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# NCJA *InfoLetter*

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## News

### **VOCA Victim Assistance Grants Likely To Be Cut By \$159 Million**

Congress' 2008 Consolidation Appropriations Act recently cut Victims of Crime assistance grants by approximately \$81 million, with a scheduled 2009 cut of \$53 million more. Together the cut means 40% less funding than 2006. In addition, the plan for 2010 provides nothing for victims' services.

The VOCA grants are awarded to states primarily for crime victim compensation programs and victim assistance programs such as shelters and counseling services. There are roughly 4,000 state and local victim service agencies funded by VOCA nationwide that serve nearly 4 million victims a year.

The National Center for Victims of Crime surveyed victims advocates across the nation last month to determine the importance of VOCA funds to their programs. Agencies reported that the cuts would have a dramatic effect, reducing staff and services, cutting training programs, and forcing agencies and shelters to wait-list victims or shutdown altogether.

In the words of a non-profit service provider in Texas, "We are a bare-bones operation.... VOCA funding for staff and services is the only way most of our poor and homeless clients ever get assistance."

The survey also shows a disproportionately large burden falling on rural areas. With the shutdown of local facilities, victims will not only have to travel much farther for services, but the programs' visibility within the community will diminish, leaving victims unaware of where to turn for assistance.

VOCA funds are created through fines and penalties of federal offenders and thus are taken from a special reserve currently amounting to \$1.7 billion. The \$625 million cap set in recent years is put in place to ensure the stability of the fund in later years.

National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators and other victims advocate are working to restore funds by asking Congress to release VOCA funds and set the cap back to the amount received in 2006.

To view the National Center for Victims of Crime report, [click here](#).

To learn more about efforts to restore funding visit the [NAVAA website](#).