

HOW VOCA CAN SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

What is VOCA?

VOCA refers to “The Victims of Crime Act,” a federal law enacted by Congress in 1984. Importantly, the legislation created the Crime Victims Fund (CVF), which distributes funding to both individual victims of crime and victim service providers. The CVF is financed entirely without taxpayer dollars by collecting funds from criminal fines and penalties.

- As of April 2022, the Crime Victims Fund holds a balance of \$2.9 billion. Following the passage of the 2021 “[VOCA fix](#)” legislation, that amount is predicted to grow in the coming years. The proportion of the fund distributed each year varies and is based on a formula.
- Each state receives an allocation of the CVF and distributes that money within the state. As a result, individual states have their own application processes and eligibility requirements.
- Every state has a “VOCA administrator” who directs the program and is the main point of contact for victim service providers.

How can VOCA support survivors of community violence?

Given that survivors of community violence are uniformly victims of crime, VOCA assistance grants can provide funding for hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) and other organizations that provide direct services to victims of crime and their families. VOCA’s broad eligibility requirements allow HVIPs to tailor services to address the diverse needs of survivors of violence.

- VOCA requires states to provide funding to underserved communities, such as the predominately Black and Brown communities that are disproportionately affected by gun violence. Funding for HVIPs directly addresses long-standing racial inequities.
- States can support survivors of community violence by helping HVIPs utilize best practice strategies, including providing funding for robust data collection and evaluations, training and technical assistance, and continuing education for program staff.
- VOCA can ensure survivors of community violence receive services that are both trauma-informed and culturally inclusive. Administrators can promote excellence in victims services by practicing [diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices](#).

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How has VOCA supported HVIPs in the past?

In recent years, states have made significant investments in community violence initiatives through their VOCA programs. While some states have funded individual HVIPs through the traditional VOCA assistance grant applications, others have launched coordinated, state-wide initiatives.

- In 2020, New Jersey utilized \$20 million in VOCA dollars to launch a network of 9 HVIPs. This funding was used to cover individual program operations as well as technical assistance costs.
- In 2019, Virginia dedicated \$2.45 million in VOCA funds to support the Virginia HVIP Collaborative.
- Numerous HVIPs across the country receive VOCA assistance grants as individual programs.

How to learn more

- Visit [our website](#) for [additional resources](#) on funding for HVIPs.
- Find your VOCA Administrator at the [National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators' website](#) & learn more about VOCA funding eligibility requirements.
- Join the [HAVI Policy Working Group](#) for ongoing updates and advocacy opportunities.