

# Expanding the Reach of Victim Services: Identifying Unmet Needs of Victims in Your State/Territory

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2019 VOCA National Training Conference  
August 14, 2019

# Who We Are

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Convener  
Partners  
Subject Matter Experts



# National Resource Center for Reaching Victims

The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims is a one-stop shop for victim service providers, culturally specific organizations, criminal justice professionals, and policymakers to get information and expert guidance to enhance their capacity to identify, reach, and serve all victims, especially those from communities that are underrepresented in healing services and avenues to justice.

**We are supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.**

# NRC Partners



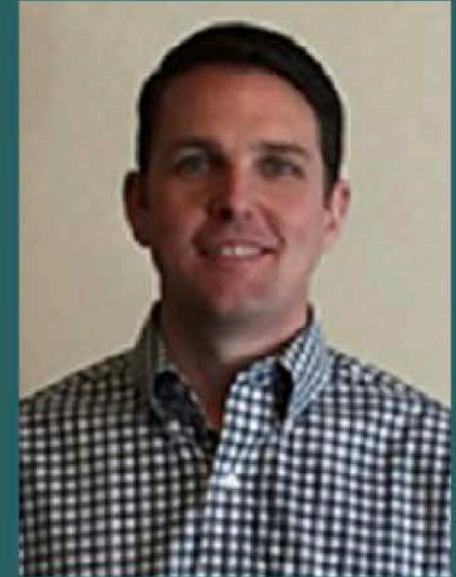
**Katie Block**

National Clearinghouse on  
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National Children's Advocacy  
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# NRC Partners (2)



**Zoe Flowers**  
Women of Color Network,  
Inc.



**Allison Hastings**  
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**Leo Martinez**  
Casa de Esperanza



# NRC Partners (3)



**Michael Munson**  
FORGE



**Richard Smith**  
Common Justice



**Olga Trujillo**  
Caminar Latino

## **NRC Partners Not Pictured**

- National Center for Victims of Crime



# What We Do

## **Creating a Network of Support**

- Support
- Connect
- Validate

# A Spotlight On...

- Children and youth
- People with disabilities and Deaf people
- Older adults
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender individuals
- Individuals with limited English proficiency and immigrants
- Individuals who are formerly incarcerated
- Boys and men of color
- Other historically marginalized communities
  - Native American/tribal/First Nations
  - Girls and women of color
- Other emerging categories of crime victims



# Today's Session

- Provide a snapshot of who is underserved, nationally, and why
- Examine barriers to accessing services and supports
- Discuss barriers to VOCA funding, especially for culturally-specific organizations
- Identify strategies to enhance the accessibility, equity, and inclusion of your grant-making

# Understanding who is underserved, barriers to receiving services, and implications for our work

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# Assessment Overview

- Goals
- What We Did
- Who Participated

# Key Activities

- Informational interviews (103)
- Listening sessions (60)
- Field survey
- Literature reviews
- Practice material reviews



1900+  
People  
Participated

# Key Findings

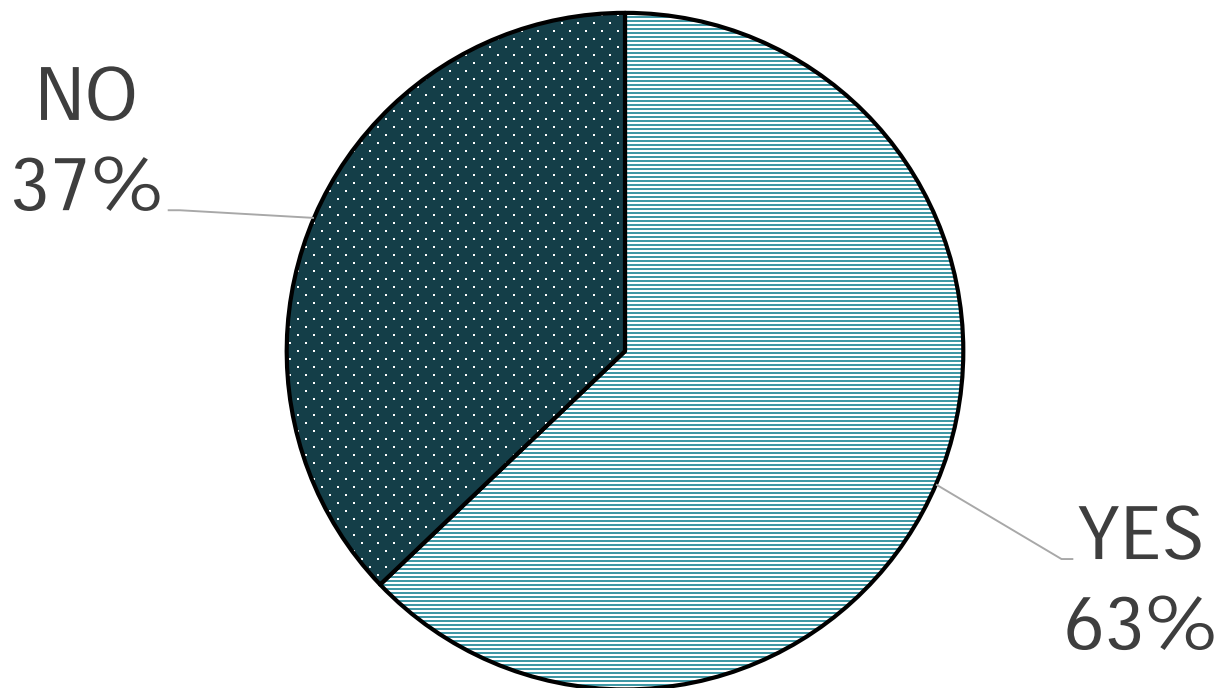




# Finding 1

## Growing awareness

# Has your program/organization identified victims from certain communities as underserved?



*“While our county is fairly homogenous, we know that we are not serving as many people of color, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, elderly, as we would like... We know that there are many stigmas and prejudices for different minority populations; we attempt to alleviate those, but we could always learn more in order to do better.”*



# Finding 2

## Fear and mistrust

*“The other issue is a lack of trust, and that lack of trust is completely rational because most of my clients have had lengthy interactions with systems that say they’re there to help, but they don’t, or in some cases, they make their lives worse.”*

Crime victims are often not met by advocates or service providers from their communities.

*We're a mostly white agency, and governmental. Many people hurt or harmed by crime will never feel comfortable approaching us for help.*

– Survey Respondent



Many survivors are also reluctant to reach out for help based on negative interactions they've had with systems and fears that they will lose more than they will gain by accessing services.

*Elders who are being abused by family members are much less likely to reach out, either because they do not know about the services or they do not want to complain about their family for fear of alienation, retaliation, or loss of independence.*

– Survey Respondent



# Finding 3

## Outreach vs. Engagement

*I think as an agency we haven't had a specific plan or made it an agency priority to do intentional outreach to a variety of marginalized populations, nor have we made it a part of our work culture before to have intentional, long-term trainings for our staff who provide direct services.*

– Crime Victim Advocate

# Language Matters

*In 20 years, I have never met someone who wasn't a crime victim, but they don't identify that way. The words we use are not the words our clients use.*

## Language Suggestions

- People harmed by violence
- Anyone affected by violence
- Survivors of trauma or harm

## Other Suggestions

- Emphasize the benefits of advocacy and services
- Center healing



# Finding 4

An abundance of barriers

## Critical Reasons Why Survivors are Underserved

Percent of Respondents Who Agree or Strongly Agree

Lack of public awareness of services available

65%

Lack of trust

61%

Physical barriers

61%

Cultural barriers

53%

Lack of services to meet the need

52%

Language/communication barriers

50%



Additional Critical Reasons Why Survivors are Underserved	Percent of Respondents Who Agree or Strongly Agree
Lack of staff knowledge on how to serve	49%
Eligibility restrictions	45%
Lack of collaboration with culturally-specific programs	43%
Programmatic barriers	35%
Staff bias/attitudinal barriers	24%



# Finding 5

Many competent programs shut out

# Many Competent Programs...

- May not label themselves as “victim services”
- Use approaches and provide services that are not recognized as victim services by mainstream funders and providers
- Provide healing work with little financial support
- Face barriers to getting VOCA funding
- Funding conditions constrain many programs

*“We are needing to fit survivors of trauma into particular categories dictated by our funding (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse). That limits our ability to serve all community members who have experienced trauma and are in need of supportive services (e.g., victims of community violence, for example, [or] people experiencing grief and loss).”*



# Finding 6

Limited to no partnerships



# Finding 7

Gaps exist between funding priorities/strategies and the need



*“I don't think our agency's clients completely represent the whole picture of who lives in our 17-county region and I think we have to make a concerted effort through training (ourselves), creating a diverse staff, and have an intentional and intersectional community outreach plan in order to make our services more accessible to all the people in our service area. I also believe we have to make our organization feel safe to all groups of people so they feel comfortable seeking services with us.”*

– Survey Respondent



# What is happening in your State/Territory?

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# Pair Share: What is happening in your State/Territory?

- How are the national trends around who is underserved playing out in your State/Territory? In what ways, is it different?
- Who has your State/territory identified as underserved?
- What steps has your State/territory used to identify who is underserved?

# Group Share

- What challenges have you encountered when assessing need and identifying who is underserved?
- What steps has your State/territory successfully used to identify who is underserved?



# Expanding the Reach of VOCA Funding

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## Barriers & Strategies

# Barriers to VOCA Funding

## Culturally-Specific Programs

- May not consider their work victim services
- Often not aware of VOCA funding
- May experience barriers to applying
  - Lack of experience with government grant-writing
  - Language barriers
  - Access barriers
  - Programmatic barriers
- May not have infrastructure to manage Federal funds

# Barriers to VOCA Funding

## Mainstream

- Many do not have trust and established relationships with underserved communities or the organizations that serve them, and don't have a framework for equitable partnerships
- Many programs have barriers that prevent survivors from underserved communities from receiving healing services that are culturally responsive and trauma-



# Strategies for Access & Inclusion


- **Assessment**

- Emphasize qualitative data and insights due to gaps in research.
- Partner with stakeholder organizations in underserved communities.
- Create accessible, inclusive opportunities for people to share needs, strengths, and effective strategies re: underserved communities.

- **Solicitation**

- Include priorities areas and services that center survivors from underserved communities.
- Include partnership requirements, especially for mainstream programs who's mission is not focused on a specific underserved community.
- Request information from applicants on strategies they will or plan to use to ensure culturally-responsive, trauma-informed strategies.
- Require funds be included to support language access and accommodations.






# Strategies for Access and Inclusion (2)

- **Outreach and Engagement**

- Allow more time for organizations to prepare applications.
- Ask community stakeholders to share solicitation.
- Host (accessible) pre-application informational sessions.
- Encourage applications from non-traditional agencies.

- **Application Requirements**

- Simplify
- Focus requirements on what's needed to assess success for reaching survivors from underserved survivors
- Allow multi-lingual and video-based submissions



# Strategies for Access and Inclusion (3)

- **Review Process**

- Expand pool of reviewers to include reviewers with specific expertise in serving survivors from underserved communities.
- Use a scoring framework that focuses on content and ideas, and not English grammar and delivery of ideas.
- Orient reviewers in equitable and inclusive review framework.
- Facilitate an accessible review process.

- **Post-Award**

- Monitoring
- Support



# Let's Continue the Discussion.

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