

Victims of Crime Act Crime Victims Fund 2012 Appropriations

VOCA provides critical funding that helps millions of victims of all types of crime every year.

- The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) is the only federal grant program supporting direct assistance services to victims of *all* types of crimes. More than 4,000 local programs depend on state VOCA victim assistance grants every year to provide services to 3.5 million to 4 million victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, drunk driving, elder abuse, robberies, and survivors of homicide victims, etc.
- These programs provide essential, often life-saving, services, such as emergency shelter, help obtaining protective orders, counseling, support groups and helping crime victims navigate the criminal justice system.
- VOCA also supplements state funds that provide financial compensation assistance to hundreds of thousands of victims of violent crime and supports victim advocates and services for those involved in the Federal criminal justice system.

The Crime Victims Fund comes from Federal criminal fines and penalties; *not from taxpayers.*

- VOCA created the Crime Victims Fund, a special account made up entirely of collections from Federal criminal fines, forfeitures, and special assessments, used exclusively to support crime victim programs.
- Because these fines and penalties have already been paid into the Crime Victims Fund by Federal criminal offenders, Fund spending is budget neutral that does not add to the national debt or deficit.
- Since 2000 when Congress began capping total annual Fund expenditures, amounts not distributed are kept in the Fund as a reserve to ensure funding for future victim services.
- OMB projects the FY 2012 opening balance of the Crime Victims Fund will be \$5.8 billion.

The annual VOCA cap has not kept pace with total VOCA program cost increases.

- Under VOCA's formula for distributing each year's cap amount, state VOCA victim assistance formula grants that support direct victim assistance programs receive whatever amounts are left over *after* the other VOCA programs are funded. So, unless the VOCA cap is high enough, increases in the other programs or if new programs/costs are added to VOCA, the amount available for state assistance grants is reduced.
- State assistance grants were cut by 22% from 2006 to 2008 resulting in 589,912 *fewer* crime victims receiving critical VOCA-funded services. Although Congress began restoring these cuts in 2009, state assistance grants in 2011 are 11 percent *less* in real dollars than in 2006.
- VOCA victim assistance grants support more than 20,000 full-time equivalent positions at an average cost of less than \$20,000 each.

Need for crime victim assistance services continue to increase.

- While many victim programs are struggling to survive, the needs of crime victims continue to increase. The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) 2010 census found that 70,648 crime victims were served a single day but 9,541 requests for services went *unmet* that day due to inadequate funding and resources. In fact, while the number of adults and children served increased by 22 percent since 2006, the number of unmet requests increased by 85 percent meaning that need for services greatly outpaced the capacity to provide those services.
- During 2010, domestic violence programs laid off or could not replace over 2,000 staff positions; at least 77% reported funding cuts at the same time that 82% reported increased demand for services.
- According to a 2010 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), 25% of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for services; funding and staffing cuts have resulted in an overall 50% reduction in advocacy services.

A minimum FY 2012 VOCA cap of \$1 billion is needed to help meet the growing needs of crime victims for critical services without jeopardizing the Fund's future stability.