

The National Evaluation of State Victims of Crime Act Compensation and Assistance Programs: Findings and Recommendations From a National Survey of State Administrators

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This report is prepared under Grant NIJ#98-VF-GX-0016 from the National Institute of Justice. Opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The views expressed are those of the authors, and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

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Acknowledgments

The Urban Institute/SANDAG project team would like to thank the many state administrators who were so generous with their time and expertise in providing the information requested in the surveys. We greatly appreciate their input and hope this report will prove useful to them.

We would like to thank the many experts who provided a wealth of feedback and insights for the development and analysis of this survey and other aspects of the evaluation. Members of our advisory panel include Kelly Brodie, Barry Bryant, Martha Burt, Dan Eddy, Carroll Ellis, Adele Harrell, Barbara Hart, Eileen Luna, and Brian Ogawa. We are also much indebted to our Project Monitor at the National Institute of Justice, Richard Titus, and to Bernie Auchter of NIJ. We appreciate the valuable guidance of Carol Watkins and Carolyn Hightower at the Office for Victims of Crime, and helpful assistance from Linda Rost at the Office for Victims of Crime.

Additional staff at both the Urban Institute and SANDAG were also very helpful in producing this report and the survey on which it was based. At the Urban Institute, we would like to thank Dave Williams, Dionne Davis, Jake Rosenfeld, and Nicole Brewer. At SANDAG, we appreciate the assistance of Mara Libuser and Linda Sullivan in completing the interviews.

Abstract

In 1984 VOCA established the Crime Victims' Fund (CVF) to supplement states' victim compensation and assistance programs. Over \$3.2 billion has been disbursed from the CVF to state programs. As part of an ongoing project evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of these programs, the Urban Institute and SANDAG surveyed all state administrators regarding current policies, practices, contentious issues, and areas for program improvements. Findings indicate that state programs are generally functioning well but could improve operations in several areas, including planning, training, outreach, and coordination. Further development of responses to drastic fluctuations in expenditures from the CVF and development of policies for future uses of funds currently held for victim-related spending are also needed.

Executive Summary

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), which administers the Crime Victims' Fund (CVF) established by the 1984 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), has disbursed over \$3.2 billion in formula grants to state victims' compensation and assistance programs since 1986. These funds have supported direct payments to victims for crime-related expenses, and thousands of local service providers across the nation who assist victims of a broad range of crimes. OVC provided funding to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), who commissioned the Urban Institute and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to conduct a national evaluation of state victims' compensation and assistance programs supported in part with VOCA funds. The goals of this evaluation are to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of state programs at helping to deliver a seamless web of support to assist victims in their struggle to recover from the financial, emotional, physical, and psychological effects of criminal victimization.

The evaluation has several phases and gathers information from state administrators; advocates, members of advisory bodies, and others who provide input on state program administration; local service providers; and victims who have accessed compensation and assistance services. Getting input from stakeholders at various levels allows us to examine the effects of state policies on local service delivery and how these policies, relationships, and coordination issues affect victims. Our methods include a phone survey of all state administrators; site visits to six states to interview state administrators and local assistance providers; focus groups with assistance program clients; and phone surveys with compensation claimants and assistance clients.

We have completed the telephone survey of all 52 compensation administrators and all 56 assistance administrators (all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and some territories). This report, the first of several reports on findings from this multi-year study, summarizes important grant administration policy and practice information obtained from the survey and publicly available data, and offers recommendations for improvements to state and federal policies and operations by comparing current practices with program standards and experts' recommendations. Future reports will analyze key issues in grant program administration in more detail (based on site visit interviews with administrators, advisors, advocates, and community service providers); examine local service provision issues and practices (from site-visit interviews with community service providers); and assess how well compensation and assistance services meet victims' needs and how services could be improved (based on phone surveys with compensation claimants and clients of community victim assistance programs).

State Compensation Programs

The findings from program performance data and our survey of administrators paint a picture of compensation programs that are generally financially sound and are functioning in accordance with identified goals and standards (e.g., NACVCB, 1996; OVC, 1998a). In general, states seem to be performing the most essential activities to implement good financial planning, outreach, claims processing and decisionmaking, coordination with victim assistance programs, program administration, and training. More advanced activities could, however, be implemented in each of these areas to further enhance program functioning and services to victims, in accordance with recommendations from NACVCB's and OVC's expert panels. Advanced activities include

- *Financial Planning:* State legislatures and advocacy groups should support efforts to expand benefits in states with revenues that exceed payout needs, and efforts to raise additional funds to better meet victims' needs in states with a funding shortfall.

- *Outreach to Victims:* States should consider making greater use of technology and other innovative means to reach out to victims. Efforts should also focus on reaching victim groups (defined by type of crime and victims' characteristics) who have not been well-represented in claimant rolls. Working closely with groups who represent or serve these victims may be very useful in identifying and overcoming barriers to accessing compensation. Issues may arise when one type of provider (e.g., victim/witness staff in prosecutors' offices) is the primary source of help in accessing compensation, and should be examined and addressed.
- *Claims Processing and Decisionmaking:* Processing time could be improved by streamlining and resolving delays in verification procedures. Efforts to increase payment caps where needed, such as for funeral expenses, should be supported. Special efforts may be needed to enhance the general understanding and improve how programs apply the concept of contributory misconduct.
- *Coordination:* Coordination with victim assistance programs should move beyond communication and toward active collaboration, to further the goal of building a seamless web of support for victims.
- *Program Administration:* As state programs expand, additional efforts should be focused on strategic planning, needs assessments, and the promotion of innovative approaches to serving victims. Technical assistance from OVC and others with expertise in these areas may be needed to help administrators explore these new areas in productive ways.
- *Training:* Training efforts should continue to include members of the justice system and members of other professions who work with victims, such as health and mental health care providers, funeral directors, school personnel, and representatives of Indian tribes and other ethnic or racial minorities. Informing a broader range of professionals about compensation should help reach a broader range of victims.

This broad range of activities could be supported under the VOCA administrative allowance. Increases in this allowance would facilitate states' efforts to undertake these expansions. It is important to note that success in these activities would certainly produce more demand on funds for awarding claims, suggesting the need to increase overall allocations in conjunction with additional funding to enhance program operations. Better-functioning programs would need more funds for awards because they would meet victims' needs more completely.

State Assistance Programs

Findings from the current research, in conjunction with other input from state administrators (i.e., the 1997 regional meetings of administrators), OVC priorities and guidelines, and recommendations from the field (i.e., OVC, 1998a), indicate that state VOCA assistance programs are generally functioning well in a number of areas. This is commendable particularly in light of the difficult funding situation under which programs operate. However, a number of issues related to VOCA assistance program operations and management remain.

- *Funding Allocations:* The most pressing problem facing state administrators is the difficulty of doing long-range planning, given extreme fluctuations in funding levels from year to year. The four-year obligation period certainly helps to relieve pressures on state administrators to distribute a variable amount of funds. The federal caps of the last two years have controlled fluctuations, but have led to a very large amount (over \$780 million) being held for crime victim purposes but not available for allocation. It is critical that policies be developed for putting these funds to work for victims in a timely way and in accordance with the legislative intent of VOCA. These policies should consider the

possibility that Congress will continue imposing annual caps as well as the possibility that the entire pool of funds may become available for allocation, and develop mechanisms for smoothing allocation fluctuations as needed. It may be useful to involve state administrators and other critical stakeholders in policy development efforts.

- *Strategic Planning:* Many states reported doing needs assessments, coordination of funding sources, efforts to increase revenues, and other planning-related activities. But only about half the states reported having a formal strategic plan for victim services funding at the time of our survey. Since this is clearly a priority for OVC, and can be very helpful to administrators in managing a complex grant program with a four-year distribution period for each year's allocation and changing funding levels from year to year, this seems to be an area in which OVC could provide critical support. Efforts to help those states with plans share information on the content of their plans, how they were developed, and how they are implemented could be very useful to those states without such plans.
- *Needs Assessments:* While most states reported conducting needs assessments, their methods varied widely. Knowing what victims' needs are, and which victims and what needs are underserved, is critical for funding decisions. A closer look at how needs assessments are being done, which methods seem more useful than others, and how the results are used could also be very helpful to state administrators.
- *Outreach to Service Providers and Underserved Populations:* As states' ability to do long-range planning improves, additional efforts should be made to reach qualified service providers and victim populations not currently served by VOCA funding. Needs assessments should provide very useful input on these efforts, and partnerships between state administrators and groups which represent underserved populations should be helpful in identifying barriers to service utilization and how to overcome them.
- *Coordination:* Coordination of the many funding sources available to assist victims of crime is very important to eliminate gaps or duplication of services. While coordination mechanisms vary, over three-quarters of the states make an effort to co-track at least some of the major federal victim assistance funding streams, and find these efforts useful. Coordination with the state compensation program is also common, but is mostly limited to training efforts and distributing program materials. Ways in which VOCA and other assistance administrators, compensation administrators, and federal victim/witness personnel might work together more closely should be identified and supported.
- *Support for Administration and Training:* The administrative allowance can and has been used to support many activities, which OVC and leaders in the field have identified as crucial, such as strategic planning, needs assessments, coordination, and various outreach activities. Use of this allowance seems to be on the rise, and state administrators have expressed the need for greater support for administrative activities. Many administrators would also like to broaden the use of administrative funds to include prevention activities (which would require a legislative change), among others. Training funds are also being put to use, although some administrators would like them to be made more accessible by reducing or eliminating the 20 percent match requirement. Given the current funding environment and the gaps remaining between recommended and actual practices, OVC should consider the feasibility of increasing these allowances and opening them up to additional uses.

VOCA State Compensation and Assistance Programs

Help for Victims of Crime: Early Community, State, and Federal Efforts

A steady rise in the level of serious violent crime in the United States during the early 1960's increased concern for its impact on victims and society. Criminal victimization can have many harmful impacts on victims, and victims often need assistance with financial and emotional burdens imposed by the crime and in navigating the criminal justice system. State legislatures began establishing and funding crime victims' compensation programs in the mid-1960's to help alleviate the financial impact of criminal victimization. By the early 1970's, local community groups, often motivated by dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system's response to victims, began establishing programs that provided support and advocacy services to survivors of violent crime. The U.S. Department of Justice, through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), soon followed suit in 1974 by supporting the development of eight prosecutor-based and two law enforcement-based victim/witness pilot programs. The LEAA contributed a total of \$50 million to victim service programs during its tenure. Federal funding for victim assistance declined with the termination of the LEAA in the early 1980s. When the Report of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime (1982) recommended that a federal funding stream was essential to the continued viability of both assistance and compensation programs, Congress responded by passing the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) in 1984.

Federal Funding Through The Victims of Crime Act of 1984

With the passage of VOCA, the federal government reasserted its role in the victim assistance field and provided significant resources for its continued expansion. VOCA established the Crime Victims' Fund (CVF), which is funded by fines, penalty assessments, and forfeitures in federal criminal cases, not by appropriated tax dollars. The Federal Courts Administration Act of 1992 removed an initial \$100 million cap on the Fund and eliminated the need for periodic reauthorization of VOCA and the CVF. The vast majority of the CVF is used in two major formula grant programs that supplement the states' provision of financial assistance and direct services to crime victims¹. The Victim Compensation Program receives up to 48.5 percent of CVF funds and is allocated to the states as a 40 percent payout on most state expenditures, so that about 30 percent of a state's total compensation funds are VOCA dollars.² The Victim Assistance Program receives at least 48.5 percent of CVF funds and is allocated according to a base amount and state populations. If 40 percent of combined state compensation expenditures is less than the 48.5 percent of the CVF reserved for federal compensation allocations, the remainder of the 48.5 percent is allocated to the assistance program.

VOCA Purposes and Funding

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) within the U.S. Department of Justice administers these programs. Statutory language and OVC guidelines direct states to use these funds for:

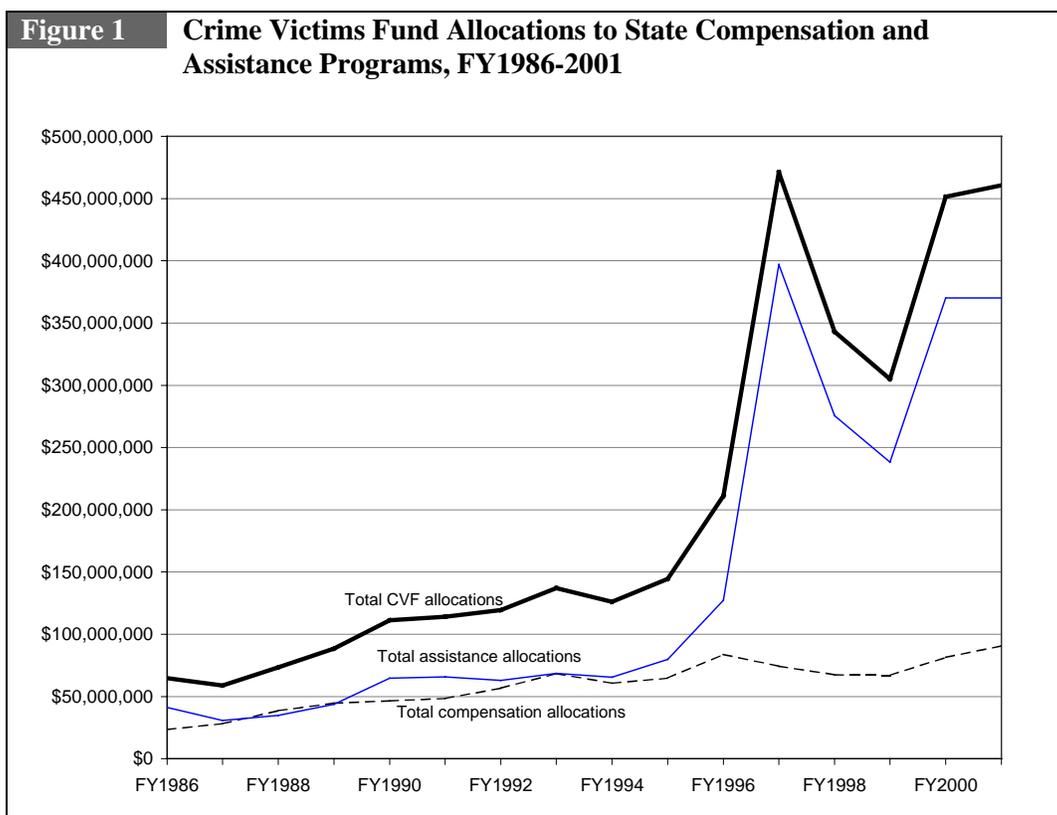
- Enhancing accessibility to services, particularly for priority and underserved populations;
- Encouraging victim cooperation with criminal justice officials;

¹ After set-asides to support U.S. Attorneys' Office and FBI Victim Coordinators, child abuse investigations and prosecutions, discretionary programs for training and technical assistance, an international victim compensation program, and a reserve fund for assisting victims of terrorism or mass violence, or for offsetting fluctuations in CVF awards to the states.

² Across the nation, about three-quarters of the state-generated funds are from criminal fines and penalties, and the rest are from appropriations, although this varies considerably from state to state (Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson, 1992).

- Promoting coordinated public and private assistance efforts at the community level; and
- Maximizing resources to reduce the financial, physical, psychological, and emotional costs of victimization.

From 1986 through 2001, OVC awarded a total of over \$3.2 billion to state victim compensation and assistance programs. Figure 1 presents year-by-year data for total VOCA awards to participating states, and for compensation and assistance awards separately. These funds have grown from \$64.7 million in 1986 to \$460.8 million in 2001, a seven-fold increase. The funds grew steadily in the first ten years, increasing about 225 percent from 1986 to 1995. The sharpest inclines occurred over the last six years, with an overall increase of just over 300 percent from 1996 to 2001. These patterns reflect strengthened efforts by U.S. Attorneys and the Department of Justice’s Antitrust Division to pursue fines from convicted offenders (OVC, 1999a). Some years, notably 1997, 2000, and 2001, have been record years due to large deposits into the Fund from substantial penalties in federal cases such as corporate fraud, antitrust, and price-fixing cases. Allocations for 2000 and 2001 would have been much higher had not Congress imposed spending caps.



Evaluating State VOCA Programs

The present research was commissioned by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) within the U.S. Department of Justice, with support from OVC, to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of state VOCA programs. This is an auspicious time to assess how programs currently operate, lessons learned from the past, and promising directions for future developments. There is a valuable opportunity to use the high levels of funding currently available to develop state-of-the-art methods for better serving victims' needs, especially since crime rates have declined in recent years.

In light of the resources dedicated to VOCA, a careful evaluation of whether these programs are accomplishing what they were designed to do is vitally important. As part of a larger NIJ research program to examine this issue, the Urban Institute and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) were selected to evaluate 1) the effectiveness and efficiency of VOCA services in meeting victim needs and 2) how victim assistance providers and compensation programs are coordinating to help deliver a seamless web of support to reduce the costs and consequences borne by victims of crime (recognizing that many other professions also serve victims).

The evaluation has several phases and gathers information from state administrators; advocates, members of advisory bodies, and others who provide input on program administration; local service providers; and victims who have accessed compensation and assistance services. Getting input from stakeholders at various levels allows us to examine the effects of state policies on local service delivery and how these policies, relationships, and coordination issues impact victims. The various phases of the study are outlined below in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the Urban Institute/SANDAG National Evaluation of VOCA State Programs

Phase	Key Informants	Data Collection Methods
I	State Administrators, Members of Advisory Bodies, and Victim Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compilation of descriptive program data from public sources ▪ Telephone survey with all state assistance and compensation administrators ▪ Site visits in 6 states to interview state assistance and compensation administrators, members of oversight bodies, and victim advocates
II	Local Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site visits to 3 local assistance providers in each of the 6 selected states; 18 programs in total
III	Victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus groups with assistance clients at one site in each of the selected states; 6 in total ▪ Telephone survey of 40 assistance clients from each of the 18 local providers visited; 720 in total ▪ Telephone survey of 80-85 compensation claimants in each of the 6 states visited; about 500 in total

This report is the first in a series of reports on the findings from this multi-year study. The report focuses on the policies and practices of state VOCA administrators as informed by the compilation of publicly available data and administrators' responses to a national telephone survey in 1999. The survey was developed to provide information on current policies and practices, which can be compared with identified goals and standards to suggest areas for future development.

Crime Victims' Compensation

As it is known today, crime victims' compensation is the state's means of recompensing some victims for certain expenses incurred as a result of the crime they suffered. This is distinguished from restitution and civil liability, which hold the offender directly accountable for repairing the harm done to his or her victim (it is of course possible to implement all approaches to helping victims simultaneously). Crime victim compensation is a direct payment to a crime victim or survivor, or a payment on the victim's behalf to those who have provided services to the victim. The first American legislation to provide crime victims' compensation was enacted in California in 1965 (similar legislation was passed in New Zealand and England in the previous two years). California was quickly followed by New York, Hawaii, and Massachusetts in the next three years, and a total of 38 states had enacted compensation legislation and statewide programs by 1983 (Roberts, 1990). As of 2001, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam operate compensation programs that are funded by state funds and federal VOCA funds.

The Uses and Management of Federal VOCA Compensation Funds

Federal eligibility guidelines for 1997 developed by OVC address how VOCA compensation funds may be spent, and how the funds should be managed. Guidelines that address how the funds may be spent – eligible victims, crimes, and expenses – specify that:

- Compensation is for victims of violent crime with injury³ and for homicide victims' survivors; federal funds are not to be used for victims of property crime;⁴
- VOCA compensation funds may be used to pay for victims' crime-related medical or dental costs; mental health counseling; funeral and burial costs; lost wages or loss of support; and crime scene clean-up expenses;⁵
- State compensation programs must promote victim cooperation with the reasonable requests of law enforcement authorities;⁶
- State compensation programs may not, except to prevent unjust enrichment of the offender, deny compensation to a victim because of his or her familial relationship or cohabitation with the offender; and
- Compensation must be available to victims of federal crimes, to residents of other states who are victimized in a given state, to state residents who are victimized in another state, territory, or possession which does not have a compensation program, and to state residents who are victimized by terrorist acts outside the United States.

³ Some states define injury as physical injury, while others do not (Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson, 1992).

⁴ Updated OVC guidelines will allow for crisis counseling, mental health services, financial counseling, or similar services for victims of property crime, but not replacement of the property.

⁵ States may pay other expenses at their discretion, but federal compensation funds are not to be used to pay for victims' property damage or property losses, except for personal medical devices.

⁶ States determine what constitutes "cooperation with reasonable requests." Frequently-used definitions include reporting the crime to a law enforcement agency (typically within 7 days or less), reporting to another governmental agency such as protective services or a court, or completing a medical evidentiary examination for sexual assault. States may also require cooperation with enforcement efforts of police and prosecutors, with exceptions for compelling safety reasons (Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson, 1992). OVC encourages states to examine what factors may discourage victims from cooperating with law enforcement (such as threats from the offender; age, psychological, cultural, or linguistic barriers; embarrassment and shame; and apprehension about law enforcement agencies) and how these barriers can be overcome.

Additional OVC guidelines address how the VOCA funds should be managed by the state:

- State compensation programs have the year of award plus the following three years to obligate federal funds. For example, federal fiscal year 1997 funds are available for obligation from October 1, 1996 through September 30, 2000 (federal fiscal years 1997 through 2000);
- State compensation programs may use up to 5 percent of the federal award for administrative purposes;⁷ and
- State compensation programs may not use federal funds to supplant state funds otherwise available for crime victim compensation.

Additional State Regulations

Aside from these guidelines, the states have a good deal of discretion in how compensation funds are managed and spent, and regulations vary from state to state. State-imposed eligibility requirements address filing deadlines (generally from six months to three years after the crime), payer of last resort requirements, the victim's role in the crime, and the types of losses covered.

States consider compensation to be the payer of last resort for crime-related expenses, so that compensation is available only for those expenses not covered by private insurance, public insurance and benefits programs, restitution, civil damage awards, and any other sources of recompense. Since payment from some of these sources may take years to receive, compensation programs will often provide the victim with more timely payment with the understanding that funds received in the future for expenses paid by the compensation program will be forwarded to the compensation program (subrogation).

The victim's role in the crime is an important element of eligibility for compensation. All states assess contributory misconduct – illegal or culpable behavior on the part of the victim at the time of the crime – in determining compensation awards. Some states deny awards entirely if claimants engaged in contributory misconduct, while other states reduce awards in proportion to the extent of misconduct. This is a very difficult issue for compensation programs; staff must often sift through several different versions of the crime to make decisions on a case-by-case basis, and some states have no written standards for assessing contributory misconduct.

In addition to covering the losses specified in federal guidelines, many states cover other crime-related expenses as well. These vary a good deal from state to state, and a few states include rehabilitation services, replacement services, certain property losses, relocation expenses for some victims, and rental payments. Payments from state funds for these types of expenses may not be eligible for inclusion in calculations of the federal 40 percent payout.

Federal Funding for Victims' Compensation

OVC has disbursed \$944,794,000 to state compensation programs from 1986 to 2001. See Figure 1 for an illustration of trends in compensation funding over the years. Compensation allocations have grown from \$23.5 million in 1986 to \$90.7 million in 2001, a 385 percent increase. The pattern of growth has been one of fairly constant increase, with some modest fluctuations since 1994. The phenomenal

⁷ These funds may be used to support program personnel's salary and benefits; travel costs for attendance at training conferences; computer equipment and support services; audit costs; costs of producing and distributing program brochures, posters, and other outreach activities; professional fees for computer services and peer review of compensation claims; agency membership dues; program enhancements such as toll-free numbers; special equipment and materials to facilitate service to persons with disabilities; activities to improve coordination among public and private agencies; and to provide training to public and private organizations that serve crime victims.

growth of the Crime Victims Fund has not had a dramatic impact on the compensation allocations since they are tied to states' expenditures, rather than to the size of the Fund per se. There have been sufficient funds available to meet the federal payout in every year except FY 1988, when the payout was reduced about 2 percent due to insufficient collections into the CVF.

State Program Operations and Performance

Descriptive data on state programs are available on a state-by-state basis, as presented in Table 2. Other information is available at the national level from aggregated state performance reports to OVC (OVC, 1998b). These data provide a thumbnail sketch of how compensation funds are used by the states.

Administrative Agencies. Programs are administered by a wide variety of state agencies (see Table 2). Over half the state programs are housed in an office, department, commission, council, institute, or board directly involved with the criminal justice system, including planning and policy offices, the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Public Safety, courts, and corrections agencies. Another 20 percent are located in victim-related bodies, including independent agencies whose only function is to administer the compensation program. The remainder are scattered across a wide range of other types of agencies, including health, social, or human service agencies; labor, industry, or workers' compensation agencies; the state treasury, the governor's office, a finance administration agency; a board of control; and a board of examiners. The implications of program placement will be explored in more detail in future evaluation activities.

Federal Allocations. The states received a total of \$81,374,000 from OVC in FY2000, ranging from the Virgin Island's \$39,000 to California's \$19,161,000. The median allocation was \$621,000, which is about the amount that went to Oregon or Virginia (Table 2). These allocations are the 40 percent payout on state expenditures for FY1998.

State Payments. In 1997, the states paid out nearly \$249 million (combined federal and state funds) to over 114,000 claimants. Of these, a small minority were emergency claims – 2300 emergency payments totalling \$1.7 million. The states paid nearly \$3.8 million for forensic sexual assault exams (OVC, 1998b). States impose caps on maximum award amounts ranging from Maine's \$7500 to Washington's \$150,000, with a few states having no overall cap but caps on various categories of expenses. The average cap is around \$22,000 to \$25,000. With awards averaging from Maine's \$960 to Rhode Island's \$9724 – at a median of about \$2400 across the nation—actual payments typically fall well below the caps (Table 2). The caps are designed to accommodate victims with very high expenses (such as drunk driving crash survivors with catastrophic injuries); few victims incur this level of expense.

Types of Expenses. Payments were most often for medical/dental expenses, at a median of 55 percent of all awards across the nation, followed by lost wages/loss of support at 15 percent, funeral/burial expenses at 10 percent, mental health expenses at 6 percent, and other expenses at 1 percent. However, there is tremendous variation in the distribution of funds across these categories from state to state (Table 2).

Types of Crimes. The most common type of crime for which compensation was paid was non-familial assault, at 48 percent of all funds paid. Homicide accounted for 16 percent of all payments, child sexual and physical abuse for 12 percent (with most of these payments for sexual abuse), domestic assault/spouse abuse for 7 percent⁸, driving while intoxicated/under the influence for 4 percent, adult sexual assault for 3 percent, and other crimes accounted for 9 percent of all payments (OVC, 1998b).

⁸ Reporting procedures were recently revised to provide better information on domestic violence-related and other types of claims. Data currently available report that 14 percent of all claims paid in 1999 were for domestic

Case Processing Indicators. States vary a good deal in their case processing statistics, as shown in Table 2. States determined a median of 74 percent of the claims they processed in 1997⁹, approving for payment about 69 percent of those determinations (with rates again differing considerably across states). States reported a median claim processing time of 18 weeks, which varies from North Dakota's average of 5 weeks to Rhode Island's average of 286 weeks. However, it is very important to note that case processing milestones are defined quite differently from state to state, and states' methods for computing processing time vary enormously across states, so comparing one state's processing statistics to another's is extremely imprecise and should be undertaken very cautiously.

violence-related crimes. In 1997, 9 percent of all claims paid were domestic violence-related. Data on the amount of the claims paid in 1999 are not yet available (OVC, 2000a).

⁹ These include claims carried over from 1996 and all claims received during 1997. Since programs could not be expected to determine all these claims—such as those received just before the end of 1997—the 74 percent determination rate should not be interpreted to fall short of a goal of 100 percent. In fact, across the nation more claims were determined during 1997 than were received in 1997, indicating that the carry-over (of which the older claims might be considered “backlog”) may be decreasing from year to year.

Table 2. Descriptive Data on State Compensation Programs

STATE	Administrative Agency	FY 2000 Award	FY 2000 Award Rank	Maximum Award	Average Award Amount (FY 97)	Percent of Total Awards for FY 97					Percent of Claims Determined (FY 97)	Percent of Determinations Approved for Payment (FY 97)	Average Claim Processing Time (FY 97, in weeks)
						Medical/Dental	Mental Health	Lost wages/Loss of support	Funeral/Burial	Other			
Alabama	Independent	\$842,000	23	\$10,000	\$3,412	58%	5%	16%	19%	2%	68%	49%	17
Alaska	Department of Public Safety	\$226,000	43	\$25,000	\$4,771	36%	8%	46%	6%	3%	54%	69%	14
Arizona	Criminal Justice Commission	\$357,000	38	\$10,000	\$1,148	46%	14%	16%	25%	0%	83%	75%	8
Arkansas	Office of the Attorney General	\$849,000	21	\$10,000	\$1,618	55%	7%	10%	27%	0%	89%	83%	10
California	State Board of Control	\$19,161,000	1	\$46,000	\$2,046	35%	45%	13%	6%	1%	76%	86%	17
Colorado	Department of Public Safety	\$2,781,000	8	\$10,000	\$1,289	40%	37%	12%	9%	2%	90%	92%	11
Connecticut	Superior Court Operations	\$573,000	31	\$15,000	\$3,478	48%	6%	27%	15%	4%	64%	56%	32
Delaware	Independent	\$367,000	36	\$25,000	\$3,212	55%	11%	13%	5%	16%**	78%	79%	16
District of Columbia	Supreme Court	\$590,000	30	\$25,000	\$2,783	30%	0%	23%	47%	1%	24%	88%	6
Florida	Office of the Attorney General	\$4,544,000	4	\$15,000	\$2,865	50%	4%	38%	7%	2%	88%	60%	9
Georgia	Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	\$612,000	29	\$10,000	\$2,599	53%	11%	16%	20%	0%	70%	63%	22
Hawaii	Department of Public Safety	\$270,000	42	\$10,000	\$1,502	38%	5%	3%	7%	46%**	57%	79%	55
Idaho	Industrial Commission	\$573,000	32	\$25,000	\$2,170	53%	26%	15%	5%	1%	77%	81%	17
Illinois	Court of Claims	\$4,919,000	3	\$25,000	\$5,526	62%	3%	17%	15%	2%	32%	46%	31
Indiana	Criminal Justice Institute	\$1,458,000	15	\$10,000	\$1,218	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	69%	50%	112
Iowa	Department of Justice	\$950,000	19	Categorical Caps	\$1,587	56%	11%	22%	10%	1%	88%	89%	9
Kansas	Office of the Attorney General	\$911,000	20	\$25,000	\$2,897	71%	6%	13%	9%	2%	90%	73%	17
Kentucky	Independent	\$361,000	37	\$25,000	\$4,147	73%	2%	9%	16%	0%	66%	41%	44
Louisiana	Commission on Law Enforcement & Administration of Criminal Justice	\$314,000	40	\$10,000	\$1,867	60%	3%	12%	24%	2%	96%	76%	10

*Data from FY98

** Examples of "Other" include attorney fees, daycare, and transportation

Sources: www. Sources: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc, "Crime Victims Fund 2000" (OVC), and NACVCB's 1996 Program Standards

Table 2. Descriptive Data on State Compensation Programs

STATE	Administrative Agency	FY 2000 Award	FY 2000 Award Rank	Maximum Award	Average Award Amount (FY 97)	Percent of Total Awards for FY 97					Percent of Claims Determined (FY 97)	Percent of Determinations Approved for Payment (FY 97)	Average Claim Processing Time (FY 97, in weeks)
						Medical/Dental	Mental Health	Lost wages/ Loss of support	Funeral/Burial	Other			
Maine	Office of the Attorney General	\$85,000	49	\$7,500	\$960	50%	21%	21%	8%	0%	76%	81%	18
Maryland	Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services	\$1,461,000	14	\$45,000	\$8,083	78%	0%	11%	10%	0%	41%	54%	84
Massachusetts	Office of the Attorney General	\$959,000	18	\$25,000	\$4,089	29%	8%	44%	18%	2%	75%	60%	18
Michigan	Department of Community Health	\$311,000	41	\$15,000	\$2,384	59%	2%	19%	19%	1%	75%	47%	17
Minnesota	Department of Public Safety	\$738,000	24	\$50,000	\$2,256	40%	6%	32%	20%	1%	66%	85%	19
Mississippi	Department of Finance and Administration	\$420,000	35	\$10,000	\$2,631	63%	2%	10%	24%	1%	83%	56%	25
Missouri	Department of Labor & Industrial Relations	\$1,473,000	13	\$15,000	\$4,589	72%	1%	14%	12%	1%	77%	81%	6
Montana	Board of Crime Control	\$152,000	45	\$25,000	\$3,150	72%	14%	6%	7%	0%	40%	69%	45
Nebraska	Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice	\$114,000	48	\$10,000	\$1,961	64%	2%	14%	20%	10%**	77%	55%	22
Nevada	State Board of Examiners	\$847,000	22	\$50,000	N/A	72%*	14%*	11%*	3%*	0%*	92%*	39%	N/A
New Hampshire	Department of Justice	\$66,000	50	\$10,000	\$1,114	31%	38%	15%	9%	8%	63%	77%	21
New Jersey	Independent	\$1,686,000	11	\$25,000	\$4,171	56%	6%	32%	4%	2%	46%	49%	69
New Mexico	Independent	\$357,000	39	\$20,000	\$1,587	60%	15%	9%	12%	4%	91%	77%	27
New York	Independent	\$4,187,000	5	Categorical Caps	\$1,646	61%	1%	19%	12%	8%	68%	51%	29
North Carolina	Department of Crime Control and Public Safety	\$1,549,000	12	\$20,000	\$3,344	72%	2%	11%	14%	0%	72%	59%	28
North Dakota	Department of Corrections	\$59,000	51	\$25,000	\$1,954	68%	8%	22%	2%	0%	92%	76%	5

*Data from FY98

** Examples of "Other" include attorney fees, daycare, and transportation

Sources: www. Sources: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc, "Crime Victims Fund 2000" (OVC), and NACVCB's 1996 Program Standards

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						Medical/Dental	Mental Health	Lost wages/ Loss of support	Funeral/Burial	Other			
Ohio	Attorney General's Office	\$3,394,000	6	\$50,000	\$4,190	31%	4%	59%	6%	0%	48%	47%	53
Oklahoma	District Attorney's Council	\$693,000	25	\$10,000	\$2,662	68%	7%	14%	11%	0%	41%	61%	9
Oregon	Department of Justice	\$623,000	26	\$44,000	\$1,336	44%	31%	18%	6%	1%	70%	57%	20
Pennsylvania	Commission on Crime and Delinquency	\$1,317,000	16	\$35,000	\$2,148	46%	4%	20%	18%	12%**	71%	80%	30
Rhode Island	General Treasurer's Office	\$615,000	28	\$25,000	\$9,724	7%	1%	9%	3%	79%**	10%	69%	286
South Carolina	Office of the Governor	\$2,410,000	9	\$15,000	\$2,003	69%	5%	9%	16%	0%	90%	82%	6
South Dakota	Department of Social Services	\$138,000	47	\$10,000	\$1,219	58%	25%	8%	7%	2%	69%	79%	23
Tennessee	Treasury Department	\$1,959,000	10	\$12,000	\$4,172	28%	1%	37%	13%	22%**	72%	60%	12
Texas	Office of the Attorney General	\$9,055,000	2	\$50,000	\$2,803	59%	10%	23%	7%	2%	86%	71%	21
Utah	independent	\$1,057,000	17	\$25,000	\$1,147	49%	21%	10%	5%	15%**	96%	82%	6
Vermont	Independent	\$142,000	46	\$10,000	\$1,425	22%	44%	10%	10%	14%**	83%	73%	8
Virginia	Workers' Compensation Commission	\$619,000	27	\$15,000	\$2,599	69%	5%	9%	17%	0%	90%	49%	6
Washington	Department of Labor and Industries	\$2,920,000	7	\$150,000	\$2,091	29%	13%	40%	6%	12%**	90%	73%	10
West Virginia	Court of Claims	\$523,000	34	\$25,000	\$6,692	51%	2%	35%	8%	3%	80%	53%	36
Wisconsin	Department of Justice	\$569,000	33	\$40,000	\$1,549	50%	8%	35%	6%	1%	74%	55%	18
Wyoming	Office of the Attorney General	\$173,000	44	\$10,000	\$1,966	67%	9%	11%	7%	6%	62%	65%	16
Virgin Islands	Department of Human Services	\$39,000	52	\$25,000	\$7,548	61%	0%	13%	7%	19%**	20%	93%	33
MEANS	N/A	\$1,506,815	N/A	\$24,690	\$2,928	51%	10%	19%	12%	2%	66%	65%	29
MEDIANS	N/A	\$621,000	N/A	\$22,500	\$2,384	55%	6%	15%	10%	1%	74%	69%	18

*Data from FY98

** Examples of "Other" include attorney fees, daycare, and transportation

Sources: www. Sources: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc, "Crime Victims Fund 2000" (OVC), and NACVCB's 1996 Program Standards

Prior Recommendations for Program Improvements

Several substantial efforts have been undertaken to identify issues pertaining to program operations and performance and to encourage efforts to address problems. The National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (NACVCB) provides its member programs with many services, including a set of program standards developed by an advisory board of state compensation program administrators, state and local public and nonprofit victim assistance providers, individual victim advocates and national advocacy organizations, and OVC personnel. NACVCB's Program Standards (1996) specify goals, objectives, and basic and advanced strategies to improve program operations in four key areas:

- *Effective Outreach, Training and Communication:* Inform as many victims as possible about compensation and communicate effectively and sensitively with victims and with groups that work with them or on their behalf.
- *Expeditious and Accurate Claims Processing:* Process applications as quickly, accurately, and efficiently as possible so that eligible victims may receive funds promptly and in accordance with compensation regulations.
- *Good Decisionmaking:* Make fair, consistent, and prompt claims payment decisions in accordance with statutory requirements and in furtherance of the basic mission to serve crime victims.
- *Sound Financial Planning:* Ensure that sufficient funds exist for the compensation program to pay all eligible applicants for all compensable costs.

Another major effort to encourage improvements in victim services has recently been completed. *New Directions From the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century* (Office for Victims of Crime, 1998a), and its companion piece, *Strategies for Implementation—Tools for Action Guide* (Office for Victims of Crime, 2000b) is the first comprehensive plan for improving and expanding services for victims of violent crime since the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime issued its recommendations in 1982. It contains over 250 recommendations for improving service to victims in a wide variety of professions, drawing on input from over 1000 experts from victim advocates and service providers, criminal and juvenile justice agencies, and allied professions. These recommendations include improvements for victim compensation programs and victim assistance providers, among many other professionals who work with victims.

Recommendations for improvements in victim compensation cover a number of areas, and can be grouped into recommendations regarding program management, and recommendations regarding service enhancements.

Recommendations on Program Management. State programs should strive to make the following improvements to program operations (OVC, 1998a):

- *Financial Management.* Although both VOCA and state funds have increased since 1984, some states continue to experience funding shortages. Programs should work to expand funding sources and implement cost control mechanisms. Programs should ensure that any excess funds are used to support victim assistance activities.
- *Expeditious Claims Processing.* States should strive to process all claims within 12-21 weeks. Emergency funds should be awarded within 24 hours. States should explore how technological advances, such as the Internet and automated case management systems, can enhance the application

process and improve case processing times by assisting in obtaining necessary verifications. VOCA administrative allowances can be used in these efforts.

- *Coordination with Victim Assistance.* Compensation programs should coordinate with administrators of VOCA and other sources of victim assistance funding to identify services to which victims can be referred, and to ensure that victims' needs are met comprehensively across the state.
- *Victims' Input.* Victims should be recruited to serve on boards, commissions, or other advisory groups that assist with program development and implementation. Victim service providers should also provide input and coordinate their services with the compensation program's services.
- *Evaluation.* States should evaluate the effectiveness of their outreach efforts and services; barriers to accessing compensation; any special groups of victims that may be underserved; claims processing efficiency; and reasons for denials of claims. Steps needed to improve services and operations should be identified and implemented.

Recommendations on Service Expansion. Programs should strive to expand their services by reaching new victims, expanding benefits, and loosening requirements.

- *Outreach to Victims.* States should widely publicize the availability of compensation benefits through efforts designed to reach special population groups which may not be accessing compensation because of cultural or language barriers. Compensation programs can also reach out to victims through victim service advocates and providers, police officers, and others who have direct contact with them. Compensation programs should provide these groups with information and materials to encourage them to refer victims to compensation and assist victims in the application process. Victim advocates employed by compensation programs not only sensitize other staff to victimization issues, but provide critical advocacy, referral, information, and other services to victims. Victims should be eligible for compensation regardless of their nationality, and this principle should apply to all state programs in this country as well as other nations' compensation programs.
- *Mental Health Counseling Benefits.* Compensation programs should review their guidelines for covering mental health treatment. Over half the states place restrictions on the level of mental health benefits that qualify for coverage, and some advocates are concerned that these limits are too low. Compensation staff should develop standards with input from the mental health community. Programs should also expand the types of victims eligible to receive counseling.
- *Medical Benefits for Catastrophic Injuries.* States should increase their caps on these types of payments, and should cover expenses such as medically necessary devices and building modifications.
- *Other Benefits.* Compensation programs should cover transportation costs of victims who must travel across state lines to attend criminal proceedings. Programs should also plan for changes in benefit needs should health care insurance coverage become more universal. For example, other nations with national health care can use compensation funds to address the effects of long-term psychological or physical injuries, pay for pain and suffering, and reimburse property losses.
- *Reporting Requirements.* Some victims are reluctant to report to police, such as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and gang violence, and as a result may not be eligible for compensation due to lack of timely reporting. States should extend reporting deadlines and allow reports by third parties or to other agencies, such as family courts (e.g., filing for a protection order in a domestic violence case).
- *Filing Deadlines.* Some victims miss claim filing deadlines because of significant victimization trauma, and others because they do not learn of compensation until much later. Filing deadlines should be eliminated or at least extended to three years from the crime.

NACVCB has suggested that many needed improvements to compensation programs could be facilitated by several changes to federal VOCA guidelines. Increasing the federal payout from 40 percent

to 50 percent or 60 percent of state expenditures would provide funds to allow an expansion of eligibility criteria to serve more victims and cover more expenses than allowed under current eligibility standards, and to cover expenses more completely by raising caps on certain types of losses (such as catastrophic injuries).

NACVCB argues that allocating more of the CVF to compensation would have a minor impact on funds available for victim assistance, since the CVF is at record levels and assistance programs currently receive the vast majority of CVF funds. Expanding the compensation payout to 50 percent would have provided an extra \$20 million for compensation programs in FY2000 and reduced the assistance share of CVF monies from 82 percent to 77 percent. Expanding the compensation payout to 60 percent would have provided an extra \$40 million for compensation and reduced the assistance share of CVF monies from 82 percent to 73 percent. The larger the CVF, the less impact a change in the compensation payout would have on the percentage of total funds which are allocated for victim assistance.

Another change NACVCB has suggested is increasing the 5 percent administrative allowance to provide more staff to handle larger caseloads and keep case processing times down; to launch greater outreach and training efforts; and to obtain or upgrade automated systems for more efficient and accurate case processing. The median compensation award to states in FY2000 was \$621,000, which means that a median of up to \$31,000 (5 percent) can be used for administrative purposes. This amount can fund only a small portion of the efforts needed to improve services. While half the states get more administrative funds than this, half the states get even less.

Findings from the 1999 Survey of State Compensation Administrators

This evaluation collected data on current policies, practices, contentious issues, and areas for further development in state programs from a telephone survey of all 52 state administrators in 1999. We spoke with the administrator directly in charge of the program or his or her designee. The survey instrument appears in Appendix A. Our results can also be compared with NACVCB's program standards and the recommendations offered in *New Directions* to identify areas in which programs have made a great deal of progress, and areas in which further efforts are needed. We offer recommendations based on the information obtained to date in this ongoing research project. The findings are organized into content areas, with an italicized summary and recommendations preceding a fuller discussion of the results.

Financial Planning

One of NACVCB's program standards addresses sound financial planning, with the goal of ensuring sufficient funding to pay all eligible applicants for all compensable costs. New Directions recommends that programs with fiscal shortfalls seek to expand funding sources and contain costs, while those with excess funds should direct the excess to activities to benefit victims. It seems that most of the states are in reasonably sound fiscal condition and are taking steps to expand benefits for victims. Of the few states with insufficient funding, most are taking steps to increase funding and contain costs, in accordance with program standards and recommendations.

We found that 42 (81 percent) of state administrators reported having sufficient funds to pay claims determined as eligible, and 35 (67 percent) reported having revenues which exceeded their immediate payout needs. Nearly all of those with revenues exceeding payout needs are considering ways to expand the compensation program by increasing benefits to victims, most often expanding the list of eligible expenses, raising payment caps, and expanding the definition of eligible claimants. Nearly half

the states were also considering expanding the types of crime covered, and about one-third were considering changes in filing deadlines or reporting requirements.

The administrators with sufficient funds to pay claims were also asked to provide information about funds carried forward from year to year, since VOCA has allowed a four-year obligation period since 1997 (prior to that it was a three-year period). Carrying funds forward can be a sign of prudent financial planning. Most states provide supplemental awards, primarily for mental health counseling, to cover payments for future services the victim needs after the initial award determination is made. Since the number of treatments and length of time over which treatment is needed varies a good deal, supplemental awards require states to carry a reserve from year to year so that they can honor payment commitments (Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson, 1992).

Most of the states have carried funds forward since at least 1996. The average total amount of compensation funds (federal plus state) carried forward from 1996 to 1997, from 1997 to 1998, and from 1998 to 1999 was about \$1.8 million per year. The average amount of federal funding received in these years was about \$1.5 million per year, meaning that states carried forward slightly more than the federal allocation amount for each year. The fact that the amount carried forward each year has not increased much from year to year indicates that the states are expending their funds within the first several years of the four-year obligation period.

Ten states reported having insufficient funds to pay eligible claims. Some of these states reported efforts to raise funds and contain costs, including efforts to order and collect restitution and pursue subrogation (60 percent of these states), seeking additional state appropriations (40 percent of these states), and paying less than the full amount of the claim (60 percent of these states).

Outreach and Services to Victims

State administrators feel that many potentially eligible victims do not apply for compensation. This suggests a need for greater outreach and services to recruit more qualified and complete applications. Compensation programs are working to publicize their services by providing training and materials to those who work with victims, particularly victim service agencies and criminal justice personnel. Many states also provide a toll-free number for victims to reach the compensation program. Fewer states, however, reported using technology or special efforts to target underserved groups in their outreach activities. Clearly, outreach efforts are being made but there is still much room for further development. Prosecutors' offices make the most referrals to compensation, which is not surprising since in many states it may be the prosecutor-based victim service staff who typically assist victims with the compensation process as per state victims' rights legislation. While there are efficiencies in centralizing the function of assisting victims with compensation in one location (such as prosecutors' offices), complications may arise in some situations (such as non-prosecuted cases or prosecutors' offices without victim/witness staff) unless victim service providers from other agencies are available to fill in the gaps. Compensation programs report providing a variety of services to claimants, including taking responsibility for the verification process, referring claimants to local service providers, having a victim liaison on staff in nearly half the states, and identifying repeat claimants who may need crime prevention services.

We asked administrators whether they thought they received about the right number of claims, given victims' needs and crime statistics.¹⁰ Despite the fact that the number of claims is on the rise for about half the states (most often attributed to better outreach to potential claimants and better assistance in the claims process by service providers),¹¹ the vast majority of administrators (81 percent) felt they receive too few claims. In only six states did the administrators feel they receive the right number of claims, and only one state reported receiving too many claims. There is clearly a widespread perception that many potentially eligible victims do not access compensation.

Compensation programs report a wide variety of methods to reach victims both directly and indirectly through those who work with victims. At least three-quarters of the states attempt to reach victims through brochures distributed by victim service agencies, by training victim service providers and criminal justice personnel on compensation, and through a toll-free number available to victims. At least half the states reported other outreach activities including training health care providers and providing notification cards handed out by police and victim service providers. Fewer than half the states make applications available on the Internet, provide applications or brochures or radio/TV announcements in other languages, provide a TDD line for the hearing impaired, make translators available by telephone, work with community organizations such as schools or churches, or use billboards or other printed notices in high crime areas. These reports indicate that, while many states are employing a variety of outreach activities, in the future more states could focus outreach activities on special population groups, such as the non-English-speaking, and use more innovative methods of outreach, in line with recommendations from *New Directions*.

Nearly all the states (83 percent) have legislation that specifies victims' rights to be notified about the compensation program. In about two-thirds of these states, law enforcement officers are required by law to inform victims. Prosecutors are required to inform victims in over half these states. When asked to estimate who refers victims to compensation most frequently, over half the states named prosecutors' offices, with police and victim service programs falling a distant second and third. The predominance of prosecutors' offices as a source of referrals may indicate that in many areas it is the victim/witness staff in prosecutors' offices who work with victims on their compensation claims, perhaps in part because victim service staff are less often employed in law enforcement agencies. This does not necessarily mean that police and nonprofit victim service providers do not inform victims of compensation; they may be the ones referring victims to the prosecutorial staff for assistance with compensation forms and procedures. While there are efficiencies in centralizing the function of assisting victims with compensation in one location (such as prosecutors' offices), complications may arise in some situations (such as non-prosecuted cases or prosecutors' offices without victim/witness staff) unless victim service providers from other agencies are available to fill in the gaps.

Once a victim has learned of compensation possibilities and filed a claim, verification is required to document the eligibility of the claim and to satisfy fiscal responsibilities in the handling of public

¹⁰ However, it should be remembered that states vary in how they define what a claim is; nearly two-thirds of the states count one claim per crime regardless of filings by secondary victims, which may result in multiple filings per crime being counted as one claim. The other one-third of the states open new claims for secondary victims of a given crime, so that a single crime can result in multiple claims. Clearly statistics on the number of claims received may be higher in the latter group because of differences across states in claims classification procedures, rather than real differences in rates of filing claims.

¹¹ About one-quarter of the states have experienced a drop in number of claims filed in recent years, which administrators attributed primarily to the falling crime rate and greater availability of other sources of recompense (e.g., health insurance, public assistance, or restitution).

funds. In the majority of states, the compensation staff are responsible for obtaining verifying information from law enforcement, service providers, and employers, relieving the victim of this task.

Most states (85 percent) will, in addition to handling the compensation claim, provide referral services to victims. Referrals are made to a wide variety of services, especially prosecution-based advocates (perhaps for assistance in completing the claim form or process) and domestic violence programs.

Service provision to victims can be enhanced by the presence of a designated victim advocate or liaison on the compensation staff. Nearly half (42 percent) of the states have someone on staff to handle phone calls, complaints, questions, assist with forms, and make referrals, in line with suggestions from *New Directions*. Five states have an advocate position in the compensation program supported by VOCA assistance funds.

Nearly every state (94 percent) also has procedures to identify repeat claimants. Many programs use this information to identify repeat victims who need additional victim services (such as crime prevention), or to investigate possible fraud. Some also use the information for case management purposes, such as avoiding duplication of records or staff assignments.

Claims Processing

Along with outreach efforts it is important to plan for program changes to accommodate a higher workload while also improving case processing procedures, since it is an important goal for states to process all claims as quickly and accurately as possible, and to award emergency funds within a very short time. Although it is very difficult to reliably compare case processing statistics across states because of definitional and procedural differences, it seems clear that case processing time could be improved in many states. Obtaining verification from outside sources (such as service providers and law enforcement) is a key source of slowdowns, and some providers complain of the length of the process, benefit limitations, and releasing privileged information. Efforts are needed to streamline documentation procedures, address limitations, and resolve confidentiality issues. While nearly all states have expedited procedures for processing emergency claims, there is widespread agreement that local service providers are in a better position to provide emergency relief because they are not subject to eligibility and the concomitant verification requirements, and they can provide immediate access to local resources. Changes in who awards emergency funds (i.e., local service providers rather than state compensation programs) may necessitate changes in OVC guidelines and training of state and local personnel in new procedures.

Claims Processing Time. It is very important for claims to be processed in a timely manner to help victims avoid the adverse consequences of late payments of bills or failure to receive services in a timely manner. The claimant survey portion of this evaluation will ask victims about these impacts of claim processing time. From the compensation program's perspective, processing time is also an important indicator of program efficiency. Data are available to assess claims processing efficiency, but several very important caveats must be kept in mind.

One very important fact to consider is that states vary greatly in how they calculate claim processing time. Forty-four percent of states "start the clock" when the application is first received in the compensation office, even if it lacks signatures, notarizations, or identifying information. In another 39 percent of states, the application must have all signatures, notarizations, and identifying information complete to start the clock, but the law enforcement report is not yet required. Of the remaining 16

percent of states, half require all the above information plus the law enforcement report to consider the claim filed, and half require all the above plus all verifications. Obviously the more information states require to consider the claim filed and begin computing processing time, the lower the processing time is likely to be and the less likely claims will be determined ineligible for want of documentation.

Another variable in calculation of claim processing time and determination and approval rates is how states handle cases that are still missing important documentation after a reasonable period of time. 40 percent of the states administratively close incomplete claims, which puts an upper limit on case processing time and may increase determination rates while decreasing approval rates. Another 14 percent of the states stop the clock and suspend case processing pending further efforts by the victim to complete the claim, which may also lower official case processing time but decrease determination rates. Ten percent of the states keep the clock running, so that claims are never administratively closed or suspended, which is likely to produce very high case processing time statistics and lower determination rates. Finally, 35 percent of the states process the claim with the information they have, which would tend to keep case processing time down and increase determination rates, but decrease approval rates.

Bearing these warnings in mind, average case processing times reported by states range from 5 to 286 weeks. The mean is 29 weeks and the median is 18 weeks¹². Even the median falls below the recommendation in *New Directions* that *all* claims are processed within 12 to 21 weeks (since it is a cross-state median of each state's average time, meaning many claims take longer than the average time). We asked state administrators to provide information on which claims processing tasks take the most time, in order to provide some insights on how processing time could be reduced.

Claims Verification. Obtaining verification from outside sources seems to take longer than internal processing of the claim, according to administrators' reports. Nearly half the administrators mentioned obtaining verification of losses from service providers or others (such as employers) as the most time-consuming step in claims processing by, and as the second most time-consuming step by another 29 percent. Nearly half the administrators reported that obtaining police verification of the crime was the first- or second-most time-consuming step, and over one-third of the states rated waiting for victims to provide application information as the first- or second-most time-consuming step. In contrast, less than one-quarter of the states reported waiting for collateral sources to make payments or internal processing steps (e.g., setting up the file, analyzing documentation, making eligibility decisions, determining the amount of the award, or waiting for the payment source to cut the check) as significantly time-consuming procedures.

Half the states have special verification procedures for different types of providers (funeral homes, medical providers, mental health providers, and attorneys), and a number of states report that providers have complaints about these procedures. Some of these special requirements include treatment plans or notes, medical records, and insurance records. Providers commonly complain that payment is too low and takes too long, treatment limitations are too restrictive, and they resist releasing information protected by client privilege. This suggests that compensation programs and service providers should work together to resolve confidentiality issues (such as release of medical records), identify and address any inadequacies in payment caps and treatment limitations, and streamline documentation procedures so that compensation programs can function more efficiently and impose less burden on program staff and victims' service providers.

Emergency Claims. Sometimes crime victims need money right away to buy food, shelter, utilities, or urgent transportation services. Emergency situations advance to special status and handling in

¹² The mean (or average) is the mathematical average of all case processing times and can be skewed by very large times. The median is the middle point, at which half the times fall below and half the times fall above.

most (83 percent) states. These claims may get the immediate attention of the compensation staff, and checks may be delivered much faster, sometimes in only 24 hours. Compensation offices also lift documentation requirements for emergencies, allowing faxed summaries of the claim or other documentation in lieu of the originals. Sometimes verbal claims will suffice.

When asked if compensation programs are better suited than local victim service programs to handle emergency expenses, nearly all administrators (90 percent) said they were not. The most critical reasons for these answers are that in most states emergency items are not compensable under state statutes, and time-consuming verification requirements may prevent speedy responses in emergencies. Additionally, victims in regions of the state without immediate access to or from state compensation offices may be disadvantaged in emergency situations. The vast majority (89 percent) of administrators feel that emergency funds are best handled by local service providers, who can provide immediate access to local resources and are not hindered by eligibility requirements. Changes in who awards emergency funds (i.e., local service providers rather than state compensation programs) may necessitate changes in OVC guidelines prohibiting the use of VOCA assistance funds to reimburse victims for “economic loss, medical costs, or relocation expenses” (although “emergency financial assistance” is allowed). State and local personnel may also need to be trained in new procedures.

Claims Determinations

Claims are most often approved for payment, and approval rates tend to increase with increased program resources for victim assistance and verification. This underscores the need to have additional funds available for awards when enhancing administrative activities and improving program operations. Payment amounts, which are on the rise in many states, are typically well below caps. Funeral expense payments come closest to capped levels across states, indicating these caps may need to be raised in many states. Judgments of victims’ contributory misconduct are a common reason for denials of claims, but processes and definitions for making these decisions show limited consensus across states. This is clearly an area in need of further development.

Consistency in Decisionmaking. Claims determination procedures receive attention from many program administrators to ensure consistency in decisionmaking. Over half the state programs attempt to ensure consistency through staff meetings to discuss difficult decisions (e.g., contributory misconduct), using a checklist of eligibility issues, maintaining a reference source of approved and denied claims, and providing regular staff training. Nearly half the states use detailed claims processing manuals and quality control procedures, and about one-third use a checklist of payment considerations.

Approval Rates and Trends. The average claim approval rates (of determinations made) show remarkable consistency from 1996 to 1998, at a cross-state average of about 68 percent per year (ranging from 37 percent to 94 percent across states each year). Trends in approval rates over this time period vary a good deal across states, however. Thirty-one percent of the states showed increased approval rates from 1996 to 1998, 29 percent saw decreased rates, and approval rates in 39 percent of the states were stable over time. Those states with increased approval rates attributed the increases to a wide variety of improvements, including s more compensation program resources to assist victims or obtain verifications, improved service provider assistance to claimants, changes in claims processing procedures, and broadened eligibility requirements or policies. Those states with decreasing approval rates reported that the major reasons for the declining rates had to do with other sources supplying benefits to victims, a rise in contributory misconduct rulings, and an increased level of marginal claims.

Payment Caps and Trends. All states have established different categories for compensation payments and caps on these categories. We asked about the categories for which claims were most likely

to be paid out at the maximum level, as an indicator of which caps should be considered for raises. The findings indicate that the category which may be most in need of raising is funeral benefits, since these payments often come closest to capped levels.

As with approval rates, payment amounts have changed over the last several years in some states, and trends vary across states. In 39 percent of the states payment amounts have increased, in one-third amounts have decreased, and in 29 percent amounts have stayed about the same. Increasing payments were attributed to higher total and categorical caps, an expansion of eligible expenses, increasing costs for medical services, and, in a few states, expansions of who is eligible to file claims and a rising rate of (more expensive) violent crimes. Administrators experiencing decreasing payments were less certain of the reasons, but some cited decreasing payments for medical expenses, lowered caps, and a decrease in the more expensive violent crimes. A few pointed out that supplemental payments are not included in these figures, so that amounts may actually be higher than portrayed.

Denials. The most frequent single reason for non-payment was contributory misconduct, at an average of 28 percent of denials across states. However, non-compliance with program requirements, such as documentation and deadline requirements, law enforcement reporting and cooperation, and payer of last resort, resulted in denials in a total of 44 percent of cases on average across the states. In addition, an average of 16 percent of claims were denied because the type of crime or the type of loss was not compensation-eligible.

Contributory Misconduct. This issue is clearly of primary importance in claims decisionmaking. It is a very difficult issue since decisions must often be made on a case-by-case basis in light of the unique facts of the case, and there seems to be a limited degree of consensus across states on what constitutes contributory misconduct. The key elements of contributory misconduct are whether the victim was engaged in illegal behavior at the time of the crime, and whether this illegal behavior was causally connected to the crime. When contributory misconduct is involved, claims may be denied or the amount of payment may be reduced proportional to the extent of the victim's culpability.

We asked administrators to report whether claims would be denied or reduced if it was determined that the victim was engaged in a felony, misdemeanor, gang activity, or prostitution at the time of the crime; if the victim was selling or possessing illegal drugs; if the victim was under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol; or if the victim was illegally carrying a weapon. We also asked whether these factors would constitute misconduct in most cases or only where a causal connection with the crime existed.

Virtually all states (from 88 percent up) considered all of these factors as key elements of contributory misconduct. The critical difference across states lies in whether the victim's behavior must be causally connected to the crime to provide grounds for denying or reducing the award.

The most clear-cut cases were when the victim was under the influence of alcohol or engaged in prostitution, behaviors that at least 80 percent of the states said must have a causal connection to the crime to constitute misconduct; and when the victim was selling illegal drugs, which 80 percent of the states would consider contributory even without a causal connection to the crime.

Some factors were more controversial but still showed a clear majority/minority split across states. About 60 percent of the states would assess contribution if the victim were under the influence of illegal drugs or illegally carrying a weapon, but only if causally connected to the crime, while about one-quarter of the states would assess contribution for these behaviors even if not causally connected. Similarly, a slight majority of the states (55 percent) would require a causal connection for the victim's possession of illegal drugs to constitute misconduct, while 38 percent would consider it misconduct

without the causal connection. Sixty percent would assess contribution if the victim was engaged in a felony or misdemeanor even if not causally connected, but 35 percent would require a causal connection.

The most controversial situation is when the victim is engaged in gang activity at the time of the crime; 48 percent of the states require a causal connection for this to be considered contributory misconduct, but 40 percent would consider it misconduct even without such a connection.

Clearly there is a limited degree of consensus on what constitutes contributory misconduct, and decisions must often be made on a case-by-case basis. Three-quarters of the states have a written policy or procedure in place to guide these decisions. The final decision in cases involving possible contributory misconduct is made by compensation program staff or administrators in about two-thirds of the states, and by the compensation board in the others.

Appeals. Nearly all states (85 percent) have a process whereby claimants can seek a reconsideration without filing a formal appeal. In an average of 18 percent of denied cases a request for reconsideration is filed; these requests lead to approvals in about one-third of the reconsiderations.

States also have formal appeals processes for claimants unhappy with the determination made in their case. Almost one-fourth of all claims denied or determined ineligible are appealed. Claims denied for contributory misconduct are by far the most likely to be appealed, underscoring again the importance of this aspect of decisionmaking. About one-quarter of appeals lead to reversals.

Underserved Populations

There is no way to positively identify how many eligible victims do not receive compensation or what groups (demographic groups or by type of crime) they represent. However, there is widespread agreement among administrators that many victims who may be eligible for compensation do not apply, and that these victims may represent some groups (such as victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, and sexual assault; and victims in rural/remote areas, non-English speakers, ethnic/racial minorities, senior citizens, residents of Indian reservations, and gays) to a greater degree than others. It may be useful for compensation programs to focus future outreach efforts on working with agencies who represent these victim groups in order to identify ways to reach these groups and overcome obstacles to full participation. Under-utilization of compensation is often attributed to factors which can be addressed by the program, including lack of knowledge about compensation (indicating the need for more publicity and outreach efforts), fear of retaliation (suggesting that greater efforts to provide victim protection are needed), crime reporting requirements (which could perhaps be made less formidable), and paperwork fatigue (indicating a need to streamline application and verification procedures).

Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson (1992) estimated the numbers of unserved eligible crime victims by comparing program statistics with estimates of the number of eligible victims based on various factors. These factors include crime-reporting statistics, estimates of the number of victimizations that were compensable types of crime with physical injury severe enough to require medical treatment, and the number of with nonculpable and uninsured victims. Using several sets of assumptions, some more restrictive than others, the authors suggested that anywhere from about one-quarter to one-half of eligible victims (depending on the assumptions made) are served by compensation programs. While programs are clearly reaching many appropriate claimants, many still go unserved.

Administrators were questioned in our survey about whether there are underserved groups and who administrators think make up the underserved populations. Nearly every administrator (85 percent) felt that there are certain categories of victims who apply for compensation less frequently than expected based on victimization rates. Victims of domestic violence and elder abuse were listed as the leading underserved groups by about three-quarters of the administrators who reported any underserved populations. About half or more of the states also identified victims of child physical and sexual abuse (49 percent and 53 percent, respectively) and adult sexual assault (60 percent) as underserved populations. About one-third of the administrators thought adults molested as children, stalking victims, and victims of hate or bias crimes are underserved. Other categories, mentioned by only a handful of administrators, include victims of DUI/DWI crashes, survivors of homicide victims, and victims of robbery, assault, other violent crimes, terrorism, and gang violence. These reports suggest where future outreach efforts and efforts to make program requirements more user-friendly could be concentrated (e.g., work with groups that serve domestic violence victims to identify how victims can be reached and which requirements may pose obstacles for them).

The administrators attributed low application rates among these groups to a lack of knowledge about compensation (87 percent of administrators reporting underserved groups), embarrassment (67 percent), fear of retaliation by the offender (58 percent), and crime reporting requirements (53 percent). Other factors mentioned by at least one-quarter of the administrators included mistrust of authority (42 percent) and paperwork fatigue (27 percent). These perceptions clearly indicate that efforts are needed to increase service to underserved populations, such as greater publicity and victim protection.

We also asked administrators about underserved groups by victim characteristics; 65 percent of the administrators reported that they could identify underserved groups by victim demographics. The leading group under-utilizing compensation programs, in the opinion of administrators, is remote/rural residents (71 percent of these states). Administrators also frequently mentioned non-English speakers (62 percent), ethnic/racial minorities (47 percent), senior citizens (38 percent), residents of Indian reservations (35 percent), and gays (32 percent). Programs should consider working with groups who represent these constituents in order to identify how they can be reached and what obstacles program requirements may present.

Coordination

Coordination with victim assistance programs is important to building a seamless web of support services to meet victims' needs. VOCA assistance and compensation programs are administered from the same or closely linked offices in about half the states, which should enhance coordination efforts. States reported using several different coordination mechanisms, most notably staff training efforts such as joint training conferences and cross-training of staff. More collaborative efforts, such as providing input to each other's decisionmaking processes, are less often used.

In 12 states, the same agency houses both the compensation and VOCA assistance programs and one person administers both programs. In 13 states the programs are administered separately but both administrators report to the same board, cabinet secretary, or other supervisory person. These circumstances should enhance coordination efforts. In the remainder of the states, however, coordination may take more energy, time, and resources.

Compensation administrators reported an average of three to four different methods of coordinating with the VOCA assistance staff. The leading coordination mechanisms are training efforts, both joint training conferences for the compensation and assistance staffs (60 percent of states) and training of VOCA assistance sub-recipients by compensation staff or administrators (56 percent). Joint

staff meetings; reviews by assistance staff of compensation forms, statutes, outreach activities, rules, and policies; regular meetings between compensation and assistance administrators; compensation input into selection of assistance subrecipients; and reciprocal cross-training are also used to effect coordination in one-quarter to one-third of the states.

Administrative Funds and Activities

Up to 5 percent of the funds annually allocated to a state may be used for a variety of important administrative activities. States are fairly evenly split as to whether they have used the entire allowance or not used it at all. Those who have not made full use of the allowance attribute this to the availability of administrative funds from other sources, and to the urgent need for awards to victims. Those who have accessed the administrative allowance are more likely to use these funds to support essential administrative activities, such as staffing, training, and office equipment, rather than more advanced efforts such as planning, needs assessments, the promotion of innovative approaches, or coordination. These findings indicate that any increase in the administrative allowance should be accompanied by an increase in overall allocations, to encourage advanced administrative activities (especially in those states that did not use the administrative allowance because the funds were more urgently needed for awards to victims). Technical assistance may be needed to help states explore new activities in productive ways.

From 1996 through 1998 (the years for which reasonably complete data were available), a little under half the states used the administrative allowance and somewhat over half did not. Those who used the allowance were most likely to use the full 5 percent, with only a few states using some but less than 5 percent. Of the states that have not always used the full allowance, over half gave as reasons the availability of administrative funds from other sources, and a more urgent need for awards to victims. Only five states cited burdensome OVC documentation requirements as a reason for non-use.

The administrators who have ever used any CVF funds for administration were asked to enumerate uses to which these funds have been directed, and to rate the usefulness of those expenditures. Half or more of the administrators used those funds to pay salary and benefits for staff or consultant services in the financial or programmatic purposes of their programs; to attend OVC-sponsored or other technical assistance meetings; and to purchase office equipment. All or nearly all of these administrators felt that the use of the funds for these purposes was extremely beneficial.

Between one-quarter and one-half the administrators used administrative funds to print or develop publications, purchase organization memberships and victim-related materials, develop an automated claims processing or tracking system, and provide training. The vast majority of administrators who used funds for these purposes rated them as extremely useful.

Fewer than one-quarter of the states used federal administrative funds to develop strategic plans, conduct surveys or needs assessments, or promote innovative approaches; improve coordination efforts; promote systemic changes or coordination in how victims are served; offer a toll-free number; pay audit or indirect costs; obtain equipment to facilitate services to the disabled; or pay experts to review claims.

Training

Training for members of the justice community, victim assistance providers, and a wide range of institutions and individuals likely to be in contact with victims is an important part of a well-functioning victim compensation system. Training educates

providers about the program so that they can inform victims of it and help victims with the application process. The survey findings indicate that compensation programs often provide training to a fairly broad range of professionals who work with victims. Those who may work most closely with victims—law enforcement, prosecutors, and staff of both public-based and private victim service agencies, especially those who work with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault—are quite likely to receive training. While these efforts are very important, other types of professionals who work with victims, such as health and mental health care providers, funeral directors, school personnel, and representatives of Indian tribes and other ethnic or racial minorities, should also be better represented in training activities, in order to reach additional victims.

Nearly all (92 percent) of the compensation administrators reported activities to train direct service providers in 1999. As might be expected, these states most often trained criminal justice and victim services professionals. The states most frequently provided training to personnel from law enforcement (in 96 percent of the states that provided training), domestic violence coalitions or local service providers (92 percent), state or local prosecutor-based victim/witness staff (90 percent), state sexual assault coalitions or local service providers (83 percent), and state or local police-based victim/witness staff (79 percent). Other members of criminal justice and victim services professions who were trained in at least half the states include prosecutors (71 percent of the states), probation/parole staff (56 percent), survivors of homicide representatives (56 percent), state or local protective service agencies (54 percent), MADD representatives (52 percent), and federal victim/witness coordinators (52 percent). Criminal justice professionals less likely to be involved in training include judges (trained in only 31 percent of states), corrections personnel (38 percent), and state criminal justice planning organizations (25 percent).

Other allied professionals receive training but at lower rates. Among them, health care providers and mental health care providers participate most often (in 63 percent and 52 percent of the programs reporting training, respectively). Funeral directors, victims/survivors, Indian tribal representatives, school personnel, representatives of other ethnic and minority groups, and attorneys received training in at least one-quarter of the states that provided any.

Compensation program staff also need to be familiar with issues of victimization to better serve the victims they come into contact with and to have an informed perspective while making important claims processing decisions. Nearly all the states (85 percent) reported providing training to compensation staff that addresses victimization issues. Compensation staff in nearly all these states received training through conferences; other frequent training methods are in-house staff training and training provided by victim service agencies.

Program Databases

Administrators described program databases that support evaluation efforts, one of the recommendations found in New Directions. Most states maintain records of the basic client demographic and case processing statistics, such as the dates claims were filed and awarded or denied, and reasons for denials. Program evaluation would, in most states, require special efforts to develop a substantial amount of additional data on process and outcomes.

Federal Reporting Forms

We asked administrators to recommend improvements to OVC's new State Performance Report. The administrators generally felt that the new form was an

improvement over the old version. Not many offered suggestions, but one common theme among those who did was the need to clarify the definitions and procedures that are used to calculate the statistics reported. They would like to see clarification of methods for calculating average case processing and payment times; how to define and count victims, claims, awards, denials, and determinations of ineligibility; and what expenses can be covered with administrative funds.

Administrators' Recommendations

Administrators suggested a number of useful changes for the compensation program, including expanding coverage to additional types of losses, raising payment caps, and making additional efforts to reach and serve underserved populations. They also suggested improvements to their states' VOCA assistance program as well, such as better training of subrecipients on compensation issues and changes in subgrant award processes and patterns.

When administrators were asked for recommendations concerning changes they would like to see in their state's compensation program, over one-half suggested expanding coverage for additional types of losses including compensation for secondary victims, assistance in relocation, crime scene cleanup¹³, and travel expenses of victims. Nearly half the program administrators felt they should put more emphasis on underserved victim groups, such as non-English speaking populations, the elderly, children, and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. One-third of the states would like to expand outreach to victims from diverse cultural groups, victims in rural areas, and victims of elder abuse. Nearly half also wanted to raise payment caps. A fair number also noted the need for additional staff members and for increased coordination with the assistance program.

We also asked compensation administrators what changes they would like to see made in their state's assistance program. About half of them felt that there should be consistent performance standards, funds should be distributed "more equitably" (less for domestic violence and sexual assault), a statewide review team should review how funds are spent, or compensation training should be mandatory for assistance subrecipients. One-quarter to one-third also felt that the VOCA administrator should monitor subrecipients to ensure compliance with compensation assistance mandates; ensure training on compensation is provided to subrecipients; and to ensure that compensation administrators are involved in assistance subrecipient funding decisions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings from program performance data and our survey of administrators paint a picture of compensation programs which are generally financially sound and are functioning in accordance with identified goals and standards (e.g., NACVCB, 1996; OVC, 1998a). In general, states seem to be performing the most essential activities to implement good financial planning, outreach, claims processing and decisionmaking, coordination with victim assistance programs, program administration, and training. More advanced activities could, however, be implemented in each of these areas to further enhance program functioning and services to victims, in accordance with recommendations from NACVCB's and OVC's expert panels. Advanced activities include:

- *Financial Planning:* State legislatures and advocacy groups should support efforts to expand benefits in states with revenues that exceed payout needs, and efforts to raise additional funds to better meet victims' needs in states with a funding shortfall.

¹³ Although this is an allowable expense under federal guidelines, some states may not pay it.

- *Outreach to Victims:* States should consider making greater use of technology and other innovative means to reach out to victims. Efforts should also focus on reaching victim groups (defined by type of crime and victims' characteristics) who have not been well-represented in claimant rolls. Working closely with groups who represent or serve these victims may be very useful in identifying and overcoming barriers to accessing compensation. Issues, which may arise when one type of provider (e.g., victim/witness staff in prosecutors' offices) is the primary source of help in accessing compensation, should be examined and addressed.
- *Claims Processing and Decisionmaking:* Processing time could be improved by streamlining and resolving delays in verification procedures. Efforts to increase payment caps where needed, such as for funeral expenses, should be supported. Special efforts may be needed to enhance the general understanding and improve how programs apply the concept of contributory misconduct.
- *Coordination:* Coordination with victim assistance programs should move beyond communication and toward active collaboration, to further the goal of building a seamless web of support for victims.
- *Program Administration:* As state programs expand, additional efforts should be focused on strategic planning, needs assessments, and the promotion of innovative approaches to serving victims. Technical assistance from OVC and others with expertise in these areas may be needed to help administrators explore these new areas in productive ways.
- *Training:* Training efforts should continue to include members of the justice system and members of other professions who work with victims, such as health and mental health care providers, funeral directors, school personnel, and representatives of Indian tribes and other ethnic or racial minorities. Informing a broader range of professionals about compensation should help reach a broader range of victims.

This broad range of activities could be supported under the VOCA administrative allowance. Increases in this allowance would facilitate states' efforts to undertake these expansions. It is important to note that success in these activities would certainly produce more demand on funds for awarding claims, suggesting the need to increase overall allocations in conjunction with additional funding to enhance program operations. Better-functioning programs would need more funds for awards because they would meet victims' needs more completely.

Crime Victims' Assistance

Efforts to assist crime victims with emotional support and system advocacy began as a grassroots movement in the early 1970's (OVC, 1998a). The first victim assistance programs in this country, established in 1972, were two rape crisis programs and a crisis intervention program for all crime victims. The first battered women's shelter opened in 1974. These nonprofit community programs were quickly followed by the first criminal justice system-based programs established in prosecutors' and law enforcement offices with federal funds in 1974. A rapid proliferation of local programs as well as the formation of various national nonprofit organizations to assist and advocate for crime victims occurred during the decades since. There are now over 10,000 community programs that provide a very broad range of services to meet victims' physical, financial, emotional, and advocacy needs. There are also victim assistance programs in many law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and correctional agencies.

During the 1980's and '90's a number of governmental actions helped to stabilize and expand the victim assistance movement. The 1982 Report of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime highlighted the insufficiency of services for victims, the need for all justice system agencies to respond sensitively to victims, several critical components of victim/witness programs, and the need for federal funding to support victim assistance efforts. The passage of VOCA in 1984, which established the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) to support public and nonprofit victim service providers and established the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to provide financial and technical support for service providers, marked a major achievement for the victims' movement. Subsequent legislation provided additional support for victim services, including the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, the Public Health and Welfare Act of 1986, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act of 1984, and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. State legislatures have provided legal foundations for justice system agencies to help victims by passing crime victims' bills of rights and state constitutional amendments on victims' rights, and by authorizing state funding to support victim services.

The Uses and Management of Federal VOCA Assistance Funds

The purpose of the VOCA victim assistance grant program is to support nonprofit and public-based victim service programs that:

- Respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims;
- Assist primary and secondary victims of crime in stabilizing their lives after a victimization;
- Assist victims in understanding and participating in the criminal justice system; and
- Provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five territories (U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa) receive VOCA awards to help fund local direct service providers. Each state or territory receives a base award supplemented by additional funds allocated on a population basis. OVC encourages state grantees to develop a program funding strategy that considers the range of victim services available, the unmet needs of victims, the demographic profiles of victims, the coordinated and cooperative responses of community organizations, the availability of services to victims throughout the criminal justice process, and the extent to which other sources of service funding are available.

The states competitively award VOCA funds to local organizations. Of the approximately 10,000 local organizations that serve crime victims, VOCA funds help support about one-third. Specific victim assistance activities include:

- Crisis intervention;
- Counseling;
- Emergency shelter;
- Criminal justice advocacy;
- Emergency transportation;
- Information and referral;
- Emergency financial assistance; and
- Assistance in filing compensation claims.

Federal guidelines developed by OVC address eligibility of subrecipient agencies and services, and management of the grant program at the state level. VOCA assistance grant subrecipients must:

- Be public non-federal or private nonprofit organizations with a record of providing effective services to victims of crime and of obtaining financial support from other sources. New programs are eligible for funding if they have at least 25 percent of their support from non-federal sources;
- Provide services free of charge to victims;
- Provide a 20 percent non-federal match for VOCA funds (with several exceptions: 5 percent match for Native American groups, and no match for the subrecipients in the territories other than Puerto Rico);
- Inform victims about the compensation program; and
- Use VOCA funds for direct service provision only; other activities may not be supported with VOCA funds.¹⁴

OVC guidelines specify that the state VOCA assistance administrators:

- Must award at least 10 percent of the assistance allocation for services for domestic violence victims; 10 percent for services for sexual assault victims; 10 percent for services for child abuse victims; and 10 percent for services for previously underserved populations;¹⁵
- Have the year of award plus the following three years to obligate federal funds. For example, federal fiscal year 1997 funds are available for obligation from October 1, 1996 through September 30, 2000 (federal fiscal years 1997 through 2000);
- May use up to 5 percent of the federal award for administrative purposes¹⁶ and 1 percent for training purposes (states must provide a 20 percent match for training fund set-asides);

¹⁴ Non-allowable activities include lobbying; perpetrator rehabilitation; needs assessments, surveys, evaluation, and research; prosecution; fundraising; indirect costs; reimbursing victims for economic loss, medical costs, or relocation expenses; administrative expenses; protocol development; interagency agreements; sending victims to conferences; and crime prevention activities.

¹⁵ Underserved populations are to be defined by each state, but may include, among others, victims of federal crimes, assault, robbery, gang violence, hate or bias crimes, intoxicated drivers, economic exploitation or fraud, or elder abuse; and survivors of homicide victims. States are also encouraged to develop definitions of underserved victims by the victims' demographic characteristics as well as by type of crime.

¹⁶ These funds may be used for program personnel's salary and benefits; consulting fees; indirect costs; audit costs; travel costs for attendance at training conferences; monitoring, evaluating, and providing technical assistance to subrecipients; purchasing equipment and support services; developing strategic plans; conducting surveys and needs assessments; paying costs of producing and distributing program brochures, posters, and other outreach activities; agency membership dues; program enhancements such as toll-free numbers; purchasing special equipment and materials to facilitate service to persons with disabilities; activities to improve coordination among public and private agencies; coordinating and developing protocols, policies, and procedures that promote systemic change in how victims are treated; and providing training to public and private organizations that serve crime victims.

- Are encouraged to coordinate with the state compensation program and federal agencies within their state; and
- May not use federal funds to supplant state funds otherwise available for victim assistance;

VOCA Funding for Victim Assistance

From fiscal years 1986 to 2001, a total of over \$2 billion—\$2,336,221,000—has been distributed by OVC to state victim assistance programs. See Figure 1 for year-by-year data. Assistance allocations have increased nine-fold since they were established, from \$41.3 million in 1986 to \$370.2 million in 2001. Since CVF formula grant funds in excess of those needed to meet the 40 percent payout for compensation are allocated to assistance, patterns in assistance distributions have been much more dramatic and more in keeping with growth trends of the overall CVF. Assistance allocations nearly doubled from 1986 to 1995, and have nearly tripled in the last six years alone (from 1996 to 2001). These years have seen considerable fluctuation; assistance funds increased by nearly 60 percent from 1995 to 1996, then more than tripled from 1996 to 1997. The next two years, 1998 and 1999, saw a drop of about 30 percent to 40 percent, although funds were still about three times as high as 1995 levels. The years 2000 and 2001 saw another enormous increase, with assistance allocations 55 percent higher than 1999 allocations, and nearly back up to the record high in 1997 (allocations would have far exceeded 1997 levels if spending caps had not been imposed for FY 2000 and 2001). All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five territories have received assistance funding since its inception in 1986.

Other Federal Funding for Victim Assistance

VOCA is not the only federal funding stream for victim service providers. Other *major* federal sources include the STOP Violence Against Women (STOP VAWA) formula grants administered by the Violence Against Women Office in the U.S. Department of Justice (which, among other purposes, has supported direct services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking since FY1996)¹⁷; the Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) block grants administered by the Centers for Disease Control in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (which has supported rape prevention, education, and public awareness activities and direct services to victims of sexual assault since at least FY1986); the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) grants administered by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (which has supported direct services to victims of domestic violence, training and technical assistance, and public awareness and prevention activities since FY 1984); and the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance formula grants administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the U.S. Department of Justice (which has provided funds to help state and local agencies initiate innovative projects to reduce drug use and violent crime and improve the effectiveness of the justice system under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988). In addition to federal funding sources, victim service providers may also be supported by state, local, and private funds.

We can obtain a *general* picture of the funding situation for direct victim assistance activities by looking at funding data for the major federal and combined state funding streams for FY1997, the most recent year for which such data are available. VOCA represented approximately 40 percent of all major federal and state funding provided for direct victim assistance that year. This percentage may be larger than usual, since 1997 was the largest year yet for VOCA funds. The figures presented in Table 3 below

¹⁷ The Violence Against Women Act also established much smaller discretionary grant programs which may include a direct victim service component, including the STOP Violence Against Indian Women grants, the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement grants, Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies, and the Civil Legal Assistance Program. Other smaller grant programs authorized by VOCA are the Children’s Justice Act grants and the Children’s Justice Act Tribal Grant Program.

must be viewed as ballpark estimates of victim service funding, since several funding streams support other purpose areas as well, and exact figures on the amounts spent on victim services alone are not always available.

Table 3. Estimates of Major Federal and State Direct Victim Service Funding for FY1997

Funding Source	FY1997 Approximate Amount for Direct Victim Services	Percent of FY1997 Total
VOCA Victim Assistance	\$397,059,000	40%
STOP VAWA	\$47,000,000 ¹⁸	5%
PHHS	\$26,250,000 ¹⁹	3%
FVPSA	\$58,240,000	6%
Byrne	\$12,000,000 ²⁰	1%
State Funding (all states combined)	\$454,183,000	45%
Total Federal and State Funding	\$994,732,000	100%

State VOCA Program Operations and Performance

Descriptive data on state programs are available on a state-by-state basis, as presented in Table 4. Other information is available at the national level from aggregated state performance reports to OVC (OVC, 1998c). These data profile how VOCA assistance funds are used by the states.

Administrative Agencies. VOCA assistance programs are housed in a broad range of state agencies, including various criminal justice agencies, health and human service agencies, financial administration and grants management agencies, and the governor’s office (Table 4). Nearly half are closely aligned with compensation programs. The implications of the type of administrative agency and co-location with the state’s compensation program will be explored in future phases of this evaluation project.

Federal Allocations. OVC allocated a total of \$370,167,000 to state assistance programs in FY2000. Since allocations are based on population, the more populous states receive larger awards than the less populous states. The average award was \$6,610,000; the smallest was \$254,000 (to the Northern Mariana Islands) and the largest was \$41,329,000 (to California) (Table 4).

¹⁸ A total of \$126 million was allocated to states, which must use at least 25 percent but no more than 50 percent to support direct victim services (25 percent is designated for law enforcement and 25 percent for prosecution). This figure represents 37.5 percent of the total, the midpoint in the states’ discretionary range.

¹⁹ A total of \$35 million was appropriated for FY1997, of which 75 percent—\$26.25 million – must be used for direct services, and 25 percent must be used for prevention, education, public awareness, and professional training (OVC, 1999b).

²⁰ This is an approximate estimate only. Byrne funds can be used to address 26 purpose areas, one of which is assistance to victims, witnesses, and jurors. Victim service projects could also be classified under other purpose areas as well. This estimate was obtained by the very kind offices of BJA staff, who searched the entire FY1997 database for awards with “victim” in the program title or project title. We gratefully acknowledge their assistance.

Table 4. Descriptive Data on State Assistance Programs

STATE	Administrative Agency	FY 2000 Award	FY 2000 Award Rank	Percent of Funding to Nonprofits (FY 97)	Percent of Funding for Domestic Violence (FY 97)	Percent of Funding for Sexual Assault (FY 97)	Percent of Funding for Child Abuse (FY 97)	Percent of Funding for Underserved Populations (FY 97)
Alabama	Department of Economic Comission and Community Affairs	\$5,939,000	23	90%	48%	12%	36%	9%
Alaska	Department of Public Safety	\$1,267,000	49	100%	53%	23%	12%	13%
Arizona	Department of Public Safety	\$6,335,000	21	71%	43%	15%	15%	28%
Arkansas	Department of Finance and Administration	\$3,673,000	34	60%	51%	12%	15%	22%
California	Office of Criminal Justice Planning	\$41,329,000	1	57%	28%	18%	20%	34%
Colorado	Department of Public Safety	\$5,463,000	24	66%	54%	14%	15%	17%
Connecticut	Superior Court Operations	\$4,592,000	30	95%	33%	18%	14%	34%
Delaware	Criminal Justice Council	\$1,429,000	46	70%	37%	18%	13%	32%
District of Columbia	Office of Grants Management and Development	\$1,154,000	51	100%	25%	16%	46%	13%
Florida	Office of the Attorney General	\$19,143,000	4	61%	28%	12%	21%	38%
Georgia	Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	\$10,052,000	10	52%	31%	13%	23%	34%
Hawaii	Department of the Attorney General	\$1,991,000	42	73%	50%	17%	17%	17%
Idaho	Department of Health and Welfare	\$2,036,000	41	81%	51%	19%	20%	10%
Illinois	Criminal Justice Information Authority	\$15,555,000	5	95%	37%	41%	9%	10%
Indiana	Criminal Justice Institute	\$7,873,000	14	60%	32%	25%	28%	14%
Iowa	Department of Justice	\$4,078,000	31	76%	46%	19%	19%	17%
Kansas	Office of the Attorney General	\$3,786,000	33	90%	63%	14%	13%	10%
Kentucky**	Justice Cabinet	\$5,420,000	25	60%	13%	3%	31%	38%
Louisiana	Commission on Law Enforcement & Administration of Criminal Justice	\$5,961,000	22	70%	30%	15%	30%	24%
Maine**	Department of Human Services	\$2,055,000	40	71%	52%	21%	30%	11%
Maryland**	Department of Human Resources	\$6,918,000	19	66%	46%	17%	33%	21%
Massachusetts**	Office for Victims Assistance	\$8,183,000	13	100%	45%	11%	49%	38%
Michigan	Department of Community Health	\$12,770,000	8	77%	82%	4%	2%	12%
Minnesota	Department of Public Safety	\$6,406,000	20	73%	18%	26%	13%	43%

* Data from FY 98

** Allocations across primary categories total less than 90% or more than 100%. This may indicate incomplete allocation of funding or oversights in reporting.

Sources: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc and "Crime Victims Fund 2000" (OVC)

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Mississippi	Department of Public Safety	\$3,940,000	32	84%	48%	11%	18%	24%
Missouri	Department of Public Safety	\$7,297,000	16	73%	67%	9%	12%	11%
Montana	Board of Crime Control	\$1,600,000	45	73%	67%	11%	11%	11%
Nebraska	Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice	\$2,578,000	39	63%	55%	19%	14%	18%
Nevada	Department of Human Resources	\$2,683,000	37	77%	31%	19%	38%	12%
New Hampshire	Department of Justice	\$1,981,000	43	95%	31%	27%	18%	20%
New Jersey	Department of Law and Public Safety	\$10,643,000	9	60%	37%	19%	13%	31%
New Mexico	Crime Victims Reparation Commission	\$2,671,000	38	70%	50%	10%	23%	18%
New York	Department of Criminal Justice Services	\$23,217,000	3	74%	35%	10%	14%	41%
North Carolina	Department of Crime Control and Public Safety	\$9,932,000	11	89%	62%	13%	17%	8%
North Dakota	Department of Corrections	\$1,296,000	48	70%	52%	13%	13%	19%
Ohio**	Office of the Attorney General	\$14,510,000	7	56%	38%	13%	14%	17%
Oklahoma	District Attorney's Council	\$4,683,000	28	67%	34%	17%	31%	18%
Oregon**	Department of Justice	\$4,602,000	29	61%	20%	8%	14%	21%
Pennsylvania	Commission on Crime and Delinquency	\$15,500,000	6	90%	46%	9%	21%	24%
Rhode Island	Governor's Justice Commission	\$1,736,000	44	76%	43%	11%	17%	29%
South Carolina	Department of Public Safety	\$5,294,000	27	75%	17%	18%	16%	49%
South Dakota	Department of Social Services	\$1,423,000	47	79%	65%	8%	13%	13%
Tennessee	Department for Financial Administration	\$7,288,000	17	88%	46%	12%	13%	28%
Texas	Office of the Governor	\$25,197,000	2	85%	33%	7%	37%	16%
Utah	Office of Crime Victim Reparations	\$3,124,000	35	48%	48%	7%	22%	23%
Vermont	Center for Crime Victims Services	\$1,239,000	50	85%	41%	17%	32%	11%
Virginia	Department of Criminal Justice Services	\$8,988,000	12	21%	41%	4%	11%	41%
Washington	Department of Social and Health Services	\$7,611,000	15	89%	35%	31%	14%	20%
West Virginia**	Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety	\$2,764,000	36	67%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Wisconsin	Department of Justice	\$7,029,000	18	77%	31%	11%	17%	34%

* Data from FY 98

** Allocations across primary categories total less than 90% or more than 100%. This may indicate incomplete allocation of funding or oversights in reporting.

Sources: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc and "Crime Victims Fund 2000" (OVC)

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American Samoa	Criminal Justice Planning Agency	\$258,000	55	0%	6%	6%	6%	82%
Guam	Office of the Attorney General	\$366,000	54	83%	24%	24%	24%	24%
North Mariana Islands	Criminal Justice Planning Agency	\$254,000	56	40%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Puerto Rico	Department of Justice	\$5,325,000	26	56%	34%	19%	32%	15%
Virgin Islands	Law Enforcement Planning Commission	\$627,000	53	100%	48%	9%	31%	12%
Means	N/A	\$6,382,155	N/A	70%	39%	14%	19%	23%
Medians	N/A	\$4,642,500	N/A	73%	40%	14%	17%	20%

* Data from FY 98

** Allocations across primary categories total less than 90 percent or more than 100 percent. This may indicate incomplete allocation of funding or oversights in reporting. Sources: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc and "Crime Victims Fund 2000" (OVC)

Distribution to Public and Private Providers. States have a great deal of discretion in how they distribute VOCA funds among public and nonprofit victim service providers. The majority of the funding for FY1997 (the last year for which these data are available) went to nonprofits, averaging 72 percent across states. Two-thirds of the states awarded anywhere from 60 percent to 89 percent of these funds to nonprofits. There was still some variance, however, with four states giving less than half to nonprofits, and ten states giving 90 percent or more to nonprofits (Table 4). The type of provider that receives VOCA funding may be determined by allocations of other funding sources and the availability of different types of providers in the state. Funding decisions may also have many implications for which victims are served and what services they receive; these issues will be explored in more depth in future phases of the evaluation.

Distribution Across Priority Categories. Federal guidelines specify that at least 10 percent of each year's funds must be awarded for services to victims of domestic violence, 10 percent for sexual assault, 10 percent for child abuse, and 10 percent for underserved populations. Table 4 presents the distribution of funds in 1997. These may have been partially FY 1997 funds along with funds from previous years. Since the distribution requirement pertains to funds for each fiscal year, these data cannot be used to assess states' compliance. However, they may indicate the extent to which states' funding patterns are converging on the requirement, and states' priorities within the broad range of discretion allowed by OVC guidelines.

On the whole, states seem to be allocating 10 percent or more to each of the four priority categories. The average allocation of funds for domestic violence victim services was 40 percent; the average allocation for sexual assault was 15 percent; an average of 20 percent of funds was allocated for child abuse; and an average of 23 percent of funding was allocated for underserved populations.

Domestic violence services received the lion's share of the funding across states as a whole. Fifteen states awarded at least half their funds to domestic violence services. However, a handful of states emphasized other priority categories; for example, the District of Columbia awarded nearly half of its funding for child abuse services. Minnesota, South Carolina, Wyoming, and American Samoa allocated about half or more of their funds to underserved populations, much more than to any other single

category. Few of the states placed a particular emphasis on sexual assault; services for these victims received more than about one-quarter of the funds in only two states, Illinois and Washington. States' emphases of one type of victim group over others in VOCA funding allocations may be influenced by how other funding sources are distributed, and by what types of service providers are available. These issues will be explored in continuing evaluation activities (Table 4).

Victims Served and Services Provided. Based on national data compiled from 1997 state performance reports to OVC (OVC, 1998c), over 4,600 VOCA subgrants were awarded to more than 3,600 service providers that year. These funds helped serve 3,128,000 victims. The majority of these victims (52 percent) were victims of domestic violence; others served were victims of child physical abuse (4 percent); child sexual abuse (8 percent); DUI/DWI crashes (1 percent); adult sexual assault (7 percent); elder abuse (1 percent); adults molested as children (2 percent); survivors of homicide victims (3 percent); robbery (3 percent); assault (6 percent); and other types of crime (14 percent).

The victims received an average of three to four different types of services each. The most common types of services were telephone contact information/referral (17 percent of services provided); in-person information/referral (15 percent); criminal justice support/advocacy (13 percent); crisis counseling (12 percent); and follow-up services (11 percent). Other services provided to fewer than ten percent of victims include therapy; group treatment/support; shelter/safehouse; emergency financial assistance; emergency legal advocacy; assistance in filing compensation claims; personal advocacy; and other services (OVC, 1998c).

Policy and Practice Issues in State VOCA Assistance Administration

The Office for Victims of Crime sponsored a series of five regional meetings for state VOCA assistance administrators in early 1997. Administrators discussed critical issues in program administration and shared innovative funding strategies and programs. A report on these meetings was issued in April, 1997 (OVC, 1997); critical issues are summarized below.

- *Funding Fluctuations and Long-Range Planning.* The most critical issue facing state administrators is how to respond to fluctuations in funding levels from year to year, most notably the dramatic increase in funding available over the last six fiscal years. The challenge is to find ways to fund needed, high-quality services in a timely fashion, and support the development of innovations in victim assistance, while trying to maintain program stability over time. OVC strongly recommends that states use the four-year obligation period for VOCA awards to engage in long-range programmatic and financial planning, with multi-year strategies for disbursement of funds, so that local programs can share the wealth in a way that stabilizes their core services and allows them to reach out to new victims and/or provide new services.

Federal Policymakers' Response to Funding Fluctuations: Capping the Fund. In a recent response to the CVF's rapid growth and its impact on administrators, Congress imposed a cap of \$500 million on expenditures from the Crime Victims Fund in FY2000, with excess funds to be rolled over for expenditure in FY2001. FY2001 expenditures have been capped at \$537.5 million, an increase of 7.5 percent over FY2000 allocations. There is currently a total of \$782 million in CVF collections above the spending caps of the last two years. These funds have been retained in

the CVF for crime victim-related purposes, as per the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000.

- *Assessments of Needs and Services.* Central to long-range planning is the identification of unmet victim needs and gaps in services so that strategies to address these gaps and meet these needs can be developed. Many states reported efforts to assess needs and services, including surveys of service providers, task forces of state employees and service providers, focus groups, and “town hall” meetings.
- *Use of Administrative Funds.* States felt that being able to use some of the VOCA award for administrative purposes was helpful, although the 5 percent allowance is often insufficient to pay the actual cost of administering the program. States reported using the administrative allowance to pay for staffing, monitoring and providing technical assistance to subrecipients, and for purchasing technology.
- *Outreach to Underserved Victims.* OVC encourages states to identify underserved victim groups (as defined by crime type as well as by victim demographics) and the services needed to meet their needs. OVC also encourages states to fund existing services that reach out to the underserved, and to fund the development of new services for the underserved. States reported various types of efforts to identify underserved groups and service gaps, and identified a variety of populations as underserved. While some states reported funding innovative types of victim services to reach these groups, states also pointed out obstacles to the expansion of victim services to reach new types of victims or new geographic areas or to provide new types of services (OVC, 1997). For one, VOCA’s “record of service” requirement may make it difficult for very new programs to secure funding. Service providers’ staff salaries are so low and turnover rates so high that efforts to stabilize existing programs may be more pressing than program expansions. It may also be difficult to get new programs started when grant writing capacity is inadequate and matching funds are unavailable.
- *Outreach to Victim Service Providers.* States routinely inform previously-funded providers about VOCA funding opportunities. However, outreach efforts in many states need to be expanded to include other providers who have not received VOCA funding, especially groups that serve underserved populations. Some states report outreach efforts that include use of the Internet and newspaper ads, as well as regional or broadcast training and technical assistance conferences for potential applicants.
- *Coordination of Federal Funding Streams and Reporting Requirements.* Many state administrators expressed a need for more information on awards from other federal funding sources (such as STOP VAWA, FVPSA, PHHS, and Byrne grant programs). Some states have developed coordination and information-sharing mechanisms. State administrators voiced a strong need for unified federal reporting forms for victim service providers. OVC has been coordinating a multi-agency effort to develop a single performance report for service providers who receive funding from any federal source. The goal of this ongoing effort is to reduce the reporting burden on providers who are funded by multiple sources and must report service activities and statistics for each grant separately.
- *Advisory Boards and Councils.* Oversight bodies can be very helpful in establishing funding priorities, reaching out to new programs and underserved victims, and selecting applications for funding. Fifteen states reported having such bodies, some required by statutory authority, and others by policy. Boards often include victim advocates, service providers, and sometimes victims themselves.

- *Implementing Victims' Rights Legislation.* As of the 1997 OVC report, nearly every state had statutory victims' bills of rights and over half the states had constitutional amendments on victims' rights. However, the implementation of victims' rights (usually through prosecutor-based victim/witness advocates) varied widely from state to state; some states had advocates in only a few of the prosecutors' offices. All states felt there was a need to improve services for victims of juvenile offenders. Some states reported special initiatives to implement victims' rights, including a statewide ombudsman program with a toll-free number for victims, the use of Judicial District Rights Commissions, and corrections-based victim notification systems.
- *State Training Efforts.* States may use up to 1 percent of their assistance allocation for training of victim service providers and allied professionals, with a 20 percent match required. Some states require VOCA subrecipient agency staff to receive training as a grant condition, some have established mentoring programs, and others are developing certification programs for victim service providers.
- *State 800 Numbers.* Almost half the states reported that toll-free services are available for victims to receive information about and referrals to local providers. Some of these are limited to certain victim groups, such as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse.
- *Technology.* All states expressed a critical need for information on how computer technology can be used in victim notification systems, implementation of victims' rights, data collection and reporting efforts, case management, communication between the state administrator and local programs, and victim referrals among providers across the state. Administrators need information on how to purchase, implement, and operate technology systems, and how to evaluate vendors. In addition to computer systems, some states have used VOCA funds to distribute cellular phones to domestic violence victims for contacting law enforcement in an emergency.

Prior Recommendations for Program Improvements

New Directions (OVC, 1998a) offers a number of recommendations for further development of the victim assistance field. While these recommendations do not address the management of grant programs at the state level *per se*, they do suggest ways in which state grant administrators can prioritize funding to support the development of the victim services field. This survey touched on many of these issues, and future evaluation activities will address these issues in more detail.

- *Needs Assessments and Service Development.* Communities should undertake comprehensive efforts to identify groups of underserved victims, what their needs are, how their needs can best be addressed, and barriers to accessing services. Efforts to identify needs and develop and implement services should include input from multidisciplinary partnerships as well as from crime victims, should emphasize cultural competency, and should strive to create a comprehensive network of services within communities. Interagency response protocols should be developed and implemented for assisting all types of victims, but especially children, the elderly, and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- *Services to Address Special Needs.* Each state should develop a statewide crisis response team to assist communities experiencing incidents of mass violence or terrorism. Local and regional teams should also be developed. The creation of a national office for community crisis response should be considered, and should involve the Federal Emergency Management Agency as well as the Justice Department.

A national 24-hour hotline for crisis intervention, and statewide toll-free numbers to provide information and referrals, should be established to assist victims of all types of crime. This would be a valuable resource to victims in rural areas with few local services, and to victims of crimes not currently served by hotlines (most hotlines serve domestic violence or sexual assault victims only).

Victim services should also focus more on victims with disabilities. Research is needed to determine the extent of victimization against the disabled, and to guide prevention efforts and strategies to increase reporting. Service providers need more training on reaching and serving victims with disabilities, and accessible services tailored to disabled victims' unique needs should be developed and implemented.

Victim service providers should be trained to assist crime victims who interact with the media, and *New Directions* recommends utilizing the National Center for Victims of Crime's enumeration of rights for victims who choose to deal with the media. Providers who are sophisticated in media relations can help victims have a more positive experience with media coverage while improving their own professional relationships with the media.

- *Public Awareness Activities.* Victim service providers should undertake campaigns to increase public awareness of victimization issues, knowledge about services available, and public support for victim services. These efforts may also increase crime reporting and decrease the stigma of victimization. These initiatives should address a broad range of crime types, and should be particularly active during the National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April.
- *Program Standards, Accreditation, and Ethics.* There should be national or consistent state standards of services, such as those developed by NOVA, and accreditation procedures for provider programs to ensure quality and consistency across programs. The basic elements of victim services recommended by NOVA include crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy, support during criminal investigation, support during prosecution and case disposition, support after case disposition, training for allied professionals, violence and substance abuse prevention activities, and public education activities. While some states have developed service standards, they vary from state to state. A code of ethics should also be instituted that addresses the provider's relationship with victims, colleagues, other professionals, and the public; and rules for professional conduct. Some advocacy groups (i.e., NOVA and MADD) have developed a model code of ethics, and some states have adopted ethical codes. These efforts should be expanded, and some consistency across states should be developed through a national commission to develop certification and accreditation standards for programs and staff.
- *Staff Training and Certification.* Pre-service and in-service training requirements and certification procedures should be instituted to ensure service quality. Some states have established minimum training requirements, some states require ongoing training as a VOCA grant condition, and some states have established certification procedures which specify training and experience requirements.
- *Use of Technology.* Computer technology, including the Internet and e-mail, can be very useful in making information and counseling services widely and easily available to the public, and in helping providers communicate with each other and with state funding administrators. Cellular telephone technology has been used to provide an extra measure of safety to domestic violence victims by giving them immediate access to law enforcement emergency services. The application of technological developments to victim services should be explored and supported through technical

assistance and training. A national center should be created to locate or develop software for local programs to use in case management, internal evaluations, and reporting.

- *Program Evaluation.* Research should be done to evaluate the effectiveness of services, such as individual or group crisis intervention models. Standard evaluation procedures and protocols should be developed for each component of victim services so that programs can measure their own success and areas for future development.

Findings from the 1999 Survey of State Assistance Administrators

The telephone survey of state administrators in 1999 sought to obtain basic information on a broad range of key policy and practice issues in state assistance program administration. We spoke with all 56 administrators directly in charge of the program, or his or her designee. Findings from this survey are useful for assessing current conditions and comparing these conditions with recommendations for best practices (as discussed previously). Future evaluation activities will explore these issues in more detail through site visits to a selected group of states and other research methods. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix B; findings and recommendations suggested by the results are presented below. As in the compensation section of this report, the findings are organized by content area, with an italicized summary and recommendations preceding a fuller discussion of the results.

Responses to Funding Fluctuations

All states have seen dramatic fluctuations in their allocations from OVC in the last six years, with a general trend toward rapidly rising amounts. Since VOCA funds make up a significant portion of funding for all state and federal victim services, managing fluctuations from year to year, and responsibly allocating much larger amounts over the last six years, proves very challenging to state administrators. Administrators' priorities for managing funding fluctuations indicate a concern with assuring future funding stability while improving core resources for victims and providers. There seems to be less emphasis on long-term commitments or promoting expansions into new areas, due no doubt to the uncertainty of the funding source.

In flush years, specific strategies which half or more of the administrators reported using included carrying over funds to the next year (e.g., states carried over an average of 40 percent of their FY1997 funds into FY1998); funding special technology projects (such as automated victim notification; cell phones or other emergency systems for victims; automated case tracking systems; e-mail systems for service providers; and hiring consultants to assist with technology projects); increasing the salaries or benefits of providers; and making special one-time or supplemental awards. Less utilized strategies, used in under half the states, included guaranteeing multi-year funding for certain programs or projects; developing long-term plans; funding special outreach projects for underserved victims; funding other innovative projects such as restorative justice or ombudsman programs; and funding special coordination projects, such as those to link criminal justice and human service systems.

Administrators' strategies for responding to funding decreases also show a commitment to retaining stability in providers' funding. In lean years, states have most often funded the same programs but at a lower level than they requested, and used held-over funds from previous years. Only a minority of the states have reduced the number of programs funded or obtained state funds to fill in the gaps.

Despite the increasing amounts of funding available from the CVF over the last six years, nearly three-quarters of the administrators felt that the assistance funds available through their office are insufficient to meet the needs of service providers. A popular strategy to increase revenues is seeking

additional state appropriations (although these efforts may not always be successful). Other strategies, used in a minority of the states, include efforts to increase offender fines and fine collection rates. Costs are commonly contained by funding proposals at less than the full level requested, and by helping providers obtain funding from local, private, and other federal sources. A few states reported efforts to be more selective in funding decisions, such as strengthening selection criteria or using evaluation results to guide funding decisions.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning, or multi-year funding strategies, can be very helpful in managing funding fluctuations and the four-year obligation period allowed under OVC guidelines. While many states are doing planning-related activities such as needs assessments, coordination of funding sources, and efforts to increase revenues, only about half the states reported having a formal strategic plan for victim services funding. These plans typically covered about four years, which is the obligation period. The plans tend to focus on promoting expansion as well as stabilizing current services (although current funding practices place more emphasis on stabilization). OVC efforts to help states develop strategic plans, in conjunction with efforts to stabilize CVF allocations, could be very useful for promoting both stability and expansion of victim assistance programs.

Strategic plan priorities reported by over three-quarters of the states included reaching new types of victims or areas of the state not currently well-served; stabilizing existing services; and developing new types of services. A minority of states reported service coordination, prevention and public education, and training as priorities of the state's plan for VOCA and other victim services funding. Key justice (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, and state criminal justice planning agencies) and protective service system personnel, victim advocates/providers, and victims were most often involved in strategic planning. A wide range of staff from other criminal justice agencies, other victim service agencies, and allied professionals were involved in the planning in fewer than half the states.

Use of the Four-Year Obligation Period

The four-year obligation period seems to be a valued tool administrators use to cope with funding fluctuations. Analyses indicate that administrators have availed themselves of the option to spread funds out over a longer time period, so that the subgrant award process has taken increasingly more time in recent years. This is not surprising, since administrators have had more funds to award due to increased allocations in most years as well as more funds held over from previous years.

For FY1995 funds, it took an average of 11 weeks to issue the first award once funds were available for draw down; this average increased to 18 weeks for FY 1996 and FY1997 funds, and 31 weeks for FY1998 funds (data are available from too few states to report for FY1999). For FY1995 and FY1996, the average length of the funding distribution process (from issuing the first award to the most recent award) was 26 weeks; the average rose to 56 weeks for FY1997 funds. An average of only 20 weeks is reported for FY1998 funds, but that is due to the very likely possibility that the *most recent* award with FY1998 funds is not the *last* award with these funds, since administrators had another two years to distribute the funds at the time of the interviews.

Needs Assessments

Identifying what services victims need to cope with a criminal victimization and what needs go unmet can be critical information in deciding how to allocate funds. States generally reported taking steps to identify victims' needs and involved at least the core professionals (criminal justice and victim service providers) in these efforts, although methods of needs assessments were varied and often anecdotal. A closer look at how needs assessments are being done, which methods seem most useful, and how the results are used could be very helpful to administrators, and will be addressed in future phases of this evaluation.

A large majority of the states (84 percent) reported that there is a process in place to determine the needs of victims across the state. Just over half the states (57 percent) reported using formal needs assessment methods, typically an examination of crime and population statistics, or surveying/interviewing victim service providers or victims. Other assessment methods include drawing feedback from subrecipient site visits and progress reports, advisory councils, and public hearings; and obtaining information during the application process. About three-quarters of the states use an advisory group to oversee the needs assessment process. Personnel involved in the needs assessment process in over half the states include a variety of criminal justice system staff; various victim service providers; mental health care providers; and victims themselves. Members of allied professions or local boards were less commonly involved.

Underserved Populations

There is a widespread perception that many groups of victims are underserved, whether groups are defined by type of crime (e.g., victims of elder abuse, hate crime, and property crime) or by victim demographics (e.g., the elderly, residents of remote areas, and ethnic/racial minorities). Greater public education and awareness efforts, more accessibility in service programs, and services to enhance victim safety are needed to address underservice. It may be useful for assistance programs to focus future outreach efforts on working with agencies who represent underserved groups, in order to identify ways to reach them and overcome obstacles to full participation.

Over three-quarters of the administrators thought that there are underserved victims, or those who receive assistance less frequently than expected based on known victimization rates. Victims of elder abuse, hate or bias crime, and property crime such as fraud were thought to be underserved by over half the administrators. Less than half but a significant portion (one-third or more) of the administrators considered victims of gang violence, stalking, drunk driving crashes, adult sexual assault, survivors of homicide, child physical and sexual abuse, robbery, and assault underserved. Reasons for underservice included victims' lack of knowledge about assistance programs, embarrassment, fear of retaliation by the offender, and belief that programs are available only when the justice system is involved; and the lack of accessibility, or accessibility problems with assistance programs.

We also asked administrators what groups of victims they thought were underserved when group is defined by victims' demographic characteristics. Administrators often identified senior citizens, residents of remote or rural areas, ethnic/racial minorities, non-English speakers, persons with disabilities, gays, and immigrants as underserved. One-quarter of the administrators reported that some areas of their state have no services for crime victims, so victims in these areas may be completely unserved.

The Funding Distribution Process

How the funds are distributed may depend greatly on who finds out about their availability, how applicants are evaluated, and who makes the final funding decisions.

Publicity efforts are most commonly targeted at current subrecipients or traditional types of providers. Selections among applicants focus on capacity to provide service and evidence of need. Decisionmakers may be administrative agency staff or other personnel, such as advisory board members or state officials. The implications of publicity techniques, selection criteria, and types of decisionmakers will be explored in further detail in additional evaluation activities.

Current subrecipients are most commonly informed of funding availability (89 percent of the states), although two-thirds of the states also reported notifying a mailing list of all law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers. General publications, such as newspapers, web pages, newsletters, and state equivalents of the Federal Register, were less frequently used. The large majority (84 percent) of states reported efforts to encourage new applicants. These efforts most frequently included providing information or technical assistance about the application process at state or regional meetings and through telephone consultations; mailing RFPs to all victim service providers in the state; and contacting groups that serve populations vulnerable to crime.

Only 11 percent of the states reported that they funded all applicants at the requested level in the last three years, so the vast majority of states needed to select among applicants. In addition to federal eligibility standards, the most popular funding criteria included the applicant's demonstrated capacity to provide services; evidence of service need; geographic distribution criteria; soundness of the proposal and budget request; and the applicant's ability to coordinate with other providers. Specific requirements in over half the states included mechanisms for community coordination and service referrals; providing victims with information and assistance in compensation applications; setting specific project goals and methods for measuring achievements; making services accessible to disabled victims; ensuring adequate staff training and credentials; and providing information on other funding sources.

States vary a great deal in terms of who is involved in making funding decisions. The staff and director of the administrative agency are most commonly involved in reviewing applications. Advisory boards or proposal review panels are involved in just under half the states. These bodies are typically composed of law enforcement, prosecution, domestic violence advocates/providers, sexual assault advocates/providers, and state protective services agency staff. The final funding decision is made by staff within the administrative agency in just under half the states, and by decisionmakers outside the administrative agency (such as an advisory board or a state official such as the governor or attorney general) in just over half the states. Two-thirds of the states have an appeals process for applicants to contest funding decisions.

Coordination

Coordination of the funding process is very important since VOCA is one of a number of funding sources for service providers. Coordination can help eliminate duplicate funding or gaps in coverage. Coordination with the compensation program is also important to ensure that more of victims' needs are met and to comply with federal requirements that assistance providers help victims with compensation. Most states make an effort to coordinate information on awards from at least the major federal victim assistance funding sources, to identify gaps and duplications and to make funding decisions. Assistance programs coordinate with compensation programs more often through exchange of information than through active collaborative processes. Ways in which VOCA and other assistance administrators, compensation administrators, and federal personnel might work together more closely should be identified and supported.

We asked VOCA administrators about coordination with other federal and state funding sources. One-third of the administrators reported that all victim assistance grants are tracked together; another half reported that some grants are tracked together (most often the federal grants—VOCA, VAWA, PHHS, and/or FVPSA grants). A little under one-quarter of the states reported no co-tracking efforts. The VOCA administrative agency was the most likely party responsible for the tracking in states that track at least some of the grants together. Two-thirds of the states also reported less formal means of information-sharing, most often sharing lists of awards between the VOCA and VAWA administrators. It is not surprising that these two should work together most closely, since these two programs are often administered by staff who work out of the same office, or even the same person, and they may support services for the same victims. Information from formal tracking or less formal information-sharing is most often used to identify gaps and duplications in services, to make funding decisions, and to coordinate service programs.

Assistance providers are required by federal guidelines to refer victims to compensation. State administrators commonly try to facilitate coordination with compensation by inviting compensation staff to train assistance subrecipients, and by having joint training conferences for compensation and assistance staff. Only a minority of the states reported other methods of coordination, such as joint staff meetings or retreats, written reports or memoranda of understanding on coordination, and providing input to each other's planning or decisionmaking processes. Administrators in over half the states help subrecipients comply with federal requirements by distributing compensation brochures and application forms, and providing training. A minority of the states monitor referrals to compensation through site visits or monitoring, in application and contract requirements, and by checking with compensation administrators to see the origins of the applications. Three-quarters of the assistance administrators reported providing the compensation program with a statewide directory of service providers.

Services and Oversight of Subrecipients

The majority of states attempt to help subrecipients fulfill their responsibilities, usually by providing training and technical assistance, cluster conferences for subrecipients, and monitoring activities. Monitoring most often involved site visits, audit reports, and desk activities such as phone contacts and review of subrecipients' performance reports. Evaluation activities and application of program standards were not frequently reported. These may be fruitful areas for future development. A significant minority of the states have terminated a few grants for cause during the last several years, usually for non-performance.

Nearly every state administrator reported that they consider it their job to assist subrecipients in fulfilling their grant responsibilities. They provide this assistance by offering training or technical assistance, performing site visits, and monitoring programs through reviewing performance reports. About three-quarters of state administrators have sponsored both statewide and regional meetings (typically annual meetings) for VOCA and other victim assistance subrecipients to gather and share their expertise.

Many states monitor subrecipients through site visits, telephone contacts, written performance reports from subrecipients, and annual audit reports. Fewer than one-quarter of the states use additional methods, such as victim satisfaction surveys, monitoring by state domestic violence or sexual assault coalitions, or application of performance guidelines developed by NOVA or other agencies. Fewer than one-quarter of the states have sponsored any evaluations or reported any evaluations by subrecipients in the last five years.

It is not uncommon for a state administrator to terminate a grant for cause during the project period; 39 percent of the states reporting doing so since 1996. These states reported an average of about two such terminations. The reasons were most often failure to deliver the promised services and noncompliance with reporting requirements. Less common reasons included false reporting or double billing, change in status from nonprofit to for-profit, or bankruptcy of the program.

Use of the Administrative Allowance

States are allowed to use up to 5 percent of their total allocation for administrative activities, at their discretion. Many of the activities discussed above may be supported from this source. The states have made significant if not always full use of the funds, with an apparent recent increase in level of use. Less than full usage was due to availability of administrative funding from other sources and a more pressing need to award the funds to service providers. The funds have supported many different purposes, usually rated by administrators as extremely useful.

All states have used the administrative allowance, with one-third of the states using the full allowance since the first year it was available, and the other two-thirds using at least some of the money at least some of the time. Use seems to be growing, with states allocating an average of 3.7 percent of their award in FY1996, 4.0 percent in FY1997, and 4.4 percent in FY1998. Those who have not always made full use of the allowance reported as their reasons that the money was more urgently needed for awards to subrecipients, and that administrative funding has been available elsewhere. States reported using administrative funds for a wide variety of purposes, from supporting basic program functions (staffing, training, subrecipient services, purchasing equipment, developing publications) to more advanced functions such as strategic planning, needs assessments, coordination, and developing automated systems. Nearly all the purposes were rated as moderately or extremely useful.

Training

OVC guidelines also allow administrators to reserve 1 percent of their total award for training projects, with a 20 percent match. As with the administrative allowance, the training funds have not always been used to their fullest extent, due to other sources and urgent needs for subrecipient awards, but usage seems to be increasing. State funds and VAWA funds have been used to support training efforts instead (this is one of STOP VAWA's explicit purposes). This suggests that VOCA training funds might be targeted to providers who serve other types of victims. Nearly all the states have provided training, and have reached a wide-ranging audience in which criminal justice staff and victim service providers are featured most prominently. Many topics have been covered in this training.

A wide range of justice system professionals, including law enforcement, prosecution, probation/parole, judges, and corrections have received training in at least half the states. Among a number of victim service providers, only federal victim/witness coordinators received training in fewer than half the states.²¹ Nearly all states trained domestic violence and sexual assault advocates/providers, and two-thirds or more also trained police- and prosecution-based victim/witness staff; MADD, groups for survivors of homicide, and other grassroots groups; and protective service agencies. Allied professionals most likely to receive training were health care providers, mental health care providers, and compensation staff. Training has most often been available through statewide or regional conferences, or

²¹ OVC provides other means for training federal personnel.

by allowing subrecipients to use their awards to attend OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy and NOVA's annual conferences.

Training topics included substantive areas such as crisis intervention, victims' legal rights, victims' compensation, counseling skills, and working with special groups of victims; as well as procedural areas such as interagency collaboration, grant administration, program management, outreach, use of technology, and working with the media.

Interactions with the Federal Government

Many states have made use of OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy and the Resource Center and found them valuable resources. Other federal resources used by state administrators include regional conferences, the Training and Technical Assistance Center, and OVC's web site and publications. The majority of states have found the federal reporting forms helpful in assessing funding patterns, gaps, and duplications; helpful for legislative reporting and responding to requests; and helpful in assessing programs' level of success. However, nearly two-thirds of the states would like to see changes in the forms to make definitions more specific and include examples, and to eliminate duplication of data across the subgrant award and fiscal reporting forms.

Administrators' Recommendations

In response to a request for general comments on the federal guidelines and legislation, or any other concerns about the federal or state VOCA program, administrators offered several observations. Many administrators would like to broaden the use of funds to include such activities as prevention, overhead costs, and batterer programs. Many would also like to see the guidelines clarified and simplified. For example, there is some confusion as to whether OVC guidelines prohibit providers from charging fees for any services, or only for VOCA-funded services. Administrators also expressed a desire for an increase in the administrative allowance and steps to make the training allowance more accessible, such as discontinuing or changing the matching requirement. Finally, a number of administrators emphasized that funding fluctuations present a continual management problem, and should be addressed through efforts to smooth funding levels.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings from the current research, in conjunction with other input from state administrators (i.e., the 1997 regional meetings of administrators), OVC priorities and guidelines, and recommendations from the field (i.e., OVC, 1998a), indicate that state VOCA assistance programs are generally functioning well in a number of areas. This is commendable particularly in light of the difficult funding situation under which programs operate. However, a number of issues related to VOCA assistance program operations and management remain.

- *Funding Allocations:* The most pressing problem facing state administrators is the difficulty of doing long-range planning, given extreme fluctuations in funding levels from year to year. The four-year obligation period certainly helps to relieve pressures on state administrators to distribute a variable amount of funds. The federal caps of the last two years have controlled fluctuations, but have led to a very large amount (over \$780 million) being held for crime victim purposes but not available for allocation. It is critical that policies be developed for putting these funds to work for victims in a timely way and in accordance with the legislative intent of VOCA. These policies should consider the

possibility that Congress will continue imposing annual caps as well as the possibility that the entire pool of funds may become available for allocation, and develop mechanisms for smoothing allocation fluctuations as needed. It may be useful to involve state administrators and other critical stakeholders in policy development efforts.

- *Strategic Planning:* Many states reported doing needs assessments, coordination of funding sources, efforts to increase revenues, and other planning-related activities. But only about half the states reported having a formal strategic plan for victim services funding at the time of our survey. Since this is clearly a priority for OVC, and can be very helpful to administrators in managing a complex grant program with a four-year distribution period for each year's allocation and changing funding levels from year to year, this seems to be an area in which OVC could provide critical support. Efforts to help those states with plans share information on the content of their plans, how they were developed, and how they are implemented could be very useful to those states without such plans.
- *Needs Assessments:* While most states reported conducting needs assessments, their methods varied widely. Knowing what victims' needs are, and which victims and what needs are underserved, is critical for funding decisions. A closer look at how needs assessments are being done, which methods seem more useful than others, and how the results are used could also be very helpful to state administrators.
- *Outreach to Service Providers and Underserved Populations:* As states' ability to do long-range planning improves, additional efforts should be made to reach qualified service providers and victim populations not currently served by VOCA funding. Needs assessments should provide very useful input on these efforts, and partnerships between state administrators and groups which represent underserved populations should be helpful in identifying barriers to service utilization and how to overcome them.
- *Coordination:* Coordination of the many funding sources available to assist victims of crime is very important to eliminate gaps or duplication of services. While coordination mechanisms vary, over three-quarters of the states make an effort to co-track at least some of the major federal victim assistance funding streams, and find these efforts useful. Coordination with the state compensation program is also common, but is mostly limited to training efforts and distributing program materials. Ways in which VOCA and other assistance administrators, compensation administrators, and federal victim/witness personnel might work together more closely should be identified and supported.
- *Support for Administration and Training:* The administrative allowance can and has been used to support many activities, which OVC and leaders in the field have identified as crucial, such as strategic planning, needs assessments, coordination, and various outreach activities. Use of this allowance seems to be on the rise, and state administrators have expressed the need for greater support for administrative activities. Many administrators would also like to broaden the use of administrative funds to include prevention activities (which would require a legislative change), among others. Training funds are also being put to use, although some administrators would like them to be made more accessible by reducing or eliminating the 20 percent match requirement. Given the current funding environment and the gaps remaining between recommended and actual practices, OVC should consider the feasibility of increasing these allowances and opening them up to additional uses.

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Appendix A: The Survey of Compensation Administrators

Interview with VOCA-Funded State Compensation Administrators

Instructions are in bold text preceded by an arrow (→).

52 Respondents

Length of interview:

Average = 56.2 Range = 21 – 82 [Time in minutes]

Introduction

This is part of a study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and conducted by the Urban Institute. This is a national study about compensation benefits for victims of crime.

You should have received a letter of introduction from OVC and a copy of the questionnaire we'd like to complete with you, as well as a summary of descriptive information on your state's program, from the Urban Institute. Please review this summary prior to completing the survey.

First, we'd like to confirm:

Name: _____

Position: _____

How long at this position: _____

If less than 1 year: Were you in compensation services before?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Management

1.

We sent you an information sheet about your VOCA Compensation Program. This information was compiled from OVC Performance Reports, the NACVCB's Program Directory, and Internet homepages for state programs. Is all the information accurate?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Skip to Q2**
- 2. No **Continue with 1A**

31% (16/52)

1A. What needs to be revised?
Make revisions

2.

Since fiscal year 1995, states have been allowed to use up to 5% of federal compensation grant funds for administrative purposes. According to OVC information on your state, you used or will use:

- ____ % in 1995 7% (4/52); Average = 2.5%
- ____ % in 1996 96% (50/52); Average = 1.8%
- ____ % in 1997 98% (51/52); Average = 2.3%
- ____ % in 1998 100% (52/52); Average = 1.7%
- ____ % in 1999 13% (7/52); Average = 3.6%

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. If ALWAYS used the full 5%, complete 2A and 2B 19% (10/52)
- 2. If used SOME funding, complete 2A, 2B, and 2C 39% (20/52)
- 3. If NEVER used any funds, complete 2C 42% (22/52)

2A. For what purposes have you ever used VOCA compensation funds? 58% (30/52)

Check *all* that apply

2B. For each of the ways in which you have used assistance funds for administration, how useful have these activities been to the administration of the program?

Rate each option according to the scale:

1 = not very useful

2 = moderately useful

3 = extremely useful

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
<input type="radio"/> 1. pay salary and benefits for staff, or consultant fees, to administer and manage the financial or programmatic aspects of VOCA 57% (17/30)	1	2	3 94%
<input type="radio"/> 2. attend OVC-sponsored or other relevant technical assistance meetings 50% (15/30)	1	2	3 80%
<input type="radio"/> 3. purchase equipment for the state grantee, such as computers, software, fax machine, copying machines, etc. 50% (15/30)	1	2	3 100%

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
o 4. purchase memberships in crime victims' organizations and victim-related materials, such as curricula, literature, and protocols 33% (10/30)	1	2	3 70%
o 5. develop strategic plans on a state and/or regional basis, conduct surveys and needs assessments, or promote innovative approaches to serving crime victims (such as through technology) 13% (4/30)	1	2	3 75%
o 6. improve coordination efforts on behalf of crime victims with other OJP offices and bureaus, or with federal, state, or local agencies and organizations 10% (3/30)	1	2	3 67%
o 7. provide training on compensation issues to public or private nonprofit organizations that assist crime victims 27% (8/30)	1	2	3 88%
o 8. print and/or develop publications such as training manuals, victim service directories, or victims' brochures 37% (11/30)	1	2	3 82%
o 9. coordinate or develop protocols, policies, or procedures that promote systemic change or coordination in the ways crime victims are treated or served 13% (4/30)	1	2	3 50%
o 10. develop an automated claims processing or tracking system 33% (10/30)	1	2	3 90%
o 11. offer a toll-free number for potential claimants to obtain information or assistance 10% (3/30)	1	2	3 67%
o 12. obtain special equipment to facilitate services to persons with disabilities 3% (1/30)	1	2	3
o 13. pay expert reviewers for medical or mental health claims 3% (1/30)	1	2	3

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
o 14. pay audit costs 10% (3/30)	1	2	3
o 15. pay for indirect costs at a federally approved indirect cost rate 10% (3/30)	1	2	3
o 16. other: _____ 10% (3/30)	1	2	3

2C. What are the reasons you have not made full use of the administrative allowance?

Check *all that apply* (42/52)

- o 1. the funds are more urgently needed for awards to victims 52% (22/42)
- o 2. administrative funding has been available from other sources 57% (24/42)
- o 3. OVC documentation requirements present obstacles to using these funds for administrative purposes 12% (5/42)
- o 4. other: _____ 29% (12/42)

Other include:

- 1) Insufficient funds
- 2) Sufficient state funds

Training

3.

Has the compensation program provided training in the basics of victim compensation to groups and individuals that routinely come into contact with victims? (Training may have been provided by your program or other organizations and is not limited to training funded by VOCA funds.)

Check *one box that applies*

- o 1. Yes Complete 3A 92% (48/52)
- o 2. No Skip to Q4

3A. Which of the following individuals or groups did your program or other organizations provide training to in the last year?

Check *all* that apply

Criminal justice professionals

- o 1. law enforcement 96% (46/48)
- o 2. Prosecutors 71% (34/48)
- o 3. Judges 31% (15/48)
- o 4. probation/parole 56% (27/48)
- o 5. Corrections 38% (18/48)
- o 6. state criminal justice planning organization 25% (12/48)
- o 7. other: _____ 17% (8/48)

Victim services professionals

- o 8. state domestic violence coalition or local service providers 92% (44/48)
- o 9. state sexual assault coalition or local service providers 83% (40/48)
- o 10. federal victim/witness coordinators, including military 52% (25/48)
- o 11. state or local police-based victim/witness staff 79% (38/48)
- o 12. state or local prosecution-based victim/witness staff 90% (43/48)
- o 13. MADD 52% (25/48)
- o 14. survivors of homicide representatives 56% (27/48)
- o 15. other grassroots victims' organizations 48% (23/48)
- o 16. state or local protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 54% (26/48)
- o 17. other: _____ 2% (1/48)

Other allied professionals

- o 18. health care providers 63% (30/48)
- o 19. mental health care providers 52% (25/48)
- o 20. Attorneys 27% (13/48)
- o 21. Clergy 21% (10/48)
- o 22. funeral directors 44% (21/48)
- o 23. Indian tribal representatives 29% (14/48)
- o 24. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 27% (13/48)
- o 25. other: _____ 10% (5/48)

Others

- 26. major employers 8% (4/48)
- 27. school personnel 29% (14/48)
- 28. victims or their survivors 44% (21/48)
- 29. other: _____ 8% (4/48)

4.

Are victimization issues (e.g., how to talk to victims, effects of victimization, symptoms of PTSD, services available for victims, legal rights of victims, etc.) included in training for compensation staff?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 4A 85% (44/52)
- 2. No Skip to Q5

4A. How is the compensation staff trained?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. staff attends National Victim Assistance Academy 27% (12/44)
- 2. service providers provide training 43% (19/44)
- 3. in-house staff training 73% (32/44)
- 4. staff sent to other victim conferences 91% (40/44)
- 5. other ways, please describe: _____
_____ 18% (8/44)

Financial Planning

5.

Are there sufficient funds to pay readily all the claims that are determined eligible by your program?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Skip to Q6 81% (42/52)
- 2. No Continue with 5A, then 5B (10/52)

5A. Is anything being done to increase revenue?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. Nothing is being done. 0% (0/10)
 - o 2. State legislation is being amended to increase level of offender fines. 10% (1/10)
 - o 3. Fine collection rates are being improved. 10% (1/10)
 - o 4. Additional state appropriations are being sought. 40% (4/10)
 - o 5. Work with prosecutors, state correction officials and/or judges is being done to ensure that restitution is ordered and collected from convicted offenders. 60% (6/10)
 - o 6. A system to track payments of restitution to the program is being established. 60% (6/10)
 - o 7. Subrogation interests are being pursued 60% (6/10)
 - o 8. Pursuing civil liens against offenders for their tax refunds or prison wages 10% (1/10)
 - o 9. We have compensation office staff dedicated to revenue increasing issues. 30% (3/10)
 - o 10. Other strategies are being used to boost revenues, please describe: 20% (2/10)
- _____

5B. Is anything being done to contain costs?

Check all that apply

- o 1. Less than 100% is being paid on claims (e.g., provider agrees to take less, use of state workers comp schedule or other insurance schedules) 60% (6/10)
 - o 2. Caps on payouts are being reduced or instituted. 30% (3/10)
 - o 3. Other strategies are being used to contain costs, please describe: 30% (3/10)
- _____

6.

We are interested in finding out how much of your funding is carried over from one year to the next. Please provide the amounts carried over from one year to the next for the last several years:

\$_____ carried over from FY 1996 funds to FY 1997 83% (43/52)
Average = \$1,695,968; Range = \$0 - \$13,711,000

\$_____ carried over from FY 1997 funds to FY 1998 92% (48/52)
Average = \$1,818,359; Range = \$0 - \$11,778,000

\$_____ carried over from FY 1998 funds to FY 1999 90% (47/52)
Average = \$1,835,278; Range = \$0 - \$19,458,000

7.

Do the program's revenues exceed your immediate payout needs?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 7A 67% (35/52)
- 2. No Skip to Q8

7A. Is the program considering ways to increase benefits to victims?Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 7B 94% (33/35)
- 2. No Skip to Q8

7B. How?Check *all* that apply

- 1. raising caps 73% (24/33)
- 2. expanding list of eligible expenses 91% (30/33)
- 3. expanding definition of eligible claimants (e.g., secondary victims) 67% (22/33)
- 4. extending filing deadlines 36% (12/33)
- 5. changing reporting requirements 36% (12/33)
- 6. expanding the types of crime covered 46% (15/33)
- 7. other, please describe: _____ 9% (3/33)

Outreach and Services to Victims

8.

What are the three most frequent ways that victims learn about the compensation program?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Prosecutors' offices:	30% (16/52)
Police:	25% (13/52)
Medical or other providers:	18% (9/52)
Victims' service programs:	18% (9/52)

Other: 6% (3/52)
 Public awareness or education campaigns: 3% (2/52)

8A. Now, which of those three you just named seems to occur most often?
 Place an asterisk by the #1 response

Prosecutors' offices: 56% (29/52)
 Police: 19% (10/52)
 Victims' service programs: 12% (6/52)
 Medical or other providers: 8% (4/52)
 Other: 4% (2/52)

9.

Which of the following outreach efforts does your program utilize?
 Check *all* that apply

- 1. applications printed in other languages 21% (11/52)
- 2. applications available on the Internet 44% (23/52)
- 3. billboards or other printed notices in high crime areas 10% (5/52)
- 4. brochures and/or information cards printed in other languages 46% (24/52)
- 5. brochures in victim services agencies 92% (48/52)
- 6. programs in schools, churches, or other community organizations;
 please describe: _____ 27% (14/52)
- 7. radio and/or TV public service announcements for non-English speakers 17% (9/52)
- 8. TDD line for hearing impaired 37% (19/52)
- 9. toll-free telephone number for victims to use 75% (39/52)
- 10. translators available by telephone 35% (18/52)
- 11. notification cards handed out by police 73% (38/52)
- 12. notification cards handed out by victims' service providers 58% (30/52)
- 13. training of criminal justice personnel on compensation 83% (43/52)
- 14. training health care providers on compensation 64% (33/52)
- 15. training victim services providers on compensation 87% (45/52)

- o 16. other ways, please describe: 25% (13/52)
 Other includes:
 - 1) Signs posted in county offices (e.g., police department)
 - 2) Mailings (brochures and newsletters) to medical service providers or prosecutor offices
- o 17. Newspaper / newsletter 6% (3/52)
- o 18. None 0% (0/52)

10.

Does your state have a victim's right amendment or other victims' legislation which specifies the right to be notified/informed of the availability of compensation benefits?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes Continue with 10A 83% (43/52)
- o 2. No Skip to Q11
- o 3. Don't know Skip to Q11

10A. Further, does this amendment/law impose specific responsibilities on the state compensation program to assure that all victims learn of these benefits?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes Skip to Q11
- o 2. No Continue with 10B 79% (34/43)
- o 3. Don't know Skip to Q11

10B. Is a person or agency responsible for notifying victims of this right?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes, please specify: _____ 79% (27/34)
 - a) Law enforcement and/or prosecutor offices
 - b) Judges
 - c) Attorney General
- o 2. No
- o 3. Don't know

11.

Are law enforcement officers required by state law to inform victims about the compensation program?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes 65% (34/52)
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

11A. How often do you believe law enforcement officers — in general, across departments — actually inform victims about compensation?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. nearly always 6% (3/52)
- 2. more often than not 21% (11/52)
- 3. about half the time 31% (16/52)
- 4. not very often 35% (18/52)
- 5. rarely or never 6% (3/52)
- 6. Don't know 2% (1/52)

12.

Are verification forms required before an application is considered filed?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes 14% (7/52)
- 2. No

12A. Who is responsible for obtaining verification forms/police reports from law enforcement?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. victim-claimant 10% (5/52)
- 2. compensation staff 79% (41/52)
- 3. both, please explain: _____ 10% (5/52)
- 4. other, please explain: _____ 2% (1/52)

12B. Who is responsible for obtaining verification information from service providers?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. victim-claimant 12% (6/52)
- 2. compensation staff 67% (35/52)

- o 3. both, please explain: _____ 19% (10/52)
- o 4. other, please explain: _____ 2% (1/52)

12C. Who is responsible for obtaining verification information from employers?
Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. victim-claimant 14% (7/52)
- o 2. compensation staff 64% (33/52)
- o 3. both, please explain: _____ 21% (11/52)
- o 4. other, please explain: _____ 2% (1/52)

13.

Do you refer victims to service providers or other resources, as needed?
Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes **Continue with 13A** 85% (44/52)
- o 2. No **Skip to Q14**

13A. Of the programs/services listed below, which three do you make referrals to most often?
Check *three* that apply

- o 1. domestic violence programs 19% (8/44)
- o 2. sexual assault programs 10% (4/44)
- o 3. child abuse programs 4% (2/44)
- o 4. survivors of homicide programs 14% (6/44)
- o 5. prosecutor-based victim advocates 23% (10/44)
- o 6. law enforcement-based victim advocates 7% (3/44)
- o 7. Department of Social Services 5% (2/44)
- o 8. mental health programs 8% (4/44)
- o 9. physical health programs 0% (0/44)
- o 10. Medicaid office 2% (1/44)
- o 11. Social Security office 2% (1/44)
- o 12. homeless shelter 1% (1/44)
- o 13. legal aid 3% (1/44)
- o 14. victim hotline 0%

o 15. other: _____ 7% (4/44)

14.

Is there a special person(s) on staff designated to be a liaison with victims (e.g., to handle phone calls, complaints, questions, assist in filing forms) as well as make referrals to other agencies as needed?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes 42% (22/52)
- o 2. No

14A. Have you applied to the State Victim Assistance Program for VOCA funding for a victim advocate position in your program?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes Continue with 14B 14% (7/52)
- o 2. No, please explain: _____

- 1) Do not need an advocate
- 2) Inappropriate to use an advocate (conflict of interest, need other staff first, should not act as an advocate, etc.)
- 3) Already have an advocate or advocates at the county level
- 4) Did not know this was available
- 5) Considering applying for a victim advocate position

Skip to Q15

14B. Has the funding been granted?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes 71% (5/7)
- o 2. No

15.

Are you able to identify repeat claimants (same person, new crime)?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes Continue with 15A 94% (49/52)
- o 2. No Skip to Q16

15A. What do you do with this information?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. Identify repeat victims who may need other victim services in addition to compensation services 37% (18/49)
- 2. Investigate possible fraud 33% (16/49)
- 3. Other things, please specify: _____ 55% (27/49)
 - 1) Both identify repeat victims and investigate fraud
 - 2) Make sure the claim is not a duplicate claim by mistake
 - 3) Open a new claim
 - 4) Nothing
 - 5) Use the same staff who handled the previous case(s)

Claims Processing

16.

Based on your knowledge of crime statistics in your state and the needs of crime victims, do you think the compensation program receives:

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Too many claims 2% (1/52)
- 2. Too few claims 81% (42/52)
- 3. Right number of claims 12% (6/52)
- 4. Don't know 6% (3/52)

16A. Do you:

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Count only one claim per crime regardless of secondary victims 62% (32/52)
- 2. Open new claims for secondary victims 37% (19/52)
- 3. Depends on the type of crime 2% (1/52)

16B. We note from your state's OVC Performance Reports for the last three/four years that the number of applications for compensation is up / down / about the same.

If trend is UP, complete 16C 52% (27/52)

If trend is DOWN, complete 16D 27% (14/52)

If trend is ABOUT THE SAME, skip to Q17 21% (11/52)

16C. Why do you think this is?

Check *all that apply* (27/52)

- o 1. better outreach to potential claimants 85% (23/27)
- o 2. the crime rates are up 7% (2/27)
- o 3. service providers are doing a better job at assisting claimants with claims process 82% (22/27)
- o 4. changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made more victims eligible or have expanded the types of losses the compensation program can cover 37% (10/27)
- o 5. other sources of recompense, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally less available to victims 11% (3/37)
- o 6. other: _____ 22% (6/37)

16D. Why do you think this is?

Check *all that apply* (14/52)

- o 1. outreach has decreased or is less effective 21% (3/14)
- o 2. the crime rate is down 71% (10/14)
- o 3. service providers are not as effective at helping claimants with the claims process 7% (1/14)
- o 4. changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made fewer victims eligible or have restricted the types of losses the compensation program can cover (such as pain and suffering) 7% (1/14)
- o 5. other sources of recompense, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally more available to victims 71% (10/14)

17.

We note, from your state's OVC Performance Report for 1997 (*or most recent year*), that on average it takes _____ weeks to pay an approved claim. This is the total of the average number of weeks between receiving the claim and making a determination, and the average number of weeks between approving a claim and making payment. The following questions are designed to help us better understand how this processing time is calculated in your office.

Average = 29 weeks; Range = 5 – 286 weeks

17A. At what point does your office start counting processing time on a claim? Please indicate the one best choice that reflects the usual practice, even if there may be exceptions.

Check *one box that applies*

- o 1. When the application is first received by the compensation office, even if it is not signed or notarized (where required) or does not include other important identifying information

- such as social security number **44% (23/52)**
- o 2. When the application is complete with regard to all critical information about the claimant (such as signature, social security number, notarization where required, address, etc.), even if it does not include a law enforcement report **39% (20/52)**
- o 3. When the application is complete with regard to all critical information about the claimant AND includes the law enforcement report **8% (4/52)**
- o 4. When the application is complete with regard to all critical information about the claimant, includes the law enforcement report, AND all other verifications of losses or expenses **8% (4/52)**
- o 5. Other: _____ **2% (1/52)**

17B. What is your policy with regard to applications that are missing important documentation after a reasonable period of time? Please indicate the one best choice that applies in most cases.

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Incomplete claims are administratively closed after a certain period of time, please specify: _____ **40% (21/52)**
- o 2. After a certain period of time, the processing time clock is stopped and claims are held pending further efforts by the victim to complete the process, please specify: _____ **14% (7/52)**
- o 3. The clock keeps running (claims are never administratively closed or suspended) **10% (5/52)**
- o 4. Claim is processed with the information that has been received. **35% (18/52)**
- o 5. Other _____ **2% (1/52)**

18.

In order to give us a better picture of how claims processing time is spent, please rank the top three of the following tasks that take up the most time.

Rank the top three, from 1 to 3

- _____ 1. securing/waiting for police report or verification of the crime
1st: 19%; 2nd: 29%; 3rd: 27%
- _____ 2. securing/waiting for verification of losses or expenses (e.g., provider bills, employment records, medical report, counseling treatment plans, etc.)
1st: 46%; 2nd: 29%; 3rd: 15%

- _____ 3. assisting/waiting for victims to provide all the necessary information on the application
 1st: 12%; 2nd: 25%; 3rd: 14%
- _____ 4. processing the claim (setting up the file, analyzing documentation, making the eligibility decision, and determining how much to pay)
 1st: 14%; 2nd: 8%; 3rd: 12%
- _____ 5. waiting for collateral sources to make payments
 1st: 4%; 2nd: 4%; 3rd: 21%
- _____ 6. waiting for the Board/Commission (where established) to make a determination
 1st: 2%; 2nd: 2%; 3rd: 6%
- _____ 7. waiting for the state government payment source to cut the check
 1st: 0%; 2nd: 4%; 3rd: 4%
- _____ 8. other: _____

 1st: 4%; 2nd: 0%; 3rd: 2%

19.

Do you have different or special procedures for different providers in terms of claims processing requirements (e.g., in amount of verification required)?

Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes, please explain briefly below for each. 50% (26/52)
2. No **Skip to 19A**
1. funeral homes: _____ 62% (16/26)
- 1) Require a receipt and/or a verification form
 - 2) Require a death certificate
 - 3) Verify life insurance
2. medical providers: _____ 62% (16/26)
- 1) Require a verification form and/or itemized bill for treatment

- 2) Doctor's treatment notes
- 3) Medical records
- 4) Insurance explanation of benefits and/or claim forms
- o 3. mental health providers/therapists: _____ 92% (24/26)
 - 1) Mental Health Treatment Plan (must certify that treatment is related to the incident)
 - 2) Itemized bill
- o 4. attorney's fees: _____ 35% (9/26)
 - 1) Affidavit or letter attesting hours billed and request for payment
 - 2) Documentation of the award and civil suit

19A. Do any of the above provider groups have special needs or complaints about the compensation claims process that are unique to the group?

Check *one* box that applies 58% (30/52)

- o 1. Yes, please explain briefly below for each.
- o 2. No **Skip to Q20**
- o 1. funeral homes: _____ 50% (15/30)
 - 1) Complain about payment and verification delays
 - 2) Think payment caps are too low
- o 2. medical providers: _____ 43% (13/30)
 - 1) Complain about payment and verification delays
 - 2) Think payment caps are too low
 - 3) Think length of treatment deadlines are too short
- o 3. mental health providers/therapists: _____ 73% (22/30)
 - 1) Complain about payment and verification delays
 - 2) Complain about cumbersome paper work
 - 3) Resist the release of treatment plan (client privilege)
 - 4) Disagree with payment and treatment limitations

- o 4. attorney's fees: _____ 17% (5/30)

20.

Do you have a procedure for expediting the processing of claims in emergency situations?
Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes **Continue with 20A** 83% (43/52)
o 2. No **Skip to Q21**

20A. What is this procedure?

Each response was specific to the individual program answering the question. In general, many of the emergency situation procedures shared the following characteristics:

- 1) Emergency claims are afforded a special status that usually moves them to the immediate attention of the Compensation staff.
- 2) Compensation checks are delivered much faster than under normal circumstances — sometimes within 24 hours.
- 3) Faxing summaries of the claim or communicating the summary of a claim verbally often supplant the usual forms required when processing a claim.

21.

We'd like to ask you your thoughts on whether compensation programs or local victim service programs are the best vehicles for paying for emergency expenses of victims, such as food, shelter, utilities, or transportation.

Do you believe the state compensation program is the best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses of crime victims (such as food, shelter, utilities, and transportation)?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes **Skip to Q22**
o 2. No **Continue with 21A** 90% (46/52)

21A. Why is it difficult for compensation to pay for these services?

Check *all* that apply (46/52)

- o 1. Verification of the crime is too slow. 72% (33/46)
- o 2. Verification of the loss is problematic. 70% (32/46)
- o 3. Criteria are needed to limit emergency awards to cases of extreme hardship. 22% (10/46)
- o 4. Timely interaction with a victim in distant parts of state is problematic. 48% (22/46)
- o 5. Most emergency items are not compensable under state statutes. 74% (34/46)

22.

Do you believe that local assistance services are the best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses of crime victims, such as food, shelter, utilities, and transportation?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes **Continue with 22A** 89% (46/52)
- o 2. No **Skip to Q23**

22A. Why are local assistance services the best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. They're not limited by eligibility requirements. 78% (36/46)
- o 2. They can provide immediate access to resources locally. 100% (46/46)
- o 3. Other reason, please explain: _____ 28% (13/46)

Claims Determinations

23.

How do you ensure consistency in decision-making?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. conduct regular staff training 62% (32/52)
- o 2. have staff meetings to discuss difficult issues, e.g., contributory conduct 73% (38/52)
- o 3. quality control 44% (23/52)
- o 4. maintain a record or index of claims approved and denied, so that reference can be made to past precedent 56% (29/52)
- o 5. use a checklist of eligibility issues 56% (29/52)
- o 6. use a checklist of payment considerations 35% (18/52)
- o 7. use detailed written claims processing manual 48% (25/52)
- o 8. other ways, please specify: _____ 29% (15/52)

Other includes:

- 1) Continuity of personnel on the Board or our office
- 2) One person makes the decision

24.

OVC data indicate that the claim approval rate was _____% in FY 1995, _____% in FY 1996, _____% in FY 1997, and _____% in FY 1998, and _____% in FY 1999 (*if available*). Are these figures accurate?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes 83% (43/52)
- 2. No

FY 1995 Average: 78% Range: 68%-88% (2 respondents)

FY 1996 Average: 67% Range: 37%-91% (51 respondents)

FY 1997 Average: 68% Range: 41%-93% (51 respondents)

FY 1998 Average: 68% Range: 37%-94% (52 respondents)

FY 1999 Average: N/A

There seems to be a general trend toward increasing / decreasing / stabilizing approval rates over these years.

- If trend is INCREASING, complete 24A 31% (16/52)
- If trend is DECREASING, complete 24B 29% (15/52)
- If trend is STABILIZING, skip to Q25 39% (21/52)

24A. Why do you think the approval rate is up?

Check *all* that apply (16/52)

- 1. Our office has more resources (more staff, or recent training, or better automation, or clearer policies, etc.) to provide services to claimants to help them prepare better applications. 44% (7/16)
- 2. Service providers' assistance to victims in preparing claims has improved. 50% (8/16)
- 3. Our office has more resources (more staff, or recent training, or better automation, or

clearer policies, etc.) to use in the verification process (e.g., getting police reports or providers' bills). 44% (7/16)

- o 4. Other changes in claims processing procedures have increased the approval rate. 44% (7/16)
- o 5. Statutory eligibility requirements have become less restrictive. 25% (4/16)
- o 6. Eligibility rules or policies have become less restrictive. 38% (6/16)
- o 7. There has been variation in interpretation of eligibility rules by compensation staff. 19% (3/16)
- o 8. Other reasons, please explain: _____ 38% (6/16)

24B. Why do you think the approval rate is down?

Check *all* that apply (15/52)

- o 1. Our office has fewer resources (less staff, or loss of training opportunities, or problems with automation, or unclear policies, etc.) to provide services to claimants to help them prepare better applications. 7% (1/15)
- o 2. Service providers' assistance to victims in preparing claims has gotten worse or less frequent. 0% (0/15)
- o 3. Our office has fewer resources (less staff, or loss of training opportunities, or problems with automation, or unclear policies, etc.) to use in the verification process (e.g., getting police reports or providers' bills). 20% (3/15)
- o 4. Other changes in claims processing procedures have decreased the approval rate. 33% (5/15)
- o 5. Statutory eligibility requirements have become more restrictive. 0% (0/15)
- o 6. Eligibility rules or policies have become more restrictive. 13% (2/15)
- o 7. There has been variation in interpretation of eligibility rules by compensation staff. 20% (3/15)
- o 8. Other reasons, please explain: _____ 80% (12/15)

Other includes:

- 1) Other sources are supplying the benefits
- 2) Victim contributory conduct is increasing
- 3) More marginal claims are being submitted (because of increased outreach efforts)

25.

Which three categories of compensation claims were the most likely to be paid out at the category cap?

Check top three

- o 1. emergency awards 6% (3/52)
- o 2. funeral benefits 32% (17/52)
- o 3. lost wages 15% (8/52)
- o 4. medical expenses 18% (9/52)
- o 5. mental health benefits 16% (8/52)
- o 6. moving expenses 1% (2/52)
- o 7. state has no category caps 0% (0/52)
- o 8. No other caps / chose less than three 6% (3/52)
- o 8. other categories, please specify: _____ 6% (3/52)

25A. Approximately what percentage of the claims paid in FY 1997 in each category were for victims/survivors of gun violence?

Enter percentage or write "NA" if data are not available

- ____% 1. emergency awards 6% (3/52)
Average = 0.33% Range = 0 – 1%
- ____% 2. funeral/burial benefits 8% (4/52)
Average = 18% Range = 0 – 50%
- ____% 3. lost wages/economic support 6% (3/52)
Average = 13% Range = 1 – 34%
- ____% 4. medical/dental expenses 6% (3/52)
Average = 36% Range = 5 – 53%
- ____% 5. mental health benefits 4% (2/52)
Average = 17% Range = 0 – 34%
- ____% 6. moving expenses 6% (3/52)
Average = 10% Range = 0 – 31%

Other categories, please specify category and percentage: Number of responses was negligible

- _____ % 7. _____
- _____ % 8. _____
- _____ % 9. _____

Examine OVC-supplied data on the Compensation Summary Sheet and determine the overall trend in advance of the interview (data point 13)

25B. We note from your state's OVC Performance Reports that the average amount of a total awarded claim over the last three/four years has increased / decreased / stayed about the same.

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. If trend has INCREASED, ask 25C 39% (20/52)
- 2. If trend has DECREASED, ask 25D 33% (17/52)
- 3. If trend has STAYED ABOUT THE SAME, skip to Q26 29% (15/52)

25C. Why do you think this is?

Check *all* that apply (20/52)

- 1. cap on total awards has increased 35% (7/20)
- 2. category caps have increased 45% (9/20)
- 3. eligible expenses have increased 40% (8/20)
- 4. the types of claims have changed; please describe: _____
_____ 25% (5/20)

Changes in claims include:

- 1) Expanding definition of "victim" to include secondary victims
- 2) More violent crimes (claims are more expensive because of the injuries that occur as a result of violent crimes)
- 3) Expanding the types of eligible claims

- 5. other reasons: _____ 40% (8/20)

Other includes:

- 1) Medical services are more expensive
- 2) The number of claims has increased

25D. Why do you think this is?

Check *all* that apply (17 respondents)

- 1. cap on total awards has decreased 0% (0/17)
- 2. category caps have decreased 12% (2/17)
- 3. eligible expenses have decreased 0% (0/17)
- 4. the types of claims have changed; please describe: _____

_____ 24% (4/17)

Changes in claims include:

- 1) The cap for compensation from property crimes has decreased
- 2) Fewer violent crimes (claims are less expensive)

o 5. other reasons: _____ 71% (12/17)

Other includes:

- 1) Decreased payment for medical expenses
- 2) Don't know
- 3) Supplemental payments are not included in this figure

26.

Information from your OVC State Performance Report for FY 1997 (or most recent year for which data are available) indicates that _____% of claims determined during the year were "not approved for payment." We would like to get more information to better understand what this figure means.

Average = 32% Range = 7 – 59%

Of these "not approved for payment" determinations, approximately what percentage were due to the following reasons? (Should add to 100%) **85% (44/52)**

_____% 1. incomplete paperwork

Average = 10% Range = 0-63%

_____% 2. missed deadlines

Average = 6% Range = 0-50%

_____% 3. failure to report to law enforcement

Average = 4% Range = 0-28%

_____% 4. failure to cooperate with law enforcement

Average = 9% Range = 0-35%

_____% 5. contributory conduct

Average = 28% Range = 0-100%

_____% 6. claims for crimes not covered by compensation

Average = 8% Range = 0-35%

_____% 7. claims for losses not covered by compensation

Average = 8% Range = 0-35%

____% 8. all expenses paid by collateral sources
Average = 15% Range = 0-100%

____% 9. other: _____

Average = 15% Range = 0-50%

Other includes:

- 1) No (insufficient) evidence of a crime
- 2) Non-residential claim
- 3) Withdrawn by claimant
- 4) Failure to cooperate
- 5) Not an eligible claimant (felony convictions, contributory conduct)

____ 10. don't know 15%

27.

Short of a formal appeals process, can the claimant seek a reconsideration of a determination to deny a claim?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 27A 85% (44/52)
- 2. No Skip to Q28

27A. In approximately what percent of cases during the last fiscal year where the claim was denied, was a request for reconsideration filed?

_____% (33/44)

Average = 18% Range = 0 – 89%

27B. In what percent of cases filed for reconsideration during the last fiscal year was the claim subsequently approved?

_____% (29/44)

Average = 34% Range = 0 – 90%

28.

What percentage of denied or ineligible claims are appealed?

_____ % (46/52)

Average = 23% Range = 0 – 89%

28A. Which reasons for denial are most frequently appealed? Please rank the top three reasons.

Rank the top three, from 1 to 3

_____ 1. incomplete paperwork

1st: 2%; 2nd: 13%; 3rd: 4%

_____ 2. missed deadlines

1st: 6%; 2nd: 10%; 3rd: 13%

_____ 3. failure to report to law enforcement

1st: 6%; 2nd: 6%; 3rd: 10%

_____ 4. failure to cooperate with law enforcement

1st: 8%; 2nd: 13%; 3rd: 21%

_____ 5. contributory conduct

1st: 54%; 2nd: 15%; 3rd: 8%

_____ 6. claims for crimes not covered by compensation

1st: 2%; 2nd: 13%; 3rd: 6%

_____ 7. claims for losses not covered by compensation

1st: 4%; 2nd: 8%; 3rd: 13%

_____ 8. all expenses paid by collateral sources

1st: 0%; 2nd: 4%; 3rd: 10%

_____ 9. other: _____

1st: 10%; 2nd: 10%; 3rd: 6%

Other includes:

- 1) Lack of sufficient evidence that a crime occurred
- 2) Not an eligible claimant (felony convictions)

_____ 10. don't know
 1st: 8%; 2nd: 0%; 3rd: 0%

_____ 11. Skip
 1st: 2%; 2nd: 2%; 3rd: 2%

_____ 12. No others / chose less than three
 1st: 0%; 2nd: 6%; 3rd: 6%

28B. What percentage of appealed claim denials are reversed?

_____ % 77% (40/52)

Average = 26% Range = 0 – 95%

29.

Does your compensation program have a written policy or procedure in place to guide decision-making in cases that may involve contributory conduct or illegal behavior on the part of the claimant?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 29A 75% (39/52)
- 2. No Skip to Q30

29A. Who makes the final decision?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. an administrator 25% (10/40)
- 2. the board 35% (14/40)
- 3. some other individual or group, please specify: _____ 40% (16/52)

Other includes:

- 1) Claims or case manager
- 2) Judges from Court of Claims
- 3) Staff from Compensation Office

29B. Which of the following are examples of contributory conduct justifying a full or partial denial of a

claim (understanding that there may be exceptions based on the facts of a case)?

Check *all* that apply

	In most cases	Only where causal connection exists
1. victim engaged in felony or misdemeanor at the time of the victimization	<input type="radio"/> 60%	<input type="radio"/> 35%
2. victim engaged in gang activity at the time of the victimization	<input type="radio"/> 40%	<input type="radio"/> 48%
3. victim selling illegal drugs	<input type="radio"/> 80%	<input type="radio"/> 18%
4. victim possessing illegal drugs	<input type="radio"/> 38%	<input type="radio"/> 55%
5. victim under the influence of illegal drugs	<input type="radio"/> 25%	<input type="radio"/> 63%
6. victim under the influence of alcohol	<input type="radio"/> 10%	<input type="radio"/> 83%
7. victim engaged in prostitution	<input type="radio"/> 25%	<input type="radio"/> 80%
8. victim illegally carrying a weapon	<input type="radio"/> 28%	<input type="radio"/> 60%
9. other: _____	<input type="radio"/> 3%	<input type="radio"/> 8%

Underserved Populations

30.

In your opinion, are there certain categories of crime victims who apply for compensation less frequently than expected based on known victimization rates?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 30A** 85% (44/52)
- 2. No **Skip to Q31**

30A. Who do you think may be under-utilizing the compensation program? Victims of:

Check *all* that apply

- 1. child physical abuse 49% (22/45)
- 2. child sexual abuse 53% (24/45)
- 3. DUI/DWI crashes 16% (7/45)

- o 4. domestic violence 76% (34/45)
- o 5. adult sexual assault 60% (27/45)
- o 6. elder abuse 71% (32/45)
- o 7. adults molested as children 36% (16/45)
- o 8. survivors of homicide victims 20% (9/45)
- o 9. Robbery 13% (6/45)
- o 10. Assault 18% (8/45)
- o 11. other violent crime 11% (5/45)
- o 12. Stalking 31% (14/45)
- o 13. hate or bias crimes 31% (14/45)
- o 14. Terrorism 7% (3/45)
- o 15. gang violence 16% (7/45)
- o 16. other: _____ 2% (1/45)

30B. Why do you think eligible crime victims may be discouraged from applying for compensation?

Check all that apply

- o 1. contributory conduct rules 16% (7/45)
- o 2. crime reporting requirements 53% (24/45)
- o 3. Embarrassment 67% (30/45)
- o 4. fear of retaliation by offender 58% (26/45)
- o 5. filing time requirements 18% (8/45)
- o 6. need to have signature notarized 4% (2/45)
- o 7. do not know about compensation 87% (39/45)
- o 8. fatigue from paperwork requirements 27% (12/45)
- o 9. mistrust of authority 42% (19/45)
- o 10. other reasons, please describe: _____ 16% (7/45)

Other includes:

- 1) Emotional trauma
- 2) Perception of compensation as "public welfare"
- 3) Language barrier

31.

Some states report that there are groups, based on demographic or geographic characteristics,

who are or maybe under-utilizing compensation programs. Is that true in your state?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 31A** 65% (34/52)
- 2. No **Skip to Q32**
- 3. Don't know **Skip to Q32**

31A. Which groups are under-utilizing the compensation services, given the demographics and/or victimization rates in your state?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. persons with disabilities 21% (7/34)
- 2. ethnic/racial minorities 47% (16/34)
- 3. Females 21% (7/34)
- 4. Gays 32% (11/34)
- 5. Immigrants 27% (9/34)
- 6. Indian reservation residents 35% (12/34)
- 7. inner-city residents 15% (5/34)
- 8. Males 6% (2/34)
- 9. non-English speakers 62% (21/34)
- 10. remote/rural area residents 71% (24/34)
- 11. senior citizens 38% (13/34)
- 12. Teens 9% (3/34)
- 13. other groups, please specify: _____ 3% (1/34)

Coordination

32.

What mechanisms do you use to coordinate your compensation program with the state-level VOCA assistance program?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. None 14% (7/52)
- 2. joint staff meetings 35% (18/52)
- 3. joint staff retreats 10% (5/52)
- 4. joint training conferences for compensation and assistance staff 60% (31/52)
- 5. Memorandum of Understanding defining how to coordinate 0% (0/52)

- o 6. periodic written reports 12% (6/52)
 - o 7. reciprocal cross-training 27% (14/52)
 - o 8. regular joint administrator meetings 25% (13/52)
 - o 9. VOCA assistance administrator sits on Advisory Board for compensation program 10% (5/52)
 - o 10. VOCA compensation administrator or staff sits on victim assistance grant review panels 25% (13/52)
 - o 11. VOCA compensation administrator assists in planning process for distribution of assistance funds 17% (9/52)
 - o 12. VOCA assistance administrator or staff asked to review and comment on application forms, compensation statutes, rules, or other policy documents 27% (14/52)
 - o 13. compensation staff or administrator provides training to VOCA assistance subrecipients 56% (29/52)
 - o 14. VOCA assistance administrator or staff provides input in developing outreach initiatives for compensation program 25% (13/52)
 - o 15. other mechanisms, please specify: _____ 31% (16/52)
- Other includes:
- 1) Located in the same agency or building
 - 2) Share the same director

33.

Does the compensation program have a statewide directory of victim service providers?
Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes 75% (39/52)
- o 2. No

Record-Keeping Systems

34.

We're interested in understanding more about the information you keep about claims, in addition to that required by the OVC reporting forms. What additional information do you keep about claims in a database?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. None 4% (2/52)
- o 2. the date(s) additional supporting materials are sought 56% (29/52)
- o 3. the date claim was awarded, rejected, or denied 94% (46/52)

- o 4. the reasons for denial or rejection 92% (48/52)
- o 5. whether the claimant has a prior felony conviction 15% (8/52)
- o 6. whether the victimization is gun related 23% (12/52)
- o 7. other information, please describe: _____ 37% (19/52)

Other includes:

- 1) Type and amount of award (payment information)
- 2) Offender/victim demographic information
- 3) Restitution and subrogation payments

34A. What information do you collect about claimants during the application process?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. None 2% (1/52)
- o 2. Gender 92% (48/52)
- o 3. race/ethnicity 79% (41/52)
- o 4. Disability 67% (35/52)
- o 5. type of residence (i.e., rural, urban, suburban, tribal) 15% (8/52)
- o 6. how the claimant learned about the compensation program 77% (40/52)

34B. What information about claimants do you enter into a database or compile statistical reports on?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. None 14% (7/52)
- o 2. Gender 81% (42/52)
- o 3. race/ethnicity 62% (32/52)
- o 4. Disability 48% (25/52)
- o 5. type of residence (i.e., rural, urban, suburban, tribal) 12% (6/52)
- o 6. how the claimant learned about the compensation program 64% (33/52)

Interaction with the Federal Government

35.

How would you improve OVC's *new* State Performance Report?

Check *all* that apply

- o a. clarify the instructions on: _____

14% (7/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) How to calculate the average time for processing and paying a claim
- 2) How to count victims and initial claims
- 3) What expenses can be covered by the 5% allowance of VOCA funds for administrative purposes

o b. change the narrative questions to more structured response formats 15% (8/52)

o c. eliminate the questions on: _____

12% (6/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) Calculating the average time for processing and paying a claim
- 2) The narrative questions that have been added
- 3) Questions on claims, filings, denials, and awards — Compensation programs are too different to provide adequate comparisons

o d. add questions on: _____

8% (4/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) The number of claims that are not approved, broken out by denials for cause and ineligible claims
- 2) How individual state programs are structured
- 3) How states count incoming claims

o e. other: _____

79% (41/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) The new form is an improvement over the previous form / no suggestions for improvement
- 2) Not familiar enough or would like to use the new form more before making any suggestions
- 3) Improve the definition of how to calculate the average

time for processing and paying a claim

36.

From what you know about crime victims in your state, what would you like to see changed in your compensation program to better meet their needs?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. it should be expanded to cover additional types of losses, such as:

_____ 54% (28/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) Compensation for secondary victims
- 2) Relocation expenses
- 3) Crime scene cleanup
- 4) Travel expenses

- o 2. it should expand outreach to victims of crimes, such as:

_____ 35% (18/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) Crimes involving cross-cultural issues
- 2) Victims in rural areas
- 3) Victims of elder abuse

- o 3. it should put more emphasis on underserved victim groups, such as:

_____ 46% (24/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) Non-English speaking populations
- 2) The elderly
- 3) Children
- 4) Victims of domestic violence
- 5) Victims of sexual assault

- o 4. overall and/or categorical payment caps should be raised 44% (23/52)

- o 5. the criminal justice reporting requirement should be lengthened or eliminated 8% (4/52)

- o 6. the amount of paperwork required of claimants should be reduced 12% (6/52)
- o 7. other: _____
_____ 37% (19/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) More staff members
- 2) Increased outreach efforts
- 3) Increased coordination with the Assistance program

37.

How would you like to see your state's VOCA assistance program changed?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. State VOCA administrator should monitor subgrantees to ensure compliance with VOCA mandate to assist victims with applying for compensation. 33% (17/52)
- o 2. State VOCA administrator should ensure training about compensation is provided to subgrantees. 33% (17/52)
- o 3. VOCA subgrantees should be required to provide training about compensation to their staffs. 35% (18/52)
- o 4. More VOCA subgrants should be awarded to law enforcement-based programs. 10% (5/52)
- o 5. Compensation administrators should be included in VOCA assistance grant recommendation/decision committees. 27% (14/52)
- o 6. State VOCA grant process should be more open and accountable. 10% (5/52)
- o 7. Other: _____ 50% (29/52)

Other includes:

- 1) Develop consistent performance standards
- 2) Fund more equitably (less funds for domestic violence and sexual assault)
- 3) Create a statewide review team to review how funds are being spent
- 4) Make Compensation training mandatory for VOCA Assistance recipients

38.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the VOCA program that we haven't covered in

this interview?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Write response on the back of this page
- 2. No

19% (10/52)

39.

Please send a copy of your compensation application form to the Urban Institute:

Ryan Allen
The Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Thank you for your time

Appendix B: The Survey of Assistance Administrators

Interview with VOCA-Funded State Assistance Administrators

Instructions are in bold text preceded by an arrow (→).

56 respondents

Length of interview:

Average = 65.1 Range = 34 - 117 [Time in minutes]

Introduction

This is part of a study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and conducted by the Urban Institute. This is a national study about assistance services for victims of crime.

You should have received a letter of introduction from OVC and a copy of the questionnaire we'd like to complete with you, as well as a summary of descriptive information on your state's program, from the Urban Institute. Please review this summary prior to completing the survey.

First, we'd like to confirm:

Name: _____

Position: _____

How long at this position: _____

If less than 1 year: Were you in assistance services before?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Management

1.

We sent you an information sheet about your VOCA Victim Assistance Program. This information was compiled from OVC Performance Reports, and Internet homepages for state programs. Is all the information accurate?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Skip to Q2 41% (23/56)**
- 2. No **Continue with 1A**

1A. What needs to be revised?

Make revisions on Summary Sheet

2.

Since fiscal year 1995, states have been allowed to use up to 5% of federal assistance grant funds for administrative purposes. According to OVC information on your state, you used or will use:

____ % in 1995
____ % in 1996 **Average = 3.7%**
____ % in 1997 **Average = 4.0%**
____ % in 1998 **Average = 4.4%**
____ % in 1999

Check **one** box that applies

- 1. If ALWAYS used the full 5%, complete 2A and 2B
- 2. If used SOME funding, complete 2A, 2B, and 2C
- 3. If NEVER used any funds, complete 2C

- **36% (20/56) always used the full 5% of funds for administrative purposes**
- **64% (36/56) used some of the 5% of funds for administrative purposes**

2A. For what purposes have you ever used VOCA assistance funds?

Check **all** that apply

2B. For each of the ways in which you have used assistance funds for administration, how useful have these activities been to the administration of the program?

Rate each option according to the scale:

- 1 = not very useful
- 2 = moderately useful
- 3 = extremely useful

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
<input type="radio"/> 1. pay salary and benefits for staff, or consultant fees, to administer and manage the financial or programmatic aspects of VOCA	1	2	3
89% (50/56)			96%
<input type="radio"/> 2. attend OVC-sponsored or other relevant technical assistance meetings	1	2	3
91% (51/56)			92%

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
o 3. monitor subrecipients or potential subrecipients, provide technical assistance, or conduct evaluation or assessment of program activities 84% (47/56)	1	2	3 94%
o 4. purchase equipment for the state grantee, such as computers, software, fax machine, copying machines, etc. 84% (47/56)	1	2	3 85%
o 5. train VOCA service providers 63% (35/56)	1	2	3 100%
o 6. purchase memberships in crime victims' organizations and victim-related materials, such as curricula, literature, and protocols 63% (35/56)	1	2 30%	3 70%
o 7. develop strategic plans on a state and/or regional basis, conduct surveys and needs assessments, or promote innovative approaches to serving crime victims (such as through technology) 54% (30/56)	1	2	3
o 8. improve coordination efforts on behalf of crime victims with other OJP offices and bureaus, or with federal, state, or local agencies and organizations 52% (29/56)	1	2	3 72%
o 9. provide training on crime victim issues to public or private nonprofit organizations that assist crime victims 63% (35/56)	1	2 29%	3 66%
o 10. print and/or develop publications such as training manuals, victim service directories, or victims' brochures 66% (37/56)	1	2	3 76%
o 11. coordinate or develop protocols, policies, or procedures that promote systemic change in the ways crime victims are treated or served 34% (19/56)	1	2 42%	3 42%
o 12. train managers of victim service agencies 45% (25/56)	1	2 36%	3 60%

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
o 13. develop an automated grants tracking system 32% (18/56)	1	2	3 89%
o 14. pay audit costs 27% (15/56)	1	2 47%	3 47%
o 15. pay for indirect costs at a federally approved indirect cost rate 21% (12/56)	1 50%	2	3 33%
o 16. other: _____ _____	1	2	3

2C. What are the reasons you have not made full use of the administrative allowance?

Check *all that apply*

38 administrators responded

- o 1. the funds are more urgently needed for awards to subgrantees 42% (16/38)
- o 2. administrative funding has been available from other sources 42% (16/38)
- o 3. OVC documentation requirements present obstacles to using these funds for administrative purposes 5% (2/38)
- o 4. other: _____ 37% (14/38)

Other includes:

- 1) use of funds was not approved
- 2) budgeting issues
- 3) only used what was needed so the remainder could be used in the field

Training

3.

OVC records indicate that you used or will use a total of _____% of your FY 1995 VOCA Assistance funds for training; _____% of your FY 1996 funds; _____% of your FY 1997 funds; _____% of your FY 1998 funds; and _____% of your FY 1999 funds (if available). What (other) state or federal funds have you used to support training?

Average VOCA funds used for training:

1996: 0.18%

1997: 0.26%

1998: 0.33%

Check *all* that apply

- 1. money set aside by the state legislature 13% (7/56)
- 2. other state funds, including state-funded staff: _____ 48% (27/56)
Other includes:
 - 1) general revenue funds
 - 2) state compensation funds / funds generated from state fines, penalties and fees paid through court system
 - 3) other state appropriations
- 3. VAWA funds 59% (33/56)
- 4. CDC funds 9% (5/56)
- 5. other federal funds: _____ 16% (9/56)
- 6. other funds: _____ 21% (12/56)
- 7. Byrne Grant funds 20% (11/56)

For those who have not used any VOCA assistance funds for training purposes since FY 1995, or have used less than 1%:

3A. You have not used VOCA assistance funds for training purposes in this time period, or you have used less than 1%. What are the reasons you have not used more of the VOCA grant for training:

Check *all* that apply 54 administrators responded

- 1. the funds are more urgently needed for awards 46% (25/54)
- 2. training funding has been available from other sources 50% (27/54)
- 3. OVC documentation requirements present obstacles to using these funds for training purposes 15% (8/54)
- 4. we had difficulty meeting OVC match requirements 13% (7/54)
- 5. other: _____ 28% (16/54)

Other included:

- 1) Do not have sufficient staffing to conduct/plan training
- 2) Subgrantees provide training at the local level

4.

Has your agency provided or arranged for training opportunities for administrators, grant monitors, allied professionals, or victim service providers (not limited to VOCA funds)?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 4A, then 4B** 93% (52)
- 2. No **Skip to Q6**

4A. Which of the following individuals or groups did your program provide or arrange training for in the last year?

Check *all* that apply

Criminal justice professionals

- 1. law enforcement 85% (44/52)
- 2. Prosecutors 75% (39/52)
- 3. Judges 54% (28/52)
- 4. probation/parole 62% (32/52)
- 5. Corrections 50% (26/52)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 39% (20/52)
- 7. other: _____

Victim services professionals

- 8. state domestic violence coalition or local service providers 96% (50/52)
- 9. state sexual assault coalition or local service providers 94% (49/52)
- 10. federal victim/witness coordinators, including military 46% (24/52)
- 11. state or local police-based victim/witness staff 73% (38/52)
- 12. state or local prosecution-based victim/witness staff 87% (45/52)
- 13. MADD 64% (33/52)
- 14. survivors of homicide representatives 65% (34/52)
- 15. other grassroots victims' organizations 62% (32/52)
- 16. state or local protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 71% (37/52)
- 17. other: _____

Other allied professionals

- 18. health care providers 58% (30/52)
- 19. mental health care providers 64% (33/52)
- 20. Attorneys 40% (21/52)

- o 21. Clergy 37% (19/52)
- o 22. funeral directors 15% (8/52)
- o 23. Indian tribal representatives 27% (14/52)
- o 24. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 33% (17/52)
- o 25. other: _____

Others

- o 26. staff of compensation program 54% (28/52)
- o 27. major employers
- o 28. school personnel 21% (11/52)
- o 29. victims or their survivors 33% (17/52)
- o 30. other: _____ 0%

4B. What topics were included in the training?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. collaboration with other agencies 85% (44/52)
- o 2. counseling and interviewing skills 56% (29/52)
- o 3. crisis intervention and emergency procedures 73% (38/52)
- o 4. grant administration 79% (41/52)
- o 5. interfacing with the media 29% (15/52)
- o 6. legal rights of victims 69% (36/52)
- o 7. safety planning, not limited to domestic violence 46% (24/52)
- o 8. substance abuse 25% (13/52)
- o 9. public education 25% (13/52)
- o 10. obtaining compensation for victims 69% (36/52)
- o 11. Outreach 56% (29/52)
- o 12. program management 60% (31/52)
- o 13. understanding and working with the criminal justice systems 77% (40/52)
- o 14. use of technology 56% (29/52)
- o 15. gang violence 27% (14/52)
- o 16. working with victims of particular types of crime, please specify: 64% (33/52)

18% of respondents who answered "yes" to #16 specified types of crime including workplace violence, consumer

fraud, campus crime, drug abuse, children who witness violence, major trauma to communities, victims of juvenile offenders

- o 17. working with victims from specific demographic areas or groups, please specify: **48% (25/52)**
28% of respondents who answered "yes" to #17 specified groups including:
 - 1) Native Americans
 - 2) South East Asians, Samolis, Laotians
 - 3) refugees
- o 18. other training topics, please specify: _____ **12% (6/52)**

5.

How was the training provided?

Check *all* that apply **52 administrators responded**

5A. How useful were these training experiences to the participants, based on feedback or evaluations?

Rate each option according to the scale:

- 1 = not very useful
- 2 = moderately useful
- 3 = extremely useful

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
o 1. through regional conferences or training sessions around the state 69% (36/52)	1	2	3 83%
o 2. through state-wide conferences or training sessions 92% (48/52)	1	2	3 94%
o 3. through state training academies we have developed with training funds 17% (9/52)	1	2	3 100%
o 4. by allowing subrecipients to use grant funds to attend OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy 56% (29/52)	1	2	3 69%
o 5. by allowing subrecipients to use grant funds to attend other out-of-state conferences or training sessions 87% (45/52)	1	2	3 82%
o 6. other: _____ _____ 12% (6/52)	1	2	3 67%

Planning and Subrecipient Funding Process

6.

Is there a process in place to determine the needs of crime victims throughout the state?
Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 6A** 84% (47 respondents)
- 2. No **Skip to Q7**

6A. Which groups were included in determining victims' needs?

Check *all* that apply

Criminal justice agencies

- 1. law enforcement 87% (41/47)
- 2. Prosecutors 92% (43/47)
- 3. probation/parole 64% (30/47)
- 4. Corrections 66% (31/47)
- 5. Judges 68% (32/47)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 66% (31/47)

Victim services

- 7. state domestic violence coalition/providers 100%
- 8. state sexual assault coalition/providers 89% (42/47)
- 9. federal victim/witness coordinators 60% (28/47)
- 10. MADD 55% (26/47)
- 11. survivors of homicide representatives 62% (29/47)
- 12. other state protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 70% (33/47)

Allied professions

- 13. legal service providers 45% (21/47)
- 14. health care providers 47% (22/47)
- 15. mental health care providers 51% (24/47)
- 16. Indian tribal representatives 23% (11/47)
- 17. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 36% (17/47)

Others

- 18. Victims 75% (35/47)
- 19. local, county, district (etc.) boards or trustees 21% (10/47)
- 20. other: _____ 6% (3/47)

6B. Do you use an advisory group?
Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 6C 72% (34/47)
- 2. No Skip to 6D

6C. Is it required by law?
Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes 38% (18/47)
- 2. No

6D. Do you document victims' needs through formal assessment?
Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 6E 57% (27/47)
- 2. No Skip to 6F

6E. How is the formal assessment accomplished?
Check *all* that apply

- 1. interviews, focus groups, or phone/mail surveys with victim service agencies 67% (31/47)
- 2. interviews, focus groups, or phone/mail surveys with victims 59% (28/47)
- 3. interviews, focus groups, or phone/mail surveys with others: _____ 30% (14/47)
 - 1) criminal justice professionals
 - 2) subgrantees
- 4. statistical data on crime rates, population distributions, etc. 82% (39/47)
- 5. other sources or methods: _____ 30% (14/47)

Other includes:

- 1) needs assessment
- 2) annual/quarterly reports from subgrantees
- 3) public hearings

6F. Do you do any other kind of assessment? Please describe the process used to determine victim needs: (46 respondents)

Yes = 63% (29/46)

No = 37% (17/46)

Other kinds of assessment include:

- 1) Feedback from site visits and/or progress reports
- 2) Advisory councils (includes both state-wide and community-based councils)
- 3) Through information gathered during the application process
- 4) A "needs survey" of victims who have used the Assistance program

7.

Do you have updated information (within the last 12 months) on the total number of victim assistance programs in the state funded by all federal and state sources?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 7A** **61% (34/56)**
- 2. No **Skip to Q8**

7A. Do you have information on what types of services they provide?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **97% (33/34)**
- 2. No

7B. Do you have information on approximately how many victims they serve?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **79% (27/34)**
- 2. No

7C. Do you have information on who these victims are, in terms of the type of crime and/or victim demographic characteristics?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **77% (26/34)**
- 2. No

8.

Are there any counties or communities in your state that have no services for crime victims, not even a local contact?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes 25% (14/56)
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

9.

How many years are covered in the state's strategic plan for victim assistance funding?

____ years Continue with 9A 48% (27/56)

Average number of years in strategic plan = 3.8 (range = 1-10)

- There is no strategic plan Skip to Q10

9A. What are the top priorities identified in the plan?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. stabilize existing services 70% (19/27)
- 2. develop new types of services not now widely available 70% (19/27)
- 3. reach new types of victims (defined by demographic characteristics or type of crime) not now well-served 82% (22/27)
- 4. reach new areas of the state not now well-served 82% (22/27)
- 5. other: _____ 22% (6/27)

Other includes:

- 1) Coordination of services to avoid duplication
- 2) prevention & public education
- 3) training

9B. Were any of the following groups included in the development of the long-range plan?

Check *all* that apply

Criminal justice agencies

- 1. law enforcement 78% (21/27)
- 2. Prosecutors 85% (23/27)
- 3. probation/parole 44% (12/27)
- 4. Corrections 41% (11/27)
- 5. Judges 37% (10/27)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 56% (15/27)

Victim services

- o 7. state domestic violence coalition/providers 96% (26/27)
- o 8. state sexual assault coalition/providers 96% (26/27)
- o 9. Federal victim/witness coordinators 37% (10/27)
- o 10. MADD 41% (11/27)
- o 11. survivors of homicide representatives 44% (12/27)
- o 12. other state protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 67% (18/27)

Allied professions

- o 13. legal service providers 41% (11/27)
- o 14. health care providers 33% (9/27)
- o 15. mental health care providers 41% (11/27)
- o 16. Indian tribal representatives 19% (5/27)
- o 17. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 33% (9/27)

Others

- o 18. Victims 52% (14/27)
- o 19. local, county, district (etc.) boards or trustees 11% (3/27)
- o 20. other: _____ 7% (2/27)

10.

The next set of questions focuses on when federal VOCA monies were received and distributed for 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999:

For 1995

10A. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw down) 1995 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 91% (51 respondents)

1995, Second Quarter: 24% (12/51)

1995, Third Quarter: 45% (23/51)

10B. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1995 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 91% (51 respondents)

1995, Third Quarter: 47% (24/51)

1995, Fourth Quarter: 27% (14/51)

10C. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1995 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 82% (46 respondents)

1995, Third Quarter: 15% (7/46)

1995, Fourth Quarter: 33% (15/46)

1996, Second Quarter: 11% (5/46)

1996, Third Quarter: 15% (7/46)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1995):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 77 days, Range = -368 days to 440 days
- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 181 days, Range = -30 days to 1,096 days

For 1996

10D. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw down) 1996 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 93% (52 respondents)

1996, First Quarter: 40% (21/52)

1996, Second Quarter: 27% (14/52)

10E. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1996 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 93% (52 respondents)

1996, Second Quarter: 15% (8/52)

1996, Third Quarter: 44% (23/52)

1996, Fourth Quarter: 21% (11/52)

10F. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1996 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 86% (48 respondents)

1996, Third Quarter: 15% (7/48)

1996, Fourth Quarter: 21% (10/48)

1997, Second Quarter: 15% (7/48)

1997, Third Quarter: 17% (8/48)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1996):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 124 days, Range = -86 days to 607 days
- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 177 days, Range = -122 days to 730 days

For 1997

10G. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw down) 1997 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 98% (55 respondents)

1997, First Quarter: 49% (27/55)

1997, Second Quarter: 16% (9/55)

1997, Third Quarter: 13% (7/55)

10H. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1997 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 98% (55 respondents)

1997, Second Quarter: 16% (9/55)

1997, Third Quarter: 49% (27/55)

1997, Fourth Quarter: 22% (12/55)

10I. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1997 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 96% (54 respondents)

1997, Fourth Quarter: 11% (6/54)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 22% (12/54)

1999, Second Quarter: 19% (10/54)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1997):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 126 days, Range = -77 days to 744 days

- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 391 days, Range = 0 days to 822 days

For 1998

10J. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw down) 1998 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 95% (53 respondents)

1997, Fourth Quarter: 11% (6/53)

1998, First Quarter: 57% (30/53)

1998, Second Quarter: 9% (5/53)

10K. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1998 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 84% (47 respondents)

1998, Second Quarter: 11% (5/47)

1998, Third Quarter: 40% (19/47)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 21% (10/47)

10L. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1998 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 82% (46 respondents)

1998, Third Quarter: 15% (7/46)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 17% (8/46)

1999, Second Quarter: 24% (11/46)

1999, Third Quarter: 20% (9/46)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1998):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 214 days, Range = -276 days to 1,289 days
- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 140 days, Range = -88 days to 415 days

For 1999

10M. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw down) 1999 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 80% (45 respondents)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 13% (6/45)

1999, First Quarter: 56% (25/45)

1999, Second Quarter: 18% (8/45)

10N. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1999 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 34% (19 respondents)

1999, Second Quarter: 26% (5/19)

1999, Third Quarter: 53% (10/19)

100. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1999 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 21% (12 respondents)

1999, Second Quarter: 33% (4/12)

1999, Third Quarter: 42% (5/12)

1999, Fourth Quarter: 25% (3/12)

11.

How do service providers find out about the availability of VOCA funds?

Check *all that apply*

- 1. Current recipients automatically get sent the new RFP. 89% (50/56)
- 2. RFP is published in the state or local equivalent of the Federal Register. 32% (18/56)
- 3. RFP is published in victims' services newsletters. 30% (17/56)
- 4. They are publicized through an RFP mailing list sent to (limit to type of agency, e.g., law enforcement, hospitals): _____ 64% (36/56)

Most respondents indicated that the notice is sent to an all-inclusive list that includes law enforcement, prosecutors and service providers

- 5. Other ways, please describe: _____ 16% (9/56)
- 6. Web pages. 20% (11/56)
- 7. Newspapers. 38% (21/56)
- 8. Word-of-mouth. 9% (5/56)
- 9. Meetings. 5% (3/56)

12.

Are you taking any steps to encourage *new* applicants for VOCA funds?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 12A** 84% (47 respondents)
- 2. No **Skip to Q13**

12A. Do you:

Check *all* that apply

- 1. Contact groups that serve vulnerable populations (e.g. retired persons, children, homeless). 62% (29/47)
- 2. Contact groups of allied professionals (e.g., health care providers, clergy). 43% (20/47)
- 3. Encourage applicants to call the state office with questions about the RFP process. 75% (35/47)
- 4. Give presentations at state/regional meetings of victim services. 75% (35/47)
- 5. Mail RFPs to all victim service programs in the state. 62% (29/47)
- 6. Provide an 800 number for applicants with questions. 26% (12/47)
- 7. Provide technical assistance to grass roots groups and others who may be unfamiliar with the RFP process. 70% (33/47)
- 8. Use the Internet. 57% (27/47)
- 9. Help create new victim service programs; please describe: 40% (19/47)
 - 1) outreach to underserved areas
 - 2) provide technical assistance
- 10. Provide links between existing agencies; please describe: 45% (21/47)
 - 1) demonstrated coordination is grant requirement
 - 2) cross-disciplinary training
 - 3) distribute publications describing other programs
- 11. Contact groups that serve underserved communities (such as inner city or rural areas, immigrant or Native American populations, etc.); please describe: 45% (21/47)

Make contact w/ agencies that serve underserved populations including Native American, Hispanic, elderly, disabled, hearing impaired, gay and lesbian victims.
- 12. Other, please describe: 4% (2/47)

13.

Who is involved in deciding which applicants to fund?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. Advisory Board 48% (27/56)
- o 2. Task Force 5% (3/56)
- o 3. VOCA victim assistance staff 77% (43/56)
- o 4. VOCA victim assistance director 68% (38/56)
- o 5. Proposal review panel 45% (25/56)
- o 6. other state staff, please specify: 43% (24/56)
 Other includes:
 1) Attorney General
 2) Governor's Office
 3) Victim Compensation staff/director
- o 7. other groups or professionals in your state, please specify: 36% (20/56)
 * Similar to o 6.

13A. What groups are represented on the advisory board, task force, or proposal review panel?Check *all* that apply*Criminal justice agencies*

- o 1. law enforcement 70% (39/56)
- o 2. Prosecutors 71% (40/56)
- o 3. probation/parole 27% (15/56)
- o 4. Corrections 32% (18/56)
- o 5. Judges 34% (19/56)
- o 6. state criminal justice planning organization 39% (22/56)

Victim services

- o 7. state domestic violence coalition/providers 68% (38/56)
- o 8. state sexual assault coalition/providers 70% (39/56)
- o 9. federal victim/witness coordinators 38% (21/56)
- o 10. MADD 13% (7/56)
- o 11. survivors of homicide representatives 29% (16/56)
- o 12. other state protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 54% (30/56)

Allied professions

- o 13. legal service providers 30% (17/56)
- o 14. health care providers 34% (19/56)
- o 15. mental health care providers 40% (22/56)
- o 16. Indian tribal representatives 9% (5/56)
- o 17. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 25% (14/56)

Others

- o 18. Victims 43% (24/56)
- o 19. local, county, district (etc.) boards or trustees 7% (4/56)
- o 20. other: _____ 29% (16/56)

Other includes:

- 1) victim advocate / victim-witness specialist
- 2) representative from educational system
- 3) private citizens / community professionals

14.

Who makes final funding decisions?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Board of Trustees 13% (7/56)
- o 2. Governor 14% (8/56)
- o 3. Task Force 2% (1/56)
- o 4. VOCA director 13% (7/56)
- o 5. VOCA staff 2% (1/56)
- o 6. Proposal review panel 2% (1/56)
- o 7. Attorney General 14% (8/56)
- o 8. Other individual or group, please specify: _____ 41% (23/56)

Examples of "other" include:

- a) Grant-making agency within the state government
- b) A combination of powers that could include two or more of the following: Governor, Attorney General, VOCA Administrator, and another state agency, such as the Department of Health.

An alternative summary of who makes funding decisions:

- 1) Decision-makers within the department or agency responsible for administering VOCA funds: 45% (25/56)
 - 2) Decision-makers outside of the department or agency responsible for administering VOCA funds: 55% (31/56)
-

15.

Is there an appeals process for applicants to contest the state's decision?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 15A 63% (35/56)
- 2. No Skip to Q16

15A. Briefly describe the appeals process:

The appeals process is distinct for each Board. In general, the appeals process in Assistance programs share the following characteristics:

- Applicants wishing to appeal a decision must submit a letter to the Council or Board, usually within 10 to 30 days after funding has been designated.
 - This letter must argue the reasons that an applicant should be reconsidered for funding (or in some cases, increased funding).
 - The Board or Council usually reviews the appeal and renders a decision within 10 days.
-

16.

Did your state fund all applicants at all levels they requested during the last three years?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Skip to Q17 11% (6/56)
- 2. Some, but not all Continue with 16A 46% (26/56)
- 3. No Continue with 16A 41% (23/56)

16A. After meeting federal guidelines, what are the five key criteria you used to decide which subgrantees to fund?

Only current criteria are applicable

The five most popular criteria:

- 1) Past performance of the agency requesting funding / demonstrated capacity to perform services well
- 2) Evidence that the proposed service is needed
- 3) Various geographic distribution criteria
- 4) Reasonable budget request / sound proposal
- 5) Agency's ability to coordinate with other service providers

17.

In addition to the federal VOCA requirements, does your state require potential subrecipients to do any of the following as a condition of funding?

Check *all that apply*

- 1. develop specific collaborative efforts with other agencies in their communities (other victim services, health or social services, criminal justice, etc.) 82% (46/56)
- 2. provide translation services for non-English speaking victims 27% (15/56)
- 3. provide access to services for victims with disabilities 52% (29/56)
- 4. ensure that program staff receive regular skills development training or maintain certain credentials 50% (28/56)
- 5. refer victims to other needed services in the community 75% (42/56)
- 6. maintain application forms and program brochures for victim compensation 84% (47/56)
- 7. distribute and help prepare application forms for victims 77% (43/56)
- 8. set specific project goals for use of funds and include a method for measuring whether goals are met 75% (42/56)
- 9. collect victim satisfaction data 36% (20/56)
- 10. list other sources of funding that they are currently or have already applied for 71% (40/56)
- 11. other: _____ 18% (10/56)

18.

We noticed that the federal VOCA assistance grant to your state has fluctuated from:

\$ _____ in 1995 to Average = \$1,426,857, Range = \$211,000 - \$8,369,000

- \$ _____ in 1996 to Average = \$2,252,429, Range = \$142,657 - \$14,009,000
- \$ _____ in 1997 to Average = \$7,089,768, Range = \$260,000 - \$44,294,000
- \$ _____ in 1998 to Average = \$4,922,408, Range = \$240,000 - \$29,912,825
- \$ _____ in 1999, Average = \$2,856,345, Range = \$234,000 - \$25,555,000

and that there were fluctuations in prior years as well.

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. If fluctuation, continue with 18A 98% (55/56)
- 2. No fluctuation, skip to Q19

The next questions ask about different ways of dealing with the impact of funding level uncertainty in flush and lean years.

18A. In flush years, which of the following has your state engaged in:

Check *all* that apply

- 1. Funds are carried over to the next year. 86% (47/55)
Please provide the amounts carried over from one year to the next for the last several years:
 - 1. \$ _____ carried over from FY 1997 funds to FY 1998
Average = \$2,887,308, Range = \$0 - \$20,138,000
 - 2. \$ _____ carried over from FY 1998 funds to FY 1999
Average = \$2,856,345, Range = \$0 - \$14,353,369
- 2. Long-term plans are developed. 42% (23/55)
- 3. Multi-year funding is guaranteed for good programs or earmarked for specific purposes. 47% (26/55)
- 4. Special one time or supplemental awards are made 60% (33/55)
- 5. Funded special technology projects: 62% (34/55)
 - 1. automated victim notification programs 47% (16/34)
 - 2. cell phones and/or other emergency systems for victims 27% (9/34)
 - 3. automated case tracking and/or other technological innovations in program management 44% (15/34)
 - 4. e-mail systems for service providers to network and communicate

- availability of services 44% (15/34)
- o 5. hiring consultant to help programs with new technology 24% (8/34)
- o 6. other: _____ 18% (6/34)
- o 6. Funded special outreach projects, such as projects to reach new groups of victims (e.g., immigrant victims, or victims of gang violence or fraud) 39% (21/55)
- o 7. Funded special coordination projects, such as those to link criminal justice and human service systems 15% (8/55)
- o 8. Funded other innovative projects, such as restorative justice programs, legal services for battered women, or an ombudsman program 36% (20/55)
- o 9. Increased salaries or benefits of victim assistance providers 62% (34/55)
- o 10. Other ways of dealing with fluctuations please describe: _____
_____ 31% (17/55)

Other ways of dealing with the fluctuations:

- 1) Increase the amount of on-going services provided
- 2) Increased the categories of acceptable purchases for subgrantees (i.e., computers, out-of-state travel, conferences, etc)
- 3) Level VOCA funds over a three-year period for a subgrantee

18B. In lean years, which of the following has your state engaged in:
Check *all* that apply

- o 1. The number of programs funded is reduced. 26% (14/55)
- o 2. The same number of programs are funded but for less than the requested amounts (e.g. funded applicants receive no more than a set percentage of what they request). 73% (40/55)
- o 3. Leftover funds from previous years are used. 66% (36/55)
- o 4. The state picks up the cost. 9% (5/55)
- o 5. Other ways of dealing with fluctuations, please describe: _____
_____ 24% (13/55)

Other ways of dealing with the fluctuations:

- 1) Adjust the grant funding period
- 2) Concentrate funding on core services
- 3) Level funding, so the same number of programs can be funded each year

19.

Are the assistance funds available through your office sufficient to meet the demands of local

service providers?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Skip to Q20**
- 2. No **Continue with 19A** 70% (39/56)

19A. Is anything being done to increase revenue?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. Nothing is being done. 9% (4/39)
- 2. State legislation is being amended to increase the level of offender fines. 23% (9/39)
- 3. Fine collection rates are being improved. 26% (10/39)
- 4. Additional state appropriations are being sought. 56% (22/39)
- 5. Work with prosecutors, state corrections' officials and/or judges is being done to ensure that restitution is ordered and collected from convicted offenders. 49% (19/39)
- 6. A system to track payments of restitution to the program is being established. 39% (15/39)
- 7. Other strategies are being used to boost revenues, please describe: _____
_____ 33% (13/39)

Other strategies include:

- 1) Seeking funding from other sources (federal, local, philanthropy, etc.)
- 2) Localities are assuming more of the financial burden

19B. Is anything being done to contain costs?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. Nothing is being done. 13% (5/39)
- 2. Proposals are being funded at less than the full level requested. 64% (25/39)
- 3. Proposal selection criteria are being toughened so that fewer proposals are funded
15% (6/39)
- 4. Other strategies are being used to contain costs, please describe: _____
_____ 46% (18/39)

Other strategies:

- 1) Increase coordination efforts by funding sources to ensure that there is no duplication in funding
- 2) Identify other funding sources (use supplemental grants)
- 3) Maximize the use of funds by evaluating current funding recipients on the quality of their services

Underserved Populations

20.

In your opinion, are there certain categories of crime victims who receive assistance less frequently than expected based on known victimization rates?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 20A** 79% (45/56)
- 2. No **Skip to Q21**

20A. Who do you think may be under-utilizing assistance programs? Victims of:

Check *all* that apply

- 1. child physical abuse 36% (16/45)
- 2. child sexual abuse 31% (14/45)
- 3. DUI/DWI crashes 40% (18/45)
- 4. domestic violence 22% (10/45)
- 5. adult sexual assault 40% (18/45)
- 6. elder abuse 78% (35/45)
- 7. adults molested as children 27% (12/45)
- 8. survivors of homicide victims 40% (18/45)
- 9. Robbery 33% (15/45)
- 10. Assault 33% (15/45)
- 11. other violent crime 29% (13/45)
- 12. Stalking 42% (19/45)
- 13. hate or bias crimes 73% (33/45)
- 14. Terrorism 16% (7/45)
- 15. gang violence 47% (21/45)
- 16. property crimes such as fraud 58% (26/45)
- 17. other: _____ 7% (3/45)

20B. Why do you think that these victims may be under-utilizing assistance services?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. Embarrassment 71% (32/45)

- o 2. fear of retaliation by offender 64%(29/45)
- o 3. don't know about assistance programs they need 80% (36/45)
- o 4. assistance programs can be hard to access (e.g. transportation barriers, child care problems, hours of operation inconvenient to victims) 49% (22/45)
- o 5. believe assistance programs are only available to victims when the criminal justice system is involved 53% (24/45)
- o 6. no assistance programs are available that address their specific victimization needs 53% (24/45)
- o 7. mistrust of authority 40% (18/45)
- o 8. provider has no space 22% (10/45)
- o 9. other reasons, please specify: _____ 27% (12/45)

Other includes:

- 1) Inadequate victim service programs
- 2) Underreporting of crime / victim blaming
- 3) Lack of outreach by victim services
- 4) Lack of referrals by law enforcement and the medical community

21.

Some states report that there are groups, based on demographic or geographic characteristics, who under-utilize assistance programs. Is that true in your state?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes Continue with 21A 89% (50/56)
- o 2. No Skip to Q22

21A. Which groups are under-utilizing the assistance services, given the demographics and/or victimization rates in your state?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. individuals with disabilities 62% (31/50)
- o 2. ethnic/racial minorities 70% (35/50)
- o 3. Females 10% (5/50)
- o 4. Gays 62% (31/50)
- o 5. Immigrants 56% (28/50)
- o 6. Indian reservation residents 32% (16/50)
- o 7. inner-city residents 22% (11/50)

- o 8. Males 32% (16/50)
- o 9. non-English speakers 64% (32/50)
- o 10. remote/rural area residents 72% (36/50)
- o 11. senior citizens 76% (38/50)
- o 12. Teens 38% (19/50)
- o 13. other groups, please specify: _____ 10% (5/50)

Victims' Rights

22.

What steps has your state taken to facilitate the implementation of victims' rights?

The following steps were popular among states seeking to facilitate the implementation of victims' rights:

- 1) Enactment of legislation / Constitutional Amendment / Victim Bill of Rights
- 2) Implementation of a victim notification system
- 3) Creation of victim advocacy programs
- 4) Providing legal representation for victims
- 5) Victim rights education initiatives and other outreach efforts

Coordination

23.

What mechanisms do you use to coordinate your office and the state compensation program?

Check *all that apply*

- o 1. None 7% (4/56)
- o 2. joint staff meetings 34% (19/56)
- o 3. joint staff retreats 13% (7/56)
- o 4. joint training conferences for compensation and assistance staff 45% (25/56)
- o 5. Memorandum of Understanding defining how to coordinate 4% (2/56)
- o 6. periodic written reports 9% (5/56)
- o 7. reciprocal cross-training 25% (14/56)
- o 8. regular joint administrator meetings 29% (16/56)
- o 9. VOCA assistance administrator sits on Advisory Board for compensation program

18% (10/56)

- o 10. VOCA compensation administrator or staff sit on victim assistance grant review panels
25% (14/56)
- o 11. VOCA compensation administrator assists in planning process for distribution of assistance funds 21% (12/56)
- o 12. VOCA assistance administrator or staff asked to review and comment on application forms, compensation statutes, rules, or other policy documents 32% (18/56)
- o 13. invite compensation staff to train assistance subrecipients 59% (33/56)
- o 14. assistance program staff aid the compensation program staff in planning outreach
25% (14/56)
- o 15. Same agency or office 23% (13/56)
- o 16. other mechanisms, please specify: _____
34% (19/56)

Other mechanisms:

- 1) Compensation and Assistance offices are in close proximity to each other, so there is a lot of informal coordination
- 2) Contact between the programs on an "as needed" basis
- 3) Joint performance and annual reporting forms

24.

Under VOCA, a victim assistance service program must comply with the requirement that they "assist potential recipients in seeking crime victim compensation benefits." How do you ensure that the subrecipients are complying with this requirement?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. state provides training 70% (39/56)
- o 2. state ensures ample supply of applications 63% (35/56)
- o 3. state distributes brochures 71% (40/56)
- o 4. state assistance programs check periodically with compensation administrator to see where applicants are coming from 39% (22/56)
- o 5. site visits and monitoring 23% (13/56)
- o 6. application and contract requirements 29% (16/56)
- o 7. other ways, please specify: _____ 21% (12/56)

Other includes:

- 1) Monitor quarterly (or other) reports produced by the subrecipients
- 2) Training of subrecipients by members of the

Compensation staff

3) Subrecipients must indicate that they have complied in case records

25.

Does anyone produce a state directory of service providers?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 25A** 86% (48/56)
- 2. No **Skip to Q26**

25A. What service providers are included in the directory?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. all providers 77% (37/48)
- 2. only VOCA funded providers 10% (5/48)
- 3. others, please specify: _____ 13% (6/48)

25B. How often is the directory updated?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. more often than once a year 8% (4/48)
- 2. once a year 52% (25/48)
- 3. less often than once a year 40% (19/48)

26.

Does your office provide the compensation program with a statewide directory of victim service providers, whether produced by your VOCA program or another organization?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes 73% (41/56)
- 2. No

27.

VOCA programs operate in the context of many other federal, state, and private non-profit funding sources intended to serve the needs of crime victims. The following questions are designed to help us understand the extent to which these funding streams are coordinated at the state level.

Does someone at the state level keep information on (i.e., track) the distribution of VOCA funds along with other federal and state funding for victim assistance, such as VAWA grants, CDC Sexual Assault grants, HHS Family Violence Prevention and Services (FVPSA) grants, VAIC grants (Victim Assistance in Indian Country), and state funding sources?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes, all grants for victim assistance are tracked together **Continue with 27A-C**
34% (19/56)
- o 2. Only some grants are tracked together; these are: _____
Continue with 27A-D 45% (25/56)
Popular grants tracked together include:
 - 1) VOCA
 - 2) VAWA
 - 3) CDC
 - 4) HHS
- o 3. None of them are co-tracked **Skip to 27C-D** 21% (12/56)

27A. What agency(ies) are responsible for keeping information on these funding streams?

Check *all* that apply (44/44)

- o 1. my agency 84% (37/44)
- o 2. state administrative or planning agency 18% (8/44)
- o 3. Attorney General's Office 11% (5/44)
- o 4. Criminal Justice Coordinating Council 2% (1/44)
- o 5. Governor's Office 11% (5/44)
- o 6. State Budget Office 7% (3/44)
- o 7. State Human Services 9% (4/44)
- o 8. don't know 5% (2/44)
- o 9. other: _____ 16% (7/44)

27B. Please provide the name and phone number of a contact person at the agency(ies) that keep information on these funding streams: (44)

27C. How is the information that comes from these efforts (keeping information on funding streams and/or less formal information-sharing) used? (56)

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. to identify duplications in services 75% (42/56)
- o 2. to identify gaps in services 79% (44/56)

- o 3. to make funding decisions 73% (41/56)
- o 4. to coordinate service programs 71% (40/56)
- o 5. to write a report to the state legislature or other office 32% (/56)
- o 6. not really used 7% (/56)
- o 7. other purposes: _____ 7%
(4/56)

27D. If no formal system for keeping information on these funding streams is in place, are other means of information-sharing commonly used?

Check *all that apply* (37/56)

- o 1. Lists of VOCA awards are distributed to: 83% (33/37)
 - o 1. the VAWA administrator 94% (31/33)
 - o 2. the CDC Sexual Assault grant administrator 42% (14/33)
 - o 3. the HHS FVPSA grant administrator 49% (16/33)
 - o 4. state fund administrators 58% (19/33)
 - o 5. other: _____ 21% (7/33)
- o 2. Lists of awards are received from: 70% (28/37)
 - o 1. the VAWA administrator 93% (26/28)
 - o 2. the CDC Sexual Assault grant administrator 39% (11/28)
 - o 3. the HHS FVPSA grant administrator 43% (12/28)
 - o 4. state fund administrators 46% (13/28)
 - o 5. other: _____ 14% (4/28)
- o 3. other information-sharing methods are used; describe: _____
_____ 25% (9/37)

Other methods include:

- 1) Ad hoc planning meetings with other funding sources
- 2) Serve on other advisory or review boards
- 3) Publish grant information on web site

- o 4. no other information-sharing methods are used 8% (3/37)

28.

What percent of victim assistance programs, or portions of programs, in the state are funded with VOCA money during FY 1998?

_____ % 46% responded (26/56)
 Average = 72%, Range = 10% - 100%

- o Don't know

29.

According to OVC information on your state for FY 1997, your agency also administered a total of \$ _____ in state funds for victim services. How much in additional state funding for victim services was available in 1997 and administered by other agencies?

List agency, if known, and the amount of state funding it administered

Agency	Amount of funding
1. _____	\$ _____
2. _____	\$ _____
3. _____	\$ _____

- o 4. don't know

Average amount of state funds = \$5,678,067
 Range = \$0 - \$82,850,694

- o 1. Department of Health Average = \$247,916; 4% (2/56)
- o 2. Department of Human Services Average = \$10,911,875; 4% (2/56)
- o 3. Department of Health and Human Services Average = \$538,885; 4% (2/56)
- o 4. Department of Social Services Average = \$119,470,000; 2% (1/56)
- o 5. Attorney General Average = \$1,569,691; 4% (2/56)
- o 6. Governor's office Average = \$2,631,025; 7%
- o 7. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Average=\$216,158,900; 2% (1/56)
- o 8. Department of Aging Average = \$3,514,960; 2% (1/56)
- o 9. Other Average = \$2,861,164; 4% (2/56)

30.

Have you sponsored statewide or regional meetings for subgrantees to get together and share their expertise?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. Yes Continue with 30A 77% (43/56)
- o 2. No Skip to Q31

30A. Were they:

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Statewide 49% (21/43)
- 2. Regional 7% (3/43)
- 3. Both 44% (19/43)

30B. How often are meetings held?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Quarterly 16% (7/43)
- 2. Annually 67% (29/43)
- 3. Monthly 9% (4/43)
- 4. As needed 7% (3/43)
- 5. other: _____

30C. Who are the meetings for?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. VOCA grantees only 54% (23/43)
- 2. all state grantees who receive victim assistance, regardless of the funding source (e.g., VAWA grantees) 77% (33/43)
- 3. others, please specify: _____ 40% (17/43)

Others include:

- 1) Anyone interested in providing victim services
- 2) Any group receiving funds from VOCA
- 3) Criminal justice agencies
- 4) Healthcare / mental health providers

Program Evaluation and Accountability

31.

We are interested in finding out what sort of monitoring and evaluation efforts the state or subrecipient programs are conducting, regardless of whether these efforts are being funded in whole or in part with VOCA assistance or with other funds.

31A. How does the state monitor subrecipients?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. annual site visits 48% (27/56)
- o 2. site visits less frequent than annually 39% (22/56)
- o 3. site visits more frequent than annually 29% (16/56)
- o 4. telephone contacts between program monitors and subrecipients 91% (51/56)
- o 5. written performance reports the subrecipients submit 96% (54/56)
- o 6. victim satisfaction forms the subrecipients collect and submit 23% (13/56)
- o 7. annual audit reports 71% (40/56)
- o 8. subgrants to statewide domestic violence and/or sexual assault coalitions to monitor local programs (e.g., shelters or rape crisis centers) 23% (13/56)
- o 9. use of the performance guidelines for a "Model Victim Assistance Program" prepared by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) 5% (3/56)
- o 10. performance guidelines developed by other organizations 16% (9/56)

31B. Has the state conducted or funded any evaluations in the last five years (besides any evaluations which subrecipients may fund from their awards):

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. yes **Check *all* that apply:** 23% (13/56)
 - o 1. on a state-wide level 54% (7/13)
 - o 2. on a regional level 0%
 - o 3. of individual assistance programs 69% (9/13)
- o 2. no

31C. Have any subrecipients conducted or funded evaluations of their programs, in the last five years?

Check *one* box that applies

- o 1. yes -- Can you provide us with a copy of the final report? 21% (12/56)

Please send to: Ryan Allen
The Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
- o 2. No 39% (22/56)
- o 3. don't know 39% (22/56)

32.

In your opinion, is it your job to assist subgrantees in fulfilling their grant responsibilities (e.g., complying with federal mandates such as referring victims to compensation and/or

accomplishing other tasks for which they received the VOCA award)?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 32A 96% (54/56)
- 2. No Skip to Q33

32A. Please describe two ways you provide this assistance.

Methods include:

- 1) Offering training seminars or technical assistance
- 2) Performing site visits
- 3) Monitoring programs by reviewing their regular performance reports

33.

Since 1996, have you ever had to terminate a subgrantee for cause during the project period? Please note that we are not talking about deciding not to renew funding weak programs, but actually terminating during the grant period.

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 33A 39% (22/56)
- 2. No Skip to Q34

33A. Approximately how many subgrantees have you terminated? _____

AVERAGE: 1.8

RANGE: 1-4

33B. What were the reasons for termination?

Check *all* that apply

- 1. noncompliance with reporting requirements 59% (13/22)
- 2. not delivering promised services 64% (14/22)
- 3. program went bankrupt 9% (2/22)
- 4. other reasons, please explain: _____ 36% (8/22)

Other reasons include:

- 1) False reporting / double billing
- 2) Organization switched from non-profit to for-profit

Interaction with the Federal Government

34.

Has staff from any of your subgrantees attended the OVC-sponsored National Victim Assistance Academy in FY 1998?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes **Continue with 34A** 61% (34/56)
- 2. No **Skip to Q35**

34A. How many subgrantees attended? _____

Average: 3.1

Range: 1-15

35.

What OVC training and technical assistance resources has your state used?

35A. For each resource you've used, how helpful was it?

Rate each option according to the scale:

1 = not very helpful

2 = moderately helpful

3 = extremely helpful

	Not very helpful	Moderately helpful	Extremely helpful
1. _____	1	2	3
2. _____	1	2	3
3. _____	1	2	3
4. _____	1	2	3
5. _____	1	2	3

Other OVC training and technical assistance resources include:

- 1) OVC Resource Center 19% (11/56) Average Rating = 2.6
- 2) OVC Web site 5% (3/56) Average Rating = 2.7
- 3) VOCA Conferences / 34% (19/56) Average Rating = 2.9
trainings
- 4) NOVA Conferences / 7% (4/56) Average Rating = 3.0
trainings
- 5) National Victims' 5% (3/56) Average Rating = 3.0
Assistance Academy
- 6) OVC Training/Technical 21% (12/56) Average Rating = 2.7
Assistance Center

7) OVC staff/site visits	20% (11/56)	Average Rating = 2.8
8) OVC Mentor Program	4% (2/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
9) National Crime Victim's Resource Center	7% (4/56)	Average Rating = 2.5
10) Publications/brochures	7% (4/56)	Average Rating = 2.5
11) NOVA technical assistance	4% (2/56)	Average Rating = 2.5
12) NCJRS	2% (1/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
13) General conferences / training	4% (2/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
14) Other	7% (4/56)	Average Rating = 3.0

36.

Has your office used the OVC Resource Center?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes Continue with 36A 54% (30/56)
- 2. No Skip to Q37

36A. How helpful was it?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. very helpful 70% (21/30)
- 2. somewhat helpful 27% (8/30)
- 3. not very helpful 3% (1/30)

37.

How often do you require subrecipients to submit information necessary for completion of the state performance report?

Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Monthly 13% (7/56)
- 2. Quarterly 52% (29/56)
- 3. Biannually 11% (6/56)
- 4. Annually 18% (10/56)
- 5. other, please specify: _____ 7% (4/56)

38.

We are interested in your feedback on OVC's reporting forms, the Subgrant Award Report and

the State Performance Report.

38A. How are the data you collect for these reports useful to you?

Check *all that apply*

- o 1. for public education 32% (18/56)
- o 2. for annual reporting to the executive 41% (23/56)
- o 3. for legislative reporting and responding to requests 57% (32/56)
- o 4. for assessing patterns in funding and addressing gaps or duplications 59% (33/56)
- o 5. for assessing programs' levels of success 52% (29/56)
- o 6. other: _____ 18% (10/56)

Other includes:

- 1) Not useful
- 2) Assists in monitoring subgrantees
- 3) Assists in monitoring victims served

38B. How would you improve the reporting forms?

Check *all that apply*

- o 1. clarify the instructions on: _____ 9% (5/56)
- o 2. change the narrative questions to more structured response formats 27% (15/56)
- o 3. change the definitions of these types of services: _____ 5% (3/56)

- o 4. eliminate the questions on: _____ 2% (1/56)
- o 5. add questions on: _____ 7% (4/56)
- o 6. Nothing 5% (3/56)
- o 7. other: _____ 63% (35/56)

Other:

- 1) Make the definitions more specific (definitions lack consistency across states) and include more examples for the types of victimization.
- 2) Eliminate duplication of data regarding the subgrant award report and fiscal information collected by the controller's office
- 3) Remove the reporting requirement

39.

Do you have any specific suggestions for changing OVC assistance guidelines or even the VOCA legislation itself, to better serve crime victims in your state?

Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes: _____

_____ 61% (34/56)

2. No

From the 34 respondents who said "yes," some of the suggestions include:

- 1) Broaden the use of VOCA funds (e.g., prevention, overhead costs, batterer programs)
- 2) Clarify and simplify guidelines
- 3) Increase the allowable amount of funds for administrative purposes
- 4) Discontinue the matching requirement for training funds / change the matching requirement so that the match funding does not have to be from a direct service

40.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your state's VOCA assistance program or the federal VOCA program that we haven't yet covered?

Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes: _____

_____ 25% (14/56)

Some responses include:

- 1) Fluctuations in funding presents a continual problem. congressional appropriations or another tactic to smooth funding levels might be appropriate.
- 2) SAR reporting is slow and cumbersome.
- 3) Mailings from OVC are too numerous and of marginal value. A "Frequently Asked Questions" piece on the more complex guidelines may be necessary.

2. No

41.

What would you like to see changed in your state's compensation program, or in OVC's program guidelines, to better meet the needs of crime victims?

Check *all* that apply

- o 1. it should be expanded to cover these additional types of losses:

_____ 20% (11/56)

Other types of losses include:

- 1) Secondary victims
- 2) Some property crime losses
- 3) Victim's cost of going to court

- o 2. it should put more emphasis on victims of these types of crime:

_____ 11% (6/56)

- o 3. it should put more emphasis on these groups of victims:

_____ 5% (3/56)

- o 4. overall and/or categorical payment caps should be raised 25% (14/56)

- o 5. the criminal justice reporting requirement should be eliminated 11% (6/56)

- o 6. the amount of paperwork required of claimants should be reduced 23% (13/56)

- o 7. other: _____ 64% (36/56)

Other includes:

- 1) Expedite processing of compensation claims
- 2) Increase coordination between Assistance and Compensation offices (possibly manage both in the same system).
- 3) Increase percentage of funds available for administrative use

Thank you for your time