

The OVC Center for VOCA Administrators Introduction Video Transcript

Chris Asplen:

Hello, and welcome to The OVC VOCA Center for VOCA Administrators. The overall goal of The OVC VOCA Center is to build a strong support network of VOCA administrators and their staff, to broaden victim services to historically underserved communities, and to advance promising policies, practices, and programs that promote justice and healing for all victims of crime. We will achieve these goals through the provision of peer-to-peer training and technical assistance and support on federal grant management. Now, I'd like to introduce you to The OVC VOCA Center director, Janelle Melohn, who will give you more information about what the VOCA Center can offer you.

Janelle Melohn:

Thank you, Chris. Welcome, everyone. I've been a VOCA compensation and assistance administrator for many years in Iowa, and now serve as the director of the VOCA Center. The VOCA Center is supported by several staff, consultants, and subject matter experts, who include many current VOCA administrators, to provide you with the best training and technical assistance. Now I'd like to introduce you to the rest of the management team. Suzanne.

Suzanne Breedlove:

Thank you, Janelle. I'm Suzanne Breedlove. I was the VOCA administrator for Oklahoma for over 30 years and currently serve as the VOCA compensation senior program manager for the VOCA Center. As a former administrator, I managed victim compensation, VOCA assistance, and the sexual assault examination fund. I recognize and respect the fact that victim compensation is a state-administered program and looks different in every state. Kellie.

Kellie Rabenhorst:

Thank you, Suzanne. I'm Kellie Rabenhorst. I'm the former VOCA victim assistance and compensation administrator for Nebraska. I'm currently the VOCA assistant senior program manager for the VOCA Center. I look forward to having the opportunity to work with all of you and assist you in the meaningful work that we get to do with the VOCA dollars.

Janelle Melohn:

As you can tell, the VOCA Center management team has quite a bit of experience walking in your shoes. We will provide peer-to-peer technical assistance to support and meet the needs of VOCA administrators. The VOCA Center will broaden victim services to historically underserved communities. The VOCA Center will provide grant and financial management training and technical assistance. The VOCA Center will provide learning opportunities designed specifically for VOCA administrators, and the VOCA Center will foster expanded accessibility and sustainability of VOCA programs.

Kellie Rabenhorst:

As VOCA administrators, you face some pressing challenges. As former administrators, we have firsthand experience with these same challenges. For example, are you struggling with how to manage funding fluctuations and reductions? Do you have a federal audit coming up and are wondering how to prepare? Are you new to your position and looking for guidance?

Suzanne Breedlove:

Do you have questions about federal grant management, VOCA regulations and guidelines, grant requirements, or allowable costs? Do you need help updating your policies and procedures? Would you like to learn how other states are reaching and funding services to underserved communities?

Janelle Melohn:

You are not alone. The VOCA Center is here to assist you. The VOCA Center will provide direct training and technical assistance outreach, a VOCA 101 Academy, VOCA administrator networking opportunities, expanded OVC coordination, learning communities, and sharing of promising practices, tools, and resources. The VOCA Center will utilize subject matter experts when appropriate to deliver the best possible experience for state administrators.

You may be wondering, what does direct training and technical assistance look like? It could be streamlining processes to reduce administrative burden, addressing funding fluctuations and managing sustainable budgets, or it could be responding to trends in audit findings and audit preparation, or maybe it's sharing best practices on how other states manage their VOCA programs. The VOCA Center is able to meet your needs through a variety of learning opportunities.

Kellie Rabenhorst:

One of those opportunities will be learning communities that will allow you to engage in conversations with your peers and subject matter experts to share best practices and address issues impacting victim compensation and victim assistance administrators.

Suzanne Breedlove:

Another opportunity will be administrator round table sessions. These will be monthly discussions among victim compensation and assistance administrators to support connections and peer-to-peer guidance.

Janelle Melohn:

We will also be providing VOCA 101 academies and training for new administrators annually. These will be designed for administrators new to the field, with less than three years on the job.

Kellie Rabenhorst:

On the VOCA Center website, you will find a VOCA administrator directory, a resource library, news and events, and webinars.

Suzanne Breedlove:

Resources and technical assistance are always available remotely, as well as hosting and participating in various in-person meetings and conferences when travel is possible. We want to be flexible and meet your needs at a time that is most convenient for you. To request technical assistance, please email vocacenter@ncja.org. We have full-time staff, as well as access to subject matter experts across the country, to address your victim assistance and compensation needs. If we don't know the answer, we will find someone who does.

Janelle Melohn:

This concludes our introduction to the VOCA Center. Please don't hesitate to contact us at vocacenter@ncja.org for assistance, or if you have questions about what we have to offer.