



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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DOJ's OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARDS FUNDS
TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF CHURCH SHOOTING
IN SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, TX

WASHINGTON, DC – The Office for Victims of Crime of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs today announced a \$183,717 Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program grant to assist victims of the 2017 shooting at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

On November 5, 2017, 26 people were fatally shot and 20 others were wounded when an assailant opened fire on worshipers at the church in rural Sutherland Springs, Texas. The gunman fled the scene and was later found dead.

"We try in vain to express our sympathy for the survivors of this horrific tragedy, but simultaneously we know the victims need tangible support. The Department of Justice and OVC are eager to do all we can to help this community as they continue to heal," said OVC Director Darlene Hutchinson. "While it's been two years since this tragedy, we know the victims still have significant needs and will in the years to come. Since the days immediately following the shooting, OVC and our partners have been assisting Sutherland Springs, and we'll continue to stand with them."

OVC's AEAP grant is intended to provide supplemental emergency and longer-term support to victims in jurisdictions where an incident of criminal mass violence or domestic terrorism has occurred. OVC awards this funding after local and state authorities have determined the costs associated with responding and have submitted a request for assistance; it is in addition to the millions of dollars that OVC provides to each state annually for victim assistance programs and crime victim compensation. In March 2018, Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced the release of more than \$2.3 million in Victims of Crime Act funding (previously provided by OVC) to support future recovery efforts in the Sutherland Springs community. This week's grant will reimburse victim assistance costs incurred by the Bexar County's Medical Examiner's Office, and will fund services provided by the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas, and the Ecumenical Center, which has been providing crisis response and support services to victims as they continue to heal and cope with re-traumatization.

Since 1995, OVC has provided AEAP funding in response to incidents of mass violence – from the Boston Marathon bombing to the Pulse Nightclub shooting to the Las Vegas concert shooting. AEAP grants are funded from the Crime Victims Fund, which is financed by fines and

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penalties paid by convicted federal offenders, not from tax dollars.

For more information on this grant program, visit <https://www.ovc.gov/AEAP/>.

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov

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