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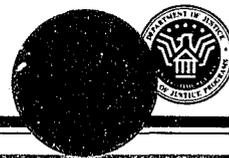
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OVC BULLETIN

February 1992

Victim Programs To Serve Native Americans

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ACQUISITION

Crime rates indicate that almost everyone will be a victim of crime during his or her lifetime—many of us will be victimized more than once (see, *Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1988). Preliminary statistics for 1990 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics stated that nearly 6 million people were victims of violent crimes, including rape, robbery, and simple and aggravated assault. Providing services to these victims is an ongoing challenge confronting the Nation and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) in its role as the Federal focal point for crime victims' issues. Special problems and challenges are posed for Native American victims. See separate box.

During the past 10 years, a new emphasis has been placed on securing crime victims' rights. National attention was first directed to victims in 1981 when President Reagan appointed the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime. The task force conducted the first comprehensive analysis of the plight of crime victims and witnesses, and found that victims were often victimized twice—first, by the crime

This *Bulletin*, the first to focus on programs specifically targeted toward Native American victims of crime, was written by Susan Shriner, a program specialist with the Office for Victims of Crime's Federal Crime Victims Division.

itself, then by the criminal justice system. The *President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, Final Report*, released in December 1982, continues to serve as a blueprint for how the criminal justice system should improve its response to crime victims.

Legislative changes for victims

Since the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime published its final report, significant legislative efforts have been undertaken to help victims of

crime. The first piece of landmark legislation, the Federal Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-291), recognized the important role of crime victims and witnesses in the criminal justice process and continues to ensure that the Federal Government will provide victim-witness assistance and model legislation for State and local governments. The Act also identified rights for victims of Federal crimes.

The Crime Control Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-647) strengthened the Victim and Witness Act by mandating services

FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 1987, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) became aware that victim services were virtually unavailable for Native American crime victims. U.S. Attorneys, who were prosecuting cases involving violent crime, reported that "on-reservation" assistance did not exist for Native American crime victims. Since 1987, OVC has designated the provision of victim services to Native Americans as an Office priority. Attention to this priority has resulted in the establishment of many specific program initiatives, including (1) an emergency fund that U.S. Attorneys can access to provide services to victims involved in Federal prosecutions, (2) a discretionary grant program to fund victim assistance programs in remote areas of Indian reservations under Federal jurisdiction, (3) the Children's Justice Act

Program for Native Americans to improve the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases involving Native Americans, and (4) specialized training opportunities for victim assistance providers. OVC also has encouraged State assistance and compensation programs to improve their response to the needs of Native American crime victims.

It is with pleasure that OVC is taking this opportunity, through its first *OVC Bulletin* publication, to describe its programs that serve Native American crime victims, and the impact the programs are having in Indian Country.

Brenda G. Meister
Acting Director

and rights that were to be accorded to all crime victims by employees of the Federal criminal justice system engaged in the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. These rights and protections were listed under Title V of the Act that, in effect, created a Federal Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and codified the services that are to be made available.

The 1990 Crime Control Act also includes provisions that enable Federal officials to adjust Federal court proceedings to the needs and abilities of child victims and witnesses. Additionally, certain professionals who work on Federal lands, including Indian reservations, are now required to report suspected child abuse.

The Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-630) stressed the protection of Indian child abuse victims by requiring both prompt reporting of suspected child abuse in Indian Country and background checks for tribal and Federal employees who have regular contact with children.

Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982

Among the major provisions in the Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982 are the following:

- Guidelines for ensuring the fair treatment of victims and witnesses in the Federal criminal justice system.
- Victim impact statements to be contained in presentence reports.
- Criminal penalties protecting victims and witnesses from intimidation or retaliation, including provisions for civil restraining orders.
- Restitution for victims.
- Consideration of victims' situations in bail determinations.

The Act also authorized the Indian Child Abuse Treatment grant program and the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention program. Funds for these programs have not yet been appropriated.

The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) (Public Law 98-473) is the most significant piece of Federal legislation for crime victims enacted to date. VOCA substantially contributed to the development and expansion of crime victim assistance and compensation programs across the United States by establishing an innovative funding mechanism that takes money away from convicted Federal criminals to support the provision of services to crime victims. The Crime Victims Fund (the Fund), which is financed by Federal criminals and not taxpayers, is derived from criminal fines, penalties, and bond forfeitures. Congress directed OVC, which it established under the terms of VOCA, to distribute the Fund proceeds principally to States and U.S. Territories so that a network of responsive victim assistance and compensation services would be immediately accessible for victims throughout the country.

Since the establishment of the Fund, more than \$700 million has been collected from Federal criminals and applied to the rehabilitation, recovery, and compensation of innocent crime victims. In fiscal year 1992, OVC will award more than \$127 million in grants to support the provision of compensation benefits and assistance services to victims. By law, moneys deposited into the Fund are used, in large part, to make awards to States and territories through formula and discretionary grant programs.

A large percentage of moneys deposited into the Crime Victims Fund are distributed to State grantees through formula grants. The State crime victim compensation programs that receive VOCA funds utilize State and Federal dollars to offset financial losses incurred by victims as a direct result of crime. Payments are made for such items as medical expenses, mental health coun-

seling, lost wages, and funeral expenses attributable to deaths resulting from violent crimes. State agencies designated by the Governor to receive VOCA assistance grants provide such services as rape crisis counseling and other support services, child abuse treatment, shelter for battered women, support groups for victims, and prosecutor-based victim assistance services.

A comparatively small portion of the Fund is available exclusively for the support of services to victims of Federal crimes and for training and technical assistance projects for eligible victim assistance programs. It has been this comparatively small portion of the Fund, amounting to about \$1,250,000 annually, which has been used by OVC to develop victim assistance services for victims of Federal crimes in Indian Country. By fiscal year 1993, up to \$2,500,000 annually could be available depending on the amount collected in the Fund the preceding year.

The award of discretionary grant funds in Indian Country has been undertaken in order to cultivate victim services for Native Americans who previously had no access or minimal access to such services. It has also been undertaken to enhance Indian service providers' eligibility for State assistance subgrant awards, thereby bringing Native American assistance providers within the formula grant network serving the remainder of the country.

Another comparatively small portion of the Crime Victims Fund, amounting to \$9,325,000, is available annually to implement the Children's Justice Act (CJA), a grant program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the purpose of improving the way that child abuse cases are investigated and prosecuted. However, up to \$675,000 of this amount is set aside to allow OVC to administer CJA grants for Native Americans. These grants are made for the purpose of assisting Native American tribes in developing and operating programs designed to improve the handling of child abuse cases in Indian Country.

Native American victims

There are about 500 federally recognized tribes, each of which represents a unique combination of tradition, heritage, and culture. Indian reservations can be found high on the mesas or at the bottom of canyons, accessible only by helicopter, pack mule, or hours of climbing and hiking.

Access to victim-related services is often difficult, if not impossible. Tribal police, schools, and hospitals are often hundreds of miles from many of the people who need and use them. Available health and mental health services are rudimentary and often do not include staff trained in addressing the needs of crime victims. Therapy for a sexually abused child or a rape victim is seldom available.

In these remote areas, justice for crime victims is rare, public transportation does not exist, highways are few, and law enforcement is not a phone call, but hours or days away. As the events described in the Native American victim scenario illustrate, there are some unique difficulties in obtaining victim services in Indian Country.

Other significant factors that inhibit Indian victims from receiving adequate services include the limited number of law enforcement officers and the high number and complex nature of crimes

committed in Indian Country. Approximately 20,000 child abuse complaints were reported to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1986. Since 1987, there have been 11 multiple-victim child molestation cases in boarding and day schools in Arizona alone. These incidents have resulted in the victimization of over 1,000 children. In fiscal year 1990, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) initiated 975 investigations involving violent crimes on Indian reservations.

Many violent crimes in Indian Country involve domestic violence and child abuse. These crimes are inherently problematic because there is often reluctance on the part of victims to take action against the perpetrators. One reason for this reluctance is that the reporting of domestic violence may be considered by family members as a betrayal; strong kinship ties often exist, and there may be a taboo on seeking help outside the family unit. Additionally, language can be a barrier that prevents or impedes victims from seeking assistance.

The 1980's brought sweeping changes in the criminal justice system's response to crime victims. VOCA funding allowed the States to expand and improve assistance services nationwide, and by 1988 there were thousands of programs providing a wide variety of services to help crime victims throughout the United States. In contrast, victim service programs were virtually nonexistent on Indian reservations. Believing that

Native American crime victims were equally in need of the kind of assistance now available in the cities and towns of America, OVC designated the development of victim services for Native Americans as a major program priority.

OVC involvement in Indian Country

When several multiple-victim cases involving child sexual abuse were discovered on Arizona reservations in 1987 and 1988, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona submitted special requests to OVC to obtain immediate victim assistance for over 400 child victims. OVC responded by tapping into the Crime Victims Fund for money to support the provision of short-term emergency treatment to these children and their families. This was the first use of the Fund to finance treatment services for crime victims in Indian Country.

The Federal Crime Victims Emergency Services Fund

OVC has established a special fund, the Federal Crime Victims Emergency Services Fund (the Emergency Fund), to provide emergency assistance to all victims of Federal crime, including Native Americans. Upon request, funds are made available to U.S. Attorneys' offices to address emergencies in which victims involved in Federal prosecutions need services that are unavailable or inaccessible through other sources.

Since the establishment of the Emergency Fund, OVC has approved 87 requests from 25 U.S. Attorneys' offices, making disbursements totaling \$470,287. Almost two-thirds of this amount has been used to provide emergency assistance to Native American crime victims on reservations. For instance, the Emergency Fund was recently used to:

- Initiate 3 months of mental therapy for 20 child sexual abuse victims at the Pine Ridge Reservation Rocky Ford

Native American victim scenario

Mary, a Navajo woman, dropped her husband off at the trading post on the Navajo Reservation so he could unload hay. She drove off to complete another errand and became stuck in mud. As a result, she was late in returning to pick up her husband. In a rage, he hit her repeatedly in front of the children while they were in the trading post parking lot. During the attack, the three young children screamed for him to stop.

Badly beaten, with a severe eye injury, the woman fled and walked for hours in the snow until she came to a home where she was allowed to stay the night. The next day, she set off again until she came to another house where the family had a car and gas and was able to drive her 50 miles to the hospital so she could have her eye treated.

School. Extended treatment is to be funded by local service agencies.

- Allow six children to accompany their family to a trial in Wyoming when it was determined that the children would be in danger if left behind on the reservation.
- Finance a psychological evaluation of and treatment for a 4 1/2-year-old child who was sexually assaulted by her uncle on a Washington reservation.
- Finance emergency transportation expenses for an Arizona victim attending an out-of-state gang-rape trial.
- Finance mental health treatment for child sexual abuse victims in multiple-

Emergency Fund case scenario

The defendant was convicted of rape and carnal knowledge on March 16, 1989. He had sexually abused his 13-year-old stepdaughter for 6 years. As a result of this abuse, the victim gave birth to a baby boy on March 4, 1984.

After the victim cooperated with law enforcement, charges were filed. The victim's family abandoned her, blaming her for all that had happened. At age 19, she had nowhere to turn, no means of support, and no work experience.

Because there were no victim services available on the reservation, the woman was taken to a shelter in Gallup, New Mexico. At this facility, shelter staff agreed to help her apply for other financial assistance, find an apartment, and develop skills necessary to become self-sufficient.

Working with the U.S. Attorney's office in the District of Arizona, the Office for Victims of Crime provided the young woman with living expenses to cover a 2-month adjustment period until she could support herself and her child.

victim cases in Arizona and South Dakota.

In each case, the victim-witness coordinator in the U.S. Attorney's office worked with service providers on the reservations to identify treatment alternatives for the victims and their families. Treatment, services, or both were determined to be unavailable for the victims. Thus, requests for support were approved by OVC.

The Emergency Fund was effective in providing services to individual victims, but it could not establish a network of on-reservation services responsive to the ongoing needs of Native American crime victims. The near absence of on-reservation victim assistance services had to be addressed in order to ensure access by Native American victims to the types of services available in other communities nationwide.

Assistance to Victims of Federal Crime in Indian Country: A grant program

OVC recognized a need for the Federal Government to make an identifiable commitment to Native American crime victims. Consequently, the Office designated the development of victim assistance services for Indians as its highest priority with respect to that portion of the Crime Victims Fund used to support services to Federal crime victims. A new discretionary grant program to initiate the provision of victim services in Indian Country was announced in July 1988. Funding for this grant program, amounting to \$1,800,000 to date, was taken from the Federal crime victims portion of the Fund, and was made available to States containing areas of Indian Country where the Federal Government has authority to investigate and prosecute crimes. An additional \$583,000 will be available in fiscal year 1992.

Applications for the discretionary funds were solicited and reviewed through a

First Year (1988) Indian Grants	
Arizona	\$250,500
Michigan	90,500
North Dakota	100,500
Oregon	35,500
South Dakota	195,500
Utah	50,000
Washington	170,600
Wisconsin	35,500
Wyoming	75,500

Second Year (1989) Indian Grants	
Idaho	\$115,500
Kansas	40,500
Minnesota	40,500
Montana	200,500
Nevada	105,500
New Mexico	200,500

competitive grant award process. The selected State grantees were required to subgrant the funds to Indian tribes or organizations that, in return, were required to establish services for victims of crime in their own communities. On November 8, 1988, OVC made awards totaling over \$1 million to nine States. These States subsequently made 29 subgrant awards to Indian tribes and Indian organizations to support a variety of victim assistance services.

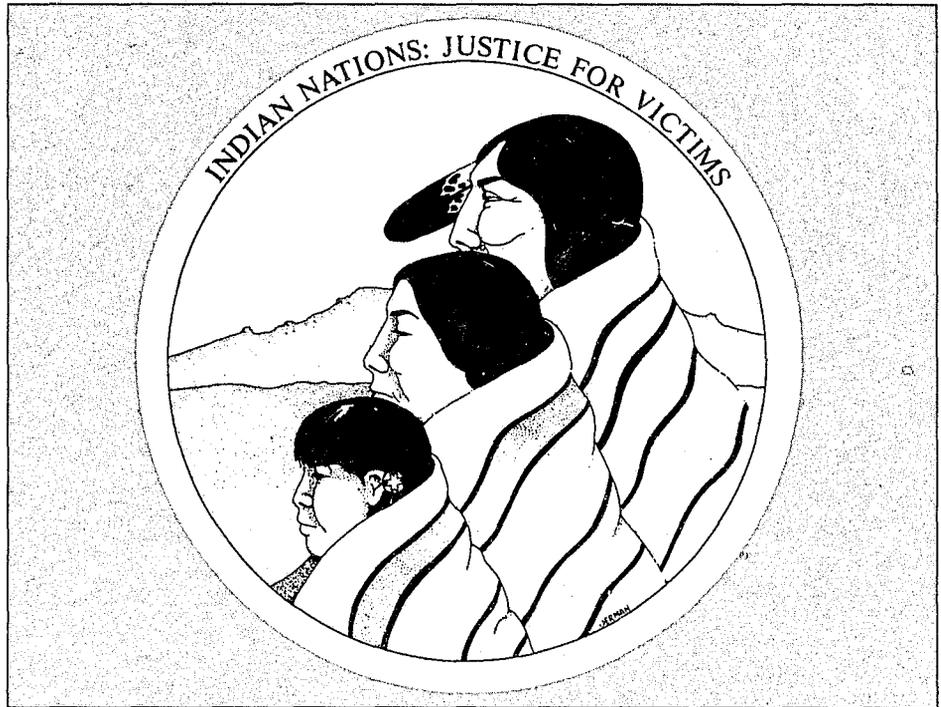
Because of the overwhelming tribal interest in developing victim services programs on the reservations, OVC made another \$700,000 available to other States. On November 1, 1989, an additional 6 States were awarded the funding, and these grantees made 23 subgrant awards to Indian tribes and organizations providing on-reservation services.

To date, over 52 subgrants have been made to Indian tribes and organizations. Some of the Indian programs are improving the handling of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse cases. For example, the Hopi Tribe is expanding treatment programs for child sexual abuse victims and their families; the Crow-Creek Reservation in South Dakota provides comprehensive crisis intervention services; the Lower Brule Reservation has a volunteer rape crisis team; volunteers from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Oregon, program accompany tribal police on an on-call basis; and the Menominee Tribe Victim Assistance Program was the first—and remains the only—police-based victim assistance program in the State of Wisconsin.

The services provided are also becoming more sophisticated. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs now routinely uses victim impact statements from child victims in tribal court; other Native American programs support domestic violence shelters, law enforcement training, emergency transportation, child care, and court advocacy.

With the first nine grants, progress has already been recognized. Tribes are beginning to see the victim assistance program as a necessary and integral part of their communities. Particular examples of expanded victim services include the following:

- Tribal dollars are now being contributed to support victim services programs.
- On-reservation victim assistance programs have provided a forum for improved communication between tribal and State governments. For example, South Dakota subgrant contracts to Indian tribes had formerly contained language that, according to tribal leaders, disregarded aspects of tribal sovereignty. As a result of constructive discussions among State and tribal leaders, compromises were reached, and tribal contract revisions were adopted. The Governor of South Dakota also designated 1990 as a year of greater cooperation between the tribes and the



State and has pledged State support for the Indian victim assistance programs.

- Programmatic adjustments are being made to address unique tribal needs. For example, Warm Springs has worked with tribal elders and storytellers to record healing stories to be conveyed to sexually abused children.
- The Navajo Victim Assistance Program coordinator briefs FBI, State, and local law enforcement officers on tribal cultural aspects, enabling them to respond sensitively to crime victims and successfully investigate crimes.
- In 1988, the first two tribal victim assistance programs were established in Michigan—there are now six active tribal programs in the State.
- Victim assistance program managers in Oregon, North Dakota, and South Dakota now serve on State victim task force committees.

The reduced number of emergency assistance requests submitted to OVC also is a clear indication of progressive change. Requests from U.S. Attorneys for emergency assistance for Native American victims were reduced from 35

requests, totaling \$211,763 in fiscal year 1989 to 14 requests, totaling \$40,535 in fiscal year 1990. In 1991, 11 requests totaling \$71,930 were approved on behalf of Native American crime victims. The victim-witness coordinators in U.S. Attorneys' offices report that the on-reservation programs are providing their own emergency services for crime victims.

Six of the nine original States that received Assistance to Victims of Federal Crime in Indian Country grants have made State VOCA subgrant awards to on-reservation victim assistance programs.

OVC Indian programs initiatives with States and tribes

VOCA victim assistance

State victim assistance agencies have been encouraged to support on-reservation programs with the funds received through victim assistance formula grant programs. OVC's intent in developing the Assistance to Victims of Federal Crime in Indian Country grant

initiative was not to create a separate system of assistance for Federal crime victims, but to use the special grant program as a way to open the door for Indian Country, so Native Americans eventually would have access to effective, sustained VOCA assistance programs in their communities.

With the 1988 VOCA amendments, States were required to make 10 percent of their subgrant awards to programs that serve previously underserved victims of violent crime, such as victims of drunk drivers or survivors of homicide victims. As part of the effort to make VOCA resources available to Native Americans, OVC also has included Native American crime victims as a category that States may use to meet their underserved victims requirement. In 1990, 12 States responded by listing Native Americans among their underserved victim populations.

As a result of OVC's encouragement, approximately 30 additional on-reservation assistance programs are now supported by State victim assistance agencies through the VOCA victim assistance grant program.

State victim compensation

Until 1988, very few Native Americans knew that compensation programs were available to them. This lack of familiarity persisted even though eligible State compensation programs, which receive Federal funds, must compensate victims of Federal crime on the same basis as they compensate victims of State crimes.

OVC has worked with the National Organization of Crime Victims Compensation Boards to initiate a Native American outreach effort to inform victims of crime on Indian reservations about compensation programs. Native American victims are gradually becoming aware of these benefits. In 1990, to promote Native American access to compensation, OVC developed a new condition for eligibility for a crime victims compensation grant: that State applicants initiate specific efforts to inform on-reservation victims about the

State's crime compensation program and the availability of compensation to all victims of violent crime, regardless of where the crimes are committed.

It is critical that victim service providers and law enforcement officials know about their local compensation programs. Crime victims suffer immeasurably, and financial assistance can be a lifeline that preserves, for some victims, a measure of stability and dignity. While no amount of money can erase the tragedy and trauma experienced by crime victims, financial redress can be an important first step toward recovery for all crime victims, including Native American victims.

Children's Justice Act Program for Native Americans

In 1988, while Congress was considering the reauthorization of the Victims of Crime Act, the Department of Justice successfully proposed an amendment to

reduce the amount of CJA funds available to the States through HHS. This was proposed to allow Indian tribes to participate in the grant program. As a result of the amendment, \$675,000 annually is now available to Native Americans to (1) promote systemic improvements in the way child abuse cases are investigated and prosecuted in Indian Country and (2) ensure that child victims are treated in a manner that prevents or limits the onset of additional trauma.

In 1989, OVC published a *Federal Register* notice announcing the availability of CJA for Native Americans grant funds, through a competitive, discretionary grant award process, for federally recognized Indian tribes. In the announcement, OVC requested that tribes design model programs to foster greater cooperation among law enforcement officers, prosecutors, mental health providers, social service providers, and victim-witness advocates.

Children's Justice Act for Native Americans Funding (1989)	
Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes (Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Montana)	\$50,000
Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma	52,000
Crow-Creek Sioux Tribe (Crow-Creek Reservation, South Dakota)	41,000
Gila River Indian Community (Gila River Indian Reservation, Arizona)	43,000
Hopi Tribe (Hopi Reservation, Arizona)	45,000
Mississippi Band of Choctaw (Choctaw Reservation, Mississippi)	40,000
Nez Perce Tribe (Nez Perce Reservation, Idaho)	50,000
Ogala Sioux Tribe (Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota)	60,000
Pueblo of Santa Clara, New Mexico	30,000
The South Puget Sound Intertribal Agency/Intertribal Family Services (on behalf of the Chehalis, Skokomish, Squaxin Island, Quileuta, Jamestown Klallam, Makah, Lower Elwha, and Shoalwater Bay Tribes of Washington)	55,000
	<u>\$466,000</u>

Forty-six applications were received, and on February 6, 1990, the first 10 CJA for Native Americans grants were awarded. Each of the funded projects is unique in that each addresses the specific needs and circumstances of the tribe benefiting from the grant. These projects will result in:

- The creation of special prosecution units.
- Training for multidisciplinary teams.
- Revisions of tribal codes to address child abuse matters.
- Child advocacy services for children involved in court processes.
- Protocols for reporting, investigating, prosecuting, and treating child sexual abuse cases.
- Improved case management and treatment services.

In November 1990, an additional nine CJA for Native Americans grants were awarded directly to tribes.

In 1991, continuation grants were awarded to enable tribes to stabilize the improvements and ensure that the positive changes were integrated into the tribes' systems and procedures for handling serious cases of child abuse. Total funding for this program to date amounts to \$2,151,826 (including continuations, training, and technical assistance).

Training and technical assistance

To improve the quality of the response to crime victims in Indian Country, OVC has sponsored a number of training opportunities for service providers and tribal and Federal officials responsible for investigating and prosecuting violent crimes in Indian Country. For 3 years, OVC has financed a daylong specialized training on the handling, investigation, and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases in the Federal system. This training is held in conjunction

Children's Justice Act for Native Americans Funding (1990)	
Blackfeet Tribal Business Council (Blackfeet Nation, Browning, Montana)	\$84,625
Bristol Bay Native Association (Dillingham, Alaska)	84,486
Grand Portage Reservation (Grand Portage, Minnesota)	341,001
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa (Suttons Bay, Michigan)	55,214
Hannahville Indian Community (Wilson, Michigan)	27,210
Menominee Indian Tribe (Keshena, Wisconsin)	49,027
Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Rosebud, South Dakota)	56,833
Salt River Pima-Maricopa (Scottsdale, Arizona)	63,759
Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California (Garnerville, Nevada)	65,317
	\$517,472

with the National Symposium on Child Sexual Abuse in Huntsville, Alabama, and presents state-of-the-art information for Federal officials, law enforcement officers, medical personnel, victim advocates, mental health providers, and social service professionals. Persons in attendance have included Bureau of Indian Affairs criminal investigators, FBI special agents, other Federal and tribal law enforcement officers, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, victim-witness coordinators from U.S. Attorneys' offices, and tribal representatives who have received CJA for Native Americans grant funds. The purpose of the training has been to build skills and to promote an interdisciplinary approach to coordinating all aspects of the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child victims. Such coordination minimizes trauma and improves assistance to victims.

One OVC-sponsored training conference, "Child Sexual Exploitation: Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Initiatives," was held in January 1990 in Phoenix, Arizona. Those in attendance included teams of Federal investigators, prosecu-

tors, and service providers who must address the problems of child pornography, child sexual exploitation, and multiple-victim cases in Indian Country. Scholarships were provided for 50 Native American participants.

Through an interagency agreement with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, OVC has sponsored training events that have involved Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement personnel and focused on the treatment of crime victims, including responding to child abuse and family violence. Seven training sessions have been held in Phoenix, Arizona; Aberdeen, South Dakota; Billings, Montana; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Warm Springs Indian Reservation, Oregon; Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Window Rock, Arizona.

Since 1988, OVC has sponsored an annual national conference for Native Americans, "Indian Nations: Justice for Victims of Crime." The Rapid City, South Dakota, conference in 1988; the Phoenix, Arizona, conference in 1989; and the 1990 conference in Portland, Oregon, brought together more than 700

Native American victims of crime, victim advocates, and service providers from a variety of agencies and disciplines, including the mental health, social services, and criminal justice professions. These conferences provided another opportunity for an interdisciplinary gathering of professionals to identify and address the needs of crime victims in Indian Country. The next conference will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in April 1992.

In 1990, OVC announced the award of two new competitive grants to provide training and technical assistance to Indian victim assistance programs. Two Native American nonprofit organizations have provided regional training seminars and onsite technical assistance visits to victim assistance programs funded by OVC under the Assistance to Victims of Federal Crime in Indian Country grant program and the CJA for Native Americans grant program. Staff at 72 programs have received the necessary training and technical assistance to start and successfully operate their new programs.

Summary

OVC is committed to improving the provision of victim assistance services

to Native Americans. Throughout the last 5 years, OVC has made the initiation and development of these services the highest funding priority for that percentage of the Crime Victims Fund available for training, technical assistance, and services to victims of Federal crime. The concentrated effort in this area grew out of OVC's initial attempts to address the needs of Native American victims through providing emergency services to multiple-victims of child sexual abuse. However, the funding effort soon expanded into many other areas.

OVC activities in Indian Country have included (1) the provision of emergency services for Native American crime victims; (2) establishment of victim assistance programs on reservations; (3) establishment of programs to improve the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases in Indian country; (4) training and technical assistance for a variety of professionals who have responsibility for the identification, investigation, and prosecution of crimes, and the treatment of victims in Indian Country; (5) inclusion of Native Americans as a category of victims that States may use in meeting their underserved requirement in VOCA victim assistance programs; and (6) the dissemination of information about the

availability of crime victim compensation programs.

These efforts in Indian Country are but small steps toward improving a serious situation involving a near absence of victim services. There is a long way to go before the basic intent of the Victims of Crime Act will be fulfilled and all crime victims in this country—regardless of where they live—have access to the compassionate support and responsive assistance needed to recover from the demoralizing and sometimes devastating effects of crime.

For additional copies of this *Bulletin* or more information on Native American victims, Contact OVC's National Victims Resource Center at 1-800-627-6872.

The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, establishes the policies and priorities, and manages and coordinates the activities of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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