

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE OF VICTIM
SERVICES AND JUSTICE GRANTS**



FY 2026 Budget Oversight Hearing
Testimony of

Jennifer L. Porter
Director

Before the
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
The Honorable Brooke Pinto, Chairperson
Council of the District of Columbia

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9 a.m.
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Room 412
Washington, D.C. 20004



Good morning, Chairwoman Pinto, members, and staff of the Committee. I am Jennifer L. Porter, the Director of the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG). I am joined today by John Nitz, Agency Fiscal Officer. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

The District is facing yet another challenging fiscal year and agencies have had to make unprecedented decisions to sustain the delivery of core services. For FY26, Mayor Bowser's proposed budget for OVSJG is \$83,373,718.79, which includes \$65 million in local funds and 40 FTEs. Twenty-seven of these FTEs are internal to OVSJG and 13 are intradistrict FTEs who serve residents at various District agencies.

The Mayor's *Grow DC* budget includes investments that focus on public safety and increasing revenue to support city services and programs. These crucial investments include the important role OVSJG plays in healing through community-based and trauma informed restoration.

OVSJG's budget includes investments for renewed funding for victim services, Sexual Assault Victims' Rights Amendment Act (SAVRAA) sexual assault services, and Justice Grants. The budget allocates:

- \$50 million in Victim Services;
- \$19.8 million in Justice Grants;
- \$10.5 million for Access to Justice; and
- \$1.6 million in Agency Administration.

Over 95 percent of OVSJG's budget is for grants, including grants to community-based organizations and District agencies providing services to victims of crime and healing for returning citizens. The projected FY26 budget for the Justice Grants programs and operations is \$19.8 million. This includes a \$3.1 million projected increase in federal grants. The reentry budget will be granted to service providers to conduct individual needs assessments and meet the varied needs of returning citizens to assist with reintegration, avoid homelessness, and reduce recidivism. Justice Grants funding includes family reunification supports, pre-release services, and connection to services that the supporting community of individuals leaving incarceration need for success including parenting classes, financial management, and resources that better position individuals before they are released.

The FY26 proposed budget reflects specific investments in services for victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, life-threatening intentional trauma, and crime victims in general. In addition to a recurring \$3 million investment for funding of SAVRAA, the budget also includes an increase of \$2.6 million in Special Purpose Revenue funds from the Crime Victims Assistance Fund. The local victim service budget reflects an investment of \$40.5 million for victim/survivor service providers to continue to create and implement accessible and comprehensive victim services, including crisis intervention, advocacy, case management, trauma-informed mental health services, shelter, and other services that promote healing.

The Targeted Services budget this year includes:

- \$707,000 for the Private Security Camera Incentive Program, including the renewal of the 1 FTE for additional program support.
- \$500,000 for the Community Capacity Building/Community Capacity Grant for targeted training, technical assistance, and funding for community-based organizations (CBOs) to enhance their ability to effectively manage District grant funding.

In closing, I would like to thank Mayor Bowser for her support of the mission of OVSJG and our shared DC values of healing to prevent trauma and centering survivors of all crime types through District investments. The resources allocated to our agency play a critical role in supporting healing, safety, and justice for residents of the District of Columbia. The Council and this Committee are critical allies in this effort, thank you for your support of OVSJG.

My team and I are available to answer any questions.