## FACE p FACE

Connecting Policymakers to People Involved with the Correctional System

## **Addressing the Needs of Victims of Crime**

Victims of crime often experience related physical, emotional, and financial distress that can be overwhelming without adequate support for recovery.¹ Victims and their families may face significant financial challenges following a crime, such as medical and mental health counseling expenses, costs of fixing or replacing damaged property, and, in many cases, a significant loss of income due to injury.² Although victims of certain crimes are entitled to restitution payments and other assistance programs, research suggests that such assistance is underutilized due to systemic barriers and administrative hurdles that are prevalent in state victims compensation programs.³ And while laws in all 50 states dictate that crime victims have a right to be notified about the status of the person who committed the crime, some states and other jurisdictions still have not established automated victim notification systems to ensure prompt and consistent updates.⁴

People in the U.S. ages 12 and older were victims of an estimated 5 million violent crimes in 2015.<sup>5</sup>

According to a survey of crime victims<sup>9</sup> conducted in 2016:



8 in 10 victims of crime experienced at least one symptom of trauma as a result of the incident



2 in 10 victims were injured or experienced medical problems



6 in 10 experienced stress



5 in 10 experienced anxiety or feelings of fear



4 in 10 experienced difficulty sleeping



in the U.S. experienced one or more property crimes in 2015.7



In 2015, only 47% of violent crimes and 55% of serious violent crimes were reported to police.8

9.1% of violent crime victims

received assistance or restitution from a victim service agency in 2015.10

In 2015, **1.1 million** people experienced at least one serious violent crime—rape or sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated assault.<sup>6</sup>















Commission a
statewide victimization
incidence study to help
understand the needs of people who
are most commonly victimized.



## Improve victim notification systems so

that they are automated, have
an option for victims to opt out, and
include all relevant court proceedings
as well as the movement of the person
who committed the crime within
corrections, probation, and
parole.



Form a multi-disciplinary team of prosecutors,

victim advocates, defense
attorneys, county clerks,
courts, probation and parole
agencies, and corrections
staff to improve restitution
collection efforts for
victims

## What Policymakers Can Do



The needs of crime victims by collaborating with federal agencies that administer funds for victim services, as well as utilizing any state genera funds that support services for victims.



Invest in statewide financial assistance programs for victims,

review rules and regulations about the types of victims who can access the programs, and consider expanding these benefits to meet the unique needs of victims in your state.

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- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Ibid.
- American Probation and Parole Association, Fact Sheet 6: Promising Victim-Related Practices in Probation and Parole (Lexington, KY: American Probation and Parole Association), <a href="http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/default-source/restitution-toolkit/pyrppp-factsheet-6.pdf?sfvrsn=2">http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/default-source/restitution-toolkit/pyrppp-factsheet-6.pdf?sfvrsn=2</a>.
- 5. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Crime Victimization, 2015 NCJ251080 (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016), https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv15\_sum.pdf.
- 6. Ibid
- 7. Ibid.
- 8. Ibid.
- 9. Alliance for Safety and Justice, Crime Survivors Speak: The First-ever National Survey of Victims' Views on Safety and Justice (Oakland, CA: Alliance for Safety and Justice, 2016), https://www.allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/Crime%20Survivors%20Speak%20Report.pdf
- 10. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Crime Victimization, 2015.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2016-MU-BX-K011 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.