

Bridging Research and Practice to Expand Our Reach

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Goals

- Provide an overview of the needs assessment we conducted to better understand the factors contributing to some communities being underserved,
- Share the key findings from our assessment, and
- Discuss implications for our work and field.

About Us: The 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.

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (2)

We are working to:

- increase the number of victims who receive healing supports by understanding who is underrepresented and why some people access services while others don't;
- design and implement best practices for connecting people to the services they need; and
- empower and equip organizations to provide the most useful and effective services to crime victims.

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
- Men of color
- Other historically marginalized
 - Native American/tribal/First Nations
 - Religious minorities
 - Women of color
- Other emerging categories of crime victims

About Us: The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (3)

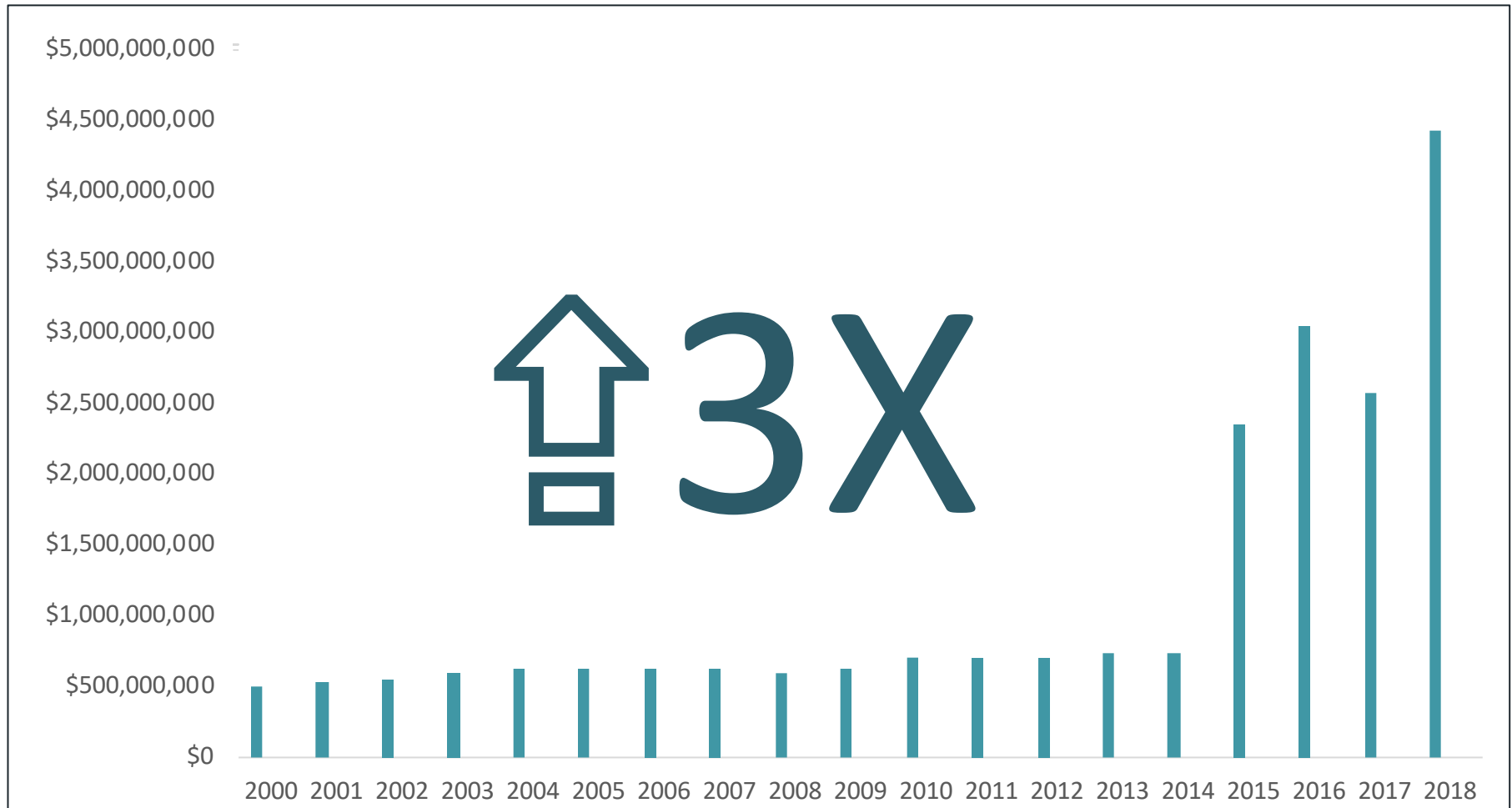
We are a collaboration among:

- Caminar Latino
- Casa de Esperanza
- Common Justice
- FORGE
- The National Children's Advocacy Center
- The National Center for Victims of Crime
- The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later in Life
- Vera Institute of Justice
- Women of Color Network, Inc

Background

The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims

Crime Victim Funds Cap by Year



13%

5%

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

Field Survey Respondents

1,519 responses

- 99% English
- 1% Spanish

About the respondents' agencies

- 38% Domestic Violence Agency
- 28.5% Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Center
- 13.75% Child Advocacy Center
- 10.38% Corrections
- 7.84% Law Enforcement
- 7.77% Culturally Specific
- 7% Adult Protective Services
- 4.88% Disability Services
- 1.1% Tribal

Field Survey Responses (2)

- 45% of agencies have 10 or fewer full-time staff
- 50% of respondents are in management/supervisory positions
- 50% of respondents were in the crime victims field 8 or more years

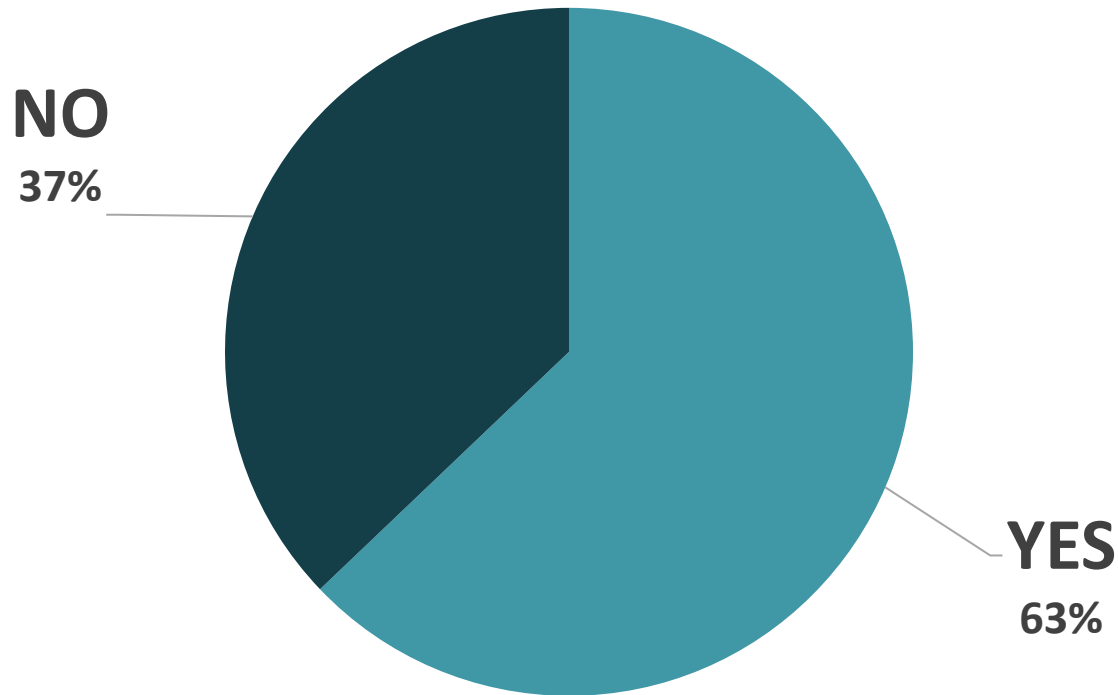
Key Findings

Survey Results

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%
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

Implications

What does this mean?

“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

Questions?

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