



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, OCT. 1, 2018

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS MORE THAN \$600,000 TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF MASS VIOLENCE

WASHINGTON – In the Justice Department’s continuing efforts to support victims of mass violence, the Office of Justice Programs’ Office for Victims of Crime today announced two Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) grants totaling more than \$600,000 to help victims, family members and first responders deal with the after-effects of two deadly incidents in Colorado and Washington State.

“We have seen it too often – the lives of innocent people cut short or changed forever in an instant, families left to pick up the pieces and survivors forced to cope with devastating injuries and the far-reaching effects of trauma,” said OJP Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth. “We offer not only our thoughts and prayers, but our material support, to the victims and survivors of these unspeakable attacks and to the brave public safety professionals who selflessly responded that day.”

On Sept. 23, 2016, a gunman entered the Macy’s department store at the Cascade Mall in Burlington, Washington, and began indiscriminately shooting, leaving four women and one man dead, and numerous employees and customers traumatized. The following day, Arcan Cetin, 20, was arrested and he later confessed to the shooting. Five months later, Cetin committed suicide by hanging himself in his jail cell.

The Washington Department of Commerce’s Office of Crime Victims Advocacy will receive \$185,258, to reimburse the agency for their victim crisis response and vital services rendered after the incident. The funding also will provide important training and support services for first responders and other victims impacted by the shooting to help them heal.

The other mass violence incident occurred on Nov. 1, 2017, when a man entered a Walmart Supercenter in Thornton, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, and shot and killed three people and terrorized 179 customers and 63 employees. Less than two hours later, police apprehended Scott Ostrem, 47, and he was charged with six counts of first-degree murder and attempted murder; a trial is set to begin in January 2019.

Colorado’s 17th Judicial District Attorney’s Office will receive \$423,414 to reimburse them for crisis response services they provided following the incident. The funding will also be essential to offer additional resources for victims, first responders and the community, while also supporting the victims during the upcoming trial.

AEAP is designed to supplement the available resources and services of entities responding to acts of terrorism or criminal mass violence to ensure there are sufficient resources for these victims as well as victims of other crimes. OVC works extensively with prospective AEAP grantees (including sending expert consultants as needed to the impacted jurisdictions) to identify victim resources, assess victim needs and identify gaps in services, facilitate meetings among responding organizations, hold victim forums, collect budget data, develop response strategies, and/or weigh the jurisdiction's ability to support victims through current and ancillary funding sources, which may take a significant amount of time as victims' needs evolve over time.

“Mass violence leaves in its wake profound loss, serious physical wounds and deep emotional scars that can significantly affect the survivors, the first responders, as well as citizens in the community,” said OVC Director Darlene Hutchinson. “My hope is that OVC’s funding and various services will provide a measure of comfort and support to the survivors of these horrible tragedies.”

For more information about AEAP, please visit: <https://www.ovc.gov/AEAP/>

The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP and its components can be found at: www.ojp.gov.

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