

1-2003

# 2002 Oregon Crime Victims' Needs Assessment Final Report

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**2002**

**OREGON CRIME VICTIMS'  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**FINAL REPORT**

Research conducted by the

Regional Research Institute  
for Human Services

PORTLAND STATE  
UNIVERSITY

for the

Crime Victims' Assistance Section  
of the Oregon Department of Justice

**2002**

**OREGON CRIME VICTIMS'  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**FINAL REPORT**

**January 2003**

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Fellow Oregonians:

The Oregon Department of Justice, among its many important missions, is privileged to be the state center for services to crime victims through the work of the Department's Crime Victims Assistance Section (CVAS). By administration of the victims' compensation program, of different state and federal revenue streams to victims' service providers, and its contributions to advocate training, CVAS is working to help the support and healing of crime victims throughout Oregon.

During the last 25 years, Oregon has made major progress in the quality of its crime victims' services. With the approach of last century's end, however, CVAS and I concluded it was time for a systematic review of still unmet victims' needs. "If we knew where we are and whither we are tending," President Lincoln once said, "we would know better what to do and how to do it."

In that spirit CVAS commissioned this needs assessment. In presenting it to the public, I want to extend special thanks to those who made it possible: Connie Gallagher, CVAS Director, and our CVAS colleagues who contributed to it; the Regional Research Institute of Portland State University, the consultants who organized and conducted the study that underlies this report; the members of the Advisory Committee who provided ongoing counsel and guidance of great value as the study progressed; and the hundreds of Oregonians who generously contributed their time to providing the information on which the findings and recommendations of the study are based.

I hope this assessment will help provide a current, accurate picture of "where we are and whither we are tending" as to crime victims' services in Oregon; and I hope it will provide a useful contribution to understanding, as to unmet crime victims' needs, "what to do and how to do it."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hardy Myers".

HARDY MYERS  
Attorney General

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Many thanks to the following people who helped to complete this study:

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# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## ACRONYM LIST

ADA	Assistant District Attorney
AFS	Adult and Family Services (part of DHS)
CAMI	Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention
CARES	Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Services
CAT	Child Abuse Teams
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
COBRA	Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (Continuation of health benefits after employment ends)
CVAN	Crime Victims' Assistance Network
CVAS	Crime Victims' Assistance Section (Oregon Dept of Justice)
DA	District Attorney
DHS	Oregon Department of Human Services
DK	Don't know (survey response)
DUII	Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants
DV	Domestic Violence
GED	General Education Development (High School equivalency)
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
LEDS	Law Enforcement Data Service
LOE	Loss of earnings
LOS	Loss of support
MRDD	Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
NA	Not applicable (survey response)
OHP	Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid)
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SA	Sexual Assault
SANE	Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner
SART	Sexual Assault Response Team
SCF	Services to Children and Families (former name for Child and Family Services section of DHS)
VAP	Victims' Assistance Program
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act
VINE	Victim Information and Notification Everyday
VOCA	Victims of Crime Act

### Symbols:

- Report findings
- Suggestions and recommendations from respondents
- n Number of respondents in a sample
- % Percentage
- # Number

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contributors.....	i
Acronym List.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Table of Tables.....	v
Table of Figures.....	vi
<b>SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
OREGON CRIME.....	1
VICTIMS' SERVICES IN OREGON.....	2
UNMET SERVICE NEEDS.....	2
RANGE AND QUALITY OF SERVICES.....	2
BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES.....	3
UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS.....	3
CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS.....	3
KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY "THEMES".....	4
<b>SECTION 2: A SNAPSHOT OF OREGON CRIME AND CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICES FOR 2001.....</b>	<b>10</b>
CRIME IN OREGON.....	10
SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME.....	11
VICTIMS' SERVICES FUNDING.....	12
<b>SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>14</b>
INFORMATION TYPES.....	14
DATA COLLECTION SOURCES AND DATA TYPES.....	14
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENT GROUPS.....	15
<b>SECTION 4: SERVICE USE AND AVAILABILITY.....</b>	<b>20</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD.....	20
SERVICES RECEIVED BY VICTIMS.....	20
SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS OF CRIME.....	22
SERVICES BY PROVIDERS WHO WERE ALSO VICTIMS.....	23
FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR VICTIMS.....	24
HELPFULNESS OF SOURCES OF SUPPORT.....	25
ACCESSIBILITY.....	26
<b>SECTION 5: BARRIERS CRIME VICTIMS ENCOUNTER.....</b>	<b>28</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD.....	28
WHY VICTIMS DON'T REPORT CRIMES.....	28
BARRIERS TO VICTIMS' SERVICES.....	29
BARRIERS BY REGION.....	30
<b>SECTION 6: UNMET SERVICE NEEDS OF CRIME VICTIMS.....</b>	<b>37</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD.....	37
UNMET SERVICE NEEDS.....	37
QUALITATIVE INFORMATION ON SERVICE NEEDS.....	40
REASONS SERVICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE.....	43
<b>SECTION 7: UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS OF CRIME VICTIMS.....</b>	<b>47</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD.....	47
VICTIM POPULATIONS SERVED.....	47
UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS.....	49
EFFECTS ON LIFE AREAS.....	50
COVERING EXPENSES.....	51
SOURCES OF SUPPORT.....	52
<b>SECTION 8: OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>62</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD.....	62
INFORMING CRIME VICTIMS OF THEIR RIGHTS.....	62
ENFORCEMENT OF CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS.....	65
ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS.....	67



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

---

CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION .....	69
SPECIFIC CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS .....	72
<b>SECTION 9: SERVICE PROVIDER CONTEXT AND ISSUES.....</b>	<b>74</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD: .....	74
FUNDING .....	74
STAFFING .....	74
TRAINING.....	76
SERVICE AREAS .....	77
OUTREACH .....	77
CHANGES .....	79
SELF CARE .....	81
LINKAGES AND PARTNERSHIPS.....	82
<b>SECTION 10: SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS.....</b>	<b>85</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD .....	85
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM POSITIVES.....	85
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS .....	86
CHANGES TO THE OVERALL CRIME VICTIM RESPONSE SYSTEM.....	90
FUNDING .....	94
TRAINING.....	95
<b>SECTION 11: A CLOSER LOOK AT ISSUES FOR VICTIMS OF SPECIFIC TYPES OF CRIME .....</b>	<b>99</b>
HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HEARD .....	99
TYPES OF CRIME AND THEIR EFFECT ON VICTIMS' LIVES.....	100
AGENCIES FIRST CONTACTED BY VICTIMS .....	101
SERVICE SATISFACTION BY CRIME TYPE .....	102
SPECIALIZED SERVICES BY TYPES OF CRIME .....	104
<b>SECTION 12: RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>109</b>
CONSISTENT AND AVAILABLE INFORMATION .....	109
IMMEDIATE AND ONGOING VICTIM SUPPORT .....	110
OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY .....	111
SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS .....	111
SERVICE LINKAGES AND PARTNERSHIPS .....	112
FUNDING .....	112
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND COMPENSATION.....	113
LAWS AND POLICIES .....	113
TRAINING.....	114
<b>SECTION 13: SELECTED STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS .....</b>	<b>115</b>
RESPONDENT IDEAS.....	115
INNOVATIVE NATIONAL PROGRAM MODELS .....	120
<b>APPENDIX A: CRIME MAPPING .....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS .....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: SUPPLEMENTAL DATA TABLES AND FIGURES .....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: KEY INFORMANTS.....</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>215</b>

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

---

## TABLE OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Reported crime incidents by state .....	10
Table 2.2: Reported Crimes Against Persons in 2000 and 2001 .....	11
Table 3.1: Data sources, mode of collection, scope and primary data type.....	15
Table 3.2: Crimes discussed in victims' survey .....	16
Table 3.3: Special characteristics .....	17
Table 3.4: Number of agencies responding by service areas .....	18
Table 3.5: Populations of underserved crime victims most familiar to key informants.....	19
Table 4.1: Services received .....	21
Table 4.2: Services provided to victims across Oregon .....	22
Table 4.3: Services provided by victims .....	24
Table 4.4: Agency of first contact .....	24
Table 4.5: Helpful sources of support for the victim.....	26
Table 5.1: Barriers to accessing victims' services and resources .....	30
Table 5.2: Barriers: Range of responses by CVAS region .....	31
Table 6.1: Unmet Service Needs of Crime Victims .....	38
Table 6.2: Top 5 Unmet Service Needs .....	39
Table 7.1: Racial distribution of crime victims served.....	47
Table 7.2: Ethnic/cultural distribution of crime victims served .....	48
Table 7.3: Agencies providing services and information .....	48
Table 7.4: Percent of crime victims served of special populations.....	49
Table 7.5: Underserved populations in the respondents' communities .....	50
Table 7.6: Life areas affected by the crime .....	51
Table 7.7: Financial resources used to cover expenses following the crime .....	52
Table 7.8: Helpful sources of support for victims .....	52
Table 8.1: Enforcement of Crime Victims' Rights.....	66
Table 8.2: Agencies routinely informing victims about Crime Victims' Compensation.....	69
Table 8.3: Reasons victims did not apply for Crime Victims' Compensation .....	70
Table 8.4: Sources used for covering expenses after the crime .....	71
Table 9.1: Top funding sources during most recent fiscal year .....	74
Table 9.2: Number of staff per agency.....	75
Table 9.3: Average number of staff reported by service type .....	75
Table 9.4: Common ways people find out about programs .....	78
Table 9.5: Relationship of changes in funding and changes in staffing.....	80
Table 9.6: Percentage of agencies that SEND referrals TO other agencies .....	82

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

---

Table 9.7: Percentage of agencies that RECEIVE referrals FROM other agencies.....	83
Table 10.1: Crime victims service system characteristics .....	91
Table 11.1: Average effect of each type of crime on a victim's life .....	100
Table 11.2: First agency contacted following the crime by crime type.....	101
Table 11.3: Overall accessibility of needed services by crime type .....	102
Table 11.4: Provider respect and responsiveness to victims of specific crime types .....	103
Table 11.5: Overall satisfaction with criminal justice system by crime type.....	103

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figures 4.1 & 4.2: Overall accessibility of services/service system.....	27
Figure 6.1: Services that providers heard clients expressing a greater need for.....	39
Figure 6.2 Respect and responsiveness of service providers.....	45
Figure 8.1: Are you aware of what Crime Victims' Rights are in Oregon? .....	62
Figure 8.2: Agencies providing written information on Crime Victims' Rights.....	64
Figures 8.3 & 8.4: Agencies verbally reviewing Crime Victims' Rights with clients.....	65
Figures 8.5 & 8.6: Are you aware of victims who have been unable to enforce their Crime Victims' Rights? .....	67
Figure 9.1: Respondents believing their agencies would benefit from Crime Victims' Compensation training .....	76
Figure 9.2: Service area.....	77
Figure 9.3: Changes in funding during the last two years .....	79
Figure 9.4: Changes in staffing during the last two years.....	79
Figure 10.1: Overall satisfaction of the criminal justice system.....	86

The tables and figures found within the appendices are summarized in a separate Table of Tables and Table of Figures following the list of appendices on p. 124.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the Crime Victims' Assistance Section of the Oregon Department of Justice, Portland State University's Regional Research Institute for Human Services conducted an 18-month (July 2001-December 2002) needs assessment of the current state of crime victims' services and victims' needs in Oregon. The primary objectives of the needs assessment were to identify:

- Gaps in the current service delivery system, including linkages among agencies
- Range and quality of services
- Barriers to accessing services, particularly among underserved populations
- How well Crime Victims' Rights are implemented
- Model national and statewide programs

Data collection components included in this comprehensive assessment of Oregon crime victims' needs were:

- In-depth telephone interviews with 100 service providers that primarily serve victims of crime
- Mailed surveys from 206 other agencies that serve crime victims or refer victims of crime to other service providers
- Telephone interviews with 42 key informants who have specialized knowledge of underserved populations
- Mailed surveys from 434 victims of interpersonal crime or elder fraud
- Six focus groups with 51 crime victims from underserved populations
- Three public meetings with 38 community participants

This report is a compilation of the findings gathered from the broad range of knowledgeable and insightful people in Oregon. The findings are organized within this report in sections based on content areas of the data. Recommendations for policy makers, services providers and advocates for victims based on these findings are organized by overarching themes that cross the data content areas. This executive summary represents highlights of the findings and recommendations presented in more detail throughout the report.

### **Oregon crime**

Crime in Oregon, with a total population of 3,471,700, increased 1.5% in 2001 when compared to 2000, according to the Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS). Total reported crimes increased in half of Oregon's 36 counties. Crimes Against Persons decreased 6.1% from 2000 to 2001. Of the individual crimes, large relative increases were observed for willful homicide (40.3%, from 67 to 94 reports) and negligent homicide (116.7%, from 6 to 13 reports), while forcible rape, other sex offenses, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault showed decreases (down 3.2%-13.5%).

The total number of arrests for 2001 was 169,147, a decrease of 1.8% from 2000. Arrests of adults decreased 1%; juvenile arrests were down 4.6% for the same time period. Frequently, such a pattern is seen nationally when reduced budgets have negatively impacted workload and staffing.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## Victims' services in Oregon

Victims' Assistance Programs (VAPs) can be found in 36 counties and five cities in Oregon. Victims' assistance services are primarily provided through DAs' offices; however, some VAPs are found in law enforcement agencies, juvenile departments and nonprofit organizations. Victims who report their crimes and cooperate with prosecutors can apply for Crime Victims' Compensation through the Crime Victims' Assistance Section (CVAS) of the Oregon Department of Justice. Service providers access a variety of state and federal grants to assist victims and their families.

In addition to the prosecutor-based Victim Assistance Programs, there are many other service providers who assist, advocate for and serve crime victims, such as approximately 49 domestic violence providers statewide. Some of the other types of providers to which victims go for help include mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, sexual assault teams, medical professionals, child abuse assessment and advocacy centers and homeless shelters.

## Unmet service needs

Three quarters of the victims who responded to this survey said they received the services they needed. However, it's likely that the majority of victims who completed the questionnaire had reported their crimes to law enforcement, which triggers victim access to services. In addition to a crime not being reported, providers and key informants who work with victims noted that victim needs were not being met for a variety of reasons, including time limits, limited funding, limited staff, monetary caps, professional attitudes and eligibility criteria. When we looked at information from all of our sources -- victims, service providers, and key informants -- the top unmet victim service needs identified were: financial assistance; criminal justice support and advocacy, emergency housing and shelter; mental health services and legal assistance. Detailed information about this topic can be found in the *Unmet service needs of crime victims* section of the larger Needs Assessment Report.

## Range and quality of services

Victims have access to a wide range of services. According to the crime victims surveyed, the most frequently used services were help with applying for Crime Victims' Compensation, medical services, mental health services and victim notification regarding case status.

The picture the research team received of service quality was mixed. Victims said mental health providers, medical personnel, victims' assistance staff and law enforcement officers were moderately helpful, although not surprisingly, they gave friends and family the highest "helpfulness" ratings. Both providers and victims said improvements could be made in service accessibility. The respondents identified access problems, such as difficulties finding appropriate services, calls that were not returned, and geographic distance from services.

Service providers and victims gave professionals high marks for respect and responsiveness, but there were many written and verbal comments complaining of rudeness, insensitivity, or lack of sympathy from law enforcement officers, DAs' offices, judges and/or child welfare staff. In many cases, these experiences caused further trauma for victims. Furthermore, it also was clear from written and verbal comments that many victims perceived the criminal justice system

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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to be unbalanced in favor of offenders. Detailed information about this topic can be found in the *Service use and availability*, *Unmet service needs of crime victims* and *System improvements* sections of the larger Needs Assessment Report.

## Barriers to accessing services

The majority of service providers and referral sources (84.9%) and key informants (100%) reported that crime victims experienced barriers to accessing services. According to information from victims, providers and key informants, the most influential barriers to crime victims' services were:

- Lack of information about what is available and how to access it
- Insufficient services
- Language and cultural issues that prevent reporting and/or lead victims to assume the system is not "for them"
- Victim issues, such as fears, attitudes or perceptions about how responsive and helpful the system will be
- Geographic isolation and mobility

Detailed information about this topic can be found in the *Barriers crime\_victims encounter* section of the larger Needs Assessment Report.

## Underserved populations

Specific populations of crime victims were identified by the CVAS as possibly being underserved: Native Americans, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, new immigrants, non-English-speaking individuals, elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with mental illness, homeless youth, rural and isolated populations, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals. Throughout the needs assessment process, we focused on developing a better understanding of the special circumstances of these groups of people. Data indicated that victims coming from these populations were often underserved, had trouble finding services that meet their needs and tended not to report crimes. People from these groups often do not receive the services and compensation they needed to recover from their victimization.

For many reasons, underserved victims believed the system was not for them. According to information gathered from all of our respondents familiar with these underserved population, their needs included specialized peer advocates, more bi-lingual and culturally sensitive services, outreach and prevention efforts and adequate basic services in rural communities. Detailed information about this topic can be found in the *Underserved populations of crime victims* section, as well as throughout most of the sections of the larger Needs Assessment Report.

## Crime Victims' Rights

Although many agencies reported providing information to crime victims about their rights, victims were not consistently clear about their rights or are not sure if they were informed. This may be due to victims receiving a lot of information following the crime. In many cases, victims' rights were not enforced. The right to receive prompt restitution was the right most often not

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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enforced according to victims and service providers. A variety of problems within the criminal justice system surfaced as barriers to victims exercising their rights, including no or incorrect information, system failures, judicial issues, offender-related issues and victim-related issues.

Many service providers routinely inform victims about Crime Victims' Compensation and assisted victims in submitting compensation applications. The majority of the victims surveyed applied for compensation. Not knowing about Crime Victims' Compensation was the primary reason reported by those who did not apply. Detailed information about this topic can be found in the *Oregon Crime Victims' Rights* section of the larger Needs Assessment Report.

## Key findings and recommendations by "themes"

Nine categories were chosen to group the key findings and recommendations. These categories represent important themes heard throughout the needs assessment process. They are:

- Consistent and available information
- Immediate and ongoing victim support
- Offender accountability
- System improvements
- Service linkages and partnerships
- Funding
- Financial assistance and compensation
- Laws and policies
- Training

Recommendations came from respondents and from research team members based on information they received throughout the needs assessment process. Recommendations are in no particular order.

### - Consistent and available information -

#### *Findings:*

Victims and service providers reported not getting enough information in almost every area, including Crime Victims' Compensation, Crime Victims' Rights, service availability, offender status, court dates and other steps in the criminal justice process. This is clearly a problem that needs attention. The lack of information creates problems in every aspect of the victim response system. In some cases, victims don't have updates on their cases and don't know whom to ask. More consistent, available information is needed across the board.

#### *Recommendations:*

- Crime victims need to be informed of their rights as soon as possible, preferably by law enforcement officers and/or victim advocates at the scene of the crime or at the hospital.
- Establish policies to ensure crime victim advocates review pertinent Crime Victims' Rights information at various stages of the victim response process in writing and verbally.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Review current procedures and improve timeliness of provision of case-related information to victims by the court or through the DAs' offices. This information would include dates and times for court hearings, offender status updates, and invitations to participate in court proceedings, victim impact statements, and plea negotiations.
- Provide basic victim service and victims' rights information in utility bills, phone directories, web sites, and other public outlets.
- Have every agency representative who comes into contact with a victim provide that victim with a card or brochure that lists Crime Victims' Rights, benefits, available services, and phone numbers. This information needs to be repeated at each step of the system by police, nonprofit and system-based advocates, juvenile staff, prosecutors, judicial staff, and probation and parole officers.
- Set up a statewide 24-hour Victims' Assistance Center where victims can call for referrals and information. Center personnel would follow-up to ensure appropriate services are secured.

## **- Immediate and ongoing victim support -**

### *Findings:*

The single most important change Oregon can make in its response to victims is in the area of advocacy. Victims want to be contacted at the scene or at the hospital by a victim advocate. They want more frequent contact by advocates in the first few weeks following the crime and ongoing assistance as needed. Victims want to be fully supported throughout the criminal justice process by an advocate who is respectful and sensitive to their needs. Advocates who speak the language and understand the culture of victims was another victim request.

### *Recommendations:*

- Offer every victim support through each step of the criminal justice process. Support should include a well-trained personal advocate, timely information, and appropriate referrals and follow up.
- Station advocates where they can have the most impact, locations such as homeless youth shelters, community organizations, parole and probation offices, juvenile departments and law enforcement agencies. Depending on the need, advocates can work in multiple locations during the week.
- Provide crime victim advocates with copies of police reports in cases of violent crime and fraud.
- Make victim advocates available to quickly respond to victims of violent crimes, assisting with law enforcement, medical, media, and family members.

## **- Offender accountability -**

### *Findings:*

Victims reported feeling re-victimized when offenders were not prosecuted, received plea bargains, or were given lenient sentences. Victims believe the criminal justice system is unfair and favors offender rights over victim rights. Victims asked for harsher penalties for serious



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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crimes, more victim- focused involvement from parole and probation officers, and support for the collection of restitution. Service providers and victim advocates also called for more offender accountability and increased victim participation in the court process.

## *Recommendations:*

- Assure all victims are asked to participate in plea negotiations.
- Arrest restraining-order offenders in whatever county they violated the order, not only the county where the order was issued.
- Have civil protective orders for rape victims when cases are not prosecuted.
- Have parole and probation officers more involved in victim response and victim notification of offender status.
- Implement a statewide restitution-tracking program.
- Prioritize payment of restitution to victims.

## **- System improvements -**

### *Findings:*

Victims and service providers called for better, more coordinated ways to serve and support crime victims. Areas identified as needing the greatest improvement within the criminal justice system included increasing victim focus and streamlining the system. Changes needed for the overall victim response system included increased sensitivity to and support for cultural minorities, coordination of the complex system, improved payment and restitution processes and better data collection and monitoring.

### *Recommendations:*

- Execute a statewide comprehensive coordinated plan for victim assistance that sets statewide standards for dissemination of Crime Victims' Rights, identifies core services and protocols for VAPs, and outlines expectations for consistent, ongoing communication with victims regarding the criminal justice process.
- Have greater emphasis on timely services, including mental health evaluation and treatment for victims to avoid long waiting lists.
- Provide for more shelters and focus on specific victim needs (elders, teens, sexual minorities, religious minorities, etc.)
- Have Intervention and counseling alternatives without activating the criminal justice process.
- Expand the use of technology to better support rural Oregon communities.
- Use technology such as an automated victim notification system.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## - Service linkages and partnerships -

### *Findings:*

Agencies and individuals are partnering more often to provide crime victims with a coordinated response. Multidisciplinary teams exist or are being established that focus on crisis response, child abuse, elder abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Protocols are being developed to include medical, law enforcement and service communities. Having law enforcement play a larger role, especially in interagency communication and collaboration, would help. Agencies also want to do a better job linking with programs outside of the criminal justice system. Providing better services to crime victims is the primary goal agencies have for more collaboration. They also see the benefits of saving money and cutting costs.

### *Recommendations:*

- Encourage more communities to form coordinated crisis response teams, such as Child Abuse Teams, Domestic Violence Response Teams, Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs), Child Abuse Assessment Centers, and Elder Abuse Prosecution Units.
- Look at ways to provide services through a consortium of agencies rather than a department, particularly in less-populated areas.
- Consider incentives to encourage collaboration and partnerships that result in better use of funds and improved services.
- Have victim advocates work with community agencies to co-case manage victims from other cultures, victims with disabilities and victims with mental illness.

## - Funding -

### *Findings:*

Agencies rely on a variety of funding sources, utilize many volunteers and employ several outreach methods. Many providers reported expanding, enhancing or otherwise changing their services to better meet the needs of victims over the last two years. Almost two thirds of the victim service providers reported that their funding had changed in the previous two years, with 31% of the agencies reporting an overall increase in funding, 25% reporting an overall decrease, and 44% reporting fluctuations in funding. However, many communities, especially in rural Oregon, lack basic victims' services due to insufficient funding. Victims told us that although services existed in their communities, long waiting lists made it difficult to receive the services when they were needed.

### *Recommendations:*

- Provide rural Oregon with additional resources for administration, services, shelters and transportation.
- Fund additional crime victim advocate positions, especially for populations of underserved victims of crime.
- Hire "peer advocates" who live in the community and speak the language of the crime victims served.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Fund positions for rural victim advocates who represent multiple agencies.
- Reduce the number of funding streams for victims' services by combining services in one statewide office. Data collection could then be more uniform and grants monitoring could be better coordinated. It would be easier to evaluate programs and projects and reduce overlap.
- Blend, braid or pool funds from various agencies within the same communities, or across county lines, to increase resources for crime victims.

## **- Financial assistance and compensation -**

### *Findings:*

Emergency funding is needed for crime-related expenses such as safe, temporary housing, transportation, crime scene clean up, and reimbursement for lost income. This is especially true for low-income victims. Although some of these expenses may be covered by Crime Victims' Compensation, this source of funding is not always available right away. Of the 274 victims responding to a question about compensation, 66% said they didn't apply. The primary reason was not knowing about Crime Victims' Compensation. Eligibility problems (in the cases of financial fraud for example) and complexity of the process kept other victims from applying.

### *Recommendations:*

- Explore ways the system can assist victims of financial fraud, including mental health services and financial counseling.
- Make Crime Victims' Compensation forms more user-friendly.
- Continue to make funds available in the immediate aftermath of the crime, such as with discretionary emergency funds.
- Expand civil/legal assistance.
- Shorten the turnaround time for decisions and payments on Crime Victims' Compensation claims by making the process more efficient through technology and additional staff (where needed).

## **- Laws and policies -**

### *Findings:*

Victims were frequently critical of the overall criminal justice system and had specific concerns about laws and policies, law enforcement, DAs and the courts. Victims, service providers and key informants asked for changes in Oregon law and agency policies that they believed would benefit future victims. They were particularly interested in changes that would prioritize victim rights, improve communication regarding offender status and court dates, and enhance victim protection.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## *Recommendations:*

- Put the restraining order process in victim-friendly locations, not courthouses.
- Involve victims in the development of policies, procedures, laws and guidelines.
- Extend the 30-day window banks allow customers to report bank errors.
- Allow homeless youth to receive emergency medical care without the threat of law enforcement notification regarding possible warrants.
- Assign lead investigators to fraud cases that have multiple jurisdictions.
- Take social security numbers off of all identification cards (hospital, insurance, etc.)

## **- Training -**

### *Findings:*

Comments made by victims said that more training for professionals could improve the overall usefulness of the service system. Specific professional training needs included sensitivity training for law enforcement officers and DAs. Training came up repeatedly with individuals who work with crime victims. Most of their comments centered on training for judges, law enforcement officers and DAs.

### *Recommendations:*

- Work with the Bureau of Police Safety, Standards and Training (BPSST) to more fully develop a victim sensitivity and response component to their training program. Have the Oregon District Attorneys' Association, Oregon Judicial Department, Oregon Nurse Association, and the statewide defense attorneys' organization to incorporate a victim sensitivity and response component in yearly trainings.
- Conduct cultural awareness and sensitivity training for each agency's personnel and provide information on how services could be tailored to the needs of special populations.
- Provide cross training to victim response agencies so they know how each system works, i.e., mental health/criminal justice system; advocates/DHS; parole and probation/domestic violence agencies. Agencies should be aware of the continual need for communication and information sharing with partner agencies.
- Provide training to emergency room personnel and other medical staff likely to first encounter victims about victim needs, sensitive approaches to victims, and information and referral systems.
- Give advocates, police, prosecutors and judges additional training to learn more about the trauma victim's experience and how they can respond with more understanding, empathy, sensitivity and support. Victims treated with compassion and respect can provide better information to investigators.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## SECTION 2: A SNAPSHOT OF OREGON CRIME AND CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICES FOR 2001

### Crime in Oregon<sup>1</sup>

Crime in Oregon, with a total population of 3,471,700,<sup>2</sup> increased 1.5% overall in 2001 when compared to 2000, according to Statewide Reported Offenses and Arrests for 2001 compiled by the Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS). Total reported crimes increased in exactly half of Oregon's 36 counties. The state's five most populated counties – Clackamas, Lane, Marion, Multnomah and Washington – represent 60% of the Oregon's population and nearly two-thirds of both total reported crimes and total Crimes Against Persons (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1: Reported crime incidents by state and top 5 most populous counties in 2001**

Area	% of 2001 Population	Total Crime			Crimes Against Persons		
		2000	2001	% Change	2000	2001	% Change
Oregon	100.0%	439,371	445,885	1.5%	44,405	41,707	-6.1%
Clackamas	9.9%	34,212	35,667	4.3%	2,989	2,691	-10.0%
Lane	9.4%	44,460	42,871	-3.6%	4,326	4,192	-3.1%
Marion	8.3%	43,677	45,599	4.4%	3,798	3,985	4.9%
Multnomah	19.2%	108,845	108,742	-0.1%	14,336	12,489	-12.9%
Washington	13.1%	38,005	40,899	7.6%	3,417	3,493	2.2%
Total for 5 Counties	59.9%	269,199	273,778	1.7%	28,866	26,850	-7.0%
% of Crimes		61.3%	61.4%		65.0%	64.4%	

Crimes Against Persons (the focus of this report) represent 9.4% of total reported offenses in Oregon for 2001, relative to 241,837 (54.2%) reported property crimes and 162,341 (36.4%) reported behavioral crimes. Reported Crimes Against Persons decreased 6.1% overall from 2000 to 2001. Of the individual crimes, forcible rape, other sex offenses, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault showed decreases, while willful murder and negligent homicide showed large increases. A breakdown of the eight crimes in this category for 2000 and 2001 are presented in Table 2.2. (Caution: The actual number of crimes representing those large increases were smaller than for the decreases in all other Crimes Against Persons).

<sup>1</sup> All of the crime data reported in this section can be found in the *Statewide Reported Offenses and Arrests for 2001* compiled by LEDS (website: [www.leds.state.or.us](http://www.leds.state.or.us)).

<sup>2</sup> Population statistics reported in this section are from the Population Research Center (PRC), Portland State University (website: [www.pdx.edu/CPRC](http://www.pdx.edu/CPRC)).

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 2.2: Reported Crimes Against Persons in 2000 and 2001**

Crime type <sup>a</sup>	2000	2001	% Change
Simple Assault	25,848	24,608	-4.8
Aggravated Assault	7,746	6,698	-13.5
Other Sex Offenses	5,896	5,710	-3.2
Robbery	2,906	2,759	-5.1
Forcible Rape	1,282	1,201	-6.3
Kidnapping	654	624	-4.6
Willful Murder	67	94	40.3
Negligent Homicide	6	13	116.7
Total	44,405	41,707	-6.1

<sup>a</sup> Titles represent actual LEADS categories.

LEADS also presents some interesting statistics related to when reported crimes occur. Friday is the most crime-ridden day (14.7%), closely followed by Saturday (14.5%). There is slight variation across months of the year, with July (9.0%) coming out on top as the most crime-ridden month. Crimes most often occur between midnight and 2am (7.3%) as well as between 4pm and 6pm (7.0%). Finally, LEADS found that by far, the most common statewide location for reported offenses is a single family residence (16.8%), followed by streets/alleys/ sidewalks (11.6%) and parking lots/driveways (10.5%). A complete table of these data can be found in *Appendix D: Supplemental data tables and figures*.

The total number of arrests for 2001 was 169,147, a decrease of 1.8% from 2000. Arrests of adults decreased 1%; juvenile arrests were down 4.6% for the same time period.

The total number of felony cases processed statewide by the courts in 2001 was 36,615, as reported by the Oregon State Court Administration. Of those, 2,041 went to trial, with 5.6% of the total felony cases terminated by trial. The number of misdemeanor cases tried during the same period was 61,662.

## Services for victims of crime<sup>3</sup>

CVAS reports that approximately \$3.9 million was collected in restitution, subrogation and punitive damages in 2001. The agency distributed almost \$2 million of that amount to victims for: medical and dental care, loss of earnings (LOE), loss of support (LOS) due to the decease of the primary wage earner, counseling, funeral expenses, rehabilitation and transportation. Of the 4,212 victim claims received by CVAS, 3,947 had

<sup>3</sup> The information in this report about crime victim claims and funding for crime victims' services were gathered from personal correspondence with CVAS staff and the CVAS website at [www.doj.state.or.us/CrimeV/welcome1.htm](http://www.doj.state.or.us/CrimeV/welcome1.htm)

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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determinations made with 74% accepted, 6% denied, and 20% for medical assessments only.

## Victims' services funding

Funding for services to victims of crime in Oregon is administered through several different agencies. Funds are distributed as grants or contracts to victim service providers throughout the state. Services providers receiving grant funds include Domestic and Sexual Violence services agencies, County -prosecutor-based VAPs, child abuse intervention agencies, and various other programs that serve victims of crime. Following are the administering agencies and the funds allocated by each agency on an ongoing basis.

- Oregon Department of Human Services – Children, Adults and Families
  - Oregon Criminal Fines and Assessment Account Domestic Violence Services fund
  - Oregon Criminal Fines and Assessment Account Sexual Assault Services fund
  - Oregon Marriage License Fees Domestic Violence Program fund
  - Federal Family Violence Prevention Services Domestic Violence Program fund
  
- Oregon State Police – Criminal Justice Services Division
  - Federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) fund
  - Federal Edward Byrne Memorial Formula Grant fund
  
- Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
  - Oregon State Tax Check-Off fund
  - Federal Department of Health and Human Services/Center for Disease Control fund
  
- Oregon Department of Justice – Crime Victims' Assistance Section
  - Oregon Criminal Fines and Assessment Account Prosecutor Based Victim Assistance fund
  - Oregon Criminal Fines and Assessment Account Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention fund
  - Oregon (General Fund) Domestic and Sexual Violence Services fund
  - Federal Victim of Crime Act – Victim Assistance Fund

The amount of money available for distribution varies for each funding source from year to year or from one biennium to the next, depending on the specific funding cycle. Ongoing funds dedicated to victims' services from the above funding sources in the year 2001 total \$7,795,458 in funds collected from various sources in the state of Oregon and \$8,092,215 in Federal funds.

Occasionally one-time grants for victims' services are made through the above agencies from the listed sources and other funding sources. In addition, service providers may be awarded grant funds that are administered directly from the federal level.

## **2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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CVAS reimburses individual victims statewide for compensable expenses incurred as a result of a crime through the Oregon Crime Victims' Compensation Program. The Oregon Crime Victims' Compensation Program is funded through the Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) – Victims' Compensation fund, Criminal Fines and Assessment Account Crime Victims' Compensation fund and punitive damages funds that are received by the Department of Justice. In 2001, approximately \$2.5 million was distributed to victims of crime through the Compensation program.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this project was to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the current state of crime victims' services and crime victim needs in Oregon<sup>4</sup>. CVAS asked that a special emphasis be placed on understanding the obstacles experienced by underserved populations as they try to access victims' services. The 18-month project was conducted from July 2001 through January 2003 by a team of researchers from Portland State University's Regional Research Institute for Human Services, who partnered with consultants familiar with crime victims' services in Oregon. The project was supplemented by expert advice, guidance and assistance from an Advisory Committee comprised of Oregonians who had been victims of crime.

### Information types

This needs assessment covered a variety of areas, which were incorporated into all of the data collection instruments. These information types included:

- The types of crimes and the impact of crime on victims
- Crime Victims' Rights and Crime Victims' Compensation
- Victims' services and support
- Underserved populations of crime victims
- Service provider issues
- Service needs, gaps and barriers
- Service system recommendations for improvement
- Descriptive information about victims of crime
- Descriptive information about service providers and referral sources

### Data collection sources and data types

In order to be comprehensive, data was collected from a broad range of individuals and in a variety of different ways, as shown in Table 3.1 on the next page. As in all research, our final sample size for each data source was a proportion of the number we attempted to gather (i.e., the target sample size) due to individuals choosing to not participate in the needs assessment or data being incomplete. The proportion of the targeted sample size is represented as the response rate in Table 3.1. Two general types of data were gathered and analyzed: quantitative and qualitative. *Quantitative data* is numerical data that shows how representative certain responses are across a group of respondents. This type of data is presented as percentages, average scores and counts of people. *Qualitative data* is textual data from comments provided during interviews and focus groups, as well as written on survey forms. It provides information beyond the numbers, giving us a more in-depth understanding of the issues identified through analyzing the numeric data. This type of data is presented as quotes, lists, and themes based on individual respondent viewpoints. Table 3.1 includes the primary type of data collected from each of the different data sources.

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<sup>4</sup> A more thorough presentation of the methodology used for this needs assessment can be found in *Appendix B: Expanded methodology*.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 3.1: Data sources, mode of collection, scope and primary data type**

Data Source	Mode of Collection <sup>a</sup>	Sample Size	Response Rate	Scope	Primary Data Type
Key informants	In-person Interviews	42	140% of 30 proposed	Specific underserved populations	Qualitative (Words)
Crime victims' service providers	Telephone interviews	100	88% of 114 agencies contacted	Statewide. Agencies contracted to provide crime victims' services and additional categories of providers such as hospitals and law enforcement.	Quantitative (Numbers)
Referral sources	Mailed written survey	206	18% of 1118 surveys mailed	Statewide. Mainly agencies who refer to crime victims service providers	Quantitative (Numbers)
Victims from underserved populations	Focus groups	51	106% of 48 (average of 8/group, 6 groups)	Specific types of crimes. Specific geographic locations.	Qualitative (Words)
Crime victims	Written survey	434	11% of 4,079 surveys distributed	Statewide. Mainly applicants for Crime Victims' Compensation and recipients of Victim Assistance Program services	Quantitative (Numbers)
Public meetings	In-person group discussions	3 meetings	75% of 4 meetings	Specific geographic locations	Qualitative (Words)

<sup>a</sup>All of the instruments (interviews, surveys) used for this needs assessment are reproduced in Appendix B.

## Characteristics of the respondent groups

For the purpose of this section, general characteristics of each respondent group are presented. Additional details about respondent characteristics are presented in *Appendix B: Expanded methodology*.

### -Crime victims-

Over half the respondents who responded to our written survey for victims of interpersonal crime or elder fraud were victims themselves, while almost 40% described themselves as someone close to a person who had been a victim of a crime. A small percentage of the respondents described themselves as both a victim of a crime and a person who is close to a victim of a crime. Of the people who were responding on behalf of a victim, more than 90% were relatives of the victim, including parents, spouses or partners, siblings and children.

Even though many individuals had experienced more than one crime throughout their lives, respondents were asked to answer the victim survey items regarding their experiences following only one of the crimes. For this survey, participants mainly

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

responded regarding child abuse, domestic violence, assault, rape and homicide. A complete list of crimes discussed is included in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Crimes discussed in victims' survey**  
n=414 victims

Crime	# of respondents	% of respondents
Child abuse -- sexual and/or physical	112	27.1
Domestic violence	83	20.0
Assault ( <u>not</u> domestic violence)	54	13.0
Rape	39	9.4
Homicide <sup>a</sup>	36	8.7
Robbery	13	3.1
Financial exploitation/fraud	11	2.7
Adult sexual assault ( <i>other than rape</i> )	10	2.4
Driving under the Influence of Intoxicants (DUII)	7	1.7
Hit and run	5	1.2
Arson	4	1.0
Elder abuse	3	0.7
Hate crime	3	0.7
Stalking	3	0.7
Attempted murder	2	0.5
Theft	1	0.2
Emotional abuse	0	0.0
Kidnapping	0	0.0
Terrorism	0	0.0
Rape and other crime	9	2.1
Multiple crimes (not including rape)	13	3.1
Other	6	1.4

<sup>a</sup>Relatives of a person who has been murdered are often referred to as, and identify themselves as, victims of that same homicide

The average age of the victim survey respondents was 27.7 years with most respondents clustering around the median age of 25 years. Victim respondents were also predominantly Caucasian women, with nearly 90% being most comfortable speaking English. For 57% of the respondents, the highest level of education they received was at least some college. More than one-third of the respondents were divorced or separated, followed by one-third who were single/never married.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Survey respondents were asked if they considered themselves as having any of a list of possible characteristics. Of these, the highest percentage of respondents (20.5%) said that they had a physical disability or mental illness. A complete list of the special characteristics we asked about is included in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Special characteristics**  
n=273 victims

Characteristics	# of victims	% of victims
Physical disability	56	20.5
Mental illness	42	15.4
Victim of a juvenile offender	23	8.4
Developmental disability	22	8.1
Extremely rural or geographically isolated area	21	7.7
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender	18	6.6
Homeless	16	5.9
Elder victim of financial fraud	13	4.8
Immigrant or refugee	11	4.0
Member of a religious minority	10	3.7
Any other special characteristic	45	16.5

NOTE: Respondents could endorse more than one special characteristic

## **-Service providers and referral sources-**

Respondents were representatives from 100 service providers that primarily or solely serve victims of crime and 206 other agencies that either serve victims of crime as part of their client population or refer victims of crime to other service providers. For simplicity throughout this report, the former group will be referred to as “service providers” and the latter group will be referred to as “referral sources.” Referral sources were asked a subset of the questions presented to service providers. Whenever the same data was gathered from both groups of respondents, the information provided was combined and referenced as from “service providers/referral sources” or “agencies.”

Agencies these respondents represented were distributed throughout the state and provided a variety of services. Responding to a list of agency types, the type most frequently endorsed was mental health, followed by domestic violence, sexual assault and VAPs (see Table 3.4). Mental health providers were a mix of agencies and private practitioners. VAPs were frequently located in the DAs’ offices for the counties, though some had located people in local police stations at least one day per week. Domestic violence and sexual assault providers frequently said that they provided both services. Other service types endorsed included police/sheriff, child abuse assessment and advocacy center, DA’s office, medical (predominantly hospitals), faith, juvenile justice, aging, alcohol/drug treatment, corrections, Native American, education, and legal. Many respondents identified multiple service types that could describe their agency.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 3.4: Number of agencies responding by service areas**  
n=306 service providers/referral sources

Agency Type	# of Agencies	% of Agencies
Mental health	91	29.7
Domestic violence	57	18.6
Sexual assault	46	15.0
Victim Assistance Program (VAP)	43	14.1
Police / sheriff	38	12.4
Child abuse assessment	34	11.1
DA's office	31	10.1
Medical	25	8.2
Faith	13	4.2
Juvenile justice	12	3.9
Corrections	5	1.6
Education	5	1.6
Aging	3	1.0
Alcohol / drug treatment	3	1.0
Other	24	7.8

Note: Respondents could endorse more than one agency type.

## **-Key informants-**

In-person interviews were conducted with key informants representing groups of people who could potentially be underserved by community providers. The underserved populations were defined by (a) the type of crime, (b) the specific cultural or linguistic group, and/or (c) a geographic area. When respondents were read a list of potentially underserved population types, more than one-quarter said they were most familiar with immigrants or refugees, victims living in extreme rural and isolated areas, Native Americans, Latinos, and non-English-speaking individuals. A complete breakdown of the special populations most familiar to the key informant respondents is presented in Table 3.5.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 3.5: Populations of underserved crime victims most familiar to key informants**  
n=42 key informants

Population	#	%
Immigrants or refugees	15	35.7
Extreme rural and isolated populations	12	28.6
Native Americans	12	28.6
Latinos	12	28.6
Non-English-speaking individuals	12	28.6
Elder victims of crime other than financial fraud	10	23.8
Persons with physical disabilities	10	23.8
Homeless victims of crime	10	23.8
Elder victims of financial fraud	9	21.4
Persons with mental illness	9	21.4
Victims of juvenile offenders	8	19.0
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered victims of crime	8	19.0
Victims who are developmentally disabled	8	19.0
Asians	5	11.9
African Americans	3	7.1
Religious minorities	3	7.1
Other	16	38.1

NOTE: Respondents could endorse more than one category

## **-Focus groups for underserved populations-**

Participants in the six focus groups represented the underserved populations for which each focus group was targeted. The focus groups of people victimized by crime were:

- Latina women (5 participants in Umatilla County)
- Immigrants and refugees who were also survivors of domestic violence (11 participants in Multnomah County)
- Members of the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender community who had been victims of crime (10 participants in Multnomah County)
- Victims of juvenile offenders (5 participants in Linn County)
- Juvenile victims of crime (10 participants in Coos County)
- Elderly victims of crime (10 participants in Washington County)

## **-Public meetings-**

One public meeting each was held in three Oregon counties: Coos (9 participants), Union (11 participants) and Washington (18 participants). Although the turnout for each public meeting was much smaller than we had hoped, a variety of interested individuals from the service providing community, as well as individuals who had been victimized by crime, attended each of the meetings. At public meetings, participants were aware that their comments were for public record and therefore were not confidential.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 4: SERVICE USE AND AVAILABILITY

### Highlights of what we heard

The most frequently used crime victims' services, according to victims, were help with applying for Crime Victims' Compensation, medical services, mental health evaluation and therapy, and victim notification regarding case status. The overwhelming majority of victims also told us that law enforcement agencies were their first point of contact. Not surprisingly, victims found friends and family to be the most helpful source of support for them following victimization, but they also found mental health providers, medical personnel, victim assistance staff, and law enforcement officers to be moderately helpful. Victims as well as providers made it clear that improvements can be made in service accessibility.

### Services received by victims

*What are the services victims most frequently receive?*

The victim survey included a list of 26 services that can be available to victims of crime. Respondents were asked to identify those services they had actually received (see Table 4.1 on the following page). The victims who reported the crime they discussed in the survey used an average of 4.7 types of services following that crime (n=378); whereas, people who had not reported the crime received slightly fewer types of services, an average of 3.8 (n=43 non-reporters who told us about the services they received). Overall, we learned that the most frequently received services were:

- Assistance with applying for Crime Victims' Compensation
- Medical services
- Mental health services
- Victim notification about the offender and the overall case
- Criminal justice support/advocacy

Respondents who received a service were asked to rate how useful it was to them. The following list highlights the top five services rated as most useful, on a scale of 1 ("not useful") to 4 ("very useful"). Although only a small proportion of respondents indicated using these services, they found them to be quite useful:

- Emergency financial assistance (Rating: 3.67; received by 12.2%)
- Shelter/short-term housing services (Rating: 3.64; received by 6.5%)
- Help with transportation (Rating: 3.62; received by 10.6%)
- Child care (Rating: 3.60; received by 3.7%)
- Spiritual/religious counseling (Rating: 3.49; received by 15.0%)

Table 4.1 includes a complete list of the services received by our survey respondents, including any descriptions of services that were printed on the survey form.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 4.1: Services received**  
n=433 victims

Type of Service	% receiving service	Average usefulness of service for those receiving <sup>a</sup>
Assistance with applying for Crime Victims' Compensation	51.0	3.29
Medical services	47.1	3.34
Mental health evaluation or therapy for you or victim	46.4	3.35
Victim notification of offender/case information and status	45.7	3.02
Criminal justice support/advocacy ( <i>someone goes to court with you, assists during law enforcement investigations, explains criminal or civil procedures, assists in making victim statement at sentencing</i> )	41.6	3.32
Crisis services ( <i>in person or a telephone hotline</i> )	28.4	3.08
Support groups ( <i>including self-help groups, AA/NA./Al-Anon, and drop-in groups</i> )	24.5	3.11
Emergency legal advocacy ( <i>help with filing temporary restraining orders, stalking orders and other protective orders</i> )	21.7	3.29
Mental health evaluation/counseling for spouse or family	19.2	3.39
Restitution information or help with processing requests	17.6	2.96
Hospital accompaniment ( <i>someone goes with you or meets you at the hospital</i> )	16.9	3.17
Spiritual/religious counseling	15.0	3.49
Emergency financial assistance	12.2	3.67
Victimization prevention skills education	11.5	3.11
Help with transportation	10.6	3.62
Help filing insurance claims or dealing with insurance co.	8.8	3.11
Property return	8.3	2.77
Help with employment issues/problems	7.6	2.52
Victim/offender mediation ( <i>someone serves as an intermediary between you and the offender to discuss the impact of the crime and to provide offender with an opportunity to voice remorse</i> )	6.9	2.62
Shelter/short-term housing services	6.5	3.64
Help with landlord issues/problems	4.4	3.06
Child care	3.7	3.60
Bilingual services ( <i>services or printed information in a language other than English</i> )	3.0	3.40
Information about or help with immigration issues	2.5	3.25
Crime site clean-up	2.5	3.09

<sup>a</sup>Rating scale: 1=not useful, 4=very useful



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## Services available to victims of crime

*What services do agencies provide to victims of crime in Oregon?*

Similar to the approach used in the victim survey, service providers were given a slightly longer list of 42 services and asked if they provided each service to crime victims.

Services most frequently provided to victims of crime according to service providers were, in order:

- Information and referral
- Crisis services
- Community outreach
- Case management
- Criminal justice support

Table 4.2 below presents the distribution of crime victims' services provided in Oregon, as reported by providers. Service descriptions can be found in the reprinted interview and survey in Appendix C.

**Table 4.2: Services provided to victims across Oregon**  
n=306 service providers/referrals sources

Type of Service	#	%
Information and referral	206	67.3
Crisis services	179	58.5
Community outreach	156	51.0
Case management	155	50.7
Criminal justice support	153	50.0
Bilingual services <sup>a</sup>	151	49.3
Court orientation	147	48.0
Assistance with Crime Victims' Compensation	139	45.4
Transportation	138	45.1
Prevention education	131	42.8
Hospital accompaniment	123	40.2
Emergency financial assistance	116	37.9
Mental health evaluation or therapy <sup>b</sup>	113	36.9
Emergency legal advocacy	106	34.6
Help with victim impact statement	106	34.6
Victim notification	105	34.3
Support groups	104	34.0
Property return	90	29.4
Restitution claims	83	27.1
Employment intervention	83	27.1

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Type of Service	#	%
Victim hotline	79	25.8
Impact panels	79	25.8
Landlord intervention	74	24.2
Parenting classes	73	23.9
Life skills education	72	23.5
Death notification	71	23.2
Victim protection	70	22.9
Insurance claims	68	22.2
Witness fee	63	20.6
Shelter	60	19.6
Immigration assistance	57	18.6
Victim/offender mediation	55	18.0
Legal assistance	50	16.3
Child care	49	16.0
Crime site clean up	49	16.0
Substance abuse	41	13.4
Medical services	35	11.4
Spiritual counseling	35	11.4
Transitional housing	25	8.2
Employment services	18	5.9
Physical therapy	11	3.6
Other	31	10.1

<sup>a</sup> Seventy-one providers indicated providing services in Spanish. Nineteen indicated providing services in at least one language other than Spanish.

<sup>b</sup> Eleven agencies indicated providing mental health services for the family of the victim. Only five agencies indicated providing any kind of mental health services for the significant other of the victim if they were not married.

### Services by providers who were also victims

*Do people who have been crime victims provide services?*

We wanted to get a sense of the proportion of services being provided by people who had been crime victims themselves. To do this, we asked service providers who were individually interviewed (n=100) to identify which of the services their agency offers are provided by a fellow crime victim. Across all of the 42 services, 35% to 100% of the service providers offering each service noted that crime victims provide the service. Table 4.3 highlights the services that two-thirds or more of providing agencies indicated were provided by crime victims at their agency.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 4.3: Services provided by victims in two-thirds or more of providing agencies**

n= 100 service providers

Service	# of agencies providing this service	Agencies with Service Provided by Crime Victim	
		#	%
Substance abuse	5	4	80.0
Life skills education	34	27	79.4
Victim protection	43	33	76.7
Support groups	57	41	71.9
Spiritual counseling	7	5	71.4
Victim/offender mediation	10	7	70.0
Victim hotline	49	34	69.4
Child care	35	24	68.6
Impact panels	35	24	68.6
Shelter	40	27	67.5
Employment services	12	8	66.7
Immigration	42	28	66.7

A complete list of the services and the proportion of agencies that identified crime victims as providing the service can be found in Appendix D:

## First point of contact for victims

*What agency do victims contact first following a crime?*

When asked which agency they had contacted first following the crime, approximately 52% of victims named law enforcement, stating that the police often arrived on the scene of the crime without being notified directly by the victim. Other agencies were contacted first, but in far fewer numbers, as is shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Agency of first contact**

n=390 victims

Agency	#	%
Law enforcement	203	52.1
Medical personnel	35	9.0
Victims assistance	19	4.9
Children's services	16	4.1
Domestic violence/sexual assault agency	16	4.1
Hotline - child or adult	14	3.6
Counselor or Therapist	9	2.3
School personnel	9	2.3
Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Services (CARES)	8	2.1

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Agency	#	%
Attorney	7	1.8
Church	4	1.0
Russian Oregon social service	4	1.0
Adult and Family Services (AFS)	3	0.8
Ambulance	3	0.8
Probation/parole officer	2	0.5
Crime Victims' Compensation Program	2	0.5
Multiple agencies	10	2.6
Other	11	2.8

Note: Not included in the table were 13 victims (3.3%) who said they contacted no one and 2 victims (0.5%) who could not remember who they contacted first.

Note: For a breakdown of agency of first contact by type of crime experienced, see *Issues for victims of certain types of crimes*.

We also asked the individually interviewed service providers who they believed victims contacted first. Of those who responded to the item (n=83), the agencies they identified as most frequently contacted first by crime victims were:

- Law enforcement (27.7% or 23 providers)
- VAPs (19.3% or 16 providers)
- Hotlines (18.1% or 15 providers)
- Sexual assault/domestic violence agencies (10.8% or 9 providers)
- Child welfare agency (3.6% or 3 providers)
- AFS (1.2% or 1 providers)
- Other agencies (19.3% or 16 providers)

## Helpfulness of sources of support

*What did victims find to be most helpful?*

Crime victims were asked to indicate how helpful a variety of sources of support were in assisting them as a crime victim/survivor. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being not helpful and 4 being very helpful, the average scores ranged from 2.13 to 3.15 (see Table 4.5). The sources of support rated at or above the midpoint on the scale (average scores 2.5 and up) by victims were:

- Friends and family
- Mental health providers
- Medical personnel
- Victims' assistance advocates
- VAPs
- Law enforcement
- Sexual assault/rape crisis advocate

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 4.5: Helpful sources of support for the victim**  
n=433 victims

How helpful was each of the following in assisting you as a crime victim/survivor? <sup>a</sup>	# of victims responding	Average score
Friends	398	3.15
Family	399	3.09
Mental health professional/therapist	262	2.96
Medical personnel	297	2.87
Victims' assistance advocate (in DA's office)	345	2.72
VAP	326	2.66
Law enforcement officer (police/sheriff)	395	2.63
Sexual assault or rape crisis advocate/counselor/volunteer	141	2.50
Victims' assistance liaison (from police/sheriff office)	298	2.41
Minister/clergy/faith community	196	2.39
Victim support group	169	2.27
Child abuse center	123	2.21
Domestic violence shelter/program	127	2.13

Note: A breakdown of the ratings for each type of support can be found in Appendix D.

<sup>a</sup> 1=not helpful, 4=very helpful

## Accessibility

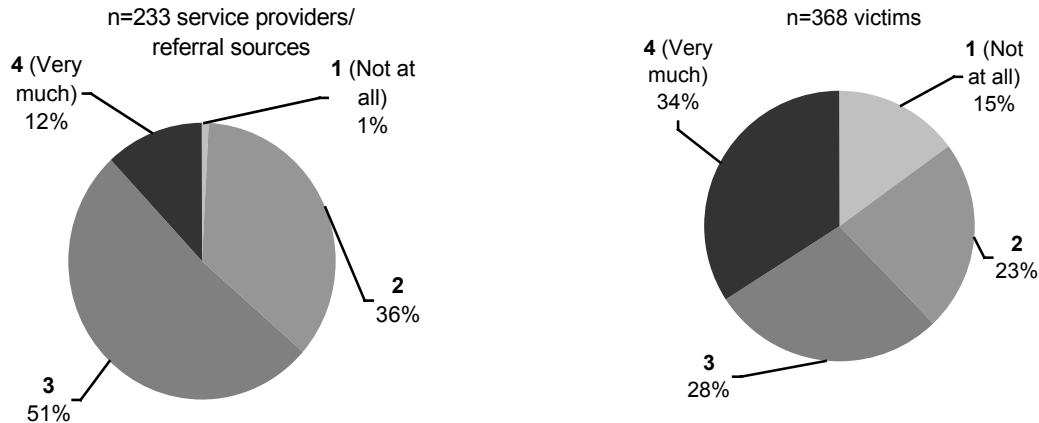
*Overall, how accessible were the services victims received or needed?*

Overall, both service providers and victims said they found services to be somewhat accessible. On a scale of 1 to 4 (1=not at all accessible, 4=very accessible), victims provided an average rating of 2.8 for the accessibility of the services they received or needed. On the same 4-point scale, service providers' average rating was 2.75 regarding the accessibility of the service system as a whole.<sup>5</sup> Figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict the proportions of ratings for both respondent groups.

<sup>5</sup> See *System improvements* for ratings on a full range of service system characteristics.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Figures 4.1 & 4.2: Overall accessibility of services/service system



There is clearly room for improvement in the area of accessibility. It is interesting to note that a greater proportion of victims gave services a "not at all" accessibility rating than providers (14.9% as compared to 0.9%). On the other hand, 34.2% of victims responding rated their services as "very accessible," compared with 12% of providers.

## Victims

Comments from the victim surveys and focus groups were reviewed to identify more details about the issue of service accessibility. Victims reported difficulties with accessibility including:

- Problems finding or getting to the police station
- Long waiting lists for mental health evaluation, therapy or support groups (One victim said, "I couldn't get into appropriate counseling because all of the referrals had waiting lists.")
- Long waits to give a statement
- Problems reaching someone on the phone
- Long travel distance and lack of appropriate services in rural areas (A victim from rural Oregon told us, "I had to drive 50 miles to a domestic violence shelter.")

## Key informants and service providers

Service providers commented on several issues that keep victims from accessing the services they need:

- Inability to read well enough to find services
- Services that take too long to access
- Information that is not readily available
- Lack of mental health treatment professionals
- Overworked legal system
- Phone messages that are not returned (One referral said, "Over burdened legal providers are likely underpaid and are generally unavailable for victims. Many complaints of lack of communication from legal back to victims. Few call backs to victims.")

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 5: BARRIERS CRIME VICTIMS ENCOUNTER

### Highlights of what we heard

Although services for victims were reported to be somewhat accessible (*see Service use and availability*), victims still faced barriers when reporting crimes, accessing services, and getting the help they needed. Because reporting a crime to law enforcement starts the service delivery process, a key barrier to accessing services is not reporting the crime. Victims gave multiple reasons for not reporting the crime, including being afraid of the offender, dealing with it another way, and having no confidence in the justice system. The majority of service providers (84.9%) and key informants (100%) also reported that crime victims experienced barriers. The most influential barriers to reporting crimes and accessing services were:

- Lack of information
- Insufficient services
- Language and cultural issues
- Victim concerns, such as fears, attitudes and perceptions about how responsive and helpful the system will be
- Isolation and mobility

### Why victims don't report crimes

*If the crime was not reported, what was the primary reason for not reporting it?*

#### Victims

Reporting a crime to law enforcement triggers the service delivery process. However, many victims do not report for a variety of reasons. Of all victims who completed the survey, approximately 14% (60 of 433 respondents) indicated that they had not reported the crime being referenced. (Our main source of respondents was from the CVAS office, so the 14% is probably an under-representation of victims who do not report.) These "non-reporters" were able to tell us why they did not report. When provided with a list of possible reasons, over half of respondents endorsed multiple reasons. The reasons identified by victims for not reporting the crime, in descending order, were:

- Afraid of offender
- Dealt with it another way
- No confidence in justice system
- Police couldn't or wouldn't do anything
- Did not have a telephone or transportation
- Did not know how to report
- Felt sorry for the offender
- Fear regarding their family's reaction to the crime
- Did not know it was a crime
- Did not want to go through legal process
- Past childhood experience

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## Key informants

According to the key informants we interviewed, culture and language significantly contributed to the lack of reporting, as did other reasons, such as:

- Victim language and culture
- Lack of understanding of the laws and the criminal justice process in the United States
- Acts such as sexual assault and domestic violence crimes not being seen as “crimes” in certain cultures
- Distrust of law enforcement based on experiences in the victim’s community or country of origin
- Victim’s fear of being arrested for outstanding warrants
- Concern for the victim’s own safety
- Embarrassment over what happened to the victim (including elder victims of fraud)
- Fear of losing support and/or a caregiver (elder victims and victims with disabilities)
- Not wanting to implicate a relative

According to one key informant, “People with physical disabilities are not reporting because if they have an attendant, and that person is the perpetrator, they worry about losing that support. They worry about losing their home because of lack of accessible shelter space or companion dog. Individuals with mental illness fear the system because it’s scary.”

## **Barriers to victims’ services**

*Do crime victims experience barriers to services and/or resources they need and, if so, what are those barriers?*

Approximately 85% of 265 responding service providers said that crime victims experienced barriers to services and resources, and 100% of our 42 key informants told us that underserved populations specifically experienced barriers.

To understand this issue more fully, we asked 100 service providers during individual interviews to tell us about the types of barriers victims experienced. Their responses fell into the categories listed below in table 5.1.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 5.1: Barriers to accessing victims' services and resources**  
n=91 service providers<sup>a</sup>

Response	#	%
Language/cultural	29	31.9
Transportation	24	26.4
Financial	20	22.0
Service not available	9	9.9
Discrimination and stigma	8	8.8
Fear	7	7.7
Not aware of services	4	4.4
Child care needs	4	4.4
Lack of training for providers	4	4.4
Physical disability	3	3.3
Reading ability in victim's main language	2	2.2
Lack of phone service	2	2.2

<sup>a</sup>Nine of the 100 providers felt that victims did not experience any barriers to accessing services

The language and cultural barriers listed above included lack of culturally competent providers, lack of materials in other languages, cultural perceptions of police, cultural barriers to exposing family problems, and cultural isolation. Transportation barriers focused mainly on a lack of public transportation. Financial barriers related to not qualifying for funds, delays in insurance payments, and services not being court-ordered.

## Barriers by Region

Providers in Eastern Oregon (CVAS region #2) listed the greatest number of barriers. The fewest providers listing barriers were in Multnomah County (CVAS region #3). The table below details the range of respondents endorsing the barriers by CVAS Region.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 5.2: Barriers: Range of responses by CVAS region**  
n=91 service providers

Response	Statewide		Number of respondents endorsing item as a barrier			
			Highest #		Lowest #	
	n	%	Region	#	Region	#
Language and cultural	29	31.9	2-Eastern	12	4-SW Oregon	2
Transportation	24	26.4	2-Eastern	15	5-Central Coastal	0
Financial	20	22.0	2-Eastern	10	3-Multnomah	2
Service not available	9	9.9	2-Eastern	4	3-Multnomah	0
Discrimination and stigma	8	8.8	5-Central Coastal	5	1-NW	0
Fear	7	7.7	1-NW 2-Eastern 3-Multnomah	2 each	4-SW Oregon	0
Not aware of services	4	4.4	2-Eastern Oregon	2	5-Central Coastal 3-Multnomah	0 each
Child care needs	4	4.4	1-NW & 2-Eastern & 3-Multnomah & 4-SW	1 each	5-Central Coastal	0
Lack of training	4	4.4	1-NW	2	3-Multnomah 5-Central Coastal	0 each
Physical disability	3	3.3	1-NW 3-Multnomah 5-Central Oregon	1 each	2-Eastern 4-SW Oregon	0 each
Reading ability in main language	2	2.2	3-Multnomah	2	All others	0 each
Lack of phone service	2	2.2	2-Eastern	2	All others	0 each

The top barriers to accessing victims' services mentioned in victims' surveys and focus groups, key informant interviews and town meetings, in order of frequency, fell into the following categories:

- Lack of information
- Insufficient services
- Language and culture
- Victim Issues
- Isolation and mobility

As can be seen in the following summaries of comments about barriers to accessing services, they are often quite similar to the reasons why victims do not report crimes.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## - Lack of information -

### Victims

Victim comments reflected a variety of experiences with access to information. Several victims referred to the fact that this was a difficult time in their life and thus that it was challenging or impossible to react to information.

"So much of that time is a blur so if I had been told, I didn't grasp it."

"I was not given enough information and I was in no condition to seek aid for myself or my child."

"I didn't know about them [services]. It was a confusing time – difficult to process everything that was going on."

Many victims spoke of the difficulties they had finding the information and help they needed, such as:

- Making calls that weren't returned
- Having contact with one part of the system (e.g., law enforcement, DA's office, child advocacy center), but never hearing about what else was available (e.g., Crime Victim's Compensation)
- Getting the "run-around" when calling for information or help
- Not being given information in a systematic, complete way

The specific types of information victims described as being inadequate were:

- Progress of their case
- Location of the offender
- How to handle fraud crimes
- Process to receive restitution
- Range of services that are available
- Eligibility requirements for receiving services
- Location of the various services

### Key informants

Professionals' responses often paralleled those of the victims. Key informants focused on underserved populations and noted issues related to geographic location. According to these respondents, victims' lack of information was often related to:

- Difficulty finding out what is available to them
- Understanding that they had been victims of a crime
- Lack of understanding of an unfamiliar culture and legal system
- Fear of law enforcement (especially for victims from other countries or cultures)
- Belief that an incident such as domestic violence does not constitute a crime
- Living so far from services that they don't know they exist
- Having no phone service
- Being served by providers in rural areas that have limited funds for outreach

## - Insufficient services and resources -

### Victims

We received a number of comments from victims who simply said that they could not get services. Some victims spoke about the lack of services in their area, like this victim

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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who said, "[I] tried to get help but there doesn't seem to be any in our demographic." Others said they assumed services were not available because "nobody offered or asked." Others mentioned that although services existed in their community, long waiting lists made it difficult to receive the services when they were needed. Specific service and resource gaps that caused problems for victims included:

- Financial assistance to get career training
- Special housing for youth
- Group therapy and support groups (including for teen-age girls)
- Non-shelter housing
- Legal assistance
- Inpatient mental health services
- Counseling for children who witness domestic violence
- Lack of services in small towns

(More information about this barrier can be found in *Unmet service needs*.)

### Key informants

Key informants talked about insufficient services as a barrier in several ways. They cited services needed by clients in the immediate aftermath of a crime, such as emergency cash assistance and appropriate shelters (for cultural groups and the physically or developmentally disabled).

As regards the longer term, they described a variety of services needed by victims to get back on their feet:

- Affordable (post-shelter) housing (including housing that is not isolated from communities of minority groups)
- Parenting support
- Childcare
- Respite care for special needs children
- Counseling services (including alcohol and drug and traditional healing)
- Legal assistance (including civil, for dealing with financial fraud or divorcing an abusive spouse)

Additionally, providers and advocates in rural parts of Oregon emphasized the limited service infrastructure in those areas as an overarching problem; they talked about missing services of particular types, such as licensed counselors, and about agency staff unable to meet all the needs with which victims come to them.

The lack of culturally appropriate services is a barrier to victim recovery. For example, domestic violence shelters may not be appropriate sanctuaries for women from South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh) because they are unable to get the food they are used to eating or to feel comfortable carrying out their religious practices; a frequent outcome in these cases is for the woman to return to her abuser because there is nowhere else to go. A key informant familiar with Native American needs said lack of traditional healing treatment is a barrier.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## - Language and culture -

### Victims

We heard from victims who are immigrants and refugees about the challenges of getting assistance in a "foreign country." Lack of citizenship as well as cultural isolation can be barriers to reporting or accessing assistance. For example, Hispanic women who stayed with abusive husbands told us about their fear of being on their own in a strange place. A domestic violence victim from Romania said, "It is a problem when husbands are American citizens and we are not, because we are nobody. The legal system is not set up to help you if you don't have money."

Language was also a frequent problem. Victim comments referred to a lack of translators when seeking help, and reluctance to use the phone numbers given to them because of their limited English.

### Key informants

Professionals reported that victims' cultural attitudes and values, as well as their previous experiences, prevent them from reporting crimes or otherwise seeking help. Examples of this are:

- There are cultural taboos against seeking help outside the family because it can bring shame on themselves and their families.
- Incidents such as domestic violence may not be considered a crime in some cultural groups (e.g., South Asians, Southeast Asians).
- Law enforcement is something to be feared because police officers and other officials were frequently seen as corrupt and abusive in the countries from which they came (e.g., Mexico, Russia).
- Immigrant and non-English-speaking communities are isolated from "mainstream" American culture and may have the perception that either all or part of the system is not "for them" – it would do no good to report a crime and seek help.
- The lack of legal documentation makes victims fearful of authorities and limits their eligibility for assistance.

Cultural issues are inextricably interwoven with language. Key informants and service providers often noted that language is a barrier for victims being able to understand the legal system and Crime Victims' Rights. It is a barrier to getting help, if the law enforcement or advocacy staff member with whom a victim comes in contact does not speak the victim's language, or if the written material that is handed out is only in English.

## - Victim issues -

### Victims

We heard from victims about a variety of challenges and attitudes that prevented them from taking advantage of help that was available to them. Sexual minority as well as homeless youth victims reported that they do not perceive the system as being responsive to them because of their lifestyle. In addition, victims spoke about focusing

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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on putting their lives back together, previous negative experiences with the system, and embarrassment as reasons they did not report a crime or pursue services.

## Key informants

Key informants told us specific populations of crime victims had additional reasons that kept them from getting help:

- For the elderly, the issue may be embarrassment. They feel duped and vulnerable, their dignity has been violated, and they prefer even to avoid informing their families. In some cases, an elderly person may not seek help because a relative is implicated.
- Victims who are people with mental illness or who are homeless may have already had a negative experience with law enforcement that makes them unwilling to go to such an agency for help. A key informant who works primarily with the homeless said his clients see involvement in the service system as a process that just causes them more stress: "They are already living at the margins and have other things to cope with besides protecting their own rights as a crime victim."

We heard a number of comments about fear of the consequences of accessing services, such as:

- Homeless youth and adults who have a criminal record of their own may not report a crime against them for this reason.
- Homeless youth fear reprisals from other youth who turn on them.
- Women from minority cultures or disabled women may worry that the attitudes of professionals will result in loss of their children.
- Disabled victims may fear losing attendants (even if that person is the abuser), or fear having to leave their home for a place that may not be handicapped accessible, such as a shelter or transitional housing.

Professionals also noted that the effect of trauma for all victims was a barrier. They acknowledged that victims are sometimes too overwhelmed by coping with everything related to their victimization that it is difficult for them to follow through with referrals to services. The variety of phone numbers, service provider names (both people and agencies) and paperwork/forms that are given to victims can be too confusing to manage in the immediate aftermath of a crime.

## **- Isolation and mobility -**

### Key informants

Transportation came up as a barrier in every conversation with key informants and town meeting participants serving rural parts of the state. Lack of public transportation makes it difficult or impossible for clients without cars or who are unable to drive to participate in the judicial process or to access supportive services. At the same time, some victims in sparsely populated counties live great distances from the core area for services and sometimes even lack phone service. Some key informants specifically mentioned distance and isolation as barriers for Native American crime victims.

Professionals also identified limited community infrastructure as an overarching difficulty in less-populated counties. Agency staff of all types may be spread too thin, so grant

## **2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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funds do not reach as far. There may be few or no licensed mental health counselors or limited transitional housing in rural areas. Key informants said lower salaries make it difficult to keep professionals in rural areas who provide needed victims' services. In addition, professionals reported that there are fewer businesses to provide extra financial support and fewer people in the community volunteer base in rural areas.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 6: UNMET SERVICE NEEDS OF CRIME VICTIMS

### Highlights of what we heard

A large majority of the crime victims we surveyed are not experiencing a “gap” in the services they need. In fact, at least three-quarters of the victims who said they needed any of the services also said they received them. Approximately one-quarter of the crime victims reported needing but not receiving victim/offender mediation, emergency financial assistance and information about restitution or help with processing restitution requests. Service providers, key informants, and victims most frequently commented about financial assistance, emergency shelter and other housing, legal assistance, criminal justice support and mental health services as not sufficiently available. Respondents indicated that services were limited or nonexistent due to a number of reasons including time limits, limited funding, limited staff, monetary caps, professional attitudes and eligibility criteria.

### Unmet service needs

*What services do Oregon crime victims express a greater need for in their service areas?*

A list of 26 crime victims' services was created based on other surveys and expert informants. Victims were asked whether they received a service, and if not, to indicate whether they needed it. To identify “gaps” in services, we calculated the percentage of victims who reported needing but not receiving a service. For all of the services listed, the *majority* (75.1% or more) of the victims surveyed did *not* experience them as a “gap” (i.e., an unmet service need). The highest proportion of victims who needed but did not receive a service was 28.4%.

For the subset of crime victims in our study who experienced unmet service needs, the three most frequently endorsed were: victim/offender mediation, emergency financial assistance and getting information about restitution or help with processing restitution requests. The following table shows the services listed in the survey in descending order by the percentages of victims who identified it as a gap. The definitions provided in the survey are also listed to allow for an accurate interpretation of the victim service gaps in Oregon.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 6.1: Unmet Service Needs of Crime Victims**  
n=433 victims

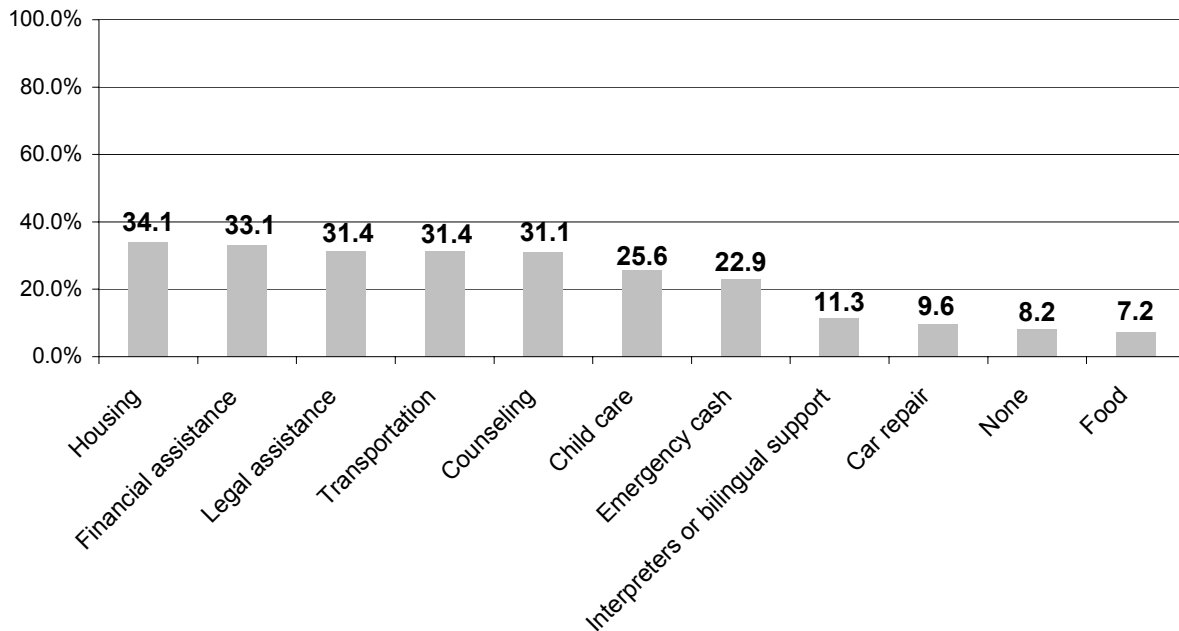
Type of Service <sup>a</sup>	Victims needing but not receiving the service	
	%	#
Victim/offender mediation (someone serves as an intermediary between you and the offender to discuss the impact of the crime and to provide offender with an opportunity to voice remorse)	24.9	108
Emergency financial assistance	24.7	107
Getting information about restitution or help with processing restitution claims	23.3	101
Victimization prevention skills education	19.9	86
Victim notification of offender/case information and status	18.7	81
Criminal justice support/advocacy (someone goes to court with you, assists during law enforcement investigations, explains criminal or civil procedures, assists in making victim statement at sentencing)	17.1	74
Mental health evaluation/counseling for spouse or family	16.6	72
Assistance with applying for Crime Victims' Compensation	15.7	68
Support groups (including self-help groups, AA/NA/AI-Anon, and drop-in groups)	15.2	66
Mental health evaluation or therapy for you or victim	14.5	63
Emergency legal advocacy (help with filing temporary restraining orders, stalking orders and other protective orders)	13.2	57
Crisis services (in person or a telephone hotline contact)	12.5	54
Property return	12.0	52
Help with employment issues/problems	12.0	52
Help with transportation	11.8	51
Spiritual/religious counseling	11.5	50
Help filing insurance claims or dealing with insurance company	11.5	50
Help with landlord issues/problems	9.7	42
Hospital accompaniment (someone goes with you or meets you at the hospital)	8.3	36
Shelter/short-term housing services	6.9	30
Child care	6.5	28
Crime site clean-up	6.5	28
Medical services	4.6	20
Information about or help with immigration issues	2.1	9
Bilingual services (services or printed information in a language other than English)	1.8	8

<sup>a</sup>Lists of services included in survey instruments were based on similar studies in other states and reviewed by CVAS staff and our Crime Victims' Advisory Committee prior to distribution.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

We also asked service providers and referral sources to identify the services victims expressed a greater need for, as a result of their victimization, that were not available in their service area. The vast majority (91.8%) identified at least one unmet need for their clients. Services endorsed as “needed but not available” by approximately one-third of the providers were: housing, financial assistance, legal assistance, transportation, and mental health counseling (see Figure 6.1). These service gaps were identified as occurring in Oregon, rather than being found in only particular counties.

**Figure 6.1: Services that providers heard clients expressing a greater need for**  
n=293 service providers/referral sources



Looking at the two sets of data, we can compare the top five responses regarding unmet service needs by victims and service providers/referral sources in descending order by type of respondent.

**Table 6.2: Top 5 Unmet Service Needs**

n=433 victims	n=293 service providers/ referral sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victim/offender mediation</li> <li>• Emergency financial assistance</li> <li>• Information about restitution or help with processing restitution requests</li> <li>• Victimization prevention skills education</li> <li>• Victim notification of offender/case information and status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Emergency financial assistance</li> <li>• Legal assistance</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Mental health counseling</li> </ul>

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Thirty-eight of 41 key informants (92.7%) also responded that there should be new or added services for crime victims from underserved populations.

As part of this needs assessment, we attempted to get an idea of unmet service needs by comparing the geographic prevalence of crime to the location of services in each Oregon county. We were able to do this analysis with only limited success. See *Crime mapping* for a discussion of the issues related to mapping crime and service data.

## Qualitative information on service needs

Finally, qualitative comments provided through the personal interviews, focus groups, and written surveys were reviewed and summarized. This look at the data provided us with a slightly different list of the top unmet victim service needs. In order of frequency, the most frequently noted victim service gaps were:

- Financial assistance
- Criminal justice support and advocacy
- Housing and shelter
- Counseling
- Legal assistance

### - Financial assistance -

#### Victims

Victims talked about the need for more help with costs of housing and gas, and compensation for lost income when away from a job due to the crime. Emergency funds to help pay for specific "safety" items immediately following the crime were also mentioned. One victim told us, "A special fund was very helpful, it paid for immediate repair of broken windows and changing all the locks."

#### Key informants and service providers

Providers and advocates spoke about the need for general financial assistance for low-income victims. They also asked for more discretionary funds to be distributed immediately following a crime to help victims regain control over their lives. Some of these expenses are covered by Crime Victims' Compensation, but respondents noted that such compensation is not available right away. Professionals in the service system reported that discretionary funds are needed to cover costs such as:

- Shelter (if the victims' home was the crime scene)
- Crime scene clean-up
- Fuel for the car
- Vouchers for a cab ride

### - Criminal justice support and advocacy -

#### Victims

Victims commented about the need for interaction with an advocate in the immediate aftermath of a crime. For example, we heard about the desire for contact from a domestic violence advocate at the time of the police response and contact from an

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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advocate while still in the hospital. One victim told us, "Everything confused me, I needed someone to help me out and explain things." We received a number of comments on victim survey forms and in focus groups expressing unhappiness with the outcome of a case or how it was prosecuted. Although victims made positive comments about their experiences with victim advocates and DAs' offices, they also asked for more help in the following areas:

- Dealing with the police department because they were treated poorly
- Telling an employer how the trauma affected the victim's ability to work
- Understanding victims' rights
- Assisting with paperwork and dealing with creditors and banks in financial fraud cases
- Making phone calls
- Accessing more information about the status of their case and the facts about the criminal justice system

## Key informants and service providers

Service providers and key informants saw the need for more assistance in navigating the system, as well as information about court dates and case status. We also heard about the necessity for more immediate advocacy response for victims who find it hard to go through the required steps on their own, "Assistance to victims to know what services they may need and in accessing those services. [Victims are] so distraught and traumatized. The victim [shouldn't] have to do so much of the work to get assistance." We received comments about the need for:

- A crime victims' specialist designated for victims of juvenile crime
- Advocacy support that is accessible in outlying areas
- More help for adult victims of sexual assault

## **- Housing and shelter -**

### Victims

A few victims expressed frustration that there was not more help with the cost of rent for non-shelter housing. The victim comments we received about shelters and related domestic violence services were very positive.

### Key informants and service providers

Advocates for some special populations see the domestic violence services community as responding primarily to the "mainstream" population. One key informant representing immigrant and refugee victims of crime told us, "They need domestic violence shelters that are not 'dorms' but apartment-like housing ... culturally appropriate shelters." Advocates and providers also said victims have trouble affording longer-term housing. An advocate for Hispanic domestic violence victims noted that transitional, post-shelter housing is often far from these victims' cultural community. Comments identified the need for more specialized shelters for:

- Elder victims of abuse
- People who are developmentally disabled or mentally ill

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Transgendered persons who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault
- Ethnic and cultural groups, including followers of Islam or Hinduism who need to adhere to religious guidelines
- Teens who are victims of abuse
- Women with male children over the age of 12

## **- Counseling -**

### Victims

Victims commented on the difficulties of finding counselors who would see them or their family members. A parent of one victim remarked, "It took me days to find someone who would see and evaluate my son. I probably called 15-20 different places trying to make an appointment." The length and complexity of the approval process for Crime Victims' Compensation counseling coverage was another issue victims had with getting the mental health counseling they needed.

### Key informants and service providers

The need for general mental health services came up frequently. In some sparsely populated areas of the state, access to assistance is a problem, especially if there are no licensed mental health providers. A key informant in a rural county told us, "Crime Victims' Compensation requires victims to be seen by a licensed mental health professional with the State of Oregon, and we have none." We also heard about the need for specialized treatment, such as:

- Accessible counseling in the victim's language by someone who understands the culture
- Treatment of abused children with disabilities
- Sexual assault counseling, especially for teens
- Long-term counseling and support
- Victim advocates who understand mental illness
- Traditional healing such as longhouses and sweat lodges for Native American victims of crime

## **- Legal assistance -**

### Victims

Some of the victim comments we received on legal assistance were about fairness; victims see more or better legal representation being available to the perpetrator than to victims. The need for civil legal assistance was a big issue in focus groups that included minority women domestic violence victims. A Vietnamese refugee said, "I lost everything to my husband in the divorce. Now, I'm working to pay my attorney's fees. I make too much money for legal aid assistance, but I can't afford the attorney's fees."

### Key informants and service providers

Key informants talked about a general need for more free legal assistance. However, civil legal assistance was also identified frequently by providers and advocates as a particular need – for financial abuse cases, women who are trying to leave abusive

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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marriages, and victims who have immigration issues. We also received a comment about the need for more targeted prosecution of financial fraud.

## - Other -

Other service needs identified by victims, service providers and key informants were: court accompaniment, child care, transportation, information and referrals, substance abuse services, assistance with financial fraud problems, case management, crisis services, victim/offender mediation and bilingual services.

## Reasons services are not available

*Why are services insufficient or not available?*

## - Funding limitations, insufficient staffing and service restrictions -

### Victims

A number of victims perceived limited funding and staffing to be related to problems they had getting the help they wanted. Typical comments were: "We need more people for a consistent period of time and reachable for victims" and "Very frustrating with voice mail and short staff. I would wait all day for return calls that did not come."

### Key informants and service providers

Of the 218 service providers who responded, 76.6% (n=167) reported that there were limitations to the services they could offer victims. The interrelated issues of funding limitations, insufficient staffing (paid and volunteer) and time and eligibility restrictions were by far the most frequently cited reasons for lack of or insufficient services according to the key informants and service providers.

Funding limitations were identified by or related to most of the service provider comments. Several of the key informants identified funding as the only reason services are insufficient or unavailable for their clients. Funding limitations were described as:

- Monetary caps on benefits paid out by insurers and victims' assistance
- Limited funds for emergency financial assistance
- Rigid eligibility criteria for emergency financial assistance
- Availability of some services only if the clients have reported the crime
- The availability of sufficient staffing for crime victims' assistance and other services
- Slow payment and reimbursement time
- Lack of funding for the development of a needed new service
- Limited funds for outreach to let victims and the communities know about the services that are available

The funding issue seemed to be particularly acute in rural areas. As discussed in *Barriers crime victims encounter*, isolation and mobility issues create special problems:

- Providers in rural parts of the state often must cover more territory and overcome other obstacles related to isolation and a more limited services infrastructure.

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Grants with restrictions on how much can be spent on administration may not reach as far as in more populated areas that have greater depth of services. A provider of domestic violence services in a rural county said, "I have four locations and 11 staff people. I could do more for clients with more administrative funds."
- There are fewer volunteers to fill in the staffing gaps.
- Fewer businesses broaden the funding base through contributions.

Key informants and service providers also talked about a variety of time, coverage and eligibility restrictions that caused problems for victims. Some of these restrictions were:

- A 30-day limit to shelter stays and a one-day limit to hotel stays
- A two-year limit to providing services for victims, some of whom may have lifelong issues resulting from their victimization
- Limited hours of operation (related to funding and staff limitations noted above)
- Restricted time per client (related to limited funding noted above)
- Lack of coverage for counseling for victims of financial fraud under Crime Victims' Compensation
- Non-coverage of Native American traditional healing that may be the first choice of victims in those communities
- Insurance and Crime Victims' Compensation restrictions on reimbursement
- A 45-day waiting period for financial assistance from AFS
- The lack of longer-term financial assistance for women without children or women without legal documentation

### - Professional attitudes -

*Did providers treat you with respect and responsiveness?*

#### Victims

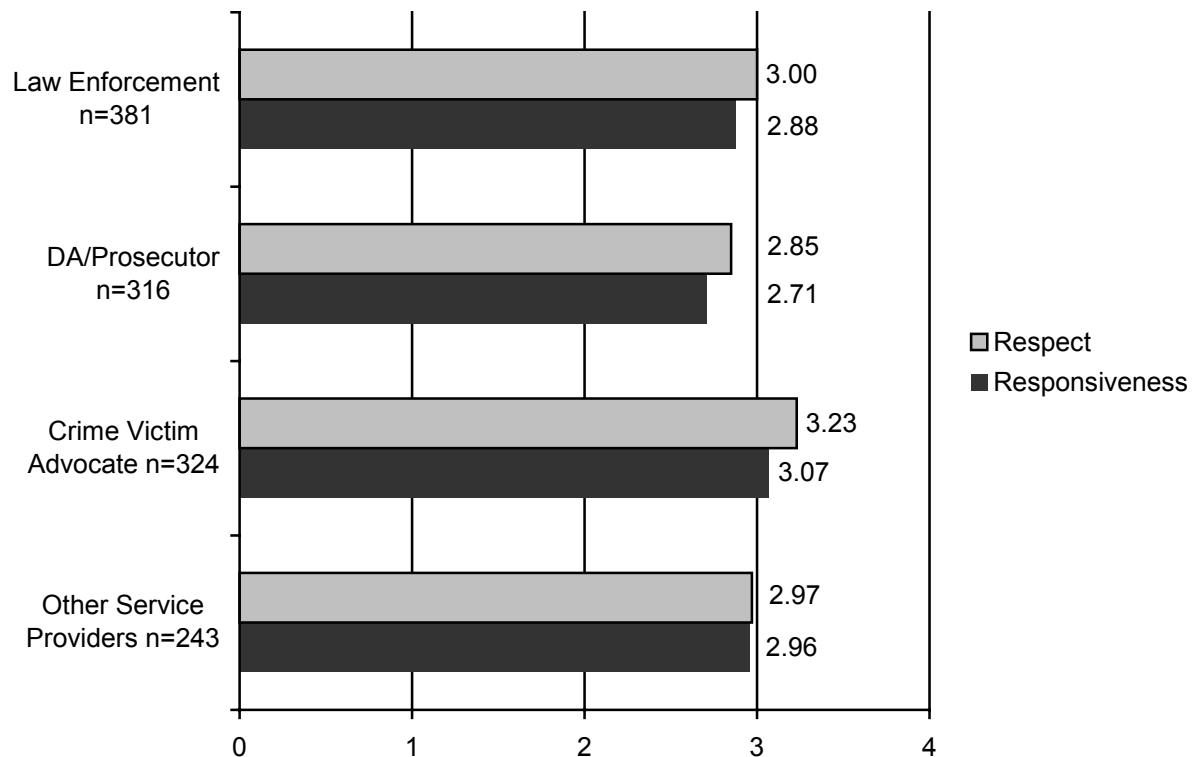
Many victims reported that advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors treated them with respect and were responsive to their requests, as indicated by the midpoint or higher mean scores presented in Figure 6.2. The following descriptions were used:

- Respect: "The staff was sympathetic to my situation, feelings, and experiences. They took into account what I had been through and made me feel as comfortable as possible. They treated me with respect and dignity."
- Responsiveness: "The staff responded to me in a timely manner, returned my calls when I left messages, gave me appointments when I needed them and satisfied my requests for information and additional needs."

Crime victim advocates received the highest average ratings, followed by law enforcement, and then prosecutors. For each group, responsiveness scores were lower than respect scores, which could in part be due to the high workload that was described by advocates, law enforcement and prosecutors during the town meetings.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Figure 6.2 Respect and responsiveness of service providers



Note: Scale= 1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree

Victims commented that sometimes respect and responsiveness would be present on the day of the crime, but would lessen over time. Victims appreciated being told that the crime wasn't their fault and being treated like someone who had just been victimized by a crime, rather than with suspicion that they might also be a perpetrator. Victims who had positive experiences with professionals often remembered their helper's name and specifically commented on their assistance. Bad experiences also evoked strong responses by victims.

While professionals received relatively high scores from our broad sample of victims responding to the above survey items (Figure 6.2), we received many verbal or written comments from victims about rudeness, insensitivity, or lack of sympathy from police, DAs, judges and child welfare staff. Some individuals had experiences involving law enforcement officers who did not take them seriously or did not know how to respond to a domestic abuse situation that was not "mainstream" – such as a caregiver abusing a physically disabled person, or violence in a situation involving two same-sex partners. One focus group participant told us, "If an officer can't deal with gay issues, then assign someone who can. Someone we can call. That person can go back to officers and let them know it is not okay to deal with people that way." Victims talked about professionals failing to treat situations as a crime and/or the police officers making jokes or laughing.

Some victim comments expressed unhappiness with the outcome of their cases and the way they were treated: "DA and probation officer – I felt like I was always a bother to



## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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them. Made me feel guilty. They did not show any sensitivity to me. I hated to call and ask questions.”

Professional response was also a significant issue for elderly victims of financial fraud who took part in a focus group. Victims reported that banks as well as law enforcement were unhelpful in some cases.

For a complete breakdown of Respect and Responsiveness ratings by victims of specific types of crimes, see *Issues for victims of specific types of crimes*.

### Key informants and service providers

Even the professionals within the service system saw attitudes of their peers as affecting service availability, primarily for particular groups. One key informant who serves victims with developmental and/or physical disabilities said it is a problem that "policy, procedures, [and] guidelines are being developed without input from these groups. There is the attitude that individuals in power can make decisions for people in vulnerable positions." According to key informants, responsive services are not being developed due to lack of understanding that certain groups may need something different. They also reported that some professionals responded inappropriately when members of these diverse groups came to them for help.

For more information on professional attitudes, see the victim-focused approach subsection in *System improvements*.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## SECTION 7: UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS OF CRIME VICTIMS

### Highlights of what we heard

CVAS asked us to look at specific groups of crime victims who may be underserved, specifically Native Americans, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, new immigrants, non-English speaking individuals, elderly, persons with disabilities, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals.<sup>6</sup> We found that victims coming from these populations were often underserved, had trouble finding services that meet their needs and tend not to report their crimes. People from these groups often did not receive the services and compensation they needed to recover from their victimization. For many reasons, underserved victims believed the system is not for them. A number of valuable suggestions to address these problems were made by both crime victims and professionals who serve and/or advocate for crime victims from these special populations.

### Victim populations served

*What is the racial, cultural and ethnic distribution of crime victims served?*

As indicated in *Appendix B: Expanded methodology*, providers served few victims from non-White races. As shown in Table 7.1, almost all agencies said that they served at least some people of Caucasian descent; however, more than half the agencies reported serving no one of Native American, African American or Asian descent.

**Table 7.1: Racial distribution of crime victims served**  
n=235 service providers/referral sources  
(sorted in descending order based on the first column of figures)

Race	% of agencies serving <u>any</u> victims of this race	Average % of victims of this race served across agencies	% of agencies serving <u>no</u> victims of this race	% of agencies serving <u>75% or more</u> victims of this race
White or Caucasian	97.4	81.2	2.6	17.4
Black or African American	42.6	2.6	57.4	0.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	42.1	3.5	57.9	0.4 <sup>a</sup>
Asian	36.2	1.8	63.8	0.4
Unknown/not tracked	18.7	2.6	81.3	0.9

<sup>a</sup>0.4% = one agency

Looking specifically at ethnicity, approximately three-quarters of respondents indicated that they served people of Hispanic backgrounds. Only about 10% of providers

<sup>6</sup> Source: Oregon Crime Victims' Services Needs Assessment Proposal, p. 16

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

indicated serving any victims from other non European-American backgrounds, such as victims from the former Soviet Republics or people of Chinese or Vietnamese descent. As shown in Table 7.2, a few respondents (no more than three each) listed additional ethnic groups that they served, including Korean, Pacific Islander, Hmong, Cambodian, African and Arab. Almost no agencies specialized in serving people of non-European descent. On average, about 12% of victims served by any one agency was Hispanic. The average of victims served falls to 1% or less for victims from ethnic backgrounds other than European or Hispanic.

**Table 7.2: Ethnic/cultural distribution of crime victims served**

n=182 service providers/referral sources

(sorted in descending order based on the first column of figures)

Ethnicity/Culture	% of agencies serving <u>any</u> victims of this ethnicity	Average % of victims of this ethnicity served across agencies	% of agencies serving <u>no</u> victims of this ethnicity	% of agencies serving <u>75% or more</u> victims of this ethnicity
Hispanic/Latino	78.6	12.3	21.4	20.0
Vietnamese	11.5	0.3	88.5	0.0
Former Soviet Republics	11.0	1.0	89.0	0.6
Chinese	11.0	0.8	89.0	0.5
Japanese	9.3	0.3	90.7	0.0
Other	7.6	0.8	92.4	0.5

Slightly over half (51.5%) of 293 service providers and referral sources indicated providing services and information in languages other than English. Of these, Spanish was the most common, followed by a large drop in the number of agencies using other languages (see Table 7.3). A limited number of agencies provided services or information in Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean. The 28 agencies providing information and services in other languages did so for specific languages including American Sign Language, Eastern European, Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American or Middle Eastern. Nine of the 28 agencies reported using a translation service, such as the AT&T Language Bank, to accommodate multiple languages.

**Table 7.3: Agencies providing services and information in languages other than English**

n=293 service providers/referral sources

Language	# of agencies	% of agencies
Spanish	147	50.2
Russian	22	7.5
Vietnamese	17	5.8
Korean	15	5.1
Chinese	14	4.8
Other	28	9.6

As represented in the Table 7.4 below, religious minorities, immigrants and refugees were served by the fewest agencies overall, with more than three quarters of all

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

responding agencies indicating that they served no one from those populations. The last column of figures in the table represents the number of agencies serving a large proportion of victims with special characteristics and thus possibly able to provide more specialized services in response their special needs. The highest number of agencies that focused on serving an underserved population (13.6%) served people living in extreme rural or geographically isolated areas. Religious minorities, refugees and immigrants constitute the lowest average percent of victims served across all agencies.

**Table 7.4: Percent of crime victims served of special populations**

n=199 service providers/referral sources

(sorted in descending order based on the first column of figures)

Special Population	% of agencies serving <u>any</u> victims of this population	Average % of victims served by each agency that are of this population	% of agencies serving <u>no</u> victims of this population	% of agencies serving <u>75% or more</u> victims of this population
People w/ mental illness	62.8	16.78	37.2	8.0
People with developmental disabilities	55.8	5.63	44.2	0.5
Victims of juvenile offenders	53.3	12.60	46.7	2.5
Non-English speaking/ limited English speaking	46.2	6.56	53.8	1.5
Extreme rural/ geographically isolated populations	45.2	20.04	54.8	13.6
People with physical disabilities	44.7	4.36	55.3	1.5
Homeless	40.7	7.81	59.3	4.5
Gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender	40.7	3.71	59.3	1.0
Elder victims of financial fraud	31.2	3.93	68.8	1.5
Immigrant or refugee	25.6	3.15	74.4	0.5
Religious minorities	13.1	0.62	86.9	0.0

## Underserved populations

*What populations of crime victims are underserved in Oregon communities?*

Responding to a list of potentially underserved populations, our key informants for underserved populations said that multiple populations were underserved in their community. As shown in Table 7.5, over half of key informants identified persons with mental illness, extreme rural and isolated populations, and persons with physical disabilities as being underserved in their communities. Approximately 25% to 50% of respondents reported that the other populations listed were underserved in their communities.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 7.5: Underserved populations in the respondents' communities**  
n=42 key informants

Population	# saying these populations were underserved in their community	% of key informants
Persons with mental illness	26	61.9
Extreme rural and isolated populations	24	57.1
Persons with physical disabilities	22	52.4
Non-English speaking individuals	21	50.0
Immigrants or refugees	21	50.0
Elder victims of crime other than financial fraud	21	50.0
Latinos	21	50.0
Native Americans	19	45.2
Homeless victims of crime	18	42.9
Elder victims of financial fraud	17	40.5
Victims who are developmentally disabled	17	40.5
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered victims of crime	16	38.1
Asians	15	35.7
Victims of juvenile offenders	13	31.0
African Americans	12	28.6
Religious minorities	10	23.8
Other	18	42.9

Almost half of the key informants identified other populations of crime victims they believed were underserved in their community. These other groups included:

- Youth
- Domestic violence and sexual assault victims
- Children who witness domestic violence
- Non-elder victims of financial fraud
- Sex workers
- People who have legal issues, are in prison or are wanted by the police
- Fishermen who go to sea for extended periods and can't access services

## Effects on life areas

We analyzed some items from our victim survey by comparing responses of victims identifying themselves as having certain characteristics of potentially underserved populations<sup>7</sup> to victims who did not characterize themselves as in one of those groups.

<sup>7</sup> Characteristics included: developmental disability, physical disability, mental illness, gay/lesbian/bisexual/ transgender, homeless, immigrant or refugee, member of a religious

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In general, victims with these characteristics were slightly more affected by the crime (see Table 7.6). The life area most affected for all victims was their psychological or emotional well-being (rating = 3.62 and 3.56 on a 4-point scale). Community and spirituality were the life areas with the greatest difference in effect between the two groups, with the greater effect being for victims with special characteristics.

**Table 7.6: Life areas affected by the crime**

(sorted in descending order by areas most effected for victims with special characteristics)

Life Area	Average Rating <sup>a</sup>		Difference in Ratings <sup>b</sup>
	Victims with at least one special characteristic (n=205)	Victims with no special characteristics (n=183)	
Psychological/Emotional	3.62	3.56	0.06
Social	3.02	2.78	0.24
Financial	2.99	3.04	-0.05
Physical/Medical	2.95	2.65	0.30
Spiritual	2.61	2.24	0.37
Community	2.61	2.20	0.41

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1=not affected, 4=Very affected

<sup>b</sup>Positive differences indicate a *greater effect* for the group with at least one special characteristic.

## Covering expenses

For all victims responding to the survey item, Crime Victims' Compensation was the most commonly accessed resource for covering expenses following the crime. However, victims with the special characteristics were less likely to use Crime Victims' Compensation to cover their expenses following the crime (see Table 7.7). They were also less likely to use donations to a special victims fund. Instead, victims from special populations were more likely to access the resources of non-profit organizations, their insurance or family and friends.

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minority, extremely rural or geographically isolated area, victim of a juvenile offender, and elder victim of financial fraud.

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 7.7: Financial resources used to cover expenses following the crime**  
(sorted in descending order by resources most used by victims with special characteristics)

Resource	% of victims with at least one special characteristic (n=131)	% of victims with no special characteristics (n=87)	Difference in % using each resource <sup>a</sup>
Crime Victims' Compensation	46.6	57.5	-10.90
Family or friends	37.4	31.0	6.40
Insurance	33.6	26.4	7.20
Personal savings	32.8	31.0	1.80
Other	26.0	19.5	6.50
Court-ordered restitution	13.0	10.3	2.70
Non-profit organization(s)	10.0	2.3	7.70
Faith organization	5.3	2.3	3.00
Donations to a special fund for victim	2.3	4.6	-2.30

<sup>a</sup>Positive differences indicate a *larger proportion* of victims with special characteristics using that resource.

### Sources of support

Friends received the highest average rating for helpfulness by all victim survey respondents, though victims with at least one special characteristic provided a lower average rating than those without. Victims in potentially underserved populations gave only the faith community and domestic violence programs higher average helpfulness ratings compared to victims without any special characteristics (see Table 7.8).

**Table 7.8: Helpful sources of support for victims**  
(in descending order by sources most helpful to victims with special characteristics)

Source of support	Average rating <sup>a</sup>		Difference in ratings <sup>b</sup>
	Victims with at least one special characteristic (n=198)	Victims with no special characteristics (n=183)	
Friends	2.95	3.39	-0.44
Mental health professional/therapist	2.91	3.05	-0.14
Family	2.90	3.30	-0.40
Medical personnel	2.84	2.89	-0.05
Victims' assistance advocate (in DA's office)	2.71	2.77	-0.06
VAP	2.62	2.69	-0.07
Law enforcement officer (police/sheriff)	2.62	2.68	-0.06
Sexual assault or rape crisis advocate/counselor/volunteer	2.52	2.55	-0.03

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Source of support	Average rating <sup>a</sup>		Difference in ratings <sup>b</sup>
	Victims with at least one special characteristic (n=198)	Victims with no special characteristics (n=183)	
Minister/clergy/faith community	2.50	2.27	0.23
Victim assistance liaison (from police/sheriff office)	2.37	2.48	-0.11
Victim support group	2.23	2.27	-0.04
Domestic violence shelter/program	2.23	1.91	0.32
Child abuse center	2.13	2.25	-0.12

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1=not affected, 4=Very affected

<sup>b</sup>Positive differences indicate *greater source of support* for the group with at least one special characteristic.

The following summaries detail what we heard regarding 11 underserved populations of crime victims. The categories are in order according to the number of comments we found throughout the qualitative data from all respondents. Categories reflect the ideas of victims, key informants and service providers.

## **- Extreme rural and isolated victims of crime -**

### Key informants and service providers

Extreme rural and isolated victims were the most frequently mentioned underserved population category in the qualitative data. Respondents who live in rural communities and those who serve people who live in isolated areas of more populated counties talked about victim hardships relating to where they live. It was apparent that victims living in Oregon's more remote areas do not receive the same response as urban victims of crime. One key informant explained it this way: "We don't have a licensed mental health provider in our county. We also need transportation assistance to get to and from doctors." Issues faced by victims who live in remote corners of the state included:

- Absence of licensed mental health professionals
- No funds provided by Crime Victims' Compensation to see alternative mental health providers that may be locally available
- The need to drive long distances to access services
- Lack of transportation
- Generally limited resources
- Provider turnover
- Access to shelters and housing
- Service waiting lists
- Lack of funding for sufficient staff and services
- Existing agencies spread too thin
- Not enough volunteers
- Reluctance to enforce restraining orders by law enforcement
- No television, phone or radio for some victims (no awareness of services)



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Ideas to improve the current service delivery system were:

- Have statewide meetings in rural areas to hear the voice of rural people.
- Provide collaborative funding for multi-agency staff positions.
- Hire a multi-agency victim advocate who will go to crime scenes with officers.
- Furnish technical support and more staff to rural programs.
- Provide funds for sexual assault exams.
- Develop transportation resources.
- Team victim advocates with other crime response professionals.
- Develop a certification process for advocates in order to have more qualified people.
- Address the problem of poverty in rural Oregon.
- Provide consistent, stable funding for existing services.

## **- Non-English or limited English-speaking victims -**

### Victims

We held two focus groups with domestic violence victims who spoke limited or no English. One focus group in eastern Oregon was conducted in Spanish. Those participants asked for more Spanish-speaking professionals, especially service providers. They also requested more materials in Spanish for victims. Victims from the immigrant and refugee focus group echoed these issues related to their languages. One victim summarized in this way, "The police gave me a card with numbers to call, but because I couldn't speak English, I couldn't make the calls. I was referred to someone who helps Russian speakers, but the woman there couldn't help me because I am Bulgarian, not Russian." The reasons mentioned in both focus groups for not reporting and for not seeking help included: confusion about the system, concern for their children, not knowing where to go or who to talk to, fear of being on their own in a strange place, and fear of reprisals from their spouses. Ideas for improving the system's response to non-English speaking victims were:

- Assistance with obtaining divorces
- Support groups conducted in Spanish
- Information posted on bulletin boards in churches, laundry mats, mailboxes and post offices (with phone numbers to call)
- Church-centered domestic violence programs
- Services designed for minority women
- Services and materials in languages other than English

### Key informants and service providers

Access to someone who is trained in victims' services and speaks the victim's language is important. One key informant told us that some families fight hard to get information relating to system access, "Being non-English-speaking compounds the problem. There are culturally different practices and some families don't understand what is accepted and what is 'legal' in this culture." Non-English-speaking victims include victims who speak Russian, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian and Arabic. However, respondents told us that Spanish is the language most non-English victims speak in Oregon. Providers and advocates identified the following as some of the issues facing non-English speaking victims:

- Not all services are of the same quality (mainstream vs. services for specific populations).

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Victims' services need to be more culturally responsive as well as address language issues.
- Undocumented women are not eligible for AFS financial assistance, food stamps, or (OHP) coverage.
- Services tailored to specific needs of the population are needed.
- Children often translate for professionals and their parents, which is not appropriate.

Key informants and service providers offered the following ideas to improve Oregon's response to non-English-speaking victims:

- Provide more affordable and accessible ESL classes.
- Support radio shows that provide information to assist Spanish-speaking victims.
- Have focus groups for migrant women who are victims of domestic violence.
- Have interpreters available in the courtroom for restraining orders.
- Pass legislation that allows undocumented people basic public assistance.
- Have more bilingual attorneys available to help victims of crime.
- Eliminate abuse and victimization in housing for the Spanish language community.
- Provide more training to response professionals in the areas of cultural awareness, sensitivity and language.
- Distribute prevention information in other languages to help non-English-speaking people avoid fraud and other crimes.

## **- Immigrant and refugee victims -**

### Victims

Portland was the site of an immigrant and refugee focus group. Eleven participants representing nine countries spoke passionately about their personal experiences as victims of crime in Oregon. For the most part, these victims reported positive experiences with law enforcement. Police officers were responsive and very helpful in terms of explaining what happens next and how to get help. The participants asked for more free legal assistance and help with finding housing, education, job training, and employment. They had some creative ideas about what would make the system more responsive for immigrants and refugees, such as:

- Support community programs where people "adopt" families and help them find what they need.
- Have police give victims information regarding services, system process, and who to call for help.
- List domestic violence resources in the front of the telephone book where it would be easy to find (different languages would help, too).
- Allow AFS to use funds to pay for additional education and training, other than GED.
- Have more civil legal assistance similar to the Lewis and Clark Legal Clinic.
- Make allowances for Section 8 housing for domestic violence victims who have no legal status in the United States (no "green card").

### Key informants and service providers

Each culture has its own unique characteristics that impact its view of crime in this country. According to one key informant we spoke to regarding Asian victims of crime,

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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this population believes the system is for “mainstream” Americans and not for them. He went on to say, “There is a social stigma attached to reporting crime, especially domestic violence, rape and sexual assault. They don’t see protection against crime; they see shame. This population doubts that the system works for them.” Other immigrant and refugee professionals agreed with this point of view, which is based on their unique backgrounds and cultural isolation in this country. Another key informant observed that immigrants and refugees are reluctant to report crimes because they think nothing will happen. “Comes from being in a minority population. People have low self-esteem; they feel they don’t have rights. Response is often ‘what difference does it make?’ Gets them involved in a process that causes more stress.” Ways the system can better respond to this underserved population were suggested by the key informants. Some of those ideas were:

- Design population-specific services for immigrant and refugee victims.
- Fund victim advocate positions for nonprofits that serve this population.
- Support grassroots efforts within the “communities.”
- Hire and train more individuals who are from immigrant and refugee communities.
- Support culturally appropriate domestic violence shelters that are apartments, not dorms.
- Fund legal assistance for immigrants and refugees.
- Develop accessible Crime Victims’ Rights information for various minority populations.
- Work with other agencies to reduce teen abuse of their parents.
- Increase the number of support groups, especially for Russian teen victims of sexual abuse.
- Provide information on American civil legal and criminal justice systems.
- Offer more culturally specific prevention services for abusers.
- Train police to more appropriately respond to immigrant and refugee victims of crime.
- Help parents with gang prevention/intervention strategies.
- Reach out to immigrant and refugee communities with crime victim information.

### - Elder victims -

#### Victims

This project conducted a focus group of elder victims of fraud and learned that there is a growing need for services to this population. Participants reported that Oregon’s elder citizens often escape the attention of response professionals. They added that victimization normally occurs in the privacy of their homes either through caretaker abuse or financial exploitation. We learned that these victims seldom report because they are too embarrassed and afraid to say anything – they suffer in silence. Victims of elder fraud reported learning not trust others. One victim told us, “Makes you mistrust everyone. My social security number is on my identification card at the VA Hospital, anyone there could see it and misuse it.” Elder victims had a number of good ideas for making things better, some of which were:

- Work with banks to be more sensitive and responsive to elder fraud victims.
- Pass legislation to protect bank customers, not just the banks.
- Appoint advocates to be in charge of the case so victims can see the “big picture.”
- Eliminate Social Security numbers on identification cards of any type.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Provide information on “signals” and what to look for in terms of fraud and identify theft.
- Solve the problem of multiple jurisdictions in cases of fraud by assigning a lead investigator.
- Extend the 30-day window banks have for reporting bank errors in order to give victims of fraud more time to discover, inquire, and investigate what happened.
- Address the court access issues relating to elder victims (metal detectors, steps, transportation, hearing devices, etc.)
- Assign special detectives for elder issues.
- Use television and radio to get the word out for elders.

## Key informants and service providers

This project talked to the Elder Safe Program in Washington County and Elders in Action in Multnomah County. Both of these programs work closely with law enforcement, AARP, Senior Services, and others to help elder victims of crime. We also held a public meeting where law enforcement and other professionals voiced their concerns about the issues common for elder crime victims. Experts in the field see a need for additional resources for this population such as: compensation for emergencies and counseling for victims of fraud; qualified in-home providers; emergency shelters that are handicapped accessible; and restitution for victims of fraud. Ideas for improvements to the system included:

- Support groups for seniors
- Special elder crime prosecution units
- Peer seniors used to empower elder victims
- Ombudsperson for elder victims of crime
- Help with legal issues, such as temporary restraining orders and recovery of property
- Police training to better understand elder crime issues and how to recognize and serve victims of these crimes
- Crime victim advocates at senior multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings
- Transportation for seniors to attend court hearings and appointments following victimization
- Financial credit assistance
- Outreach to the general public about these types of crimes and where to go for help

## **- Victims who are homeless -**

### Victims

Youth who have been homeless or were in danger of becoming homeless talked to us in Coos County. All of these teenagers were victims of crime who did not receive the help they needed. One teen described her experience this way: “I wasn’t offered any services at all. What I needed most at that time was someone to believe me, because nobody did. I didn’t know what my options were.” Teenage victims reported thinking that the system ignores them because of their age. In some cases, kids with previous police contact are especially ignored: “I think law enforcement doesn’t believe us if we’ve had any interaction with police, they don’t believe you for anything after that.” Having safe shelter is paramount with this population. All of the focus group respondents came from abusive homes and were either on the street, living in group homes or residential

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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programs, or barely making it in their own apartments. They had other ideas about what would help them most:

- Find ways to inform teens of their crime victim rights as early as possible.
- Support alternative approaches for teens to use when reporting (adult who goes with them to report to police).
- Fund advocate positions in homeless shelters.
- Have Independent Living classes in high schools for all teens.
- Fund homeless teen shelters, especially in rural areas.
- Allow teen victims to get emergency medical care with no fear of being arrested for outstanding juvenile warrants.

## Key informants and service providers

One key informant reported that homeless people are often not taken seriously. We were told that because they are consumed by meeting their own basic needs, follow-through on assistance is a low priority. Professionals noted that notification of perpetrator status is difficult with the homeless population, so they fear being re-victimized. Other issues facing homeless victims of crime included: lack of homeless shelters; not enough drug and alcohol treatment; a cumbersome system that is difficult for the average person to understand; little public understanding of the issues facing homeless people; and the difficulty in getting information to victims who have no address. Helpful ideas offered by key informants and service providers were:

- Provide more housing, childcare and parenting resources.
- Prevent evictions due to violence.
- Provide additional legal services for homeless victims of crime.
- Give homeless victims information about their rights and the status of their offenders.
- Create more homeless shelters.
- Develop a grievance procedure for victims.
- Assign sensitive and responsive police officers to work with homeless victims.

## **- Native American victims -**

### Key informants and service providers

Advocating for the need for non-traditional approaches for Native Americans came up frequently with people who serve this population of crime victims. A key informant we spoke with in Portland wanted more joint partnerships with agencies and timely access to emergency and on the spot services. She advocated for innovative approaches to serving underserved populations: "We need to be unafraid of not having answers. Sometimes we don't like to admit that there are differences because it can mean doing things differently." Some of those "different" ways of doing things identified by these providers and advocates included:

- Cover traditional healing in Crime Victims' Compensation Program. Traditional healing can include "longhouses, sweat lodges and seven drums." Tribes vary in their traditional healing methods.
- Encourage a more consistent and professional justice system on reservations.
- Help to reduce the influence of tribal politics on quality of service.
- Distribute information more widely to Native Americans.
- Improve service access to rural Native Americans.
- Develop a Federal crisis response system for Native Americans.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Address jurisdictional issues for victim response on the reservations related to state and tribal authorities not wanting to step on each other's toes.
- Provide more advocates for Native American women.

## **- Victims of juvenile offenders -**

### Victims

Victims asked for more contact with the parents of juvenile offenders and payment of restitution by parents. They also requested closer contact with schools so victims are not exposed to their offenders during the school day. Ideas to improve the response system were:

- Provide "AA" type meetings for juvenile offenders.
- Increase cooperation between police and school officials.
- Give Neighborhood Watch organizations more information about crimes and how to report.
- Involve parents and hold them accountable for the acts of their children.

### Key informants and service providers

"A victim focus must become part of the work with juvenile offenders so they clearly understand what crime victims experience and need. It should be a parallel role, not one or the other," said a key informant from Washington County. Key informants and service providers offered the following ways victims of juvenile crime can be better served:

- Invite victims of a juvenile crime to the juvenile justice agency to walk through the entire process and have their questions answered, as is done in Washington County.
- Institute harsher sentencing for juveniles who commit violent crimes.
- Restraining orders to keep juvenile offenders away from victims at school.
- Restrict juvenile offenders from "boot" camp if a gun was used in the crime.
- Develop a restitution-related program that provides juveniles with opportunities to earn money.
- Hold parents responsible for restitution.

## **- Victims with mental illness, developmental disabilities or physical disabilities -**

### Key informants and service providers

We heard that reporting is a problem with these populations for a number of reasons – difficulties communicating, fear of the system because it's scary, worry about losing attendant support and not knowing where to go and what to do. Key informants and service providers who work with these individuals said that rights are often not enforced for these populations because the victims are not taken seriously. Ideas offered to improve services for individuals with disabilities were:

- Have a centralized number to call with someone on the other end who knows about resources.
- Recruit advocates from those communities who can relate to the experiences of these victims.
- Train law enforcement officers to better understand and respond to people who have mental illness or are disabled in some way.
- Provide accessible shelter space that has an attendant and a wheelchair-accessible shower.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Include accessible motels in the voucher system.
- Fund services for men with disabilities (cognitive and physical).
- Include individuals from these communities in policy development and planning.
- Make the system less frightening and more accessible.
- Have flexible funds for services outside of managed care.
- Use victims to lead recovery and support groups.
- Educate individuals who have a disability or mental illness on how to avoid victimization.
- Help people with developmental disabilities learn about Crime Victims' Rights, making sure that representatives of the system adjust their communication so that the information can be understood.

## **- Gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual victims -**

### Victims

Portland was the site for a focus group of gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual victims of crime. The types of crime represented by this group included hate crime, assault, and domestic violence. Criticisms of the response system included insensitive helping professionals. One victim said, "This population is blamed for the violence perpetrated against them and they blame themselves. Police overreact in domestic violence cases by arresting both partners instead of finding out which one is to blame for the violence." The focus group participants had ideas that would improve the way this population could be served, including:

- Victim support similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, run by victims for victims
- Cell phones to call police
- Nightly safety patrols (such as the Pink Panthers in San Francisco) in high crime areas
- Police officers who can deal with gay issues in a sensitive, open-minded manner

### Key informants and service providers

Treating everyone the same doesn't work when it comes to responding to victims of crime, according to one of our key informants speaking on behalf of gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual victims. For example, there are age and gender issues that require special attention. Advocates and service providers offered the following ways to improve the system's approach to this population:

- Shelters and other services specializing in the needs of gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual victims of crime
- Anti-violence programs in the schools
- Better crime prevention and crime diversion programs
- Avoiding assumptions about victims of crime
- Middle school education relating to dating violence, power and control
- Better connection with and more help from county crime victim assistance programs
- More dialogue between government and non-government organizations
- Rural resources to better connect with and serve gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual victims of crime

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## - Children with disabilities who are victims -

### Key informants and service providers

According to an expert we interviewed in Portland, "Children with disabilities or special needs are abused at twice the rate of other children. They are not getting seen as readily when abuse does occur. These kids are not believed and have problems communicating." Although we didn't have a high number of responses regarding this population, problems were identified that should be addressed. Some of those problems were lack of funding, not enough training, poor collaboration among agencies, and limited cross-training. Suggested improvements included:

- Increase the number of medical foster homes.
- Fund additional family supports including educational services, medication and therapy interventions.
- Increase respite care, specialized child care and after-school care.
- Prosecute offenders more often.
- Provide Crime Victims' Rights' information to this population and their families.
- Provide more staffing so all child abuse reports can be followed up by law enforcement and child welfare.

## - African American victims of crime -

### Key informants and service providers

We spoke to a key informant who represented African American domestic violence victims. She requested longer shelter stays and easier access to emergency funds for domestic violence victims. Basic needs such as phone cards, household items, and transportation were mentioned. Services and system changes that would be helpful to this population included:

- Consider eliminating or postponing the AFS work search requirement for some traumatized domestic violence victims.
- Reduce the waiting period for AFS assistance.
- Remove or increase shelter time limits.
- More follow-through to alleviate victim confusion and trauma.
- Improve intake process and have questions that are more sensitive to cultural differences and trauma.
- Provide sensitivity training for all workers and include victim panels.
- Provide more legal aid for this population.
- Use survivors to talk to victims throughout the process and to offer support groups.



## SECTION 8: OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS

### Highlights of what we heard

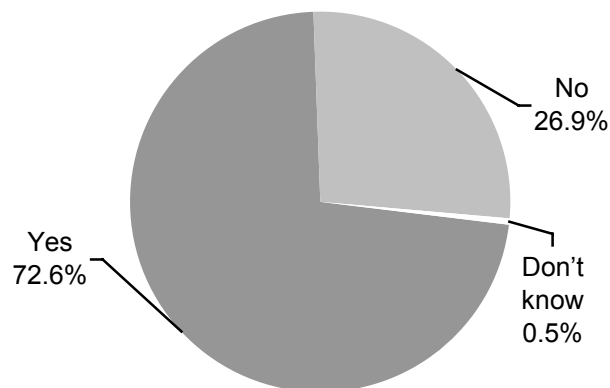
Although many agencies report providing information to crime victims about their rights, victims are not consistently clear about their rights or are not sure if they were informed. This may be due to victims receiving a great deal of information following the crime. For many victims, their rights were not enforced, with the right to receive prompt restitution being the right most often not enforced. A variety of problems within the criminal justice system surfaced as barriers to victims exercising their rights, including: no or incorrect information, system failures, judicial issues, offender-related issues and victim-related issues. Many service providers routinely inform victims about Crime Victims' Compensation and assist victims in submitting applications. The majority of the victims surveyed applied for compensation. Not knowing about Crime Victims' Compensation was the primary reason reported by those who did not apply. Other specific rights are reviewed in detail at the end of this section.

### Informing crime victims of their rights

#### *Are referral sources aware of Crime Victims' Rights?*

We asked agencies that refer crime victims to community services whether they were aware of Oregon's Crime Victims' Rights.<sup>8</sup> Of the 182 respondents who answered this question, the majority (72.6%, n=132) said they were aware of the rights (see Figure 8.1 Are you aware of what Crime Victims' Rights are in Oregon).

**Figure 8.1: Are you aware of what Crime Victims' Rights are in Oregon?**  
n=182 referral sources



<sup>8</sup> Referral sources were not asked this question.

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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### *How are victims informed of their rights?*

Victims of crime reported that the most common way they were informed of their Crime Victims' Rights was through:

- Law enforcement officers
- Crime victims' advocates

Other avenues through which victims reported hearing about their rights included:

- Mental health providers
- Welfare workers
- Shelter staff
- Adult protective services and AARP
- Child abuse assessment centers
- Immigration and refugee agencies
- Community action groups
- Colleges and universities
- Probation and parole officers
- Legal Aid
- FBI offices
- Native American tribes
- Doctors' offices
- English as a Second Language (ESL) classes

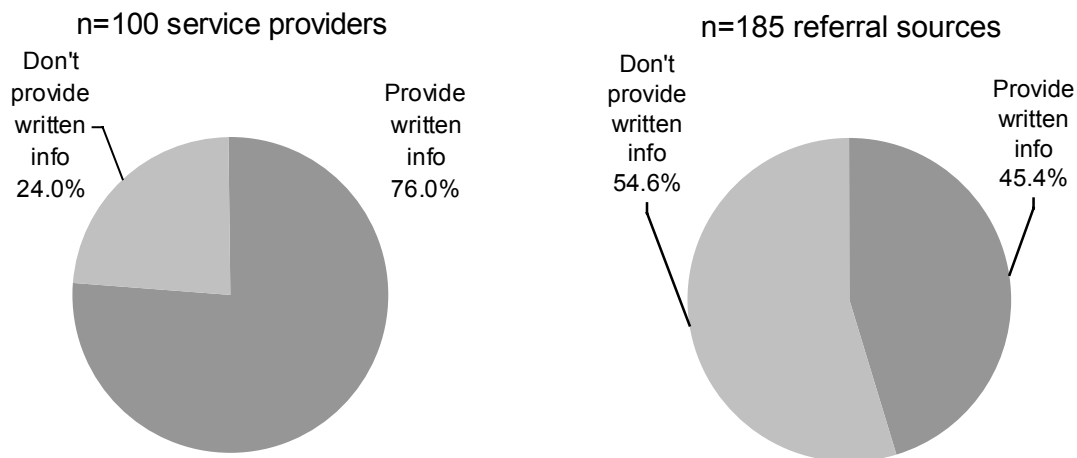
Advocates and other professionals reported that rights information can be given at various junctures in the crime response process. Most often, rights are provided at first contact with the victim either in person or on the phone and then mailed. Victims may receive packets in the mail outlining their rights, get cards from law enforcement officers when they report, or hear about their rights when an advocate is dispatched to the hospital to meet with them. According to a juvenile department crime victim advocate, victims should be contacted within 24 hours after they receive packets in the mail to verbally review their rights with an advocate.

Sometimes advocates review only applicable rights with the victim as needed. Victims may receive rights at the beginning and throughout the process, including at grand jury proceedings or first contact after arraignment. Other ways victims hear about their rights are by word of mouth, from radio and television, from postings in group homes and other nonprofits, in phone books or from telephone hotlines.

We asked agencies about the manner in which they give rights information to crime victims. Overall, 56.1% said they provide clients with written information about Crime Victims' Rights. A different picture is found when we separated respondents by agencies that provided services specifically to crime victims ("service providers", many of which being crime victim advocate programs) and agencies that referred victims to those agencies (referral sources) (Figure 8.2). Over three-quarters of service providers (76%) compared to slightly less than half of referral sources (45%) gave out written information on Crime Victims' Rights.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Figure 8.2: Agencies providing written information on Crime Victims' Rights



Of the 76 service providers who provided clients with written materials about their Crime Victims' Rights, over two-thirds (69.3% or 52 respondents) had information available in languages other than English.<sup>9</sup> The most frequently provided non-English language documents were in Spanish (64.5% or 49 respondents). Few providers had documents in other languages such as Russian (available from four providers), Chinese (available from three providers), Vietnamese (available from two providers), Korean (available from one providers), and Hindi (available from one provider). Data from the referral source questionnaire suggests that reading ability is an issue for victims of all languages.<sup>10</sup>

Many of the respondents provided us with samples of what they distributed. Content and layout of the information varied across providers. We received information in the form of brochures, form letters, flyers, small cards, victims' handbooks, and simple sheets of paper. The information was often included with other materials about the agency or service provider. We received a few documents in languages other than English, mainly brochures and small information cards. The rights were often described as the Victims' Bill of Rights or Crime Victims' Rights, and were not provided in a uniform manner across sources. Sometimes the full text of all the rights was listed along with a citation of the corresponding legislation. In other documents, only a few of the rights were listed. Unfortunately, rights were sometimes presented in an incomplete manner. For example, the text stating that the victim must make a specific request in order for the right to be enforced was often missing from the relevant rights.

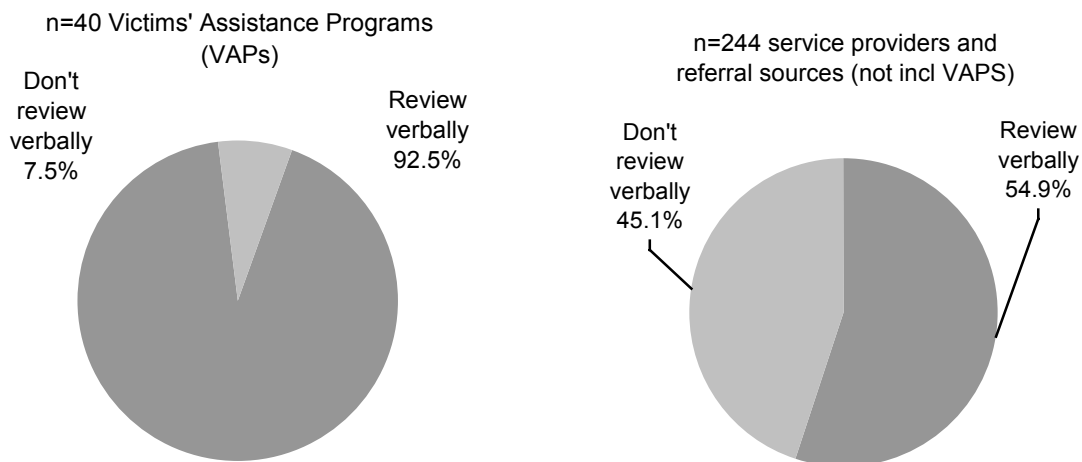
Of the respondents who answered this question, a little over half (55% or 134 respondents) reported that someone at their agency verbally reviews Crime Victims' Rights with their clients. However, when looking specifically at VAPs (n=40), virtually all (92% or 37 respondents) indicated that they verbally reviewed Crime Victims' Rights with their clients. (See Figures 8.3 and 8.4)

<sup>9</sup> Referral sources were not asked this question.

<sup>10</sup> In a pre-made list, 66.4% of 140 referral sources endorsed that reading ability in the victim's main language was a barrier to accessing services.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Figures 8.3 & 8.4: Agencies verbally reviewing Crime Victims' Rights with clients



## Enforcement of Crime Victims' Rights

### *Are Crime Victims' Rights being enforced in Oregon?*

Many victims appeared to be confused about Crime Victims' Rights. Many were not sure if they had been informed, stating that it was probable, but that they had received so much information following the crime they couldn't really recall. Other respondents said that not all the rights applied to them, often because the offender hadn't been caught or the case had not yet gone to trial. However, approximately half of the respondents believed that most of the rights applied to their cases and were able to speak about whether they thought those rights were enforced.

For each right presented in the victim survey, from 28% to 59% of the respondents for whom the right was applicable said it had not been enforced (Table 8.1). The right to receive prompt restitution and the right to receive a transcript of any open court proceeding were considered by more than half of respondents to have not been enforced in their cases. Of interest, from 15.7% to 43.6% of the respondents did not know if the rights had been enforced.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 8.1: Enforcement of Crime Victims' Rights**

n= number of victims feeling the right was applicable to their case

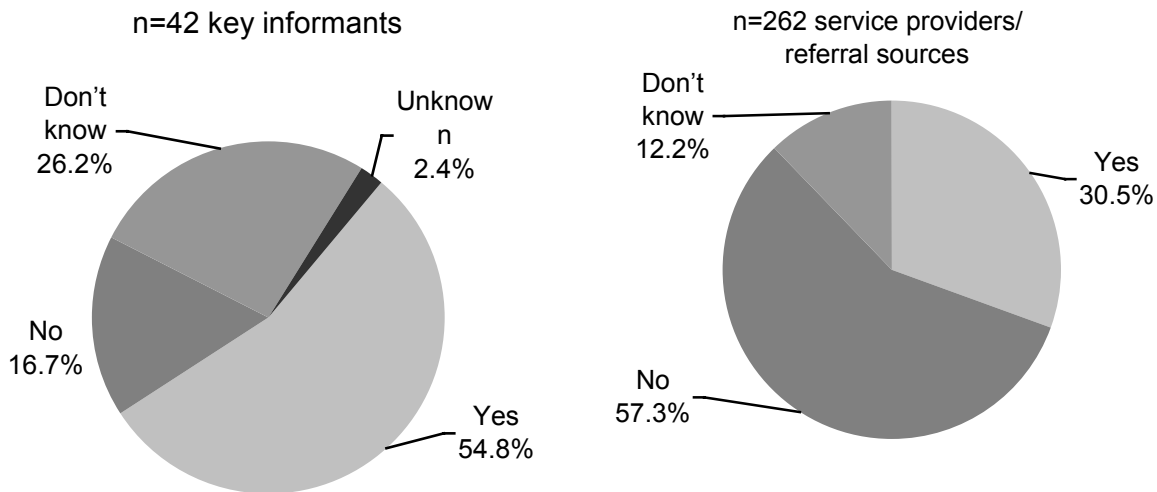
Oregon Crime Victims' Rights	# of victims responding to the Item	% who felt it was <u>not enforced</u>	% who <u>didn't know if it had been enforced</u>
The right to ...			
...receive prompt restitution from the convicted criminal who caused your loss or injury.	205	59.0	20.5
...obtain a copy of a transcript of any court proceeding in open court.	208	50.5	21.2
...upon request, be notified of parole hearings and to appear and be heard (either verbally or in writing) at those hearings.	185	40.5	31.9
...upon request, be notified of Psychiatric Security Review Board hearings, conditional release, discharge or escape of a criminal defendant found guilty except for insanity.	172	39.5	43.6
...upon request, be notified of and appear and be heard at hearings that may result in revocation of probation, post-prison supervision or parole.	182	39.0	34.1
...upon request, be notified of the impending release of the convicted criminal.	197	38.1	26.4
...refuse an interview, deposition or other discovery request by the criminal defendant or defense.	188	35.1	28.2
...upon request, not have the victim's address and phone number be given to the defendant.	64 <sup>a</sup>	34.4	21.9
...obtain information about the conviction, sentence, imprisonment, criminal history and future release from physical custody of the defendant/convicted criminal.	218	33.0	17.4
...upon timely request, be consulted with about plea negotiations involving any violent felony.	213	31.9	21.1
...upon specific request, be informed of and be present at any critical stage in the court proceedings.	249	28.9	15.7
...upon timely request, be notified of pre-trial release or sentencing hearings and, if present, be heard.	226	28.3	16.4
...be reasonably protected from the criminal defendant or convicted criminal throughout the criminal justice process.	237	27.0	14.8
...apply for and receive crime victim compensation, if eligible.	234	25.2	13.7

a Respondents frequently stated that the perpetrator knew where they lived prior to the crime and they had not moved, so they felt the right was not applicable to them.

The majority of the 42 key informants for underserved populations believed that victims received written (71.4%) and verbal (76.2%) information on Oregon Crime Victims' Rights. Over half of key informants (54.8%) were aware of victims who had not been able to enforce their rights (Figure 8.5). About one-third of service providers referral sources answering this item (31%) were aware of victims unable to enforce their rights (Figure 8.6).

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Figures 8.5 & 8.6: Are you aware of victims who have been unable to enforce their Crime Victims' Rights?



## Enforcement problems

*Why are Crime Victims' Rights not being enforced?*

- No or incorrect information -

### Victims

Victims sometimes hear nothing about what happens to their cases. For some reason, information is not conveyed through Victims' Assistance, law enforcement, or the DA's office. One victim who was not told about the status of the offender said, "Some type of update would have been comforting. I was really scared. I didn't go to a shelter. I lived in fear. I remembered closing the windows. I still don't know what happened." Other areas where victims said they received no, incorrect, or late information were:

- Late notification of trial proceedings
- Incomplete or incorrect information (wrong times or dates)
- Failed attempts to connect with law enforcement (no call backs)
- No information due to confidentiality requirements (schools)

### Key informants and service providers

Where language is an issue, victims have an even more difficult time understanding what is going on with their cases. A key informant representing seasonal and agricultural workers told us: "Getting information [is difficult] because of language, lack of phone, and authorities not knowing where they [victims] are." In addition, there is not enough individual attention paid to victims who have a mental illness, a developmental disability, or a physical disability. Referral sources noted the following problems:

- Victims are not notified when there are changes in schedules.
- Court hearings are held without victims because they were not notified.
- Some families are simply ignored.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Initial police response is inadequate.
- Victims get lost in the process and no one remembers to notify them.

## - System failure -

### Key informants and service providers

According to professionals working with victims of crime, system failures included: victims not receiving their Crime Victims' Rights, inconsistent support from different jurisdictions, lack of enforcement for restitution claims, no ability to grieve decisions, and the perception that DAs under-prosecute cases of domestic violence. Workload is a key issue that impacts the system's responsiveness to crime victims, especially in child welfare and law enforcement. We also heard this is a problem in the courts, DAs' offices and with parole officers who are "way overloaded and burned out." Insufficient enforcement of small claims judgments and the lack of a common or standardized database were additional system failures.

## - Judicial issues -

### Key informants and service providers

The right to be present and informed of court proceedings frequently is not enforced due to a variety of court-related issues according to service providers. These issues include:

- Court dates are changed so fast that victims are not notified.
- DAs are not pre-warned by judges so they can notify their clients of changes or important information.
- Court hearings are set without input from victims.
- The process is made too onerous by courts for the victims to manage.

An interesting finding is that victims are often not told they don't have to talk to defense attorneys. According to a referral source respondent: "One defense attorney represented himself to the client and made it look like he worked for the DA."

Victims' rights can be affected by judicial decisions. As reported by a service provider, the victim's right to be present at the time of the sentencing may not occur if the judge moves forward without offering that opportunity to the victim. Finally, victims may not be allowed to present their impact statements, according to another service provider respondent; this is up to the judge. This is especially true if a plea to a lesser charge is negotiated.

## - Offender-related issues -

### Key informants and service providers

Some respondents told us that when offenders have some connection to the response system, either through personal relationships or through their work, victims' rights seem to be negatively impacted. Defendants often obtain restraining orders before the victims can get to court, one service provider told us. Another said that, when offenders are released from jail prior to their trials, victims feel unprotected and, in some cases, victims are not notified of the release.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## - Victim-related issues -

### Key informants and service providers

A variety of issues can interfere with victim involvement in the judicial process and rights enforcement. These issues include:

- Finding victims to notify them of court dates and/or offenders' status
- Non-reporting
- Daily living circumstances, such as transportation, work schedule, phone service and/or childcare
- Victim fears
- System intimidation
- Eligibility
- Language, culture and/or age

It is important to note that if victims don't report the crime (often for many of the reasons listed above) they have little chance of accessing appropriate services according to service providers. One service provider we interviewed said some DAs only notify victims of important information by mail and if there is no response by the victim (again, for many of the reasons listed above), the office doesn't follow up. Other problem areas that impact enforcement of Crime Victims' Rights are professional attitudes, funding, lack of prosecution, lack of legal assistance, jurisdiction issues and restraining order problems.

## Crime Victims' Compensation

### - Informing victims -

*Do agencies routinely inform victims about Crime Victims' Compensation?*

The majority (73.9% or 201 respondents) of service providing agencies, including 38 VAPs, reported routinely informing victims about Crime Victims' Compensation (Table 8.2). Eighty-six agencies (100.0%),<sup>11</sup> including 30 VAPs, reported offering assistance with submission of the application.

**Table 8.2: Agencies routinely informing victims about Crime Victims' Compensation**

n=272 service providers/ referral sources

Response	Victims Assistance Programs		Other agencies		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	38	95.0	163	70.3	201	73.9
No	2	5.0	69	29.7	71	26.1
Total	40	100.0	232	100.0	272	100.0

<sup>11</sup> Referral sources were not asked this question.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## – Applying for and receiving compensation –

*Do victims apply for Crime Victims' Compensation? If not, why?*

Of the 433 crime victims surveyed, about 63% (n=274) reported applying for Crime Victims' Compensation. To determine some possible reasons why victims might not apply for Crime Victims' Compensation, a list was included in the survey. Of the 130 crime victims who did not apply, the majority (59.5%) or 78 respondents endorsed not knowing about it as their reason. The distribution of all the reasons endorsed for not applying are presented in Table 8.3.

**Table 8.3: Reasons victims did not apply for Crime Victims' Compensation**

n=130 victims not applying for compensation

Reason	%
I did not know about it	59.5
My insurance paid my expenses	12.3
I did not understand the program	12.3
I couldn't find the emotional energy to go through the process	9.2
I had no expenses	8.5
I was told that I did not qualify	7.7
The application was too difficult to complete	4.6
I waited past the deadline	3.8
I determined I was not eligible under the guidelines	3.1
The application was not available in my language	0.0
Other	18.3

Note: Respondents could endorse more than one reason.

### Victims

Eligibility for and payment of Crime Victims' Compensation was an issue commented on in-depth by victims. They also noted that the lag time between approval of Crime Victims' Compensation and receiving it was a problem area. Victims identified the following suggestions to improve the financial responsiveness of the system:

- Provide compensation for childcare payments.
- Pay medical bills promptly once the compensation claim is approved.
- Develop a better way for victims to access compensation.
- Expand list of therapists eligible for reimbursement through the Crime Victims' Compensation Program.

### Key informants and service providers

According to key informants and service providers, the primary reason for victims not receiving Crime Victims' Compensation is that victims don't report the crime or they don't cooperate with the prosecution of offenders. They added that eligibility problems and the complexity of the process keep some crime victims from accessing compensation. Complaints about the compensation process also included: long approval process, failure to give forms to victims, complexity of the forms, rules that restrict time and qualifications, too many hoops to go through to get counseling from private sector providers, denial of the claim by the DA based on the case

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

being weak, and denial of claims for child victims who are unwilling to give verbal statements. One more area of concern relates to people with disabilities. One respondent told us: "I've been advocating with MRDD clients and chronically mentally ill victims who do not have enough understanding or guardians to follow through and access compensation."

Problems with the Crime Victims' Compensation Program ranged from inflexibility in authorizing claim funds to poor understanding of private insurance requirements to delayed reimbursements. Ideas for an improved compensation system were:

- Help victims complete compensation applications.
- Make paperwork more victim-friendly.
- Improve the Crime Victims' Compensation Program brochure (easier to read, more "white" space) and translate it into Spanish.
- Reduce the waiting time between application and payment of Crime Victims' Compensation.
- Allow victims to select private practitioners; don't force them to go to the OHP approved providers and county mental health.
- Approve counseling at the time of request and assure payment to the provider so treatment is not delayed.

## - Expenses not covered by Crime Victims' Compensation -

*What other sources of financial assistance do victims of crime use?*

When provided with a list of possible sources of help with expenses following a crime, victims reported accessing multiple sources (Table 8.4). The majority of respondents used Crime Victims' Compensation funds. The additional sources written in by respondents and represented by the "other" category included welfare benefits, unemployment, COBRA insurance, working extra shifts, personal loans and child welfare.

**Table 8.4: Sources used for covering expenses after the crime**

n=359 victims with expenses after the crime

Source	#	%
Crime Victims' Compensation	196	54.6
Personal savings	130	36.2
Insurance	129	35.9
Family or friends	110	30.6
Court-ordered restitution	31	8.6
Non-profit organization(s)	20	5.6
Church, synagogue, mosque, other faith organization	15	4.2
Donation to a special fund for you/your relative	9	2.5
Other	64	17.8

Note: Respondents could endorse more than one source.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Almost half of the (48.4% or 148 respondents) service providers/referral sources reported helping victims locate assistance for expenses not covered by Crime Victims' Compensation. The most commonly identified sources of assistance included governmental and community organizations, such as:

- OHP
- AFS
- Faith community
- Community Assistance Programs
- Private insurance
- Food banks
- Used clothing stores
- Shelters

(A complete list of these additional sources for victim expenses can be found in Appendix D.)

## Specific Crime Victims' Rights

### - Receive prompt restitution -

#### Key informants and service providers

Restitution is clearly a problem area. Key informants and service providers reported several reasons for this. In some cases, victims were not advised of restitution hearings. Not only does this make it difficult for judges to order restitution, but it also impacts the amount of restitution victims receive. Defendants' ability to pay for restitution is a problem, especially with juvenile offenders. A key informant we talked to said, "The right to 'prompt' restitution as written in the Oregon Constitution is rarely enforced as juveniles don't have the ability to pay. The court will often enter the money judgment but it can't be enforced until after the juvenile turns 18." Sometimes victims don't follow through with requesting restitution due to the amount of paperwork and because they don't feel "entitled." Other reasons for failure to order and receive restitution are insufficient enforcement, low priority for parole and probation officers, and lack of a system to enforce payments.

### - Be present at and informed of court proceedings -

#### Victims

Lack of notification of court proceedings was a complaint we heard repeatedly from victims. This seemed to happen for many reasons, including last-minute schedule changes, incorrect dates and times on notifications, no notification of police officers or victim advocates, and judicial decisions to move forward without informing victims. One victim told us, "My experience is court dates and times are changed at the last minute. The offender in my case had three continuances and the police officer was not notified. The judicial system fails victims and police officers."

#### Key informants and service providers

Victim advocates may not get case files until just before sentencing, which leaves them little time to notify the victims. One victim advocate explained it this way: "Sometimes we would get the file after sentencing judgment. This would be totally unsatisfactory. That could have been for a variety of reasons such as internal system and court issues." Other reasons victims are

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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not present at or informed of court proceedings are: poor legal representation, lack of communication, changes in court dates, no transportation or child care provided, no release from work, no follow through from victim assistance, and judges not pre-warning DAs' offices.

### **- To be protected from the criminal defendant -**

#### Key informants and service providers

Protecting victims and co-victims from their offenders can be problematic according to the people who serve victims. Sometimes this is because the offender is connected to or knows someone in "power." Victims want more distance between the offender and them while waiting for court. They also asked that their confidential phone numbers not be given to their offenders by phone companies and that restraining orders be honored county to county. Victim notification of offender status is needed for offenders in Oregon facilities and offenders coming back to Oregon from other states. Victim protection can have an impact on crime reporting and criminal justice cooperation. A referral source respondent added, "Protection is often unavailable. This is why many victims refuse to call police."

### **- To request and receive information about convictions, etc. -**

#### Victims

Periodic updates on offender status during every phase of the process are what victims requested. One victim was denied information due to the appeals' process, "I was told that I wouldn't get any information about the perpetrator until his appeals were exhausted, contrary to what is listed as a right on this survey." One victim was informed of the offender's status not from official sources but from people she knew on the street. Another victim had to pay to get a copy of the police report.

#### Key informants and service providers

Sometimes, in cases of multiple jurisdictions, questions about who has a right to certain records can make it difficult to access them. One service provider told us about clients who were not notified about the offender's criminal history or date of release from prison. Sometimes, victims are not contacted in a timely manner because they can't be located. Another problem is agency staff members' lack of understanding about Crime Victims' Rights.

### **- Right to be consulted with about plea negotiations -**

#### Key informants and service providers

"Prosecutors don't understand that in violent crimes, victims have a constitutional right to be involved in plea negotiations. This is not being done." Service providers reported that victims don't know about their right to be consulted about plea negotiations. Victims are left out of the process, are not informed of their rights, and they don't know how to proceed. The victim may not be allowed to read his or her victim impact statement in cases where the charges are dropped due to plea agreements and at the judge's discretion.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## SECTION 9: SERVICE PROVIDER CONTEXT AND ISSUES

### Highlights of what we heard:

Agencies reported that a number of circumstances can affect their ability to effectively support the needs of crime victims. Agencies rely on a variety of funding sources, utilize many volunteers, and employ a range of outreach methods. Many agencies reported expanding, enhancing or otherwise changing their services to better meet the needs of crime victims in Oregon over the last two years. Few programs reported cutting services in the same period of time. In fact, some new programs have been added as a result of state and federal grants. Overall, we heard from providers that they want agencies to work together and use limited resources in the most effective and efficient ways.

### Funding

*What were the top funding sources that supported service agencies during the most recent fiscal year?*

Service providers (n=100) were asked to indicate their biggest funding sources in their last fiscal year, with their number one choice being the largest. We analyzed these responses in two ways: (1) respondents listing a funding source as one of the top three and (2) respondents listing a funding source as number one (see Table 9.1).

**Table 9.1: Top funding sources during most recent fiscal year**  
n=100 service providers

Funding Source	% listing it in top 3	% listing it as #1
State government	82.0	8.0
Federal government	75.0	11.0
County government	47.0	23.0
Private donations	31.0	18.0
Foundations	25.0	19.0
Client fees	6.0	3.0
Other	13.0	2.0

### Staffing

*How many staff members are employed by crime victims' service agencies?*

Across the 100 service providers interviewed, staff varied by agency, budget and funding source. Volunteers were extensively used for victims' services, with 93% of agencies utilizing at least one volunteer. The average number of volunteers for all responding agencies was approximately 27 per agency. The number of full-time employees per agency varied widely with nine agencies having no full-time staff, one agency reporting 70 full-time staff members and an overall average of approximately seven full time staff per agency. Agencies reported fewer part-time staff, with 73% reporting three or fewer and an overall average of approximately four part-time staff per agency.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 9.2: Number of staff per agency**  
n=100 service providers

Staff Type	Mean # of staff	Standard deviation <sup>1</sup>
Volunteers	26.54	43.5
Full time employees	7.23	10.4
Part-time employees	3.59	5.3

<sup>1</sup>Standard deviation is a statistic that indicates the amount of variation around the mean. The larger the standard deviation, the broader the variation of individual numbers (i.e., number of staff at each agency) around the mean (i.e., average number of staff across all agencies).

Two programs located in police departments reported the largest ratio of 16.5 volunteers to every paid staff member. Agencies that reported having more volunteers than staff included:

- Police offices (a ratio of 16.5 volunteers: 1 paid staff member)
- Medical (5.18 volunteers: 1 paid staff member)
- VAPs (3.47 volunteers: 1 paid staff member)
- DA's offices (2.82:1)
- Sexual assault agencies (2.45:1)
- Child abuse advocacy (2.73:1)
- Domestic violence agencies (2.41:1)
- Mental health providers (2.21:1)

**Table 9.3: Average number of staff reported by service type**  
n=100 service providers<sup>a</sup>

Agency/ Programs	# of Agencies	Average # of Full-time staff	Average # of Part-time staff	Average # of Volunteers	# of volunteers for each paid staff member
Domestic violence	34	9.0	4.3	32.1	2.4
VAP	32	2.7	1.6	14.6	3.4
Sexual assault	25	7.1	3.1	28.7	2.8
DA office	24	2.7	1.5	11.8	2.8
Child abuse advocacy	16	6.6	5.4	32.9	2.7
Mental health	9	8.7	6.4	33.4	2.2
Medical	3	10.3	12.7	119.0	5.2
Police	2	1.5	0.5	33.0	16.5
Sheriff	1	49.0	1.0	50.0	1.0
Other	16	11.1	4.4	28.9	1.9

<sup>a</sup>The responses from programs listing more than one agency type were calculated into each service type they listed. Respondents did not provide data for faith, criminal justice, aging and legal services.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## Training

*What types of training do service providers give their volunteers and staff?*

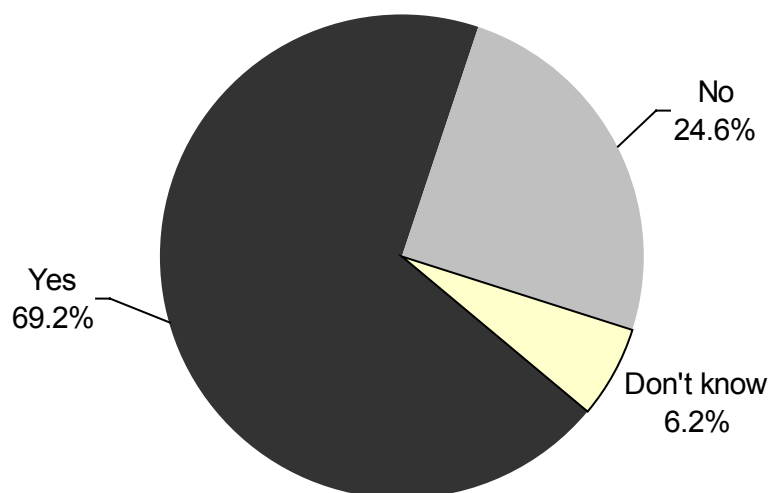
Ninety-three percent of respondents indicated that their staff received training about how to work with victims of crime. Trainings were provided at the start of employment or volunteer service, with follow-ups of varying frequency ranging from one time only to once a month and once a year. Total hours of training varied. Some agencies reported a planned standardized amount, such as 40 hours four times a year or 10 hours of sexual assault specific training. Other agencies provided training as needed or depending on prior experience. Types of training included on-the-job orientation and training, as well as outside conferences and workshops provided by the Crime Victims' Assistance Network (CVAN), the Department of Justice and other sources. Job shadowing, on-going support and supervision were also mentioned. Training received included:

- Trauma and the effect of violence
- Court and legal proceedings
- Domestic violence
- Sexual assault
- Advocacy
- Child abuse
- Crisis response
- Cultural diversity and sensitivity
- Elder abuse
- Victimology
- Victim information and notification.

Over two-thirds of responding service providers indicated that their agencies would benefit from Crime Victims' Compensation training.

**Figure 9.1: Respondents believing their agencies would benefit from Crime Victims' Compensation training**

n=260 service providers/referral sources



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

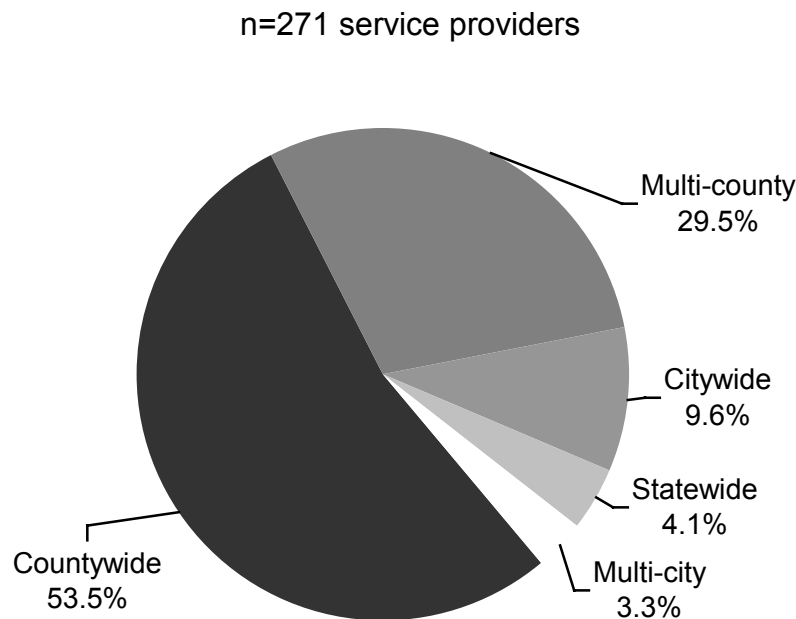
Other topics covered in agency trainings included: orientation, self-care, critical incident stress management, and in-service trainings focused on specific crime-related topics and tied to Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

## Service areas

*What service areas do crime victims' service providers represent?*

More than half of responding providers and referrals sources serve victims throughout a single county (53.5%). Slightly less than one-third represented broader, multi-county agencies (29.5%). When asked during individual interviews, only eight out of the 100 responding service providers<sup>12</sup> reported expanding their geographic service areas over the previous two years, while no agencies reported providing services to a smaller area than previously.

**Figure 9.2: Service area**



## Outreach

*In what ways do victims find out about services and programs?*

Service providers were provided a list of possible outreach methods and asked to identify the top five ways people find out about their program. The data was analyzed in two ways: (1) the percentage of agencies listing an outreach method as one of their top five and (2) the percentage of providers identifying something as their top outreach method (see Table 10.4).

<sup>12</sup> Referral sources were not asked this question.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 9.4: Common ways people find out about programs**  
n=100 service providers

Outreach Method	% listing it in top 5	% listing it as #1
Police	74.0	30.0
Word of mouth	71.0	15.0
Community outreach	58.0	17.0
Brochures	50.0	4.0
Prosecutors	40.0	5.0
Informational letter	24.0	7.0
Hospitals	22.0	0.0
Telephone book	15.0	1.0
Web page or Internet	13.0	0.0
Professional training	8.0	0.0
Radio announcements	8.0	0.0
Newspaper advertisements	8.0	2.0
Toll-free number	4.0	1.0
TV announcements	1.0	1.0
Other (incl. Bathroom stickers, phone calls, and multi-media)	24.0	7.0

Half or more of the respondents identified police, word of mouth, community outreach and brochures as one of their top five outreach methods. Respondents wrote in other agencies from whom people found out about their program, including:

- Oregon Department of Human Services (AFS, child welfare, aging services)
- Domestic violence services and shelters
- Schools
- Mental health providers
- Housing
- Adult and Juvenile Community Corrections
- Senior Center
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)

The majority of the 100 victims' services providers (69%) said that their community outreach had changed over the past two years. Changes included:

- Adding or increasing targeted outreach to the elderly, people of Hispanic descent or victims who live in rural areas.
- Developing brochures, posters, and/or websites.
- Increased collaboration and communication with community partners.

A complete list of recent outreach efforts is included in *Appendix D: Supplemental data tables and figures*.

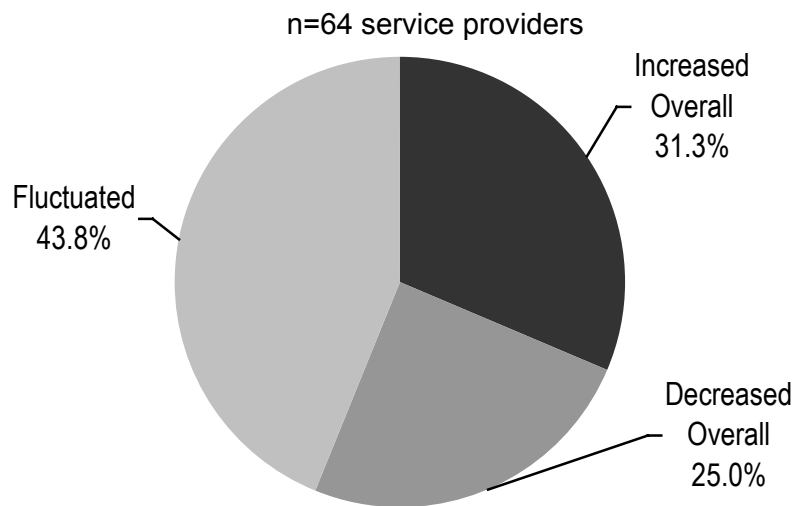
# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## Changes

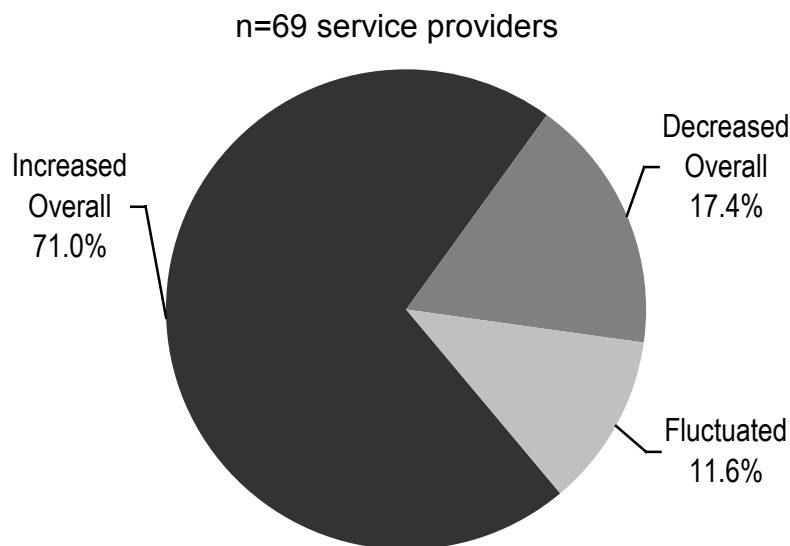
*What changes have agencies experienced in the past two years?*

Sixty-five percent of 100 service providers reported that their funding sources have changed in the previous two years. Of those agencies reporting changes, approximately 31% reported an overall increase in funding, 25% reported an overall decrease in funding, and 44% reported fluctuations in levels of funding from various sources. Seventy-one percent of 100 service providers reported increases in staffing in the previous two years.

**Figure 9.3: Changes in funding during the last two years**



**Figure 9.4: Changes in staffing during the last two years**



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Almost one-third of the agencies that indicated they had lost funds also reported an increase in staff (31.3% or five of 16 respondents). Half of the agencies indicated that they both gained funds and reported staffing increases (10 out of 20 respondents).

**Table 9.5: Relationship of changes in funding and changes in staffing over last two years**

n=64 agencies reporting a change in funding

Changes in Funding	Total Respondents	Changes in Staffing			
		Increase	Decrease	Fluctuated	No change or no answer
Increase	20	10	1	4	5
Decrease	16	5	5	2	4
Fluctuated	28	14	5	2	9

### *Key informants and service providers*

Reviewing the comments from individual interviews and surveys, general changes in agency services over the last two years reflected an increase in overall support and services to victims of crime. For example, we heard from one key informant, "The new DA increased the technology support and other resources to provide more services and better quality." Overall, we heard that Oregon made a great deal of progress in the field of victim response by fortifying its local services through government grants such as VOCA, VAWA, and Oregon's Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention account (CAMI). Improvements and enhancements over the last two years also included:

- In-house medical assessments
- Forensic interviewing
- Community outreach
- Prevention education
- Legal referrals
- A sexual assault nurse on site
- Bilingual services
- Civil legal assistance
- Respite care
- Job skill services safety net
- More emergency funds
- Parenting classes
- Anti-violence programs in the schools
- More staff and volunteers
- A victim/offender mediation program
- An elder abuse MDT
- Expansion of services to victims of less violent crimes
- More services to stalking victims
- Additional in-house victim advocates
- Substance abuse treatment
- A law enforcement advocate
- New crisis intervention services
- A support group for children
- A restitution position
- Expansion to 24-hours a day, seven days a week
- A multi-agency victim advocate and crisis response team member
- Increased Latina services
- Crime site cleanup and home repairs

Surprisingly, we did not hear much from key informants and service providers about cuts in services over the last two years. Some agencies did report having to cut specific positions due to lack of funding. In one case, a half-time victim advocate position was eliminated and the

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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services were transferred to probation officers. Another provider told us her/his agency lost funding for a crisis counselor who met with clients for ongoing peer counseling sessions.

A few agency representatives reported a shift in program emphasis, such as an increase in shelter beds and a decrease in transitional housing and staff. Another agency reported a change in focus from solely emotional support to support for basic needs: "Our clients need financial support. Our services have changed to meet these emergency needs." Specific service cuts due to reduced funding included:

- Discontinued sex abuse assessments
- Discontinued services to victims under the age of 10
- Limits in children's programming
- Decrease in outreach and help with restraining orders
- A bilingual position cut in half
- Downsizing "core" services only
- Decrease in federal funds cut staff providing court advocacy, peer counseling and youth outreach
- Elimination of a children's program

## Self care

*What support do agencies provide staff who may be vicariously traumatized?*

Working with victims of crime can lead to stress over time, including feelings of being traumatized themselves by victims' experiences and stories. Eighty-eight percent of service providers and 57% of referral sources responding to this question reported that they provided support to volunteers and staff experiencing vicarious trauma.

Often, agencies relied on multiple methods of supporting their staff who may experience vicarious traumatization. Types of support include:

- Yearly training/retreats
- Periodic workshops
- Peer support
- Weekly team meetings
- Access to a chaplain (mainly for hospitals and police departments)
- Employee assistance programs and mental health counseling
- Time off
- Debriefing (including those targeted for critical incidents)
- Clinical supervision
- Grief counseling
- Flex time
- Fitness membership and recreation opportunities

## Executive directors

Executive directors must manage multiple aspects of their organizations. Some directors devote a lot of time to direct service at the expense of their other duties, such as building and developing their programs. We heard from directors about the difficulty they had in monitoring and reporting on various grants. These multiple sources of funding created time-consuming tasks for directors. One executive director suggested, "Reduce the workload for directors, such as by having a volunteer coordinator or someone to develop and monitor grants." One director had an idea to reduce the amount of time directors spend on researching and writing grants: a common application form for all agencies, such as VOCA, VAWA, and Child Abuse

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Multidisciplinary Intervention account (CAMI). Directors also told us about organizations that provide peer support for executive directors such as Technical Assistance for Community Service (TACS) in the Portland Metro area. TACS provides a forum for executive directors to meet monthly for idea sharing, support, and problem solving.

### Linkages and partnerships

To describe the array of linkages among crime victims' services agencies in our sample, service providers and referral sources were asked to identify agencies with which they had a referral relationship. Table 10.6 presents the percentage of each agency type that *sends* crime victim referrals to each of the other agencies. An "X" is printed where an intersection of the same agency type occurs in the table. Percentages representing two-thirds or more of the referring agencies are printed in bold italics to illustrate which referral relationships are the strongest. In all cases, faith-based agencies are receiving referrals from the smallest proportion of any of the other agency types. The faith-based agencies are also making the fewest referrals to other agencies.

**Table 9.6: Percentage of agencies that SEND referrals TO other agencies**

REFERRING agency	Other agencies to which referrals are sent							
	Police/ sheriff	Medical/ hospital	District attorney	Mental health	Domestic violence shelter	Child abuse advocacy	Community resources	Faith
Police/sheriff (n=38)	X	57.9	<b>92.1</b>	63.2	<b>73.7</b>	55.3	57.9	23.7
Medical (n=25)	<b>68.0</b>	X	36.0	60.0	64.0	48.0	60.0	32.0
VAP (n=43)	<b>88.4</b>	<b>83.7</b>	<b>69.8</b>	<b>90.7</b>	<b>90.7</b>	65.1	<b>90.7</b>	60.5
District attorney (n=31)	<b>87.1</b>	<b>74.2</b>	X	<b>87.1</b>	<b>87.1</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>80.6</b>	48.4
Mental health (n=91)	58.2	54.9	47.3	X	<b>67.0</b>	56.0	49.5	44.0
Domestic violence (n=57)	<b>84.2</b>	<b>82.5</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>84.2</b>	X	64.9	<b>86.0</b>	42.1
Child abuse advocacy (n=34)	<b>79.4</b>	64.7	55.9	<b>73.5</b>	64.7	X	<b>70.6</b>	32.4
Sexual assault (n=46)	<b>78.3</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>80.4</b>	65.2	<b>89.1</b>	47.8
Faith (n=13)	23.1	23.1	7.7	15.4	15.4	7.7	7.7	X

Table 9.7 presents the percentage of each agency type that *receives* crime victim referrals from each of the other agencies. Again, the percentages representing two-thirds or more of the agencies receiving referrals are printed in bold italics to illustrate the strongest referral relationships. A slightly different picture is produced when looking at referrals in this manner.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 9.7: Percentage of agencies that RECEIVE referrals FROM other agencies**

RECEIVING agency	Other agencies from which referrals are received							
	Police/ sheriff	Medical/ hospital	District attorney	Mental health	Domestic violence shelter	Child abuse advocacy	Friends/ family of victim	Faith
Medical (n=25)	68.0	X	16.0	56.0	48.0	20.0	48.0	24.0
VAP (n=43)	95.3	74.4	88.4	81.4	76.7	51.2	88.4	34.9
District attorney (n=31)	93.5	67.7	X	80.6	80.6	64.5	80.6	38.7
Mental health (n=91)	34.1	48.4	40.7	X	34.1	39.6	64.8	31.9
Domestic violence (n=57)	89.5	82.5	75.4	77.2	X	35.1	86.0	54.4
Child abuse advocacy (n=34)	88.2	70.6	61.8	73.5	58.8	X	67.6	44.1
Sexual assault (n=46)	84.8	82.6	76.1	80.4	71.7	34.8	87.0	63.0
Faith (n=13)	15.4	15.4	7.7	7.7	7.7	0.0	15.4	X

NOTES: "Police/Sheriff" was excluded from this table because their most common sources of referrals did not fit many of these categories. "Community Resources" was also excluded from this table due to it not being a common referral source for these agency types. "Friends/Family of the Victim" was added to this table due to it being a common referral source for these agency types.

Ninety-two of the 199 responding service providers (46.2%) said there were agencies from which they would like to get additional referrals. Respondents addressed what was necessary to make referrals to other agencies possible. Training and education came out on top. One respondent suggested that training would increase referrals because it would reduce beliefs such as, "Drug and alcohol programs are worried that dealing with sexual abuse issues will trigger a relapse in drinking." Other suggested training topics were:

- The impact of domestic violence on children
- Better understanding of what the system provides for crime victims and their families
- Domestic violence and sexual assault issues
- Mandatory reporting
- Issues facing prostitutes
- Community awareness education
- What healthcare providers should know about the needs of crime victims

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## Key informants and service providers

Respondents told us that agencies and individuals are partnering more often to provide crime victims with coordinated response. Providing better services to crime victims is the primary goal agencies reported for enhanced partnerships. However, they also commented on wanting to see the benefits of saving money and cutting costs. Ideas for improving the linkages within Oregon's crime victims' response system were:

- Development of cross-agency protocols including medical, law enforcement and service communities.
- Increased involvement of law enforcement, especially in interagency communication and collaboration.
- Improved linkages with programs outside of the criminal justice system. "We lack basic understanding of how the overall system works and we have gaps in services"
- Establishing multidisciplinary team approaches that include domestic violence advocates, mental health professionals and housing experts.
- Increased funding to establish additional positions so referrals can be made without knowing that a crime victim will be put on a waiting list.
- Working with multiple agencies to provide follow up and long-term after care.
- More integrated planning between community agencies.
- Adding services that address language and culture – without them, referrals cannot be made.
- More population specific shelters (e.g., elders, transgendered people, teenagers, immigrants and refugees) would support referrals to much-needed victims' services.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 10: SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

### Highlights of what we heard

Victims and professionals repeatedly called for better ways to serve and support victims of crime. The areas identified as needing the greatest improvement within the criminal justice system were: better offender accountability, law and policy changes, increased victim focus and streamlining of the process. Changes needed for the overall crime victim response system were: increased sensitivity to and support for different cultures and languages, more consistent and available information, coordination of a complex system, more funding, an improved payment and restitution process, and better data collecting and monitoring mechanisms.

### Criminal justice system positives

*What was the most positive part of the criminal justice system?*

#### Victims

Victims identified excellent work being done in communities throughout the state. They spoke positively about professionals who treated them in sensitive and compassionate ways. According to one respondent, this meant a great deal to her: "My ADA [assistant district attorney] was kind, honest, willing to explain procedures, willing to hear what I had to say and treated me with respect and dignity." Some respondents said police officers were concerned, supportive, and responsive. A victim comment that echoed what we heard from others was, "Everything worked the way it's supposed to. The police officer was GREAT and the detective was very thorough. The DA was amazing and the judge was strict." Clearly, victims were satisfied when professionals responded with sympathy, understanding, support, reassurance and compassion. They were relieved when offenders were held accountable for their actions.

Crime victim advocates were appreciated for their help with completion of compensation forms and their concern for victim safety. Helping victims understand the judicial process and keeping them informed on a regular basis were other ways advocates worked well with victims. Advocates who responded at either the crime scene or the hospital were extremely valuable to victims.

Victims liked participating in the judicial aspects of their cases. They appreciated being able to attend court, voice their concerns, make victim impact statements, and write letters. This involvement allowed them to feel like they were making a difference and curbing criminal activities. Other service quality positives heard from some of the victims included offenders being dealt with quickly, restitution being paid in a timely way, offenders being sentenced and jailed, a child-friendly atmosphere at grand jury for child abuse victims and payment of medical bills by the Crime Victims' Compensation Program.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

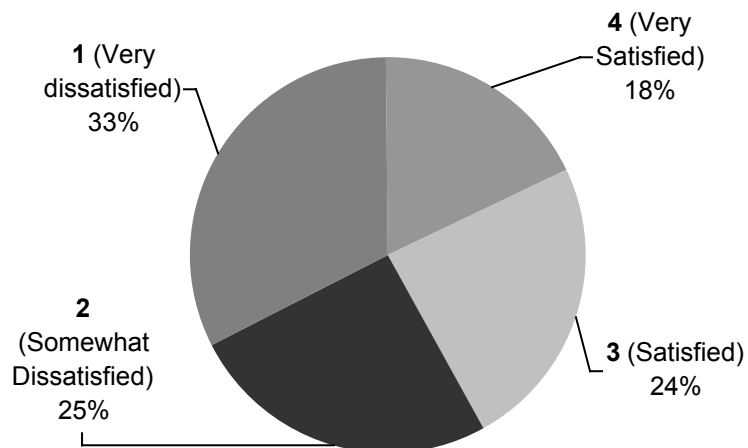
## Criminal justice system improvements

*What changes would victims and service providers most like to see in the criminal justice process?*

### Victims

Although we gathered evidence for positive experiences with the criminal justice system from victims, we more commonly heard about the need for improvements. Victims expressed being somewhat dissatisfied with the overall criminal justice system, giving it an average score of 2.27 on a scale of 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 4 ("very satisfied"). Figure 10.1 presents the breakdown of those ratings and shows that the majority of victims (58%) were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the criminal justice system. In the survey, the criminal justice system was defined as "individuals and agencies that provide public safety and/or legal services or are otherwise involved with the arrest, trial and/or punishment of criminals."

**Figure 10.1: Overall satisfaction of the criminal justice system**  
n=397 crime victims



When victims were given the opportunity to describe their experiences in more detail, they were frequently critical of the overall criminal justice system and had specific concerns about offender accountability; laws and policies; law enforcement, DAs and the courts; insensitivity to victims; and complexity. These and other issues noted by victims, key informants and service providers are presented in the following sections.

Victims, key informants, and service providers had a great deal to say about changes in the criminal justice process. The top five areas mentioned, in order, were:

- Offender accountability
- Law and policy changes
- Law enforcement, DA and court issues
- Victim-focused approach
- Streamlined process

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## - Offender accountability -

### Victims

"I felt like my life was an open book to talk about and his was confidential. I still feel like a victim." This victim's comment typified what we heard from others regarding their perception of how the system treated them compared to how offenders were handled. Victims, in general, felt more victimized when offenders were not prosecuted, received plea bargains, or were given lenient sentences. The majority of victims felt the criminal justice system was unfair. One focus group participant summarized this by saying, "It is unfair when you go to court and they make all types of allowances for the offender and [his/her] family but not for the victim." Victims suggested various ways to improve offender accountability:

- Offer a civil protective order for rape survivors when cases are not prosecuted.
- Establish harsher penalties for serious crimes.
- Correct the prison "matrix" program so offenders are not released early.
- Involve parole and probation officers more in victim response.
- Support and guarantee the collection of restitution.
- Decrease the number of plea bargains and take past incidents into account.

### Key informants and service providers

Victims weren't the only ones emphasizing the need for more offender accountability. The community service providers commented frequently on this topic, such as this key informant, "Judges are more intent on seeing the offenders get a hearing and skip the part about the victims and what their rights are." System improvements identified by professionals included:

- Offer more victim/offender mediation.
- Increase victim participation in the court process.
- Revamp the restitution system, including requiring parents to pay restitution for juvenile offenders.
- Involve victims in plea negotiations.
- Take away personal property of offenders
- Ensure funding for appropriate staffing in order to hold offenders accountable

## - Law and policy changes -

### Victims

Victims who reported crimes and cooperated with prosecutions came away with insightful observations gained from their unique experiences of the entire process. Victims suggested changes in Oregon law and policy that they believed would benefit future victims of crime, including:

- Provide civil protective orders for a rape survivor when there is no prosecution.
- Require community service for offenders in addition to prison time.
- Issue automatic restraining orders when someone is arrested for domestic violence.
- Provide optional "no contact".
- Eliminate plea bargaining.
- Provide punishment options for some offenders, such as public presentations, counseling, education and community service.
- Find ways to prosecute rape cases with less physical evidence for women who are afraid to report right away.
- Accept video interviews for child victims as testimony to avoid facing offenders.
- Treat identity theft seriously.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Withhold media information until all family members are contacted.
- Arrest offenders over weekends if necessary (i.e., staff appropriately for weekend coverage).
- Provide minors with legal protection from abusers during investigative discovery process.

## Key informants and service providers

Key informants and service providers more often recommended policy changes than changes to the law. They work day-to-day within “systems” that need readjustment to better meet the needs of their clients. Suggestions for changes in policies made by these professionals were:

- Change AFS criteria to include single women.
- Ensure services are “local” in every community.
- Reduce workload for advocates so they have more direct service and less grant monitoring.
- Eliminate confidentiality barriers that block information sharing regarding crime victim cases.
- Expand services for victims who don’t report the crime or do not appear in court.
- Review local ordinances regarding eviction of domestic violence victims from their apartments was also identified as a policy improvement. (This practice is considered a violation of Housing and Urban Development’s Section 8 regulations.)
- Fix the restraining order statute regarding jurisdiction. A restraining order in one county may not be honored in another county where the perpetrator violates the order. As a result, the offender may not be arrested.
- Change the law to allow support for financial fraud victims to be covered by Crime Victims’ Compensation Program.

## **- Law enforcement, district attorneys and the court -**

### Victims

A universal plea heard from victims was for law enforcement, DAs and the court to treat them with compassion, sensitivity and respect. Underserved populations, in particular, said law enforcement failed to respond in a way that made them feel good about reporting. This was especially true with the gay/lesbian/transgendered population, but it also came up with elder victims of crime, homeless youth and cultural minorities. One victim told us that criminals abuse the judicial system, needlessly tie up the court and harass the victims through motions and trial delays. Victims made the following suggestions to improve the sensitivity of the judicial process:

- Train police officers to be more responsive and sensitive to all victims.
- Patrol high crime areas, especially at night, and offer assistance to victims by giving them information and referring them to sympathetic law enforcement officers.
- Provide “safe havens” where teenagers, homeless, and gay/lesbian/ transgendered victims can report crimes and seek assistance.
- Urge DAs to take more time interviewing victims right after the incident to alleviate victim stress and provide DAs with more “fresh” information.
- House crime victim advocates in more neutral locations outside of DAs’ offices.
- Increase the number of female police officers with domestic violence expertise who can guide and assist other officers.
- Expect professionals to avoid judging people who live on the “fringe.”
- Make it possible for victims to be assigned to one person to whom they would go for all information and support.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## Key informants and service providers

Assistance in navigating the criminal justice system was identified as something that would greatly help crime victims. Specific suggestions made by professionals were:

- More contact with crime victim advocates during every step of the process
- Crime scene response teams in every county, with special attention given to domestic violence and SARTs
- Timely notification of court proceedings
- Increased cooperation between law enforcement and DAs
- Prompt return of victim phone calls by law enforcement and DAs
- Law enforcement playing a larger role in victim response (more involved with planning and decision making regarding the victim response system)
- Education and training for criminal justice system professionals about the needs of special populations

## **- Victim-focused approach -**

### Victims

Victims reported that, in many cases, the court process favored and made allowances for offenders at the expense of victims. One respondent noted, "The victim is made to feel on trial, not the offender." Victims explained that they experienced heightened sensitivity, raw emotions and guilt at the time when the system is demanding a great deal from them. Victims want more attention to be given to:

- Victim safety throughout the criminal justice process
- Sensitivity and respect for all crime victims in all service areas
- Fair and respectful treatment of victims in the courtroom
- Allowances for victims' needs and obligations when scheduling court appearances and appointments
- Victim awareness of and access to information regarding cases, offender status, services and compensation (More information about this issue can be found in *Oregon Crime Victims' Rights*.)

## Key informants and service providers

Individuals who work with victims were concerned about the criminal justice system's lack of sensitivity to crime victims. One referral source commented, "Crime victims are handed off through stages of the justice system and no one agency has the resources to shepherd a victim through the complex system. That is the one improvement that would have the most impact for victims." Specific suggestions regarding increasing victim focus included:

- Develop a grievance process for victims who believe they have been unfairly treated.
- Help victims navigate the complex system.
- Allow victims to receive intervention and counseling alternatives without activating the criminal justice system.
- Develop alternative interventions for perpetrators because incarceration can make things worse for some victims (e.g., takes away the "bread winner," keeps offenders from making money and paying restitution).
- Locate the processing of restraining order requests in victim-friendly locations -- not courthouses, which can be intimidating places for victims.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## - Streamline the process -

### Victims

“How long does it take to pronounce someone as a victim of a crime?” asked one victim. The time it takes for a case to go to trial, the delay in getting information about hearings, the wait for Crime Victims’ Compensation claim acceptance – these are all obstacles for quick problem resolution in the minds of Oregon crime victims. Many crime victims begged for the system to be more efficient. One victim had this to say, “I would like trials to end sooner. It’ll be 10 months from my incident before we go to trial. I feel like I’m being re-victimized by having to hold on to and remember everything. I can’t just move on with my life.” Specifically, crime victims requested a quicker justice process in sex abuse cases, less waiting time for child abuse assessments, elimination of repeated court delays and consistent, frequent updates regarding the case.

### Key informants and service providers

Professionals who work with victims of crime told us getting into the criminal justice system can be difficult for some of their clients. One source said, “Trying to get legal, law enforcement, arrest, and investigation [help] is extremely poor.” Not knowing what is happening during the criminal justice process is another problem victims face according to one key informant: “Some DAs will call you back and let you know the disposition, some don’t ever call.” Service providers recommended a number of improvements to streamline the criminal justice system:

- Restructure the hearing process to ensure time for victim participation.
- Have a faster turnaround time on cases.
- Develop a flow chart from opening the case to receiving restitution and releasing the offender from probation. This will help victims better understand the process.
- Improve the time it takes for a case to move through the judicial process.

## **Changes to the overall crime victim response system**

### *What changes should be made to the overall crime victim service system?*

In addition to improvements for the criminal justice system, our data included many references to changes needed for the overall crime victim response system, which was defined as “agencies and programs that are available to serve and support people who have been victimized by crime.” One hundred percent of key informants and 98.6% of service providers/referral sources responded that the service system for crime victims could be improved. Professionals reported believing that service systems can be designed to provide services that are comprehensive, that meet individual needs, and that are available through community providers.

We asked respondents to rate the current crime victim service system on a number of positive characteristics. (A set of items were adapted from the service system performance scale created by Morrissey, Ridgely, Goldman and Bartko, 1994.) Generally, respondents reported those characteristics are present, but not to the degree that they potentially could be (see Table 10.1). On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being Not at all and 4 being Very much, the “overall” average rating for key informants, service providers and referral sources combined was 2.42. No area received a rating higher than 2.7. Characteristics considered to be the least present by key informants, service providers and referral sources (see column ① of Table 10.1) were:

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Victim involvement in improving or changing services (2.03)
- Appropriate and timely restitution (2.11)
- Clear community-wide goals (2.12)
- Non-traditional services (2.16)
- Culturally appropriate services (2.33)

**Table 10.1: Crime victims service system characteristics**

Extent to which the current service system...	Average score <sup>a</sup>		
	① Overall n=273	② Service providers/ referral sources n=235	③ Key informants n=42
Provides services that are accessible <sup>b</sup>	2.70	2.75	2.42
Allows differing points of view to exist among organizations	2.62	2.60	2.72
Addresses the issues of trauma	2.60	2.64	2.36
Provides services that are gender specific	2.59	2.60	2.48
Is integrated, that is, agencies are by various means linked together to allow services to be provided in a coordinated and comprehensive manner	2.58	2.59	2.50
Provides services that are individualized	2.58	2.64	2.20
Can be accessed at different stages of the victim recovery process	2.57	2.58	2.50
Shares information about what services agencies currently deliver or are planning to deliver	2.55	2.52	2.69
Creates opportunities for joint planning across different types of agencies (e.g., legal, mental health, physical health, public safety, domestic violence, child welfare)	2.50	2.47	2.68
Is responsive to most or all victims' needs	2.47	2.47	-
Ensures that agencies have timely access to client records in ways that do not violate client confidentiality and/or rights	2.44	2.45	2.37
Is characterized by efficient and accurate communication	2.38	2.39	2.32
Prevents crime victims from getting lost in the complex system	2.34	2.37	2.18
Provides services that are culturally appropriate	2.33	2.37	2.09
Fosters a "big picture" understanding of the service system and the roles/responsibilities of the agencies that constitute that system	2.31	2.31	2.29
Provides services that incorporate non- traditional approaches	2.16	2.18	2.03
Develops clear community-wide goals and plans	2.12	2.13	2.09
Ensures that victims receive appropriate and timely restitution	2.11	2.19	1.57
Involves crime victims in improving and/or changing services	2.03	2.03	2.03
Overall average score	2.42	2.44	2.23

Note: The survey items are sorted in ascending order based on the scores in column ①.

<sup>a</sup> 1=Not At All, 4=Very Much

<sup>b</sup> This data on accessibility can be compared with the victims' rating of accessibility in *Service availability and use*.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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As can be seen from Table 10.1, the impressions of the key informants for underserved populations differed from those of the service providers and referral sources, with the overall average scores being 2.23 and 2.44, respectively. In most cases, the service system ratings for key informants were lower. The areas with the largest gap between the two respondent groups, with key informants' rating being lower, were:

- Restitution (difference=.62)
- Individualized services (difference=.44)
- Accessible services (difference =.33)
- Addresses issues of trauma (difference=.28)
- Culturally appropriate services (difference=.28)

It is clear from the data above that changes to the overall crime victim response system are needed. The following system improvement categories rose to the top of the list when we reviewed all of the comments made by victims, service providers, referral sources and key informants. The top areas in order were:

- More consistent and available information
- System coordination
- Victim-focused approach
- Funding
- Training
- Culture and language
- Streamlined process
- Payment system and restitution
- Data collection

## **- More consistent, available information -**

### Victims

By far the most frequently mentioned issue among all respondents in every needs assessment category was information. Victims clearly don't get enough of it. The lack of information creates problems in every aspect of the victim response system. In some cases, victims don't have updates on their cases and don't know whom to ask. Victim ideas for more consistent, available information were:

- Improved communication between police and hospitals
- More updates on offender status
- Additional check-ins with crime victim advocates
- Prevention and intervention information in schools (before kids go into detention where the information is not very helpful)
- Medical examiner death notification before release to media
- Prompt return of victim phone calls by DAs, advocates and law enforcement
- Cards showing services, benefits, crime victim rights and phone numbers for legal and emotional help given to all victims. Repeat this information during each step of the system (police, advocates, prosecutors, judicial staff, probation and parole officers)
- Victim information listed in the front of phone books in multiple languages
- Better information about the system and how it works, including what's available to victims, what to expect, and help with understanding the offender process
- Community awareness efforts such as radio and television ads, so people know what services are available and where to call

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## Key informants and service providers

Professionals identified communication and information sharing among agencies serving victims as areas that need improvement. One agency may start a new victims' services' program and not notify partner agencies of its existence. This lack of information and poor service coordination traumatizes victims and families according to key informants. Respondents believed that consistent, available information for victims and more public outreach to underserved populations would most likely increase the number of victims reporting.

Professionals' information sharing improvement ideas included:

- Better understanding by providers of how the overall system works
- Brochures and printed materials in easy to understand, simple language of the populations served
- One place to contact and receive information and assistance
- Wider distribution of crime victims' assistance information
- A public information and awareness campaign
- More presence in rural communities
- A 24-hour victim hotline for information and referral

## **- Linkages and partnerships -**

## Key informants and service providers

Encouraging agencies to work together as they respond to victim needs was repeatedly mentioned by key informants and services providers. For example, one respondent said, "There has been an historical conflict between our agency and the domestic violence agency in town." Lack of a team approach to responding to the needs of crime victims also stood out as a theme. No state-level coordination of services and resources exists, which results in the burden of coordination falling on already overburdened communities or providers. One referral source asked for more cooperation and collaboration among service agencies by saying, "The largest problem we face is stereotyped and preconceived notions between agencies that should be working together to provide comprehensive services." Interestingly, we often heard that limited funding, which results in fewer positions and services to which victims can be referred, interferes with agencies establishing or maintaining partnerships. What can be done to improve coordination and collaboration among victim service providers? The experts suggested:

- Improve relationships between service providers and law enforcement, which included more networking, more learning opportunities, and ongoing education regarding specific crimes such as domestic violence.
- Enhance partnerships with schools, including the development of protocols for assessment and referral.
- Establish standard confidentiality rules and release of information forms to help with accessing information and sharing client and case files across agencies.
- Implement efforts such as community policing, crime scene response and multidisciplinary teams in every county to support coordinated community responses.
- Establish a state-funded position to coordinate federal and state resources.
- Place crime victims' advocates in nonprofits serving homeless youth.
- Have four to six regionally-based, highly skilled and trained multidisciplinary response teams that would coordinate resources and help victims.
- Improve support services for families of children with disabilities so they are individualized, coordinated and seamless across agencies.
- Increase collaboration between long-term housing and transitional housing agencies.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Create a central data system for the collection and analysis of crime victim data, including offender status.
- Establish regionally based response teams for victims' assistance and resource coordination
- Establish a coordinated domestic violence shelter program.
- Provide co-case management for cultural groups.
- Establish multi-disciplinary teams focused on crisis response, child abuse, elder abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence.
- House victim advocates in multiple sites during the week. One victim advocate would cover several locations such as the DA's office, juvenile department, sheriff's office, or police department.
- Implement a comprehensive, coordinated plan for Oregon victim assistance.
- Reduce the funding "streams" to provide a more coherent funding system (e.g., one respondent commented on the "20 different pots of money our budget comes from").
- Identify mechanisms for similar counties to combine resources.
- Have the Crime Victims' Compensation Program take a more active case management role, especially in cases where there is no case manager.

## - Victim-focused approach -

### Key informants and service providers

Understanding the specific needs of various populations of crime victims was a recommendation of several key informants and service providers we interviewed. Allowing victims to get services when they need them was a suggestion by this service provider, "Have a system in place where victims can enter at any time." The most frequently heard comment regarding a victim-focused approach related to respect and sensitivity for crime victims. According to one service provider, "Clients complain of being unheard, hassled, put-off, unable to use trained providers, pushed off to county mental health and refused services." Specific suggestions to focus on victims included:

- Develop a grievance process for victims who believe they have been unfairly treated.
- Increase awareness of the needs of specific populations, such as elder victims of financial exploitation.
- Increase services tailored to victims of certain types of crime and from specific populations.
- Find ways to serve homeless youth that make them feel safe and heard.
- Allow all crime victims to enter the system at any time (i.e., any point along the way with or without filing a report with law enforcement).
- Protect victims from being evicted from their homes in cases of domestic violence.

Additional information regarding needs of victims of specific types of crime or backgrounds is included in the report sections on *Unmet service needs of crime victims*, *A closer look at issues for victims of specific types of crime*, and *Underserved populations of crime victims*.

## Funding

### Key informants and service providers

Key informants and service providers identified insufficient funding as a significant problem with the victim service system. A key informant representing victims in rural Oregon commented, "No one knows who is supposed to pay for services. This is a problem in rural areas because

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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hospitals don't have enough funding to absorb the cost." Additionally, respondents believed offender services were better funded than victims' services. Recommendations for increased resources included:

- Development of interventions to meet victims where they are, whatever system they find themselves in
- More funding for legal assistance, medical exams, housing and shelters
- Stable and consistent funding for local programs
- Good salaries and benefits for service providers to reduce turnover
- Provide additional funding for advocates who can immediately contact victims following the crime. (Currently, there is a lag time of two to three weeks due to report processing.)
- Resources for small agencies to offer case management services Help with administrative costs
- Money to try new ideas so funding for basic services isn't tapped
- Increased support for basic ongoing support services
- Increased law enforcement staffing to cover the workload
- Funds for a public outreach campaign
- Additional volunteer coordinators to recruit, train and supervise volunteers
- More resources to rural areas including sufficient support for fiscal management and support staff
- Modifications to VOCA grant requirements that allow funding for prevention and education

## Training

### Victims

Comments made by victims indicated that more training for professionals could improve the overall usefulness of the service system. Specific professional training needs mentioned by victims included:

- Sensitivity training for law enforcement officers and DAs
- Domestic violence training for law enforcement agencies
- Child welfare worker training to gain improved sensitivity for victims and their families
- Improved training for domestic violence shelter workers
- Law enforcement training regarding underserved populations (cultural differences, gay/lesbian/transgendered victims, needs of elder victims, homeless youth)
- Education and training for local police officers, specifically about sexual assault

### Key informants and service providers

A town meeting participant noted, "Training is a huge issue. Trainings are far away and a two-day training takes four days. They cost a lot of money and programs are poor." Training came up repeatedly with individuals who work with crime victims. Most of the comments centered on training for judges, law enforcement and DAs. One example came from a referral source: "Judges need mandatory training on domestic violence, restraining orders, and child development. Judges make decisions every day that affect lives and often have very little education on the subject. If they don't understand the cycle of violence and how abusive men use their kids, they often make poor decisions for vulnerable victims." Respondents had other ideas about training:

- Sexual assault training for nurses in the local hospital
- Aging awareness training for the police academy relating to financial exploitation and effective interviewing approaches

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- More “peers” trained to work with special populations
- Training for people of color to provide counseling
- More culturally appropriate training for people who work with victims
- Mandatory training for judges and law enforcement in child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence and elder abuse
- Training law enforcement and service agency professionals to recognize abuse of children with disabilities, people with mental illnesses, people who are deaf, and victims of elder abuse
- Address the turnover rate within MDTs and its impact on training
- Law enforcement training for mental health workers and mental health training for law enforcement workers
- Cross-training within the delivery system
- Community anti-violence and anti-oppression education
- Training on specific crimes – victim characteristics of those crimes and how to appropriately respond

## - Culture and language -

### Victims

Non-English speaking victims reported difficulty with language barriers when dealing with law enforcement, advocates, and service providers. In addition, written materials such as brochures, Crime Victims' Rights pamphlets, and Crime Victims' Compensation forms are primarily in English. Immigrant and refugee victims of crime felt invisible due to their lack of legal status, income and familiarity with American culture and language. Ideas for improving the overall service system included:

- Increase the number of bilingual professionals responding to needs of crime victims.
- Translate printed victim information into other languages.
- Provide Native American spiritual support
- Support a tribal government system that understands the situation and is more sympathetic to both sides of the crime.
- Provide assistance for law enforcement in cases where the victim is deaf.
- Provide more non-traditional approaches to crime victim support.

### Key informants and service providers

Making a crime report to law enforcement is the first step in the crime victim response process. This opens the doors to advocacy, compensation, counseling, and resolution. When victims don't report, they may not get the help they need. Victims from cultural and ethnic minorities very often don't report for a variety of reasons, including lack of trust and understanding of the system, cultural taboos, and language issues. One key informant we talked to expressed it this way, “We need more attention on Russian and Asian populations' unwillingness to report. We do not fully understand this and so much of what we do is focused on what happens after a report is made. We need to develop other services to ease and minimize the effects of crime on these populations.” Suggestions made by professionals to improve the overall system's responsiveness to people of different cultures and languages included:

- More co-case management for cultural groups
- More response professionals who are culturally sensitive and bilingual
- More tailored services by culture, type of crime, age, and disability
- Utilization of individuals inside cultural communities as victim response avenues
- More culturally appropriate shelters with knowledge of the communities and languages
- More services that reflect the community of people they serve

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Increased support for “traditional” systems within cultural communities

## - Streamlined process -

Providers and victims struggle with a “slow and cumbersome system.” In particular, this is a system that is strange and unfamiliar for immigrant and refugee victims of crime. It is also a system that demands a great deal from people when they are traumatized. According to a key informant representing rural Native Americans, “Women in trauma have extreme difficulty in navigating the system. They need an advocate to help. They are not thinking clearly because of their victimization. They need assistance in processing choices.” Suggestions for streamlining the overall crime victim service system were:

- Make crime victim compensation forms user-friendlier.
- Make it easier to get into the crime victim response system.
- Improve linkages with other agencies outside of criminal justice such as social services, health, food stamps, etc.
- Reduce paperwork for victims.
- Reduce the response time for counseling.
- Design response alternatives for people with disabilities and mental illnesses.

## - Payment system and restitution -

### Victims

Eligibility for and payment of government support, and restitution were issues raised by victims. In particular, victims reported that it is often difficult to receive restitution from juvenile offenders. Victims identified the following suggestions to improve the financial responsiveness of the system:

- Require parents to pay restitution for juvenile offenders if the juveniles are unable to pay.
- Provide compensation for childcare payments.
- Establish mechanisms to help victims get restitution from offender.

### Key informants and service providers

Respondents noted that it is often difficult to enforce restitution. Ideas for improved restitution systems offered by key informants and services providers were:

- Develop a restitution program that provides opportunities for juveniles to earn money.
- Make parents responsible for paying restitution for their children.
- Help with the enforcement of restitution.

## - Data -

### Key informants and service providers

Collecting important data, tracking restitution payments, and evaluating program results were important efforts, according to the professionals we interviewed and surveyed.

Recommendations for data improvements to the victim service system were:

- Implement a tracking system that records ordered and paid restitution (similar to one in Idaho).
- Create a central domestic violence database.
- Use a shared offender database for community notification purposes.
- Simplify the grant reporting system so it takes less completion time for programs receiving funds.

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Develop a centralized referral system.
- Create a flowchart of the path victims take through the judicial and therapeutic processes.
- Track victims who manipulate the system for personal gain.
- Eliminate some paperwork through computer data entry.
- Create standard forms for gathering statistics and make them available electronically (e.g., create computer files, put forms on the internet for electronic submission).
- Help programs that have multiple sites with better ways to collect and report on important data.
- Organize state resources by services and provide statewide statistics.
- Develop a flowchart from offender entry into the criminal justice system to victim receiving restitution to offender leaving probation.
- Collect and analyze data on disability status among abused children.
- Have more evaluation so programs and projects can be assessed on how well they are doing and what needs to be improved.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 11: A CLOSER LOOK AT ISSUES FOR VICTIMS OF SPECIFIC TYPES OF CRIME

This section provides a closer look at information previously reported, broken down by the type of crime that victims experience. Dividing up our sample in this way results in a very small number of respondents for some crime types. For that reason, we are presenting numeric data here only for the crime types represented by at least nine respondents. In alphabetical order, these are:

- Adult sexual assault (other than rape)
- Assault (non-domestic violence)
- Child abuse
- Domestic violence
- Financial exploitation of persons, especially elderly
- Homicide
- Multiple crimes
- Rape
- Rape and another crime
- Robbery

A complete list of the types of crimes our victim survey respondents experienced is in *Appendix B: Methodology*.

### Highlights of what we heard

Victims reported that the type of crime they experienced dictated the services they needed or received. Domestic violence victims asked for more crisis response teams and mental health counseling. Victims of financial exploitation and fraud wanted more frequent visits from advocates and a better explanation of the criminal justice process. Co-victims associated with homicides requested prompt return of victims' belongings, family notification prior to media release and improved communication with medical professionals.

During the last fiscal year, providers reported they served clients who were predominately victims of domestic violence, child abuse, rape, sexual assault and assault. Victims of almost all crime types said their psychological and emotional well being was the life area most affected by their victimization. The most helpful sources of support for victims were families, friends, and Crime Victim Advocates. Across all types of crime, the first point of contact most frequently identified by the victims we surveyed was law enforcement. Victims of elder abuse, homicide and adult sexual assault found services to be the most accessible. Ratings of satisfaction with the criminal justice system varied widely, with victims of attempted murder and elder abuse reporting the highest satisfaction ratings.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## Types of crime and their effect on victims' lives

*What effect did the crime have on victims' lives?*

To gain an appreciation for the impact of a crime, we asked victim survey respondents to rate how much the crime committed against them affected the following areas of their lives:

- Financial – monetary losses or difficulties
- Physical/medical – physical pain or injury
- Psychological/emotional – behavioral or mental issues
- Spiritual – issues about faith or religion
- Social – problems keeping healthy relationships with friends and/or family
- Community – isolation and/or lack of support from the victim's community

In looking at the effect each of the crimes had on those different areas of a victim's life, victims of most of the crime types listed psychological and emotional well being as the life area most affected. Exceptions to this result were (a) victims of assault rating the physical/medical effects as greatest and (b) victims of robbery and financial exploitation rating the effect on their finances as greatest. A complete breakdown of those average ratings is presented in Table 11.1 below.

**Table 11.1: Average effect of each type of crime on a victim's life**  
n=380 victims

Crime Type	# of victims <sup>a</sup>	Life Area <sup>b</sup>					
		Financial	Physical/medical	Psychological/emotional	Spiritual	Social	Community
Child abuse	112	2.5	2.4	3.8	2.4	3.0	2.2
Domestic violence	83	3.5	3.3	3.8	2.5	3.3	3.0
Assault (non-domestic violence)	54	3.0	3.6	3.2	2.0	2.2	2.3
Rape	39	2.9	3.1	3.8	2.8	3.4	2.8
Homicide	36	3.1	2.6	3.8	2.8	2.8	2.1
Robbery	13	3.0	1.7	2.7	1.8	2.0	1.7
Financial exploitation of persons, esp. elderly	11	3.0	1.7	3.0	1.6	1.9	1.4
Adult sexual assault (other than rape)	10	2.9	2.1	3.6	2.9	3.1	2.2
Rape + one other crime <sup>c</sup>	9	3.3	3.5	3.7	2.4	3.3	3.1
Multiple crimes	13	3.7	3.3	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.3

<sup>a</sup>The proportions of crimes in this sample may not represent the proportion of crimes in Oregon

<sup>b</sup>Rating scale: 1=Not at all affected, 4= Very affected

<sup>c</sup>In looking at the 22 incidents in which multiple crimes were listed by victims, 41% involved rape as one of the co-occurring crimes; therefore, those were pulled out into a separate category for analysis.

In looking across potential sources of support following the crime, for many of the crime types victims reported receiving the greatest support from friends, family mental health professionals

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

and medical personnel. Victims of a few types of crime gave their highest helpfulness ratings to other sources. For example, victims of adult sexual assault and financial exploitation rated law enforcement as an equal or greater source of support than the other sources. Additionally, victims of multiple crimes and rape plus one other crime rated sexual assault/rape crisis and faith organizations as an equal or greater source of support. A complete breakdown of the average ratings on sources of support is included in *Appendix D: Supplemental data tables and figures*.

### Agencies first contacted by victims

*What was the first agency contacted for help following the crime?*

As discussed in *Service use and availability*, over half of all victims (52.1% or 203 of 390 respondents) told us that the first agency they contacted following the crime was law enforcement. When broken down by crime type, law enforcement continued to be the most frequently named agency of first contact following the crime. After law enforcement, the agencies first contacted by crime victims differed by type of crime. Table 11.2 below presents the two agencies of first contact most frequently listed by victims of specific types of crime.

**Table 11.2: First agency contacted following the crime by crime type**

n=380 victims

Crime type	# of victims	First agency contacted following the crime (Top 2) <sup>a</sup>	% of victims in crime type
Child abuse	112	Law Enforcement	29.5
		Child welfare	13.4
Domestic violence	83	Law Enforcement	39.8
		Hotline, medical	9.6 each
Assault (non-domestic violence)	54	Law Enforcement	64.8
		Medical	13.0
Rape	39	Law Enforcement	66.7
		No one	10.3
Homicide	36	Law Enforcement	44.4
		Victims Assistance	22.2
Multiple crimes	13	Law Enforcement	46.2
		Medical	15.4
Robbery	13	Law Enforcement	76.9
		No one	7.7
Financial exploitation of persons, esp. elderly	11	Law Enforcement	63.6
		No one, Probation/parole officer	9.1 each
Adult sexual assault (other than rape)	10	Law Enforcement	70.0
		Sexual Assault Agency	10.0
Rape + one other crime	9	Law Enforcement	55.6
		Attorney, Medical, SA Agency	11.1 each

<sup>a</sup>If more than one agency is listed, each agency had the same percentage of respondents identifying it.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## Service satisfaction by crime type

*How accessible were services received or needed?*

In looking at issues for victims of specific crimes, we also analyzed victim ratings regarding service accessibility, the respect and responsiveness of service providers and satisfaction with the criminal justice system. As discussed in *Service use and availability*, the average rating of service accessibility provided by all victims (n=422) was 2.8 on a 4-point scale (1=not at all accessible, 4=very accessible). As a comparison, Table 11.3 below details this accessibility rating broken down by responses from victims of specific crimes and presented in ascending order based on the average rating.

**Table 11.3: Overall accessibility of needed services by crime type**  
n=380 Victims

Crime type	# of victims	Rating <sup>1</sup>
Homicide	36	3.3
Adult sexual assault (other than rape)	10	3.2
Rape	39	3.0
Child abuse	112	2.9
Assault (non-domestic violence)	54	2.8
Domestic violence	83	2.7
Rape + one other crime	9	2.6
Multiple crimes	13	2.4
Financial exploitation of persons, esp. elderly	11	2.0
Robbery	13	2.0

<sup>1</sup>1=Not at all accessible, 4=Very accessible

In *Unmet service needs*, we looked at how victims rated providers for respect and responsiveness. In Table 11.4 on the following page, we break down those results by the type of crime experienced by each respondent.

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Table 11.4: Provider respect and responsiveness to victims of specific crime types**  
n=380 victims

Crime experienced	# of victims	Law enforcement		DA		Crime victims' advocate		Other service providers	
		Respect	Respon- sive	Respect	Respon- sive	Respect	Respon- sive	Respect	Respon- sive
Child abuse	112	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.7	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0
Domestic violence	83	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.6	3.3	3.2	3.0	2.9
Assault (non-Domestic Violence)	54	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.4	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.1
Rape	39	3.2	3.1	2.8	2.8	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1
Homicide	36	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.3
Multiple crimes	13	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.6	3.5	3.5	2.9	2.9
Robbery	13	2.5	2.6	1.9	2.2	2.6	2.3	2.7	2.7
Financial exploitation	11	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.5	2.0	3.0
Adult sexual assault (other than rape)	10	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.3	2.9	3.1	3.0
Rape + 1 other crime	9	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.0	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9

NOTE: Rating scale for all four items: 1=Strongly Disagree, 4= Strongly Agree

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the criminal justice system, the average rating across all victims (n=422) was 2.3 on a 4-scale (1=very dissatisfied, 4=very satisfied). (See *System improvements* for more details.) A breakdown of average satisfaction levels by crime type is presented in Table 11.5 below.

**Table 11.5: Overall satisfaction with criminal justice system by crime type**  
n=380 victims

Crime Type	# of Victims	Rating <sup>a</sup>
Adult sexual assault (other than rape)	10	2.9
Financial exploitation of persons, esp. elderly	11	2.6
Homicide	36	2.6
Child abuse	112	2.3
Assault (non-domestic violence)	54	2.2
Domestic violence	83	2.2
Rape	39	2.2
Rape + one other crime	9	1.9
Robbery	13	1.9
Multiple crimes	13	1.7

<sup>a</sup>Rating Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 4= Strongly Agree

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## Specialized services by types of crime

The following summaries detail what we heard regarding specialized services by type of crime. The seven crime categories that follow are in order according to the number of comments made during focus groups, interviews and on written questionnaires. Categories primarily reflect the ideas of victims; however, service providers, key informants, and referral sources also are represented.

### - Domestic violence -

#### Victims

Survivors of domestic violence told us that more needs to be done in the areas of crisis response, follow up, and mental health counseling. Victims reported troubling, long-term conditions such as post-traumatic stress, debilitating fear and apprehension. The legal status of immigrant, refugee, and migrant women can keep them from receiving financial aid and needed services. Underserved populations with special needs stemming from culture, language, disability, and isolation require more targeted approaches to treatment for the effects of domestic violence.

A crisis response system that includes advocates who provide on the spot service as well as follow up support would greatly help survivors of domestic violence, "If I had some automatic callback from someone, I would have acted. Because of my addiction and trauma, I didn't seek help – at least make one callback." One immigrant victim asked for domestic violence information to be listed in local telephone directories in multiple languages.

#### Key informants and service providers

Professionals working with domestic violence victims told us about issues facing clients coming from underserved populations including unwillingness to report, lack of awareness about the system, and negative perception of government. One key informant spoke of a social "stigma" relating to culture, age and gender, "There is a social stigma attached to reporting crime, especially sex crimes like domestic violence, rape and sexual assault. They don't see protection against crime. They see shame."

Not including immigrants, refugees and other underserved populations in the domestic violence shelter system is perceived as a political and resource issue within the victims' services community. More networking and collaboration among service providers and funds for additional shelter and housing options were mentioned as improvements that need to be made. Finally, we heard from many respondents that the "system" needs to hire and train bilingual workers who come from the communities they serve.

### - Financial exploitation and fraud -

#### Victims

Most of the victims we heard from regarding these crimes were elders. They spoke about not understanding what they needed to do and feeling embarrassed, humiliated, and devastated by what happened to them. One victim told us, "I've been duped. I don't want to tell my family. I'm ashamed because I just lost \$3,000." In many cases, people close to them were the perpetrators. These were people they trusted. In cases where the victim was a homebound elder, safety of the victim was paramount. Victims of financial exploitation and fraud need

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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frequent visits from advocates who can explain the intricacies of the banking system, help with the “paper trail,” and explain the criminal justice process. Banks can improve their response by training employees, setting standards, extending reporting time frames for claims, and working closely with law enforcement and DAs throughout prosecution. A public information campaign aimed at seniors would help to prevent some of these cases.

## Key informants and service providers

One key informant described, “The elderly population is invisible. It is the fastest growing population, but you don’t hear about their needs. The financial impact is the biggest impact and it’s hard to see. We can’t see their suffering.” Key informants identified a number of areas in which the system could improve for elder victims of fraud and financial exploitation, including:

- Address the issues of mobility, transportation, hearing loss and age-related problems.
- Notify victims in advance of hearings so they can arrange for accommodation of any special needs.
- Furnish emergency financial assistance.
- Provide information about and access to support groups.
- Arrange for Ombudsmen services.
- Provide financial counseling.
- Help rebuild credit.
- Cover the costs of mental health services specific to the psychological impact of this type of crime.

## **- Sexual assault and rape -**

### Victims

Comments from victims described a need for more SARTs, counseling for victims of sexual assault, prison time for offenders and help from victim advocates. One victim appreciated the assistance she received: “The police had a person in place to help us with our daughter’s rape, and this was very helpful.”

### Key informants and service providers

While professionals were impressed with the amount of collaboration and community response for domestic violence, they believed services for sexual assault victims were weak. “For sexual assault and stalking victims, there is simply not enough trained response,” said one respondent. Advocates and service providers familiar with the needs of sexual assault victims made the following suggestions to improve the system:

- Develop SARTs.
- Provide funds for sexual assault exams for victims 15 and older.
- Have Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) in all hospitals.
- Train for all law enforcement officers responding to sexual assault.
- Train for advocates working with this population.
- Arrange support groups for teen victims.

Another issue of concern for providers was culpability – whether or not someone participated in the action that led him/her to be victimized, such as delivering drugs. This impacts how law enforcement handles the case according to one key informant: “Police can be insensitive or victim blaming, the victim can feel he or she can’t work with the police. This makes them ineligible to access compensation.”

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Stalking came up a few times in this category, with respondents wanting more legal solutions. "The remedies in statute aren't available to stalking victims when they try to access protective orders or police citations. Having stalking itself investigated is difficult," explained one respondent.

### **- Child abuse -**

#### Victims

Family members described the need for their children to access services over time due to developmental changes and life circumstances that trigger a need for more help. "Sexual abuse is an ongoing area to keep an eye on. Feelings and emotions can arise at coming of age, first boyfriend and even after marriage." Adolescent victims of abuse reported not being heard or believed: "The court does not believe me, SCF does not believe me, and my probation officer hung up on me."

#### Key informants and service providers

Multidisciplinary teams and child abuse centers have had a positive impact on victims and their families in Oregon. However, respondents requested Child Abuse Teams for investigations and more coordinated response systems for counties with multiple law enforcement jurisdictions. Attention needs to be given especially to children with disabilities. Professionals reported that this population of children is abused at twice the rate of other children. One key informant said, "Abuse is not recognized as readily because these kids are not believed and have problems communicating." Other requests for changes to the system included more services for children who witness domestic violence and visitation centers for parents who have conflicts and their children.

### **- Juvenile crimes -**

#### Victims

Parental involvement was a theme heard repeatedly by victims of juvenile crime – parents who meet with the victims, pay their children's restitution, and are held accountable for the acts of their children. Getting schools and law enforcement agencies to work together to protect victims from offenders at school would also help victims and their families. Providing a place or a person in school for kids to report was another idea from victims: "The high school counselor should be aware of what happened and check in with the victim to see how he is doing." Offender accountability, more serious consequences, and "AA" type offender groups were other ideas coming from victims and their families.

#### Key informants and service providers

Issues facing providers working with this population of crime victims include lack of victim advocates in juvenile departments, no stable funding to serve victims of juvenile crime, and the unwillingness of the court and others to hold parents responsible for the actions of their children. Teenage children of immigrants and refugees who are involved in gangs are abusing their parents according to our respondents. They need help to know what to do to keep their children out of gangs, "A lot of the families don't know how to discipline their children. The children are more advanced in language and tend to take over." Suggestions to improve Oregon's response to this population were:

- Implement a restitution program that provides opportunities for youth to earn money.
- Offer the services of victims' advocates in every county.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Train victims' services personnel on the issues for victims of juvenile crime.
- Walk victims of juvenile crime through the judicial process.

## - Elder abuse -

### Key informants and service providers

Advocates and service providers described how caretaker abuse happens behind closed doors to vulnerable elders who are dependent on the help of others. Fearing for their safety and well being, they may not report the abuse to authorities. Elder victims tend to be embarrassed, incapacitated, and fearful of being institutionalized. If they do report, getting them into the system is extremely difficult. One key informant explained, "If they don't prosecute, that can be a problem. The victim does not qualify for assistance. It's a big emotional thing. They are punished if they don't want to prosecute a caregiver."

Professionals in this area described the need for an array of services provided through several agencies for victims of elder abuse, such as:

- Help with restraining orders and legal issues
- Emergency housing or in-home care giving solutions
- Shelter options designed for the frail elderly
- Adult day care with a shelter component
- Emergency cash assistance
- Consistent communication between crime victims' services, county aging service providers, and law enforcement in order to build a multidisciplinary response for elder victims
- An "official" referral system and expedited court process
- Awareness of the needs of elder victims, in particular the frail elderly, by law enforcement and the criminal justice system (One respondent said, "In our county, we work well with the victim system and adult protective services. We investigate every case that comes into our office.")

## - Homicide -

### Co-victims

The issues reported by co-victims associated with homicides included:

- Lack of communication with medical professionals
- Prompt return of victims' belongings to their families
- Family notification before release to media
- Help with crime scene cleanup
- Travel assistance for relatives to attend the victim's funeral

Co-victims appreciated financial help for burials and the support they received from CVAS. They asked for a more sensitive professional response to co-victims and witnesses as well as better protection especially in gang-related violence cases.

### Key informants and service providers

Improving homicide response in rural communities and providing adequate law enforcement and DA support in small towns were issues of concern for providers. They told us this was due to a scarcity of funding and the need for homicide experience, "It's so important to investigate

## **2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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properly in the beginning of the case or the case could be bungled. Once in a while you see this in a big county, too. Detectives need to admit they don't know and ask for help."

Providers want more funding for the communities, additional qualified people working with victims, more police detectives and ADAs, and well-investigated cases so co-victims are not re-victimized. Respondents praised the work of the Oregon Parole Board, especially in cases where co-victims testify in release hearings.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 12: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are grouped by the “themes” identified from the report’s findings. The “themes” are:

- Consistent and available information
- Immediate and ongoing victim support
- Offender accountability
- System improvements
- Service linkages and partnerships
- Funding
- Financial assistance and compensation
- Laws and policies
- Training

Recommendations come from the Needs Assessment respondents and from the research team. They are presented in no particular order. Key Recommendations can be found in the Executive Summary on page 4 of this report.

### **Consistent and available information**

- Provide more proactive outreach in communities that are less familiar with the American system, i.e., speakers attending church services.
- Crime victims need to be informed of their rights as soon as possible, preferably by law enforcement officers and/or victim advocates at the scene of the crime or at the hospital.
- Establish policies to ensure crime victim advocates review pertinent Crime Victims’ Rights information at various stages of the victim response process in writing and verbally.
- Review current procedures and improve timeliness of provision of case-related information to victims by the court or through the DAs’ offices. This information should include dates and times for court hearings, offender status updates, and invitations to participate in court proceedings, victim impact statements, and plea negotiations.
- Revise all printed materials to be clearly written, inviting, and easy to understand. Print brochures and information flyers for the following: Crime Victims’ Rights, criminal justice process, restitution process, restraining order process, and available services and compensation.
- Prepare standardized brochures in multiple languages. Include information in the brochure on what to do if the victim thinks his rights have been violated.
- Distribute state guidelines for the dissemination and implementation of Crime Victims’ Rights.
- Design and implement a public awareness campaign that includes “key messages” relating to: crime prevention; what to do if you or a loved one is victimized; services available for victims of crime; and crime victim rights.



# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Provide basic victim service and victims' rights information in utility bills, phone directories, web sites, and other public outlets.
- Have every agency representative who comes into contact with a victim provide that victim with a card or brochure that lists Crime Victims' Rights, benefits, available services, and phone numbers. This information needs to be repeated at each step of the system by police, nonprofit and system-based advocates, juvenile staff, prosecutors, judicial staff, and probation and parole officers.
- Have agencies collaborate on production of outreach materials.
- Enhance the existing CVAS website to include basic information on the criminal justice system and what victims can expect.
- Have trained people answer all phone lines for every victim advocate program; avoid use of an answering machine.
- Set up a statewide 24-hour Victims' Assistance Center where victims can call for referrals and information. Center personnel would follow up to ensure appropriate services are secured.
- Have advocates reach out to victims in their own neighborhoods, using their own languages and having an understanding of their cultures. Outreach should include neighborhood action groups, churches, homeless shelters, rural and isolated areas, and places where immigrants, refugees and teen runaways frequent.
- Garner support of state and local media.

## **Immediate and ongoing victim support**

- Establish standards and funding for victim assistance so victims receive services equally across county boundaries, populations, and crime types.
- Offer every victim support through each step of the criminal justice process. Support should include a well-trained personal advocate, timely information, and appropriate referrals and follow-up.
- Station advocates where they can have the most impact, in locations such as homeless youth shelters, community organizations, parole and probation offices, juvenile departments and law enforcement agencies. Depending on the need, advocates could work in multiple locations during the week.
- Provide crime victim advocates with copies of police reports in cases of violent crime and fraud.
- Make victim advocates available to quickly respond to victims of violent crimes, assisting with law enforcement, medical, media, and family members.
- Expect advocates to work closely with victims throughout the criminal justice process and not "hand off" victims to others.
- Have advocates take a more active case management role, especially in cases where there are no case managers.
- Establish crime victim advocate standards, expectations, and certification process.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Expect advocates to contact crime victims within a certain period of time following the incident, with frequent follow-up contacts up to and including prosecution.
- Enhance advocacy services to include employer intervention, paperwork assistance, help with creditors and banks (financial fraud cases), and assistance with restitution forms and collection.
- Monitor the work of VAPs by establishing performance measures to ensure key activities and services occur.

## Offender accountability

- Order community service for non-violent offenders that would benefit victims' services (such as rehabilitation of housing for elderly) and measures that guarantee the person's safety and prevent crime (such as installing locks and trimming high bushes). These in-kind contributions hold offenders accountable and assist victims in need.
- Work with the Oregon Department of Corrections and Oregon Youth Authority to sponsor annual fund-raisers with proceeds to go to victims' services.
- Assure all victims are asked to participate in plea negotiations.
- Arrest restraining order offenders in the county in which they violated the order, not only the county where the order was issued.
- Have civil protective orders for rape victims when cases are not prosecuted.
- Have parole and probation officers more involved in victim response and victim notification of offender status.
- Implement a statewide restitution-tracking program.
- Prioritize payment of restitution to victims.
- Strengthen parental accountability for the acts of their children.

## System improvements

- Execute a statewide comprehensive, coordinated plan for victim assistance that sets statewide standards for dissemination of Crime Victims' Rights, identifies core services and protocols for VAPs, and outlines expectations for consistent, ongoing communication with victims regarding the criminal justice process.
- Have a service system that allows all victims to enter at any time and receive help.
- Have greater emphasis on timely services, including mental health evaluation and treatment for victims to avoid long waiting lists.
- Provide for more shelters and focus on specific victim needs (elders, teens, sexual minorities, religious minorities, etc.).
- Provide for a grievance process for victims who feel they have been unfairly treated.
- Have intervention and counseling alternatives without activating the criminal justice process.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Have prosecutors meet victims shortly after the crime instead of months later at the time of trial. Victims would feel more supported and prosecutors would get better information.
- Expand the use of technology to better support rural Oregon communities.
- Utilize existing computer-based systems to improve medical diagnoses and treatment for victims of sexual assault of all ages.
- Use technologies such as an automated victim notification system.

## Service linkages and partnerships

- Establish special elder crime prosecution units.
- Establish volunteer patrols for areas frequented by sexual minorities at night and hand out information about Crime Victims' Rights and services.
- Recruit volunteers from underserved populations; partner them with professionals and train them to take on paid positions.
- Encourage more communities to form coordinated crisis response teams, such as Child Abuse Teams, Domestic Violence Response Teams, SARTs, Child Abuse Assessment Centers, and Elder Abuse Prosecution Units.
- Look at ways to provide services through a consortium of agencies rather than a department, particularly in less-populated areas.
- Consider incentives to encourage collaboration and partnerships that result in better use of funds and improved services.
- Partner with private nonprofits on fund-raising events in the community. Underwrite events with corporate in-kind donations.
- Work with community providers to develop victim response services for individuals who do not have legal status.
- Have victim advocates work with community agencies to co-case manage victims from other cultures, victims with disabilities and victims with mental illness.

## Funding

- Dedicate a portion of funding to innovative and cutting-edge approaches in working with special populations. Grant funds through an RFP process to community-based groups.
- Fund homeless teen shelters or housing options especially in rural Oregon.
- Provide rural Oregon with additional resources for administration, services, shelters and transportation.
- Fund additional crime victim advocate positions, especially for populations of underserved victims of crime.
- Hire "peer advocates" who live in the community and speak the language of the crime victims served.
- Fund positions for rural victim advocates who represent multiple agencies.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Reduce the number of funding streams for victims' services by combining services in one statewide office. Data collection could then be more uniform and grant monitoring could be better coordinated. It would be easier to evaluate programs and projects and reduce overlap.
- Blend, braid or pool funds from various agencies within the same communities, or across county lines, to increase resources for crime victims.
- Make additional funds available for staffing crime victim programs.
- Work with higher education and private foundations to launch a scholarship program tied to community service for rural Oregon crime victim service providers.

## Financial assistance and compensation

- Explore ways the system can assist victims of financial fraud, including mental health services and financial counseling.
- Open reimbursements to more private mental health providers.
- Make Crime Victims' Compensation forms more user-friendly.
- Provide financial assistance for housing, transportation costs, child care, crime scene clean up and for lost income when away from the job due to the crime.
- Continue to make funds available in the immediate aftermath of the crime, such as with discretionary emergency funds.
- Pay for Native American non-traditional healing practices with Crime Victims' Compensation funds.
- Expand civil legal assistance.
- Shorten the turnaround time for decisions and payments on Crime Victims' Compensation claims by making the process more efficient through technology and additional staff (where needed).
- Have "short forms" for certain types of crimes.

## Laws and policies

- Take social security numbers off of all identification cards (hospital, insurance, etc.)
- Extend the 30-day window banks allow customers to report bank errors.
- Allow homeless youth to receive emergency medical care without the threat of law enforcement notification regarding possible warrants.
- Assign lead investigators to fraud cases that have multiple jurisdictions.
- Assign detectives who are specially trained to work with elder victims to elder abuse cases.
- Allow additional court time for victims to be heard.
- Use performance measures in court cases that include participation of the victim, not just number of cases.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- Protect victims from being evicted from their apartments in cases of domestic violence.
- Put the restraining order process in victim-friendly locations, not courthouses.
- Involve victims in the development of policies, procedures, laws, and guidelines. Victims with disabilities and victims from diverse cultural backgrounds should be included.

## Training

- Provide immigrant and refugee organizations with the training they need to give appropriate crime victim information to people when they enter the country. This would include information about how the criminal justice system works.
- Have Crime Victim Advocates train community partners in victim response and sensitivity issues.
- Work with the Bureau of Police Safety, Standards and Training (BPSST) to more fully develop a victim sensitivity and response component to their training program. Ask the Oregon DAs' Association, Oregon Judicial Department, Oregon Nurses' Association, and Oregon Association of Defense Counsel to incorporate a victim sensitivity and response component in yearly trainings.
- Conduct cultural awareness and sensitivity training for each agency's personnel and provide information on how services could be tailored to the needs of special populations.
- Offer standardized training across the state and standardized printed information that can be used in trainings.
- Provide cross-training to victim response agencies so they know how each system works, i.e., mental health/criminal justice system; advocates/DHS; parole and probation/domestic violence agencies. Agencies should be continually aware of the need for communication and information sharing with partners.
- Provide training to emergency room personnel and other medical staff likely to first encounter victims about victim needs, sensitive approaches to victims, and information and referral systems.
- Give advocates, police, prosecutors and judges additional training to learn more about the trauma victims experience and how they can respond with more understanding, empathy, sensitivity and support. Victims treated with compassion and respect can provide better information to investigators.
- Develop prevention methods that are taught to people who are more vulnerable to being victimized, such as disabled, developmentally delayed, and individuals from minority cultures.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## SECTION 13: SELECTED STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS

The following state and national programs, identified by key informants, service providers and victims, are examples of programs that meet the needs of victims and communities. While not a complete list of all of the efforts going on in Oregon and elsewhere, the programs were selected by the research team to represent community-based collaborations.

Examples of other national programs can be found in the second part of this section. These programs, selected by research team members, will give service providers ideas to consider as they address victim issues in their communities.

### Respondent ideas

#### - Domestic violence -

**The Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (DVERT)** is a unit of the Colorado Springs Police Department working in collaboration with over 20 partnering community agencies. As a unique multi-disciplinary unit, DVERT is staffed by employees of several partnering agencies, including victim advocates from the Center for Prevention of Domestic Violence, El Paso County Department of Human Services caseworkers, a deputy DA and a paralegal, Detectives from El Paso County Sheriff's Office and Woodland Park Police, and a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Supervisor.

Colorado Springs police DVERT teams, consisting of police and victim service workers, visit identified high-risk abusers, even if they don't have warrants outstanding, to notify their partners (especially new partners) of the person's abusive past. The team attempts to break through the isolation, intimidation, and control.

DVERT has a number of programs including a Children's Program that consists of DHS caseworkers, a CASA/DVERT case coordinator, and a DVERT Children's Program Manager. This program is involved with eight school districts. DVERT participates in community coalitions that focus on best practices regarding children who witness domestic violence.

Contact: Terri Anderson, Children's Program Manager (719) 444-7813, <http://www.dvert.org/>

In 1993, the Portland Police Bureau created a special unit, the **Domestic Violence Reduction Unit (DVRU)**, designed to reduce the level of domestic violence. A product of the philosophy of community policing, the DVRU represents a new way of doing police work, one that more accurately reflects the cultural values of the community in the enforcement of the law. This police unit has two goals: to increase the sanctions for batterers and to empower victims. The DVRU's mission is to investigate selected domestic violence cases, promote deterrence, assist victims, interrupt the cycle of violence and its continuation from one generation to the next, and aid local and regional efforts to respond to domestic violence.

Contact: 503-823-0992, <http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/dchs/dv/dvman/spec.html>

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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**House of Ruth of Baltimore** has a comprehensive court-based Help Establish Legal Protection Permanently (HELPP) program for victims of domestic violence in Baltimore City and Prince George's County. HELPP enhances the court-based services for victims of domestic violence currently being offered through the Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Project (POARP) by providing victims with long-term representation in family law cases and legal information and advocacy on other issues, such as public benefits, medical assistance and housing.

House of Ruth provides individual and group counseling to victims and their children, offers free legal representation from seven offices across the state and staffs a 24-hour crisis hotline to help victims in need. House of Ruth trains court personnel on the dynamics of domestic violence, helps Maryland businesses develop in-house policy training, educates and counsels teens on dating abuse prevention and consistently uses advocacy to usher in new legislation that helps ensure the safety of all Maryland's women and children.

Contact: Carole Alexander, House Of Ruth, (410) 554-8444, Email: [info@hruth.org](mailto:info@hruth.org)

**The Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team's (INVEST)** mission is to identify and intervene in the most potentially lethal domestic violence cases. The City of Jacksonville, Florida contracted with Hubbard House to provide the advocates and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office provided two officers who are specifically assigned to the INVEST Office. The additional staff includes a program manager, crime analyst, training specialist and receptionist. The City of Jacksonville, through the Community Services Department, funds the positions.

All domestic violence police reports and referrals from other agencies are reviewed daily and assessed for potential lethality. Assessment includes the use of the Threat Assessment Checklist completed by all referral sources. Advocates and sheriff's officers who work together to provide services to victims and accountability to perpetrators on cases identified as high risk for lethality. Client participation is completely voluntary and confidential. All services are provided free of charge.

INVEST participates in setting policy and in ensuring comprehensive services to clients from all participating agencies. INVEST includes representatives from the City of Jacksonville Community Services Department, Victim Services Division, Jacksonville Fire and Rescue, Memorial Hospital, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, State Attorney's Office, Hubbard House, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Women's Center of Jacksonville, Jacksonville Naval Air Station, University of North Florida, Animal Care and Control, The Salvation Army, Duval County Public Health Department and Florida Department of Children and Families.

Contact: (904) 858-1366, [galston@coj.net](mailto:galston@coj.net)

### **- Elder fraud and abuse -**

Elder Safe helps victims aged 65 and older after a crime is reported to police and continues to help them through the criminal justice system. Based at the Washington County Sheriff's Office, Elder Safe collaborates with the DA's office and the Department of Aging and Veterans' Services and all city police departments to coordinate services. Older crime victims may have disabilities that make it difficult for them to read legal documents or to travel independently to the courthouse. Assistance tailored to the unique circumstance of each victim may include personal support, court advocacy, or help filling out forms. Program staff and volunteers

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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understand the needs of victims for information, validation, restitution, testimony and support as their cases travel through the criminal justice system.

Elder Safe Contact: Joyce DeMonnin (503) 846-2773,  
[http://www.co.washington.or.us/sheriff/service/eld\\_safe.htm](http://www.co.washington.or.us/sheriff/service/eld_safe.htm)

**Elders in Action** Ombudsmen are trained volunteers who provide support and assistance to senior citizens or individuals with long term disabilities, in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area who are experiencing problems with health care, housing, crime and elder abuse. Ombudsmen provide one-on-one problem solving assistance. Upon request, they can act as an advocate for another person when trying to get a problem solved.

Contact: 503-823-5269, [volunteer@eldersaction.org](mailto:volunteer@eldersaction.org)

### - Child abuse -

Oregon has a **network of child abuse assessment and advocacy centers** consisting of 18 programs statewide. Centers provide centralized assessments for children who may have been abused or neglected. Physical examinations and interviews are done in a comfortable environment to help children feel relaxed and unafraid.

The goals of assessment and advocacy centers are:

- To minimize further trauma to child abuse victims and their families by coordinating expert evaluation services in one location.
- To provide a high level of expertise in the medical diagnosis and treatment of abused children.
- To provide access to needed mental health interventions, as quickly as possible.
- To provide recommendations for medical and psychological treatment and follow-up in cases of child abuse.
- To provide a database for research and potential legislation on prevention and treatment of child abuse.

**Regional Centers** ensure that every child suspected of having been physically or sexually abused receives a skilled, complete, and therapeutic child abuse medical assessment. Regional centers are charged with providing consultation, education, training, technical assistance, and referral services to the administrators, child interviewers/investigators, and medical personnel affiliated with community child abuse assessment centers and multidisciplinary teams.

Contact: Kevin Dowling, CARES Northwest (503) 331-2400, <http://caresnw.org/region.htm>

### - Homicide -

The **Dougy Center** was the first center in the US to provide peer support groups for grieving children. Over 13,500 children, teens and families have been served since 1982. The Dougy Center is a privately supported non-profit organization and there is no fee for service. The mission of The Dougy Center for Grieving Children is to provide to families in Portland and the surrounding region loving support in a safe place where children, teens and their families grieving a death can share their experiences as they move through their healing process.



## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Through the National Center for Grieving Children and Families, the Center also provides support and training locally, nationally and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children in grief.

Contact: (503) 775-5683, [www.grievingchild.org](http://www.grievingchild.org)

### - Underserved populations -

**The Mutual Assistance Association of Portland** is a community/clan panel for the Asian community. The panel is made up of elders and influential people in and out of the community who investigate, mediate and settle traditional social issues, including issues impacting victims of crime. This is one of many Mutual Assistance Associations nationwide, all of which serve Asian communities. These panels are not part of the traditional, mainstream response system, but they were created out of a cultural need to settle community differences within the community.

Contact is the Hmong Assistance Association, (503) 503-544-6743, [hmongoregon@hotmail.com](mailto:hmongoregon@hotmail.com).

**SAWERA** is a grassroots, non-profit, volunteer organization that was formed in Oregon in 1997 to serve South Asian women and children victims of domestic violence through education, advocacy, empowerment and solidarity. The twin goals are to provide direct services to victims, and to conduct outreach and education in South Asian communities in the greater Portland area and beyond. SAWERA supports and publicizes women's organizations in South Asia whose main goals are to empower women. They also give support to grassroots women's movements in countries of origin.

Contact: (503) 641-2425, <http://www.sawera.org/>

### - Sexual assault -

**The Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC)** in Portland is open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Volunteers are on call to provide advocacy to those in need. An extensive training program prepares volunteer advocates to provide crisis intervention and support services. Advocates are available to support sexual assault survivors at the hospital through the evidence exam, the law enforcement interview, and at any legal proceeding. SARC ensures that victims receive the information they need, are listened to, and are treated with sensitivity, respect and dignity. Advocates can also help support family members and loved ones. Advocates offer emotional support and information on the survivors' rights and choices.

Contact: (503) 384-0480, [sarc@teleport.com](mailto:sarc@teleport.com).

### - System improvement -

**Jacksonville Victim Services Center** in Jacksonville, Florida, was established in 1991 as the first freestanding facility for comprehensive crime victims' services in the country. The mission of the Center is to provide crime victims, survivors, and their families with counseling for mental, emotional, and physical trauma resulting from criminal victimization. The city and local

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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contributors provide the \$900,000 yearly budget. The Center screens 2,300 police reports monthly for appropriate outreach work with 1,400 victims. The City's crime victims were awarded over \$525,000 in compensation in 1991.

Contact: (904) 630-6300 (Voice), 1-888-886-3015 : 24 Hr., [mholley@coj.net](mailto:mholley@coj.net)

### - Offender accountability -

**VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday)** is a free, anonymous, computer-based system that uses state-of-the-art technology and a centralized call center to connect victims and concerned citizens with vital offender information through a 24-hour-a-day toll-free telephone hotline. The program is a joint effort between the Oregon Department of Justice and the Oregon Department of Corrections and in cooperation with the Oregon State Sheriffs Association and the Oregon Youth Authority.

Victims of crime and concerned citizens who call the VINE hotline are able to access a database containing information on over 41,000 offenders in Oregon. By entering the name or state identification number of an offender, callers can access the following information:

- Name of the offender
- Offender state identification number
- Current offender and probationer custody status
- Location of offender: institution name or community corrections location
- Scheduled release date
- Community supervision expiration date

Crime victims and concerned citizens may also register for the VINE notification program. VINE automatically calls registered participants if there is a change in the status of an offender. The triggers for notification include lawful release, escape, work release, parole hearings and sixteen other scenarios.

The toll-free VINE phone number is 1-877-OR-4-VINE (1-877-674-8463) and the service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in both English and Spanish.

CONTACT: Perrin Damon, Department of Corrections, (503) 945-0925, Department of Justice, (503) 378-6002, <http://www.doj.state.or.us/>

**Victim/offender dialogue** is a process that provides interested victims an opportunity to meet their offender, in a safe and structured setting, and engage in a discussion of the crime. With the assistance of a trained mediator, the victim is able to tell the offender about the crime's physical, emotional, and financial impact; to receive answers to lingering questions about the crime and the offender; and to be directly involved in developing a restitution plan for the offender to pay back his or her financial debt.

Once a restitution contract is determined, the offender can fulfill the agreement by performing the contract terms successfully. The criminal justice system has an effective tool with which to respond to the needs of victims and the community. Victim and offender mediation focuses the offender's attention on the values at stake and offers the offender the opportunity to take responsibility for the crime. As volunteer mediators in community victim offender mediation

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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programs, citizens are involved in reducing crime and in helping to keep their community safe and livable.

Contact: Victim Offender Mediation Association (VOMA) (612) 874-0570,  
[voma@voma.org](mailto:voma@voma.org)

## **-Other programs mentioned by respondents-**

Additional programs that participants in this needs assessment told us about included:

- Baker County's coordinated community response team
- Center for Victims' Services in Washington County
- Women's Crisis Service in Grants Pass
- Portland Police Crisis Response Team
- Center for Health in Lincoln County (pool of volunteers working with Latino population)
- Battered Women's Services Program in Lincoln County (shelter and legal advocacy)
- Lane County Restitution Specialist (access to defendant financial information)
- Linn County Mediation Program (inexpensive, volunteer-based)

## **Innovative national program models**

An Internet and literature search (including the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, *New Directions from the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*) was done to identify program models that address "themes" found in this report. The following examples will help readers learn about various innovative efforts around the country. The descriptions briefly highlight these efforts.

### **- Linkages and partnerships -**

In Tennessee, the **Metropolitan Nashville Police Department** created a Victim Intervention Program in 1975. The unit is now staffed by mental health counselors and provides free crisis intervention and ongoing counseling for any victim of a violent or other crime that has affected an individual emotionally. In 1994, the department expanded its assistance to victims by creating a separate Domestic Violence Intervention Division that coordinated its response with the prosecutor's office. This is the largest program of its kind in the nation. Domestic violence homicides have been reduced by over 40 percent in two years.

The Largo Police Department in Florida collaborates with the state attorney's office and with the local domestic violence shelter to enhance services to victims and to improve the prosecution rate of domestic violence cases. One of the unit's most innovative services is faxing copies of police reports to the local shelter, which then calls victims to offer assistance.

### **- Immediate and ongoing victim support -**

**Midwest Leadership Through Education and Advocacy for the Deaf (LEAD)** in Missouri provides people who are deaf and hard of hearing with comprehensive support and leadership through education and research. With support from VOCA, the Midwest LEAD Institute provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services to deaf victims of domestic violence.

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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**Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women** uses coalition building as an effective tool for dealing with older battered women. Since older women seldom use shelters, many service providers in Minnesota began providing hotel rooms and private "safe homes" for older battered women. As a result, providers are seeing larger numbers of these victims coming forward and seeking help.

**The Anti-Violence Partnership of Philadelphia** has developed, with Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) funding, a multidisciplinary training curriculum to foster more consistency in services for survivors of homicide victims. The curriculum addresses the unique psychological and emotional impact of homicide on survivors and presents a new approach to assisting them.

A promising practice initiated in 1997 by the **Missouri Department of Corrections** involves a partnership with the Missouri Organization for Victim Assistance. The two organizations have a network of volunteer advocates trained to accompany victims to parole hearings.

### - Offender accountability -

**Minnesota Restorative Justice Initiative** advocates adoption of restorative justice principles and has established a department unit that supports implementation of restorative justice concepts throughout the state. This statewide effort involves all aspects of the community including schools, churches, courts, corrections and law enforcement agencies and citizens. The initiative provides technical assistance in designing and implementing applications of restorative justice.

**The Mennonite-based Victim Offender Reconciliation Program** in Clovis, California, offers victim-offender dialogue services that are used widely in other communities of faith to help individuals start the recovery process in the aftermath of victimization. The program is sponsored by 42 churches and provides training to Christian and Jewish communities.

**A pilot program in New Jersey** has been initiated to improve the rate of offender payment of court-ordered fines, restitution, and community service. By using a consistent sanctioning policy toward sentence violators and a centralized bench warrant process before one judicial officer in the Superior Court, the project has produced immediate significant results.

In **Summit County, Colorado**, offenders who owe more than \$2,000 in restitution are required, as a condition of probation, to submit their income tax returns to their probation officers. If the offender is entitled to a tax refund, the probation officer can require the offender to pay that amount toward the restitution obligation.

**Neighborhood Accountability Boards** are in communities across Florida. The Boards involve community sanctioning and interventions that share a focus on bringing victims, juvenile offenders and community members together to develop policies aimed at repairing the harm caused by crime. NABs are often known as restorative boards. They are composed of local citizens, with judicial oversight, seeking to provide community-sanctioning response to juvenile crime.

### - Funding -

Some Departments of Corrections and jails utilize funds from **inmate telephone systems** to pay wholly or partially for the costs of automated victim notification.

## 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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**Countrywide Moving and Storage**, an independent small business in Texas, provides free moving and storage to help victims move out of an abusive home and resettle in a safer place.

Many **cellular phone companies** donate phones programmed to call 911 to stalking victims and victims of domestic violence. Local law enforcement and domestic violence shelters coordinate these projects. Communications companies have also donated voice mailboxes for women in abusive situations to receive messages from family members, advocates, the police, and their attorneys.

### - Financial assistance and compensation -

**Delaware** has undertaken a program to develop a special fund that uses VOCA victim assistance dollars to meet the emergency needs of crime victims when local and state resources and private insurance are not available. Up to \$2,500 is available for services such as crisis intervention, food, temporary shelter, transportation to services and lock replacement. Financing comes from a VOCA assistance grant awarded to the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit.

**Vermont's** program has established interagency agreements with sexual assault task forces located within law enforcement agencies to expedite emergency financial assistance to sexual assault victims. Law enforcement officers have been trained to provide enough documentation about the victimization to the compensation program so that an emergency award can be made within a few days.

**Arkansas'** compensation program distributes notification cards to crime victim service providers, law enforcement officials, and the state's victim/witness coordinators explaining how to help crime victims file a claim. The program's staff prepare monthly news releases with information about the compensation program and the awards that have been made to residents of that county. The program's Smart Choices, Better Chances initiative, funded by an education grant from the U.S. Attorney General's Office, educates elementary school students about juvenile violence and the state's crime victims' compensation program.

**Iowa** uses computer software to provide the crime victims' services director with an efficient way to track every claim from the moment the victim calls or writes to the office for assistance. The database can be used to generate correspondence with the victim, the DA, the courts, probation, and service providers. New Mexico has a similar system.

In **Monroe, Washington**, the police department serves as a central distribution point for emergency victim assistance funds available from community resources. The police department uses short, simple application forms so victims can apply as quickly as possible for assistance, which is financed by groups such as the United Way, the Salvation Army, and the Safeway Corporation.

### - System improvements -

**Victim Services in New York City** is exploring the use of the Internet to provide services for crime victims. Victim Services operates two websites, both designed for Internet surfers seeking help. The organization has received inquiries on services from around the country, which it answers via email. Victim Services provides referrals to local resources and offers encouragement for those taking first steps to continue seeking help.

# 2002 OREGON CRIME VICTIMS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## - Communication and information -

In **Howard County, Maryland**, and other jurisdictions, police officers give a checklist to survivors that helps them obtain death certificates, apply for financial assistance and other benefits, choose a funeral home, and consider other important services. This information helps survivors who have no idea what to do after a loved one has died by giving them a tool to navigate a legal system they may find confusing and overwhelming when overcome with grief.

In **South Carolina**, the Victim Assistance Network uses VOCA funds to produce an outstanding 30-minute film that depicts a "walk through the criminal justice system" for victims of crime. Beginning with law enforcement and culminating with corrections and parole, the speakers on the video provide simple, specific information about victims' rights and services.

## - Laws and policies -

The **National Center for Victims of Crime** in Arlington, Virginia has a legislative database with 27,000 victims' rights statutes.

The **Connecticut Legislature** passed a compromise gun-control measure (SB 1402) that extends a ban on assault weapons, bans certain types of high-powered ammunition, and strengthens gun seizure rules in cases where restraining orders have been issued. The law requires those under restraining orders and orders of protection in domestic violence cases to give up their guns. The change was a response to a murder in 2000 of elderly women by her ex-husband, who was under a restraining order.

In **Arizona**, the Greeting in Telephone Information and Payment System (TIPS) has the wording "computer based." This allows for prosecution of telephone scams under the computer fraud rather than fraudulent schemes provisions of the Arizona Revised Statutes. The first prosecution using that statute resulted in a sentence of 3.5 years in the state prison.