**U.S. Department of Justice**
Office of Justice Programs

Office for Victims of Crime
OVC Fact Sheet
*Advocating for the Fair Treatment of Crime Victims*

*October 1999*

# The Federal Crime Victims Division

Through its Federal Crime Victims Division (FCVD), the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is committed to ensuring that Federal crime victims' rights are protected and that they receive needed services through initiatives described in this fact sheet. Also, OVC coordinates victim services offered by the Federal Government and other public agencies.

## American Indian-Alaska Native Crime Victims Initiatives

The Victim Assistance in Indian Country (VAIC) Program makes awards directly to Indian Tribes under Federal criminal jurisdiction to establish reservation-based victim assistance services in remote areas of Indian Country where limited services are available for crime victims. Since 1988, OVC has awarded $8.2 million to fund more than 52 programs. Activities that are funded include hiring victim advocates, establishing a 24-hour crisis hot line, recruiting victim service volunteers, transporting victims in an emergency, and providing bilingual counseling services.

Approximately 20 VAIC programs were awarded competitive funding in 1999. In 1998, VAIC programs served more than 8,316 victims of domestic violence, child physical abuse, elder abuse, assaults, DUI/DWI crashes, and survivors of homicide.

The Children's Justice Act (CJA) Partnerships for Indian Communities makes awards directly to federally recognized tribes so that they may determine methods of investigation, prosecution, and handling of child physical and sexual abuse cases that reduce trauma for child victims. A total of $1.5 million is available annually for this program. Since CJA was established in 1989, more than 38 programs have been developed.

These programs have helped to: (1) train multidisciplinary teams; (2) revise Tribal codes to address child sexual abuse; (3) establish child advocacy services for children involved in Tribal court processes; (4) develop protocols for reporting, investigating, and prosecuting child sexual abuse cases; (5) improve coordination that minimizes the number of child interviews; (6) improve case management and treatment services; and (7) hire specialized staff such as designated investigators and prosecutors to handle child victim cases.

## Federal Crime Victim Assistance Fund

In 1988, OVC established the Federal Crime Victim Assistance Fund to assist Federal victims in need of immediate assistance that was unavailable through any other source. Since that time, OVC has set aside funds each year to aid victims of Federal crime. These funds, administered by the FCVD, are made available to U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) through reimbursable agreements. Federal Crime Victim Assistance funds have been used to provide crisis counseling, pay temporary shelter costs, cover travel for victims' participation in criminal justice proceedings, defray emergency medical treatment expenses, and hire interpreters for nonsubpoenaed victims. In addition to administering this fund, the FCVD also provides training and technical assistance in the field.

## Training and Technical Assistance

The FCVD provides Federal criminal justice personnel with numerous training opportunities on effective intervention with Federal crime victims. The training includes programs on handling cases and the development of victim/witness policies and procedures for Federal criminal prosecutors, investigators, and victim/witness coordinators. The Federal Crime Victims Division, in cooperation with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the FBI, and other Federal agencies, provides victim/witness training to more than 70 different Federal law enforcement agencies nationwide.

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Since 1984, the FCVD has worked with U.S. Attorneys and their staff to develop strategies and initiatives to assist them in complying with Federal crime victims' legislation and improving their response to Tribal, military, and other Federal criminal justice personnel within their districts. Through the District Specific Training Initiative, OVC has provided funding and personnel support for diverse conferences such as a Hostage Negotiation Training Conference; a Four Corners Indian Country Conference; a Victim Assistance Conference for military and other Federal criminal justice personnel; and a nationwide domestic violence teleconference, as well as providing scholarships for conference participants from remote areas.

Through the biennial National Indian Nations Conference, FCVD provides training and technical assistance to victim service providers, criminal and Tribal justice personnel, victims, victim advocates, volunteers, and other allied professionals that serve the needs of victims in Indian Country.

Under the Children's Justice Act or Victim Assistance in Indian Country Grant Programs, comprehensive skills-building training and technical assistance is also provided to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations.

## Monitoring

OVC monitors Federal agency compliance with the *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance* for fair treatment of Federal crime victims and witnesses required by the Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982 and other Federal statutes. U.S. Department of Justice agencies are required to report annually to the U.S. Attorney General, through OVC, on their "Best Efforts" in ensuring that the statutory rights were provided to Federal crime victims in the previous year.

## Information and Materials

The FCVD prepares and disseminates information through the OVC Resource Center regarding services to victims of Federal crime. OVC has helped produce a number of information resources, including videos, brochures, and resource packages. Some of these include the following:

- Resource Package for Children Required To Testify in Federal Court.
- B.J. Learns About Federal and Tribal Court — a video.
- Financial Assistance for Crime Victims — a video.
- Inside Federal Court — a video.
- Bitter Earth: Child Sexual Abuse in Indian Country — a video.
- White Collar Crime/Fraud Victim Resource Packages.
- After the Robbery: Crisis to Resolution — a video.
- Young Once, Indian Forever — a video.
- Justice for Victims — a video.
- Building VAIC Programs in Indian Country.

## For Further Information

More information about the Office for Victims of Crime is available through the following sources:

OVC ..... 202–307–5983
OVC Web Site ..... http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/
OVC Resource Center ..... 1–800–627–6872
OVC Resource Center Web Site ..... http://www.ncjrs.org

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