



The author(s) shown below used Federal funding provided by the U.S. Department of Justice to prepare the following resource:

Document Title: Twenty Years Later: National Study of Victim Compensation Program Trends, Challenges, and Successes

Author(s): Jeanette Hussemann, Malore Dusenbery, Jennifer Yahner, Robbie Dembo, Elena Navarro, Genevieve Citrin Ray, Joshua Fording

Document Number: 309364

Date Received: August 2024

Award Number: 15PNIJ-21-GG-00995-NONF

This resource has not been published by the U.S. Department of Justice. This resource is being made publicly available through the Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

FINAL REPORT

June 2024

Twenty Years Later: National Study of Victim Compensation Program Trends, Challenges, and Successes

This project was supported by Award No. 15PNIJ-21-GG-00995-NONF, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Presented by:

Jeanette Hussemann, *NORC at the University of Chicago*
Malore Dusenbery, *Urban Institute*
Jennifer Yahner, *Urban Institute*
Robbie Dembo, *NORC at the University of Chicago*
Elena Navarro, *NORC at the University of Chicago*
Genevieve Citrin Ray, *NORC at the University of Chicago*
Joshua Fording, *Urban Institute*

Presented to:

National Institute of Justice



About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective, nonpartisan research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created, and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration.



About the Urban Institute

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that provides data and evidence to help advance upward mobility and equity. We are a trusted source for changemakers who seek to strengthen decision-making, create inclusive economic growth, and improve the well-being of families and communities. For more than 50 years, Urban has delivered facts that inspire solutions—and this remains our charge today.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Abstract	4
Background	5
Research Goals.....	9
Research Methods.....	11
Research Findings.....	16
Summary	31
Bibliography.....	39
Appendix A. Comparison of National Survey of Victim Compensation Administrators, 2003 and 2023.....	43
Appendix B. National Survey of Victim Compensation Administrators	61
Appendix C. Victim Compensation Claimant Survey	79
Appendix D. Interview Questionnaire for Victim Compensation Staff.....	91
Appendix E. Interview Questionnaire for Community- and Legal System-Based Victim Assistance Providers	96

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the crime victims and their loved ones, compensation program administrators, and victim service providers who participated in this study, sharing their perspectives and experiences by survey or interview. We also appreciate support for this study from the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (NACVCB), the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA), and the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC).

Abstract

State victim compensation programs across the U.S. provide financial assistance to victims of crime to cover expenses associated with the financial, physical, and psychological burden of victimization. In 2022, these programs paid over \$230 million to support victims and their families. Given the prevalence of victimization and the high costs associated with crime, state victim compensation programs are essential to helping meet the needs of victims in general, and specifically in racially marginalized, low-income communities. In 2003, the Urban Institute published an NIJ-funded *National Evaluation of State Victims of Crime Act Assistance and Compensation Programs: Trends and Strategies for the Future* seminal report on state victim compensation and assistance programs. After almost 20 years, the goal of the current study was to update knowledge about victim compensation programs by administering a survey to victim compensation program administrators in each state and partnering with four states for a deep-dive assessment of their programs to examine how different victim compensation program structures, models, funding streams, and policies influence how programs operate and distribute compensation. Findings from the study indicate that compensation programs have not changed significantly since 2003, however victim compensation programs in the current study report providing more training to victim compensation program staff and having more written policies and procedures to guide decision-making. Also, victim compensation programs indicate that they are effectively meeting outreach, claims processing, decision-making, and financial planning goals. The most frequent needs reported by victim compensation programs to sustain and continue to meet their goals over the next 20 years include more staff to better support their programs, improved data collection and case management systems, and increased federal/VOCA and state funding.

Background

Despite a downward trend in victimization over the past few decades, victimization rates have increased over the past several years. For example, in 2022, there were over 6.5 million violent victimizations of people aged twelve and older, compared to 4.6 million in 2021, according to the National Crime Victimization Surveys (Thompson & Tapp, 2023). Further, law enforcement data reports a violent victimization rate of 9.7 per 1,000 for people aged twelve and older in 2022 compared to 7.5 per 1,000 in 2021 (Office for Victims of Crime, 2022).

Although crime affects all communities, some communities report disproportionately higher levels of victimization experiences, including people of color, individuals who suffer from mental illnesses and disabilities, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, and other marginalized and disadvantaged communities (Barry & Ghandnoosh, 2023). For example, research indicates that people with lower levels of income face a greater likelihood of experiencing violent victimization. Further, Black male youth who live in urban communities face the highest risk of violent victimization and have the least access to resources and victim assistance services (Maki & Warken, 2023; Warnken & Lauritsen, 2019).

The impacts of victimization can vary, but often include social, emotional, physical, and financial impacts, each with short and long-term implications. The nature of costs victims incur can also vary by the crime experienced, with survivors of vehicular crimes, child sexual abuse, and homicide accumulating some of the greatest expenses according to claims data examined by the research team. While some victims may face similar challenges and absorb comparable costs, diverse challenges can arise depending on the person and the victimization experienced. For example, some victims of crime may experience immediate consequences including property damage and physical injuries, while others may suffer longer-term consequences, including psychological trauma and long-term

employment loss. A seminal study on the cost of crime published in 1996 estimated that the annual cost of personal crime is \$105 billion in medical costs, lost earnings, and victim assistance programs; however, the estimated cost rises to \$405 billion annually when pain, suffering, and reduced quality of life are accounted for (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996). Yet, research indicates that people who receive compensation to cover at least some of the costs associated with the victimization are less likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological conditions that may stem from being a victim of crime (Alvidrez, et al., 2003).

To help support victims of crime, U.S. states and territories administer victim compensation programs to provide reimbursement for costs associated with victimization. Victim compensation programs were first established in 1965 in California. By 1972, thirty-two states had established victim compensation funds, and in 1984, the Crime Victims Fund was established at the federal level with the passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA), which provided federal guidance and reimbursement for state compensation programs. By 2003, all U.S. states and territories administered victim compensation programs (Office of Victims of Crime, 2020).

In 2022, the total payout by state victim compensation programs was \$234,778,746, which supported approximately 208,000 victims (Office of Victims of Crime, 2024¹). Federal funding from the Crime Victims Fund supports about 30 percent of state victim compensation programs, with states responsible for supporting the remaining 70 percent of funding. Funding for the Crime Victims Fund comes from federal fines and fees, and as a result, the amount in the Fund fluctuates. In an effort to stabilize the Fund by requiring monetary payments from federal deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements to go into the Fund, in 2021, Congress passed the VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021 (H.R. 1652, 2021).

¹ See OVC Formula Chart: FY 2024 Crime Victims Fund Compensation Allocation (ojp.gov). In 2018, victim compensation programs paid over \$400 million to support victims and their families.

The goals of the victim compensation programs are generally similar across states; however, specific eligibility criteria and allowable expenses may vary. Further, some expenses incurred may be allowable by the state (e.g., loss of essential property), but not eligible for federal reimbursement.² Eligible expenses typically include expenses related to physical, dental, and mental health, funerals, and burial expenses, and loss of wages. Victim compensation programs are a payer of last resort, meaning they are intended to cover out-of-pocket expenses not paid by any other reimbursement source, including health insurance, civil suits, state disability insurance, worker's compensation, and so forth.

While eligibility to receive victim compensation may vary, there are many similarities, and all victims are eligible for compensation regardless of whether the crime falls under state, federal, tribal, or military jurisdictions (NACVCB, 2014b). Also, most states currently require that victims report the crime to law enforcement within a specific time frame; that an application for compensation is submitted within a certain time frame (i.e., typically within two years); that the claimant cooperates with law enforcement and prosecution; and that the claimant has not participated in the criminal offense that resulted in the victimization (NACVCB, 2023). Some states further restrict eligibility based on criminal history (Evans, 2014).

Notably, in 2024, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) proposed the first revisions to the VOCA Compensation Guidelines in over 20 years with intentional focus on improving diverse victims' access to compensation and equity of the program's administration (Rose, 2024). These changes follow reports by victims, advocacy organizations, and investigatory news reports that highlighted racial

² Eligible, reimbursable expenses and the VOCA Compensation Guidelines were last revised in 2001. During the writing of this report, the U.S. Department of Justice proposed changes to the guidelines and requirements for the Victim Compensation Grant Program. A decision regarding a final proposed rule change is outstanding. The proposed rule change was introduced to promote access and equity and reduce the number of denials. Specifically, the proposed rule would broaden allowable reimbursable medical and mental health expenses, specifically to account for individuals living in rural areas and to be more responsive to Tribal communities, clarify statutory requirements, as well as broaden the definitions of eligible claimants beyond a close familial relationship to the victim and of reimbursable property damage expenses related to an individual's safety. (See [Federal Register :: Subject: Victims of Crime Act \(VOCA\) Victim Compensation Grant Program](#) and [Justice Department proposes major changes to address disparities in state crime victim funds | AP News](#))

disparities in compensation and services across states (e.g., Lauer & Catalini, 2024; Maki & Warnken, 2023; Warnken & Lauritsen, 2019). Disparities are in large part driven by the disproportionate impact of the legal system on People of Color and their greater exposure to homicide victimization. Accordingly, OVC's new rule will restrict the use of contributory conduct and cooperation with law enforcement as reasons for compensation claim denial (Ruebman et al., 2024). Several states have already begun to change their own compensation rules formally through legislative changes (e.g., Dusenbery et al., 2024; Victim Compensation Reform Act, 2024).

In 2020, over 230,000 people applied for victim compensation.³ Among the applications received, 82 percent were the primary victims whose victimization was the basis for the application, and 18 percent were secondary or indirect victims⁴ (Hamilton, 2022). Of the primary victims who applied for compensation, 64 percent self-reported as female and 36 percent as male. Approximately one-quarter self-reported as Black or African American or Hispanic or Latino (27 percent and 26 percent, respectively), and over one-third self-reported as White, Non-Latino or Caucasian (38 percent). Half of the primary victims self-reported as being between the ages of 25 – 59 (50 percent).

Seventy-three percent of applications for victim compensation were approved in 2020, with 27 percent denied. The most common reasons that compensation programs denied applications related to the application being incomplete, the claim or crime being ineligible for compensation, a failure to cooperate or report the crime to law enforcement, contributory misconduct, or the application not being filed within the allowable timeframe (Hamilton, 2022; see OVC FY 2020 Victim Compensation Performance Report). An independent report by the Associated Press in 2023

³ Overall, the number of applications were down in 2020 due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic complicated programs ability to conduct outreach to victims and potential victims as well as the number of volunteers who support compensation programs. Victims were also reporting crimes less frequently during the pandemic for fear of contracting COVID-19.

⁴ A secondary victim is "a person who is impacted by a crime but who is not the direct victim of the crime; this is often a friend, family member, or significant other of a direct victim, or a member of the victim's workplace or community." (see Victims of Crime Act: Victim Compensation Formula Grant Program Fiscal Year 2020 Data Analysis Report (ojp.gov))

(Lauer & Catalini, 2023) argued that the race of the victim may indirectly be a factor on whether a claim for compensation is approved or denied. Notably, their research found that claimants who identified as Black were disproportionately denied compensation in 19 of 23 states who provided data. Specifically, Black victims were almost three times as likely to be denied compensation for reasons such as ‘contributory misconduct’, where compensation program staff determined that victims participated in or led to their own victimization (Lauer & Catalini, 2024).⁵

Examining factors related to the accessibility and use of state victim compensation programs was one of the core goals of the current study, as described next. Variation in where state compensation programs are housed and how they are structured empowers different types of decisionmakers and incorporates various payment processes, staffing, and requirements. It is important to understand how these different models and policies operate given the essential role compensation plays in helping victims recover from crime. Further, research that incorporates the perspectives of program staff, community victim assistance providers, and claimants—such as the current study—is critical to examining these issues and aligns with the investments OVC and NIJ have made in recent years to understand the effectiveness of victim compensation programs.

Research Goals

In 2003, Urban published the NIJ-funded *National Evaluation of State Victims of Crime Act Assistance and Compensation Programs: Trends and Strategies for the Future* seminal report on state victim compensation and assistance programs (Newmark et al., 2003). Through a national survey of compensation programs, as well as interviews with compensation program administrators and victims

⁵ These findings along with other evidence encouraged OVC to propose a rule change in 2024 that encouraged state victim compensation programs to specify what constituted as contributory misconduct and the process used to determine whether a claimant participated in contributory misconduct to reduce subjectivity and racial disproportionality.

who claimed compensation, this study provided the first in-depth understanding of the efficiencies and effectiveness of victim compensation programs and VOCA assistance programs in their support of victims of crime. After almost 20 years, the goal of the current study was to update knowledge about victim compensation programs. This study examined the effectiveness, utilization, and comprehensiveness of state victim compensation programs in meeting victims' needs, including the strengths, barriers, and challenges of policies and funding models, and best practices for the field.

Research questions that guided this study included:

1. How are victim compensation programs structured, operated, funded, and utilized today? And, in what important ways have their structure, operations, funding, and utilization changed over the past 20 years?
2. What key barriers and challenges do victim compensation programs face today, and what have been the most notable barriers and challenges during the past 20 years?
3. How do victim compensation program directors, funders, service providers, and claimants measure “effectiveness” and “success”? And, what models, policies, and/or practices of victim compensation programs have been effective and achieved such success today and/or during the past 20 years?
4. What are the characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of individual claimants who request victim compensation? To what extent are their compensation needs met by other sources of funding, such as private or public insurance?
5. Looking at the next 20 years of victim compensation, what do program directors and stakeholders perceive as most critical to improving and/or sustaining the performance of victim compensation programs? What federal and state policy changes might be needed to support the performance of victim compensation programs?

Research Methods

This study relied on qualitative and quantitative data collection with victim compensation program administrators, stakeholders, and claimants of victim compensation to answer the research questions that guided this study. Quantitative data collection included a National Survey of Victim Compensation Programs with U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam, and a survey with claimants in Arizona, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia, as well as analyses of multiple years of claims data from the same four states. Qualitative data collection included semi-structured interviews with victim compensation staff and community- and legal system-based victim service providers in Arizona, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia.

National Survey of Victim Compensation Programs

The *National Survey of Victim Compensation Programs* was administered to victim compensation program administrators in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam (n = 53) (see **Appendix B** for the national survey instrument). Survey development focused on updating the survey that Urban administered to victim compensation program administrators in 2003 to allow for comparisons across time. Survey questions focused on victim compensation policies, practices, utilization, effectiveness, emerging issues, impact of state and federal funding levels, and areas for future development. Prior to administration, the survey was reviewed by the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (NACVCB), the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA), and the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC).

The *National Survey of Victim Compensation Programs* was administered online via Qualtrics between April 2023 and February 2024 and took about 30 minutes to complete. Email invitations with individualized links were shared between April and June 2023. Beginning in July 2023, phone outreach was conducted with nonrespondents. Contact information for victim compensation program

administrators was provided by NACVCB. A total of 49 respondents (47 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) completed the survey, resulting in a 92% response rate.⁶

Victim Compensation Program Performance Report Data

In addition to national survey data from victim compensation programs, Performance Management Tool (PMT) data for each compensation program was collected from OVC for all compensation programs across the U.S., including the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico. PMT data includes aggregate data submitted quarterly and annually to OVC to provide information on the number of applications received, approved, and denied by compensation programs, as well as victim demographics, and expenses paid. PMT data was acquired for the years of 2007 to 2022 to allow for a national trend analysis, which will be published in a forthcoming journal article.

Victim Compensation Claimant Survey

The *Victim Compensation Claimant Survey* was administered to individuals who filed for victim compensation in Arizona, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia (See **Appendix C** for the claimant survey instrument). Survey development also focused on updating the claimant survey administered in the 2003 study, and included questions about the victim, crime type, expenses associated with the victimization, awareness of and experiences with filing for compensation, the process and outcome of filing a claim, perspectives of program staff, and recommendation for improvements. The survey took about 15 minutes to complete and was administered to individuals who filed a request for compensation in their respective state within the year prior to survey administration. Everyone who completed the survey received a \$30 incentive for their participation in the study.

⁶ Ohio, Kentucky, Vermont, and Guam did not complete the national survey.

Delaware and West Virginia

In June 2023, Delaware and West Virginia provided case-level claimant contact information, including name, mailing address, email, and phone number, for individuals who filed a claim within the past year.⁷ In Delaware, a total of 928 claimants were included in the study and received an invitation to complete the survey. In West Virginia, a total of 404 claimants were included in the study and received an invitation to complete the survey.

All claimants were initially mailed an invitation packet which included an invitation letter with a link to the online claimant survey, a paper copy of the claimant survey, and a pre-paid reply envelope for returning the survey. In week 2, claimants received an email invitation to facilitate ease of accessing the online link to the survey. In week 3, a reminder postcard with a QR code was mailed to all claimants. Between July and September 2023, emailed invitations continued to be shared with nonrespondents. A total of 272 (29 percent) claimants completed the survey in Delaware, and a total of 125 (31 percent) of claimants completed the survey in West Virginia.

Arizona and New York

Arizona and New York declined to share claimant contact information with NORC to facilitate direct outreach to potential respondents due to their policies regarding confidentiality and information sharing. To support the administration of the survey, each state mailed invitation letters with a link to the survey to claimants along with the decision letters about their claims for victim compensation. In New York, the victim compensation program mailed survey invitation letters to claimants monthly. Between July and October 2023, 2,427 claimants were mailed invitation letters, and 104 (4 percent) completed the survey.

⁷ Prior to sharing identifying information with NORC, the Delaware victim compensation program shared a letter with claimants providing them with the opportunity to *opt-out* of the study and the West Virginia victim compensation program shared a letter with claimants providing them with the opportunity to *opt-in* to the study.

Because victim compensation is administered at the county-level in Arizona, each county managed the mailing of the invitation letters. However, county victim compensation boards do not always meet monthly to make decisions on victim compensation requests; therefore, the frequency in which survey invitation letters were shared with claimants varied across the state. Due to the method by which the survey was administered in Arizona, participation rates were particularly low, and we lacked information about when and if survey letters were shared with claimants. To increase response rates, the incentive was increased from \$30 to \$40 and a QR code was added to the invitation letter; however, these adjustments had no impact on responses. In sum, between July 2023 and February 2024, a total of 1,053 claimants were mailed invitation letters and only 32 (3 percent) completed the survey.

Summary of Survey Response Rates

The total number of *Victim Compensation Claimant Survey* invitations, completed surveys, and response rates are summarized in **Table 1** below. NORC conducted survey representativeness analyses to compare survey respondents with those invited in Delaware, New York, and West Virginia. These analyses showed some differences by race and gender that are described in the state briefs published by Urban.

Table 1. Claimant Survey Responses

State	Survey Invites	Survey Completes	Response Rate
Arizona	1,053	32	3%
Delaware	928	272	29%
New York	2,427	104	4%
West Virginia	404	125	30%

Semi-Structured Interviews

For the deep-dive state analyses in Arizona, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia, semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff who worked in the victim compensation program as well as victim assistance providers based in community and legal system settings. The interview protocols are attached as **Appendix D** and **Appendix E**. In each state, the compensation program leads shared contact information for categories of professionals we identified as relevant (e.g., claims coordinators, claims investigators, commission/board members, victim advocates, law enforcement advocates). Upwards of three email invitations were sent to approximately 15 professionals in each state, requesting their participation in a voluntary 60-minute virtual interview. The number of professionals interviewed, and response rates are as follows: 14 of 16 interviews were conducted in Arizona (88 percent response rate); 12 of 15 interviews were conducted in Delaware (80 percent response rate); 14 of 16 interviews were conducted in New York (88 percent response rate); and 6 of 16 interviews were conducted in West Virginia (38 percent response rate). Thematic coding was used to synthesize qualitative information from these interviews.

Claims Data

Compensation program leads in Arizona, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia provided several recent years of compensation claim data. **Table 2** shows a summary of the years covered, average annual number of claims, and average payment across years, for each state. The specific information provided varied across states, but generally included information about claims (i.e., filing date, victimization, and demographics), decisions (i.e., decision date, decision outcome, and reason for denial), and payments (i.e., payment date and amount). The Urban team cleaned, merged, and analyzed the data using the programming language R, and then conducted longitudinal comparisons of key frequencies and descriptive statistics such as t-tests and analyses of variance to compare means; Kruskal-Wallis tests and Dunn's tests to compare distributions of data between sub-groups; chi-square

tests to compare cross-tabulations and frequencies; and ordinary least squares and logistic regressions to model claim outcomes, payment amounts, and processing time. Analyses of the claims data are described in individual briefs published separately by the Urban-NORC team.

Table 2. Claims Data Provided

State	Years Covered	Average Annual Number of Claims	Average Payment across Years
Arizona	2019—2021	1,785	\$3,026
Delaware	2020—2022	1,247	\$2,882
New York	2019—2022	8,149	\$2,392
West Virginia	2017—2021	400	\$5,180

Research Findings

In the following sections, we summarize study findings in response to the following research questions:

1. How are victim compensation programs structured, operated, funded, and utilized today? And, in what important ways have their structure, operations, funding, and utilization changed over the past 20 years?
2. How do victim compensation program directors, funders, service providers, and claimants measure “effectiveness” and “success”? And, what models, policies, and/or practices of victim compensation programs have been effective and achieved such success today and/or during the past 20 years?

3. Looking at the next 20 years of victim compensation, what do program directors and stakeholders perceive as most critical to improving and/or sustaining the performance of victim compensation programs? What federal and state policy changes might be needed to support the performance of victim compensation programs?

Research questions 2 and 4 focused on barriers and challenges of victim compensation programs and victim compensation claimants, which will be the focus of practitioner-friendly briefs published by the NORC-Urban research team (see Navarro et al., 2024 and Dembo et al., 2024). The deep-dive evaluation briefs published by the Urban-NORC team (see Dusenbery et al, 2024a-c and Yahner et al, 2024) will also address all five research questions at the state-level.

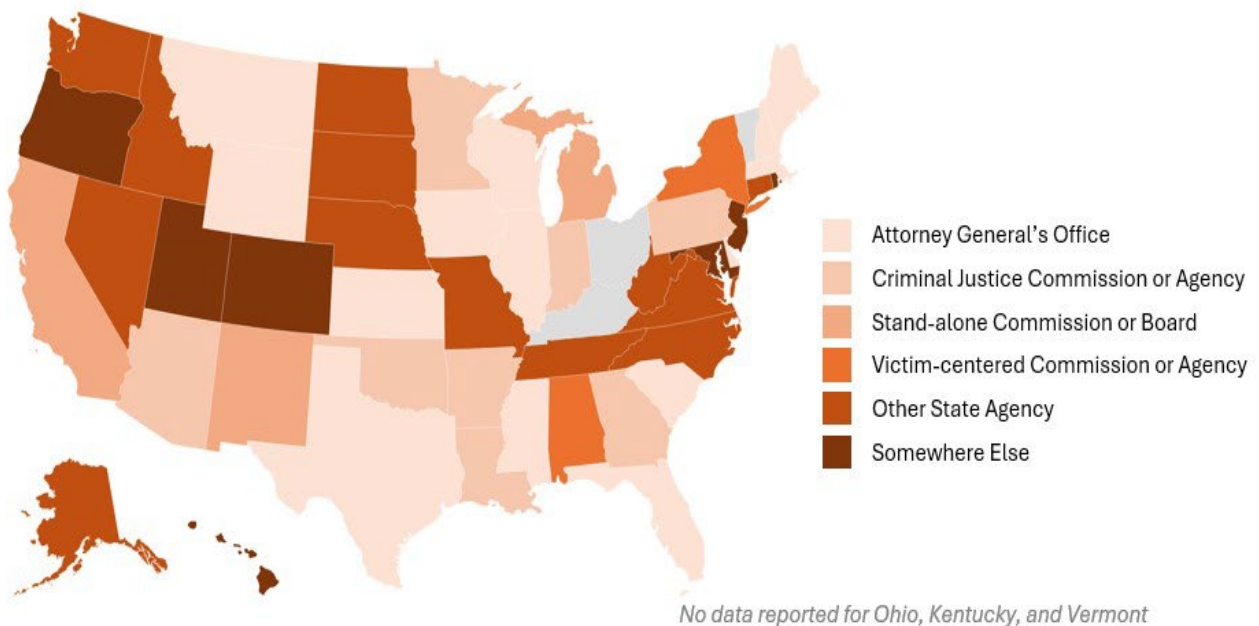
Victim Compensation Program Administration

To learn about how victim compensation programs are structured, operated, funded, and utilized today, a *National Survey of Victim Compensation Programs* was administered to victim compensation program administrators in 53 U.S. states and territories, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Responses were received from 49 states and territories, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Ohio, Kentucky, Vermont, and Guam chose not to participate in the survey.

Results of the survey indicate that approximately a quarter of victim compensation programs are housed in the Attorney General's office ($n = 14$) or in another state agency ($n = 13$), and 16 percent are housed in a criminal justice commission or agency ($n = 8$). Two programs—Arizona and Colorado—operate under a decentralized program structure that empowers local-level decision-making regarding claims eligibility and payments. Compensation programs in the four deep-dive states are situated in different agencies, including the state attorney general's office (Delaware), county attorney offices (Arizona), victim services agency (New York), and state legislature (West Virginia).

Professionals in each state saw both advantages and disadvantages to these locations. For example, being housed in a prosecutorial office can make accessing law enforcement reports more efficient but can cause barriers for communities that distrust law enforcement. By contrast, programs in victim-centered agencies may have closer partnerships with victim assistance providers but experience more inefficiencies accessing law enforcement documents.

Figure 1. Where Victim Compensation Programs are Housed

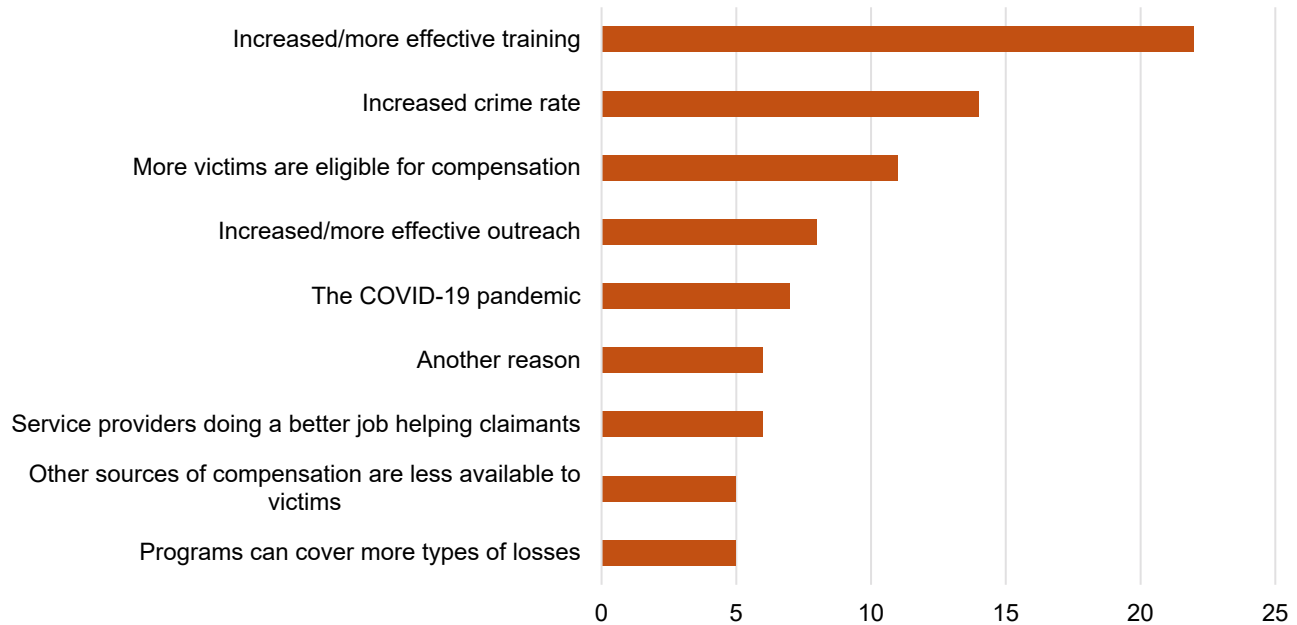


Most victim compensation program administrators have been in their position for three to five years (29 percent), and compensation programs employ an average of 18 full-time staff, although this number varied widely depending on the size of the state. For example, California employs 212 and Texas employs 105 full-time staff, compared to Maine and Wyoming, and other smaller or more rural states, which each employ three full-time staff, respectively. When asked whether programs had too few, too many, or just the right number of staff, 65 percent reported that they felt as if they did not have enough staff to support the program (n = 32). (See **Appendix A** for tables with survey data.)

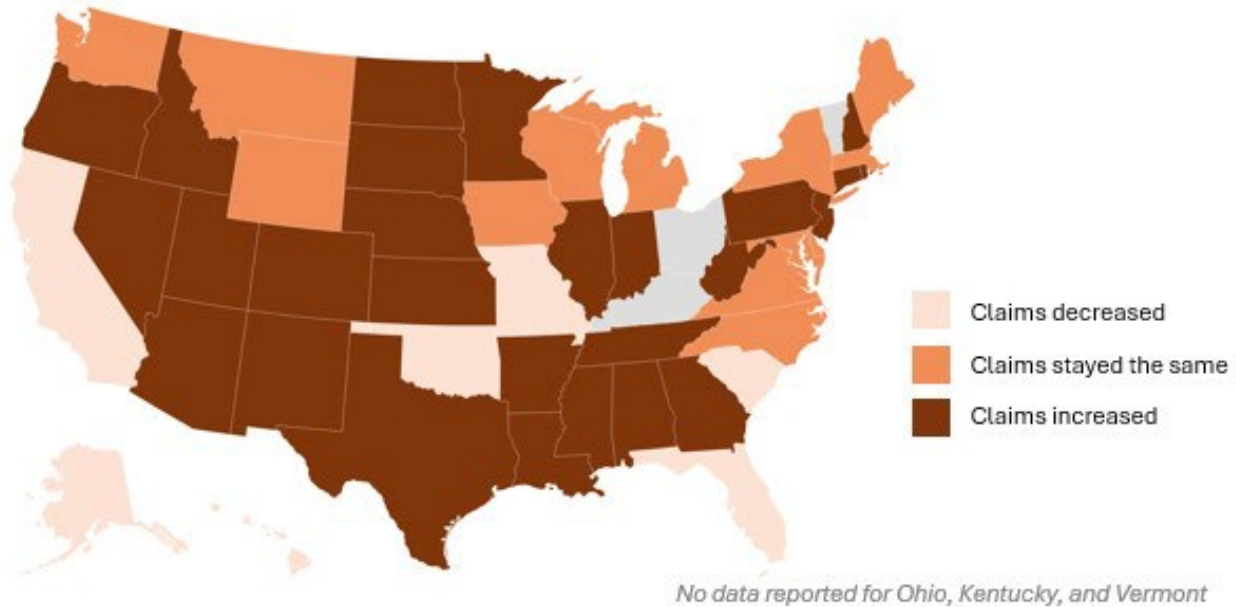
According to program administrators, over 95 percent of victim compensation program staff are trained on both the victim compensation program as well as victimization issues. When compared to data collected in the 2003 study, the percentage of compensation staff who receive training, either from the victim compensation program or from outside sources has increased. For example, in 2003, program administrators indicated that 85 percent of compensation program staff received training on victimization issues, whereas 96 percent of compensation program staff reportedly receive training on victimization issues in 2023. In both 2023 and 2003, approximately half of victim compensation programs designated a person(s) to serve as a liaison with victims to answer phone calls, complaints, answer questions, assist in filling out forms, and refer victims to other agencies as needed.

Claims and Funding

Twenty-eight victim compensation programs indicated that claims have increased over the past three years, compared to eight programs that indicated that claims have decreased, and 13 programs that indicated that claims have stayed the same. When asked why programs felt that claims have increased over the past three years, the most common response was increased or more effective training with criminal justice workers, victim service providers, and other community providers on victim compensation programs (n = 22). The second and third most common response was that crime rates have increased (n = 14) and changes in statutory eligibility requirements that have made more victims eligible to receive compensation (n = 11).

Figure 2. Reasons for Increase in Claims (n = 28)

Programs that indicated claims have decreased over the past three years most frequently indicated that the reasons for the decrease were changes in statutory eligibility requirement that have resulted in fewer victims being eligible for compensation (n = 8) and statutory eligibility requirements that have reduced the types of losses that compensation programs can cover (n = 8). Several states also felt that the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the number of claims that they received over the past three years (n = 6), although many respondents noted that the pandemic forced programs to update their application so that it was accessible on-line.

Figure 3. Where Claims Have Increased, Decreased, and Stayed the Same

When asked whether victim compensation programs had enough funds to pay for claims in the past year, over 80 percent indicated that they did have enough funding (n = 39). Additionally, when asked whether their revenue exceeded their expenditures in the prior year, 60 percent indicated that their revenue did not exceed their expenditures (n = 28). Similarly, over 80 percent of victim compensation program in 2003 indicated they had sufficient funds to pay for compensation claims, and the majority also indicated their revenues did not exceed their expenditures in the year prior to participating in the survey. From interviews conducted in the deep-dive states, we know that even when a compensation program reported having enough funds to pay for claims, there can still be a strong need for funds to cover administrative costs and hire more staff—something shared by interviewed staff in Arizona, Delaware, and New York. Further, as OVC considers federal rule changes that may reduce barriers to compensation eligibility for additional victims, increased funding to states may be necessary to process, investigate, and assess eligibility for these additional claims.

Claims Processing and Decision-Making

Over half of victim compensation programs consider the point at which an application is first received into the office to be the point at which processing time begins. In this case, the application does not need to be complete, or signed or notarized (where required) (n = 26). Time spent on applications by victim compensation staff most often includes: 1) securing or waiting for verification of losses or expenses (e.g., provider bills, employment recorders, medical reporting, or counseling and treatment plans); 2) securing or waiting for police reports or verification that a crime was committed; and 3) assisting and waiting for victims to provide information needed to complete the application before it is formally processed.

In cases when documentation is missing, over half of victim compensation programs will close the file after a certain period (n = 25). In 25 percent of states, the claim is either processed with the information received or the claim is held, but never closed (n = 12). This process has not changed substantially since 2003, when 40 percent of compensation programs also indicated that they will close a file after a period.

Three common sets of documents that are often needed to complete an application for victim compensation are records from law enforcement indicating that a crime occurred; information from employers reflecting time lost on the job because of injury or personal loss due to victimization; and services received through community providers. Obtaining records required to complete an application for compensation can be a burdensome task for people who may be experiencing loss, injury, or

trauma related to a victimization. According to information provided by compensation programs, almost three-quarters of compensation programs assume the responsibility of obtaining verification records from law enforcement (n = 36). Ten programs indicated that they work with the claimant to obtain law enforcement records, and one program indicated that it was the responsibility of the claimant to obtain records from law enforcement. In contrast, over half of the programs indicated that they work with claimants to obtain information from employers (n = 28) and services providers (n = 25), versus taking on the responsibility of obtaining the records themselves; however, in many cases the claimant may need to be involved to authorize releases of information in cases where personal information will be exchanged.

Figure 4. Responsible for Obtaining Verification: Law Enforcement

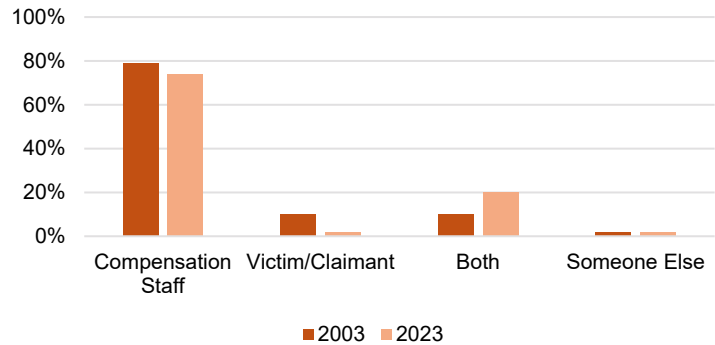


Figure 5. Responsible for Obtaining Verification: Employers

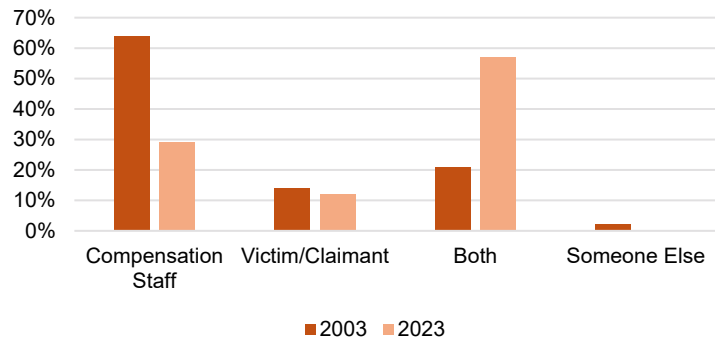
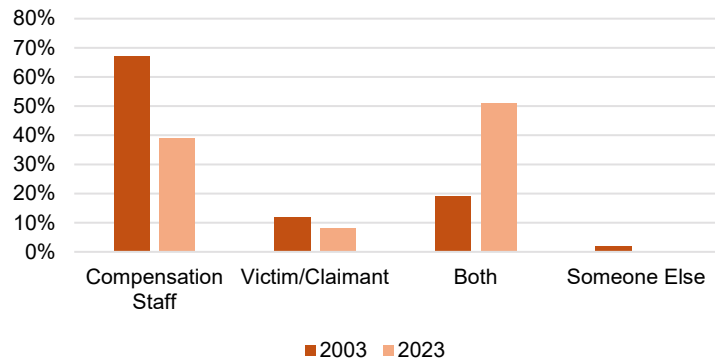


Figure 6. Responsible for Obtaining Verification: Service Providers



How decisions are made regarding whether to approve a claim for victim compensation varies across programs. In 22 programs, the compensation program staff are the decision-makers for whether a claim for victim compensation is approved. In other states, either a program administrator, director, or a board decides whether a claim is approved. Decisions by compensation staff and the program

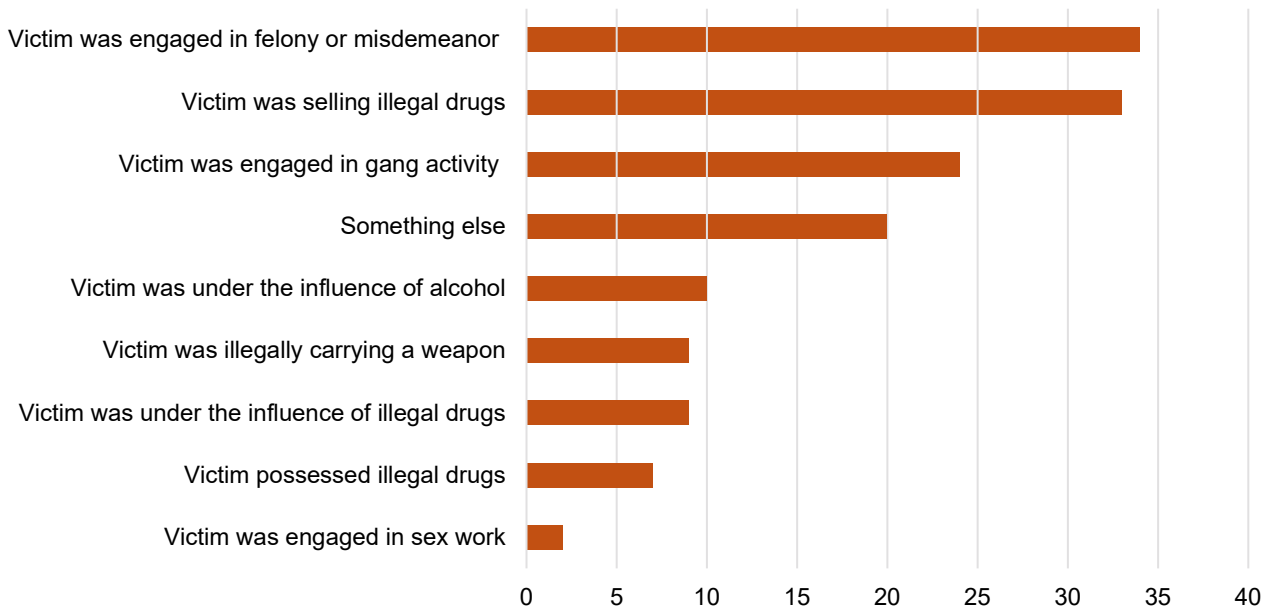
director can be made on an ongoing basis, compared to decisions made by a board that meets on a set schedule to decide on claims processed in that period. However, boards made up of local-level, relevant professionals may have greater understanding of the specific victimization needs, services, and costs in the community.

Program Eligibility

While the goals of victim compensation programs may be similar across states and territories, specific eligibility criteria and allowable expenses can vary. For example, only 35 percent of programs indicated that victims who experience a crime in another state are eligible to claim compensation in the state where they reside (n = 17), whereas 69 percent of programs indicated that victims who experience a crime outside the U.S. are eligible for compensation in the state where they reside (n = 34). In 80 percent of states (n = 39), victims are required to report crimes to law enforcement, and in 90 percent of states, victims are required to cooperate with law enforcement on an investigation (n = 44).

Contributory conduct can also impact whether a claim for compensation is awarded, denied, or partially awarded.⁸ Contributory conduct is the assessment of whether a victim participated in a crime or activity that led to their own victimization. Ninety-four percent (n = 46) of compensation programs indicated that they have established written policies or procedures that guide decision-making in cases that involve contributory conduct or illegal behavior. Conduct that most often leads to full or partial denial of a compensation claim is the determination that a victim was engaged in a felony or misdemeanor at the time of the victimization (n = 34) as well as if the victim was selling drugs (n = 33). Twenty-four states also indicated that that a claim may be fully or partially denied if the victim was engaged in gang activity at the time of the victimization.

⁸ As mentioned, the Office for Victims of Crime is currently proposing changes to federal rules regarding consideration of contributory conduct.

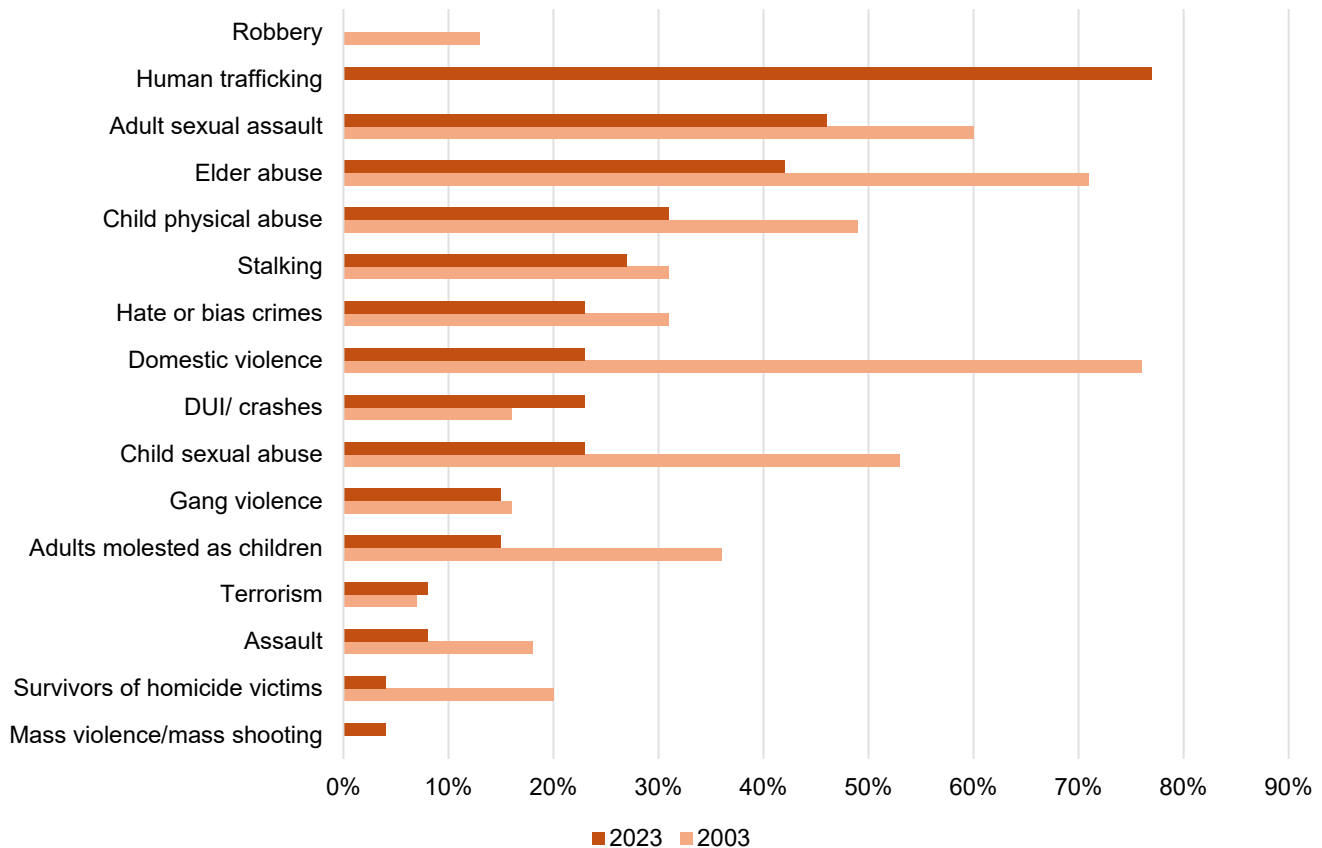
Figure 7. Contributory Conduct Leading to Full or Partial Denial of Claim

Victims Served

Analysis of data in deep-dive states indicated that victims who experienced assault were the most common type of claim received by the compensation programs. Over half of respondents to the national survey indicated that certain types of crimes and groups of people, based on demographic or geographic characteristics, apply for compensation less frequently than others. This finding has remained consistent over the past 20 years when many compensation programs also indicated that they perceived that the benefits of the victim compensation program were not reaching all victims of crime. Additionally, many of the victims that compensation programs were concerned were under-served in 2003 were highlighted as continuing to be under-served in 2023.

In the 2023 survey, victim compensation programs reported that victims who experienced human trafficking (79 percent), adult sexual assault (50 percent), elder abuse (46 percent), child physical abuse (29 percent), and stalking (29 percent) were less likely to apply for compensation. When asked why some crime victims do not apply for compensation, over three-quarters of state administrators indicated that victims were not aware of the compensation program. Other top reasons cited for not using the program included emotional trauma, embarrassment, mistrust of authority, and residing in rural communities where there may be less services or transportation available to victims of crime. Additionally, non-English speaking victims (60 percent), LGBTQIA+ victims (53 percent), and victims from Indigenous communities who live on and off reservations were also perceived as under-using compensation programs.

Figure 8. Crime Victims Under-Using Programs, by Crime Type



Victim Compensation Program Performance and Sustainability

Data on victim compensation program effectiveness and the future needs of compensation programs was collected via a set of questions that asked program administrators to provide their perspective on how effective they felt their program has been at achieving four goals and what their program would need to achieve and sustain the goals over the next 20 years. These goals were guided by the program standards outlined by NACVCB almost three decades ago (NACVCB, 1996), but with which all program administrators agreed still resonate today. These goals include:

Goal 1. Effective Outreach, Training, and Communication: To inform as many victims as possible about compensation and communicate effectively and sensitively with victims and with groups that work with them or on their behalf.

Goal 2. Expedient and Accurate Claims Processing: To process applications as quickly, accurately, and efficiently as possible so that eligible victims may receive funds promptly and in accordance with compensation regulations.

Goal 3. Good Decision-Making: To make fair, consistent, and prompt claims payment decisions in accordance with statutory requirements and in furtherance of the basic mission to serve crime victims.

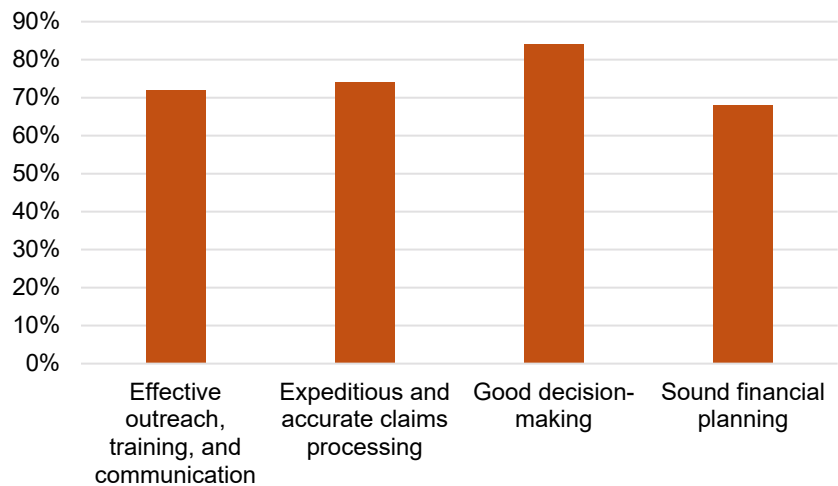
Goal 4. Sound Financial Planning: To ensure that sufficient funds exist for the compensation program to pay all eligible applicants for all compensable costs.

Program Effectiveness

When asked how strongly programs agreed or disagreed that their compensation goals aligned with the outreach, claims processing, decision-making, and financial planning goals outlined by NACVCB, all programs either strongly agreed or agreed that their program goals aligned. When asked how effective their program has been at achieving each goal over the past three years, most programs indicated that they had been either very effective or effective at achieving their goals. Specifically, as shown in **Figure 9**, 72 percent of victim compensation programs felt that they had been either very effective or effective at achieving their outreach, training, and communication goal; 74 percent felt that they had been

very effective or effective at achieving their claims processing goal; 84 percent felt that they had been very effective or effective at achieving their decision-making goal; and, 68 percent felt that they had been either very effective or effective at achieving their financial planning goal.⁹

Figure 9. Program Effectiveness, by Goal



Within the four deep-dive states, we also asked the interviewed program staff and victim assistance providers how they defined the effectiveness and success of their state’s victim compensation programs. The research team did not describe the NACVCB standards to them so as to

⁹ Six programs indicated that they had been either ineffective or very ineffective at achieving their outreach, training, and communication goal; six programs indicated that they had been either ineffective or very ineffective at achieving their claims processing goal; one program indicated that they had been ineffective at achieving their decision-making goal; and seven programs indicated that they had been ineffective at achieving their financial planning goal. Between three to five states responded “I don’t know” or did not respond to each question.

understand their spontaneous perceptions. The responses described in 2024 still largely aligned with the NACVCB program standards compiled almost 30 years previously, with some exceptions. Instead of citing effective outreach, training, and communication as a goal, professionals framed their state's goal as improving awareness of the program and the accessibility of financial recovery to diverse victims. The second goal of expeditious or efficient processing of claims still resonated with interviewed professionals today. In addition to "good decision-making," which included consistency and fairness as cited by professionals today, they also described the importance of transparency to victims about decision-making processes and timeline. Instead of explicitly citing financial planning, interviewed professionals said their ideal compensation program would be able to meet the financial needs of all victims across their state, with no gaps in coverage. One additional goal also emerged in interviews—that of providing a compensation program response using trauma-informed approaches. Compensation and service professionals emphasized the importance of using an empathetic and respectful approach when interacting with victims and families.

Responses from interviewed professionals regarding the degree of success their state's program had been achieving varied and is described in the individual briefs published separately by the Urban-NORC team. Overall, compensation staff and victim assistance providers had a range of perspectives of their state's ability to meet their definition of a successful program, including a trauma-informed approach. However, many thought the programs were providing a valuable resource to victims in need despite limited staff and funding available to support program operations, saying that they believed their state was "doing the best they could" to meet these goals given their available resources.

Program Sustainability

Thinking towards the future, programs were asked to consider what they needed to achieve and sustain each of the four goals on the survey. Responses varied depending on the focus of the goal but

provided insight as the field moves forward to sustain support for victims of crime. Collectively, the most frequent needs reported by compensation programs included more staff to better support victim compensation programs, improved data collection and case management systems, and increased federal/VOCA and state funding. More specifically, the top three needs across each goal include:

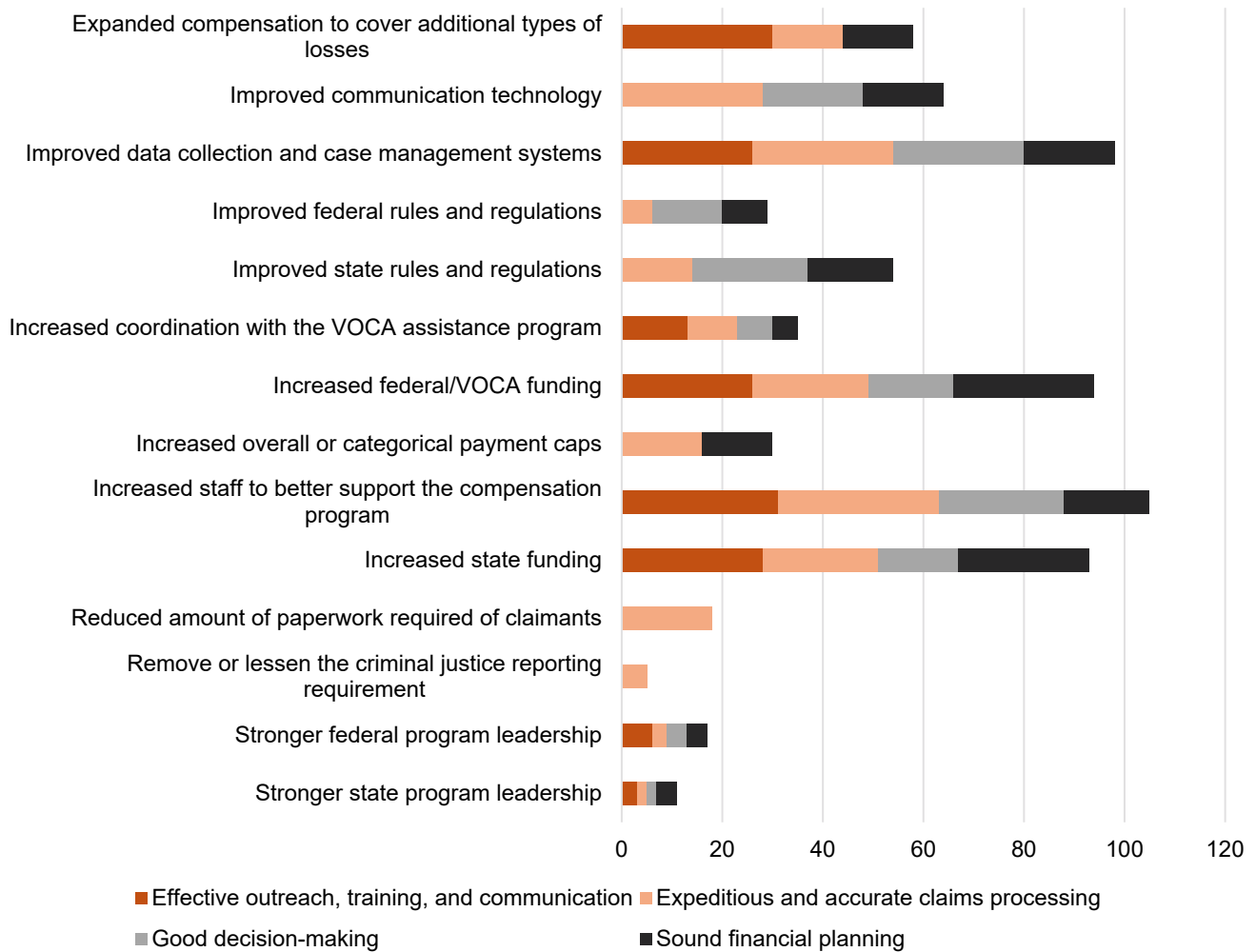
Goal 1. Effective Outreach, Training, and Communication: 1) Increased numbers of staff to better support victim compensation programs; 2) Increased focus on underserved victims; and 3) Improved communication technology.

Goal 2. Expedient and Accurate Claims Processing: 1) Increased numbers of staff to better support victim compensation programs; 2) Improved communication technology; and 3) Improved data collection and case management systems.

Goal 3. Good Decision-Making: 1) Improved data collection and case management systems; 2) Increased staff to better support programs; and 3) Improved state rules and regulations.

Goal 4. Sound Financial Planning: 1) Increased federal/VOCA funding; 2) Increased state funding; and 3) Improved data collection and case management systems.

Figure 10. Compensation Program Sustainability Needs, by Program Goals



Summary

State victim compensation programs across the U.S. provide financial assistance to victims of crime to cover expenses associated with the financial, physical, and psychological burden of victimization. In 2022, these programs paid over \$230 million to support victims and their families. Given the prevalence of victimization and the high costs associated with crime, state victim

compensation programs are essential to helping meet the needs of victims. However, little research has examined victim compensation program structures, models, decision-making, and victims served.

Twenty years ago, the Urban Institute published an NIJ-funded *National Evaluation of State Victims of Crime Act Assistance and Compensation Programs: Trends and Strategies for the Future* seminal report on state victim compensation and assistance programs. The goal of the current study was to update findings from the 2003 study by administering a survey to victim compensation program administrators in each state and engaging with four states for a deep-dive assessment of their programs. In each of the four deep-dive states, we interviewed victim compensation program stakeholders, collected victim compensation data, and surveyed individuals who filed for victim compensation.

This report focuses on three research questions that guided this study, including how victim compensation programs are structured, operated, funded, and utilized today; how victim compensation program directors, funders, service providers, and claimants measure “effectiveness” and “success”; and what victim compensation program directors perceive as most critical to improving and/or sustaining the performance of victim compensation programs. Key findings that emerged from this study are summarized below, followed by a set of recommendations.

Findings

Program Administration

- Most victim compensation programs are housed within the Attorney General’s office or another state agency, and over half of programs have an administrator whose tenure has been between one to five years. Eleven programs have an administrator whose tenure with the program is eleven years or greater, and only one program was currently without an administrator.

- The number of staff employed by victim compensation programs varied depending on the size of the state, but 65 percent of programs indicated that they had too few staff.
- Over 90 percent of programs indicated that their staff were trained on victim compensation issues and that their staff receive either in-house or external training on victimization issues. This percentage has increased slightly since 2003 when only 85 percent of programs indicated that their staff received training on victimization issues.

Claims and Funding

- Over half of states indicated that claims over the past three years have increased. The most common reasons cited for an increase in claims was increased or more effective training with criminal justice workers, victim service providers, and other community providers on victim compensation programs; increases in crime rates; and changes in statutory eligibility requirements.
- When asked about changes in the number of claims over the past three years in 2003, only 23 percent of victim compensation programs indicated that claims had increased. The most common reasons cited for increases in claims in 2003 was increased or more effective outreach to potential claimants; service providers doing a better job at helping claimants with the claims process; and changes in statutory eligibility requirements that had either made more victims eligible or expanded the types of losses the compensation program could cover.
- In both 2023 and 2003, victim compensation programs indicated that they had sufficient funds to pay for the claims that they received, and 60 percent of programs in 2023 and 66 percent of programs in 2003 indicated that their revenue did not exceed their expenditures in recent years.

Claims Processing and Decision-Making

- In both 2023 and 2003, the most time spent on applications by victim compensation staff included: 1) securing or waiting for verification of losses or expenses (e.g., provider bills, employment recorders, medical reporting, or counseling and treatment plans); 2) securing or waiting for police reports or verification that a crime was committed; and 3) assisting and waiting for victims to provide information needed to complete the application before it is formally processed.
- Almost three-quarters of compensation programs assume the responsibility of obtaining verification records from law enforcement. Ten programs indicated that they work with the claimant to obtain law enforcement records, and one program indicated that it was the responsibility of the claimant to obtain records from law enforcement. In contrast, over half of programs indicated that they work with claimants to obtain information from employers and services providers, versus taking on the responsibility of obtaining the records themselves. The process of obtaining required records has changed somewhat from data collected in 2003 when victim compensation programs were more likely to assume responsibility for obtaining required paperwork across law enforcement, employers, and service providers. However, this might reflect changes in privacy acts and the exchange of personal information which requires authorizations.
- In most victim compensation programs, staff make decisions about whether an application for compensation is approved. In a few programs, a board makes the decision about whether an application is approved. These results were consistent across 2003 and 2023.

Program Eligibility

- Most victim compensation programs will not provide compensation to victims who experience a crime in another state, but will provide compensation to victims who experience a crime outside the U.S.
- Eighty percent of victim compensation programs currently require victims to report crimes to law enforcement and 90 percent require victims to cooperate with law enforcement on investigations.
- Over 90 percent of victim compensation programs have written policies or procedures to guide decision-making in cases involving contributory conduct or illegal behavior. This percentage has increased from 2003, when 75 percent of victim compensation programs indicated that they had written policies or procedures to guide decision-making in cases involving contributory conduct. Contributory conduct that most often leads to full or partial denial of a compensation claim includes if a victim was engaged in a felony or misdemeanor at the time of the victimization, if the victim was selling drugs, and if the victim was engaged in gang activity at the time of the victimization. Specific information about contributory conduct was not collected in 2003.
- As noted, OVC is currently proposing federal rule changes that would expand program eligibility in the interest of reducing racial disparities and improving equity in compensation awards. Many states are also contemplating or beginning to enact similar changes.

Victims Served

- In both 2003 and 2023, victim compensation programs indicated that they felt as if certain types of crimes and groups of people, based on demographic or geographic characteristics, apply for compensation less frequently than others.

- In 2023, victim compensation programs reported that victims who experienced human trafficking, adult sexual assault, elder abuse, child physical abuse, and stalking, were less likely to apply for compensation. In 2003, victim compensation programs reported that victims who experience domestic violence, elder abuse, adult sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and child physical abuse were less likely to apply for compensation.
- Victim compensation programs also reported that other groups, including non-English speakers, people who identify as LGBTQAI+, people who identify as American Indians living on and off reservations, and people who identify as Hispanic or Latino are less likely to apply for compensation. In 2003, victim compensation programs also identified non-English people who identify American Indians living on and off reservations speakers, as well as people living in rural areas and older adults as people who are less likely to apply for compensation.

Program Performance and Sustainability

- All victim compensation programs agree that their programs are aligned with four goals focused on: 1) effective outreach, training, and communication; 2) expeditious and accurate claims processing; 3) good decision-making; and 4) sound financial planning.
- Most victim compensation program indicate that they are effectively meeting their outreach, claims processing, decision-making, and financial planning goals.
- The most frequent needs reported by victim compensation programs to sustain and meet goals over the next 20 years include: 1) more staff to better support victim compensation programs; 2) improved data collection and case management systems; and 3) increased federal/VOCA and state funding. Increased VOCA funding is particularly important and relevant if OVC's rule changes expanding eligibility (or removing previous barriers) are enacted.

Recommendations

- **Continue to train victim compensation program staff.** Findings from this study indicate that training of victim compensation program staff has increased over the past 20 years. Given the turnover that compensation programs can face and the experiences of the individuals who compensation staff interact with, it is important that compensation programs continue to prioritize the training of staff on issues related to the victim compensation process, equitable decision-making, victimization, trauma, and services available to victims in their community. Training should also include how best to communicate with victims via phone and email and how to support victims who are struggling to complete applications and/or gather required authorizations or paperwork. Additionally, increased training on vicarious trauma and providing additional professional development opportunities for victim compensation staff may help the retention of victim compensation staff.
- **Continue to expand access to the victim compensation application process.** Victim compensation program administrators noted that the COVID-19 pandemic forced many programs to update their application so that it was accessible online. Continued efforts should be made to move victim compensation information, applications, and notifications online to make communication and processes more accessible. Additionally, information should be provided in Spanish and other languages, and compensation staff should have easy access to interpreters or other bilingual staff to support victims whose first language may not be English.
- **Continue to collaborate with and educate law enforcement, criminal justice workers, victim service providers, and other community programs.** The most common reason cited for a rise in the number of claims among victim compensation programs was increased or more effective training with workers and organizations within the community. Outreach and education

with partners, including nontraditional partners, within the community is an important and effective way to reach victims of crime, particularly those who may be underserved.

- **Upgrade case management and data collection systems.** The second most cited need to achieve and sustain victim compensation goals moving into the future was the need for updated case management and data collection systems. Updating systems decreases the time and burden on staff to process claims, run reports, and manage budgets. Updated systems can increase the amount of time that victim compensation staff have to work with the victims who file for compensation support, train community members, and conduct outreach to underserved victims.
- **Increase funding for victim compensation programs.** The Crime Victims Fund which provides federal funding for victim compensation programs across states and territories has been fluctuating and mostly decreasing in recent years. Notably, in 2018, victim compensation program paid over \$400 million to support victims and families and just over \$230 million in 2022. As funding has decreased, victimization rates have increased, and new rule changes will also expand the number of claims. Surveyed and interviewed professionals for this study indicate that to sustain victim compensation programs, more federal and state funding is needed for operational support, updated case management and data collection systems, and expanded outreach to diverse victims of crime moving forward. Professionals also noted the need for funding to be more consistent to allow for better planning and allocation.

Bibliography

- Alvidrez, J., Shumway, M., Boccellari, A., Green, J. D., Kelly, V., & Merrill, G. (2008). Reduction of state victim compensation disparities in disadvantaged crime victims through active outreach and assistance: A randomized trial. *American Journal of Public Health, 98*(5), 882–888.
<https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2007.113639>
- Barry, C., & Ghandnoosh, N. (2023, November 2). *One in Five: Disparities in Crime and Policing*. The Sentencing Project. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/one-in-five-disparities-in-crime-and-policing/>
- Dembo, R., Navarro, E. I., Hussemann, J., Ray, G. C., Dusenbery, M., Yahner, J., & Fording, J. (2024). *National study of victim compensation programs: Perceived fairness among claimants*. NORC at the University of Chicago.
- Dusenbery, M., Fording, J., Yahner, J., Hussemann, J., & Dembo, R. (2024b). *Evaluation of crime victim compensation in Delaware: Part of a national study of victim compensation programs*. Urban Institute.
- Dusenbery, M., Fording, J., Yahner, J., Hussemann, J., & Dembo, R. (2024c). *Evaluation of crime victim compensation in New York: Part of a national study of victim compensation programs*. Urban Institute.
- Dusenbery, M., Fording, J., Yahner, J., Hussemann, J., & Dembo, R. (2024d). *Evaluation of crime victim compensation in West Virginia: Part of a national study of victim compensation programs*. Urban Institute.
- Evans, D. N. (2014). *Compensating victims of crime*. Research & Evaluation Center, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
- H.R. 1652 VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021, Public Law No. 117-27, 117th

- Congress (2021). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1652/text>
- Hamilton, B. A. (2022). Victim compensation formula grant program: Fiscal year 2020 data analysis report. In *Office of Victims of Crime: Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Administrators* (pp. 1–12). Department of Justice. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/victims-crime-act-voca-administrators/performance-reports/fy-2020-voca-compensation-performance-report.pdf>
- Lauer, C., & Catalini, M. (2023, May 17). *Every state offers victim compensation. for the longs and other black families, it often isn't fair*. AP News; The Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/crime-victims-compensation-racial-bias-58908169e0ee05d4389c57f975eae49b>
- Laurer, C., & Catalini, M. (2024, February 5). *Justice Department proposes major changes to address disparities in state crime victim funds*. AP News; The Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/crime-victims-compensation-reform-7491173e36eed267e2f63a2c577fb4a1>
- Maki, J., & Warnken, H. (2023). *Realizing the promise of crime victim compensation: Recommendations to help community violence intervention meet the needs of underserved communities* (pp. 1–19). NYU Marron Institute of Urban Management. <https://marroninstitute.nyu.edu/papers/realizing-the-promise-of-crime-victim-compensation>
- Miller, T. R., Cohen, M. A., & Wiersema, B. (1996). *Victim costs and consequences: a new look. Research Report*. National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/victcost.pdf>
- NACVCB. (2014a). *Crime victim compensation: Resources for recovery*. National Association of Crime Victims Compensation Board.
- NACVCB. (2014b). *Facts about crime victim compensation*. National Association of Crime Victims Compensation Board.
- NACVCB. (2023). Victim compensation in America: The state-federal partnership. In *National*

Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards. National Association of Crime Victims Compensation Board. <https://nacvcb.org/wp16/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/NACVCB-Special-Report-1.pdf>

Navarro, E. I., Ray, G. C., Hussemann, J., Dembo, R., Dusenbery, M., Yahner, J., & Fording, J. (2024). *National study of victim compensation programs: Barriers and challenges to compensating victims of crime*. NORC at the University of Chicago.

Newmark, L., Bonderman, J., Smith, B., Liner, B., Allen, R., Waul, M., Rosenfeld, J., White, R., Mulmat, D. H., & Jones, L. (2003). The national evaluation of state victims of crime act assistance and compensation programs: Trends and strategies for the future . In *Urban Institute*. Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/59536/410924-The-National-Evaluation-of-State-Victims-of-Crime-Act-Assistance-and-Compensation-Programs-Trends-and-Strategies-for-the-Future-Full-Report-.PDF>

Office of Victims of Crime. (2020). *2005 crime victims fund compensation and assistance allocations*. Office for Victims of Crime; Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/funding/2005-crime-victims-fund-compensation-and-assistance-allocations>

Office of Victims of Crime. (2024). *2024 crime victims fund compensation and assistance allocations*. Office for Victims of Crime. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/funding/2024-crime-victims-fund-compensation-and-assistance-allocations>

Rose, K. (2024). Message from the director: Notice of proposed rulemaking to enhance the federal crime victim compensation program. In *Office of Victims of Crime*. U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/news/announcements/message-from-director-notice-proposed-rulemaking-victim-compensation>

Ruebman, E. (2024). Realizing the promise of victims' compensation. *2024 Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) Grantee Conference*. <https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/sites/default/files/Realizing%20the%20Promise%20of%20Victims%27>

[%20Compensation%20Approved.pdf](#)

Thompson, A., & Tapp, S. N. (2023). Criminal victimization, 2022. In *Bureau of Justice Statistics* (pp. 1–34). Office of Justice Programs. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv22.pdf>

Victim Compensation Reform Act of 2024, no. HB0575 (2024).

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/BudgetFiscal/2024RS-HB0575-REIN.pdf>

Warnken, H., & Lauritsen, J. (2019). Who experiences violent victimization and who accesses services? Findings from the national crime victimization survey for expanding our reach. In *Center for Victim Research*. U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/who-experiences-violent-victimization-and-who-accesses-services>

Yahner, J., Fording, J., Dusenbery, M., Hussemann, J., & Dembo, R. (2024a). *Evaluation of crime victim compensation in Arizona: Part of a national study of victim compensation programs*. Urban Institute.

Appendix A. Comparison of National Survey of Victim Compensation Administrators, 2003 and 2023

Table 1. Victim Compensation Program Administration

	2003 (n = 52)		2023 (n = 49)	
	n	%	n	%
Compensation program housed¹				
Attorney General's office	--	--	14	29%
Criminal justice commission or agency	--	--	8	16%
Stand-alone commission or board	--	--	3	6%
Victim-centered commission or agency	--	--	2	4%
Other state agency	--	--	13	27%
Somewhere else	--	--	9	18%
Length of tenure of compensation program administrator¹				
Less than 1 year	--	--	8	16%
1 - 2 years	--	--	10	20%
3 - 5 years	--	--	14	29%
6 - 10 years	--	--	5	10%
11 years or greater	--	--	11	23%
Currently do not have a program administrator	--	--	1	2%
Number of staff currently employed by compensation program¹				
Full-time staff	--	--	x = 17.96 (SD = 33.22)	
Part-time staff	--	--	x = 1.62 (SD = 1.62)	
Contract staff	--	--	x = 19.46 (SD = 19.46)	
Program has too many, too few, or the right number of staff¹				
Too few staff	--	--	32	65%
Just the right number of staff	--	--	15	31%
Too many staff	--	--	--	--
Non-response	--	--	2	4%

Staff trained on victim compensation				
No	4	8%	--	--
Yes	48	92%	48	98%
Non-response	--	--	1	2%
Staff trained on victimization issues				
No	8	15%	2	4%
Yes	44	85%	47	96%
Staff refers victims to service providers or other resources				
No	8	15%	5	10%
Yes	44	85%	43	88%
Non-response	--	--	1	2%
Person designated to be a liaison with victims and refer to other agencies				
No	30	58%	26	53%
Yes	22	42%	23	47%

¹ Question and/or response option not included in the 2003 survey.

Table 2. Victim Compensation Program Claims and Funding

	2003 (n = 52)		2023 (n = 49)	
	n	%	n	%
Claims have increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the past three years				
Decreased	14	27%	8	16%
Increased	27	27%	28	57%
Stayed the same	11	21%	13	27%
Reason for decrease in claims¹				
Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made fewer victims eligible ²			8	89%
Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have reduced the types of losses the compensation program can cover ²	1	7%	8	89%
Decreased or less effective training with criminal justice workers, victim service providers, and other community providers ³	--	--	2	22%
Decreased or less effective outreach to potential claimants	3	21%	2	22%
Other sources of compensation, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally more available to victims	10	71%	3	33%
Service providers are not as effective at helping claimants with the claims process	1	7%	2	22%
The COVID-19 pandemic	--	--	6	67%
The crime rate has decreased	10	71%	--	--
Another reason	--	--	2	22%
Reason for increase in claims¹				
Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made more victims eligible ²	10	37%	11	40%
Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have expanded the			5	18%

types of losses the compensation program can cover ²				
Increased or more effective training with criminal justice workers, victim service providers, and other community providers ³	--	--	22	43%
Increased or more effective outreach to potential claimants	23	85%	8	29%
Other sources of compensation, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally less available to victims	3	11%	5	18%
Service providers are doing a better job at helping claimants with the claims process	22	82%	6	21%
The COVID-19 pandemic ³	--	11	7	25%
The crime rate has increased	2	7%	14	50%
Another reason	6	22%	6	21%
Sufficient funds to pay for claims				
No	10	19%	6	13%
Yes	42	81%	39	83%
Non-response	--	--	2	4%
Revenue exceeds expenditures in recent year				
No	34	66%	28	60%
Yes	18	34%	15	32%
Non-response			4	8%

¹ Total percentage may not equal 100 due to the option to enter multiple responses.

² Phrasing for 2003 survey varied slightly: "changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made more victims eligible or have expanded the types of losses the compensation program can cover" and "changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made fewer victims eligible or have restricted the types of losses the compensation program can cover".

³ Question and/or response option not included in the 2003 survey.

Table 3. Victim Compensation Program Claims Processing and Decision-Making

	2003 (n = 52)		2023 (n = 49)	
	n	%	n	%
Point at which processing time begins				
When the application is complete with all critical information about the claimant (such as signature, social security number, notarization where required, address, etc.), even if it does not include a law enforcement or equivalent report	20	39%	10	21%
When the application is complete with all critical information about the claimant and includes the law enforcement or equivalent report	4	8%	3	6%
When the application is complete with all critical information about the claimant, includes the law enforcement or equivalent report, and includes all other verifications of losses or expenses	4	8%	5	10%
When the application is first received by the compensation office, even if it is not signed or notarized (where required) or does not include other important identifying information such as social security number	23	44%	26	53%
Another point	1	2%	3	6%
Non-response	--	--	2	4%
How processing time is spent by compensation staff¹				
Assisting/waiting for victims to provide all the necessary information on the application	8	17%	30	61%
Securing/waiting for police report or verification of the crime	13	25%	40	82%
Securing/waiting for verification of losses or expenses (e.g., provider bills, employment recorders, medical report, counseling treatment plans, etc.)	16	30%	43	88%

Processing the claim (setting up the file, analyzing documentation, making the eligibility decision, and determining how much to pay)	6	11%	18	37%
Waiting for collateral sources to make payments	5	10%	7	14%
Waiting for the Board/Commission (where established) to make a determination	2	3%	2	4%
Waiting for the state government payment source to make the payment	2	3%	5	10%
Another task	1	2%	3	6%
Policy regarding applications that are missing documentation				
Incomplete claims are administratively closed after a certain period of time	21	40%	25	51%
The claim is processed with the information that has been received	18	35%	6	12%
The processing "clock" keeps running (claims are never administratively closed or suspended)	5	10%	2	4%
The processing time "clock" is stopped, and claims are held pending further efforts by the	7	14%	4	8%
Another policy	1	2%	9	18%
Non-Response	--	--	3	6%
Responsible party for obtaining verification from:				
<i>Employers</i>				
Compensation Staff	33	64%	14	29%
Victim/Claimant	7	14%	6	12%
Both	11	21%	28	57%
Someone Else	1	2%	--	--
Non-Response			1	2%
<i>Law Enforcement</i>				
Compensation Staff	41	79%	36	74%

Both	5	10%	10	20%
Someone Else	1	2%	1	2%
Non-Response			1	2%
Service Providers				
Compensation Staff	35	67%	19	39%
Victim/Claimant	6	12%	4	8%
Both	10	19%	25	51%
Someone Else	1	2%	0	--
Non-Response	--	--	1	2%
Decisionmaker for whether a claim application is approved				
A program administrator or director	18	35%	12	25%
A board	13	25%	10	20%
Compensation program staff ²	--	--	22	45%
Other staff or group	21	40%	5	10%
Established Process for Expediting Claims in Emergency Situations				
No	9	17%	10	20%
Yes	43	83%	39	80%
Victim compensation program best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses of crime victims				
No	47	90%	40	82%
Yes	5	10%	7	14%
Non-response	--	--	2	4%

¹ Total percentage does not equal 100; respondents were asked to select the top three tasks that take up the most time.

² Question and/or response option not included in the 2003 survey.

Table 4. Victim Compensation Program Eligibility

	2003 (n = 52)		2023 (n = 49)	
	n	%	n	%
Provide compensation to victims who experience a crime in another state¹				
No	--	--	32	65%
Yes	--	--	17	35%
Provide compensation to victims who experience crime outside U.S.^{1,2}				
No	--	--	13	27%
Yes	--	--	34	69%
Non-response	--	--	2	4%
Victims required to report crimes to law enforcement¹				
No	--	--	10	20%
Yes	--	--	39	80%
Victims required to cooperate with law enforcement¹				
No	--	--	5	10%
Yes	--	--	44	90%
Written policy/procedure to guide decision-making in cases involving contributory conduct or illegal behavior				
No	13	25%	2	4%
Yes	39	75%	46	94%
Non-response	--	--	1	2%
Contributory conduct that justifies full or partial denial of a compensation claim^{1,3}				
Victim was engaged in felony or misdemeanor at the time of the victimization	--	--	34	74%

Victim was selling illegal drugs	--	--	33	72%
Victim possessed illegal drugs	--	--	7	15%
Victim was under the influence of illegal drugs	--	--	9	20%
Victim was under the influence of alcohol	--	--	10	22%
Victim was illegally carrying a weapon	--	--	9	20%
Victim was engaged in sex work	--	--	2	4%
Something else	--	--	20	43%

¹ Question and/or response option not included in the 2003 survey.

² Not including crimes related to terrorism.

³ Total percentage may not equal 100 due to the option to enter multiple responses.

Table 5. Victim Compensation Program Victims Served

	2003 (n = 52)		2023 (n = 49)	
	n	%	n	%
Do certain types of crimes apply for compensation less frequently				
No	8	15%	7	14%
Yes	44	85%	26	53%
Don't know	--	--	16	33%
Crime victims under-using compensation programs¹				
Adult sexual assault	31	60%	12	46%
Adults molested as children	19	36%	4	15%
Assault	9	18%	2	8%
Child physical abuse	25	49%	8	31%
Child sexual abuse	28	53%	6	23%
DUI/ crashes	8	16%	6	23%
Domestic violence	40	76%	6	23%
Elder abuse	37	71%	11	42%
Gang violence	8	16%	4	15%
Hate or bias crimes	16	31%	6	23%
Human trafficking ²	--	--	20	77%
Mass violence/mass shootings ²	--	--	1	4%
Robbery	7	13%	--	--
Stalking	16	31%	7	27%
Survivors of homicide victims	10	20%	1	4%
Terrorism	4	7%	2	8%
Do certain groups of people, based on demographic or geographic characteristics, apply for compensation less frequently				
No	18	35%	3	6%
Yes	34	65%	30	61%

	--	--		
Groups of victims under-using compensation program¹				
American Indian/Alaska Natives living on reservations	18	35%	16	53%
American Indian/Alaska Natives not living on reservations ²	--	--	14	47%
Black/African Americans ²	--	--	10	33%
Children ²	--	--	5	17%
Hispanic or Latinos ²	--	--	12	40%
LGBTQ+ community	16	32%	16	53%
Men	3	6%	5	17%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders ²	--	--	2	7%
Non-English speakers	32	62%	18	60%
Older adults	20	38%	12	40%
People living in high crime neighborhoods ²	--	--	6	20%
People living in rural areas	37	71%	10	33%
People with disabilities	11	21%	11	37%
U.S. immigrants or refugees	14	27%	12	40%
Women	11	21%	3	10%
Younger adults ²	--	--	2	7%
Another group	2	3%	1	3%

¹ Total percentage may not equal 100 due to the option to enter multiple responses.

² Question and/or response option not included in the 2003 survey.

Table 6. Victim Compensation Program Performance and Sustainability

	2023 (n = 49)	
	n	%
Outreach, Training, and Communication		
<i>How strongly do you agree or disagree that your program's outreach, training, and communication goal is to "inform as many victims as possible about compensation and communicate effectively and sensitively with victims and with groups that work with them or on their behalf"?</i>		
Strongly Agree	30	61%
Agree	14	29%
Disagree	--	
Strongly Disagree	1	2%
I don't know	1	2%
Non-response	3	6%
<i>Over the past 3 years (2020-2022), how effective has your program been at achieving its outreach, training, and communication goal?</i>		
Very effective	11	23%
Effective	24	49%
Ineffective	2	4%
Very ineffective	4	8%
I don't know	5	10%
Non-response	3	6%
<i>What does your program need to achieve and sustain effective outreach, training, and communication? ¹</i>		
Improved communication technology	30	61%
Improved data collection and case management systems	26	53%
Increased staff to better support the compensation program	31	63%

Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program	13	27%
Increased federal/VOCA funding	26	53%
Increased state funding	28	57%
Stronger federal program leadership	6	13%
Stronger state program leadership	3	6%
Another change	1	2%
Non-response	3	6%
Expeditious and Accurate Claims Processing		
<i>How strongly do you agree or disagree that your compensation program's claims processing goal is to "process applications as quickly, accurately, and efficiently as possible so that eligible victims may receive funds promptly and in accordance with compensation regulations"?</i>		
Strongly Agree	42	86%
Agree	4	8%
Disagree	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--
I don't know	--	--
Non-response	3	6%
<i>Over the past 3 years (since 2020), how effective has your program been at achieving its claims processing goal?</i>		
Very effective	10	21%
Effective	26	53%
Ineffective	3	6%
Very ineffective	3	6%
I don't know	3	6%
Non-response	4	8%

<i>What does your program need to achieve and sustain expeditious and accurate claims processing? ¹</i>		
Expanded compensation to cover additional types of losses	14	29%
Improved communication technology	28	57%
Improved data collection and case management systems	28	57%
Improved federal rules and regulations	6	13%
Improved state rules and regulations	14	29%
Increased staff to better support the compensation program	32	65%
Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program	10	21%
Increased overall or categorical payment caps	16	33%
Increased federal/VOCA funding	23	47%
Increased state funding	23	47%
Reduced amount of paperwork required of claimants	18	37%
Remove or lessen the criminal justice reporting requirement	5	10%
Stronger federal program leadership	3	6%
Stronger state program leadership	2	4%
Another change	1	2%
Non-response	6	13%
Good Decision-Making		
<i>How strongly do you agree or disagree that your program's decision-making goal is to "make fair, consistent, and prompt claims payment decisions in accordance with statutory requirements and in furtherance of the basic mission to serve crime victims"?</i>		
Strongly Agree	41	84%
Agree	3	6%
Disagree	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--

Non-response	4	8%
<i>Over the past 3 years (since 2020), how effective has your program been at achieving its decision-making goal?</i>		
Very effective	24	49%
Effective	17	35%
Ineffective	1	2%
Very ineffective	--	--
I don't know	3	6%
Non-response	4	8%
<i>Looking forward to the next 20 years, what does your program need to achieve and sustain good decision making?¹</i>		
Improved communication technology	20	41%
Improved data collection and case management systems	26	53%
Improved federal rules and regulations	14	29%
Improved state rules and regulations	23	47%
Increased staff to better support the compensation program	25	51%
Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program	7	25%
Increased federal/VOCA funding	17	35%
Increased state funding	16	33%
Stronger federal program leadership	4	8%
Stronger state program leadership	2	4%
Another change	6	13%
Non-Response	7	25%
Sound Financial Planning		
<i>How strongly do you agree or disagree that your compensation program's financial planning goal is to</i>		

<i>“ensure that sufficient funds exist for the compensation program to pay all eligible applicants for all compensable costs”?</i>		
Strongly Agree	35	72%
Agree	8	16%
Disagree	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--
I don't know	1	2%
Non-response	5	10%
<i>Over the past 3 years (since 2020), how effective has your program been at achieving its financial planning goal?</i>		
Very effective	10	21%
Effective	23	47%
Ineffective	7	14%
Very ineffective	--	--
I don't know	4	8%
Non-response	5	10%
<i>Looking forward to the next 20 years, what does your program need to achieve and sustain sound financial planning?¹</i>		
Expanded compensation to cover additional types of losses	14	29%
Improved communication technology	16	33%
Improved data collection and case management systems	18	37%
Improved federal rules and regulations	9	18%
Improved state rules and regulations	17	35%
Increased staff to better support the compensation program	17	35%
Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program	5	10%
Increased overall or categorical payment caps	14	29%

Increased state funding	26	53%
Stronger federal program leadership	4	8%
Stronger state program leadership	4	8%
Another change	6	13%
Non-response	4	8%

¹ Total percentage may not equal 100 due to the option to enter multiple responses.

Appendix B. National Survey of Victim Compensation Administrators

National Survey of Victim Compensation Programs

In 2021, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) awarded two years of funding to NORC at the University of Chicago and the Urban Institute to conduct a national study of victim compensation programs with the goal of updating knowledge about victim compensation program operations and utilization, funding and resources, and successes and challenges, among other things.

As a part of this effort, we are inviting all victim compensation programs to participate in a National Survey of Victim Compensation Programs. You are receiving this survey because you have been identified as a victim compensation program administrator or representative of the victim compensation program for your state.

Please answer every question as best you can. If you cannot complete the survey in one sitting, you can save your answers and return to the last question you answered by reopening the link. The survey may be completed online, or downloaded and mailed back to the following address:

Jeanette Hussemann
NORC at the University of Chicago
55 East Monroe Street, 19th Floor
Chicago, IL 60603

Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you can refuse to answer any questions included in the survey. Your name will not be used in any study report, however the responses provided will be summarized in reports published by NORC, the Urban Institute, and NIJ. Data will also be archived at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD).

Thank you in advance for participating in this survey. If you have any questions about the survey now or in the future, or have technical difficulties completing it, please contact Jeanette Hussemann at 847-772-1334 or VCsurvey@norc.org.

Please select “I agree to participate” and continue to the survey.

- I agree to participate
- I do not wish to participate

Program Organization and Management

This section is about how your state's victim compensation program is organized and managed.

1. Where is your victim compensation program housed?

- Attorney General's office
- Criminal justice commission or agency
- Victim-centered commission or agency
- Other state agency
- Stand-alone commission or board
- Somewhere else, *please specify*:

2. For how long has the current victim compensation program administrator served in their position?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years
- 11 years or greater
- We currently do not have a program administrator

3. Complete the table below to indicate how many staff are employed by the jail and check the box indicate whether that number was estimated or based on jail records.

	Number
a. Full-time staff	<input type="text"/>
b. Part-time staff	<input type="text"/>
c. Contract staff	<input type="text"/>

4. Does your program have too many staff, just the right number of staff, or too few staff to accomplish the work for your program?

- Too many staff
- Just the right number of staff
- Too few staff

Victim Notice of Compensation Benefits

This section is about how victims typically learn about the victim compensation program in your state.

5. To the best of your knowledge, what are the most frequent ways that victims learn about the compensation program? *Mark all that apply.*

- Billboards or other printed notices
- Clergy
- Court social workers
- Employers
- Federal victim/witness coordinators, including military
- Victim/witness staff or advocates employed by prosecutors' offices
- Victim/witness staff or advocates employed by law enforcement
- Victim assistance staff in corrections
- Non-governmental victim service providers
- Funeral directors
- Health care providers
- Internet searches
- Jail or prison staff
- Judges
- Law enforcement personnel
- Mental health care providers
- Native American Tribal representatives
- Newspaper/newsletters
- Online ads or information
- Other victims or their survivors
- Pretrial staff
- Prosecutors
- Probation or parole staff
- Public awareness or education campaigns
- Public defenders or other attorneys
- Radio and/or public service announcements
- School personnel
- Social media
- State or local protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults
- Substance abuse therapists or treatment providers
- Survivors of homicide representatives
- Some other way, *please specify*:

6. Which of the following outreach efforts does your program use to inform victims about the compensation program? Mark all that apply.

- Ads or notifications online or in newspapers/newsletters
- Applications printed in other languages
- Applications available on the internet
- Billboards or other printed notices in high crime areas
- Brochures and/or information cards printed in multiple languages
- Brochures in victim services agencies
- Interpreters available by telephone
- Notification cards handed out by police
- Notification cards handed out by victim service providers
- Programs in schools, churches, or other community organizations
- Radio and/or TV public service announcements for non-English speakers
- Social media
- TDD line for hearing impaired
- Toll-free telephone number for victims to use
- Training of criminal justice personnel on compensation
- Training health care providers on compensation
- Training victim services providers on compensation
- Other efforts, *please describe:*

7. Does your state have a victim's rights amendment or other legislation which specifies victims' right to be notified or informed of the availability of compensation benefits?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q9**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q9**

8. Who is responsible for notifying victims of this right? Mark all that apply.

- Judge
- Law enforcement
- Prosecutor's office or the attorney general
- Victim compensation program
- Someone else, *please specify:*

- I don't know

9. How often do you think that law enforcement officers—in general, across departments—inform victims about compensation?

- Always
- Usually, *please specify:*

- About half the time, *please specify:*

- Seldom, *please specify:*

- Never, *please specify:*

- I don't know, *please specify:*

Providing and Receiving Training

This section is about the training and outreach that your program conducts with program staff and community members.

10. Has your compensation program been involved in providing training on the basics of victim compensation to groups and individuals that routinely come into contact with victims? Training may have been provided by your program or by other organizations and is not limited to training funded by VOCA funds.

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q12**

11. Which of the following individuals or groups did your program or other organizations provide compensation-related training to in the last year? Mark all that apply.

- Clergy
- Court social workers
- Employers
- Federal victim/witness coordinators, including military
- Victim/witness staff or advocates employed by prosecutors' offices
- Victim/witness staff or advocates employed by law enforcement
- Victim assistance staff in corrections
- Non-governmental victim service providers
- Funeral directors
- Health care providers
- Jail or prison staff
- Judges
- Law enforcement personnel
- Mental health care providers
- Native American Tribal representatives
- Pretrial staff
- Prosecutors
- Probation or parole staff
- Public defenders or other attorneys
- School personnel
- State or local criminal justice planning organizations
- State or local protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults
- Substance abuse therapists or treatment providers
- Survivors of homicide representatives
- Victims or their survivors
- Victim/witness staff employed by prosecutors' offices
- Victim/witness staff employed by law enforcement
- Other groups, programs, or organizations, please specify:

12. Do victim compensation program staff receive training on victimization issues?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q15**

13. How are compensation staff trained on victimization issues? Mark all that apply.

- In-house trainings
- Online training provided national organizations, boards, or agencies
- Online training provided by state organizations
- Outside service providers provide trainings to compensation staff
- Staff attend national victimization-related conferences
- Staff attend state victimization-related conferences
- Other forms of training, *please specify:*

14. What victimization issues do staff receive training on? Mark all that apply.

- Confidentiality
- Communicating with victims and survivors of crime
- Cultural responsiveness
- Ethics for working with victims and survivors of crime
- Mental health issues
- People with disabilities
- Substance use issues
- Trauma-informed care
- Types of crimes
- Types of victim services
- Victims' rights
- Other issues, *please specify:*

Victim Support

This section is about how your program interacts with and provides referral support to victims of crime.

15. Does your program staff refer victims to service providers or other resources, as needed?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q17**

16. Of the programs and services listed below, which three does your program make referrals to most often? Select three from the responses below.

- Adult Protective Services
- Child abuse programs
- Department of Social Services
- Domestic violence programs
- Family justice centers
- Homeless shelters
- Law enforcement-based victim advocates
- Legal aid
- Medicaid office
- Mental health programs
- Physical health programs
- Prosecutor-based victim advocates
- Sexual assault programs
- Survivors of homicide programs
- Social security office
- Victim hotline
- Another program or service, *please specify:*

17. Is there a special person(s) or staff designated to be a liaison with victims (e.g. to handle phone calls, complaints, questions, assist in filing forms) and refer victims to other agencies as needed?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q19**

18. What agency funds the liaison (or advocate) position?

Write in

19. Can you briefly describe how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your program's ability to conduct outreach, provide training, and/or make victim referrals?

Write in

Compensation Claims and Underserved Populations

This section asks questions about the compensation claims that your program receives and victims who may be served by your program.

20. Over the past three years (2020-2022), have claims for compensation increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

- Claims have increased
- Claims have decreased → **SKIP to Q22**
- Claims have stayed about the same → **SKIP to Q23**

21. Why do you feel that claims have increased over the past three years? Mark all that apply.
→ SKIP to Q23

- Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made more victims eligible
- Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have expanded the types of losses the compensation program can cover
- Increased or more effective training with criminal justice workers, victim service providers, and other community providers
- Increased or more effective outreach to potential claimants
- Other sources of compensation, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally less available to victims
- Service providers are doing a better job at helping claimants with the claims process
- The COVID-19 pandemic
- The crime rate has increased
- Another reason, *please specify*:

22. Why do you feel that claims have decreased over the past three years? Mark all that apply.

- Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made fewer victims eligible
- Changes in statutory eligibility requirements have reduced the types of losses the compensation program can cover
- Decreased or less effective training with criminal justice workers, victim service providers, and other community providers
- Decreased or less effective outreach to potential claimants
- Other sources of compensation, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally more available to victims
- Service providers are not as effective at helping claimants with the claims process
- The COVID-19 pandemic
- The crime rate has decreased
- Another reason, *please specify*:

23. In your opinion, are there certain types of crimes for which victims apply for compensation less frequently than expected based on victimization rates?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q26**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q26**

24. Which crime victims do you think may be under-using the compensation program? Mark all that apply.

- Adult sexual assault
- Adults molested as children
- Assault
- Child physical abuse
- Child sexual abuse
- DUI/DWI crashes
- Domestic violence
- Elder abuse
- Gang violence
- Hate or bias crimes
- Human trafficking
- Mass violence/mass shootings
- Robbery
- Stalking
- Survivors of homicide victims
- Terrorism
- Other violent crime, *please specify*:

25. Why do you think some crime victims do not apply for compensation? Mark all that apply.

- Contributory conduct rules
- Crime reporting requirements
- Do not know about compensation
- Embarrassment
- Emotional trauma
- Fatigue from paperwork requirements
- Fear of retaliation by the person who committed the crime
- Filing time requirements
- Language barrier
- Mistrust of authority
- Need to have signature notarized
- Negative perception of victim compensation assistance
- Another reason, *please specify*:

26. Are there groups, based on demographic or geographic characteristics, who are or may be under-using the compensation program in your state?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q28**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q28**

27. Which group(s) of victims do you think may be under-using the compensation program? Mark all that apply.

- American Indian/Alaska Natives living on reservations
- American Indian/Alaska Natives not living on reservations
- Black/African Americans
- Children
- Hispanic or Latinos
- LGBTQ+ community
- Men
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders
- Non-English speakers
- Older adults
- People living in high crime neighborhoods
- People living in rural areas
- People with disabilities
- U.S. immigrants or refugees
- Women
- Younger adults
- Another group, *please specify*:

28. What strategies has your state used to reach groups of victims who may be under-using the compensation program?

Write in

Compensation Eligibility

This section is about eligibility for compensation in your state.

29. Does your program provide compensation to residents in your state who experience a crime in another state?

- Yes
- No

30. Does your program provide compensation to residents in your state who experience a crime in a country other than the U.S., not including crimes related to terrorism?

- Yes
- No

31. Are victims required to report crimes to law enforcement to be eligible for victim compensation?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q33**

32. Please list any exceptions to reporting crimes to law enforcement.

Write in

33. Are victims required to cooperate with law enforcement or prosecution to be eligible for victim compensation?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q35**

34. Please list any exceptions to cooperating with cooperating with law enforcement or prosecution.

Write in

35. Does your compensation program have a written policy or procedure in place to guide decision making in cases that may involve contributory conduct or illegal behavior on the part of the claimant?

- Yes
- No

36. What contributory conduct would justify a full or partial denial of a victim's compensation claim (understanding that there may be exceptions based on the facts of a case)? Mark all that apply.

- Victim was engaged in felony or misdemeanor at the time of the victimization
- Victim was engaged in gang activity at the time of the victimization
- Victim was selling illegal drugs
- Victim possessed illegal drugs
- Victim was under the influence of illegal drugs
- Victim was under the influence of alcohol
- Victim was illegally carrying a weapon
- Victim was engaged in sex work
- Something else, *please specify:*

CLAIMS PROCESSING

This section is about victim compensation claims processing in your state.

37. At what point does your program start counting processing time on a claim? Mark the choice that reflects the usual practice, even if there may be exceptions.

- When the application is first received by the compensation office, even if it is not signed or notarized (where required) or does not include other important identifying information such as social security number
- When the application is complete with all critical information about the claimant (such as signature, social security number, notarization where required, address, etc.), even if it does not include a law enforcement or equivalent report
- When the application is complete with all critical information about the claimant and includes the law enforcement or equivalent report
- When the application is complete with all critical information about the claimant, includes the law enforcement or equivalent report, and includes all other verifications of losses or expenses.
- Another point, *please specify:*

38. What is your policy regarding applications that are missing important documentation after a reasonable period of time? Mark the choice that applies in most cases.

- Incomplete claims are administratively closed after a certain period of time, please specify time, *please specify:*
- The processing time "clock" is stopped and claims are held pending further efforts by the victim to complete the process, after a certain period of time. please specify time:
- The processing time "clock" keeps running (claims are never administratively closed or suspended)
- The claim is processed with the information that has been received
- Another policy, *please specify:*

39. We are interested in learning about how claims processing time is spent. Please select the top three tasks that take up the most time. Mark three responses

- Assisting/waiting for victims to provide all the necessary information on the application, *please specify:*
- Securing/waiting for police report or verification of the crime
- Securing/waiting for verification of losses or expenses (e.g., provider bills, employment recorders, medical report, counseling treatment plans, etc.)
- Processing the claim (setting up the file, analyzing documentation, making the eligibility decision, and determining how much to pay)
- Waiting for collateral sources to make payments
- Waiting for the Board/Commission (where established) to make a determination
- Waiting for the state government payment source to make the payment
- Another task, *please specify:*

40. Who is responsible for obtaining verification information from the following parties? Mark one response.

	Victim-claimant	Compensation staff	Both	Someone else
a. Employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Law Enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Service Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

41. Do you have a procedure for expediting the processing of claims in emergency situations?

- Yes
- No

42. Do you believe that the state compensation program is the best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses of crime victims (such as food, shelter, utilities, and transportation)?

- Yes
- No

43. Do any of the following factors make it difficult for your compensation program to pay emergency claims? Mark all that apply.

- Criteria are needed to limit emergency awards to cases of extreme hardship
- Connecting with victims in distant or rural parts of our state is challenging
- Most emergency items are not compensable under state statutes
- Verification of the crime is too slow
- Verification of the loss is problematic
- It is not difficult for us to pay emergency claims
- Another reason, *please specify:*

44. On average, how many days does it take your program to process and decide about an emergency expense claim?

Write in

CLAIMS DETERMINATIONS

This section is about how compensation claim applications are approved or denied, and the appeal process.

45. Who makes the decision about whether a claim application is approved?

- A program administrator or director
- A board, *please specify:*
- Compensation program staff
- Other staff or group, *please specify:*

46. Over the past three years, have claims approval rates increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

- Approvals have increased
- Approvals have decreased → **SKIP to Q48**
- Approvals have stayed about the same → **SKIP to Q49**

47. Why do you think the approval rate is up? Mark all that apply, → SKIP to Q49

- Eligibility rules or policies have become less restrictive
- Our office has more resources (more staff, or more training opportunities, or fewer problems with automations, or more clear policies, etc.) to provide services to help claimants prepare better applications
- Our office has more resources (more staff, or more training opportunities, or fewer problems with automations, or more clear policies, etc.) to use in the verification process (e.g., getting police reports or providers' bills)
- Service providers' assistance to victims in preparing claims has improved
- Statutory eligibility requirements have become less restrictive
- There has been variation in interpretation of eligibility rules by compensation staff
- Other changes in claims process procedures have increased the approval rate, *please specify:*

48. Why do you think the approval rate is down? Mark all that apply.

- Eligibility rules or policies have become more restrictive
- Service providers' assistance to victims in preparing claims has gotten worse or less frequent
- Other sources are providing compensation benefits to victims
- Our office has fewer resources (less staff, or loss of training opportunities, or problems with automation, or unclear policies, etc.) to use in the verification process (e.g., getting police reports or providers' bills)
- Our office has fewer resources (less staff, or loss of training opportunities, or problems with automations, or unclear policies, etc.) to provide services to claimants to help them prepare better applications
- Statutory eligibility requirements have become more restrictive
- There has been variation in interpretation of eligibility rules by compensation staff
- Victim contributory conduct is increasing
- Other changes in claims process procedures have decreased the approval rate, *please specify:*

49. Can you briefly describe how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the number of applications received or your claims approval rates, if at all?

Write in

50. How do you ensure consistency in decision making? Mark all that apply.

- Conduct regular staff training
- Continuity of victim compensation staff
- Maintain a record or index of claims approved and denied so that reference can be made to past precedent
- Quality control
- Staff meetings to discuss difficult issues, e.g., contributory conduct
- Use a checklist of eligibility issues
- Use a checklist of payment considerations
- Use detailed written claims process manual
- Another way, *please specify:*

51. Please select the top three reasons for denials of application eligibility that are most frequently appealed. Mark three responses.

- All expenses were paid by collateral sources
- Claims for crimes not covered by compensation
- Claims for losses not covered by compensation
- Contributory conduct
- Failure to report to law enforcement
- Incomplete paperwork
- Lack of sufficient evidence that a crime occurred
- Missed deadlines
- Not an eligible claimant, per state eligibility criteria
- Another reason, *please specify:*

52. Who makes the decision about whether a claim determination will be reversed following an appeal?

A board, *please specify:*

Compensation program staff

A program administrator or director

Other staff or group, *please specify:*

53. For federal fiscal year 2021, what percentage of denied or ineligible cases were appealed?

Write in

54. For federal fiscal year 2021, what percentage of appealed claim denials were reversed?

Write in

55. Thinking about how your program communicates with victims about compensation decisions, how strongly would you agree or disagree that the communication is:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I Don't Know
a. Victim-centered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Trauma-informed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PROGRAM FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This section gathers information about financial aspects of your program including your funding and financial management.

56. Are there sufficient funds to pay all the claims that are determined eligible by your program?

Yes

No

57. Have there been state or federal changes or reforms that have impacted your program's ability to pay all the claims that are determined eligible by your program?

Write in

58. Is anything being done to increase revenue?

Mark all that apply.

- A system to track payments of restitution to the program is being established State legislation is being amended to increase the level of fines for people convicted of crimes
- Civil liens against people convicted of crimes for their tax refunds or prison wages is being pursued
- Compensation office staff is dedicated to revenue increasing issues
- Fine collection rates are being improved
- Subrogation interests are being pursued
- Work with prosecutors, state correction officials, and/or judges is being done to ensure that restitution is ordered and collected from people convicted of crimes
- Nothing is being done
- Another strategy is being pursued, *please describe:*

59. Is there anything being done to contain costs?
Mark all that apply.

- Caps on pay outs are being reduced or instituted
- Less than 100% is being paid on claims (e.g., provider agrees to take less, use of state workers comp schedule or other insurance schedules)
- Nothing is being done
- Another strategy is being pursued, *please describe:*

60. Approximately how much of your victim compensation program funding for benefits in 2021 was federal versus state money? You may estimate the number.

	Dollar Amount
a. Federal funding	<input type="text"/>
b. State funding	<input type="text"/>
c. Total funding	<input type="text"/>

61. In the most recent fiscal year, did your program's revenues exceed your programs expenditures?

- Yes
- No

62. Is the program considering ways to increase benefits to victims?

- Yes
- No

63. In what ways is the program considering ways to increase benefits to victims? Mark all that apply.

- Changing reporting requirements, *please specify:*

- Expanding definition of eligible claimants, *please specify:*

- Extending filing deadlines, *please specify:*

- Expanding list of eligible expenses, *please specify:*

- Expanding the types of crime covered, *please specify:*

- Raising caps, *please specify:*

- Another way, *please explain:*

64. Since fiscal year 1995, states have been allowed to use up to 5% of federal compensation grant funds for administrative purposes. How much of the federal compensation grant funding does your state use?

- We always use the full 5% of funding
- We use some, but not all of the funding;

%

- We do not use the funding → **SKIP to Q67**

65. Please indicate how useful using administrative funds has been to the administration of your program for the following purposes? If you have not used funding for a specific purpose, please select 'Never used funding for this purpose.'

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful	Never used funding for this purpose
a. Attend OVC-sponsored or other relevant technical assistance meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Coordinate or develop protocols, policies, or procedures that promote systemic change or coordination in the ways crime victims are treated or served	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Develop, improve, or maintain an automated claims processing or tracking system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Develop strategic plans on a state and/or regional basis, conduct surveys and needs assessments, or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Improve coordination efforts on behalf of crime victims with other OJP offices and bureaus, or with federal, state, or local agencies and organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Obtain special equipment to facilitate services to persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Offer a toll-free number for potential claimants to obtain information or assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Pay audit costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Pay expert reviewers for medical or mental health claims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Pay for indirect costs at a federally approved indirect cost rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Pay salary and benefits for staff, or consultant fees, to administer and manage the financial or programmatic aspects of your program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Print and/or develop publications such as training manuals, victim service directories, or victims' brochures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Promote innovative approaches to serving crime victims (such as through technology)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Provide training on compensation issues to public or private nonprofit organizations that assist crime victims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Purchase equipment such as computers, software, fax machine, copying machines, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Purchase memberships in crime victims' organizations and victimization-related materials, such as curricula, literature, and protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Another purpose, <i>please specify</i> : <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

66. What are the reasons that you have not made full use of the 5% administration allowance? Mark all that apply.

- Administration funding has been available from other sources
- The funds are more urgently needed for awards to victims
- OVC documentation requirements present obstacles to using these funds for administrative purposes
- We have sufficient state funds
- Another reason, *please describe*:

67. Can you briefly describe how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced your programs funding, staffing, or financial planning, if at all?

Write in

MEASURING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

In this section we want your perspectives on the goals that victim compensation programs aim to achieve and how program effectiveness should be measured. We do this using guiding language developed by the National Crime Victim Compensation Board.

Effective Outreach, Training, and Communication

68. How strongly do you agree or disagree that your program's outreach, training, and communication goal is to "inform as many victims as possible about compensation and communicate effectively and sensitively with victims and with groups that work with them or on their behalf"?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

69. If you have different or additional outreach, training, and communication goals, please explain here.

Write in

70. Over the past 3 years (2020-2022), how effective has your program been at achieving its outreach, training, and communication goal?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective
- I don't know

71. What key successes or accomplishments has your program made regarding outreach, training and communication?

Write in

72. What key challenges has your program faced regarding outreach, training and communication?

Write in

73. Looking forward to the next 20 years, what does your program need to achieve and sustain effective outreach, training, and communication? *Mark all that apply.*

- Improved communication technology
- Improved data collection and case management systems
- Increased staff to better support the compensation program
- Increased focus on underserved victim groups
- Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program
- Increased federal/VOCA funding
- Increased state funding
- Stronger federal program leadership
- Stronger state program leadership
- Another change, *please describe:*

Expedient and Accurate Claims Processing

74. How strongly do you agree or disagree that your compensation program's claims processing goal is to "process applications as quickly, accurately, and efficiently as possible so that eligible victims may receive funds promptly and in accordance with compensation regulations"?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

75. If you have different or additional claims processing goals, please explain here?

Write in

76. Over the past 3 years (since 2020), how effective has your program been at achieving its claims processing goal?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective
- I don't know

77. What key successes or accomplishments has your program made regarding claims processing?

Write in

78. What key challenges has your program faced regarding claims processing?

Write in

79. Looking forward to the next 20 years, what does your program need to achieve and sustain expeditious and accurate claims processing? Mark all that apply.

- Expanded compensation to cover additional types of losses
- Improved communication technology
- Improved data collection and case management systems
- Improved federal rules and regulations
- Improved state rules and regulations
- Increased staff to better support the compensation program
- Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program
- Increased overall or categorical payment caps
- Increased federal/VOCA funding
- Increased state funding
- Reduced amount of paperwork required of claimants
- Remove or lessen the criminal justice reporting requirement
- Stronger federal program leadership
- Stronger state program leadership
- Another change, *please describe:*

Good Decision Making

80. How strongly do you agree or disagree that your program's decision making goal is to "make fair, consistent, and prompt claims payment decisions in accordance with statutory requirements and in furtherance of the basic mission to serve crime victims"?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

81. If you have different or additional decision making goals, please explain here.

Write in

82. Over the past 3 years (since 2020), how effective has your program been at achieving its decision making goal?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective
- I don't know

83. What key successes or accomplishments has your program made regarding decision making?

Write in

84. What key challenges has your program faced regarding decision making?

Write in

85. Looking forward to the next 20 years, what does your program need to achieve and sustain good decision making? Mark all that apply.

- Improved communication technology
- Improved data collection and case management systems
- Improved federal rules and regulations
- Improved state rules and regulations
- Increased staff to better support the compensation program
- Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program
- Increased federal/VOCA funding
- Increased state funding
- Stronger federal program leadership
- Stronger state program leadership
- Another change, *please describe*:

Sound Financial Planning

86. How strongly do you agree or disagree that your compensation program's financial planning goal is to "ensure that sufficient funds exist for the compensation program to pay all eligible applicants for all compensable costs"?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

87. If you have different or additional financial planning goals, please explain here.

Write in

88. Over the past 3 years (since 2020), how effective has your program been at achieving its financial planning goal?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective
- I don't know

89. What key successes or accomplishments has your program made regarding financial planning?

Write in

90. What key challenges has your program faced regarding financial planning?

Write in

91. Looking forward to the next 20 years, what does your program need to achieve and sustain sound financial planning? Mark all that apply.

- Expanded compensation to cover additional types of losses
- Improved communication technology
- Improved data collection and case management systems
- Improved federal rules and regulations
- Improved state rules and regulations
- Increased staff to better support the compensation program
- Increased coordination with the VOCA assistance program
- Increased overall or categorical payment caps
- Increased federal/VOCA funding
- Increased state funding
- Stronger federal program leadership
- Stronger state program leadership
- Another change, *please describe*:

Other Goals, Successes, and Challenges

92. Are there any additional ways in which your program measures or interprets whether the compensation program is effectively meeting the needs of victims?

Write in

93. Are there additional standards by which victim compensation program success and/or effectiveness should be measured or interpreted?

Write in

94. How strongly would you agree or disagree that your program is effectively meeting the compensation needs of victims?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

95. Are there any rules or changes that should be made at the federal level to improve your program's ability to support victims of crime?

Write in

96. Are there any changes that you would like made to the way that your grant is administered or managed by the OVC?

Write in

97. Is there anything else that we should know about your program or providing compensation to victims of crime?

Write in

Contact Information

If you are willing to participate in a follow-up survey about substance use treatment and related issues, please provide your name and contact information or those of the person to whom we should send the follow-up survey:

Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY!

Appendix C. Victim Compensation Claimant Survey

Victim Compensation Programs Claimant Survey

The Urban Institute and NORC at the University of Chicago are directing a study of victim compensation programs. This study is funded by the National Institute of Justice.

As a part of this study, we are asking people to complete a survey about their experiences filing a claim for victim compensation in their state. This information will help improve victim compensation programs.

The survey will take about 15 minutes. **When you are done, you will receive a \$30 gift card.** If you cannot complete the survey all at once, you can save the survey and return to it later.

The survey is voluntary, which means that you do not have to complete it. It is also confidential, which means that your answers will not be shared with others. Your name will not be used in any reports. The survey records will be filed with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD).

If you have any questions about the survey, call 866-681-5106 or email VCsurvey@norc.org.

Please select “I would like to take the survey” and continue to the survey.

- I would like to take the survey
- I do not want to take the survey

Introduction

To begin, we are interested in how you found out about the compensation program and your process of submitting a claim for compensation.

If you need to make a correction to any of your responses, please put a line through the incorrect response and circle the correct response.

1. Are you the direct or primary victim (person who was injured) of the crime that was the basis for the claim for compensation OR did you file on behalf of someone else who was a direct or primary victim of a crime?

- I was the direct or primary victim → **SKIP to Q3**
 I filed for someone else that was the direct or primary victim

2. What is your relationship to the victim?

- Grandparent
 Parent, stepparent, or guardian
 Sibling
 Spouse, partner, or significant other
 Witness
 Some other family member, *please specify:*

- Some other relationship, *please specify:*

3. Please mark the box that most closely describes the type of crime that occurred?

- Arson
 Assault
 Burglary
 Child physical abuse/neglect
 Child pornography
 Child sexual abuse
 DUI/DWI
 Elder abuse
 Fraud/Financial crimes
 Hate crime
 Homicide
 Human trafficking
 Kidnapping
 Mass violence
 Robbery
 Sexual assault
 Stalking
 Terrorism
 Some other crime, *please specify:*

4. Has a suspect been arrested for the crime?

- Yes
 No → **SKIP to Q7**
 I don't know → **SKIP to Q7**

5. Has a suspect been prosecuted for the crime, either through a criminal or civil court case?

- Yes
 No → **SKIP to Q7**
 Not yet → **SKIP to Q7**
 I don't know → **SKIP to Q7**

6. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I am satisfied with the outcome of the criminal or civil case against the suspect."

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree
 I don't know

7. Was this your first claim for victim compensation?

- Yes → **SKIP to Q9**
 No

8. How many previous claims for victim compensation have you made?

Please enter a number between 1-20

9. How did you learn about the compensation program? Mark all that apply.

- Victim service provider
- Victim/witness staff or advocate employed by prosecutors' offices
- Victim/witness staff or advocate employed by law enforcement
- Victim assistance staff in a correctional facility
- Federal victim/witness coordinator, including military
- Billboard or some other printed material
- Clergy or a religious leader
- Court social worker
- Employer
- Funeral director
- Health care provider
- Internet search
- Jail or prison staff
- Judge
- Law enforcement personnel
- Mental health care provider
- Native American Tribal advocate or representative
- Newspaper/newsletter
- Online ad or information
- Another victim or their survivor
- Pretrial staff
- Prosecutor
- Probation or parole staff
- Public awareness or education campaign
- Public defender or another attorney
- Radio and/or public service announcement
- School staff
- Social media
- State or local protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults
- Substance abuse therapist or treatment provider
- Survivor of homicide spokesperson
- Some other way, *please specify:*

10. When did you first learn about the compensation program?

- Before the crime occurred → **SKIP to Q14**
- The day/night the crime occurred → **SKIP to Q14**
- When the crime was reported to the authorities (law enforcement)
- After the crime occurred and/or was reported to authorities
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q14**

11. Approximately how long after the crime occurred did you learn about the compensation program?

- Within a week after the crime occurred
- Within a month (two to four weeks) after the crime occurred
- More than a month (more than four weeks) but less than six months after the crime occurred
- Six to twelve months after the crime occurred
- More than a year after the crime occurred
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q14**

12. Did a delay in hearing about the victim compensation program cause problems in filing your claim?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q14**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q14**

13. What problems did the delay cause?

- Problems with getting paperwork together
- Trouble meeting filing deadlines
- Some other problem, *please specify:*

14. Did anyone help you apply for compensation?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q17**

15. Who helped you apply for compensation? Mark all that apply.

- Compensation program staff
- Clergy or a religious leader
- Court social worker
- Employer
- Federal victim/witness coordinators, including military
- Victim/witness staff or advocate employed by prosecutors' offices
- Victim/witness staff or advocate employed by law enforcement
- Victim assistance staff in corrections
- Funeral director
- Health care provider
- Jail or prison staff
- Judge
- Law enforcement personnel
- Mental health care provider
- Native American Tribal advocate or representative
- Another victim or their survivor
- Pretrial staff
- Prosecutor
- Probation or parole staff
- Public defender or another attorney
- School personnel
- State or local protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults
- Substance abuse therapist or treatment provider
- Survivors of homicide spokesperson
- Victim service provider
- Someone else, *please specify:*

16. How did these people help you? Mark all that apply.

- Explained the compensation program to you
- Gave you a pamphlet or other materials that explained the compensation program
- Helped you fill out the compensation application
- Helped you get the paperwork required to file for compensation
- Provided a compensation application form to fill out
- Helped you in another way, *please specify:*

17. Was there help that you wanted in completing your compensation application that you did not get?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q19**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q19**

18. What type of help did you want? Mark all that apply.

- Help understanding the compensation program
- Help gathering the paperwork required to file for compensation
- Help filling out the compensation application
- Help with something else, *please specify:*

19. After you submitted your claim, were you asked to send in additional information?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q22**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q22**

20. Were you able to provide the information asked for?

- Yes, all of it → **SKIP to Q22**
- Yes, some of it
- No, none of it
- I don't know

21. Why were you not able to provide all the requested information?

- It was too much trouble/not worth it
- Was not able to get the information requested
- Another reason, *please specify:*

- I don't know

Expenses Associated with Your Claim

Next, we are interested in learning about the expenses related to your situation and the decisions made about your claim.

22. What expense(s) did you have because of this crime? Mark all that apply. Note that some of the expenses listed may or may not be eligible for victim compensation in your state.

- Attorney fees
- Crime scene clean-up
- Dental
- Funeral/burial fees
- Loss of support (such as, when the surviving family members depended on the deceased for financial support)
- Lost wages (when you or the victim could not work)
- Medical treatment
- Mental health counseling
- Moving or relocation expenses
- Other property loss or replacement
- Vocational/rehabilitation services
- Replacement services (such as, lawn care or childcare that was previously provided by the victim)
- Stolen cash or checks
- Temporary housing
- Transportation services
- Some other expense, *please specify:*

- I don't know SKIP to Q28

23. [For each expense marked in Q22] Did you request compensation for this expense?

- Yes
- No

24. Was your application for benefits approved or denied?

- The application was approved
- The application was denied → **SKIP to Q29**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q29**

25. Were the expenses approved and/or paid by the compensation program?

- Yes, they were approved and/or paid
- No, they were not approved and/or paid → **SKIP to Q27**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q27**

26. Who received (or will receive) the compensation payment?

- Paid directly to you
- Paid directly to your service providers
- Paid to you and your service providers
- Still waiting
- I don't know

27. Why wasn't this expense approved and/or paid?

- Was not able to provide the required paperwork
- Was not able to utilize the benefit awarded
- Was not able to meet the deadline
- Expenses were paid by another source
- Some other reason, *please specify:*

28. Did you have to pay money from your own pocket for this expense, without being paid back by compensation, restitution, insurance (health, life, car, homeowners, renters, etc.), or other sources?

- Yes, please estimate how much:

- No

29. [Only asked if 'Denied' to Q24] What reasons were given for why your compensation claim was denied? Mark all that apply.

- Contributory conduct (e.g., contributed to the crime)
- Crime was not eligible for compensation
- Did not file insurance claims or report the crime promptly to my insurance (health, life, car, homeowners, renters, etc.)
- Did not report the crime promptly to the police
- Reported to but did not cooperate with police/prosecutor
- Did not provide paperwork for the compensation claim in time
- Did not pass the background check
- Expenses paid by insurance company or other sources
- Expenses were not eligible for compensation
- Expenses were higher than for what the program allows
- Missed deadline for filing the compensation claim form
- Some other reason, *please specify:*

- Don't know

30. [Only asked if 'Denied' to Q24] Did anyone explain to you how to appeal the decision?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q32**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q32**

31. [Only asked if 'Denied' to Q24] Who explained the appeals process to you?

- Someone from the compensation program
- A friend or relative
- A victim advocate or service provider
- Your lawyer
- Someone else, *please specify:*

32. [Only asked if 'Denied' to Q24] Did you understand the appeals process?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
- I don't know

33. [Only asked if 'Denied' to Q24] Did you file an appeal?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q35**
- I'm still thinking about it → **SKIP to Q35**

34. [Only asked if 'Denied' to Q24] Was the decision overturned or modified?

- Yes
- No
- Still waiting to hear

Your Experience with the Compensation Process

Finally, we are interested to learn about your experience with the victim compensation process and how you feel the process could be improved. Please focus on your feelings about the compensation process as opposed to how you feel about the criminal or civil case that may have happened because of the crime that occurred.

35. Did you or someone else fill out the application for compensation?

- I did
- Someone else did → **SKIP to Q40**

36. Was the compensation application easy to fill out?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

37. Did the application take a long time to fill out?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

38. Was it hard or burdensome to get all the paperwork together?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

39. How did you submit the application?

- Online
- By mail
- In person
- I don't know

40. Were the letters or emails that you received from the compensation program difficult to read or understand?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

41. Did you speak with someone at the compensation program?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q47**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q47**

42. Did the person listen to your questions and concerns?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

43. Were your questions and concerns answered by speaking with someone at the program?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

44. Did you feel as if the person understood your background and experience?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

45. Were you asked if you needed a referral or other services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

46. If you had to call someone and they had to call you back, did they call back promptly?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

47. About how long did it take for you to receive a decision on your claim?

- Less than 1 month (less than 30 days)
- 1 to 2 months (between 30 to 60 days)
- 2 to 3 months (between 61 to 90 days)
- 3 to 6 months (between 91 to 120 days)
- Longer than 6 months (more than 121 days)
- My claim was not approved for payment
- I don't know

48. Do you feel that the program paid your claim in a reasonable amount of time?

- Yes
- No
- Still waiting
- My claim was not approved for payment
- I don't know

49. Did the amount of time it took to receive the payment cause problems for you (such as not enough money to pay bills, or call from collection agencies, etc.)?

- Yes
- No
- Still waiting
- My claim was not approved for payment
- I don't know

50. If you were not required to report the crime to law enforcement to seek compensation, would you still have reported it?

- Yes
- No
- I was not required to report the crime to law enforcement
- I don't know

51. If you were not required to notify your insurance company to seek compensation, would you have notified them?

- Yes
- No
- I was not required to notify my insurance company
- I don't know

52. Do you feel that seeking compensation was more trouble than it was worth?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

53. If a friend became a crime victim, would you recommend that they apply for benefits from the compensation program?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

54. Do you feel that the COVID-19 pandemic affected your experience filing a claim with the compensation program?

- Yes
- No → **SKIP to Q56**
- I don't know → **SKIP to Q56**

55. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your experience?

- It was hard to reach program staff
- It was hard to get support to complete the application
- It was hard to obtain the documents that I had to submit with the application
- It took a long time to receive a decision
- Something else, *please specify:*

- I don't know

56. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Select one response per statement below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know	Not applicable
The compensation program staff treated me with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The compensation program provided support if I needed it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt informed about the claim process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt informed about the decisions that were made about my claim.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The compensation program met my compensation needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The outcome of my compensation claim was fair.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the outcome of my compensation claim.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

57. What do you think the compensation program is doing well?

Write in

58. What suggestions do you have for how to improve the compensation program to help other victims in the future?

Write in

Conclusion

Thank you so much for taking the time to provide your input. These last few questions collect demographic information to help us understand different people's experiences. As a reminder, information from this survey will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team.

59. What is your age?

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 54 – 64
- 65 or older

60. [If marked 'No' on Q1] What is the direct or primary victim's age?

- 0 – 12
- 13 – 17
- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 54 – 64
- 65 or older

61. Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?

- Yes
- No

62. What is your race? Mark all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Some other race, *please specify:*

63. [If marked 'No' on Q1] Is the direct or primary victim Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?

- Yes
- No

64. [If marked 'No' on Q1] What is the direct or primary victim's race? Mark all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Some other race, *please specify:*

- I don't know

65. What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

- Female
- Male
- I don't know
- Prefer not to answer

66. What is your current gender? Mark one.

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- [Only include response if 'Indian or Alaska Native' marked on Q62] Two-Spirit
- I use a different term, *please specify:*

- I don't know
- Prefer not to answer

67. [If marked 'No' on Q1] What sex was the direct or primary victim assigned at birth?

- Female
- Male
- I don't know
- Prefer not to answer

68. [If marked 'No' on Q1] What is the current gender of the direct or primary victim? Mark one.

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- [Only include response if 'Indian or Alaska Native' marked on Q62] Two-Spirit
- I use a different term, *please specify*:

- I don't know
- Prefer not to answer

69. What was your main source of income at the time of the crime? Mark all that apply.

- Own employment
- Victim's employment (if claimant is not the victim)
- Other family members' income
- Government assistance (welfare, social security, unemployment, etc.)
- Financial aid/school loans
- Another form of income, *please specify*:

70. [If marked 'No' on Q1] What is the direct or primary victim's main source of income at the time of the crime? Mark all that apply.

- Own employment
- Victim's employment (if claimant is not the victim)
- Other family members' income
- Government assistance (welfare, social security, unemployment, etc.)
- Financial aid/school loans
- Another form of income, *please specify*:

Appendix D. Interview Questionnaire for Victim Compensation Staff

NORC-URBAN National Victim Compensation Study
Compensation Stakeholders Interview Protocol

Estimated 60 min (90 for leadership)

[Greetings and administer consent, 5 min]

Background, 5 min (5 for leadership)

Thank you again for speaking with us. We'll start with a few quick questions about your background.

1. Please describe your position and responsibilities.
2. Can you tell us a bit about your professional background?

Program Structure and Staffing, 5 min (10 for leadership)

We now want to get a picture of your program's overall location, structure, and staffing.

1. *For leadership:* Can you tell us about the compensation program's location in your state's governance structure? (If needed, probe for parent agency's title, mission, and other functions.)
 - a. How independently does your program function?
 - b. Have there been any major changes to this structure that you can speak to in the last few years?
 - c. Are there any discussions about changing this structure in the next few years?
2. *FOR AZ leadership:* How does the state compensation program oversee or support the county offices?
 - a. To what degree do they have autonomy over management and funding? The application, investigation, and determinations processes?
3. What are the advantages of having the compensation program structured the way it is? What are the disadvantages?
4. How are responsibilities for program administration, investigation, and decision-making divided among program staff?
 - a. *Probe:* Is there any part of the investigative process that is contracted out?
 - b. *Probe:* Are staff dedicated to the compensation program, or is their time shared with other programs in this agency?
 - c. What are typical caseloads, and how are cases assigned to staff members?
 - d. What is staff turnover like for the program?
5. Do you think the number and roles of compensation staff are appropriate for your program?
 - a. If not, why and how could staffing be improved?
 - b. *For leadership:* Are there any obstacles to increasing staffing or changing roles?
6. What kind of training do staff receive and is it effective? (*Probe briefly for topics, frequency, provider.*)
7. *For leadership:* Can you tell us about any advisory board or similar group that provides input on or to the compensation program? (If needed, probe on purpose and membership of the group.)
8. *For leadership:* In what ways has your program coordinated with the VOCA assistance program?

Program Funding, 5 min (10 for leadership)

Thank you for that information. Our next set of questions is about funding for the compensation program.

1. Do you think funding for your program has been sufficient to cover claims and program costs?

2. Can you tell us why you think your funds generally [*fall short of needs OR carry over from year to year OR exceed payout needs*]?
3. *FOR AZ leadership*: How does funding work for each county program?
 - a. *Probe*: Does the state have a mechanism to reapportion funds as needed among areas?
4. *All AZ*: How does the county-level funding structure work well? Conversely, how is it challenging?
5. *For leadership*: To the best of your knowledge, how much has your funding fluctuated over the last few years?
 - a. What do you think has affected or caused this pattern?
 - b. What have been the impacts of any peaks or valleys in funding?
6. *For leadership*: If the program is funded in part with fines from the state, do you monitor how courts levy and collect fines? If yes, how so?
 - a. What steps are taken to increase collection of fines or increase revenue?
7. What have been your biggest challenges related to funding?
8. *For leadership*: What are your plans and projections for future funding?
9. Do you have any plans or ideas to get additional state funding? Do you anticipate any difficulties?

Access to Compensation, 10 min (15 for leadership)

We now want to ask some questions about how people in your state learn about the compensation program and your thoughts about its accessibility.

1. To what extent do you think victims across your state are aware of the compensation program?
 - a. *Probe*: Do you think people are aware of the program before experiencing a crime or do they generally learn about it after a victimization?
 - b. How do victims obtain or receive materials about compensation?
 - c. Does the compensation program reach out directly to any potential claimants?
2. Can you tell us about the training your program provides for different professional groups, like community-based victim service providers, justice system-based advocates, or law enforcement? (*Probe for topics, frequency, who facilitates, differences across groups.*)
 - a. Is there anyone else you would like to provide training to? If so, who and what are the obstacles?
4. How else do you support victim service providers in their obligation to refer victims to the compensation program?
5. What, if any, challenges do victim service providers and/or law enforcement face in referring victims to compensation or assisting them in the application process?
 - a. How are these being addressed?
 - b. What else would you like to do?
6. To what extent do you think your compensation program is accessible to victims and their families? [*Probe for what makes it accessible or not.*]
 - a. Do you think the compensation program is more accessible to some groups of people than others? If so, to whom and why? (*If needed, probe on age, race, immigration status, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability status and mental health.*)
7. What do you think are the biggest challenges that potential claimants face when trying to access the compensation program? (*If needed, probe on reporting requirements, law enforcement cooperation, notification of insurance company or employer, etc.*)
 - a. [*If program has advocate on staff:*] To what extent has having an advocate on staff helped victims receive compensation?

8. What has your program (or state) done to increase accessibility of the compensation program?
 - a. What else do you think could be done to increase your program's accessibility?

Claims Processing, 10 min (15 for leadership)

This next set of questions will ask about your claims processing process, number of claims, approvals, and appeals.

1. *For leadership:* Please tell us generally about your claims processing process. (*Probe to understand the major steps, who is involved, terms used, and general timeframe.*)
2. What do you think your program does particularly well when processing claims?
3. What are your biggest challenges in processing claims?
 - a. *Probe:* What strategy do you have to handle backlog?
4. What affects the length of time it takes to process a claim?
 - a. *Probe:* Does processing time vary by the type of losses or the type of victimization?
 - b. *Probe:* How have developments in technology and communications systems impacted claims processing?
5. What factors have affected the overall number of claims your program has received over the last few years? [*Probe for causes of increases vs decreases.*]
6. Do you think any factors have influenced your program's approval rate in recent years? If yes, please explain.
7. How have your average award amounts fluctuated in recent years and what factors account for these trends?
8. Are there any other ideas or plans to increase benefits or eligible expenses to victims? If so, are there any obstacles to doing so?
9. *For leadership:* How does your state/program handle contributory conduct?
 - a. Does this policy affect victims of certain crimes or backgrounds?
 - b. How has this policy changed in the last few years?
 - c. How would you like this policy to change in the future?
10. *For leadership:* Can you tell us about your appeals process and how appeals hearings are conducted? *For example, when victims can provide additional documentation, if there is a clear timeframe for submitting appeals, if there are written rules for hearings, if hearings are conducted by video/phone or in different parts of the state, if victim advocates or attorneys allowed to attend.*
11. Do you have any recent or current ideas and/or plans to improve the claims processing process, such as reducing the time it takes, reducing the cost of verification for claimants, or automating any systems?

Utilization and Equity, 10 min (12 for leadership)

Thank you for sharing about claims processing. We now want to ask about how your program is being used. We also want to get your thoughts on how equitable your program's policies and utilization are.

1. How comprehensive do you think the range and amounts of costs that your program covers are?
2. Can you tell us about any trends you've seen in the types of expenses claimed and what you think has caused that?
 - a. How has your state or program responded?
 - b. What, if anything, do you think your program should be doing to better cover expenses?
3. Can you tell us about any trends you've seen in the types of victimizations claimed and what you think has caused that?

- a. How responsive is your program to covering emerging or increasing crime types?
 - b. What, if anything, do you think your program should do to better cover all crime types?
4. Do you think the demographics of claimants served reflects the demographics the victims in your state? Why or why not?
 - a. How has your program identified underserved victim groups in your state?
 - b. How has your state or program responded to better reach all people of all backgrounds? (*Probe for different demographics, language and immigration status, disability, etc.*)
 - c. What else, if anything, do you think your program should be doing to reach underserved groups?
5. To what extent do you think your program's eligibility requirements are equitable?
 - a. *For leadership:* Are there any recent or current plans to change eligibility requirements?

General Perceptions and Recommendations, 10 min (15 for leadership)

Thank you for your time so far. We will end by asking for your general thoughts on victims' needs, factors affecting the program, the effectiveness of the program, and any final recommendations.

1. To what extent are victims and their families able to recover financially in your state, whether through compensation or other means?
 - a. *Probe:* What, if any, are the gaps in programs or policies in your state that keep victims from being able to recover all economic losses from a crime?
 - b. *Probe:* What do you think are the greatest unmet financial needs among the victims in your state?
2. In what ways are your compensation program's policies and procedures responsive to victims' needs? In what ways are compensation program staff responsive to victims' needs?
 - a. What changes in the last few years, if any, have most helped you run the program and meet the needs of claimants?
3. How (if at all) do you receive feedback from victims or service providers on satisfaction with the program or victims' needs?
 - a. Have any changes been made based on feedback from victims, service providers, or advisors?
4. What policies or other factors outside of your agency have affected the compensation program?
 - a. *Probe:* Have changes in the justice system impacted the compensation program? (*If needed, examples include policies to reduce or eliminate fines and fees, increases in diversion programs or efforts to reduce prosecutions.*)
 - b. *Probe:* How did COVID-19 impact the compensation program? (*Probe for changes in funding or applications, what changes were made, and if things have returned to how they were.*)
5. In general, how would you define a successful victim compensation program?
 - a. To what extent do you think your program is meeting this definition of success?
 - b. What does your program need to [be more successful *OR* continue being successful]?
6. Do you have any other suggestions that we haven't discussed for improving or sustaining the compensation program?

Appendix E. Interview Questionnaire for Community- and Legal System-Based Victim Assistance Providers

NORC-URBAN National Victim Compensation Study
Victim Service Stakeholders Interview Protocol

Estimated 60 min

[Greetings and administer consent, 5 minutes]

Background, 5 minutes

Thank you again for speaking with us. We'll start with a few quick questions about your background.

1. Please describe your position and responsibilities.
2. What services or programs does your organization offer? What types of victims does your organization typically serve or represent?
3. Can you tell us about how you interact or work with the compensation program?

Victim Characteristics and Needs, 7 minutes

With these next few questions, we want to get a brief picture of the financial needs of victims in your community.

1. Have you noticed any trends or changes in the types of victimizations people in your community have experienced? If so, what do you think has caused that?
2. Have you noticed any changes or trends in the types of costs experienced? If so, what do you think has caused that?
3. In general, what do you see as the greatest costs that victims face as a result of a crime?
4. To what extent are victims and their families able to recover financially in your state, whether through compensation or other means?
 - a. *Probe:* What, if any, are the gaps in programs or policies in your state that keep victims from being able to recover all economic losses from a crime?
 - b. *Probe:* What do you think are the greatest unmet financial needs among the victims in your state?
 - c. Are there certain types or groups of victims that are less able to recover financially?

Access to Compensation, 10 minutes

We now have some questions about how people learn about the compensation program and its accessibility.

1. How well do you think your state's compensation program is known among victims?
 - a. *Probe:* Do you think people are aware of the program before experiencing a crime or do they generally learn about it after a victimization?
 - b. What types of victims are less likely to know about the funds?
2. How do the victims you work with generally learn about the compensation program?
 - a. *If not clear from above:* What is your or your organization's role to inform victims about compensation or help them through the application process?
3. What, if any, challenges do victim service providers and/or law enforcement face in referring victims to compensation or assisting them in the application process?
 - a. How are these being addressed?
 - b. What else do you think could be done?
4. Have you received any training or assistance from the compensation program?
 - a. If yes, do you think it was helpful? How could it be improved?

- b. What training or assistance would you be interested in receiving from the compensation program?
- 5. How easy or hard is it to communicate with the compensation program about victims' needs and experiences with the program?
- 6. To what extent do you think the compensation program is accessible to victims and their families?
 - a. What do you think are the biggest challenges that potential claimants face when trying to access the compensation program? *(If needed, probe on reporting requirements, law enforcement cooperation, notification of insurance company or employer, etc.)*
 - b. Do you think the compensation program is more accessible to some groups of people than others? If so, to who and why? *(If needed, probe on age, race, immigration status, sexual orientation and gender identify, disability status, mental health, location.)*
- 7. What do you think should be done to increase the program's accessibility? *(Probe on actions by the compensation program, actions by the respondent's organization, or policy changes.)*

Claims Process, 8 minutes

Thank you for sharing. This next set of questions asks about your opinion and the opinion of the victims you work with on the claims process.

1. How easy or hard do you think it is for victims to understand the claims process and/or complete a claims application?
 - a. What would make it easier?
2. For the victims you work with that apply for compensation, do you think the amount of time it takes to reach a decision is reasonable?
 - a. In general, how do the victims you work with feel about the length of the process?
3. For the victims you work with that apply for compensation, do you think the decisions are generally reasonable? How about the amounts awarded?
 - a. In general, how do the victims you work with feel about their claim outcome?
4. How well does the appeals process work as an option for victims whose compensation claims were partially or fully denied?

Utilization and Equity, 10 minutes

We now have a few questions about how comprehensive and equitable the program is or is not.

1. To what extent do you think the compensation program's eligibility requirements are equitable? *(Probe on reporting requirements, contributory conduct, etc.)*
2. How comprehensive do you think the range and amounts of costs that the compensation program covers are? *(Probe for any gaps or limitations.)*
3. To what extent do you think the compensation program is able to respond to and/or cover emerging crimes?
4. To what extent do you think the compensation program is awarding funds equitably across victims?
5. How could the compensation program better reach underserved victims?

General Perceptions and Recommendations, 15 minutes

Thank you for your time so far. We will end by asking for your general thoughts on the effectiveness of the program, the factors affecting the program, and any final recommendations.

1. In general, how would you define a successful victim compensation program?
 - a. To what extent do you think your state's program is meeting this definition of success?
 - b. What does your state's program need to [be more successful *OR* continue being successful]?
2. In your experience with victims and/or the compensation program, in what ways are the program staff responsive to victims' needs? What about the program's policies and procedures?
3. What do you think are the biggest external policy barriers for the compensation program to meet the needs of all victims?
 - a. How do you think the program should respond?
4. What other factors have affected the compensation program? Examples may include changes in the justice system, changes in the service landscape, or COVID-19.
 - a. How do you think the program should respond?
5. How else do you think the compensation programs should be coordinating with victim services or responders?
6. Do you have any other suggestions that we haven't discussed for improving the compensation program?