motivational support, including apps developed for Spanish-speaking victims.
 - OVC has supported several national and international (for Americans only) hotlines.
 - Many VOCA state administering agencies have updated their infrastructure to stay current with technological demands and provide greater access for victims.
 2. broadening the lens of the victim assistance field to expand support to unserved and underserved victims, including boys and young men of color, AI/AN youth, and victims of sex and labor trafficking; elder abuse; and financial fraud. These efforts provide trauma-informed, culturally sensitive services to crime victims.
 3. revision of the VOCA Victim Assistance Rule to provide more clarity and flexibility to VOCA state administering agencies for funding victim services, including transitional housing and relocation services, holistic legal assistance, and services to victims in detention facilities.