

OVS Outreach

Spring 2019

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From the Director's Desk



National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) will be observed this year, April 7 – 13. The theme, "**Honoring Our Past. Creating Hope for the Future**" celebrates the progress made by those before us as we look to a

future of crime victim services that is even more inclusive, accessible and trauma-informed. While the field of crime victims' assistance has made huge strides since its formation over 50 years ago, much work remains to ensure that every victim has access to services and support.

NCVRW was established in 1981 as a way to highlight victims' rights, the effect victimization has on individuals, their families, friends and communities, and to promote laws, policies and programs. But it also presents an opportunity to honor the service of dedicated professionals like all of you who toil often long hours handling difficult cases to assist those survivors.



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OVS 2019 Conference: Call for Workshop Presentation Proposals

The New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS) invites proposals for workshop presentations at the OVS 2019 Conference, Innovation in Victim Services: Transforming the Field through Creative Solutions to be held November 19 - 21, 2019 at the Hilton Albany Downtown in Albany, NY.



Continue to [Page 3](#) to learn how to submit a proposal. OVS encourages you to share this with colleagues who also may be interested in submitting a proposal.



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From the Director's Desk *(continued)*

Programs throughout the State commemorate NCVRW by holding events, vigils, candlelight ceremonies, poster contests, walks of hope, speaker series and many other programs designed to bring attention to victimization and victim rights. Please check out the list of events on the [OVS Events Calendar](#) (you can also fill out our [2019 Events Calendar Submission Form](#) for publishing your own event on this calendar). OVS staff attend many of these events throughout the week to emphasize our commitment to assisting victims and our commitment to supporting programs.



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.

OVS Partners with SUNY's Got Your Back



Elizabeth Cronin and mascot Hugo the Hawk present a box of bags to Safe Homes of Orange County

The Office of Victim Services is proud to partner with the State University of New York for SUNY's Got Your Back - an opportunity for students, faculty and other volunteers to create comfort bags for victims and survivors of sexual and interpersonal violence. The program was launched in 2016 and has continued annually with events at each of SUNY's 64 campuses. The personal care and comfort items are funded through a Victims of Crime Act grant, administered by OVS.

Director Elizabeth Cronin is attending several of this year's events to help spread the message of how OVS can help victims. Her first stop was Wednesday, Feb. 27 at SUNY New Paltz where volunteers stuffed more than 2,000 bags that will go to domestic violence agencies and hospitals in the Hudson Valley.

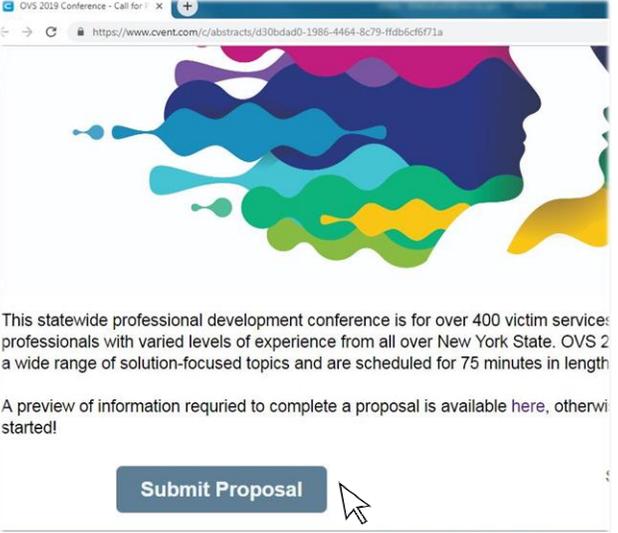
"We are very concerned about the lives and the healing of all victims across the State of New York," Cronin told the crowd. "We are particularly concerned about how our young people are able to cope when they have been victimized by crime, especially with sexual assault and domestic violence. We are so proud to be able to partner with SUNY and come up with ideas for not only how to get services to people, but also how to provide them with items that can help them in their healing process."

SUNY's Got Your Back takes place at state colleges through the end of April and will wrap up in August with the Dicks Sporting Goods Open: SUNY's Got Your Back Special Edition. Special guests at some of the events include DJ and activist Zeke Thomas and civil rights activist and original founder of the "Me Too" movement, Tarana Burke. Links to upcoming SUNY's Got Your Back events are on [Page 5](#). ■

OVS 2019 Conference: Call for Workshop Presentation Proposals *(continued)*

Workshop proposal submission information for the OVS 2019 Conference:

- Visit the [OVS 2019 Conference Call for Presentations](#) webpage
- Scroll down, click “Submit Proposal” and create a secure account
- A preview of information required to complete a proposal is available [here](#)
- Deadline for proposal submission: **Tuesday, April 30, 2019**
- Presenters will be notified no later than July 31, 2019 if their proposal is selected
- OVS will waive registration fees and cover the cost of travel for selected conference presenters
- For questions, please email training@ovs.ny.gov



This statewide professional development conference is for over 400 victim service professionals with varied levels of experience from all over New York State. OVS 2019 offers a wide range of solution-focused topics and are scheduled for 75 minutes in length.

A preview of information required to complete a proposal is available [here](#), otherwise started!

Submit Proposal

About OVS

The New York State Office of Victim Services provides compensation for innocent victims and comprehensive support services to crime victims and advocates on their behalf for

OVS wants your expertise. Please spread the word and consider submitting a proposal to present at this exciting event. ■

OVS Grants Unit Staff Joining NYS Crime Victims' Task Force

The OVS Grants unit is responsible for the administration of the Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim and Witness Assistance funds. The work in this unit is focused on the funding of direct services to crime victims via a network of community-based programs, part of OVS's three-tiered mission. While the Grants unit is not as directly involved with victims as other units, staff and supervisors recognize that it is important not to lose sight of the Agency's mission. Members of the grants unit are encouraged to attend many victim and direct service-focused workshops and seminars. Grants staff is often seen attending many National Crime Victims' Rights Week events.



In addition to attending Crime Victims' Rights Week events, two staff members have been given the opportunity to join the NYS Crime Victims' Task Force. The Task Force was founded in 1988. Their mission is to increase public awareness of the effects of crime on the individual, family and community. They plan commemorative and public awareness events during National Crime Victims' Rights Week with a heavy focus on the New York State Crime Victim Memorial Brick Ceremony. They also hold trainings and promote activities and programs that encourage the healing of victims from the effects of crime. Membership in this task force consists of

citizens and organizations both public and private that advocate for and support the rights of victims of crime. The 2019 Brick Ceremony is being held on Friday, June 14 from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. at the Empire Plaza in Albany. All programs and organizations are welcome to become members of the Task Force and encouraged to attend the Brick Ceremony. New bricks honoring victims are laid each year and can be visited by families anytime. For more information please visit: <http://nycrimevictimstaskforce.org/> ■

Helping Victims of Human Trafficking

The Office of Victim Services sits on the Governor's Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking. The Task Force's goals are to recommend interagency protocols and best practices for training and outreach to law enforcement and service providers, gather data on the number of victims and the effectiveness of the laws related to human trafficking, and to evaluate ways to increase public awareness about trafficking and make recommendations on those approaches. As part of its mission, the Task Force developed a Human Trafficking Awareness training on identifying and assisting potential victims of human trafficking. OVS has used this training to train its staff internally and is currently in the process of developing a training plan that will target all its VAPs, as well a refresher course for new OVS staff.

OVS currently provides funding to over 220 local victim assistance programs (VAPs); 72 of which, through 94 contracts, provided services to 2,269 human trafficking victims in fiscal year 2017-2018.

Generally speaking, to be eligible for assistance from OVS, an individual must report the crime to law enforcement. In lieu of a report to law enforcement, OVS accepts a notice of confirmation from the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to verify a human trafficking victim's status as a crime victim. OVS continues to operate with a rebuttable presumption that human trafficking victims have suffered physical injury for purposes of establishing their eligibility for crime victims' compensation. In fiscal year 2017-2018, OVS received 24 personal injury, two death and one essential personal property claims for human trafficking victims.

The agency continues to encourage its staff and VAPs to participate in trainings to increase their understanding of human trafficking, and OVS plans to use its website, National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April each year, and other outreach opportunities to raise public awareness. ■

Physical Injury Exceptions: OVS Compensation Claims Clarification

Currently, there is a very high volume of claims coming in to OVS which are being misfiled as Essential Personal Property (EPP) Claims. This confusion is specifically centered around our exception offenses and DV cases, which should primarily be filed as Personal Injury (PI) Claims. Remember, *Claims should always be filed based on the crime committed against the victim, and not based on what they are seeking.* As a general rule, PI and PI exception claims have a broader range of eligibility, so if the claimant is eligible, this is the claim type we should be aiming for.

Since the confusion mostly crops up concerning cases with no clear physical injury, it can be tricky. Try and remember a couple key guiding rules for filing this type of claim:

- Use your [Exceptions to Personal Physical Injury Guidelines](#). Every charge listed here will require the claim to be filed and addressed as a PI claim. Keep an eye out for the common ones, as some of these crimes are very frequently misfiled as EPP (Robbery, Criminal Contempt, Harassment).
- DV cases are usually PI or PI exception. Even if there is no clear injury listed, exception offenses are often seen on the police report or family offense petition. If the correct degree or sub-section isn't present to qualify as an exception to PI, we can review the circumstances of the incident and try to determine if an eligible charge could have been applied.

Physical Injury Exceptions: OVS Compensation Claims Clarification *(continued)*

The final hurdle, and the most misleading part, is on the portal itself. Claim type is determined by a very simple drop down, allowing you to select if the victim was either injured or lost essential personal property. Try to remember that selecting injured will be accurate for many cases without an actual injury. All PI exception charges, most DV cases, and all sexual offenses should be filed for as "The victim was injured".

Tell us about the crime.

* The victim due to this crime

Additional compensation claim guidance can be found on the [OVS VAP Training Center](#) webpage under *Advocate Guidelines for Compensation*. ■

SUNY's Got Your Back – Spring 2019 Events

Throughout this Spring, the [SUNY's Got Your Back](#) volunteers will assemble comfort bags at programs across SUNY's campuses and at sporting and cultural events, where we educate students and community members about resources available to victims of crime.

Click on Campus Link to register:

- April 2nd: [SUNY Cobleskill](#)
- April 3rd: [Niagara County Community College](#)
- April 4th: [SUNY Geneseo](#)
- April 5th: [Genesee Community College](#)
- April 9th: [SUNY Morrisville](#)
- April 10th: [College of Environmental Science and Forestry](#)
- April 11th: [Maritime College](#)
- April 15th: [Onondaga Community College](#)
- April 16th: [Farmingdale State College](#)
- April 17th: [SUNY Ulster](#)
- April 23rd: [The College at Brockport](#)
- April 25th: [FIT](#)
- April 26th: [Purchase College](#)
- April 29th: [SUNY Old Westbury](#)
- April 30th: [Rockland Community College](#)



SUNY's Got Your Back Project Team can be reached at GotYourBack@SUNY.edu with any questions. ■

OVS welcomes original content ideas for each issue of *OVS Outreach*. If you or your organization is interested in submitting an article for a future issue, email ovsoutreach@ovs.ny.gov for more information.

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E-Newsletter