



# OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

## U.S. Department of Justice

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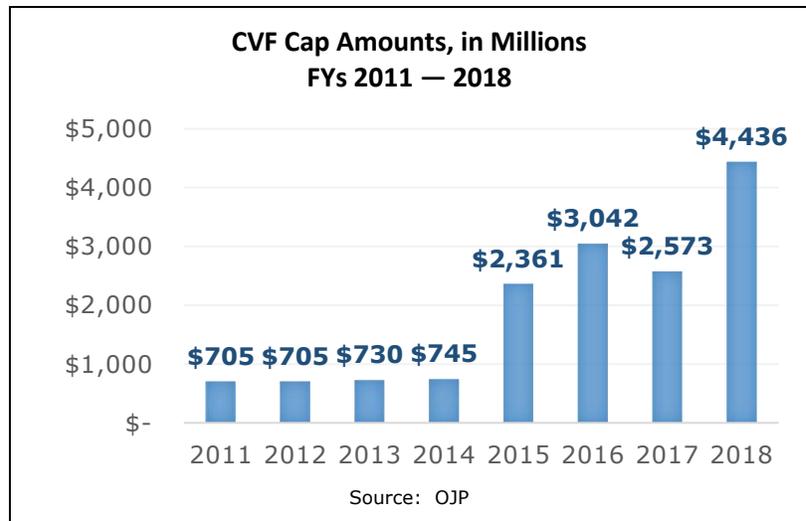
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### DOJ OIG Releases Review of the Office of Justice Programs' Efforts to Address Challenges in Administering the Crime Victims Fund Programs

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report examining the Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) administration of the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). The CVF serves as a major funding source for victim services throughout the country, primarily through OJP grants to state-administered programs that provide services to the victims of crime.

In FY 2015, Congress more than tripled the cap on CVF funds available for distribution, from \$745 million to over \$2.3 billion. In FY 2018, that number further increased to \$4.4 billion.

Since Congress increased the funds available from the CVF, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has issued nearly 50 CVF-related audit reports. Our collective CVF work demonstrates that the funding increases provide additional support to the crime victim community, but also present management challenges for OJP and the states and territories that receive the bulk of these awards.



Today's report identifies several areas in which OJP can improve its administration of CVF programs. We also highlight promising outcomes and continuing challenges experienced by the states on account of the CVF funding increases. OJP has undertaken several steps to better understand the needs in the crime victim field, but must continue to enhance its guidance and monitoring of state CVF programs to better address recurring challenges.

For example:

- In response to the substantial increase in funding, certain states adapted their existing practices, sought new ways to reach victims that had been historically underserved, and developed strategies to responsibly spend the increased disbursement of CVF funds. These strategies are detailed in the report.
- However, some states had large grant award balances in the months just prior to the award expiration deadline. These balances increased the risk of wasteful spending as deadlines approached. We encouraged OJP to analyze state spending plans and program execution, assess the causes for any implementation delays, and assist states in developing and executing future spending plans.
- We determined states would also benefit from more OJP training and guidance, particularly in the areas of financial compliance. Additionally, OJP needs to help states better assess risk, design monitoring strategies, and achieve effective oversight of their pass-through subrecipient victim assistance service providers, as this has been a frequent shortcoming among the states we have audited.
- We further found that standard grant resources and requirements are sometimes unclear, and would be improved by customized CVF materials or explanations from OJP to help the states better achieve compliance and effectively implement their victim programs.
- Additionally, we identified several improvements OJP can make in its performance reporting process to reduce the risk of inaccurate, misleading, or overstated performance data on the effect of the compensation and assistance programs.

We found that OJP has helped states achieve the core objectives of CVF grant programs, though there are several ways in which these efforts have fallen short and can be improved. Our report found that certain proposed changes to OJP's operating budget and organizational structure may add to OJP's oversight responsibilities and challenges.

The OIG made 14 recommendations to improve how OJP addresses challenges in administering the CVF. OJP agreed with all of the recommendations.

Today's report is available on the OIG's website under "Recent Reports" and at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2019/a1934.pdf>.

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