



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARDS FUNDS TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF MASS SHOOTING AT TREE OF LIFE SYNAGOGUE**

WASHINGTON, DC – The Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime, a division of the Office of Justice Programs, today announced a \$3,863,606 Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program grant to assist victims of the 2018 mass shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

On October 27, 2018, 11 people were killed and seven others, including five police officers, were injured in a shooting while Shabbat morning services were being held. In total, 31 people in the building at the time of the shooting were directly impacted by this crime and hundreds more, including family members and first responders, were adversely affected.

“Eleven innocent people lost their lives and many others were wounded or left deeply scarred by an appalling act of hate committed as they were engaged in the most hallowed act of devotion called for by their faith,” said Katharine T. Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Justice Programs. “The taking of innocent lives in a house of worship is not only a shocking crime, it must be a particular abomination in the eyes of God. We grieve for those who were taken, extend prayers to all who are left to mourn and send our support to those walking the long road of healing and recovery.”

“We empty our hearts to the members of the Tree of Life, Dor Hadash and New Light Jewish congregations in the wake of this incomprehensible tragedy,” said Jessica Hart, Director of the Office for Victims of Crime. “We recognize that programs being supported by this funding are lifelines to this community; and we pray the services and hope they offer will provide an unwavering foundation for those impacted by this act of hate.”

Attorney General William Barr has made fighting anti-semitism a top priority of the Department of Justice. According to the FBI, nearly one in every five hate crime offenses reported to police in 2018 was prompted by religious bias. Religion was second only to race, ethnicity and ancestry bias as a factor in the commission of hate crimes. The Department is fighting this form of intolerance as part of the Attorney General’s strategy for defending religious liberty. Under his direction, the Department of Justice is bringing the full weight of its resources down on those who would violate civil rights laws and put people of faith in jeopardy.

This Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program grant will provide supplemental funds to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency’s Office of Victims’ Services to support victims by providing individual and group mental health counseling, trauma training for therapists and counseling and Stress First Aid for first responders. Funding also supports reimbursement for Family Assistance Center costs, victim-related expenses for the three congregations and the Center for Victims Healing River project, a first-of-its-kind interactive

exhibit and wellness center designed to help individuals heal their past trauma and unlock a better future.

Since 1995, Office for Victims of Crime Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program grants have provided supplemental support to victims and jurisdictions that have experienced incidents of terrorism or mass violence. The funding comes from the Crime Victims Fund that is financed by fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders.

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

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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](http://www.ojp.gov).

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at [www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years](http://www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years).

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