

# OVS Outreach

## Spring 2018

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### From the Director's Desk



New York State will join the nation the week of April 8 to mark National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The theme, *Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims*, emphasizes the importance of inclusion in victim services: how can we

work together to better serve all crime victims and ensure that they have access to services and support. While we have made incredible strides over the last few decades, much work remains to ensure that every victim has access to the help they need.

At the fall conference, OVS focused attention on underserved populations and how to better assist these crime victims. Since then, we have continued this work and next month, OVS will be hosting a half-day summit focused on male survivors of sexual assault: individuals who often do not self-identify as victims, report the crimes, or receive assistance to help heal from the trauma.

*Seeking Solutions: Starting the Conversation about Male Sexual Assault*, is scheduled from **12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17**, at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Albany.

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### Save the Date

**Seeking Solutions:  
Starting the Conversation about  
Male Sexual Assault**

**Tuesday, April 17, 2018**

**Featuring  
Charles M. Blow**



**Office of  
Victim Services**

Providing help, healing and hope to crime victims since 1966.

## From the Director's Desk *(continued)*

The event will feature keynote remarks from New York Times best-selling author and award winning Op-Ed columnist, Charles M. Blow, followed by a panel of survivors and a roundtable discussion by experts with audience participation. The goal for the day is to identify solutions for effective outreach and victim assistance. Space will be limited and registration is required ([seeking\\_solutions.eventbrite.com](https://seeking_solutions.eventbrite.com)). For further information, please contact Helen Hines at [helen.hines@OVS.ny.gov](mailto:helen.hines@OVS.ny.gov).

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to crime victims and their families. The world is a better place because of your efforts and OVS is proud to be your partner in this work.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Cronin, Esq.

## Legal Corner

Many people have heard of the [New York State's Son of Sam Law](#), but are not aware of how it aims to help victims or how it came to pass. In 1977, New York was the first state to enact a law preventing a convicted criminal from capitalizing and profiting from their crimes. The law takes its name from the moniker given to serial killer David Berkowitz, who was rumored to be interested in selling his story to a filmmaker. Over time, other states and the federal government have followed New York's lead and enacted their own statutes.

New York's law has two categories of recoverable monies: "profits from a crime" and "funds of a convicted person." Profits from a crime is focused solely on funds received that are directly related to the crime, such as the sale of a criminal's story for a book or movie, while funds of a convicted person are defined as all funds and property received from any source by a person convicted of a crime specified in the law (generally, serious felonies).

All agencies and individuals with knowledge of the existence of funds of a convicted person are legally obligated to notify OVS of the existence of those funds when they exceed \$10,000 (including attorneys' fees and disbursements). This notice

should be in writing and promptly done as soon as the individual or entity is aware of the potential existence of funds of a convicted person. The notice in writing applies similarly for matters involving profits from a crime, but without requiring a monetary threshold. The law requires that funds of a convicted person be held by the notifying entity/individual for 30 days after notifying OVS.

Upon receiving such notification, OVS contacts all qualifying crime victims to inquire whether they want the agency's assistance in securing those profits/funds. Upon written request by a crime victim, OVS obtains a court order to freeze the profits or funds for at least three years, allowing victims to bring lawsuits seeking financial compensation for personal injuries due to the crime.

Since 2001, OVS has frozen more than \$35.5 million of perpetrator assets under the law. While victims are not required to notify the agency of the money they obtained through lawsuits, the law has allowed many individuals to obtain additional compensation for the injuries they have sustained. ■

## National Crime Victims' Rights Week



As noted in “From the Director’s Desk,” New York and the nation will mark the week of April 8 as National Crime Victims’ Rights Week with the theme, “Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims.”

The [2018 NCVRW Resource Guide](#) provides a wealth of free materials to promote the campaign theme, including planning tips, artwork, fact sheets and more. Click on the link above to download the guide and for more information.

And, don’t forget to submit events occurring that week for inclusion in OVS’ online calendar. Complete the online [2018 NCVRW Event Application](#) to announce any event sponsored by your organization or allied organizations in your community. ■

## At a Glance with OVS Grants

OVS has transitioned from an advance payment process to a reimbursement payment process for all its contracts with victim assistance programs and child advocacy centers.

While this is a new process at OVS, it has long been common practice for other state agencies that administer grant funding. The transition has been a smooth one to date.

Grantees are encouraged to review the [Reimbursement Webinar PowerPoint Presentation](#), which includes information on supporting documentation required to process a reimbursement request, critical deadlines and more, and the corresponding [Reimbursement Webinar Question and Answers](#) document for more information on this topic. ■



### OVS Reimbursement Process

[Click to Download PowerPoint](#)

## Self-Care for Victim Assistance Professionals

As victim advocates and service providers, your focus is on assisting victims and their families who may be suffering from trauma-related issues and seeking solutions for their well-being. But this often comes at the cost of your own well-being. It’s important to be mindful about maintaining your own optimal physical and emotional health. Check out the [five things](#) everyone should know about stress from the National Institute of Health. ■

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed throughout May since 1949. An estimated one in five Americans live with a mental health condition and millions more, such as family and friends, are affected by it.

This year's theme is "Whole Body Mental Health," which focuses on increasing understanding of how the body's various systems impact mental health. For more information, visit these links:

- [www.mentalhealth.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.gov)
- [www.nami.org/mentalhealthmonth](http://www.nami.org/mentalhealthmonth)
- [www.samhsa.gov/children](http://www.samhsa.gov/children) ■



## Comp Chat

Mass casualty events are difficult to comprehend and yet victim assistance professionals are faced with responding to them more and more frequently. We have seen mass shootings at schools, concerts, movie theaters, nightclubs and military bases across the country. Here in New York, we have responded to the terror attacks on the World Trade Center, the American Civic Association shooting that claimed 13 lives in 2009, and other large-scale incidents with multiple victims.

In these instances, responding programs often learn that victims may be from all over the world. This presents a unique, but not insurmountable, challenge because other partners, including the FBI, also may be available to assist in the response.

We learn from each event and recognize that every scenario is different. The needs, support and services vary from event to event, but they are alike in that victims, their families and the community need us at that moment and perhaps for months and years to come. It is critical that all of us in this field be prepared and ready to respond to these events and work together:

- **Learn** who your partners are in your communities and work with them. Contact your local emergency management office and make sure you are part of the conversation on disaster response. Last year, OVS advised all county emergency management offices that the agency is available to assist in a mass casualty situation, provided them with a list of programs in their communities and urged them to include these programs as a valuable resource. Many of your colleagues have responded to these incidents and were key to assisting first responders.
- **Make** sure that individuals, municipalities, agencies and organizations in your communities are aware of what OVS can provide: burial expenses; relocation; loss of earnings or support; counseling and medical expense reimbursement; transportation to medical appointments, among all the other assistance. Importantly, they need to know that your program can assist victims with filing for compensation and referral for other services.

## Comp Chat *(continued)*

OVS continues to work on its mass casualty planning and preparation and needs to partner with you to ensure that we are ready to respond quickly. As we have learned through each experience, working side by side with victim assistance programs in the affected community is the best way to provide the most services to crime victims at the most critical time. ■

## Upcoming OVS Trainings

All trainings are **free** and many are offered at locations across the state to make it easier for programs to send staff. Additional detailed information, including specific training registration guidelines, will be announced in the weeks leading up to each training.

Mark your calendars for the following trainings:

**Seeking Solutions: Starting the Conversation about Male Sexual Assault** – A half-day summit for victim advocates, law enforcement and allied professionals to address the issues facing male sexual assault survivors and the solutions needed to improve services and assistance.

- **12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 17 in Albany**

**Forensic Interviewing of Children Training** – A one-week, 40-hour certification training for child interviewers from OVS-funded Child Advocacy Centers who have responsibility for initial forensic interviews of children.

- **Monday, June 25 through Friday, June 29 in Albany**

# TRAINING

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Victim Services



**Victim Services Academy Trainings** – An introductory training for victim advocates on victim rights strategies, trauma-informed care, self-care and victim services technical assistance.

- **Wednesday, July 25 through Friday, July 27 in Albany**
- **Wednesday, August 1 through Friday, Aug. 3 in Manhattan**
- **Wednesday, Aug. 22 through Friday, Aug. 24 in Rochester**
- **Thursday, Sept. 13 and Friday, Sept. 14 in the Hudson Valley (*supervisors only*)**

Additional details are available on the [OVS Training page](#) and don't forget to download the official [OVS Training App!](#) ■

Please note, all training dates and topics are tentative and subject to change.

Don't forget to subscribe to the NEW [OVS Training Listserv](#) for inside access to OVS sponsored training announcements and routine victim services training opportunities! ■

**Subscribe Now!**