



# Office of Victim Services

The following is a **Broadcast Email** to all OVS Listserv Subscribers:

## U.S. SENATE PASSES "VOCA FIX" - JULY 20, 2021

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**New York State** is elated to share that just this afternoon the U.S. Senate passed **H.R. 1652 VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021 ("VOCA Fix")**, in a unanimous bipartisan vote! The bill now heads to President Biden.

Passage of the VOCA Fix represents a monumental victory for the future of victim services both nationally and throughout New York. Sustainable funding to the Crime Victims Fund is critical to ensure that victims of crime are met with high-quality services that are trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and reflective of diverse communities. The increase in victims seeking assistance amid the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a real, tangible need for the continued investment in services.

Changes to the VOCA statute will provide for increased funding and flexibility in the management of VOCA awards, including:

- directing federal criminal settlements from non-prosecution and deferred prosecution agreements, currently deposited into the General Treasury, into the Fund;
- increasing the percentage that state compensation programs may be reimbursed from 60 percent to 75 percent;
- providing the U.S. Attorney General the ability to issue no cost extensions on VOCA awards;
- giving states the ability to waive the local match for VOCA assistance grants for the duration of the pandemic; and,
- providing additional flexibility for compensation programs to provide support for victims even if they do not interact with law enforcement prior to requesting assistance.
- removing the restitution recovery penalty from annual state compensation certification forms.

New York is especially thankful for the steadfast support and efforts of Majority Leader Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand for their leadership. The VOCA Fix bill is now before President Biden for his anticipated signature.

**Thank you** to the many individuals, agencies, and victim service allies who have supported the VOCA Fix and our efforts to move this across the finish line. We are grateful for your partnership and critical work to support victims and survivors of crime in New York State.

### **Elizabeth Cronin, Esq.**

Director

*She/Her/Hers*

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