

## **SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

### **National Census of Victim Service Providers, 2016**

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), in consultation with RAND, NORC at the University of Chicago, and the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) under cooperative agreement (Award 2012-VF-GX-K025) requests clearance to conduct the 2016 National Census of Victim Service Providers (NCVSP). The NCVSP is jointly funded by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and BJS. It is part of the larger Victim Services Research program that BJS is developing to capture, on a routine basis, information about how victim service providers (VSPs) respond to criminal victimizations. The goals of the NCVSP are twofold: (1) to develop and validate a national roster of VSPs and (2) develop an understanding of the broad range of organizations that provide victim services as their primary function or through specific programs or personnel, including how they are structured, the types of services they offer, the types of crime victims they serve, the size of their staff, and funding sources and sustainability.

#### ***Definitions***

A victim service provider (VSP) is any organization or entity which provides services or assistance to victims of crime. There are different ways to categorize VSPs, but for the purpose of this census, the VSPs have been divided into three major categories, including:

- (a) primary providers, entities that principally function to provide services to crime victims (e.g., domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, homicide survivor groups, etc.);
- (b) secondary providers, or those that assist crime victims as one of their many functions and have a program, center, or specific staff dedicated to serving crime victims (e.g., prosecutor-based providers, hospital-based providers, campus providers, etc.); and
- (c) incidental providers, or providers who might serve crime victims as part of their regular services but have no designated programs or staff (e.g., homeless shelters, embassies, religious organizations).

These categories of VSPs cover a broad range of providers that serve the needs of different types of victims, such as prosecutors' offices, other criminal justice "system-based" VSPs (e.g., police, special advocates, etc.), community-based shelters, domestic violence or sexual assault programs, mental and physical health-related programs, and tribal organizations or tribal-focused services.

## **A. JUSTIFICATION**

### **1. Necessity of Information Collection**

Title 42, United States Code, Section 3732 of the Justice Systems Improvement Act of 1979, authorizes BJS to collect and analyze statistical information concerning the operation of the criminal justice system at the federal, state, and local levels; this includes information on the capacity of the criminal justice system and partner victim service agencies to meet the needs of crime victims (see attachment 1).

The proposed NCVSP will provide critical information on victim assistance that has been missing to date. There is no nationally representative data collection on VSPs, and resident and

law enforcement surveys about crime and victimization have historically included no information or very limited information about victim service provision. As a result, there are major rudimentary gaps in knowledge about victim service provision in the U.S. and the capacity of VSPs to reach, respond to, and meet the needs of victims. The NCVSP is the first component of BJS's effort to provide nationwide data on the number, size, and organizational structure of active VSPs in the U.S.; the geographical location of VSPs and alignment with the location of victims who need services; funding sources and financial stability of VSPs; qualifications and trainings of staff serving victims; methods and procedures VSPs use for performance measurement and record keeping; the types of services available to crime victims; the need to expand or modify how services are delivered; and the overall capacity of VSPs to meet crime victim's diverse short-term and long-term needs.

Prior to the 1980's, crime control policy paid little attention to victims of crime. This changed dramatically in the 1980s with the creation of the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and other criminal justice policy and practice efforts aimed at responding to victims' needs but also take into account their suffering. In the 1990s, OVC was joined by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) in supporting service provision as well as advocacy for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In the past few decades, these programs have been intent on building and maintaining the service infrastructure necessary to make victims of crime whole again. Data collected through the NCVSP will provide, for the first time, current information on the national victim service infrastructure.

As the social and financial milieu of the victim service field has developed, a corresponding need for a victim service research and statistical infrastructure has also developed, and data gleaned from the NCVSP will begin to meet that essential need. The federal government recognizes that victim assistance is important. In 2015, Congress increased the annual Crime Victims Fund cap to \$2.361 billion, more than 3 times the amount of funding in 2014 (\$745 million). The current balance of the fund is now more than \$10 billion up from \$0.5 billion in 2000.<sup>1</sup> The increased funds means more VSPs could potentially receive funding and that VSPs could be able to reach a greater number of victims, overall expanding the VSP field. With the increased funding also comes expectations for increased information and transparency in how the funds are being used and more consideration about whether the funding is being used in a way that effectively meets the needs of crime victims. A routine collection of empirical data from VSPs is needed to understand how VSPs are staffed and resourced to provide services to victims, the types of services provided and where there are gaps in the provision of services. There is currently no way to assess the portion of VSPs that receive federal funds, to know what portion of victims are being assisted through these funds, or to know whether funds are being allocated to areas with the greatest demand for services.

Additionally, the recent Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services report by OVC illustrates the necessity of advancements in research and statistics for victim service provision and the critical role of research and statistics in the continuing development of the victim services field.<sup>2</sup> The report describes the need for research to "expand the profession's fundamental understanding of who is affected by crime, how they are affected, what works to help victims recover from their

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.navaa.org/budget/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Office for Victims of Crime Vision 21 report: [http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21\\_Report.pdf](http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21_Report.pdf)

trauma, and what other issues affect the delivery of services to victims and the protection of their legal rights” (pg. 1). It highlights the challenges for the victim services field to respond effectively to crime victims without up-to-date, accurate data, particularly when there continue to be major changes in the nature and reach of crimes. For example, major changes in U.S. demographics, advances in technology, attitudinal shifts and better methods for identifying victims of certain types of crime (e.g., trafficking) increase the necessity of empirical data on who has access to victim services and whether service providers are equipped to adequately respond to all crime victims. Currently no data exist to address these questions.

Most of what we know about victims of crime and their help-seeking behaviors comes from BJS’s National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). This large, nationally representative survey of the non-institutionalized residential population collects a great deal of information on victims, offenders, the social context of the event, the harms resulting from crime, and the services that victims receive. Until now, however, the NCVS has asked crime victims only a few questions about service provision. BJS is currently redesigning the NCVS to include more information about whether crime victims want, know how to access, and/or do obtain services from VSPs, as well as the type of services received and victims’ satisfaction with services.

The NCVS, however, cannot be our only source of data on victims of crime. A number of important population groups are omitted by design from the survey, including the homeless, children under age 12, homicide victims and their families, and institutionalized populations, such as the elderly in nursing homes and prisoners. Many crimes are relatively rare, and as a result, the victims of these rare crimes and the services they receive cannot be identified with much precision in a sample of reasonable size. In addition, for some important types of crimes (e.g., human trafficking), victim surveys may not be the best source of information on the crime and its consequences. In these cases, if we are to have a more complete picture of victims, victim survey data must be supplemented and complemented by administrative data on victims and crimes from police and victim service agencies.

Unfortunately, the existing nationally representative data on offenses known to the police tell us almost nothing about victims or the services available to victims. The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) provide no information on victims of violent crime while in the case of property crime, commercial victims are distinguished from non-commercial victims but not consistently. Only the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) provide any data on victims. The National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collects detailed information on victims, offenders, weapons, and the social context of the crime event, but this system includes 44% of police agencies nationally, covers 28% of the population, and misses most the nation’s largest cities. Further, many crimes never come to the attention of the police.

Furthermore, there are some questions about the victim services field that will always be best answered with data collected directly from VSPs. For example, VSPs are best positioned to provide information about how they are structured, their sources of funding, the stability and turnover in staff, staff qualifications, their capacity to meet the demand for services, and the factors that influence how well they can meet victims’ needs.

With authorization under the Justice Systems Improvement Act and in collaboration with many stakeholders within the victim services field, BJS is well-positioned to build an empirical knowledge base about the characteristics and functions of VSPs. The proposed request is to conduct the NCVSP from September 2016 through March 2018 (18 months). The Census is a critical first step in being able to develop a national picture of the provision of victim services.

### ***Need for a Census of the National VSP Roster***

The most important reason for starting with a Census (rather than surveying a sample of VSPs) is that currently there is no comprehensive, centralized national roster of VSPs. Most VSP lists or directories are fragmented across funding streams (e.g., OVC has a list of all federally funded VSPs, Illinois has a list of all state-funded VSPs), or across particular types of victimization (e.g., many states have lists of domestic violence shelters), or available only for certain geographical locations (e.g., for specific states or counties). Many VSP lists are not routinely updated or monitored and may include defunct VSPs, entities that never provided direct services to victims, entities that have stopped providing services to victims, and/or duplicate VSPs. The NCVSP will generate a comprehensive list of active VSPs, capturing information on the landscape of the victim service field as a whole, in addition to the information necessary to stratify the sample for subsequent, more in depth data collection efforts.

In preparation for the NCVSP, BJS consulted with many experts in victim service provision, victim service funding, victimization, and special victim populations to create the first national, roster of about 31,000 VSPs. Experts worked together to define the boundaries of the victim service field, identify the best methods for identifying VSPs, and determine the appropriate scope for a collection on VSPs. The scope was defined as non-military based organizations providing services or funding to victims of crime and abuse as the primary mission of the organization or through dedicated personnel or programs. The project team then collected VSP lists from across the nation, starting with national lists from federal granting agencies, such as OVC and OVW, and professional membership association lists of self-identified VSPs from groups like the NCVC. Next web-based canvassing efforts were conducted in all 50 states to identify additional VSPs not covered on federal lists (report on the initial canvassing efforts in the 11 largest states is available in attachment 2). All national, state, and local level VSP lists were integrated and de-duplicated, resulting in a national roster of about 31,000 unique VSPs.

However, it is unknown what proportion of 31,000 entities on the current roster are active VSPs, fitting within the collection scope. Many of the lists used to create the national roster are not routinely updated. Over time, VSPs may merge, go out of business, change their names or location, and/or quit serving victims. Thus, an assessment of all 31,000 VSPs on the current national roster is necessary to identify VSPs that are actively serving victims as their primary function or through dedicated personnel or programs. This census will create, for the first time, a national roster of active VSPs. It is expected from the pilot study that approximately 15% of entities included on the roster will not be active or in scope, resulting in a roster of approximately 26,000 active VSPs. In addition, for many of the organizations on the current roster, few details beyond the organizational name and contact information are provided. Without basic information that would be necessary for selecting a stratified sample of VSPs that fit within the scope of the survey, such as the size, structure, and functions of each VSP, the national roster is not effective as a sampling frame. Once this basic information is collected through the NCVSP, it will then be

possible to conduct more detailed VSP surveys using a stratified sample of VSPs selected from the roster of active VSPs.

The NCVSP is designed to be brief (20 minutes) and to obtain basic information from all active VSPs on the roster. Specifically, VSPs will be asked to provide their contact information, including the agency name, address, phone number, and email address, and information about:

- (1) the structure and type of entity and the geographical region the VSP operates (Sections A through F on the primary instrument; see attachment 3a);
- (2) the types of services provided to victims and the crime type for which victims sought services in the past year<sup>3</sup> (Section G);
- (3) the size of the staff (Section H); and
- (4) funding estimates and sources (Section I).

In addition, two questions on the Census instrument will assess whether VSPs maintain case files electronically and track individual cases electronically, indicators of how well VSPs will be able to report on victim characteristics in planned future surveys (Section J). Lastly, VSPs will be asked five questions regarding how concerned they are with: their organizations ability to retain staff, the amount of funding they received in the past year, the predictability of future funding; the burden of grant reporting, and their ability to access technology (Section K). These are the most pressing questions of interest among key stakeholders in the victim services field, and VSP's concerns (or lack thereof) about these issues will be directly informative of challenges facing VSPs and the field's stability and capacity to respond to victims. See attachments 3a-3c for the NCVSP Survey instruments.

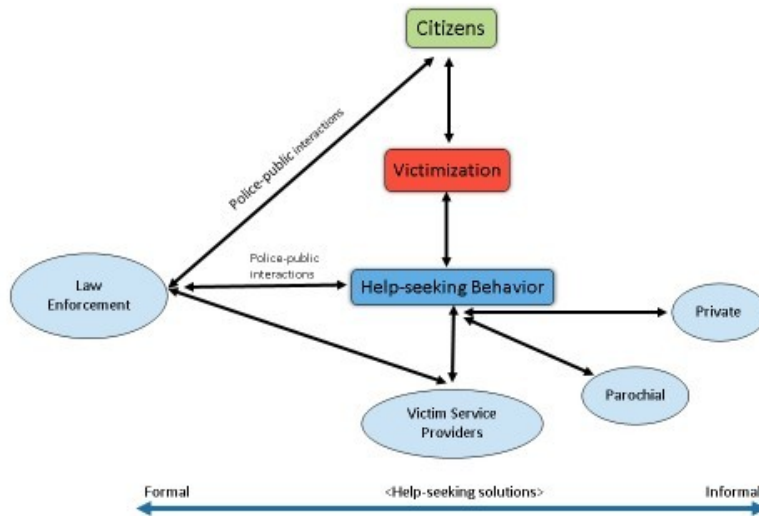
## **2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection**

The information to be collected in the NCVSP is one component of the larger BJS Victim Services Research Program. The Census will allow BJS to validate the national roster of about 26,000 active VSPs and to collect information that can be used by BJS, other DOJ entities, and external stakeholders. The data collected will have utility when used both independently and in conjunction with other existing sources of data to generate a more complete national picture of crime victims who do and do not receive assistance and how assistance is provided.

### ***BJS Uses:***

The NCVSP will contribute new information to BJS's established portfolio of victimization research, which seeks to integrate knowledge about crime, victimization, the harms from victimization, and the response to victimization from victims, criminal justice entities, and victim service providers (Figure 1). Within BJS's victimization research portfolio, the Census falls under the Victim Services Research Program, a multi-mode effort to better understand the help-seeking behavior and assistance received by victims of crime. BJS is working to align information from residents, police records, and VSPs to provide a more complete understanding of where people tend to be victimized, whether victims know how to access services, what services they receive, whether service providers have the capacity to meet victims' needs, whether victims are satisfied with and benefit from the services they receive, and differences in help-seeking behavior and services received across different types of crime victims.

Figure 1. BJS's Victimization Conceptual Framework Infrastructure



Information collected in the proposed NCVSP will, for the first time, allow BJS to triangulate data from residents, law enforcement, and VSPs to generate more comprehensive statistics about the nation's capacity to respond to crime victims' needs. The proposed NCVSP will contribute to BJS's Victim Services Research program in two major ways: (1) by creating a national roster of active VSPs that includes information about the VSPs that can be used as a sampling frame for a future, more detailed surveys; and (2) by filling major knowledge gaps about VSPs including the number of VSPs, where they are located, and what types of services they provide to crime victims.

**(1) Validating the national roster of active VSPs:**

BJS will use the NCVSP to validate a national roster of active VSPs. Based on findings from a pilot test of the Census instrument, at least 15% of entities on the current list of 31,000 may no longer be in business, no longer serving victims, or are otherwise outside the scope of this type of data collection. Additionally, the current roster could not be used as a sampling frame since it does not contain basic information about the VSPs that would be necessary for stratifying a sample on key characteristics, thereby compromising the validity of any conclusions drawn from the data if it does not represent the universe of VSPs. The NCVSP will be the first complete assessment of all 31,000 entities on the roster that will collect basic information and allow for the identification and filtering out of entities that are not active VSPs. The data will be used to describe the landscape of the victim service field as a whole and to ensure an accurate sampling frame for future research on victim services. Thus, the proposed NCVSP is a critical first step in understanding the universe of VSPs and providing key information about VSPs that can be used as stratifying variables for more in-depth surveys with samples of VSPs. The initial investment into the proposed NCVSP is an important starting point to being able to reliably and accurately sample VSPs to fill the gaps in knowledge about service provision in the nation.

## **(2) Using the Census data to develop an empirical knowledge base about VSPs:**

Information gathered through the NCVSP will be a valuable and unique source of knowledge about the victim services field. This information can be used to fill major gaps in knowledge about service provision to crime victims in the nation, particularly when aligned with other data collection efforts such as the NCVS. Below are examples of the pressing policy, practice, and research questions that can be addressed with data collected through the Census:

- *How many active VSPs with the primary function of serving victims exist in the nation (i.e., primary VSPs)?*
- *How many VSPs receive federal funding, and what portion of federally funded VSPs exist solely to serve victims versus organizations that serve victims through dedicated personnel or named programs?*
- *What percentage of VSPs are federally funded, and how do federally funded VSPs differ from non-federally funded VSPs (e.g., in funding stability, their organizational structures, and the types of victims they serve)?*
- *What does the range of VSP structures look like in the nation?*
- *What services do VSPs provide, and what types of victimization do their clients tend to experience?*
- *Where are VSPs geographically located? Are VSPs geographically aligned with the victims who need their services, or is there a mismatch in where service providers are located in relation to where victimization occurs? In regions where there are mismatches, are victims less likely to receive services?*
- *How do staff sizes and funding stability differ across VSPs in the U.S.?*

To begin, BJS is planning to release three statistical reports summarizing the characteristics of VSPs across the nation. The first report will estimate national counts of all active VSPs with the primary function of serving victims and describe the characteristics of these providers, including:

- a. Proportion of primary VSPs receiving federal or state funding
- b. Proportion of federal and state funding going to primary VSPs vs. organizations with dedicated personnel or named programs
- c. Total and average number of paid staff
- d. Proportion of VSPs providing specific types of services (e.g., case management, emotional support and safety, medical assistance, legal assistance, etc.)
- e. Proportion of VSPs serving different types of victims (e.g., sexual assault victims, identity theft victim, etc.)
- f. Total and average estimated amounts of federal and state funding and other funding sources
- g. Proportion of federal and state funding going to criminal justice-based agencies versus other types of agencies (human services, health, education)

In addition, many of these variables can be analyzed to provide more information in further detail. For example, the types of services provided can also be analyzed by the type of victims served to examine whether the VSPs that served a particular type of victim also provided services known to be needed among these particular victims (e.g., trafficking victims tend to

need case management, legal services, and immigration services<sup>4</sup>). Similarly, information about whether VSP type (e.g., law enforcement, campus/educational, community-based, non-profit, etc.) and type of victim who sought services (e.g., sexual abuse victim, identify theft victim, etc.) can be analyzed to explore the frequency with which certain VSPs come into contact with types of crime victims.

The second BJS report will compare federally funded VSPs to non-federally funded VSPs.<sup>5</sup> Much of what is known about the victim services field has been derived from information collected from federally funded VSPs. While receiving federal funding, VSPs maintain connections to OVC through regular compliance reporting, meetings, and conferences, and are therefore a convenient sample of VSPs to reach out to for policy and research initiatives. Through small scale research projects, formal and informal meetings, and discussions with practitioners about the capacity and needs of VSPs, the victim services field has developed a preliminary understanding of how VSPs are structured, the functions they serve, the types of crimes their clients experience, and some of their biggest challenges. However, it can't be assumed that what has been learned from the experiences of federally funded VSPs will generalize to all VSPs.

Understanding how VSPs differ depending on their sources of funding will help determine important stratifying variables for developing VSP samples for future surveys. More importantly, there is momentum in the victim services field to transform the way we respond to crime victims in the U.S., and the planning and decision-making that goes into transforming victims services must be based on complete information about the victim services field as a whole, not just federally funded agencies.

Specifically, this BJS report will compare VSPs with federal funding to those without federal funding on the following descriptive characteristics:

- a) Number of VSPs and total number of staff in VSPs
- b) Proportion of primary VSPs vs. organizations with dedicated personnel or named programs
- c) Total, average, and range of paid staff by VSP type
- d) Concerns about being able to retain staff
- e) Proportion of VSPs providing specific types of services
- f) Proportion of VSPs serving different types of victims
- g) Total and average amount of funding by funding sources
- h) Concerns about funding stability and predictability

Lastly, the third BJS report will integrate data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, National Incident-Based Reporting System, and data from the NCVSP to examine where services are delivered in relation to where crime occurs. One critical question of interest to all stakeholders in the victim service provider field is whether VSPs are geographically aligned with victims who need their services. Triangulating data from VSPs, law enforcement, and citizens,

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<sup>4</sup> Caliber (2007). Evaluation of the comprehensive services for victims of human trafficking: Key findings and lessons learned. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/218777.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The NCVSP instrument also includes a question about whether the entity received any federal funding in the past 5 years. This allows for a comparison between VSPs that have received any recent federal funding versus those that have not received federal funding in the past 5 years.

BJs can begin to examine this question. Data from the NCVSP will provide information about the number of VSPs operating within specified geographic areas, the staff and funding resources available to those VSPs, and the types of services they provide. Subnational data from the NCVS, as well as law enforcement statistics contribute information on the types of victimizations experienced and reported to police in those areas. These data sources together allow for an analysis of the both the demand and supply sides of victims service provision. Eventually, expanded NCVS data on the types of services sought and received by victims, will also be able to be analyzed in conjunction with NCVSP data to get a more complete picture of victim help-seeking, why victims do and do not receive services, and the impact on rates of victimization.

In sum, data from the NCVSP will allow BJS to describe and identify differences in:

- a) Geographical regions with gaps in VSPs or particular VSP types or services (e.g., a particular county, state, or a larger region such as the mid-west might have few VSPs that offer victim health services)
- b) Where VSPs are located in relation to geographical areas characterized as “at-risk” according to economic and social indicators associated with victimization (e.g., high poverty neighborhoods)
- c) Where VSPs are located in relation to subnational estimates of crime (UCR, NIBRS, and victimization surveys)
- d) Areas of need based on NCVS subnational victimization rates and data on victims not receiving services

In addition to releasing at least 3 special reports summarizing the characteristics of the VSP field, BJS will also release the cleaned VSP data in multiple formats (e.g., excel, SPSS, and/or SAS) that make it possible for other researchers, practitioners, policymakers, VSPs, and citizens to access and analyze the information. The dataset, supporting documentation, and BJS reports will be made available for download without charge at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

**Uses by other governmental agencies (OVC, OVW, VOCA administrators):**

For OVC, the type of information that can be learned from the NCVSP is critical to developing an empirically-based approach to delivering victim services that is consistent with OVC’s Vision 21 effort to transform the victim services field.<sup>6</sup> Data collected from the census, and the information collected in future National Surveys of Victim Service Providers that will be possible after the census is conducted, will yield information that government agencies can use to work more effectively in providing assistance to crime victims.

The proposed NCVSPs will allow federal and state granting agencies to better understand what percentage of the victim services field they are supporting, and whether there are gaps in government funding for particular types of VSPs or VSPs that offer particular types of services. In addition, basic descriptors about the number, size, and stability of VSPs will allow federal and state entities to better understand how to allocate funding resources, seek future funding for areas of need, and to plan appropriately for potential limitations or barriers to accessing funding.

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<sup>6</sup> Office for Victims of Crime Vision 21 report: [http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21\\_Report.pdf](http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21_Report.pdf)

Baseline measures on the number and range of victims served by VSPs, VSP staff sizes and budgets, and concerns about funding will also allow funders (e.g., OVC, OVW) to measure the progress and stability of the victim services field overtime. Information gathered from the NCVSP will be an important first step in understanding how well-equipped the victim service field is to respond to crime victims now and in the future.

### **Other Uses**

It is anticipated that academic researchers will use the NCVSP data to prepare reports and scholarly publications looking at the relationship between crime and the availability and delivery of victim services. Census public-use data files will be housed at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan and available for download.

The data will also have utility for victim advocates and victim service professionals. The NCVSP and in particular the national roster of active VSPs resulting from the Census, could be directly useful to VSPs and the victims they serve. Many VSPs dedicate resources to victim outreach, and having their contact information publically available on a national roster of VSPs will contribute to their victim outreach efforts. In addition, knowing where other VSPs are located, the types of services they provide, and their contact information might help facilitate better referrals and coordination of services among VSPs in the same geographical regions. Currently VSPs lack any systematic way to benchmark their work against that of their peers. Data from the NCVSP will allow VSPs to better understand where they fall in relation to other VSPs terms of VSPs size and scope and the types of services they provide, and examine how their concerns about budget and staff align with other VSP concerns. VSPs can use this information in strategic planning and grant writing. VSPs could also use data from the Census to identify areas across the nation where there might be gaps in the availability of VSPs or gaps in particular types of services. VSPs and victim advocates can use this information to reallocate funding and resources or argue for additional funding and resources to be used to fill those gaps.

### **3. Use of Improved Technology**

The NCVSP instrument and the procedures to collect, clean, and analyze the data have been developed based on technological advances that enhance data quality and minimize burden to survey participants and researchers. While the survey is offered through multiple modes, including paper and telephone, the primary mode of data collection is a web-based, self-administered survey instrument (welcome screen presented in attachment 4). The pilot data suggest that the vast majority of VSPs will complete the survey online, with over 80% of respondents completing the survey online.

The web interviewing capabilities are designed to assist respondents in completing their questionnaires by providing a high-quality user experience and by providing features that reduce respondent burden and ensure complete and accurate data. All web transactions will be secured through SSL encryption, and VSPs gain access via unique logins and passwords. The NCVSP instrument has been designed for online data collection using commercially available specialized survey software. The software is built to allow for easy conversion of questionnaires from one

mode to another when multi-mode surveys are desired. For example, the web instrument may also be used to administer a telephone interview with non-respondents or to complete an interview over the phone. This ability allows significant reductions in development effort and costs when moving from one mode to another.

In addition, the web survey has a user-friendly interface, and is easier to complete than the paper-pencil version of the survey because skip patterns hide non-relevant questions. The web survey also conducts real-time, automated checking of responses for numeric range and logic error(s) and protects against data entry errors that might occur when transcribing paper-pencil surveys. The web survey will be programmed to include several value-add features such as (1) the capability to resume work, allowing respondents to stop the questionnaire and return to the point of break-off at a later time without losing previously entered data; (2) a progress bar to illustrate the amount of the questionnaire completed and the amount left; (3) embedded links within the web instrument that make it easy for respondents to submit requests for support using email; and (4) the ability to print a copy of responses to keep on file once the web survey is complete. In addition, staff will monitor the completion of surveys and for those who time out or leave the survey early, will be able to email a link to the individual VSP's survey asking the VSP to complete the survey.

Although the web will be emphasized as the preferred mode of survey completion, some VSPs will prefer to complete a paper-pencil or telephone survey. For these agencies, a hardcopy questionnaire that promotes ease of administration will be provided. Data collected over the phone or via hardcopy of the instrument will be entered into the automatic data file as they are received, noting the date and method of submission.

#### **4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

The NCVSP will not duplicate any other data collection efforts. The NCVSP will be the first survey collecting standardized data about organizational functioning, types of victims served, and types of services offered from the broad range of VSPs across the nation.

Only one other national data collection related to victim services exists, and it is different from the proposed NCVSP in design, scope, and purpose. Annually since 2006, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) conducts a 1 day (24 hour) census of U.S. domestic violence shelter programs.<sup>7</sup> The collection documents the number of individuals who sought services in a 24 hour period, the types of services requested, and the barriers the shelters experienced in providing services to victims of domestic violence including not being able to meet victims' needs because of a lack of resources. In contrast, the NCVSP will cover a one year time period and includes all VSPs providing services to domestic violence victims as well as victims of other types of crimes (rather than only VSPs that run domestic violence shelters). To ensure that data collected as part of the NCVSP will be informed by and not duplicative of the NNEDV's census work, a representative from the NNEDV has participated in the development of the Census and continues to serve on the Project Input Committee.

#### **5. Minimizing Burden**

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<sup>7</sup> All reports are available online: <http://nnedv.org/resources/census.html>

Many steps have been taken to reduce burden to VSPs that participate in this national survey. First, all proposed data collection instruments were cognitively tested through two rounds of testing with 15 total VSPs (cognitive testing report available in attachment 5). The initial round of testing revealed questions were generally understood as worded, but that the instrument was taking respondents about 45 minutes to complete. The burdensome questions were identified and revised or removed and the average time to complete the instrument during the second round of testing was reduced to 20 minutes. The resulting instrument was subsequently piloted with a subset of 725 VSPs, including primary, secondary, and incidental VSPs to ensure that the web-based survey instrument was easy for respondents to navigate and that non-response follow-up procedures worked as intended.

In addition to using a short instrument (about 20 minutes), participants are able to choose the survey mode (web-based, paper) that is most convenient for them. Based on the pilot, it is expected that most respondents will make use of the online survey software. The majority of respondents (83%) completed the pilot survey using the web-based mode and consistent with findings from cognitive testing, took an average of 15 to 20 minutes to complete the instrument. The majority of respondents who started the survey online ultimately completed it. Many web-based system functions will be in place to ease the burden of survey completion (discussed above in #3). Additionally, the online survey allows respondents to return to partially completed surveys. The data collection software will store agency information and responses, allowing for multi-session, non-sequential completion of the survey.

A helpdesk will be staffed to provide assistance by phone and email to all respondents during normal business hours (Eastern Time) and will be available to all respondents through a toll-free number. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses for the project principal investigator will be provided to respondents.

## **6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection**

The NCVSP is the first data collection effort of kind. If the NCVSP is not conducted, there will continue to be no empirical data available to answer rudimentary questions about victim service provision in the U.S., including how many VSPs exist, where are they located, what types of services do they offer, and what is the size of their staff and level of funding? Without this basic information about VSPs there is no way to know what the universe of VSPs looks like, and no way to construct representative VSP samples for research examining more detailed questions. The victim services field will continue to operate without knowing whether they are reaching all victims in need of their services or adequately meeting the short- and long-term needs of victims they do serve. VSPs will have no way of benchmarking their performance against the performance of other VSPs that are similar to them across the nation, and no way of determining whether progress they are making in serving victims is comparable to the progress being made by other VSPs. Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers will continue to have no data for planning, funding, or policy-making purposes, despite billions of federal dollars spent every year on victim services.

Although the call for empirical data on victim services is not new, the recent drive to transform victim services to better respond to crime victims is the impetus for the NCVSP. Beginning in

2010, OVC launched the Vision 21 strategic initiative. The final report, Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services, makes it clear that policymakers, funders, and practitioners need a comprehensive body of empirical data to guide their decision-making. The report states: “*Vision 21 stakeholders overwhelmingly expressed an urgent need to expand the knowledge base about crime victimization and effective response. They viewed research, development of evidence-based practices, and program evaluation as the foundation of successful victim services policy and practice. As the victim services field competes for scarce resources, it must have the knowledge and tools to document the value and cost effectiveness of its services.*”<sup>8</sup>

While this information collection request is for only the initial NCVSP, BJS does intend to develop the NCVSP and the detailed follow-up survey into a routine collection on victim service providers. Contingent on future funding and resources, the NCVSP would ideally be conducted every five to six years, with the sample survey immediately following census administration.

## **7. Special Circumstances Relation to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5**

Not applicable.

## **8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Outside Consultation**

The research under this clearance is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.8(d). Comments on this data collection effort were solicited in the Federal Register, Vol. 81, No. 6, page 122 on January 11, 2016 (see Attachment 6) and in Vol. 81, No. 60, pages 17495-17496 (see Attachment 7). The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and the Williams Institute provided a joint public comment. They expressed interest in the work, stating “The proposed survey captures information that will have important utility for stakeholders and a minimal burden on respondents.” They recommended expanding the survey in three areas:

“These areas include: 1) a survey of LGBTQ services, which can be collected similar to the methods to collect data on cultural and linguistically specific services, 2) hate crimes/violence as a victimization type, because while we know many LGBTQ victim services providers serve victims of hate crimes we have no real sense of the extent of hate crime victim services offered across the country, and 3) crime victim service providers’ nondiscrimination policies and if these policies include protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. While there have been important public policy changes to protect LGBTQ victims of crime from discrimination in services, we still do not have comprehensive empirical data on if those protections have resulted in local policy protections nationally.”

To address these recommendations, two questions were added to the census instrument assessing whether VSPs have offer culturally competent services for LGBTQ victims (in item G7) or served victims of hate crime in the past year (item G11 in the Census Instrument, attachment 3a). In addition, BJS responded explaining that this NSVSP is the first short survey of all VSPs, and future more in-depth surveys are intended to collect additional information on these topics.

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<sup>8</sup> Office for Victims of Crime Vision 21 report, page 1: [http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21\\_Report.pdf](http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/pdfs/Vision21_Report.pdf)

Outside consultation has been especially important for the development of the NCVSP because, as the first national survey of victim service providers, the Census must be applicable to a wide range of VSPs that differ in their size and scope. Early and continuing discussions were held with OVC and OVW to better understand the needs of the field, the current state of reporting, and where the most important gaps in data could be found. BJS has also worked with both a Project Input Committee (PIC) and an Expert Panel to ensure the Census development and implementation is informed by experts in the areas of criminal justice, victim services, and research methodology.

The Project Input Committee (PIC), made up of representatives of various VSPs across the country, was assembled as part of the larger victim services research effort in order to provide project team members with a real world perspective on the operations, services, client bases, and management information systems of a wide variety of VSPs. A list of PIC members is include in attachment 8. The PIC includes VSPs that have expertise in one or more of the following areas of victimization: domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, child sexual abuse, trafficking, elder abuse, homicide, drunk driving, other violence, and financial exploitation. The PIC also includes VSPs that have international and national perspectives on victim services, as well as VSPs serving underrepresented victim populations (LGBTQ individuals, immigrants, homeless individuals, and individuals with disabilities) and VSPs providing services within law enforcement, prosecutor, correctional, and healthcare settings. Individuals with expertise in the legal and technological advances within victim services are also represented on the PIC. The PIC members provided review and feedback on the survey instrument and will engage in outreach efforts to encourage VSPs to respond to the Census.

Second, two meetings have been held with an Expert Panel, made up of practitioners and researchers, considered experts in the victim service field (see attachment 9 for a list of members currently serving on the Expert Panel). During these meetings, the Expert Panel provided feedback on the scope of the project, data collection procedures, developing drafts of the survey instrument, and strategies for obtaining cooperation. The Expert Panel meetings were instrumental in crafting the content and structure of the survey in such a way that it would be accessible and useful to policy-makers and the victim services field.

Federal stakeholders from OVC, OVW, and NIJ were also involved in the Expert Panel meetings and have provided consultation on various aspects of the data collection throughout the development of the project.

#### **9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents**

VSPs will participate voluntarily and will not receive payment.

#### **10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents**

According to 42 U.S.C. 3735 Section 304, the information gathered in this data collection shall be used only for statistical or research purposes, and shall be gathered in a manner that precludes their use for law enforcement or any purpose relating to a particular individual other than statistical or research purposes. The data collected through the Census represent institutional characteristics of VSPs, not information specific to individual persons. VSPs participation in the

survey is voluntary and participants will be informed prior to starting the survey that the information they provide about the VSP will be available to the public.

**11. Justification for Sensitive Questions**

Not applicable: there are no questions of a sensitive nature.

**12. Estimates of Respondent Burden**

BJS estimates the respondent burden for the NCVSP at 9,171 hours. This estimate was calculated based on 31,000 VSPs, guided by the results of the pilot study. It is expected that about 15% of the 31,000 VSPs on the current roster will no longer be in operation or will have stopped providing services to crime victims. For those 4,650 out of scope entities, the burden will be less than 5 minutes. For the 26,350 active VSPs, results from the pilot test suggest that the survey will take approximately 20 minutes per VSP to complete.

Out of Scope VSP burden= 4,650\*[5 minutes/60 minutes in an hour] = 387.5  
 Active VSP burden= (26,350\*[20 minutes /60 minutes in an hour] = 8783.33  
 Total = 387.5+ 8783.33= 9170.83 or about 9,171 hours.

In pilot testing, the amount of time to complete the survey did not vary significantly by type of VSP.

**13. Estimates of Respondent’s Cost Burden**

There are no anticipated costs to respondents beyond the employee time expended during completion of the questionnaire. Respondents are not being asked to purchase anything or maintain any services as part of this data collection.

**14. Cost to the Federal Government**

The total cost to the Federal government for the NCVSP data collection is \$3,117,399, paid by BJS and OVC. This is the cost associated with conducting the Census with a roster of 30,000 VSPs, analyzing the data, and producing BJS reports of the findings. The contractor costs include the amount spent on outreach efforts, project management, data monitoring and processing, and data documentation. However, the largest portion of the cost – about \$2.2 million – is the amount needed for data collection. The project is expected to take about two years, beginning in FY 2016 and ending in FY 2018.

Budget:

Items	Costs	totals
BJS Personnel		
GS-14 Statistician (base: 108,887), 20%	\$21,777	
GS-13 Statistician (base: 92,145), 20%	\$18,429	
GS-11 Statistician (base: 64,650), 20%	\$12,930	
GS-15 Statistician (base: 128,082), 5%	\$6,404	
GS-13 Editor, 10%	\$9,215	
Other editorial staff	\$5,000	
Senior BJS management	\$6,000	

Salaries Subtotal:	\$79,755	
Fringe benefits (28% of salaries)	\$22,331	
Salary & Fringe subtotal:	\$102,086	
Other administrative costs of salary and fringe (15%)	\$15,313	
Total staff costs		\$117,399
Rand/NORC/NCVC Subtotal:	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
<b>Total Estimated Costs:</b>		<b>\$3,117,399</b>

### 15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

Not applicable, this is the first NCVSP to be fielded.

### 16. Publication and Project Timeline

Pending OMB approval, the NCVSP data collection is scheduled to begin in September, 2016. The data collection agent will clean and verify data on a continual basis over the course of data collection, and final data cleaning will take place in spring 2017. The data will be delivered to BJS by the fall of 2017.

Analytical work will begin in fall 2017 with plans to release the first BJS summary report by early 2018. The first report will provide an estimate of the number of primary VSPs identified across the nation and summarize the broad range of VSP types, the services provided by VSPs, the crime types for which victims sought services in the past year, and the range of VSP's staffing sizes and organizational budgets. The second report, released shortly after the first, will compare the structures, services, staffing, and budgets of federally funded VSPs and non-federally funded VSPs, and will examine whether VSPs differ in their concerns about staffing and funding stability depending on whether they receive federal funding. A third special BJS report will be released in late-2018 and will integrate victim service data from the Census with data on victimization rates from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the FBI's law enforcement statistics.

The dataset, and supporting documentation, will be made available for download without charge at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and at Data.gov. It is expected the data will be available to the public for download at the time the first report is released. VSP's information can be used by victim service stakeholders to develop resources (e.g., online directories, electronic apps) for VSPs and the victims in need of VSP services.

The anticipated schedule is as follows:

January, 2016	Pilot test completed
September, 2016	Data collection begins
March, 2017	Data collection ends
June, 2017	Data delivery to BJS
March, 2018	Initial report release/data file published

**17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate**  
Not Applicable

**18. Exception(s) to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**  
Not Applicable