



OVC
Webinar Transcript

**Building Bridges Between Elder Justice Professionals
and VOCA Administrators**

May 27, 2015

Building Bridges Between Elder Justice Professionals and VOCA Administrators

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Welcome

Sanda Pauletti: Good afternoon, everyone. It is 1 o'clock so we will go ahead and get started. I want to thank you for attending today's Webinar on *Building Bridges Between Elder Justice Professionals and VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) Administrators*. My name is Sanda Pauletti, and I am with the Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC). Before we get started with today's presentation, I have just a few housekeeping items to go over.

Technical Overview



- Participants will remain on mute throughout the session. If you have questions, please type them in the Q&A pod.
- Today's session will be recorded and made available on the OVC TTAC Web site.
- If you have technical difficulties during the webinar, please contact Jason Adams at jadams@ovcttac.org.

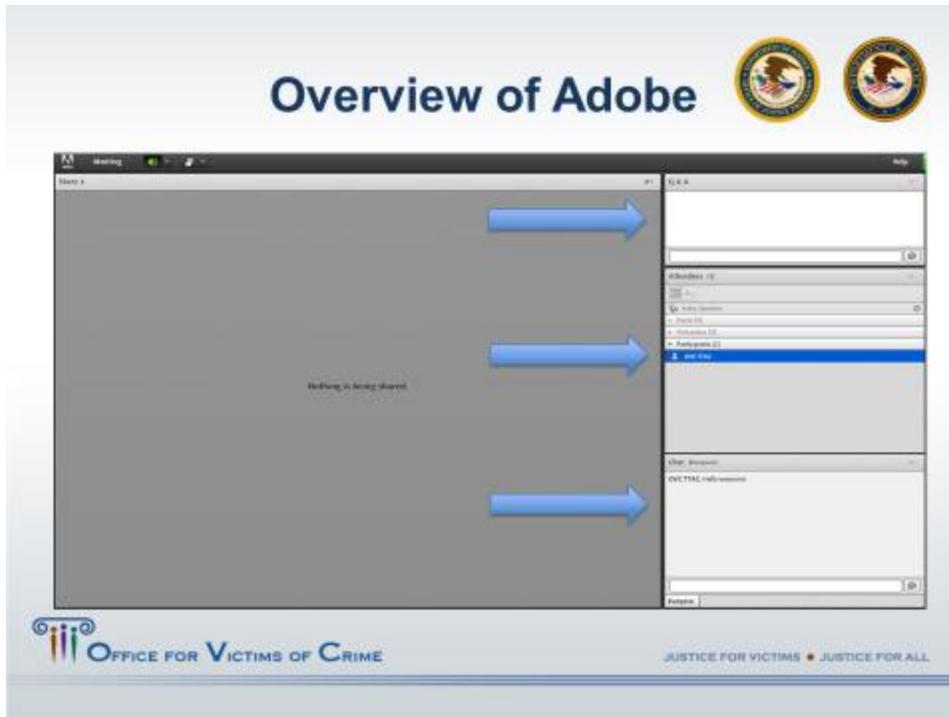


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Technical Overview

Sanda Pauletti: Participants will remain on mute throughout the session. If you have any questions for the presenter, please type those in the Q&A pod and we will address them at the end of the session. We are recording today's session, and the recording and PowerPoint presentation will be available on the OVC TTAC website. And, as with all technology, we may experience a momentary lapse in the Webinar session. In the event of a problem, please be patient and remain on the line. The Webinar session will resume shortly. If you have an individual technical problem, please contact Jason Adams by sending him a private chat or an e-mail at jadams@ovcttac.org.

Sanda Pauletti: Now I would like to turn it over to my colleague, Jason Adams, who will provide a brief overview of the Adobe connect platform.



Overview of Adobe

Jason Adams: Hi, everyone. I am just going to give you a quick overview of Adobe Connect, the platform we will be using today. In the largest window on the left-hand side is where the presentation will take place. You should have received the same PowerPoint presentation in an e-mail this morning for your reference. On the right side of the screen, you will see the question-and-answer pod at the top. If you have any questions for the presenter, you can submit them here and we will do our best to answer them towards the end.

Jason Adams: Below that is the attendees pod. This is a list of everyone that is attending the Webinar today. At the top under "host," you will see me listed as Jason Adams. This is where you can private chat with me if you have any technical issues. To do that, take your mouse and hold it over my name and select "start private chat."

Jason Adams: Finally, below the attendees pod, you will see the chat pod where you can make comments or respond to questions from the presenter, as well as to ask any technical questions if you are having trouble.

Jason Adams: And now, I am going to turn it over to Shelly Jackson, a Financial Fraud and Abuse Visiting Fellow from the Office for Victims of Crime. Shelly?

Facilitator



Shelly L. Jackson, Ph.D.

*Financial Fraud and Abuse Visiting Fellow
Office for Victims of Crime*



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Facilitator

Shelly Jackson: Hi. Good morning, everyone. So I am the Visiting Fellow at the Office for Victims of Crime. And before I came to OVC, I was in the elder justice world. And when I came to OVC, elder justice professionals were asking me for information about VOCA, funding opportunities, “How does VOCA work,” and things like that. So I invited Ursel McElroy to come and talk to us about VOCA. And I met Ursel about a year ago, well, at the last NAPSA (National Adult Protective Services Association) conference where we served on a panel together, along with Carol Sewell. And we were talking about this building bridges idea, but, you know, at a conference not everybody can come. So I wanted to make sure that other people could have access to this information, so we decided to do a Webinar.

Presenter



Ursel McElroy Drake, M.A.

*Deputy Director of Education and Policy
Ohio Attorney General's Office
Crime Victim Section*



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Presenter

Shelly Jackson: So, Ms. McElroy is really unique because she served in both the elder justice field as an APS (Adult Protective Services) supervisor in Ohio, and in the VOCA field as a state administrator in Ohio. So she really has had her feet in both worlds, and I think she is going to be really – she will be able to tell us a lot about these two worlds and how we can work together more effectively. So I am so delighted that Ms. McElroy agreed to talk to us today, and please join me in welcoming Ursel McElroy.

Ursel McElroy Drake: Good afternoon and welcome, everyone. I hope everyone is doing well. I am sitting in sunny Ohio with near 80 degrees weather. Feel free to send a chat with your location and weather as well. I want to thank Shelly for the kind introduction and for taking the lead in organizing today's Webinar. I would also like to thank Sanda Pauletti and Jason Adams for providing the technical support needed on this project. And, of course, I thank the Office for Victims of Crime for being a committed partner in our efforts to address the needs of crime victims throughout the Nation. Today's Webinar is just one more example of OVC's tireless efforts. I also want to thank our own state administrator here within Ohio, Michael Sheline. He has certainly been a great resource to me and we work really closely on many issues where we were able to bridge many gaps. And then, finally, I thank all of the participants for taking time away from your work to join us today.

Poll One



What is your involvement with VOCA?



Poll One

Ursel McElroy Drake: So it is always helpful to know who is participating. Please take a moment to respond to Poll One. And for those who select “other,” kindly type your profession in the chat pod.

Ursel McElroy Drake: All right, thank you. The results should be posted on your screen.

Ursel McElroy Drake: We have got a really diverse group here today so I am really excited about that. During our time together today, we will have an opportunity to, one, see a snapshot of the history of the Victims of Crime Act, or what is known as VOCA. We will discuss the structure of VOCA. We will look at the funding, some of the policy and practical information around VOCA. Discuss the current state of affairs for elder abuse victims. And explore why these two, VOCA and elder justice, have been seemingly slow to connect. And, finally, we will discuss strategies to help overcome this disconnect.

Ursel McElroy Drake: Now, within this limited time frame it is not my intention to make you an expert in either VOCA or elder justice. Yet, this Webinar will equip you with enough awareness to understand the importance of collaboration between VOCA and elder justice professionals.

The Impact of VOCA

31 Years of History



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The Impact of VOCA: 31 Years of History

Ursel McElroy Drake: The crime victim movement has been powerful, rich in advocacy and determination to ensure that victims, survivors of criminal offenses, are accorded fairness, dignity, and respect in the criminal justice process. The progress we have made has not come easily, and certainly not without the persistence of many. To bridge the gap between VOCA and elder justice, it is important that we first give context to this issue. So for the next 6 minutes, we will take a look at the history and the progress of VOCA. And if you have not already, feel free to turn up your speakers for the video.

30 Years Restoring the Balance of Justice

[video starts]

Female: Thirty years ago, there were not many services for victims.

President Reagan: Our concern for crime victims rests on far more than simple recognition that it could happen to any of us. All of us have an interest in seeing that justice is done, not only to the criminal, but also for those who suffer the consequences of its crimes. Mission accomplished.

[applause]

Nan Stoops, Executive Director, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence: The first services that sprang forth as a result of the Victims of Crime Act really elevated the needs that victims have beyond a criminal legal response.

Herman Millholland, Former State VOCA Administrator: VOCA changed the way we were able to provide services for crime victims. It created that funding stream for programs that did not exist prior to that.

Male: All rise.

Teresa Scalzo, Esq., Navy Prosecution Expert: VOCA was a watershed moment for victims because, for the first time, we recognized that victims really had a place in the process, and that protecting their rights mattered.

Nan Stoops: I have a lot of pride, actually, in the evolution of the field and its understanding of who it is we are here to serve. When we look at racial disparities with respect to crime and the unique challenges that are faced by immigrants, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning), people who are victims of crime, in order to meet victims where they are, provide what they need, we need to be able to adapt and to modify.

Teresa Scalzo: In the 10 years that I have been training the military, I have seen great strides made in protecting victim rights. The Navy just set up our Victim Legal Counsel program, and it is from this point forward all of our victims of sexual assault will be entitled to their own attorney, which is just cutting edge and very, very exciting. That person will stay with them until the legal issues are resolved. So they will be their lawyer until the case is closed. By giving them somebody to fight just for them, only for their interests, you allow them the ability to be heard.

Male: Please raise your right hand.

Nan Stoops: The idea is to bring people together to really find where are our points of connection. Where can we join?

Herman Millholland: We see crimes in a very different way today. Over the years, as the times have changed, the crimes are changing. There were no identity theft crimes, or issues like human trafficking. We are now seeing mass violence and terrorism.

Sandy Phillips, Victim Advocate: Unfortunately, our ranks of victims and survivors are growing every day. My daughter, Jessie, she was just in a theater watching a movie. Those Sandy Hook kids were just in their kindergarten and first grade classes. The Sikh Temple, they just went to church. In Tucson, they just went to the store. This can happen anywhere, anytime, to anyone.

Herman Millholland: These are events that, under normal circumstances, I do not think any community is prepared to respond to. One of the things that we are doing now is creating a resource guide for communities around the country to use of all of the things that need to take place in order to prepare for an event, should it happen.

Sandy Phillips: It is never, ever, going to be easy for any of us. But having somebody else out there that understands does help.

Herman Millholland: Trauma, as we know it, does not just start and stop. It is a very long process. And VOCA allows an individual, over time, to continue to receive the necessary support and services and funding to help them.

Sandy Phillips: Victims are often so shocked by what has happened to them that they do not know where to turn. So when someone does reach out to them and say, "We are here for you," that is incredibly helpful.

Teresa Scalzo: What VOCA has done is to restore that balance, to give the victim a place at the table.

Nan Stoops: The field is really expanding. It is thinking about what constitutes justice, and our deep commitment to providing what it is that people need.

President Reagan: Our laws represent the collective moral voice of a free society. Those principles will lose their meaning and our citizens will lose faith in them if we concentrate solely on punishing criminals and ignore the suffering of victims of crime.

[video ends]

Ursel McElroy Drake: So this powerful clip is the 2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week video produced by the Office for Victims of Crime. And a link to the video will be available immediately following the Webinar if you are interested.

VOCA and Elder Victims

Improving Our Response



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VOCA and Elder Victims: Improving Our Response

Ursel McElroy Drake: Now, as you can see from the video, we are proud of the progress we have made with VOCA. And we are continually striving to improve our efforts. As a system, we embrace our obligation to make every effort to exchange information and ideas about existing and emerging issues. We have an obligation to examine how we treat victims, an obligation to extend our reach and ask the question continually, “Are we meeting people where they are?” In other words, are there groups of individuals that remain underserved or not served at all? If the answer is yes, then we must begin to explore ways to understand why, and make reasonable efforts to bridge any gaps. One group that remains underserved in too many communities across the country is the elderly.

VOCA and Elder Victims

What We Know...



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VOCA and Elder Victims: What We Know...

Ursel McElroy Drake: Nationally, the aging population is growing. When you consider U.S. Census data, it is the fastest growing population in our country. Along with population growth, there has been an increase in the prevalence of elder abuse. Equally troubling is the low rate of reporting. According to the Elder Justice Roadmap, a project supported by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, for every one case reported, 23 go unreported. And reporting is low for a host of reasons. Fear of retaliation, or a fear of a loss of independence by the older victim. Their shame that this has even happened to them. They are unaware of how to access help or services. Or perhaps they have a cognitive impairment that renders them unable to recognize the abuse. And, when there is love, love for the abuser, particularly if it is their child or someone that they trust. And, in those circumstances where reports are made to the authorities, most older victims still do not access crime victim services supported by VOCA.

There is Much at Risk

Human and Economic Costs



Economic losses for the victim and others

Reliance on publicly funded programs

Unnecessary illness and injury

Premature risk of death



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There is Much at Risk: Human and Economic Costs

Ursel McElroy Drake: By not accessing critical services supported by VOCA, such as compensation to assist with medical bills incurred as a result of the abuse, or counseling to help recover from the trauma of the abuse, and criminal justice advocacy to aid in navigating the justice process and availing themselves of their rights, too often older victims are not afforded the supportive services needed to heal and the consequences can be significant.

Ursel McElroy Drake: Let us consider the economic losses for the victim and others. It can be profound. In 2010, a Met Life study estimated an annual \$2.9 billion lost in elder financial exploitation cases alone across the country. Since then, in January 2015, True Link Financial released a report estimating it is actually \$36.48 billion lost annually to elder financial exploitation. This is in addition to the increased medical costs for treatment of injuries and illnesses related to the elder abuse and neglect.

Ursel McElroy Drake: The abuse can undermine both the finances and the health of the victim, and their ability to support and care for themselves. It also adds a strain to Medicare, Medicaid, and other publicly supported services by shifting the cost of care to these systems when the elders' assets have been depleted. Unfortunately, and too often, there is also unnecessary illness and injury, and there is credible data that suggests victims of elder abuse are up to three times more likely to die a premature death in comparison with their other cohorts.

Poll Two



How often do you serve elder abuse victims?

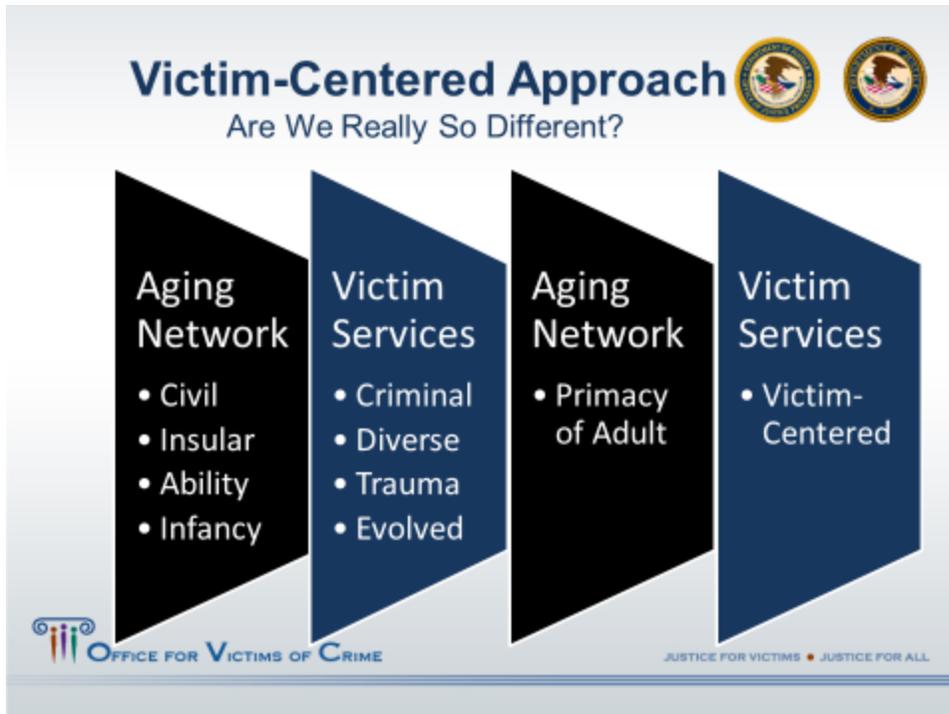


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Poll Two

Ursel McElroy Drake: So I will ask you to take a moment to respond to Poll Two. How often do you currently serve elder abuse victims within your organization or within your community?

Ursel McElroy Drake: I want to thank you, and the results are posted on the screen for you.



Victim-Centered Approach: Are We Really So Different?

Ursel McElroy Drake: So, the question is: Are we, elder justice and VOCA professionals, really so different? Why is there such a disconnect between the two systems? So let us examine the two.

Ursel McElroy Drake: When we consider the aging network, when addressing the needs of a victim of elder abuse, the remedies most often pursued are civil. This is particularly true in matters that involve powers of attorney, guardianship, and when family and/or caregivers are the abusers. Too often, even in the most egregious cases, the matter is not pursued criminally. The aging network over many years has shown itself to be rather insular, and that it has created a near full-service system dedicated to older adults. The services, policies, funding all focused on our aging population have been nicely situated under one umbrella. Quite an impressive network. When elder abuse is suspected, the victim's abilities or vulnerabilities become central to the case in influencing what interventions, if any, will be pursued. And finally, the elder justice movement is in its infancy relative to other areas of family violence. When you consider child abuse, domestic violence, the first comprehensive piece of federal legislation is the Elder Justice Act which passed in 2010, bringing national attention and the authorization of resources to the issue.

Ursel McElroy Drake: Now, in comparison, the victim services field is generally involved with people pursuing criminal justice options more often than civil. The services, policies, and funding are designed to meet the needs of a diverse range of people, from the youngest to the oldest, with various needs and varying abilities. The trauma experienced by the victim is central to the case. One's abilities and vulnerabilities are considered, but only to the extent that they affect how, not if, services are delivered. And the field has organized and evolved with landmark pieces of legislation such as VOCA, which was established in 1984.

Ursel McElroy Drake: While the aging network and the victim services field have taken undeniable paths, undeniably different paths, what is most striking is that they each strive to keep

the needs of each victim paramount, whether promoting primacy of the adults or victim-centered approaches.

VOCA in Plain Language

42 U.S. Code Chapter 112



Established in 1984

Created the Crime Victims Fund

Major funding source for victims

Financed by convicted federal offenders



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VOCA in Plain Language: 42 U.S. Code Chapter 112

Ursel McElroy Drake: So, let us talk about VOCA in plain language. As I just mentioned, it was established in 1984. It created the Crime Victims Fund, or what is often referred to as the Fund. The major funding source for victims throughout the Nation. And the Fund is based on deposits from federal criminal fines – forfeited bail bonds, penalties, and special assessments collected by U.S. Attorneys’ offices, federal U.S. courts, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons finance this fund. It is not funded by taxpayer dollars. Now, various allocations are made from the Fund, so let us first take a look at how VOCA provides funding to the states.

VOCA in Plain Language

Crime Victim Compensation Program



- **Direct reimbursement to or on behalf of a crime victim**
- **Statutorily identified crime-related expenses:**
 - Medical costs
 - Funeral and burial costs
 - Mental health counseling
 - Lost wages or loss of support



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VOCA in Plain Language: Crime Victim Compensation Program

Ursel McElroy Drake: VOCA funding is provided most notably through the Crime Victim Compensation program and the Victim Assistance Grant program. So let us look first at the Crime Victim Compensation program, or CVC.

Ursel McElroy Drake: CVC provides direct reimbursement to a crime victim, or on behalf of a crime victim. There are statutorily identified crime-related expenses, such as medical costs that are incurred as a result of the crime, funeral and burial costs, mental health counseling, and lost wages or loss of support. Now, it is important to note that each state may vary in exactly what services they pay for, the maximum amount that can be paid, and eligibility guidelines to qualify for payments. So I would encourage you to check with your state VOCA administrator for specifics on the program in your area.

VOCA in Plain Language

Victim Assistance



- **Funds awarded to local organizations that provide services directly to victims of crime**
- **Victim assistance includes:**
 - Crisis intervention
 - Emergency shelter
 - Emergency transportation
 - Counseling
 - Criminal justice advocacy



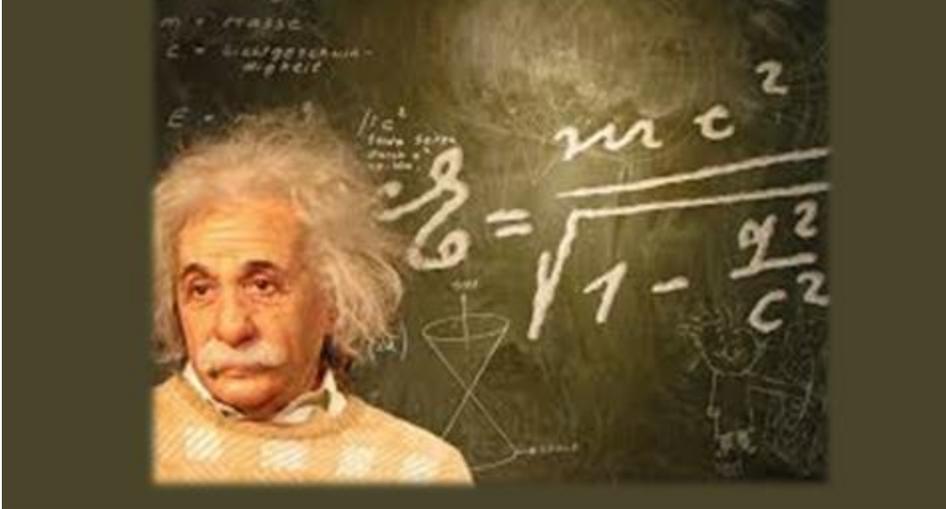
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VOCA in Plain Language: Victim Assistance

Ursel McElroy Drake: Now, through the Victim Assistance Grant program, or through Victim Assistance, funds are awarded to local organizations that provide services directly to victims of crime. We often refer to them as subrecipients. So while it is not a direct cash payment to or on behalf of the victim, Victim Assistance makes critical services available to individuals within their community. Now, some of these services include crisis intervention, emergency shelter, emergency transportation, counseling, and criminal justice advocacy. It is important to note again that each state may vary in exactly what services they offer and where the services are geographically located. So, again, I want to encourage you to check with your state's VOCA administrator for specifics.

Allocating VOCA Funds

Understanding the Numbers



Allocating VOCA Funds: Understanding the Numbers

Ursel McElroy Drake: So, just how much money is available through VOCA? That is the big question. And how are the monies in the Fund allocated? And while we could spend an entire Webinar addressing the history and current state of the Fund, today I will provide a basic overview, a snapshot, if you will, into the money.

Allocating VOCA Funds

Understanding the Numbers



- **Congress establishes an annual funding cap**
- **Allocations are made**
 - Children's Justice Act
 - U.S. Attorneys' Offices
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - Federal Victim Notification System
 - Office for Victims of Crime
 - State compensation formula grants
 - State victim assistance grants



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Allocating VOCA Funds: Understanding the Numbers

Ursel McElroy Drake: Each year, Congress establishes a maximum amount available through VOCA to support services to victims. When the Fund was authorized in 1984, a cap was placed on how much could be deposited into the Fund for the first 8 years. So during that time, we worked with an annual cap varying between \$100 million to \$150 million. In 1993, that cap was lifted allowing for the deposit of all criminal fines, different assessments, and forfeited bail bonds to support crime victim program activities. In other words, there were other sources of money that were now deposited into the Fund. And so, for the first 15 years, between 1984 and 1999, the total deposits for each fiscal year were distributed the following year to support services to crime victims. So what was deposited we were able to distribute for crime victim services.

Ursel McElroy Drake: But, starting in 2000, in response to large fluctuations in deposits, Congress placed a cap on funds available for distribution, and these caps were intended to maintain the Fund as a stable source of support. So, from 2000 to 2012, the amount of the cap varied from \$500 million to \$705 million. And, in fiscal year 2013, the cap was set at \$730 million.

Allocating VOCA Funds

More Funds Available



- **December 16, 2014, President Obama signed into law the “Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015”**
- **VOCA cap raised from \$745 million to \$2.361 billion**



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Allocating VOCA Funds: More Funds Available

Ursel McElroy Drake: So what does it look like now? Well, on December 16 of last year, the President signed into law the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015. And while that certainly is a mouthful, what that simply means is that for our purposes, the VOCA cap has been raised to \$2.36 billion. And this certainly reflects the tireless efforts of many advocates in support of raising the cap. So, in short, you can certainly see where you had \$745 million to distribute, you now have \$2.36 billion available this year for distribution.

Allocating VOCA Funds

Crime Victim Compensation Program



- **Every state administers a CVC program**
- **Each state CVC program receives an annual grant equal to 60% of what the program spends in state money annually**
 - Calculation is based on the state dollars paid out for the federal fiscal year 2 years prior to federal grant



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Allocating VOCA Funds: Crime Victim Compensation Program

Ursel McElroy Drake: How does that money – how is it allocated for the Crime Victim Compensation program? Well, let us look. Every state administers a Crime Victim Compensation program, or CVC program. Each state's CVC program receives an annual grant equal to 60 percent of what the program spends in state money annually. Essentially, they receive 60 cents on the dollar of what they spend. And this calculation is based on the state dollars paid out for the federal fiscal year, 2 years prior to the grant. So what you spent 2 years prior to us providing the grant dollars, that is how it is calculated.

Allocating VOCA Funds

Victim Assistance



- **All states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico receive an annual grant with a base amount of \$500,000**
 - Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa receive a base amount of \$200,000
- **Additional funds are distributed to states and territories based on population**



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Allocating VOCA Funds: Victim Assistance

Ursel McElroy Drake: Let us take a look at Victim Assistance. With Victim Assistance, there is a base amount provided to each state of \$500,000, with the exception of certain territories and areas mentioned below that receive \$200,000. So funds in addition to the base amount are distributed based on population data. So, essentially, heavily populated states will likely receive higher allocations than those states with smaller populations.

Allocating VOCA Funds

Administrative and Training Costs



- **No more than 5% of each year's grant can be used for administration and training**
 - Compensation
 - Victim Assistance

5%

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Allocating VOCA Funds: Administrative and Training Costs

Ursel McElroy Drake: Now, both the Crime Victim Compensation program and Victim Assistance guidelines are specific on how the money can be used to serve crime victims. However, each state program may exercise some discretion by using up to 5 percent of the grant for administration and training purposes on crime victim topics.

Poll Three



How can VOCA assist a victim of elder financial exploitation?



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Poll Three

Ursel McElroy Drake: Let us take a look at Poll Three. How can VOCA assist an elder victim, or a victim of elder financial exploitation? Take a moment to respond to the poll please.

Ursel McElroy Drake: Okay, thank you for participating in the poll, and the results should be on your screen.

Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines



Victims of financial exploitation are eligible for counseling, criminal justice advocacy, and other support services



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Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines

Ursel McElroy Drake: So, victims of financial exploitation are eligible for counseling, criminal justice advocacy, and other support services. VOCA funded programs cannot restore the financial losses suffered by victims of fraud, nor replace stolen property. Yet, given the serious nature of elder financial exploitation, I think it is important to understand that while VOCA cannot replace the monies lost, many of the services provided through VOCA can help that individual through the experience or the trauma of the exploitation. And I believe it is critical to connect these individuals with supportive services immediately and regularly, particularly if you consider the statistics I provided at the very beginning that individuals that suffer elder abuse, including elder financial exploitation, are at a three times higher risk of premature death. And so we certainly have cause to become involved as quickly and as often as we can, and certainly connecting many of these victims with service providers that can assist with counseling and advocacy is one way.

Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines



Emergency, short-term nursing home shelter for elder abuse victims for whom no other safe, short-term residence is available is an allowable cost for VOCA subrecipients



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Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines

Ursel McElroy Drake: Let us talk about some other ways VOCA may be of assistance to you. Did you know that emergency short-term nursing home shelter for elder abuse victims for whom no other safe short-term residence is available is an allowable cost for VOCA programs or subrecipients? Consider a traditional domestic violence shelter or emergency shelter, it is generally not equipped to provide the care needs many older victims may require. Perhaps the victim needs assistance with bathing, toileting, or medication reminders. Whereas a nursing facility may be able to meet those immediate physical and critical needs while working closely with VOCA subrecipients for victim support, helping them through the trauma. So this is certainly one place where elder justice professionals and VOCA professionals could explore guidelines and begin to look to see if this is a way in which they can work together.

Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines



Training on crime victim issues to aging and adult protective service providers can be supported with VOCA victim assistance administrative funds



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Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines

Ursel McElroy Drake: And, did you know that training on crime victim issues to aging and adult protective service providers can be supported with VOCA victim assistance administrative funds? So that is that 5 percent I earlier referenced that each state has available for administration and training. This certainly can be used to support training on critical crime victim issues that may be your traditional aging provider for adult protective services worker does not receive but certainly would be beneficial in providing services to many of the older victims.

Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines



Adult protective service agencies are eligible to receive VOCA victim assistance funds to expand or enhance the delivery of crime victim services



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Did You Know...? VOCA Program Guidelines

Ursel McElroy Drake: And, did you know that adult protective services agencies are eligible to receive VOCA victim assistance funds to expand or enhance the delivery of crime victim services? Again, they are entities that are eligible, but certainly there are other considerations and guidelines. And, again, I would encourage you, if you are within one of these organizations, to certainly contact your local VOCA administrator to talk about ways that perhaps you could apply to become one of the VOCA providers or subrecipients.

Ideas Anyone?

Steps to Bridging the Gap



Ideas Anyone? Steps to Bridging the Gap

Ursel McElroy Drake: So, being informed is certainly half of the battle. But I would certainly like to take a moment at this time for you to share your ideas. Ideas on maybe how you have been successful working or bridging the gap between the two. As an elder justice professional, have you had success working with your VOCA administrator? Feel free to share that in the answer pod. If, in fact, you are a VOCA administrator, maybe you were able to reach out to elder justice providers, we certainly want to hear those stories so that we can have conversation and share that with one another. I am certainly interested in hearing your feedback at this moment.

Poll Four



List one way to bridge the gap between elder justice professionals and VOCA administrators.



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Poll Four

Ursel McElroy Drake: Okay, I see we are getting some really good answers here. And, hopefully we are able to show those to others on this screen.



Strategic Approach: Steps to Bridging the Gap

Ursel McElroy Drake: So, let us talk about a strategic approach, some steps that perhaps you could take to bridge the gap. While we got some really great responses, I want to look at this in a linear fashion and see how we can be very thoughtful and very purposeful in how we begin to connect one with the other.

Ursel McElroy Drake: So the first is to identify areas of higher need, areas perhaps that are heavily populated with older individuals where we find there are no services. Areas where current services that exist, for instance the example I earlier used with the shelter, but are not necessarily equipped to provide services that may be unique to an older individual.

Ursel McElroy Drake: We want to begin to look at opportunities within VOCA guidelines to maybe address some of these areas of need. One such example again would be with shelter and being able to work with perhaps a nursing facility that you otherwise had not considered or formed any relationship with. How can we start to have those conversations in terms of it being an opportunity to support that relationship through VOCA?

Ursel McElroy Drake: Connecting with state VOCA administrators to discuss findings. You know, if you are an elder justice professional and you certainly have really good data and information on some of the needs of many of the older victims that you are servicing, it certainly would be of benefit to have those discussions. Set a meeting, talk with your VOCA administrator about the concerns you have and the areas where you believe that there are gaps. And are there ways that maybe through VOCA we can begin to fill some of those gaps?

Ursel McElroy Drake: And, for VOCA administrators, I would say make the outreach to connect with service providers and survey what is available. Survey what your current providers are able to do if presented with an older victim. And then begin to survey the area for service providers

that maybe have never applied through VOCA, but they do provide a really good service for older individuals. Is this maybe an organization that we could consider as being a subrecipient maybe in future grant cycles?

Ursel McElroy Drake: And then assist. Assist by promoting collaboration. You know, there is nothing I believe as powerful as a really strong and well thought out collaborative effort. Being able to work together to see where you can strengthen areas where perhaps maybe your service system is not as strong as you would like it to be. And by building capacity to service elder victims through these collaborative relationships, you will then create a system where there is more access for more individuals in need of crime victim services.



Ohio Attorney General's Elder Justice Initiative

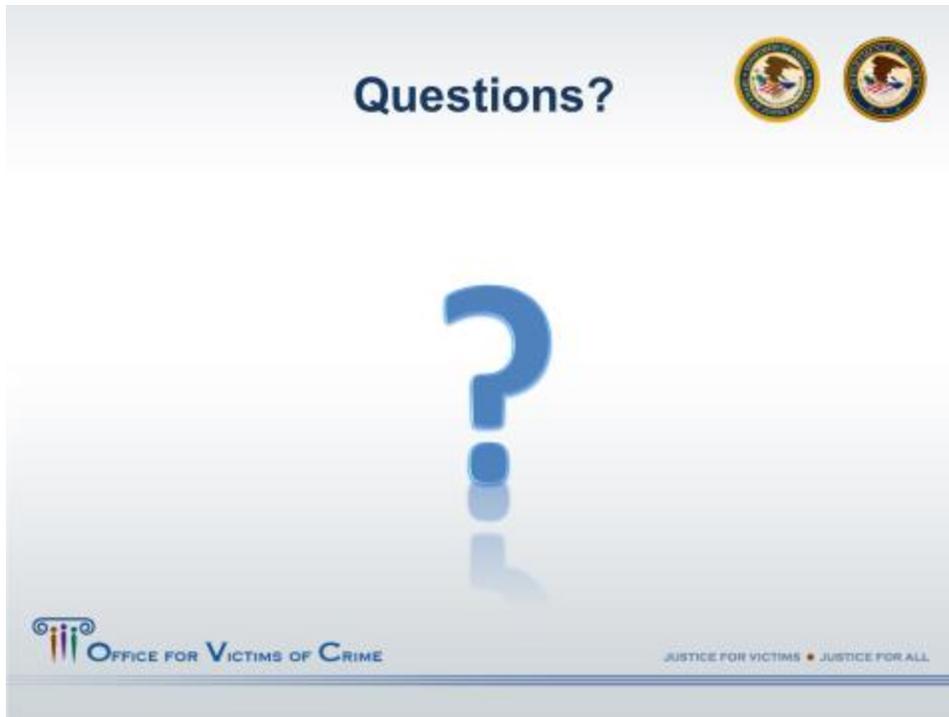
Ursel McElroy Drake: So I have here the Ohio Attorney General's Elder Justice Initiative, and I put this on here because I believe that it is certainly an example of showing how it is possible to collaborate. As Shelly mentioned in my introduction, I started my career for many years as an elder justice professional through Protective Services, and then later in the Attorney General's Office through policy and really just best practice work. But it also gave me an opportunity to connect very deeply with the VOCA community and work with many wonderful people and many providers that I had not had the opportunity or the occasion to work with in the past. And so I was very enlightened by the very two powerful movements, in my opinion, that just had not converged on one another.

Ursel McElroy Drake: And, through our Elder Justice Initiative, we are committed to utilizing all resources we have available to provide comprehensive, well-rounded access to crime victim services for any victim, young or old, no matter where they are located within Ohio. And that has meant that we have had really good conversations and honest conversations about what are we currently providing, where are we perhaps – where can we do better, and where are we doing things well? It meant that we had to begin to look at data and information on either side of this. And we were not so concerned with, you know, who was at fault or why it took us so long, but we were more focused on how can we, from this point on, begin to make changes.

Ursel McElroy Drake: And I am proud to say that we now have a few subrecipients that we have added that we currently did not have that are focused squarely on providing services for older victims. I am very pleased to say that we absolutely have hybrid organizations now whereby in the past they had provided services to younger individuals, and now they have taken the really hard task of educating themselves, networking with individuals in the elder justice profession, and they now have integrated very nicely the work of serving older victims into many of their existing efforts in their current framework. And it has been a huge success. And so I just point

that out to say that if we have been able – and I understand each state is different – but I do believe that if we have been able to make some ground here in Ohio, that certainly I would encourage others to do the same.

Ursel McElroy Drake: And at this point, I will turn it over to Sanda and she will certainly provide questions to me.



Questions?

Ursel McElroy Drake: One of the first questions that I see is: What strategies are most effective at encouraging law enforcement to understand that elder abuse is a crime, and to investigate abuse as a crime? Well, I would say one of the first and most key parts of this strategy is certainly going to involve awareness and education. It is my belief that we work from the presumption of competence, and that is that many of the professionals that we work with each and every day want to do the very best job they can do to service many of the people that we interact with. And so, I would start with education. Education on what the issues are in my area. Education on how large an issue elder abuse is across the country, and some of the very dire consequences that can come about if we are not all proactive and very involved. And then, certainly providing concrete steps. You know, it is one thing to provide theoretical approaches and information, but I think when you have law enforcement and they are tasked with having to do a lot in a compact amount of time on many different issues, it is very helpful for them to have really compact information. And if you are interested, I certainly can provide to you or have Sanda provide perhaps some resource information on some really great trainings out there that are already intact and that were designed specifically for training law enforcement on elder abuse topics.

Sanda Pauletti: Thanks, Ursel. This is Sanda. Sorry about that, we were muted. Love technology. So I can go ahead and start giving you the other questions that we have in the queue, if you do not mind. So the next question we have is: Are there federal funds available to support efforts to prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation?

Ursel McElroy Drake: Well, you know, in terms of federal – now, if that is with federal funds, I think certainly I am sure there are federal funds that are focused on family violence prevention efforts. And so, certainly I can again provide a link to those potential resources. If the question is more directly around VOCA, I would have to err on the side of saying that funds for VOCA traditionally are not utilized for prevention efforts.

Sanda Pauletti: Thank you. The next question is: How can you get interstate law enforcement involved?

[overlapping comments]

Sanda Pauletti: I am sorry. Go ahead, Ursel.

Ursel McElroy Drake: That is okay. Go ahead, Sanda.

Sanda Pauletti: Do you want to go ahead? I think I have another question here that we can jump to if you would like. How can you bridge local law enforcement agencies to accept Bureau of Criminal Investigation intervention?

Ursel McElroy Drake: So, I am not sure how each state is set up, but I can speak to our Bureau of Criminal Investigation here within Ohio. Within Ohio, we have what is known as home rule, and essentially what that means is that each of our counties or local areas, they have – they have responsibility for their own jurisdiction. They are autonomous in many ways. And before the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, which is our state arm of – that is our state arm who helps with complex investigations. They handle our forensic lab, things on sort of a more complicated level. Before they can become involved, that local jurisdiction has to make the request for the assistance. In other words, we are limited in being able to provide assistance absent their formal request for assistance. What I would encourage any individual or jurisdiction that certainly is interested in having the Bureau of Criminal Investigation involved is to certainly make them aware of the benefits of having our Office involved. Oftentimes, with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, whether it be in Ohio or if you have a similar model in any other state, there are resources that you have on the state level that perhaps do not exist on the local level. Forensic accountant, for example, for many of these complex elder financial exploitation cases. Access to the lab, if you have perhaps a sexual assault, a forensic exam kit that needs to be examined. So those really heavy resource – those cases that require a lot of resources and require a certain level of expertise, those would be the ones where I think maybe pointing out the benefits of having involvement from a more – from your state level would be beneficial.

Sanda Pauletti: Great. And it looks like the last question is: Who would be a good person to collaborate with for strategic planning purposes, specifically to serve elder abuse victims?

Ursel McElroy Drake: Well, I would say, for strategic planning, certainly you would want to involve individuals from the aging network. And let me clarify aging network. You know, each state is different in how they manage their Adult Protective Services. So I am speaking from my vantage point when I say aging network in that Adult Protective Services, at least within Ohio, service those 60 and older. But for purposes of everyone else on the call, I would certainly still want to include Adult Protective Services. I would definitely want to include my long-term care ombudsman. I would certainly want to include my VOCA administrator. I would want to include victim service providers throughout Ohio that have been successful at providing services to victims of all ages. And, you know, you definitely want to have policy makers, decision makers in the room because, you know, it is great to come up with a plan but you want people who can actually mobilize the plan. And, certainly you want to have your law enforcement or individuals representing the criminal justice profession, as well as civil justice. I think of probate courts and civil legal aid attorneys. So I think it is a really broad mix when you look at a strategic plan in providing comprehensive services for elder abuse victims. Again, you know, I am certainly willing to provide a list of potential people you may want to consider to invite. We, in Ohio, have

a commission, an elder abuse commission, and that commission certainly reflects individuals and organizations that I would certainly want to have at the table if I were developing a really comprehensive strategic plan.

Sanda Pauletti: Ursel, I think we have one more question. The question is: If APS is training law enforcement on elder abuse issues in law enforcement training academies, is this a reimbursable item for VOCA?

Ursel McElroy Drake: You know, again, I am going to say that the individual should probably talk with your VOCA administrator. And I say that because I think it could be, but you certainly want to be sure that you are following the guidelines and that the correct entities are seeking funding from the VOCA administrator. You know, it is not something you just go and do and then you come later and say I would like to be reimbursed. This is something where you first want to be sure that it is something eligible and that you are an organization that can be reimbursed, and that you understand fully what your responsibilities are and what their expectations of you are. And then, from there, I think you could perhaps go forward and maybe be successful at something like this.

Sanda Pauletti: Great. I think that may be it for questions. If we just want to maybe give a few seconds. If anybody is thinking about asking Ursel a question, you can either enter it into the Q&A pod or the chat. Looks like that might be it.

Sanda Pauletti: Well, for those who would like to download today's PowerPoint presentation or the video that Ursel shared earlier in the day, please refer to the files and web links pod. And as a reminder, today's recording and PowerPoint presentation will also be available on the OVC TTAC website in a few weeks. So thanks again to Ursel and Shelly, and to those who attended today's Webinar. We will go ahead and officially close the session. Everybody have a wonderful day and thank you for joining.

[End.]