



Ten Things You Should Know About VOCA

1. The Victims of Crime Act, passed in 1984 under President Ronald Reagan, created the Victims of Crime Act Fund, or VOCA Fund, to be a **protected and dedicated source of funding for crime victim programs**.
2. The VOCA Fund **does not depend on taxpayer dollars** – it is derived from fines and penalties on offenders at the federal level.
3. VOCA dollars are distributed to the states to support two important types of programs: **crime victim compensation programs**, which pay many of the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by victims as a result of crime, and **victim assistance programs**, which provide victims with support and guidance in the aftermath of crime.
4. **Nearly 4 million victims a year** are served by more than 4,000 local and state victim service agencies funded by VOCA.
5. VOCA assistance grants support programs that **provide assistance to victims of all kinds of crime** including victims of assault, robbery, gang violence, intoxicated drivers, fraud, elder abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, sexual assault, stalking and survivors of homicide, and many others.
6. VOCA also supports victim assistance for those involved in the **federal criminal justice system, including survivors of terrorist acts**.
7. While the VOCA Fund has been very successful in creating a strong web of services for many victims, **there are still too few services** for rural victims, teen victims, elderly victims, disabled victims, and non-English speaking victims.
8. Because the Fund is comprised of offender penalties and fines, the amount in the Fund fluctuates from year to year. For the last several years, **Congress has created a special reserve of VOCA dollars for use in leaner years**, by placing a cap on the Fund and saving the amount collected over the cap to ensure the stability of the Fund. Currently, the VOCA Fund has an **estimated balance of \$1.9 billion**.
9. In the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations bill, the cap on disbursements from the VOCA Fund was set at \$635 million. While this was an increase in funds released over the previous year, the cap still resulted in **\$30 million less** for state victim assistance funding than states received in Fiscal Year 2006.
10. **Congress and the administration should keep their promise to victims, and release more VOCA Funds to help victims of crime recover**. More of the money collected from federal offenders should be released to support the vital services crime victims need at the state and local levels. Releasing \$705 million from the VOCA Fund in FY10 would restore funding levels for victim programs to that of FY06 and begin to meet some of the increased needs for essential victim services.

For more information on VOCA and how you can help, visit www.ncvc.org/policy or email ncvc_public_policy_dept@ncvc.org.