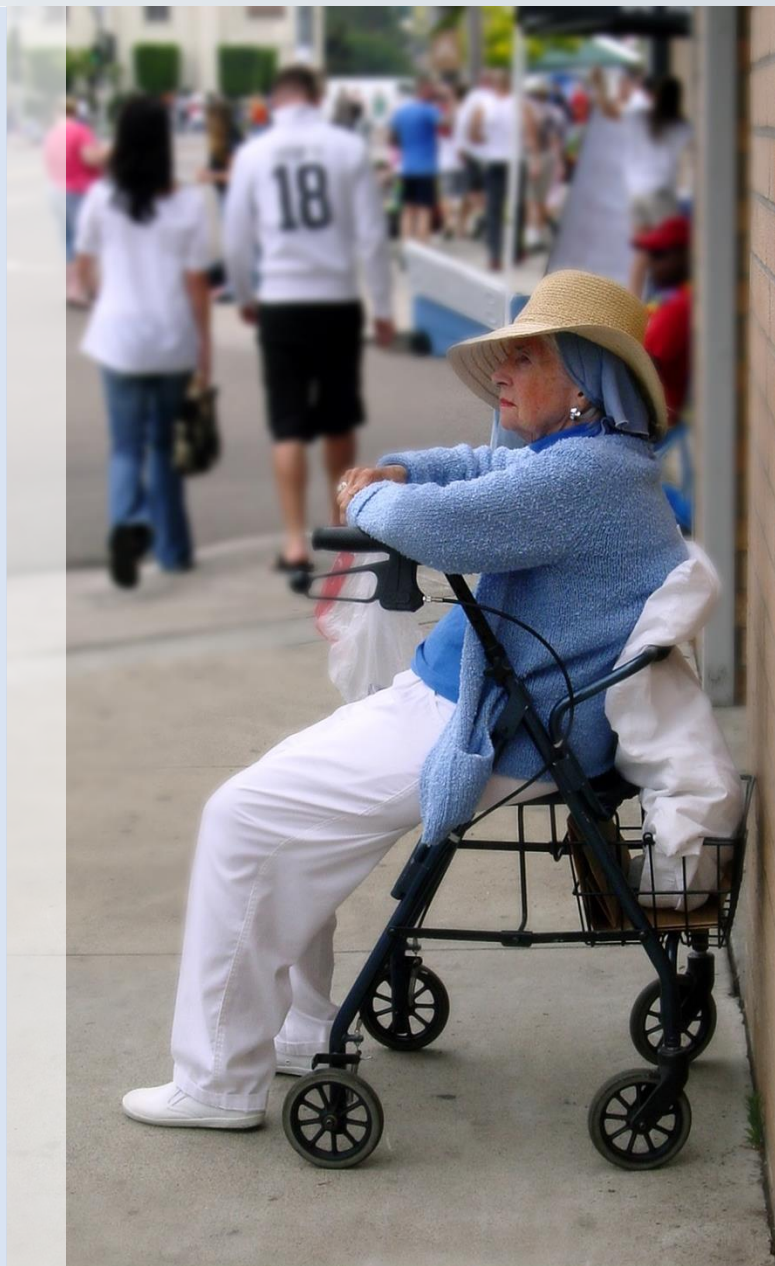


NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND GAP ANALYSIS RHODE ISLAND VICTIMS' SERVICES PROGRAM

PREPARED FOR
Rhode Island Public Safety
Grant Administration Office

BY
Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc.
48 Fourth St, Suite 300
Troy, NY 12180
www.hornbyzeller.com

April 2017



NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND GAP ANALYSIS RHODE ISLAND VICTIMS' SERVICES PROGRAM

PREPARED FOR
Rhode Island Public Safety
Grant Administration Office

BY
Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc.
48 Fourth St, Suite 300
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 273-1614
www.hornbyzeller.com

April 2017



CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	i
Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	3
Understanding Victims' Services	5
Underserved Populations	5
Minorities	8
Immigrants.....	9
Senior Citizens	10
People with Disabilities.....	11
D/deaf and Hard of Hearing.....	13
LGBTQ	15
Homeless.....	15
Gaps in Services	17
Summary	23
VOCA Funding Process in Rhode Island.....	25
VOCA Advisory Committee and Policy Board	26
Agency-Level Proposal Process.....	27
Summary	28
Recommendations.....	29
References	31
Attachment A. RFP Rating Review Tool.....	33
Attachment B. VOCA Stakeholder Interview Protocol.....	35
Attachment C. VOCA Focus Group Protocol	37
Attachment D. VOCA Proposal Rating Form	39

RHODE ISLAND VICTIMS' SERVICES PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND GAP ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The passage of the Victims of Crime Act in 1984 established the Crime Victims Fund to make annual crime victim assistance grants to each state in the United States. The Crime Victims Fund is financed through fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders including deposits from federal criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalties, and special assessments collected by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, federal U.S. courts, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, 2016). The primary purpose of these grants is to support the provision of services to victims of crime throughout the United States and can be used to support a wide array of allowable efforts designed to respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims, assist primary and secondary victims of crime to stabilize their lives after a victimization, assist victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system, and provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.

After many years of level funding, Rhode Island's Public Safety Grant Administration Office (PSGAO) has recently received significant steady increases in VOCA funding, rising from over \$1.6 million in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 to \$3.0 million in FFY 2016 and just over \$6.0 million in FFY 2017. This increase has allowed Rhode Island to provide an increasingly diverse set of services to those who have been victims of crime.

In FFY 2016, the Rhode Island's Victim Assistance Grant Program served a total of 24,192 victims associated with a wide range of crimes including child physical abuse, domestic violence, assault and DUI/DWI.¹ The most frequent service was information and referral, but others included criminal justice and other legal advocacy, help filing compensation claims and crisis counseling. During the current fiscal year, FFY 2017, a total of 58 programs provided by 41 state and non-profit agencies received funding from Rhode Island under the Federal Victim Assistance Grant Program (Public Safety Grants Administration Office, 2016).

The majority of VOCA-funded programs have a statewide service area and those that do not are mainly located in Providence County, which has both the largest population in the state and the highest number of crimes. Interviewees stated that housing, whether transitional or affordable and subsidized long-term housing, space available at a local shelter, or foster homes for children coming into Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) care is one of the highest needs for victims of crime in Rhode Island, followed by access to health insurance and health care, and transportation to access services.

When victims of crime were asked about their experiences accessing victims' services, they frequently stated they did not know services were available to them and were introduced to VOCA-funded services after connecting with a doctor or counselor on their own. The biggest need from the victims' point of view is longer-term support, someone to follow up with them in

¹ Rhode Island's VOCA funding supports services that are provided to victims of a wide variety of crimes including domestic violence, assault, child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, adult sexual abuse, DUI/DWI crashes, survivors of homicide victims, robbery, and adults molested as children.

the weeks or months after they first interact with an advocate following their victimization. They also cited a need for more publicity informing the general public that a telephone helpline can assist them in connecting to services as well as an increased awareness that services are available to victims of crime, so that people know where to find more information or who to call if they ever find themselves needing to access such services.

Underserved Populations

Immigrants and people who speak English as a second language (ESL), senior citizens, people with disabilities, people who are D/deaf and hard of hearing, LGBTQ, and the homeless are all underrepresented within the people who are accessing victims' services in Rhode Island at VOCA-funded programs. These underserved populations do not exist independently from each other; frequently a person may belong to multiple categories. VOCA-funded agencies report they are working to ensure underserved populations have access to services but that there is still more work to do. With the increase in funding beginning in FFY 2015 and additional programs funded for these groups, attention should be paid to the extent to which these programs do provide increased access to services. For all underserved groups, agencies need to be providing individuals with an opportunity to be involved in their agencies, whether through employment, volunteer opportunities, or by providing opportunities for people to voice concerns.

VOCA Funding Process in Rhode Island

The Rhode Island PSGAO Request For Proposal (RFP) process meets the federal guidelines. The VOCA grant itself as well as the RFP process is not as well publicized as it could be and some agencies that do not receive funding but may be providing eligible services and programs are unaware of its existence. The grant period of one year is perceived to be a challenge for newly established programs and agencies would like to see multi-year grants. VOCA-funded programs report that they are not connected to their fellow VOCA agencies and would like to see more opportunities for collaboration, communication, and cross-training.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are based on the research findings:

1. The PSGAO should ensure all agencies and organizations that provide services to victims of crime in Rhode Island are aware of the VOCA funding opportunities by increasing the publicity of the RFP.
2. The PSGAO should consider multi-year funding opportunities.
3. The PSGAO should continue to include victims of crime in the decision making process by asking them to participate on the VOCA Advisory Committee.
4. The PSGAO should enforce the requirements of the RFP by withholding final approval of applications which appear to be worthy of funding but do not fulfill all the requirements.

Introduction

The passage of the Victims of Crime Act in 1984 established the Crime Victims Fund to make annual crime victim assistance grants to each state in the United States. The Crime Victims Fund is financed through fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders including deposits from federal criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalties, and special assessments collected by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, federal U.S. courts, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, 2016). The primary purpose of these grants is to support the provision of services to victims of crime throughout the United States and can be used to support a wide array of allowable efforts designed to respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims, assist primary and secondary victims of crime to stabilize their lives after a victimization, assist victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system, and provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.

In Rhode Island, the Public Safety Grant Administration Office (PSGAO), an agency within the Executive Department of the State of Rhode Island, is charged with the planning, coordination, data collection, statistical analysis, and grant administration and distribution for the adult and juvenile criminal justice systems. One of the grants administered by the PSGAO is the Victims of Crime Act Victims Assistance Formula Grant (VOCA).

After many years of level funding, Rhode Island has recently received a steady increase in VOCA funding, rising from over \$1.6 million in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 to \$3.0 million in FFY 2016 and just over \$6.0 million in FFY 2017. This dramatic increase has allowed Rhode Island to provide an increasingly diverse set of services to those who have been victims of crime.

In FFY 2016, the Rhode Island's Victim Assistance Grant Program served a total of 24,192 victims associated with a wide range of crimes including child physical abuse, domestic violence, assault and DUI/DWI.² The most frequent service was information and referral, but others included criminal justice and other legal advocacy, help filing compensation claims and crisis counseling. During the current fiscal year, FFY 2017, a total of 58 programs provided by 41 state and non-profit agencies received funding from Rhode Island under the Federal Victim Assistance Grant Program (Public Safety Grants Administration Office, 2016).

The FBI broadly categorizes crime as either property crime or violent crime. In 2015 violent crimes nationwide increased 3.9 percent compared to the previous year, while property crimes declined by 2.6 percent. When comparing regions of the US (Northeast, Midwest, West, and South) during that time span, violent crime increased in each region with the exception of the Northeast, where it decreased one percent. While the Northeast can distinguish itself as being the only region with a decrease in violent crime, Rhode Island saw a 10 percent increase in violent crime, one of only 10 such states experiencing a double-digit increase. While Rhode

² Rhode Island's VOCA funding supports services that are provided to victims of a wide variety of crimes including domestic violence, assault, child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, adult sexual abuse, DUI/DWI crashes, survivors of homicide victims, robbery, and adults molested as children.

Island also saw the largest national decrease in property crime, down 13 percent from 2014 (Uniform Crime Report – Region, 2016), the vast majority of those who receive services from the Victim Assistance Grant Program are victims of violent crime. Unfortunately, on a national level most violent victimizations are not reported to law enforcement (an estimated 52% between 2006 and 2010) and not all victims who do report manage to access services (Langston, Berzofsky, Krebs, & Smiley-McDonald, 2012).

Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc. (HZA), a national research firm with offices in four states, was contracted by the Rhode Island Department of Public Safety Grant Administration Office to carry out a needs assessment and gap analysis of the Victims of Crime Act Victims Assistance Formula Grants with the following research goals:

1. identify possible underserved populations and/or gaps in services provided to victims of crimes within the parameters of the federal Victims' Assistance Grant Program statewide;
2. determine whether the current procedure and request for proposals (RFP) process for allocating VOCA funds statewide is adequate or should be modified for future funding decisions; and
3. assist in the development of a strategic plan for meeting the future goals of victims' services as provided within the parameters of the Victims' Assistance Grant Program.

After a brief description of the methodology, this report is divided into three parts, corresponding to the research goals. The last of these contains recommendations for developing a strategic plan for meeting the future goals of the program.

Methodology

To answer the questions implicit in the research goals, HZA used both quantitative and qualitative data. The research began with a literature review to identify what are generally considered best practices in serving the needs of crime victims, with particular attention paid to those who are part of underserved populations. Simultaneously HZA conducted a review of websites, reports and contracts with community service providers to identify and quantify the current services available to crime victims in Rhode Island, including the number and types of victimizations and the services accessed by victims.

In addition, HZA inventoried available surveillance data such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Unified Crime Report (UCR). The qualitative data involved meetings and interviews with the VOCA Advisory Committee, the sub-grantee agencies and victims. These sources provided perspectives on both the needs of victims and on the gaps in service availability and were useful, as well, in identifying potentially underserved populations.

The interviews were semi-structured, meaning there were fixed questions but respondents were encouraged to be expansive in their answers, and were conducted with agencies which were receiving VOCA awards as of October 1, 2016, members of the VOCA Advisory Committee and members of the Policy Board. The interviews examined how each agency provides services to victims, the number of victims they serve, and the services available to victims of crime. HZA also used the interviews to gain a perspective on the variety of services provided, the State's overall ability to respond effectively and appropriately to the needs of victims of crimes, the perceived gaps in services and the populations deemed to be underserved.

The original intent was to conduct focus groups with victims of crime, but recognizing that this can be a sensitive topic area, HZA also offered the opportunity to do one-on-one interviews. A total of seven individuals receiving victims' services participated in a focus group through one of the VOCA-funded service providers and six agreed to the interviews.

Finally, HZA spoke to agencies that do not receive VOCA funding but provide services (either at the state or local levels) to one or more underserved populations, such as the D/deaf and hard of hearing community and people with disabilities. These interviews provided information on access to services, best practices regarding service provision and the potentially unique needs of the underserved populations.

To review the current RFP and VOCA award process, HZA developed a review tool (Attachment A) to capture the extent to which the current RFP meets the following federal requirements and the extent to which submitted proposals include the following information:³

³ <https://www.ovc.gov/voca/vaguide.htm>

- the target population;
- if and how the program meets an underserved population or existing gap in services;
- an outline of program activities and services;
- measurable objectives, performance measures, and anticipated outcomes for proposed programs;
- demonstration of how the program conforms with “best practices;”
- existing program evaluations and/or quantitative data to support program effectiveness;
- a specific plan to collect, store, and analyze data for mandatory reporting requirements, program evaluation, and performance measures; and
- specific information demonstrating ability to comply with VOCA and federal Office of Management and Budgets Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) requirements.

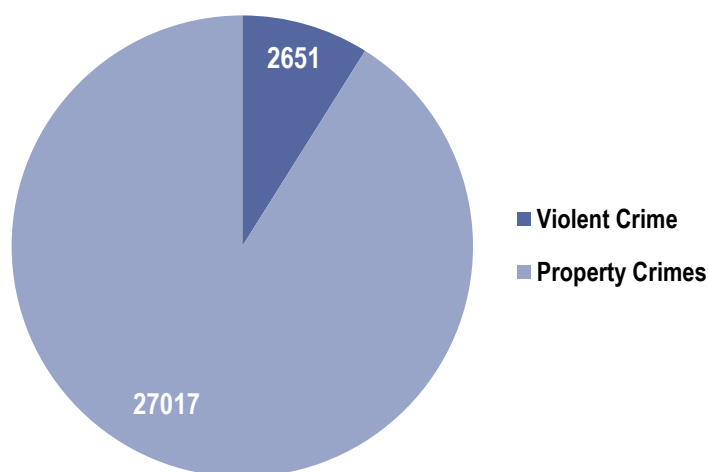
Aside from reviewing the RFP itself, HZA reviewed a random selection of twenty proposals that were submitted in response to the Spring 2016 VOCA RFP put out by the PSGAO. This allowed HZA to examine a range of responses, both funded and not funded, to help inform possible modifications to the RFP. Finally, HZA matched the review tool to the current scoring sheet used by the VOCA Advisory Committee to determine how well the scoring sheet captures the previously mentioned requirements.

Understanding Victims' Services

Underserved Populations

The Federal Bureau of Investigations' (FBI) Uniform Crime Report (UCR) provides insight into crimes occurring in Rhode Island. According to UCR data, in 2012 (the most recent year for which statewide data are available) there were a total of 2,651 violent crimes and 27,017 property crimes in Rhode Island (Figure 1).⁴

Figure 1. Number of Reported Crimes in Rhode Island (2012)
Source: FBI UCR



While violent crimes comprise only nine percent of all crimes in Rhode Island, the focus of the sub-grantee agencies is clearly on victims of violent crime. According to the federal Annual Performance Report for Rhode Island for FFY 2016, well over 90 percent of the victims served had experienced violent crimes.

Federal program guidelines identify underserved populations, including but not limited to: senior citizens; non-English speaking residents; persons with disabilities including D/deaf or hard of hearing;⁵ members of certain racial groups; ethnic minorities; people who identify as LGBTQ; and people living in rural or remote areas or inner cities. Rhode Island has substantial proportions of all of these groups.

As of 2015, 16.1 percent of Rhode Island's population was over the age of 65 (United States Census Bureau, 2016). In fact, Rhode Island is one of the nation's "older" states in terms of its overall population, ranked in the top 10 nationally for every population category over 50 (Rhode Island Division of Elderly Affairs, 2017).

⁴ The FBI UCR data is limited in scope and violent crime counts consist of aggravated assault, robbery, rape, and murder/non-negligent manslaughter. Property crime counts consist of motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and burglary.

⁵ "Deaf" refers to those individuals who are culturally Deaf and whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL), and "deaf" refers to individuals who lack the ability to hear but are not part of Deaf culture.

The number of foreign-born people living in Rhode Island is growing, rising from 9.5 percent of all residents in 1990 to over 13 percent in 2015, and over 21 percent of people in Rhode Island over the age of five speak a language other than English at home (United States Census Bureau, 2016).

In 2000, Rhode Island had the highest rate of disability of any of the New England States (West & Combs, 2002) with 8.9 percent of the population under 65 years old having a disability (United States Census Bureau, 2016) and an estimated 8.6 percent of people in Rhode Island are deaf or hard of hearing (Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, 2001).

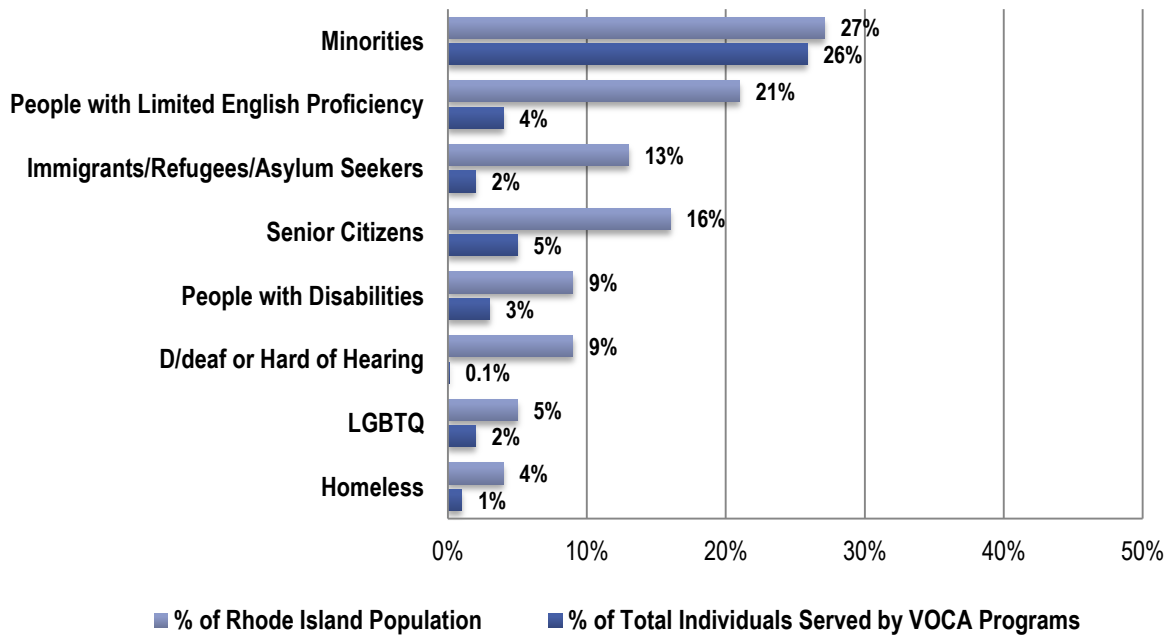
It is estimated that 2.4 million LGBTQ older adults over 50 live in the United States; that number is expected to double by 2030 (American Psychological Association, 2014) with Rhode Island having the fifth-largest proportion of adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender at 4.5 percent (Gallup, 2013).

During 2014, 4,067 individuals (3.8% of the total population) experienced homelessness in Rhode Island (Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, 2014). According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2016), Rhode Island's homeless population decreased by 6.6 percent, while the national overall homelessness rate decreased by 2.0 percent between January 2014 and January 2015.

Rhode Island has a growing minority population, with the percentage of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino rising from 12.4 percent in 2010 to 14.4 percent in 2015; those who identify as black or African American alone rising from 5.7 percent in 2010 to 7.9 percent in 2015; those who identify as Asian rising from 2.9 percent to 3.6 percent in 2015; and those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native rising from 0.6 percent in 2010 to 1.0% in 2015 (United States Census Bureau, 2016).

Unfortunately, there appear to be no data available on what percentages of crime victims belong to each of these populations in Rhode Island. However, Figure 2 shows the percentage of the total Rhode Island population who belong to underserved populations, as well as the percentage of people who self-reported as being part of each population and received services from VOCA-funded programs in FFY 2016. With the exception of minorities, the differences are sufficiently large that it is appropriate to require further attention to ensure the needs of these populations are being met and that victims services throughout the state of Rhode Island are accessible to all.

Figure 2. Percentage of Self-Reported Individuals From Underserved Populations Served by VOCA Programs compared to Populations in Rhode Island (FFY 2016 VOCA Performance Measures, PSGAO)



To identify the way service providers are working to meet their potentially unique needs, HZA asked each VOCA-funded agency to provide information regarding their awareness of these underserved populations within its community and within its service population. Service providers were also asked how they ensured people who are part of any of these underserved populations have access to victims’ services as well as how they ensure they are providing services in a culturally competent way.

The following material provides an overview of each of these underserved populations and identified needs, both in terms of providing services to people in these populations and barriers to accessing services for people in these populations as reported by VOCA-funded service providers.

Minorities

Thirteen percent of people who received VOCA services during FFY 2016 were Hispanic or Latino, nine percent were Black or African American, two percent were multi-racial, one percent was Asian, and 0.3 percent were American Indians or Alaska Natives. This is generally reflective of the demographics of Rhode Island. Rhode Island has a number of VOCA-funded programs targeting racial and ethnic minorities (including the Southeast Asian and Hispanic and Latino populations) as well as several agencies working with immigrants and refugees.

The majority of VOCA-funded service providers are located in the Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls area, which is where many people who belong to ethnic and racial minorities live. Agencies located near Native American populations continue to work to build relationships with Native American organizations.

Service providers stated they are generally able to connect Spanish speakers to counselors and service providers who are able to provide services in Spanish, but there tend to be long waitlists and more counselors who are fluent in Spanish are always needed. One of the service providers reported knowing of a number of very small grassroots organizations working with people of color within their own communities but because the organizations are so small they are either unaware of the VOCA grant or they found the application process too daunting.

The majority of VOCA-funded service providers are located in the Providence area, which is where many people who belong to ethnic and racial minorities live.

MINORITIES



Immigrants

Service providers reported that the cultural and immigration issues facing people who are immigrants, refugees, or speak English as a second language, can place huge barriers on accessing needed services. Many immigrants have had experiences with government and law enforcement in their home countries that cause distrust and are unlikely to report crimes or work with people who are from outside their own culture or language. Other immigrants have a distrust of the United States government based on their immigration status and will not report crimes they have experienced for fear of deportation.

Those interviewed noted that immigrants frequently do not know their rights, such as their right to have an interpreter. Agencies receiving federal funding are required to provide language access to people who do not speak English, so all VOCA-funded programs must know how to access language interpretation and translation services for their clients (National Center for Cultural Competence, 2016). However, while victims of crime and those who receive services do have access to interpreters and service providers who speak their own language through area agencies such as Dorcas International, the language line, Progreso Latino, and the Center for South East Asians, providers said that often it is not as simple as finding someone who can speak a certain language, but also finding someone who speaks the same dialect. Some agencies have implemented peer mentorship programs to assist with meeting the language and cultural needs of immigrants and refugees from smaller populations.

The cultural and immigration issues facing people who are immigrants, refugees, or speak English as a second language, can place huge barriers to access to services.

Immigrants frequently do not know their rights, such as their right to have an interpreter.



Access to services can be a barrier even for those who are legal immigrants because they let their paperwork lapse or have lost their paperwork, or because their immigration status is tied to the person who is victimizing them, such as a spouse in a domestic violence situation. These instances frequently affect a person's ability to get housing. Service providers reported that they know who to turn to and can frequently connect people to legal services that can assist such victims at low or no cost.

The literature on best practices indicates that agencies should work with a bilingual and bicultural person to ensure documents are available in multiple languages (National Center for Cultural Competence, 2016). While translation and interpretation services are often the most realistic, ideally, agencies should be able to provide services or refer a client to an agency that can provide services in a client's native language and reflect the cultural norms and individualized needs of immigrant and English as a Second Language speakers (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2010).

Senior Citizens

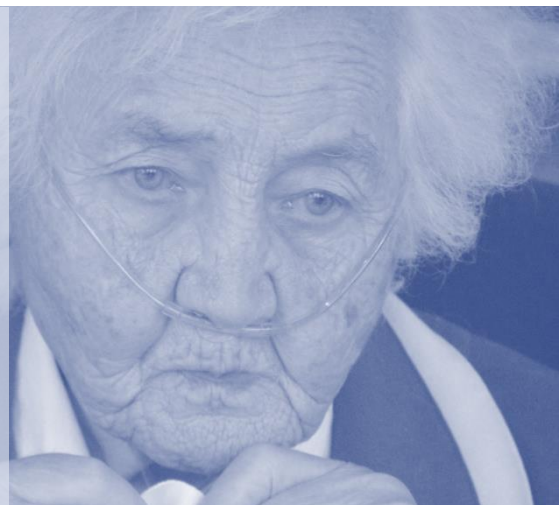
The elderly are most likely to be solicited for instances of fraud as well as being the most likely group to lose money to a fraud scheme (Acierno et al., 2009), but as noted above, the bulk of VOCA services target victims of violent crime. During FFY 2017 there are four VOCA-funded programs targeting senior citizens and providing advocacy, counseling, and shelter. Most work is done on a client-to-client level and in addition to working with victims of crime, these organizations are working to raise awareness in the community about issues facing senior citizens and awareness among senior citizens of financial scams and other crimes for which they are at high risk.

Service providers reported that financial exploitation, domestic violence, and elder abuse are the most common types of crimes that senior citizens are experiencing in Rhode Island. The providers, especially those who have senior citizens as their target population, use a variety of means to meet the needs of senior citizens including providing their services in the victims' homes. Getting to services can be a challenge for senior citizens who cannot physically get out of their house or who can no longer drive. Another challenge reportedly encountered by senior citizens is the fact that many shelters do not have the means to accommodate anyone who is in a wheelchair or uses oxygen.

When crimes experienced by senior citizens are perpetrated by family members and caregivers the victims tend to be less likely to report crimes to law enforcement or wish to become involved in the criminal justice system which can cause challenges in connecting senior citizens to services and supports (Markarian, 2012). Best practice literature suggests that service providers should determine what level of support senior citizens desire, whether they are ready to report the crime or testify at a trial, develop a safety plan with the victim, provide information and referrals to additional services, and follow up with the victim to either ensure the victim successfully connected with the desired services or make additional referrals as necessary (Markarian, 2012). Additionally, service providers and community organizations should inform seniors of known financial phone, mail, and other scams to raise awareness and prevent future financial exploitation (National Crime Prevention Council, 2017).

Financial exploitation, domestic violence, and elder abuse are the most common types of crimes that senior citizens are experiencing in Rhode Island.

SENIORS



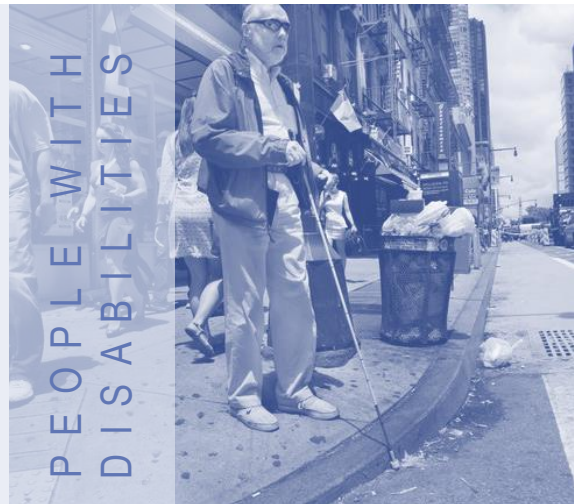
People with Disabilities

Data from recent years have shown that, despite being an underserved population, persons with disabilities experience violent victimization at a higher rate than those without disabilities, are often known to their assailant, and account for 21 percent of all violent victimizations with nearly a quarter of victims believing they were targeted specifically because of their disability (Harrell, 2015). Of disability types examined, those with cognitive impairment had the highest rate of violent victimization, twice the rate of any other disability type (Harrell, 2015).

VOCA-funded service providers generally stated they felt confident in their ability to provide services to people with disabilities including developmental, physical, and invisible disabilities. Frequently, traditional services such as talk counseling will not work with certain people such as those with developmental disabilities and agencies use other therapies when possible. They reported, however, that access to training for such therapies can be a challenge.

Some service providers, in particular those that also serve senior citizens, stated they have the ability to meet someone at their home if necessary because, as with senior citizens, the ability to get to an agency or service provider's office can often be a challenge for people with disabilities. Community-based service providers, most frequently those that provide counseling services, were able to provide things such as bus passes or agency-based transportation services for those who qualify.

Despite being an underserved population, persons with disabilities experience violent victimization at a higher rate than those without disabilities, are often known to their assailant, and account for almost a quarter of all violent victimizations.



The federal government recommends that to create equal access for people with disabilities service providers should ensure their agencies and organizations provide accessibility through physical, programmatic, and attitudinal accessibility (Office for Victims of Crime, 2012). Service providers should ensure staff members have access to training about working with people with disabilities (especially trainings provided by people with disabilities), and provide opportunities for people with disabilities to voice their needs and share concerns, taking these concerns and needs seriously and making necessary changes to the way they provide services (Office for Victims of Crime, 2012).

Additional steps agencies can take to address the attitudinal accessibility are to hire staff and recruit volunteers who have disabilities, and ensure people with disabilities have opportunities to participate on their board of directors. Agencies should ensure their office buildings and facilities are accessible by people with all types of disabilities and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, recognizing that physical accessibility goes beyond whether someone in a wheelchair can physically enter the building.⁶

Finally, service providers should examine how their policies and practices may be affecting the disabled's ability to receive services. Agencies should ensure they allow service animals, make sure all materials are accessible to people with disabilities by including captioning and braille, and ensure all employees know how to provide American Sign Language and other language interpreters.

⁶ <https://www.ada.gov/>

D/deaf and Hard of Hearing

Out of all underserved populations, people who are D/deaf and hard of hearing appear to be the most underserved by victims' services in Rhode Island.⁷ Studies on Deaf people have found they experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, psychological abuse, physical abuse, intimate partner violence, and forced sexual experiences at about twice the rate of their hearing counterparts (Smith & Hope, 2015). Deaf survivors of domestic violence also experience unique tactics that have to be accounted for to effectively provide support; abusers may injure a victim's hands or destroy devices to prevent communication (*e.g.*, iPad for FaceTime, smart phone for texting) (Smith & Hope, 2015). Although the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires service providers and law enforcement agencies to provide aids for Deaf people to ensure effective communication, most modern domestic violence programs and rape crisis centers do not have money set aside in their budget to cover costs associated with ASL interpreters (Smith & Hope, 2015).

Service providers frequently stated they do not see a lot of people who are D/deaf accessing their services and few service providers throughout the state, whether VOCA-funded or not, have clinicians or staff who can provide services in American Sign Language without an interpreter. Service providers acknowledged this was a population with whom they have frequently faced challenges in providing adequate services. They reported this was the biggest need in Rhode Island in terms of underserved populations, that there are not enough specialized services and not enough awareness of the D/deaf community. Recently, the Rhode Island Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing has been involved in training law enforcement on how to work with D/deaf people and D/deaf victims of crime.

Out of all underserved populations, people who are D/deaf and hard of hearing appear to be the most underserved by victims' services in Rhode Island, with too few specialized services available and lack of awareness of the D/deaf community.

D / deaf & Hard
of Hearing



⁷ "Deaf" refers to those individuals who are culturally Deaf and whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL), and "deaf" refers to individuals who lack the ability to hear but are not part of Deaf culture.

The Vera Institute has written that to appropriately serve the Deaf community, it is essential to recognize Deaf as a distinct cultural and linguistic group, with its own cultural norms. By recognizing the difference between the lowercase and uppercase “D” in Deaf, service providers send a message that they are aware and understanding of the unique cultural needs (Vera Institute of Justice: Center on Victimization and Safety, 2015). Just as with immigrants and people who speak English as a Second Language, Vera Institute says service providers should be knowledgeable about how to access interpretation services and Computer Aided Realtime Translation (CART) (Vera Institute of Justice: Center on Victimization and Safety, 2015). It is also important to remember that not all people who are deaf or hard of hearing are part of the Deaf community and service providers should avoid making assumptions about communication and instead ask people who are D/deaf what their preferred method of communication is, whether ASL, written, or spoken language using lip-reading (Vera Institute of Justice: Center on Victimization and Safety, 2015).

LGBTQ

Rhode Island has a growing number of VOCA-funded service providers serving the LGBTQ population with at least three FFY 2017 agencies targeting their programs for this population. The Victims Assistance Academy provides cultural competency training to ensure service providers understand the potentially unique barriers that those in the LGBTQ population face not only in society in general, but in accessing services as well.

A particular barrier that service providers are beginning to address is the one faced by transgender people when it comes to shelter services. Agencies stated they work hard to meet people where they are at and be as inclusive as possible.

It is important that service providers understand the potentially unique barriers that those in the LGBTQ population face, not only in society, but in accessing services as well.

LGBTQ



Homeless

During FFY 2017, the number of VOCA-funded programs with homeless individuals as its target population increased to three agencies from the one program the prior year. However, people who are homeless could have accessed services through any of the other VOCA-funded programs. Only one percent of all victims who received services during that year self-reported that they were homeless.

A 2010 study conducted by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council of homeless individuals located in Detroit Michigan, Fort Lauderdale Florida, Nashville Tennessee, Houston Texas, and Worcester Massachusetts found that homeless individuals experienced violence 25 times more frequently than the general United States population (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2014). Forty-nine percent of homeless individuals in this study reported being a victim of violence, while only two percent of the national population reports being a victim of violence (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2014). Of those individuals in the study who reported seeking help after the crime, 82 percent stated they were able to receive the assistance they wanted but 68 percent of individuals who accessed medical assistance were unable to pay their medical bills (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2014).

Research has shown that youth who experience homelessness are particularly vulnerable, with 69 percent having been a victim of child abuse or neglect and 73 percent having reported interpersonal violence (Rabinovitz, Desai, Schneir, & Clark, 2010).

Research suggests the best ways to engage homeless individuals, including homeless victims of crime, are through outreach and engagement in non-traditional settings such as street outreach at their encampments or places where they frequently congregate (Olivet, Bassuk, Elstad, Kenney, & Jassil, 2010). One component of outreach cited as essential is to meet people where they are emotionally as well as geographically, by providing empathic listening, avoiding stereotyping, and providing choices to homeless individuals (Olivet et al., 2010). According to Olivet et al. (2010), outreach workers should be empathetic, non-judgmental, committed, persistent and flexible, and should also have a strong knowledge of the availability of housing, medical, mental health, and substance use treatment services available. Olivet et al. (2010) also found that mentoring and emotional support, training on staff self-care, teamwork, boundaries, ethics, and personal safety are all essential to avoiding burnout among outreach.

In FFY 2017, there are three VOCA-funded programs that specifically targeted at homeless individuals. All three agencies spoke about providing street outreach as a way to inform homeless individuals, not only those who have been a victim of crime, but to build a relationship and a sense of trust and begin the process of assisting homeless people in accessing needed services. Youth who are homeless were identified as a particular need as many of the models used to address homelessness, such as the Housing First model, are not geared towards youth and there are no youth specific shelters in Rhode Island. One of the newly funded programs is targeted specifically at reaching homeless youth and young adults. Across all agencies interviewed, affordable housing was identified as a major need throughout the state of Rhode Island.

Research suggests the best ways to engage homeless individuals, including homeless victims of crime, are through outreach and engagement in non-traditional settings.

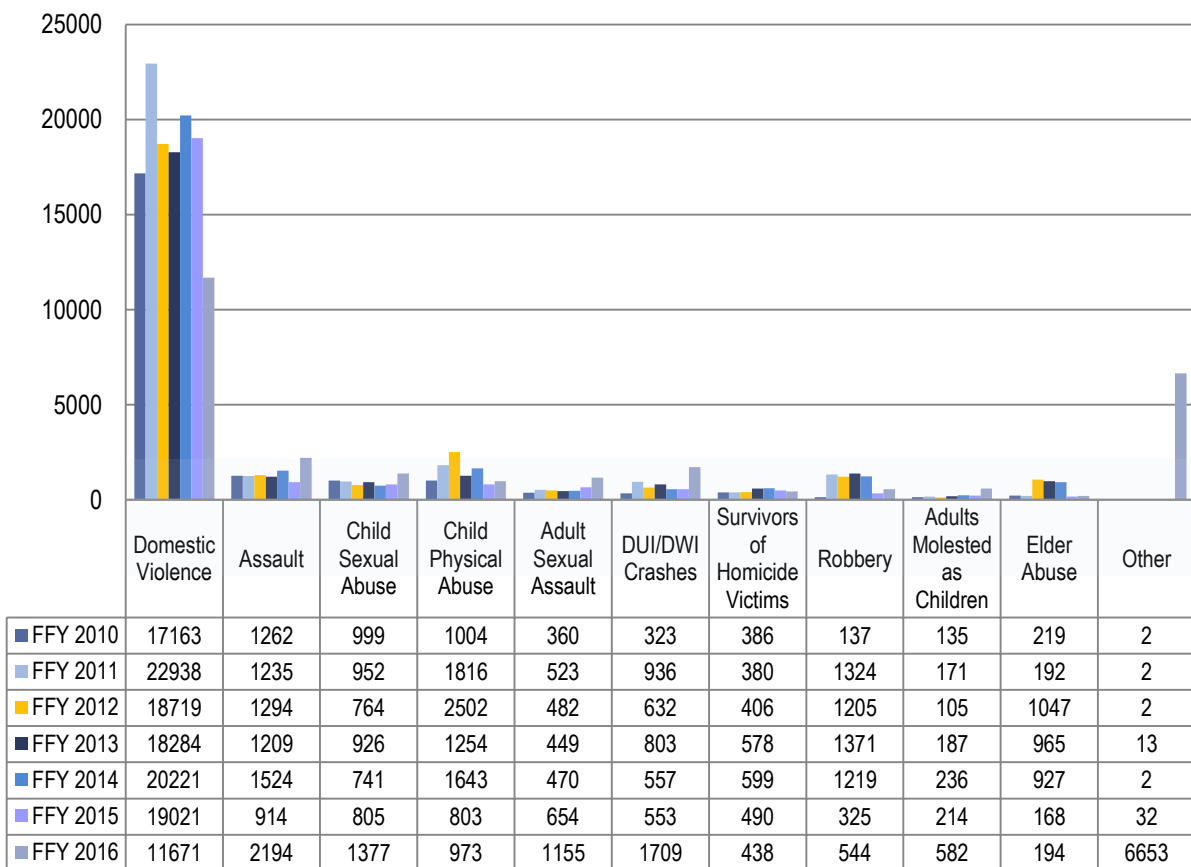
Homeless



Gaps in Services

Between FFY 2010 and FFY 2015 the overwhelming majority of people accessed victims’ services as a result of domestic violence victimizations followed by child abuse (both sexual and physical abuse), assault, and adult sexual assault (Figure 3). It should be noted that a single person may have experienced multiple types of crimes and could be included in more than one category. These crimes reflect the most common types of crimes that VOCA-funded service providers state their clients have experienced. Federal VOCA reporting requirements changed for FFY 2016, allowing for an expanded variety of crimes to be captured and more crimes to fall into the “Other” category when compared to previous years such as bullying (verbal, cyber, or physical) (335), human trafficking (270), identity theft or fraud (205), or hate crimes (137), to name just a few.

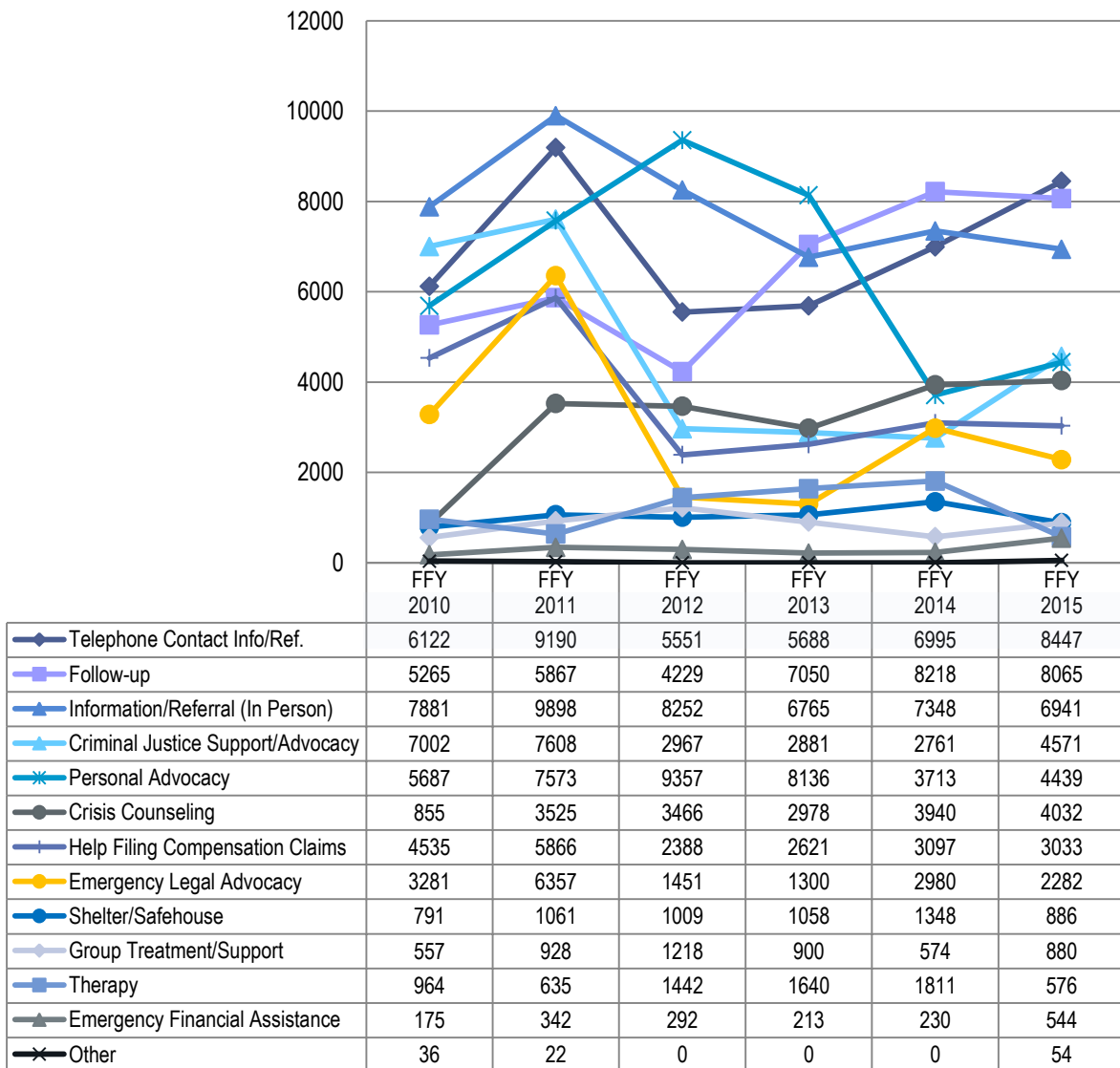
Figure 3. Types of Crimes Experienced by People Accessing Victims Services (FFY 2010-FFY 2015)



While the number of victims of domestic violence overwhelms all other categories, the amount of funding provided to programs which target domestic violence victims is less skewed in that direction. Between FFY 2014 and FFY 2016, these programs received between 29 and 30 percent of the funds distributed to sub-grantee agencies each year, with programs targeting victims of child abuse receiving about 10 percent of the funds. Part of the reason for the discrepancy is that many other programs also serve victims of domestic violence. In fact, during the same period about one-fourth of the funds went to programs whose target groups were unspecified, *i.e.*, they served victims of any crime.

The most common types of services provided by VOCA-funded programs consisted of advocacy (such as attending court with a victim or providing a victim with updates on the court case) and providing information and referrals to services, either in person or by telephone (Figure 4).

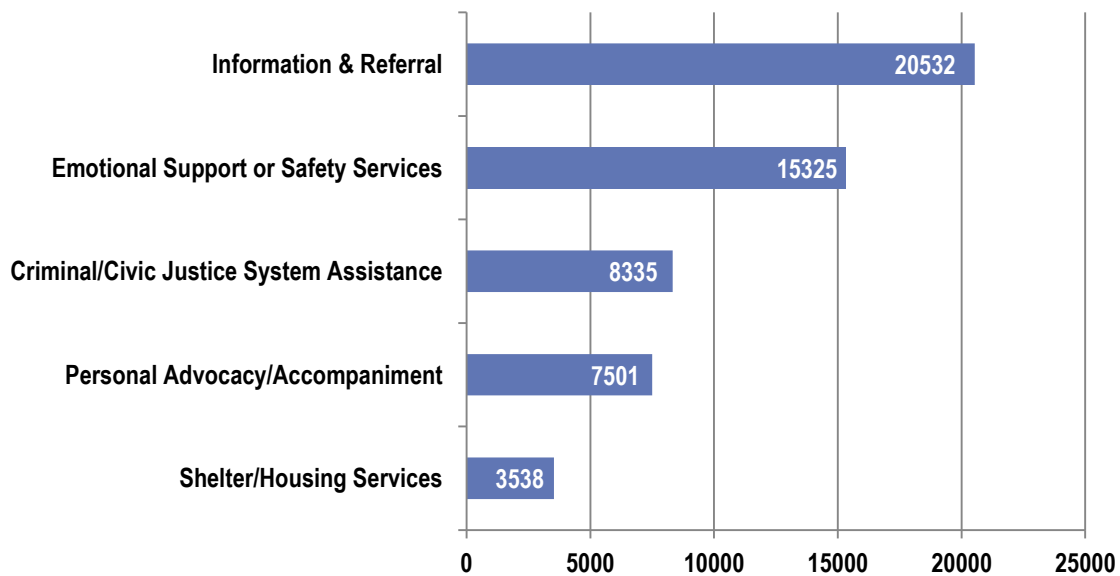
Figure 4. Number of Victims by Type of Service Provided (FFY 2010 - FFY 2016)



Victims noted they primarily were informed of the services available to them through the assistance of an advocate either at the police department or at the hospital during the aftermath of the victimization. Other services provided by VOCA-funded programs include shelter, counseling (crisis and long-term such as group or individual therapy), support groups, and emergency financial assistance. Services providers report that they partner and collaborate with state and area organizations and frequently make referrals to other services that victims need. The length of time a victim may be involved with a VOCA-funded service provider varies from a one-time interaction to long-term relationships that may last a year or longer.

As indicated previously, federal VOCA reporting requirements changed for FFY 2016 and data on services provided are collected in a different way. Figure 5 shows the distribution of services for FFY 2016. The most common type of service provided overall was information and referral with such information provided about victims service programs (13,247), other services and supports such as medical and legal referrals (12,130), victims' rights (11,005), and information about the criminal justice system (10,883). The second most common type of service provided overall was emotional support and safety services including crisis intervention (9,085), hotline counseling (4,431), and individual counseling (3,233). As noted above, more than one service can be provided to an individual

Figure 5. Number of Victims by Type of Service Provided (FFY 2016)



During FFY 2017, 58 programs (provided by 41 state and non-profit agencies within the state) received VOCA funding, an increase over the previous years (Table 1).

Table 1. VOCA-Funded Programs (FFY 2013-17)					
Fiscal Year	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	FFY 2016	FFY 2017
Number of Funded Programs	36	33	37	48	58
Total Funding Per Year	\$1,705,796	\$1,657,287	\$1,657,287	\$3,000,000	\$6,010,027

Almost 60 percent of the funded programs were to provide services statewide while the remaining 40 percent focused on specific target areas, whether one or two counties, cities/towns, or even a specific school. The majority of the services are located within the Providence area. The map below shows the concentration of VOCA-funded service providers, with red indicating the highest concentration and green indicating a lower concentration.

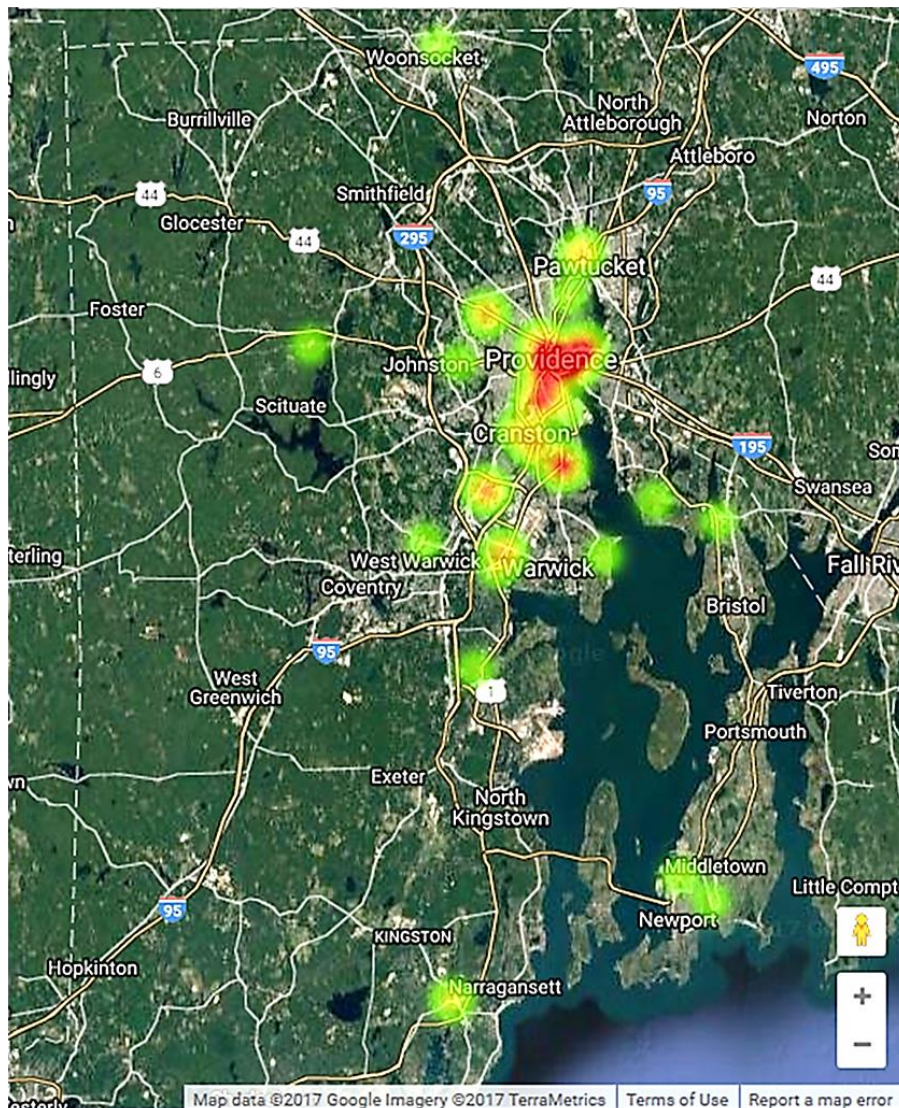
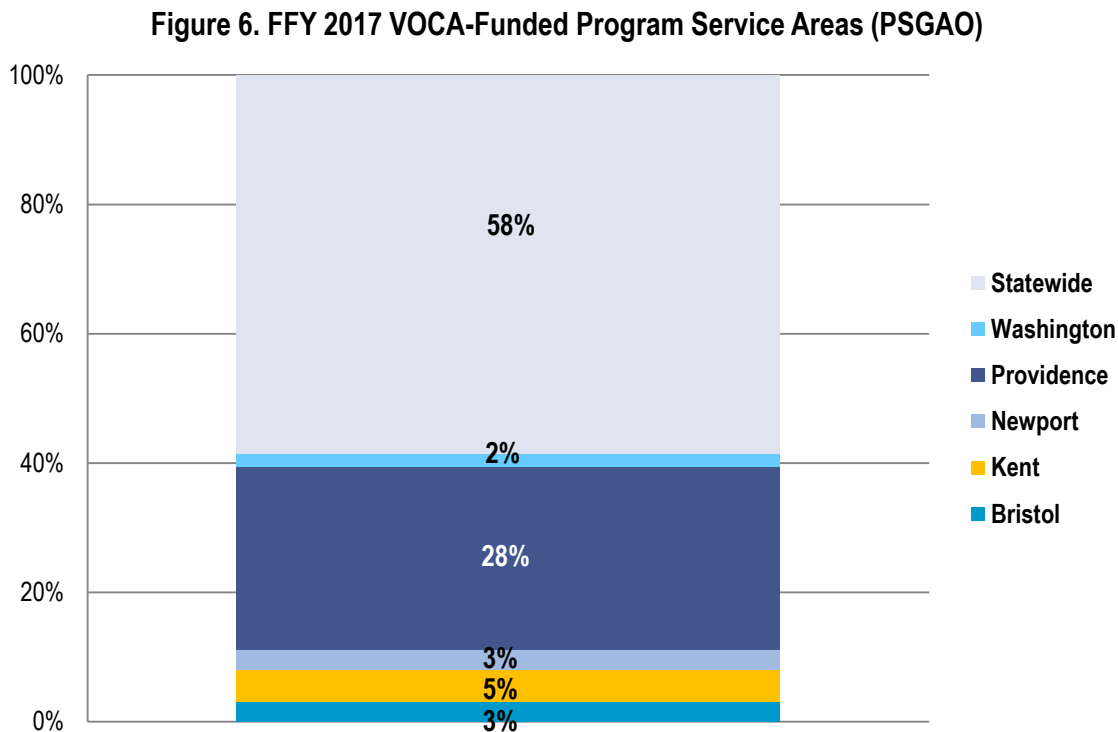


Figure 6 shows the service areas for the FFY 2017 VOCA-funded programs. As of October 2016, each police department in Rhode Island has a law enforcement advocate to assist victims of crime in understanding their rights as a victim of crime and being informed of services available to them.



HZA asked service providers (VOCA-funded or not) and crime victims to provide information about their perceptions around service needs. More specifically, the questions were:

- 1) which services do victims of crimes have trouble accessing,
- 2) which services for crime victims are currently lacking in the community, and
- 3) what is needed to improve crime victim access to needed services?

Not all responses are things that can be specifically addressed with VOCA funding, such as affordable housing or transportation, however service providers noted that they do the best they can to connect individuals to services that can help them meet their needs. The most common response to “which services do victims of crime have trouble accessing” was housing-related, whether it was transitional or affordable and subsidized long-term housing, space available at a local shelter, or foster homes for children coming into DCYF care. One stakeholder stated that it “isn’t uncommon for someone to be on several wait lists for housing,” while another said “many shelters do not have spots available for youth.” One service provider stated a need for shelter space that can accommodate fathers with children.

Additionally, health insurance, health care and mental health care (especially trauma-trained treatment providers and clinicians) were mentioned numerous times by stakeholders as issues facing victims of crime. Providers reported it is a challenge to find clinicians who will accept victim compensation funds or self-pay. Similarly, there are restrictions on what victims compensation funds can pay for, meaning agencies need to rely on community partners such as local churches and volunteer organizations to fill the gaps.

While not something that can be dealt with primarily through VOCA funds, transportation was mentioned several times as a barrier to services for many victims of crime. Some agencies have the ability to provide transportation assistance for people who fit certain criteria and others have the ability to provide clients with bus passes or taxi vouchers, but transportation reportedly remains a huge issue for accessibility to services. Public transportation, provided through a bus system, is available statewide, but getting from one place to another can take two hours or more. For the more rural areas of the state where services are lacking or not as readily available or are available only at a distance, people need to have transportation that can allow them to get to the services they need.

When asked about “which services are currently lacking in their community,” the most frequent responses were again focused on housing. One provider stated it handles the gap in service by calling around to shelters daily and helping people find friends with whom they can stay since there are no other options. Mental health services and programs for senior victims of crime were also mentioned in more than one interview as areas where services were lacking.

Finally, when asked “what is needed to improve access to needed services,” the most common response was money or funding in some form. Cultural barriers, such as being encouraged to not “rat” to the police, were cited multiple times, as well as the need for more beds at shelters, case management services for crime victims, and longer grant timeframes. Service providers identified populations that need more attention which include people with serious mental illness, youth, and people of color.

The few crime victims who were interviewed stated they often did not know services were available to them and ended up seeking help on their own, with success varying widely. Some victims were able to connect (typically through their doctor or counselor) to VOCA or other services that were able to assist them in healing, while other victims had little success advocating for themselves and gave up on trying to access services.

An overarching theme from victims was the need for longer-term support. Some victims stated they did not think they needed services at the time of their interaction with an advocate, which was frequently in the immediate aftermath of the crime either at the hospital or police station. When some time had passed, they realized they could use help but did not know where to find it. They reported that they would have appreciated someone following up with them over the weeks and months after their victimization to see if there was any assistance or referrals needed.

Now that there are advocates in place in every police station in the state, there should be increased access to services and increased knowledge on the part of victims regarding what is available to them. People who are undocumented will still have a challenge accessing needed supports and services due to their hesitation to report crimes and not feeling safe providing their name or other information to service providers.

It will be important to ensure that all law enforcement advocates know what services are available and the full scope of services that are provided by each agency (like who provides long-term versus short-term interventions). Individuals who were interviewed as victims of crime stated the fear of being judged and not wanting everyone to know the details about what happened to them were other factors that affected their ability to get the help they needed.

Summary

Crimes, both property and violent crimes, occur in all counties in Rhode Island and generally in proportion to the population of each county. The majority of VOCA-funded programs have a statewide service area and those that do not are mainly located in Providence County, which has both the largest population in the state and the highest number of crimes. Interviewees stated that housing, whether transitional or affordable and subsidized long-term housing, space available at a local shelter, or foster homes for children coming into DCYF care is one of the highest needs for victims of crime in Rhode Island, followed by access to health insurance and health care, and transportation to access services.

When victims of crime were asked about their experiences accessing victims' services, they frequently stated they did not know services were available to them and were introduced to VOCA-funded services after connecting with a doctor or counselor on their own. The biggest need from the victims' point of view is longer-term support, someone to follow up with them in the weeks or months after they first interact with an advocate in the immediate aftermath of their victimization.

They also cited a need for more publicity informing the general public that a telephone helpline can assist them in connecting to services as well as an increased awareness that services are available to victims of crime, so that people know where to find more information or who to call if they ever find themselves in a position of needing access to such services.

Immigrants and people who speak English as a second language, senior citizens, people with disabilities, people who are D/deaf and hard of hearing, LGBTQ, and the homeless are all underrepresented within the people who are accessing victims' services in Rhode Island at VOCA-funded programs. These underserved populations do not exist independently from each other; frequently a person may belong to multiple categories. VOCA-funded agencies report they are working to ensure underserved populations have access to services but that there is still more work to do.

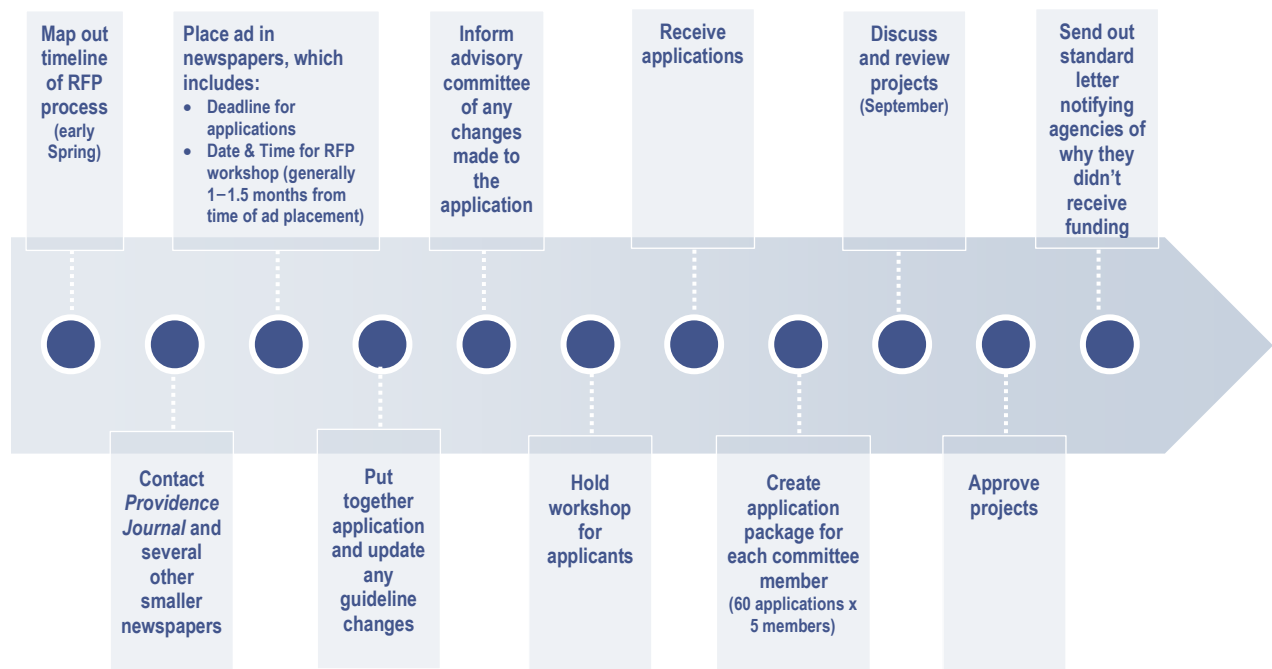
With the increase in funding beginning in FFY 2015 and additional programs funded for immigrants and ESL speakers, senior citizens, LGBTQ and homeless individuals, attention should be paid to the extent to which these programs increase access to services. For all underserved groups, agencies need to be providing individuals with an opportunity to be involved in their agencies, whether through employment, volunteer opportunities, or by providing opportunities for people to voice concerns.

VOCA Funding Process in Rhode Island

The Rhode Island VOCA Formula Grant Program’s funding process begins with the VOCA administrator mapping out a timeline of Request for Proposals events for the upcoming year. Once the RFP process has been mapped, the RFP receives any appropriate updates based on federal VOCA guideline changes before being finalized and passed on to the advisory committee with note of the changes. The VOCA administrator then contacts the *Providence Journal* and several other local newspapers in the state to place an ad for VOCA, announcing a deadline for applications as well as a date and time for a mandatory application workshop. Within the timeframe of a month to a month and half of placing the newspaper ads, PSGAO conducts the workshop for the applicants and the applications arrive shortly thereafter.

Once the RFP deadline has passed, the administrator creates and distributes the applications to each VOCA Advisory Committee member. The Committee then meets and reviews the applications regularly between May and September (as well as other times throughout the year as necessary) and makes recommendations to the Rhode Island Criminal Justice Policy Board, which makes final funding approval decisions.

VOCA FUNDING PROCESS



To be eligible for VOCA funding, agencies and organizations must fulfill the requirements listed in Table 2.

Table 2. VOCA Funding Eligibility Requirements	
Eligibility Requirements	
1	Be a public or non-profit organizations that provides direct services to crime victims.
2	If an existing program, have a record of providing effective services to crime victims for a minimum of one year, have the support and approval of its services by the community, have a history of providing direct services in a cost-effective manner, and have financial support from non-federal sources.
3	Utilize volunteers unless it is determined that there are extremely compelling reasons not to do so.
4	Maintain client-counselor confidentiality.
5	Be able to meet financial match requirements for VOCA funding.
6	Provide services at no charge.
7	Serve as voice on behalf of victims in the community. Promote, within the community, coordination of services to victims, thus avoiding duplication of effort.
8	Assist victims in seeking available crime victim compensation benefits by identifying and notifying potential recipients of the state's compensation program and assisting with application forms and procedures.
9	Provide services to victims of federal crime on the same basis as victims of state crimes.
10	Provide a variety of services over and beyond assistance with compensation and information/referral services.

VOCA Advisory Committee and Policy Board

The VOCA Advisory Committee consists of five volunteers from across the state, representing a variety of backgrounds including the court system, non-profit organizations and state agencies. The Committee works closely with the VOCA Grant Administrator to read, review, and make funding recommendations for all submitted VOCA proposals each year. When a seat is open on the Advisory Committee, potential new members who have the necessary knowledge and background are discussed by the Advisory committee, provided information about the role of the committee, and are then recommended by the VOCA Advisory Committee to the Policy Board who makes the final approval.

Once proposals begin to flow into the VOCA Grant Administrator's office, the VOCA Advisory Committee sets a schedule of roughly four to seven meetings between the months of May and September to review and discuss the proposals. The number of proposals reviewed each year has increased over the years, with over 60 proposals reviewed as part of the FFY 2017 application process. In September, the VOCA Advisory Committee reports to the Rhode Island Criminal Justice Policy Board, with their funding recommendations, where the recommendations are typically approved without significant challenges. The Policy Board meets a minimum of four times a year to review and approve planning and grant funding recommendations and

membership on the policy board is mandated by law.⁸ At least five members of the Policy Board are employed by state or non-profit agencies that received VOCA funding in FFY 2017, with some of these memberships required by law.

Agency-Level Proposal Process

One of the most frequently stated issues on the part of agencies and organizations is that the VOCA grant is not very well publicized. Many of the funded agencies have received VOCA funding for ten or more years and could not provide information about how they learned about the funding. On the other hand, more recently funded agencies stated they learned about the funding by either having previously worked at an agency that received VOCA funding or by word of mouth, with someone recommending they apply for the VOCA funding. This suggests that the newspaper advertisements should be supplemented with other means to publicize the VOCA funding announcement.

Once an agency is aware of the grant opportunity, it must contact the VOCA administrator to get the application form and deadlines because there is no information about the application process on the PSGAO's Victims' Assistance Formula Grant Program website, which would be a natural place for agencies to learn of the opportunity.⁹ Once an agency is aware of the process, the picture improves. VOCA-funded programs interviewed unanimously reported that the VOCA administrator was highly approachable throughout the application process if they had questions or needed clarification; they also indicated the guidelines on the application were easy to understand.

Additionally, funded agencies frequently stated they were not aware of who else received VOCA funding throughout the state. The VOCA-funded Victims' Assistance Academy was highly regarded as an excellent training and networking opportunity for victims' service providers throughout the state, but not every VOCA-funded agency has the opportunity to have someone at the training each year. It is a very popular training event which provides opportunities for service providers to learn about best practices in providing services, cultural competency, ways to deal with secondary trauma, an overview of the criminal justice system and other topics that allow service providers to meet the needs of their clients. The training fills up quickly each year, leaving some providers unable to attend.

Service providers reported that having networking opportunities through training events or email listservs where they could be notified of additional training opportunities and events would strengthen their own ability to provide strong victims' services to the people of Rhode Island, as well as increase the amount of cross-agency collaboration and referrals among VOCA-funded programs each year. At a minimum, service providers thought it would be beneficial to receive a list of all VOCA grantees for the year which would include a line about the work they are doing with the VOCA funding and contact information for each agency.

⁸ <http://law.justia.com/codes/rhode-island/2014/title-42/chapter-42-26/section-42-26-6>

⁹ <http://psga.ri.gov/grants/voca.php>

Many funded agencies viewed the funding period of one year as a challenge and a barrier to applying for the grant for many small organizations that may be eligible and interested in applying. Agencies receive award notifications in September and then have to begin the proposal process the following spring. For new programs, it can be a challenge to hire and train employees and begin providing services prior to the next application deadline, meaning they have little evidence to show that their program works and should continue to be funded.

VOCA-funded programs frequently expressed an interest in multi-year funding. They provided examples such as tiered funding (where new programs would be awarded funding for the two-year periods and more established programs would be awarded funding for three-year periods) or multi-year funding, which involves increased benchmarks and performance measures to ensure due diligence. Some states do, in fact, use multi-year funding, with nine states making two-year funding awards and nine additional states making three-year funding awards (National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, 2004).

The 2016 RFP application includes all required information according to the VOCA and UGG guidelines, but responses to the RFP varied in the extent to which they responded to the various elements of the RFP. Almost all proposals reviewed failed to include information about the use of evidence-based practices (EBP), the number of clients they would be serving who are part of an underserved population, or how the program would meet the needs of underserved populations. Additionally, over half of the reviewed proposals were unclear about their reporting practices and did not provide a specific plan regarding data collection, how data would be stored, and the organization's or agency's ability to analyze the data. Many programs are funded despite this missing information. The VOCA Advisory Committee stated they use the rating review tool to identify strengths and weaknesses in each proposal. No proposal comes out of the review process with a perfect score and the funding decisions are based on the overall score. Many organizations that submit proposals are small and lack professional grant writers so if additional information is needed, the VOCA Advisory Committee will conduct an interview with the submitting organization.

Summary

The Rhode Island PSGAO RFP process meets the federal guidelines. The VOCA grant itself as well as the RFP process is not as well publicized as it could be and some agencies that do not receive funding but may be providing eligible services and programs are unaware of its existence. The grant period of one year is perceived to be a challenge for newly established programs and agencies would like to see multi-year grants. VOCA-funded programs report that they are not connected to their fellow VOCA agencies and would like to see more opportunities for collaboration, communication, and cross-training.

Recommendations

The PSGAO and the VOCA Advisory Committee have shown dedication to ensuring victims of crime throughout the state of Rhode Island have access to the programs and services they need to assist them in the aftermath of a crime, although there is consensus that more work needs to be done to increase awareness of VOCA funding among agencies throughout the State.

The following recommendations are intended to provide input to the State's strategic plan for improving VOCA-funded services and are based on the findings outlined above.

1. The PSGAO should ensure all agencies and organizations that provide services to victims of crime in Rhode Island are aware of the VOCA funding opportunities by increasing the publicity of the RFP. The PSGAO may consider looking into additional publicizing of the RFP through its website, listservs for service providers, public service ads or internet announcements. It would also be helpful for the PSGAO to create a list of known service providers in the state and mail notifications to all of them at the start of the process. Additionally, organizations that submit proposals should include a plan on how they will ensure that victims of crime know the services the programs provide are available and accessible to them. The PSGAO should ensure services are expanded to be accessible to and meet the needs of underserved populations.

2. The PSGAO should consider multi-year funding opportunities. Providers report that the one year grant period creates additional challenges for newly establish programs who have six months between when the grant period begins and the next application process begins to hire, train, and begin providing services to clients. Multi-year funding cycles would provide increased stability for new and established programs alike. Recognizing that VOCA funding is not consistent year to year and that States have up to four years to spend their funds, many states that utilize multi-year funding generally hold back a portion of their VOCA funding each year to create a "reserve" or try to spread each years funding out over several years (National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, 2004).

3. The PSGAO should continue to include victims of crime in the decision making process by asking them to participate on the VOCA Advisory Committee. Victims of crime can provide a consumer-side perspective on the VOCA applications and provide unique insight into the decision making process regarding service needs and gaps. It is particularly important to include members of the underserved populations as a means of making services more accessible to these groups.

4. The PSGAO should enforce the requirements of the RFP by withholding final approval of applications which appear to be worthy of funding but do not fulfill all the requirements. Given the fact that several federally defined underserved populations are in fact underserved in Rhode Island, every program should have to specify how it is going to serve one or more of these populations. In addition, the requirements regarding evidence-based programs and data collection and analysis are important elements of a system which ensures that the funded programs are effective in achieving the state and federal goals for VOCA funding.

References

Langston, L., Berzofsky, M., Krebs, C., & Smiley-McDonald, H. (2012, August). Victimization Not Reported to the Police, 2006-2010. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from U.S. Department of Justice: Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/vnvp0610.pdf>

Markarian, A. M. (2012). Successful Elder Abuse Prosecution - A Joint Venture. Retrieved January 16, 2017, from Victims of Crime: <https://victimsofcrime.org/docs/Toolkit%20Bulletins/natl-center-for-victims-of-crime-conf-ea-handouts.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2016). *The State of Homelessness in America 2016*. Retrieved February 14, 2017, from National Alliance to End Homelessness: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/page/-/files/2016%20State%20of%20Homelessness.pdf>

National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators. (2004). Allocation Methodologies. Retrieved January 30, 2017, from VOCA Administrators' Toolkit: State Grant Management: http://navaa.org/members/interactiveSite/html/ch03/ch03_page008.html

National Center for Cultural Competence. (2016). Working with Linguistically Diverse Populations. Retrieved January 30, 2017, from National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University: <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/features/language.html#1>

National Crime Prevention Council. (2017). Strategy: Crime Prevention Services for the Elderly. Retrieved January 16, 2017, from National Crime Prevention Council: <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/violent-crime-and-personal-safety/strategies/strategy-crime-prevention-services-for-the-elderly>

National LGBT Health Education Center. (2015). *Providing Welcoming Services and Care for LGBT People: A Learning Guide for Health Care Staff*. Boston: Fenway Institute.

Office for Victims of Crime. (2012, September). Multidisciplinary Response to Crime Victims with Disabilities: Community-Level Replication Guide. Retrieved January 30, 2017, from Office of Justice Programs: Office for Victims of Crime: <https://www.ovc.gov/pubs/victimswithdisabilities/communityguide/step4-make.html>

Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime. (2016). Crime Victims Fund. Retrieved January 20, 2017, from Office of Victims of Crime: <https://ojp.gov/ovc/about/victimsfund.html>

Olivet, J., Bassuk, E., Elstad, E., Kenney, R., & Jassil, L. (2010). Outreach and engagement in homeless services: A review of the literature. *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 3(1).

Public Safety Grant Administration Office. (2014). *Public Safety Grant Administration: 2014 Annual Report*. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from Rhode Island Department of Public Safety: <http://www.rijustice.state.ri.us/documents/staff/2014%20PSGAO%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

Rabinovitz, S., Desai, M., Schneir, A., & Clark, L. (2010). No Way Home: Understanding the Needs and Experiences of Homeless Youth in Hollywood. Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership. Retrieved February 1, 2017, from Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership: http://hhyp.org/downloads/HHYP_TCE_Report_11-17-10.pdf

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing. (2001, January). Demographics on Hearing Loss in Rhode Island. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from Commission on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing: <http://www.cdhh.ri.gov/resources/demographics/>

Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs. (2017). Rhode Island's Senior Population...By The Numbers. Retrieved February 14, 2017 from <http://www.dea.ri.gov/stats/>

Social Planning Council of Ottawa. (2010). Best Practices in Supporting the Integration of Immigrant Families Through Small Ethno-cultural Organizations. The Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

State Data Center at the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program. (2014, March). Census Data Bulletin: Rhode Island's Immigrants. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from Rhode Island State Data Center: http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/census/bulletin/bulletin_march2014.pdf

Truman, J. L., & Langton, L. (2015, September 29). Criminal Justice Victimization, 2014. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from U.S. Department of Justice: Bureau of Justice Statistics: www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv14.pdf

United States Census Bureau. (2016, July 1). Quick Facts: Rhode Islands. Retrieved January 27, 2017, from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/44>

Vera Institute of Justice: Center on Victimization and Safety. (2015). Culture, Language, and Access: Key Considerations for Serving Deaf Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence. New York City: Vera Institute of Justice.

West, D. M., & Combs, J. (2002, December). The Disabled Population in Rhode Island. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from Taub Center for Public Policy: <http://www.insidepolitics.org/policyreports/Disability.PDF>

Attachment A. RFP Rating Review Tool

Rhode Island VOCA RFP Sub Award Review Tool			
Program:			
Are the following identified:	Yes	Partially	No
Statement of Need			
1. Organization Description			
a. Experience			
b. Staffing			
c. Qualifications in providing services to victims of crime			
2. Scope and extent of problem the project intends to address			
3. Target Population			
a. Number of clients to be served			
b. How program meets needs of target population			
4. Underserved Populations			
a. Number of clients to be served			
b. How program meets needs of underserved populations?			
5. Number of hours anticipated			
6. Type(s) of crime			
Implementation of VOCA-funded project			
1. Goal of project			
2. Measureable Objectives			
3. Performance measures			
4. Activities planned to meet objectives and goals			
5. Plan for management and administration of project			
6. Anticipated outcomes			
7. Adherence to best practices			
a. Is program an evidence based practice?			
8. Existing program evaluations?			
a. Quantitative data supporting program effectiveness			
b. Existing victim satisfaction with service?			

	Yes	Partially	No
9. Ability to adhere to mandatory reporting:			
a. Specified plan to collect data			
b. Specified plan to store data			
c. Specified plan to analyze data			
10. Ability to comply with VOCA and UGG requirements			
A minimum of one direct service area(s)			
Description of coordination with other services, including law enforcement.			
Budget and Financial Considerations			
Detailed budget including:			
a. Position title(s)			
b. Hours to be worked on project			
c. Hourly rate/salary			
d. Explanation of any extraordinary salary rate/qualifications			
e. Fringe Benefits (if applicable)			
f. Trainings and associated travel expenses			
g. Contractual services (per individual or type of individual)			
h. Other items (explained in detail)			
i. Other funding sources supporting the project			

Attachment B. VOCA Stakeholder Interview Protocol

Rhode Island VOCA Stakeholder Interview Protocol

Name _____ Date of Interview ____/____/2016

Agency _____ Counties Served _____

Phone _____ Interviewed by _____

Section I. Background and Contextual Information

I would like to start by asking you about some general information. This will help to provide context for the rest of the questions.

1. What is your position at the agency and how long have you been here?
 - a. Do you, or the agency you work for, provide direct services to known victims of crime? (Ask for explanation of target population if not fully explained in response.)
 - How are victims of crimes identified? Are there criteria that must be fulfilled for victims of crime to receive services at your agency?
 - b. What types of services does your agency provide to victims of crimes as part of your agency's VOCA funding? Does your agency provide any services to victims of crimes that are not covered by VOCA funding?
 - c. Do you participate in the Policy Board and/or any community collaboration efforts?
 - If yes: What is your role and what is the purpose of the board or collaboration group?
 - d. FOR STAKEHOLDERS WHO DO NOT work at an agency providing direct services: How did you become involved in the area of victims' services?
 - e. FOR STAKEHOLDERS WHO DO work at an agency providing direct services: How did you first get involved with [agency], and your work with victims of crime?

Section II. Victims of Crime in Rhode Island

The next set of questions I will ask are specific to providing services to victims of crime. Some of the questions may not pertain to you in your position; likewise, you may not have the answers to some questions and that is not a problem. We will examine all of the interview responses to get a complete picture of how and what types of services are being provided to victims of crime in Rhode Island.

2. How did you or your agency first learn about the VOCA funding and the application process?
 - a. Have you or your agency previously applied for funding (prior to FFY 2016)? Was that previous application(s) successful? If not, what was the reason?
3. From whom do you receive referrals to serve victims of crime: Law Enforcement? Advocates? Self-referrals? Other service providers?
4. What types of crimes have the victims you work with experienced?
5. (In addition to the required quarterly reporting) Do you have data collection protocols that track the types of crimes these victims have experienced? The types of services you provide to victims?

- a. Do you or your agency have a report which tracks the number of victims you serve? Is the report a monthly, quarterly or annual summation?
6. Are you aware of any of the following populations in your community or service area?
 - a. Immigrants or English as a Second Language
 - b. Senior Citizens
 - c. People with Disabilities (of any kind, including developmental and physical) –
 - d. Deaf or Hard of Hearing (specifically those who are culturally deaf and/or primary language is ASL)
 - e. Homeless people
 - f. LGBTQ
 - g. Any other notable sub-populations of which you are aware?
7. How do you ensure people who are part of any of these populations have access to services?
8. How do you ensure you are providing services in a culturally competent way for people who are part of identifiable sub-populations?
 - a. Have you participated in any training which specifically focuses on addressing the potentially unique needs of any of the above groups (*go through list above again if necessary*)?
9. Who are the other community providers on whom you rely to provide services and/or provide support to victims of crime (and possibly their families)? What types of services do they provide?
10. Which services do you find victims of crimes experience difficulties in being able to access? **What barriers do they face?** (*Probe for waitlists, service availability, lack of transportation, financial barriers, insurance, etc.*)
11. **What services would you say are lacking** at this point in your community, which are necessary to support victims of crime?
 - a. How is the community (or agency?) handling this gap in services?
12. What do you think is needed to improve victims of crime's access to needed services? This include things related to policy at a federal, state, or agency level.
13. Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you for your time today. We appreciate your insight and your assistance with this work.

Attachment C. VOCA Focus Group Protocol

Rhode Island VOCA Focus Group Protocol

Location of Focus Group _____ Date of Focus Group ____/____/2016

Led by _____ # of Focus Group Participants _____

Duration and Ground Rules: *This focus group is scheduled to last about one hour. You can say as much or as little as you would like. We only ask that you leave out names of people and keep everyone in our conversation anonymous. We also ask that you respect each other and agree to keep what you hear today confidential. Are you ready to get started?*

1. We are starting with the assumption that all of you have been victims of crime or know someone who has. Is that right? Can you talk about how that affected your ability to go about your daily life?
2. To whom did each of you (or someone else) report the crime? If the crime was not reported, why was it not reported?
3. Who let you know that there were services available to you as a victim of crime?
4. How many of you got help through someone making referrals to services for you? When that happened, what was that person's role? For those of you who did not get that kind of help, how did you get connected to the services you received?
 - a. Who do you believe should provide you with information about the services available to you?
5. How soon after the referrals were made were you able to begin receiving services? Were any of you placed on a waitlist for any services?
6. What types of services did each of you receive to help you as a victim of crime? In what ways did these services help you?
 - a. In the immediate aftermath of the crime?
 - b. Through the criminal justice process (if applicable)?
 - c. Long term?
7. What, if any, services did you believe were needed but unavailable to you? Why were you unable to receive those services (*lack of insurance, lack of transportation, lack of availability, cultural barriers, etc.*)?
8. To what extent were the services you received provided in a way that was appropriate, respectful and sensitive to your situation and needs?
9. What do you think needs to be done to ensure all victims of crime have access to the services they need?
10. Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you for your time today. We really appreciate all that you have shared with us for this project.

Attachment D. VOCA Proposal Rating Form

2016 VOCA PROPOSAL RATING FORM

Rater: «FirstName» «LastName»

Applicant: «AppAgency»

Project Title: «ProjectTitle»

PART I: Statement of the problem and goals of the project (20%)

Poor Good Excellent

- 1. Is the need for the project clearly identified?0 1 2 3 4 5
- 2. Are the goals of the proposed project reasonable and attainable?.....0 1 2 3 4 5
- 3. Are project's outcomes measurable and time specific?.....0 1 2 3 4 5
- 4. Are services in specific geographical areas where no other services exist?0 1 2 3 4 5

PART II: Implementation of the VOCA-funded project (40%)

Poor Good Excellent

- 1. Will the project serve the maximum number of victims possible? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- 2. Are the objectives of the proposed project clearly defined, measurable and include specific timeframes for their accomplishments? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- 3. Is the program description clear, appropriate, and within VOCA's allowable costs and services? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- 4. Are the project's outcomes measurable and achievable? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- 5. Do the staff have the appropriate qualifications to provide the described service? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

PART III: Management structure and organizational capacity (20%)

Poor Good Excellent

- 1. Does the applicant demonstrate sufficient management and organizational capacity? 0 1 2 3 4
- 2. Does the applicant agency hire or service members of the minority community and/or demonstrate an awareness of cultural diversity? 0 1 2 3 4
- 3. How does the applicant demonstrate coordination with other programs in the community related to victim assistance?..... 0 1 2 3 4
- 4. How does the organization demonstrate community support and approval of its services?..... 0 1 2 3 4
- 5. Has the applicant described the level of client satisfaction with the services provided? 0 1 2 3 4

PART IV: Financial considerations (20%).

Poor Good Excellent

- 1. Does the organization have adequate fiscal controls and accounting procedures? 0 1 2 3 4 5
- 2. Are budgeted costs reasonable, VOCA allowable, and cost effective for the activities proposed to be undertaken? 0 1 2 3 4 5
- 3. Does the organization have other sources of financial support? 0 1 2 3 4 5
- 4. Does the applicant demonstrate that VOCA funds will not be used to supplant existing funds and that no federal funds will be used to meet the match requirement?..... 0 1 2 3 4 5

Totals

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--