

# VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

AND THE NEED FOR ADVOCACY

A Toolkit for Advocates and Victims Services Providers  
to Ensure Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Funds  
Reach Underserved Crime Victims



CALIFORNIANS  
FOR SAFETY AND JUSTICE

[safeandjust.org](http://safeandjust.org)

## About Californians for Safety and Justice:

Californians for Safety and Justice is a nonprofit project of the Tides Center working with crime survivors, law enforcement, business and community leaders, policymakers, health professionals, educators and crime-prevention experts to replace prison and justice system waste with solutions that create safe neighborhoods and save public dollars.

In 2012, Californians for Safety and Justice launched **Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice**, a statewide network for California’s diverse crime survivors to join together and advocate for new safety priorities. The network includes a statewide Leadership Team, an online membership, and five regional chapters (Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, San Diego and Fresno).<sup>1</sup> Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice elevates the voices of those that are most harmed by crime and least helped by our current justice priorities, to advance new safety priorities rooted in prevention, trauma recovery, and community health. Most recently, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice members worked with California legislators to create \$2 million in annual funding for local Trauma Recovery Centers, which provide comprehensive services for people who have experienced traumatic crimes.

Each April, we hold an annual conference in Sacramento, “Survivors Speak”, during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. This event attracts more than 500 crime survivors and provides an opportunity for attendees to share their experiences, to get training as advocates, and develop influential networks in their own communities. The conference also helps participants connect with each other and find critical support services.

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<sup>1</sup> Learn more at [safeandjust.org/survivors](https://safeandjust.org/survivors).

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## ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed for local, state and national advocacy organizations and service providers that work on behalf of underserved communities, particularly on behalf of those populations that are disproportionately impacted by crime. The toolkit is aimed at organizations that wish to advocate for more resources to be made available to individuals in need of support, and to take full advantage of the additional VOCA funds described herein.

### *The toolkit:*

- offers an overview of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- provides advocacy tools to bring funding to your community

For organizations that wish to learn more about how to *apply* for VOCA funds, please see the Equal Justice USA toolkit at [ejusa.org/voca/toolkit](https://ejusa.org/voca/toolkit).

## I. OVERVIEW – AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY

There is an unparalleled opportunity at hand for advocates and service providers working to improve the outcomes for people who most commonly – and repeatedly – experience crime and violence in the United States. In FY2015, the U.S. Congress approved a federal cap of \$2.3 billion, up from \$745 million the previous year, for victim services. This dramatic increase – **more than 200 percent** – is the amount of funds that can go to crime victims under the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). But a concerted effort is needed to ensure that a sufficient portion of the new funds reach overlooked and under-resourced service providers and communities.

Californians for Safety and Justice has created this toolkit to help advocates and service providers accomplish that goal, by increasing efforts to:

- **Elevate the voices** of individuals and communities who experience crime most often – and whose needs typically go unmet
- **Build state-based advocacy capacity** that will engage VOCA administrators and assist them in directing funds to hard-to-reach crime survivors
- **Raise awareness** about who is most likely to be harmed, especially by repeat crime, but least likely to be recognized or helped as victims of crime.

The need for change is driven by the fact that crime can have a long-lasting impact on individuals, families and entire communities. Survivors of crime, especially victims of violence, often need assistance in recovering from these traumatic experiences – both to minimize the immediate physical and psychological impacts and also to help them avoid future harm.

Government-funded victims services were put in place to help survivors of crime, but too often these programs fail to reach populations that most commonly experience crime, especially repeat crime – in particular low-income people of color. And these victims also are the least likely to have access to policymakers, the media and others who could help their voices be heard when decisions are being made about who should receive services.

Efforts to elevate these voices are needed now around the unprecedented opportunity presented by increased funding for victims services. If local advocates, service providers and policymakers can help steer some of those funds to programs and services that are best equipped to reach overlooked and underserved populations, we can see dramatic improvements in health and public safety outcomes.

## II. BACKGROUND ON VOCA AND THE NEED FOR ADVOCACY

In 1984, the United States Congress passed the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), establishing the federal Crime Victims Fund (Fund) as the primary source of financial support for programs serving victims throughout the country. In 1988, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) was established within the U.S. Department of Justice to administer the Fund.

Deposits to the Fund do not come from taxpayer dollars but rather from criminal fines, penalties, forfeited bonds when someone fails to appear in court, and special assessments.

**As of 2014, more than \$10 billion has been deposited into the Fund.**

For the past three decades, these funds have been distributed to all 50 states for the purpose of assisting and compensating victims of crime. In Fiscal Year 2000, Congress capped the amount available for distribution in order to stabilize resources and minimize the effect of fluctuating deposits on funding levels. After that action, service providers and leaders across the country began advocating for more of the Fund to be distributed in order to more effectively meet the needs of crime victims — especially those who continue to fall through the cracks.

In December 2014 those efforts paid off: Congress lifted the cap on VOCA distributions — and by historic proportions. The Fund had been limited to \$745 million the previous year **but jumped to \$2.361 billion in Fiscal Year 2015**, representing a **216.9% increase** over the FY 2014 cap. The federal cap increased to \$2.7 billion in FY16 and is expected to stay at the same level in 2017. Although a significant portion of that increase is earmarked for pre-designated purposes, a substantial additional amount is now available through a competitive grant process. (States have three years to spend their current allocation.) See *Appendix A for funding allocations*.

### The Need for Advocacy

This major shift means that there are finally real dollars to help close tremendous gaps in services, address barriers, and move toward more inclusive, equitable and diverse VOCA funding.

Change, however, is not inevitable or easy. If the new resources simply go to existing, traditional services, many victims of crime will continue to be left behind — and vulnerable to more harm. The availability of new VOCA funds must be accompanied by a significant shift in *how* these resources are allocated — through innovative strategies that support community-based providers that have not previously received VOCA dollars.

To help in that effort, the OVC has released “Vision 21,” providing clear guidance on key priorities to move the field in a new direction. This guidance includes the need to:

- Prioritize the use of data in decision-making
- Build bridges between research and practices
- Build capacity to serve *all* victims of crime, especially vulnerable populations who experience disproportionate rates of victimization such as young men of color, the LGBTQ community, cyber crime victims, the disabled and the elderly

Despite OVC’s guidance on these issues, agencies administering VOCA at the state level still have tremendous discretion in how VOCA funds are distributed.<sup>2</sup> Demonstrating the needs of underserved communities and making the case to decision-makers will take collaboration, research and advocacy.

<sup>2</sup> As stated by the VOCA regulations, “VOCA gives latitude to state grantees to determine how VOCA victim assistance grant funds will best be used within each state” [ojp.gov/ovc/voca/vaguide.htm](http://ojp.gov/ovc/voca/vaguide.htm).

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Young males of color suffer disproportionately high rates of victimization, yet are among the least likely to report crime or seek services. Innovative approaches are being developed to better respond to their needs, including Common Justice, a restorative justice program that provides participants with a respectful and effective means of accountability, an equitable and dignified avenue to healing, and the tools to break cycles of violence.<sup>3</sup>

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## MONITORING AND ADJUSTING TO POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Regulations for VOCA and its reporting requirements has recently changed and went into effect August 8, 2016.

Although we know several of the major changes at the federal level, VOCA administrators will continue to have discretion on new guidelines at the state level. OVC also adds greater flexibility for States to support transitional housing and relocation expenses using VOCA funds. OVC adds greater flexibility for States to allow sub-recipients to use VOCA funds for coordination activities, which help leverage community resources to provide better and more cost-effective direct services. We do know that the expansion of VOCA funding will bring expanded oversight to those grants — in other words, greater scrutiny, accountability and transparency in the use of these dollars.

Local stakeholders should follow any announcements or changes at the state level to ensure they respond promptly to proposed changes that might affect their constituency. Contact the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators for updates: [navaa.org/budget](http://navaa.org/budget)

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This new rule significantly expands state and local agencies’ ability to reach survivors of a wide range of crimes, to help them recover from their ordeals, and to empower them to secure a brighter future for themselves and their loved ones.

— FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL LORETTA E. LYNCH<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [navaa.org/budget/16/NCVC\\_funding\\_needs.pdf](http://navaa.org/budget/16/NCVC_funding_needs.pdf). Noting that, “[t]o replicate this program in other cities would cost \$1 million each. For even one program per state, the total cost would be \$50 million.”

<sup>4</sup> [justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-expands-services-crime-victims](http://justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-expands-services-crime-victims)

## III. WHAT SERVICES DOES VOCA FUND AND WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THEM?

### What Services Does VOCA Fund?

VOCA funds provide crime victims with direct services, defined as those that:

- Respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims
- Assist primary and secondary victims of crime in stabilizing their lives after victimization
- Help victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system
- Provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security, such as boarding up broken windows and replacing or repairing locks, or creating a safe space to discuss their victimization

**Note:** VOCA funds may not be used to supplant state, local or other funds that would otherwise be available for the same purpose. Funds must be used to increase the total amount of resources used to support services to crime victims.

### Who is Eligible to Receive VOCA Funds?

States are required to distribute a minimum of 10% of their funds to each of the following priority areas established by VOCA:

- Underserved populations of victims of violent crime
- Victims of child abuse
- Victims of sexual assault
- Victims of domestic violence

### Who is considered “underserved”?

- Boys and men of color
- Tribal communities
- LGBTQ individuals
- People designated as Limited English Proficient
- Persons with disabilities
- Members of one or more racial or ethnic groups
- Residents of rural or remote areas, as well as residents of an “inner city”

Although states may not use federal funds to supplant state and local funds otherwise available for crime victims assistance, they do have some flexibility in determining the “underserved populations” in their jurisdiction. **Therefore, it is important for advocates to work diligently with state leaders to ensure that VOCA funds truly are serving those most in need.**

### Programs Serving Immigrants are Eligible

The Office for Victims of Crime has issued a legal notice clarifying that victims assistance programs serving undocumented crime victims *are* eligible for VOCA funding. In fact, victims services programs receiving VOCA cannot legally deny services to undocumented immigrants.<sup>5</sup>

### Services for People in the Justice System

OVC removes the prohibition on providing services to incarcerated victims (e.g., victims of sexual assault in prison). Although VOCA funding may not support prison costs, such as prison guard salaries or administrative expenses, States are no longer prohibited from allowing VOCA-funded organizations to assist incarcerated victims.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> From the legal determination clarifying the applicability of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to VOCA: “We have determined that neither compensation nor assistance funded by VOCA victim compensation or victim assistance grants are “Federal public benefits” within the meaning of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and therefore should not be denied to an individual on the ground that the person is not a “qualified alien” under that Act.”

<sup>6</sup> The Office for Victims of Crime (“OVC”) of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs (“OJP”), publishes this final rule to implement the victim assistance formula grant program (“Victim Assistance Program”) authorized by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (“VOCA”). [federalregister.gov/documents/2016/07/08/2016-16085/victims-of-crime-act-victim-assistance-program](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/07/08/2016-16085/victims-of-crime-act-victim-assistance-program)



## Who is eligible to apply for VOCA grants?

Under federal guidelines, organizations do not have to be a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status to apply for VOCA funding. However, many states list this as a state requirement or otherwise organizations must be recognized as tax exempt. Please keep in mind that organizations that apply for VOCA grants must be prepared to help crime victims with accessing all of the services listed above. VOCA also requires that grantees assist crime victims with victim compensation claims.

### ADVOCATING FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: WHAT VOCA DOES AND DOES NOT ALLOW

Restorative Justice is a service that VOCA funds, although each state has discretion on whether or not it will allow such support under its funding guidelines.

VOCA defines Restorative Justice as opportunities for crime survivors to meet with the people who harmed them, *if* those meetings are requested and voluntarily agreed to by the survivor, and offer potential beneficial or therapeutic value to the survivor.

It is important to note that VOCA does *not* fund Restorative Justice programs that replace other criminal justice proceedings.

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According to the OVC, victims of domestic violence make up the largest number of victims receiving services under the Victim Assistance Formula Grants Program. In 2012, approximately 48% of the 3,486,655 victims served by these grants were victims of domestic violence. This figure has remained relatively stable since 2000, when 50% of all victims served by the victim assistance grants were victims of domestic violence.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R42672.pdf](https://fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R42672.pdf).

## IV. ROLE OF THE STATE VOCA AGENCIES

VOCA funds are awarded by OVC through a specific funding formula as well as discretionary grants to states, local government agencies, and other entities. OVC also awards portions of the Fund to specially designated programs. The state determines how it will distribute the funds it receives, within the parameters set by the federal guidelines.

### Facts about the State VOCA Administrator

- Every state has a designated VOCA administrator who is responsible for distributing the VOCA funds.
- The state VOCA administrator is responsible for releasing and administering the Requests for Grant Application (RGA) or Requests for Application (RFA) in that state, including to all Community-Based Organizations.
- Some states also have a VOCA committee in addition to an administrator.
- Note that the name and location of the VOCA Administrator Office vary by state (Department of Public Safety, Attorney General's Office, State Office for Victim Services, Emergency Services, etc.).
- The state VOCA administrators have a professional association – the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators; its website, [navaa.org](http://navaa.org), provides information concerning each state's VOCA office, funding and legislative updates, and other pertinent details.

## V. USING ADVOCACY TO BRING VOCA FUNDS TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES IN YOUR STATE

To succeed in expanding the distribution of VOCA funds to previously underserved populations, organizations will need a multi-pronged approach consisting of several steps. These steps include:

- assessing the local landscape
- building statewide advocacy capacity, including elevating the voices of crime survivors
- gaining information about the VOCA funding process and VOCA fund decision-makers
- making VOCA administrators and other decision-makers aware of the gaps in funding and assisting them with expanding the VOCA funding process to support those that serve underserved groups

### 1. *Assessing the Landscape*

Before undertaking an advocacy campaign to expand victims services to underserved populations, it is important to understand the extent of the problem, the type of services that are available (if any), and which organizations and agencies exist to provide support – both to underserved victims and in any advocacy effort to gain VOCA funds. Gathering information through direct contact and research, including looking at past news coverage, will help you uncover potential allies and help ensure that your efforts will be enhanced and not duplicated.

## 2. Building Statewide Advocacy Capacity

The next step is building up the advocacy community in your state. This effort includes organizing community organizations, advocacy groups, and crime survivors — particularly those in high-crime neighborhoods. It is important to build relationships within the communities themselves, both with those directly impacted by crime and with the community and faith-based organizations that serve them. Identifying victims of crime, and empowering them to talk about their experiences and their unmet needs, will be a critical tool as you move forward.

## 3. Identifying Key Decision-Makers, Learning the Facts, Understanding the Process

Before engaging in an advocacy campaign to expand VOCA funds to underserved populations, organizations need to determine which strategies will work most effectively in their state. To do so they will need to learn which state agency is responsible for managing the VOCA funding process, how that process works, and how the funds are distributed. Unfortunately, obtaining this information is not always as easy as one might think.

In many states, the timeline and decision-making process for allocating new VOCA funds is unclear. Organizations that have not received VOCA funds in the past — and may be more likely to work with underserved victims and marginalized communities — may not be aware of the process or even that VOCA exists. Often, these organizations are not on the VOCA agency’s “radar” and thus are unlikely to receive notification of public hearings or requests for proposals.

Below is a list of key questions that advocates should ask to help inform their advocacy decisions. If you have difficulty finding answers to these questions, do not hesitate to contact your state or federal representative’s office for help in navigating the system.

- What is the VOCA-administering agency in your state, and who are the key leaders/contacts to engage? A listing of state VOCA administrators can be found at [navaa.org/statedirectory.html](http://navaa.org/statedirectory.html).
- Who are the other key decision-makers and influencers, including state elected officials who may oversee the VOCA funding process or may be sympathetic to your cause?
- How much VOCA funding is available to your state **after allocations to pre-designated grantees**?

- How can you learn which organizations are receiving grants, and which organizations have received grants in the past?
- Has the VOCA-administering agency released a timeline or plan for disbursement of VOCA funding?
- Is there a committee making these determinations or steering the VOCA process? If so, are the members representative of the communities the VOCA funds should serve, including the underserved? Who are the members of the committee, and what is the most effective way to contact them individually?
- Are there opportunities for public comment (e.g., public hearings) or to otherwise submit information to the decision-makers at the state agency to make the case for investment in underserved communities?
- Are there relevant Requests For Proposals (RFPs) or Requests For Applications (RFAs) already available? If not, when might they become available?
- How much time will organizations have to apply for VOCA grants? Is the timeline sufficient for them to complete their proposals?
- What programs for “underserved victims” does the state already fund through existing VOCA grants, if any?

## 4. Building Relationships with VOCA, Other Key Decision-Makers and Influencers

Once you understand the lay of the land, you will be better able to develop a plan to achieve your goal. But regardless of how well or how poorly your state is addressing underserved communities, it will be important to engage and meet with key decision-makers and others who can influence the decision-making process.

### VOCA Agency

The most important relationship you will want to build is with the VOCA administrator and other VOCA staff and leadership in your state. In fact, if you are successful in identifying these individuals and meeting with them, they will be able to help you answer the questions we have posed above.

Once you have identified the VOCA administrator, reach out to him or her to set up an in-person meeting. You may want to ask representatives from one or more other organizations to join you in this meeting. Let the VOCA administrator know that your purpose is to learn more about the funding process for your state and to provide some basic information about

the unmet needs in your community or state. Try to set up this meeting directly, but if you are unable to secure it, enlist the help of the state agency that oversees VOCA or a local state legislative office.

As part of your discussion, VOCA administrators should be urged to provide transparency and communicate how they will share VOCA funding information and how community members can provide input and be part of the process.

### **Other key decision-makers**

In addition to staff and committee members with the state VOCA administering agency, other decision-makers will include the state agency under which the VOCA administrator is situated, and state elected officials who sit on legislative committees that oversee the VOCA process and/or their staff members who help manage this effort. Set up meetings with elected officials either in their capitol or district offices. Do not overlook your **local** state representatives, even if they do not sit on relevant committees. (Remember: ultimately, state elected representatives approve the budgets for most state agencies — most likely including the one over VOCA; they can also exert influence on their fellow legislators.)

### **Key influencers**

Find out who the key influencers are in your city or county; these could be the mayor, city council members, law enforcement leaders, community and faith leaders, or neighborhood advocates. Build relationships with these individuals that allow for dialogue and education on the importance of VOCA funding to underserved communities.

When at all possible and appropriate, create avenues for key decision-makers and influencers to hear directly from crime survivors such as one-on-one meetings, community events or town halls.

## **5. Advocating for Expansion of VOCA Funds to Underserved Communities**

In addition to building relationships through one-on-one meetings, organizations will need to conduct dedicated outreach and advocacy — directly and, when possible, through

grassroots efforts with their members or constituencies. These activities can include:

- Attendance at VOCA public hearings, if they exist
- Attendance at legislative committee or other hearings to discuss VOCA funding decisions
- Providing written or oral testimony to the VOCA agency and/or legislative committees — either by an organization representative, a community member or other “influencer,” or a crime survivor or his/her family member
- Organizing letter-writing (via U.S. mail or email) and telephone campaigns
- Organizing a social media campaign (see Section V.7 below)
- Starting an online petition  
(see *Appendix B* for a sample advocacy letter and *Appendix C* for how to use social media for advocacy efforts)

The section below provides suggestions on how to build your case to ensure that your efforts will persuade decision-makers of the critical need for expanded distribution of VOCA funds.

## **6. Making the Case for Expanding VOCA Funds to Underserved Victims**

### **Making the Case with Research and Data**

To advocate successfully for VOCA funding for nontraditional survivors, organizations must clearly and effectively identify the current gaps in service. Sharing as much data as possible — and communicating the realities of those victims currently facing barriers — will be key in persuading VOCA administrators and other decision-makers of the need for this support.

Compile the following data to help make a compelling case:

- Number of specific crimes committed (in your community or your state)
- Demographics of the community and of the victims of crime
- Accessibility of services (or lack thereof)
- Where services are located
- Cultural, language, and/or social competence of current services to adequately support victims

Beyond focusing on the criteria above, advocates should not assume that administrators fully understand the racial disparities that exist in current VOCA funding priorities. Make sure to share studies that drive home this point, including the research that Californians for Safety and Justice has commissioned.<sup>8</sup> Although more extensive research is certainly warranted, the data we have compiled is compelling. For instance, the survey conducted in 2013 revealed that:

- Two in three victims have been victims of multiple crimes in the past five years. African Americans and Latinos are more likely to have been victims of three or more crimes in the past five years.
- Victims of violent crime are more likely to be low-income, young (especially under 30), and Latino or African American.
- A majority of crime victims are unaware of the full array of services available. Of the crime victims who used any type of victims services, nearly half say it was difficult to access the services.

### **Making the Case with Survivor Stories**

Facts are important, but stories of real people will greatly influence how those facts are perceived. Stories and testimonies from the underserved communities can demonstrate the problems more effectively than will any set of numbers. Examples of how to share these stories with decision-makers include:

- Letters from community organizations, churches or criminal justice agencies (law enforcement, district attorney's office, etc.)
- News articles about crime survivors and their experience
- Testimonials or letters from crime survivors themselves
- Testimony by your organization's representative — or survivors themselves — during legislative committee hearings or other relevant public meetings

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<sup>8</sup> See "California Crime Victims' Voices" [safeandjust.org/resources/2013-06-california-crime-victims-report](https://safeandjust.org/resources/2013-06-california-crime-victims-report) and "Untold Stories of California Crime Victims: Research and Recommendations on Repeat Victimization and Rebuilding Lives" [safeandjust.org/resources/2014-04-report-repeat-crime-victims-in-california](https://safeandjust.org/resources/2014-04-report-repeat-crime-victims-in-california)



“Get involved by Choice not Force!”

## From a Family Tragedy Comes a Force for Healing and Change

Adela Barajas grew up in Los Angeles. From a warm, loving family of eight, Adela became especially close to her sister-in-law, Laura, who lived just around the corner. When Laura was murdered in 2007, leaving behind four children, Adela turned her grief and anger into a fierce commitment to caring for her loved ones and making her community a better place.

She established a nonprofit organization in South Central Los Angeles called Life After Uncivil Ruthless Acts (L.A.U.R.A.), in honor of her slain sister-in-law. Operating on a shoestring, the organization focuses on connecting families affected by crime to the services they need, leading youth groups and inspiring community members to get involved in creating change in their own neighborhoods.

When Adela reflects on Laura’s life, it’s with the understanding that her family’s experience is not unique. “In low-income, high-crime areas such as ours, people are often victimized numerous times,” said Adela. “Their heartbreak is made worse when they can’t get help to cope with their tragedy — whether that’s counseling or help with re-locating or safety precautions.”

Laura was a wife, sister, friend and loving mother, who always had a home-cooked meal ready to go. She was the social coordinator of the family. At the time of her murder, Laura was still dealing with a heartbreaking loss of her own — the murder of her mother, an innocent victim of a drive-by shooting on Thanksgiving night nine years before.

On the night of March 18, 2007, Laura and her son were returning home after her daughter’s Quinceañera rehearsal. Parked in front of their house, they were shot at by a neighboring gang who incorrectly assumed Laura’s son — a 17-year old Latino boy — was a gang member. The shooters missed the son, but hit Laura instead. She died 45 minutes after arriving at the hospital.

After Laura’s death, Adela felt an overwhelming sense of anger, made worse by the difficulty and challenges she faced trying to get help for Laura’s children. Adela turned anger into action by organizing rallies in the neighborhood and calling on local politicians to pursue change. She reflects, “As I was trying to help Laura’s kids deal with their grief, I realized how little support Laura must have had when her own mother was murdered. I wanted to make sure that her kids got the help they needed to deal with the aftermath of this senseless crime.”

As the founder and executive director of L.A.U.R.A., Adela conducts outreach to identify survivors — sadly, often by attending their relatives’ funerals — and does her best to link people with the help they need, whether that be therapy, help with funeral expenses, or referral to transitional housing for those escaping a violent home situation. She has focused in large part on young people, who at an early age have often seen more tragedy than what most experience in a lifetime — loss of parents, siblings and other loved ones to acts of violence.

L.A.U.R.A. is an example of the kind of organization that is best able to help underserved crime survivors. It is steeped in the community, is founded itself by tragedy, and understands first-hand the pain of repeat victimization. Unfortunately, few resources have been available to help organizations like Adela’s provide the services that are so desperately needed — not only in South Central Los Angeles but throughout the country.

The newly available VOCA dollars offer a tremendous opportunity to dramatically improve health and public safety outcomes in underserved communities all over the country. Providing VOCA funds to grassroots organizations that work closely with overlooked and underserved survivors could make a world of difference — not only for the individuals involved but also for entire neighborhoods and communities.

In 2016, L.A.U.R.A. along with two other Los Angeles community-based organizations, submitted a joint application for VOCA funding, and were awarded \$175,000 to expand their victim service programs.

## 7. Generating and Leveraging Media Coverage

### Traditional Media

News outlets and websites are channels to reach a broad range of audiences, but they also directly influence how decision-makers think and act. Placing stories in local and national media can help spread the word about who crime victims are and the need to get much-needed resources to service providers that serve hard-to-reach victims. Advocates can:

- Pitch stories to news reporters and/or columnists about local victims issues, gaps in services, community organizing efforts around VOCA and more
- Ask editorial boards of newspapers (which write opinion pieces on behalf of the newspaper) to write an editorial urging state VOCA administrators to change their funding priorities
- Write and submit letters to the editor or op-eds (opinion pieces that run opposite of the newspaper's editorials) from community voices calling for change (*see Appendix D for more information*)
- Submit opinion pieces to local and national news sites (e.g., Huffington Post, Medium.com)
- Collaborate with other states' VOCA advocacy efforts to pitch a national magazine about this emerging movement to re-prioritize funding for victims services
- Use events and activities to generate media interest, for instance:
  - Take advantage of "National Crime Victims' Rights Week" in April, as well as anniversaries, history months, and other commemorative dates as hooks for press coverage
  - Organize a day of action or a Lobby Day to draw attention to the issue

### Social Media

Social media can play a big role in telling the stories of who victims are and their unmet needs. Advocates can harness the power of social media to help bring attention to crime survivors who are often overlooked and underserved. You can leverage your traditional media coverage exponentially by smart use of social media channels.

There are many free social media management systems that can help you organize all your accounts. We encourage you to use #SurvivorsSpeak and #VOCA4ALL, hashtags that Californians for Safety and Justice created to elevate the voices of survivors. Visuals go a long way in social media, so consider creating memes and graphics through free apps like Canva. You can also create your own media through blogs and videos.

Suggestions for making the most of your social media efforts can be found in Appendix C.

## VI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: BUILDING A FUTURE ON EMPOWERMENT AND PREVENTION

In addition to bringing more diversity to the VOCA decision-making process and expanding these funds to underserved groups, Californians for Safety and Justice has identified other critical policy issues that need to be addressed. Below are some of our key concerns:

### Data Must Play a Role in Victim Services Spending, Especially to Reach Those Most Affected

Currently, VOCA will not fund grantees to conduct surveys, needs assessments, evaluations and/or studies. The prohibition includes “efforts conducted by individuals, organizations, task forces, or special commissions to study and/or research particular crime victim issues.”<sup>9</sup>

This exclusion runs counter to current trends of basing programs and services on documented evidence. In fact, the OVC’s Vision 21 document notes that federal and state guidance must support, not hinder, the development of research and evaluation to increase effectiveness across the field.<sup>10</sup> To that end, we urge that the prohibition be lifted and instead that grant recipients be empowered and encouraged to collect, analyze and use data in their program planning.

### Understanding the Impact of Unaddressed Victimization on Everyone Involved in Cycles of Crime

Aside from the specific allowances and exclusions mentioned in Section III above, too often policy related to victims is not grounded in the complex realities of how crime and violence usually occur. Most crime and violence occurs between people that know each other. Also, sometimes people that commit crime have their own histories of unaddressed victimization. A growing body of research shows that many people in the criminal or juvenile justice system have themselves previously been victims of violent crime and did not gain access to

trauma recovery or other supports when it occurred. Many of these individuals have suffered repeat victimization. Never receiving support or services following these traumatic events can contribute to instability, such as substance abuse, mental health issues, difficulty in relationships or even turning to crime themselves.

This more advanced understanding of interrupting cycles of crime and victimization highlights the challenges of laws and regulations that fail to acknowledge that some perpetrators can have histories of victimization that need to be addressed to stop the cycle of crime. They may be considered eligible individuals as victims services recipients for their experiences of victimization, and this will help address crime cycles and heal communities. Failing to acknowledge that victims and people coming into contact with the justice system can be from the same communities and families or can even be the same individual in some instances limits the system’s ability to holistically address the impacts of crime and stop the cycle.<sup>11</sup>

Until policy language and spending priorities better reflect the realities of crime and victimization, we will fail to fully help survivors rebuild and stabilize their lives — which in turn can reduce some of the drivers of crime.

### Reclaiming “Prevention” as a Critical Strategy to Reduce Victimization

Since VOCA began, regulations have prohibited funds for subgrantees engaged in “activities exclusively related to prevention.” This rule makes little sense if VOCA’s goal is to reduce victimization and its impacts, considering how many survivors are repeat victims of crime.

Applicants should not fear or shun the word “prevention” in their efforts, since the entire nation is shifting criminal justice practices to honor and invest in strategies that address the drivers of crime and victimization.

<sup>9</sup> [ovc.gov/voca/vaguide.htm](https://www.ovc.gov/voca/vaguide.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21\\_Exec\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21_Exec_Summary.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> California Constitution Article 1, Declaration of Rights, Section 28, (e) “As used in this section, a “victim” is a person who suffers direct or threatened physical, psychological, or financial harm as a result of the commission or attempted commission of a crime or delinquent act. The term “victim” also includes the person’s spouse, parents, children, siblings, or guardian, and includes a lawful representative of a crime victim who is deceased, a minor, or physically or psychologically incapacitated. The term “victim” does not include a person in custody for an offense, the accused, or a person whom the court finds would not act in the best interests of a minor victim.”



## VII. CONCLUSION

### Funding Gains Must be Protected

The current news about expanded VOCA funding is worth celebrating, but nothing in a federal budget is sacred. Lawmakers could institute tighter caps on funding in the future.

Congressional action to balance the budget has already threatened the increase in VOCA spending in the past. After concern that funding might be cut in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015, we thankfully saw an increase from \$2.3 billion to more than \$3 billion. However, such funding could be reversed in the future.

In light of potential threats, VOCA assistance administrators are looking ahead at advocacy needs to protect future funding.<sup>12</sup> Local advocates must help state administrators protect VOCA's expanded funding — not simply to maintain those agencies' budgets but to continue the vital work of improving safety and healing in communities that have already gone too long without support.

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<sup>12</sup> As described by the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) in lobbying efforts for stable, sustainable funding, “[h]aving reasonably accurate projections of future funding levels is a crucial factor in responsible and effective long-term VOCA grant management... essential to proper and responsible long-term management of VOCA assistance programs.”

## VIII. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: VOCA STATE BY STATE FUNDING ALLOCATION (FY15/FY14)



**2015 TOTAL ALLOCATION**  
**\$2.3 BILLION**

**2014 TOTAL ALLOCATION**  
**\$745 MILLION**

**FY16 - TOTAL ALLOCATION**  
**\$2.7 BILLION**

STATE/ TERRITORIES	FY 2016 ALLOCATION	FY 2015 ALLOCATION	FY2014 ALLOCATION	STATE/ TERRITORIES	FY 2016 ALLOCATION	FY 2015 ALLOCATION	FY2014 ALLOCATION
Alabama	\$33,244,704	\$29,522,268	\$6,972,582	New Hampshire	\$9,466,979	\$8,440,633	\$2,272,174
Alaska	\$5,476,300	\$4,909,151	\$1,484,376	New Jersey	\$60,868,131	\$53,992,667	\$12,416,634
Arizona	\$46,514,392	\$40,786,191	\$9,373,362	New Mexico	\$14,551,569	\$12,981,609	\$3,292,298
Arkansas	\$20,570,144	\$18,252,952	\$4,462,740	New York	\$133,904,016	\$118,676,064	\$26,813,785
California	\$264,297,285	\$232,722,931	\$51,829,052	North Carolina	\$68,178,534	\$60,012,054	\$13,687,017
Colorado	\$37,271,902	\$32,553,473	\$7,554,592	North Dakota	\$5,600,938	\$4,925,609	\$1,468,657
Connecticut	\$24,699,013	\$22,025,182	\$5,315,321	Ohio	\$78,762,963	\$69,888,068	\$15,993,857
Delaware	\$6,874,658	\$6,099,408	\$1,739,622	Oklahoma	\$26,858,542	\$23,709,133	\$5,656,092
District of Co-	\$5,030,151	\$4,443,304	\$1,365,626	Oregon	\$27,651,313	\$24,260,854	\$5,762,542
Florida	\$137,108,287	\$119,556,240	\$26,682,201	Pennsylvania	\$86,776,184	\$77,028,140	\$17,604,722
Georgia	\$69,338,035	\$60,929,987	\$13,879,983	Rhode Island	\$7,618,402	\$6,814,938	\$1,908,023
Hawaii	\$10,147,586	\$8,995,706	\$2,380,094	South Carolina	\$33,495,173	\$29,421,155	\$6,893,734
Idaho	\$11,652,588	\$10,281,844	\$2,658,726	South Dakota	\$6,285,230	\$5,606,032	\$1,631,330
Illinois	\$87,163,624	\$77,586,941	\$17,749,786	Tennessee	\$44,979,475	\$39,696,179	\$9,198,421
Indiana	\$45,110,084	\$39,980,472	\$9,298,747	Texas	\$185,614,610	\$161,830,424	\$35,915,377
Iowa	\$21,551,984	\$19,095,346	\$4,638,213	Utah	\$20,689,525	\$18,112,508	\$4,384,404
Kansas	\$20,121,575	\$17,879,815	\$4,375,145	Vermont	\$4,718,903	\$4,249,812	\$1,339,087
Kentucky	\$30,320,735	\$26,913,399	\$6,385,507	Virginia	\$56,993,066	\$50,330,687	\$11,561,072
Louisiana	\$31,976,052	\$28,327,109	\$6,693,722	Washington	\$48,821,061	\$42,761,431	\$9,835,041
Maine	\$9,458,354	\$8,460,239	\$2,278,659	West Virginia	\$12,927,595	\$11,573,723	\$2,983,000
Maryland	\$40,977,191	\$36,267,251	\$8,438,961	Wisconsin	\$39,393,093	\$34,957,532	\$8,189,763
Massachusetts	\$46,287,672	\$40,869,523	\$9,462,007	Wyoming	\$4,449,780	\$3,996,005	\$1,280,207
Michigan	\$67,368,330	\$59,808,052	\$13,750,704	American Samoa	\$566,218	\$526,270	\$273,271
Minnesota	\$37,494,424	\$33,159,770	\$7,758,144	Guam	\$1,290,271	\$1,163,549	\$414,754
Mississippi	\$20,665,359	\$18,418,789	\$4,505,367	N. Mariana Is.	\$552,747	\$508,112	\$268,519
Missouri	\$41,497,921	\$36,789,013	\$8,593,430	Puerto Rico	\$24,749,361	\$21,736,239	\$5,381,695
Montana	\$7,461,053	\$6,625,856	\$1,859,354	Virgin Islands	\$1,197,986	\$1,123,431	\$640,248
Nebraska	\$13,278,442	\$11,760,309	\$3,002,031	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,219,900,941</b>	<b>\$1,958,834,647</b>	<b>\$455,789,902</b>
Nevada	\$19,981,431	\$17,491,274	\$4,236,124				

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## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE STATE ADVOCACY LETTER

Dear (VOCA Administrator):

I am writing on behalf of (name of organization), a community-based organization that works with (types of clients you represent/support). We are interested in working with your office/committee to ensure that increased VOCA funding to the state of (name of state) reaches communities that are most harmed by crime and receive the least support.

Those in low-income communities, especially communities of color, are often repeat crime victims and are historically overlooked when it comes to receiving victim services following a criminal incident. Crime victims often experience trauma that has long-term, if not life-long effects, and can often result in repeat victimization.

As you know, the federal appropriations bill passed in December 2014 included an unprecedented increase in VOCA funds, raising funding for victim services from \$745 million in the last fiscal year to \$2.361 billion for the fiscal year 2015. In (your state) specifically, we are pleased to know that \$XXX will be released for victim services programs. It is critical that an adequate portion of these funds reach those with the most dire need.

As you plan to make recommendations on how these dollars will be spent, we hope that you will consider us a vital resource in this planning. Furthermore, please see our requests listed below, as we seek to partner with you in seizing this opportunity to get much-needed resources to underserved crime victims and survivors.

We respectfully request that your (VOCA agency or Committee):

1. Openly express through all written communication its intention to provide increased VOCA funding to underserved victims, which include victims of violent crime, young men of color, and those who historically have been hard to reach and underserved.
2. Assure that at least 20% of increased VOCA funding goes to programs that provide victim services to victims of violent crime, young men of color, and those who historically have been hard to reach and underserved.
3. Assure that the (members of the VOCA committee, or decision-makers) represent those in underserved communities, including young men of color.
4. Work closely with our organizations and other organizations throughout the state that are working in the communities that are most impacted by crime.

Many thanks in advance for your support on this most important issue.

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## APPENDIX C: USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SUPPORT YOUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Social media plays a big role in movement building and advocacy. Advocates can harness the power of social media to help spread the message to decision-makers and potential allies and also to cultivate and build a movement. You can leverage your traditional media coverage exponentially by smart use of social media channels.

There are many free social media management systems that can help you organize all your accounts. We encourage you to use **#SurvivorsSpeak** hashtag that Californians for Safety and Justice created to elevate the voices of survivors. Visuals go a long way in social media, so consider creating memes and graphics through free apps like Canva. You can also create your own media through blogs and videos.

### Facebook:

- Name your coalition and create a Facebook page (if your organization doesn't already have one).
- Aim to post at least 3 to 4 times a week. Best times to post are in the morning between 10 am and noon.
- Posts can consist of data, facts, and media stories that illustrate the point.
- Make sure to tag people and organizations appropriately.
- If your organization has a call to action, use Facebook's "call to action" button.
- The most engaging Facebook posts have an attention-grabbing headline, interesting high-quality photo, and links to good content from a reliable source.
- Develop a voice and a personality on Facebook; it's important that your voice is an authentic representation of your organization.
- Engage your audience members in a way that shows you understand them and their needs.
- For organizing purposes you can start a Facebook group to easily alert your members of any media articles or actions.

### Twitter:

- Create a Twitter handle with the name of your coalition (if your organization doesn't already have one).
- Aim to tweet several times a day. This can be accomplished with original tweets and retweeting others. Keep in mind that tweets with a photo statistically perform better.
- Make sure to follow all influencers, policymakers, decision-makers, and state VOCA administrators in your state.
- Consider organizing a tweet chat, a day of action online for supporters and partners.

### YouTube:

- Share crime survivors' stories through videos.
- Use Facebook and Twitter to drive views to your videos.

### Online Petitions:

- Consider starting an online petition through Change.org.
- Make sure the "ask" or the "action" is clearly stated.

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## APPENDIX D: WRITING AND SUBMITTING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OR AN OP-ED

Writing a letter to the editor or placing an op-ed (which stands for “opposite the editorial page”) in a newspaper can be an effective way of spreading your message to a large audience. These tools can be used to introduce a new issue, or to respond to a positive or negative article, editorial, column, letter or op-ed that has appeared in the paper.

### To Send or Not to Send?

There are different reasons for sending a letter versus an op-ed, but in both cases, serious consideration should be given to whether to send or not, and to the content of the writing.

- Newspapers receive hundreds, if not thousands, of letter and op-ed submissions. Thus, your organization — and your issue — will have a limited number of opportunities to have something appear in the paper. Even if the item is sent by a third party on behalf of your issue (sometimes a preferable approach), the newspaper will only allow a limited number of placements on any particular subject. Therefore, it’s best to choose your message, and your timing, wisely — *e.g.*, if you know you have a big issue coming up in a few months that will need a lot of publicity, you might wish to hold off until that time.
- Think carefully about whether your letter or op-ed will help or hurt your cause. In some cases, responding to a negative comment — especially if it didn’t get much attention or coverage — may be counter-productive: it could bring more attention to something that very few people noticed in the first place.
- The content of your letter or op-ed should highlight your most important points with data or examples (more below). Keep in mind what your opposition might say, and try to refute those arguments in your message if possible.

### Choosing your media outlet

Most newspapers give preference to writers or organizations that are in their local reading area. The exceptions are individuals who are well-known or high-profile such as politicians or celebrities, and organizations that may have a distant office location but clearly have members or constituents in that paper’s distribution area. Of course,

newspapers will also give preference to issues that are of interest to or affect their readership.

When deciding which media outlet to approach, keep in mind that in most cases you will want to send your letter or op-ed to only one newspaper. This is especially true for op-eds: newspapers will want to know that you have not submitted it elsewhere. (If you wish to submit op-eds on the same subject to several newspapers, you will want to write different copy and provide different — and appropriate — signatories for each piece.)

### Letters vs. Op-eds

#### Letters

In general, letters to the editor are much easier to place than an op-ed. Letters are much shorter — usually no more than 200 words. Typically, you will have the best chance of having your letter printed if it is short, punchy, and relates to something that has been in the news recently and covered in that newspaper. And although it is acceptable to be negative, take care to not assail an individual’s character or use inappropriate language.

#### Submitting your letter

Most newspapers have an online form for sending a letter. You can write or paste in your letter, keeping the maximum word count in mind. It is a good idea to write your letter in a Word document first and proof it carefully before pasting it into the online form. And remember — oftentimes, less is more. Don’t feel that you need to meet the maximum word count. If your message is too complicated to get across in this short space, consider writing an op-ed instead.

Also, remember that **time is of the essence**. If you are responding to an item that was recently in the paper or to a recent incident, you will want to submit your letter as soon as possible to have the best chance of having it printed. After a couple of days, the newspaper may well be on to its next issue and your issue will be considered “old news.”

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## Op-Eds

Op-eds are longer opinion pieces, in many respects similar to an editorial and designed to make a specific point with arguments that back up that position. The maximum word length varies by newspaper, but generally is about 500-600 words; newspapers will occasionally print pieces above their stated maximum, if the topic is particularly controversial or high-profile and if space allows.

The process for placing an op-ed is much more competitive than for placing a letter, given the limited amount of space available. Therefore, it is important to pay a lot of attention to the copy and to the decision regarding the signer of the op-ed.

In most cases, you will have a much better chance of success if you start your piece with a compelling story. You don't have to use a person's real name, but stating the person's problem, and the impact it had on his or her life, will go far in convincing the paper to consider printing your op-ed. Using compelling arguments and hard data will also help. If appropriate, use bullets to make some of your points. And do not take a "kitchen sink" approach — use your best arguments and omit the extraneous.

### *Who should sign?*

Your organization's board president, CEO or program expert can be the signatory on the op-ed, but you may want to consider an outside influential person as the signer — especially if your argument is for more funding and your organization would stand to benefit from it. This "influencer" could be a local elected official, a prominent business person, or a church leader.

### *Submitting an op-ed*

Most newspapers have an online form for submitting an op-ed, but it is usually a good idea to send the op-ed to the editorial

page editor or deputy editor when possible. You can find that person's name either through the paper's online contact list or by looking at the masthead on the editorial page.

If you send your op-ed to this individual, include a short email message introducing your submission and a brief explanation regarding its importance and timeliness. If you also have submitted the piece through the online option, be sure to mention that you've done so in your email. Whether or not you send your op-ed directly to the editorial page staff member, you will want to follow up with a phone call a few days later to make sure he or she has received your submission — and to make a very brief pitch for placement. Remember — the paper receives a great many requests for placement, so you'll want to be sure yours has not slipped through the cracks. Calling may also be an opportunity to discuss any changes that the editor feels are necessary to make your article more printable.

### *Leveraging your op-ed*

If you are fortunate enough to have your op-ed printed, be sure to leverage that placement by sending it to decision-makers and other influencers directly, with a short note saying "in case you've missed it," or "just wanted to make sure you saw," or words to that effect. You may also want to say something about the importance of the issue, or that an important meeting or vote is imminent (if relevant). And of course, spread the op-ed through social media outlets — Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

### *If your op-ed isn't printed*

If you're unsuccessful in having your op-ed published, consider posting it as a blog on your organization's website, or through [medium.com](https://medium.com), and promoting it through social media to draw attention to the issue.

## IX. MEDIA RESOURCES

[allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Attorney-General-DeWine-Announces-2.6-Million-in-Grants-to-Create-Trauma-Recovery-Centers.pdf](http://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Attorney-General-DeWine-Announces-2.6-Million-in-Grants-to-Create-Trauma-Recovery-Centers.pdf)

[newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/black-wounds-matter](http://newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/black-wounds-matter)

[america.aljazeera.com/articles/2016/1/13/a-new-advocacy-movement-breaks-cycle-of-victimization-and-violence.html](http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2016/1/13/a-new-advocacy-movement-breaks-cycle-of-victimization-and-violence.html)

[npr.org/2015/08/17/432542041/advocates-work-to-help-black-men-who-are-victims-of-violent-crime](http://npr.org/2015/08/17/432542041/advocates-work-to-help-black-men-who-are-victims-of-violent-crime)

[allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/Crime%20Survivors%20Speak%20Report.pdf](http://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/Crime%20Survivors%20Speak%20Report.pdf)

[allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ASJ-Illinois-Crime\\_survivors-FINAL-online.pdf](http://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ASJ-Illinois-Crime_survivors-FINAL-online.pdf)

[allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Final-ASJ-statement.IL\\_1.10.17.pdf](http://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Final-ASJ-statement.IL_1.10.17.pdf)

[colorlines.com/articles/criminals-victims-and-black-men-left-behind](http://colorlines.com/articles/criminals-victims-and-black-men-left-behind)

[vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/young-men-color-disparities-responses-violence.pdf](http://vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/young-men-color-disparities-responses-violence.pdf)

[vera.org/publications/expanding-the-reach-of-victim-services](http://vera.org/publications/expanding-the-reach-of-victim-services)

### Sample Op-Eds:

[huffingtonpost.com/robert-rooks/its-time-victim-services-\\_b\\_8207962.html](http://huffingtonpost.com/robert-rooks/its-time-victim-services-_b_8207962.html)

[dailynews.com/opinion/20150417/california-should-shift-focus-from-punishing-crime-to-preventing-it](http://dailynews.com/opinion/20150417/california-should-shift-focus-from-punishing-crime-to-preventing-it)

[nhregister.com/opinion/20151112/dr-khalilah-brown-dean-leaving-victims-behind-is-unjust](http://nhregister.com/opinion/20151112/dr-khalilah-brown-dean-leaving-victims-behind-is-unjust)

[vera.org/blog/new-funding-victim-services-could-enhance-racial-equity](http://vera.org/blog/new-funding-victim-services-could-enhance-racial-equity)

## X. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) [navaa.org](http://navaa.org)

The Crime Victims Fund: Federal Support for Victims of Crime (2015) [fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R42672.pdf](http://fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R42672.pdf)

Crime Victimization Glossary [ojp.gov/ovc/library/glossary.html](http://ojp.gov/ovc/library/glossary.html)

Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Financial Guide [ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm](http://ojp.gov/financialguide/index.htm)

U.S. Resource Map of Crime Victim Services & Information [ovc.gov/map.html](http://ovc.gov/map.html)

FBI Uniform Crime Data Reporting Tool [ucrdatatool.gov/index.cfm](http://ucrdatatool.gov/index.cfm)

For a comprehensive discussion on VOCA eligibility, please see: [ejusa.org/voca/toolkit](http://ejusa.org/voca/toolkit).

### Contact Us:

Alliance for Safety and Justice, Aswad Thomas,  
National Organizer ([aswad@safeandjust.org](mailto:aswad@safeandjust.org))



CALIFORNIANS  
FOR **SAFETY** AND **JUSTICE**