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OVCTTAC Webcast 09.08

FS: Good afternoon and good morning to those of you joining us in the Western U.S. My name is Joye Frost and I'm the director of the Office for Victims of Crime here at the Office of Justice Programs. And I'm one of the many architects of the Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services Strategic Initiative. If you don't know much about Vision 21, I would encourage you to go to [ovc.gov](http://ovc.gov) and just put Vision 21 in the search engine.

And before I start my remarks, I want to thank the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center, Shelby Crawford from OVC, and Juan Sutton from the Office of Justice Programs for their efforts to make this webinar happen.

So I want to start by concisely defining what Vision 21 is. It's really an OVC initiative to work closely with victims, survivors, service providers in the traditional victim assistance field, as well as allied practitioners, to chart out the strategy for reaching and serving every crime victim in the 21st century. And together we identified so many issues –

probably not surprising to those of you who are listening in: Lack of capacity that was strongly related to underfunding of our vital victim services. (But thankfully Congress has addressed this in the last two fiscal years.) Lack of technology to ease access for many victims to needed information and services as well as to reduce the administrative burden on our practitioners.

We also identified that we really had to take a step back and rethink the issue of who is the crime victim, and expand our table, which is a pretty big table as it is, but to make it even bigger to ensure a place for crime victims and their leaders and advocates from marginalized and disenfranchised populations.

We needed to address the new types of emerging crime and the challenges they present and the important role that crime victims must play, and crime victim advocates must play, not just in the immediate aftermath of crimes, but ensuring that our voices, all of our voices, are heard as our communities,

states, and country join together to reform our criminal and juvenile systems, which is a pivotal piece of reshaping our communities into havens of peace, safety, and economic security for each and every one of us.

Interestingly enough, what we learned within months of starting our Vision 21 Initiative is that we really couldn't answer many or most of the questions that we started out with. And we couldn't answer them because there was an immense lack of data and research to guide our efforts, or at least access to that vital data and research. So it is no mistake that the very first chapter in the Vision 21 report addresses this gap. At that time we did not have enough comprehensive and meaningful victimization data or information on pragmatic, inexpensive ways to conduct program evaluation, or evidence-based practices to meet the myriad needs of an increasingly diverse population of victims.

Well, I'm standing here almost 5 years later, and I have to say we still don't have all that we need, but

we have made great progress to report today. One of the issues that we identified in that first chapter was the need for translation and communication between researchers and practitioners and not, I will add, one-way communication.

OVC for the first time has a visiting fellowship program that addresses this issue. So we have brought on a joint OVC-Bureau of Justice Statistics fellow. So it's my privilege today to introduce Heather Warnken, who is the first OVC-BJS fellow in the first-ever position designed to improve the use, dissemination, and, very importantly, translation of statistical data and social science research for the Crime Victim Assistance Bill.

Before joining DOJ, Heather spent 5 years as a legal policy associate at the Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy at the University of California Berkeley School of Law. While there, she led many multidisciplinary projects utilizing research and collaborative partnerships to bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice, including two

statewide assessments on how to improve access to victim services and compensation for underserved victims of crime. She also worked at the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department to develop policies and procedures to improve outcomes for youth, advance recommendations of the congressionally chartered Commission on Education, Equity, and Excellence, and as a research partner to Californians for Safety and Justice. She served as a law clerk to the Honorable Joseph F. Murphy, Jr., Court of Appeals of Maryland, and has provided pro bono legal services in domestic violence and child welfare matters.

I actually could go on and on, but I think I will conclude with the fact that she holds an LL.M. from UC Berkeley School of Law, a J.D. cum laude with pro bono distinction from Suffolk University Law School, and a B.A. with honors from Johns Hopkins University. I think there is probably no more ideal person to fill this first position and really set the benchmarks for those who will follow.

Heather has done incredible work in her slightly over 8 months here at OVC and BJS, and I know you will find her overview of some very important initiatives to be both thought-provoking and engaging. Heather, thank you for your efforts and for leading this discussion today. [applause]

HW: Thank you so much, Joye, and good afternoon, everyone. It's really an honor to be here with you. So even in this unprecedented era of criminal justice reform where historic bipartisan consensus around the need to make data-driven decisions with our public safety dollars is on the radar of policymakers, practitioners, the media, and even the President of the United States, we are in many ways still just scratching the surface on understanding an essential piece to any discussion on public safety, the persistent lack of access to services, healing, and recovery for far too many victims of crime.

The voices of victims and those on the frontlines serving them have been absent or seen a limited role, or under-representative role, in the media and policymaking table. Even in the advent of historic

victories achieved during the Crime Victims' Rights Movement decades ago, the needs of victims have often been oversimplified and codified with a narrow focus on rights within the justice system or harsh sentencing policies.

This departure from the more holistic and diverse goals of the grassroots movement for survivors has been amplified by another reality that Vision 21 made clear, that those victories, hard-fought and secured on behalf of all victims, have too often been little more than promises on paper or unfunded mandates disconnected from the lived experiences of many attempting to overcome their trauma alone in the aftermath of crime.

As a survivor of violent crime myself, I have experienced this disconnect firsthand where my experience of a prompt, compassionate response from law enforcement that never questioned my status as a victim nor impeded my desire to report, of knowing and understanding my rights in the justice process, of having access to an advocate to help me navigate

it, to health insurance and a range of other options for formal and informal support to meet my physical, emotional, and financial needs – all of that culturally appropriate and effective enough to help get me back on my feet.

The reality is this experience has looked nothing like the experience of hundreds of survivors I've had the privilege of connecting with around the Nation throughout the course of this work. It is hard for me to fathom knowing that, even with that range of resources, healing can be an uphill climb. This disconnect is affirmed by the data. My experience was the exception, not the rule.

Yet as we convene here today, we also do so in a powerful moment of optimism guided by Vision 21, unprecedented resources, and a growing set of tools to use them effectively, the implications of which I'll discuss today. However, borrowing from the words of Dr. King, we also know that change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability.

Much like greater awareness of the existence of victim services is not a panacea for success or equity in this field, neither in itself is a historic increase in funding. Harnessing these dollars effectively, driven by data relevant and translatable to all corners of this field, requires the continuous recognition that, much like victims, victim services providers are not a monolithic group. Whether measured by the victims they serve or the conditions in which they serve them, their perspectives vary tremendously. Their experiences are shaped daily by the role that race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and poverty play in creating divergent challenges and divergent realities for victims as in so many aspects of life.

It will require bridging the divide across researchers and practitioners and across disciplines long siloed yet indispensable to our success, expanding the tent of the field as we know it to include new strategies to reach the unseen and the unserved. Thanks to Vision 21 and Joye's leadership, we are up for that challenge. So let's dive in.

So Vision 21 as the first major assessment of the field in 15 years, as Joye mentioned, serves as a comprehensive blueprint for the ways in which reality has not kept pace with the rights and services for all victims that we've committed to over the past 30 years. Notwithstanding the dearth of data we have to inform this field, we know through the National Crime Victimization Survey that only 9 percent of victims of serious violence access services from a victim service agency. And this already low number plummets to 4 percent when the crime is unreported, approximately half.

We also know that often those most likely to experience crime are often the least likely to access support. These survivors are likely to be young, low income, and of color. In fact, the NCVS found that only 8 percent of juvenile victims receive services compared to 13 percent of those 35 to 49.

We also know this varies tremendously across various crime types, with about 22 percent of rape and sexual

assault victims and about 21 percent of DV [domestic violence] victims reporting receiving services compared to only 8 percent of aggravated and simple assault; 5 percent of males compared to 14 percent of females.

We also know that victimizations reported to the police are far more likely to get services than those not reported, making the many complex barriers to reporting, including the relationship that victims have, and their communities have, with law enforcement incredibly important. Moreover, a recent study from the Injury Prevention Research Center at the University of Iowa, using NCVS data published in just July of this year, found that reporting victimization is associated with fewer future victimizations, underscoring the relationship of reporting not only to accessing service but to crime prevention overall.

So as Joye mentioned, Vision 21 highlighted that the current research and statistical infrastructure has not kept pace with the service infrastructure built

over the last 20 years. OVC has coupled this vision of moving the field toward a future where evidence-based, data-driven practice is the norm, with a number of bold investments designed to make that possible, including bringing its existing collaborations with its sister agencies here at the Office of Justice Programs to the next level.

So though my focus today will be on those collaborations with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, I do want to note that OVC has also been working closely with the National Institute of Justice, including efforts to better understand the financial cost of victimization, the experiences of at-risk groups, a study on the national victimization of tribal youth, restorative justice programs, and the incredibly important overlap between victims and those who commit harm.

NIJ itself is also investing in a range of activities to create better linkages in its portfolio and to bridge the gap, including its dissemination series "Research for the Real World."

So why are these investments so crucial right now? Demographic shifts within the population, globalization, and evolving crime types such as trafficking, cyber, and environmental crime demand new strategies from the field. But along with Vision 21, Congress has also bestowed the potential to rise to this challenge, nearly quadrupling Victims of Crime Act funding in the past two fiscal years, a level that will continue with approximately \$2.578 billion flowing to the states in the next fiscal year. This formula grant fund program already supports more than 4,000 different victim assistance programs annually through subgrants to local public agencies and providers.

And this year we'll come hand-in-hand with a new rule interpreting the use and administration of these funds years in the making and released just this August 8th. This rule provides clarity and greater flexibility to state administering agencies to support a continuum of services that have often been scarce or unavailable to victims in the past,

including comprehensive legal assistance, transitional housing, expanded coverage of relocation expenses, and the use of these funds for forensic interviews and medical exams.

And perhaps one of the biggest sea changes of all, it removed language that restricted the use of this funding to support services to victims currently and formerly incarcerated in detention and correctional facilities. Together these create unprecedented opportunities for training, for delineation of roles and evidence-based decisionmaking. But to realize that vision, we must place our data collection efforts in timely policy and practical context of a field truly in transition, measuring what is and what will be rather than what has always been.

This is what bridging the divide is all about. As described in the Vision 21 report, "One of the principal challenges in advancing research to improve crime victim services is the lack of communication and collaboration among researchers and practitioners. Practitioners are often unaware of

information critical to their work, and even when they are aware, they may be unable to interpret or apply the findings in appropriate context, especially those not presented in a straightforward, understandable way. Across many fields research often lacks a clear explanation of its implications for practice nor the tools to translate its relevance to the locally driven challenges that overwhelmed practitioners often face."

In furtherance of OVC's commitment to bridging the longstanding and seemingly intractable divide and translation gap between researchers and practitioners, in collaboration with BJS as Joye mentioned, it launched the first-ever in-house position to specifically address it. This comes hand-in-hand with two other major efforts, including launching this year a new national resource center, one for research and evaluation and one focused on underserved communities, to help further bridge this gap for state administering agencies that we are so excited about.

Threading through all of these bridging-the-gap efforts and why this concept has eluded so many fields for so long is that at the end of the day this is a process, and it's not formulaic. It's about the hard, long-term work of finding the sweet spot, the sweet spot where rigorous scientific method meets the messiness and tremendous diversity of the real life that it seeks to measure, where data-driven and reality-driven can actually be one and the same.

So in that spirit I'm going to take off this wonky hat for a minute to give you some examples of what that amorphous concept actually means to me. Bridging the gap is not just about better dissemination and translation of existing data. Equally important, if not more so, is putting practitioners in impacted communities at the design and decisionmaking table of what information gets collected and why, and continuing to engage throughout the process those closest to and most impacted by the information that we seek.

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It means thinking about translation and dissemination on the front end of these activities, not 5 years down the line when a project concludes with a dense report tied in a bow, the type too often that collects dust on a shelf, in an inbox, or simply arrives too late to be relevant.

Take OVC's Supporting Male Survivors of Violence Initiative, for example. The last webcast in this Vision 21 series actually featured some of the rock stars leading that work nationally, and over 1,000 registered nationwide, hungry for the information that these sites and these experts had to share. This speaks to the need for information, learning, and connection on these issues now, especially in serving young males of color, a population so overrepresented in victimization and so underrepresented in the literature and in access to services. We can't wait 5 years down the line to share the groundbreaking learning that's going to come out of these 12 demonstration sites throughout the country. How do we build the infrastructure to make sure that

dissemination and translation and access to these moves forward, happens in real time?

This also means engaging new audiences and new stakeholders, such as the collaboration with the Federal Interagency Reentry Council that OVC has recently engaged in, not only at such a timely and historic moment when the restriction of funds for programs serving currently or formerly incarcerated survivors is now removed, but also at a moment when we can actually leverage the current momentum of such a diverse group of agencies, one considered one of the most successful collaborations to emerge from the Federal Government, to operate with the recognition that an astounding number of those entering the criminal and juvenile justice system and reentering society on the back end have themselves been victims of crime - often whose trauma has gone unaddressed - and to work together to actually do something about it.

Using the hook of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, which has long been commemorated in this

country, and the first-ever National Reentry Week, which was commemorated by President Obama for the first time this year, and a blog format that was more accessible potentially than a dense report, I teamed up with my friend and colleague Daryl Atkinson, DOJ's first-ever "second chance" fellow, to co-author a piece across these silos, elevating existing data to demonstrate that though only a week separates these observances on the calendar, the gulf of public perception - who society envisions as a victim and a perpetrator of crime - is much wider, often to the detriment of getting people the help they need.

We called for a unification of the efforts to develop a body of knowledge that's already happening in both spaces to create one body of knowledge capable of helping policymakers and the public break down false distinctions in an overlapping world. The inspiring results to me exemplify the essence of bridge-building, for which there is often no blueprint. Rather, it's about forging ahead with ideas that never would have been possible until everyone came into the room.

So, stepping back and looking at some of the limitations of our existing data, there are so many current sources of information so relevant to the victim assistance field, but when taken alone they can feel very limiting. This includes the Uniform Crime Report, which although it provides valuable information for more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies in this country and useful data about yearly trends, it does not capture what we think of as the dark figure of crime, that which is unreported and that that we know is one of our greatest corollaries to the underserved.

The National Crime Victimization Survey, the annual collection from a nationally representative sample of nearly 160,000 people, does, making it such a key source of information since its inception in 1972. But though the NCVS elicits information on many relevant variables for the victim assistance field, including victimization that goes under the radar of law enforcement, currently it is also limited in a number of ways, including not collecting information

on victimization of children younger than 12, not collecting information on certain crime types such as drunk driving and homicide, and not reflecting the experience of some of our most vulnerable victims, including those who are homeless, transient, or experiencing victimization in institutional or correctional settings.

This is such important context for appreciating the value to the field that BJS's expanded victimization unit will bring. Vision 21 goals were already central to BJS's mission of providing information of critical importance to federal, state, and local policymakers and their efforts toward a more integrated set of data that's better aligned to answer questions within the field.

One component of this effort to improve data quality and utility is a large-scale redesign and modernization of the NCVS, adding key questions surrounding whether victims receive services and, of those who do, what type of assistance they received. Also significant, these questions - many of which

will be added in an ask-all manner - will create a denominator. So rather than just being answered by victims through an incident report, we will be able to compare the experiences and perceptions of victims who self-report to those who do not. This also includes the NCVS subnational program, delivering the ability to couple victimization statistics and other sources of information to better understand patterns of risk, reporting, and resource allocation at the local level. The lack of state and local-level data has long been a barrier to use of the NCVS by practitioners in the field. So this is a really big deal to have this breakdown.

You can see from this teaser some of the early results of just how meaningful this deeper, granular-level analysis can be. I mean, Texas, wow: Let's start to understand why the NCVS says you're so far ahead of the curve.

We often think about this data through victims' experiences and through victims' lenses. We think about victims' pathways to services and, therefore,

our data collection efforts have tended to understandably focus on victims. But data from providers is equally important, providing another critical vantage point. What is the demand for services? Do service providers have the staffing, the funding, the training, and the other resources to actually be effective?

That is why, catching up with two decades of program development from OVC and the Office of Violence against Women to enhance the Nation's capacity to assist victims, BJS has also launched the Victim Services Research Program to collect and analyze new data from the diverse entities that serve victims. This includes a collaboration between BJS and the National Center for Health Statistics to develop a national survey of hospital-based victim services to understand the range of services available at such a critical point of access and one that to date we've known very little about.

BJS has also added questions about victim services to existing surveys of law enforcement agencies and

prosecutor's offices and together all of these efforts will offer the most comprehensive picture of victim service provision to date.

Another brand-new effort at the cornerstone of all of this is the National Census of Victim Service Providers. You can see the diverse expertise of the project team selected by a competitive solicitation by BJS and OVC starting in the fall of 2012. Driven by input from the field, the project team has worked with both an expert panel and a project input committee of diverse representation, first to assist in drafting an effective survey instrument and to answer follow-up questions on issues of importance and evolution to the field, and also to assist in identifying a diverse sample for testing.

So what will this census tell us? How many of what kinds of providers there are or what types of services are available, what are the average budgets for these programs, and what are their sources of funding.

Notwithstanding this process that has included ongoing engagement with the field, finding that sweet spot and defining what we actually mean when we say the victim services field across such a diverse landscape has remained challenging, especially during this period of unprecedented growth and change.

Lists of existing providers are often incomplete, out-of-date, and missing items necessary to draw a representative sample. The many topics and items of interest to victim assistance also presents a very challenging balancing act. If too many questions are included on a survey, it could present a burden on respondents leading to low response rates that are not generalizable and not conducive to the busy lives of practitioners in the field.

Furthermore, informal service providers may not have the staffing or capacity to record key information, but they are no less important in this landscape, especially in many underserved communities. So, addressing these challenges: In order to do that, the project shifted to implementation in two phases.

Phase one, the census phase - that will survey the complete roster of approximately 31,000 entities nationally. It will refine this roster, produce a clear picture of who is identifying as a VSP throughout the country, using basic characteristics of the organizations at a high level. Then, phase two: moving to the more detailed survey. This will use information gathered from phase one to hopefully create a nationally representative sample of VSPs and engage them in a more detailed way.

So creating this complete picture obviously means asking the right questions, but it also means continuing to inspire and promote the consistency in their answers. And part of what that entails is the hard work of understanding the subcultures and subcommunities within the field, a field spanning so many contexts and professions.

So one area that jumped out immediately was law enforcement-based victim services, especially given the fervor currently around our national conversation on policing and how infrequently the relevance of

this to crime-victim assistance is discussed. The pilot findings of the NCVSP also indicated there seemed to be some inconsistency or misinterpretation on the part of law enforcement respondents, some of them answering questions in how staffing and resources in their organizations were allocated when it came to victims. For example, some law enforcement agencies, assuming that given that serving victims is such an integral part of what they do, seemed to be answering questions about their entire budget or their entire staff capacity, which is such a different thing than having dedicated victim advocates focused on serving victims.

So this is a big deal, and being caught in the pilot phase allowed for us to do more engagement and outreach to that community of practitioners. This inspired engagement with key bodies such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police Victim Services Committee and efforts to better understand the current continuum of law enforcement-based victim services, and a site visit to one such program that is considered the gold standard of robust law

enforcement integrated assistance - a police department that features on-staff 24/7 licensed clinical social workers with specialized training in trauma to meet the needs of victims, the Austin Police Department, which stands in contrast to what anecdote has told us is definitely the exception and not the rule.

This also involved working with my colleagues at BJS to look across other sources of data that may be highly relevant but less frequently recognized as so important to the victim assistance field. That included LEMAS, the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics, which is a survey that BJS puts out that is responded to by all agencies in the entire country of a hundred sworn officers or more and a nationally representative sample of those less than a hundred.

And so what did we find? So, LEMAS was sitting there all along putting numbers behind something the field has so frequently pointed to anecdote to say is a gap. LEMAS - buried in this survey - asks a specific

question of all agencies about their capacity for victim assistance and asks agencies to put themselves in one of five categories. The gold star category is a specialized unit within the department with full-time personnel dedicated to victim assistance; in other words, what I saw in Austin.

The next category, a specialized unit with part-time personnel - you can see what a minority those agencies were with only 9 percent in the first and 4 percent in the second. The third category - maybe they didn't have a specialized unit, but the agency at least had dedicated personnel focused on serving victims, 12 percent.

The following category, no dedicated personnel but the agency at least had related policies, procedures, or training focused on victim assistance, 54 percent. Now, in 2013 when this data, the latest LEMAS, was collected, I would have assumed - given the incredible advancements in the field, especially through laws and policies that require law enforcement to play a meaningful role in victim

assistance, sometimes even through state constitutional amendments that give law enforcement a role in handing out information or meaningfully connecting victims with services - I would have thought that it was practically illegal for a law enforcement agency to put itself past category four at this point in time. Yet 20 percent of law enforcement agencies in this country were putting themselves in category five. They were not formally addressing victim assistance at all.

BJS, in an NCVS local companion study this fall, is exploring a deeper set of questions on these issues, addressing perceptions of police, focusing heavily on concepts of procedural justice and legitimacy. This will be another key tool in a comprehensive picture of community wellbeing that goes beyond just factors of violent crime.

So looking at the pilot results, which was conducted from August 2015 to January 2016 to a roster of about 700 VSPs, a report with all pilot results is currently in progress and forthcoming to the field.

But overall this process affirmed the importance of beginning this step with a high-level census in order to move toward that more detailed step. You can see the distribution of participating entities throughout the field.

The pilot and full census will also break down with much greater granularity the types of providers within these broad categories of government and nonprofit to better understand the challenges that different entities face.

So, for which crime types did victims seek services? Most VSPs saw a broad range of victims in the past calendar or fiscal year. More than 70 percent of victims reported that their services were sought for eight or more different crime types. However, government-based VSPs tended to see a more diverse group of victims than nonprofit or faith-based.

What does it mean for the field that a government-based entity might see a greater range of crime types than a nonprofit, especially given the

limitations of access to government-based services for certain groups such as those less likely to report their victimization? What does this mean for victims of limited means such as those at or below the federal poverty line who see more than double the rate of violent victimization as persons in high-income households, who may be more greatly impacted by limited points of access? What would it take to grow the range of community-based programs designed to meet a broader range of victim-centered needs?

In general, the majority of VSPs reported relatively small paid staff sizes, but staff sizes differed for nonprofit or faith-based entities compared to those based in the government. Thirty-six percent of government-based VSPs reported turnover in staff. This was in contrast to the 55 percent of nonprofit or faith-based entities that reported the same.

Nonprofit or faith-based entities were also far more likely to use volunteers, once again putting data behind something often cited as anecdote. How about

concerns? Here you can see across a broad range of issues that to date we've had no data to support. You can see high levels of concern. But notably and perhaps unsurprisingly you can see a greater level of concern on these issues from nonprofit or faith-based VSPs. This was true for staff retention, the burden of grant reporting, and access to technology. But it was especially true for funding received in the past year and the predictability of future funding.

This is why we need you. Providers and policymakers throughout the country can help by spreading the word. You can tune in to upcoming webinars to learn more about this process, including September 28th, October 13th, and November 7th. And I encourage you to check out the project website to learn more. You can also share the survey link as widely as possible. This is not a survey that can only go to those who are on that roster of 31,000. Critically important, this can be administered to entities that are not on the radar thus far, that were less likely to be on a list, especially those entities that haven't in the past received government funding.

The full survey will launch in October and it's imperative that we have as diverse representation as possible to help bring this picture to life, the full picture to life.

So as Vision 21 noted, VOCA is largely silent on the issue of prevention: research, program evaluation, the use of technology, and the need for collaborative and multijurisdictional responses to victims, and the capacity of jurisdictions to provide increasingly complex and long-term support. According to Vision 21, "the field will continue to push for a larger role in primary prevention."

Now, the new VOCA rule will help address some of this, but especially in order to effectively plug in to the national movement around criminal justice reinvestment taking place, where data-driven prevention is the cornerstone, we must support the victim assistance field in connecting these dots. Connecting the dots with proven strategies from the public health field such as Cure Violence, Healing

Hurt People, and a robust set of other hospital-based interventions and models, many of which are at the forefront currently of OVC's 12 demonstration sites in the Supporting Male Survivors of Violence Initiative.

This connection with public health is especially imperative as increasing data emerges on the role of trauma and the stakes of overreliance on justice system-based strategies that may not be effective or realistic for all victims of crime.

More and more research is building on the groundbreaking Adverse Childhood Experience Study, or ACEs, which was a study carried out by CDC and Kaiser Permanente of over 17,000 adults, one of the largest investigations ever to make the link empirically between child trauma and adult problems including future violence. As also stated in Vision 21, notwithstanding all of that progress, "American society has yet to embrace the causal relationship between childhood victimization and later criminal behavior or repeat victimization." We also must

continuously relentlessly place data, especially emerging data, in context to guard against its misuse and misinterpretation.

And last, on this definitely not exhaustive list of persistent challenges but one that I will mention today, is the importance of combining this national level of data that's being created and that currently exists with local level data, that that will remain key.

The NCVS national program and these two new surveys will be an amazing contribution to the field and to fill the information gap, but they'll never replace state and locally driven efforts to collect data that speaks directly to the challenges that that individual jurisdiction may face.

So in conclusion, once again this is why we need all of you, all of you throughout the country. Currently I have the profound honor of serving you here as both a translator and a conduit of information across divisions. That is truly the best that I can be, a

conduit of your voices, and I want you to know that I'm always here to listen, that my colleagues are always here to listen.

As we sit amidst this optimism in this historic moment and at the precipice of monumental work that is still to come, the urgent need for a trauma-informed, data-driven paradigm for victim services has never been more clear. Victims will continue to have unique paths to justice and healing, their own unique conceptualizations of what all of that means, their own unique set of needs. But this vision will continue to recognize a unifying common denominator, one that builds this bridge: that victims of all backgrounds and circumstances share a common need to feel safe and to rebuild their lives, and that there are courageous service providers all throughout this country that are making that possible every day.

If improving the use, dissemination, and translation of data and research still sounds wonky, I don't blame you, but I do hope that I've communicated to

you today something very important, the premise upon which this is built, the premise upon which OVC and BJS have made these commitments to realizing a new vision for this field: that good ideas, innovation, and policy victories are only worth their salt in the trenches of human dignity; that the practitioners and survivors who live in these trenches, they are the heart of this work; that data-driven anything means nothing if not grounded in the world that we live in; and that we can do so much better than we do now. Thank you. [applause]

And I know we'd be so happy to take your questions, either those in the room or those who are tuned in nationally who can email their questions to the OVC TTAC web that is currently up on the slide right now. Any questions?

MS: Do you know if in the last 10 years there are statistics that show that victimization is being reported more than it was 10 years ago?

HW: No. We don't have - or we have definitive data that speaks to that, and unfortunately it's remained flat that the reporting rates are still incredibly low.

FS: This may not be a fair question, but that's okay, Heather.

HW: Okay.

FS: We hear so much and much of this is from the media and of course it's always oversimplified, but it talks about rising rates of violence in certain urban cities or urban communities, but it talks about a lower level of crimes overall since the eighties, for example. I'm not completely convinced of that, and I have shared that with both NIJ and BJS because I think the nature of crime is changing so much and so much of crime and victimization is not being captured by any instrument. I just wondered about your thoughts about that.

HW: Yeah. That's a great question and I think it speaks directly to the need of granularity in our victimization data because when we oversimplify, we miss those disparities, exactly the ones that you're speaking to. It's also, I think, directly on point to this issue of context, context, context because the NCVS, for example, and some other sources of data in recent years have potentially been demonstrating a leveling out of certain disparities in victimization,

for example, across certain racial groups, but there are a lot of different factors that could be influencing that. And so thinking about not just what the data says but how it's being collected and who it's being collected from, I think remains so important. So again, like I spoke about earlier with the NCVS being a household-driven survey, who especially in an era of over-incarceration might not be participating in a household-driven survey because of transient or justice system involvement?

So I think there are no clear answers to that question, but I think it's part of why bridging the gap so that these points about changes, about trends that we run with in public policy, are really appreciated for the context.

FS: Hi. I have two questions. The first is a multi-part one so I guess I'll ask it and then you can answer [inaud.]. So the first one is, you mentioned that reporting victimization resulted in a reduction of future victimization. Could you explain why? Is it because victims have some sort of empowerment to leave dangerous situations or is it that there's

evidence that the system actually works, that perpetrators are arrested, tried, and then put away?

HW: So, I think that's part of also a theme that we've been talking about, that there's only so much that national-level statistical data can tell us. And so that study, which actually just came out last month, and I am happy to email to you in case it'd be helpful to read through some of the conclusions that the author might have drawn, that study was based on national-level statistical data. So I think we need to overlay that quantitative picture with a more deeper qualitative analysis that I think would cover across a range of many factors. You know there are many factors why victims do or don't report and many factors that drive their satisfaction and maybe their safety and stability after they do. So based on statistical data we can't answer that completely.

FS: And my second question is, of the 31,000 victim service providers, do you know how many of them are tribally based?

HW: Not so far, and that's one of the reasons that having the census, the first one ever, will be such an important step forward. Agencies will be able to

designate whether or not they are a tribal VSP, so having that number and then being able to couple it with what we know about victimization in those areas will be a major way to understand that picture.

Okay. If we've got no further questions, I think we're going to wrap up for today, and I just want to thank everyone so much, those here in the room and those who have joined us throughout the country, and I look forward to engaging with you moving forward. [applause] I'm just going to bring up Joye for some closing remarks.

JF: Well actually, my closing remark is to once again thank Heather for such a great presentation, and she shared her contact information with you and I strongly urge you to follow up with Heather. She's just amazing, amazingly helpful to us in OVC, and I know she would be the same with all of you in the field. And she actually loves going out in the field because that really is where the change happens. So I want to thank everybody that listened in today for the work that you do on a daily basis and taking time out of your very busy day to join us. So thank you,

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and this concludes this webinar and we hope you join  
us for many more. Thanks. [applause]

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