

Video Script: “A Message from the Inspector General: Review of the Office of Justice Programs’ Efforts to Address Challenges in Administering the Crime Victims Fund Programs,” July 2019

Hello, I’m Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, we released a report that assesses DOJ’s administration of the Crime Victims Fund, or CVF. DOJ is not only responsible for prosecuting federal crimes. It also plays a critical role in providing services to crime victims. As part of that effort, the Office of Justice Programs, or OJP, distributes CVF funds to states to implement programs like legal aid, crisis intervention, counseling, and shelter for crime victims.

The OIG, conducts audits of CVF programs, to ensure that funds for victim services are used properly, and are not wasted or poorly managed.

In recent years, Congress has significantly increased the amount of CVF funds available for distribution – from \$745 million in fiscal year 2014 to over \$4.4 billion last year. Since 2016, we’ve issued nearly 50 CVF-focused reports. Today’s report provides an analysis of the systemic issues we’ve identified as a result of that work.

Among our findings is that some states used the recent increases in funds effectively to enhance victim programs and support new initiatives, like extending services in rural areas.

But, other states struggled to adjust to the increase in award amounts, didn’t plan effectively, and had millions of dollars available as spending deadlines approached. We advised OJP that this created significant risk for rushed, wasteful spending, and we encouraged OJP to help states develop responsible spending plans.

Additionally, as the CVF program has grown, states have been able to increase the number of direct service providers they fund each year, from about 4,000 in fiscal year 2015 to now over 6,000 providers. This creates more opportunity to serve crime victims, but we found OJP needs to help states conduct more effective oversight of these providers.

Our report includes several other findings about steps that can be taken to improve the management of this very important fund.

To read the full report, please visit our website, oig.justice.gov, or go to Oversight.gov. Thank you for joining us.

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