

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Jennifer Grigoraitis, 617-586-1350
Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance

Emalie Gainey, 617-727-2543
Office of Attorney General Maura Healey

**AG HEALEY AND MOVA ANNOUNCE \$65 MILLION IN FREE SERVICES
FOR CRIME VICTIMS AT ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY**

Boston: Attorney General Healey and the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) announced today that \$65 million in grant funds have been awarded to community and state government-based programs across Massachusetts that provide free services for crime victims. As Chair of the Victim and Witness Assistance Board (VWAB) that governs MOVA, AG Healey made the announcement during an annual awards ceremony at the State House kicking off Victim Rights Month in Massachusetts. The funding marks a significant increase in Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) dollars that will enhance services at 124 programs across Massachusetts serving victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, homicide, child abuse, drunk driving, and other violent crimes. The programs identified in each county help victims access services such as behavioral health supports, advocacy, and financial, legal, and housing assistance.

“This year we have seen so many courageous survivors come forward to tell their stories, from students impacted by gun violence to those speaking out about sexual assault,” said AG Healey. “Today, and every day, we honor all victims and survivors as well as those who dedicate their lives to supporting them. We are proud to announce \$65 million in resources and services to help expand this critical work.”

The announcement took place as part of the annual Victim Rights Awards Ceremony that honors leaders, legislators, advocates, and survivors who have advanced the rights of crime victims. Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito proclaimed April as Victim Rights Month in Massachusetts and several individuals and organizations were recognized for their efforts on behalf of victims. Those honored included: Nancy Alterio, Director of the Disabled Person’s Protection Commission; Boston Medical Center’s Community Violence Response Team; and Peggie Ritzer, mother of homicide victim Colleen Ritzer.

“Over the past year, our nation has begun listening to the voices of survivors in a new way,” said Liam Lowney, MOVA’s Executive Director. “The voices of the students in Parkland and the #metoo movement have shown the broad scope of violence, the devastating consequences it can have, and the importance of supporting those who have been impacted by it. The increased funding we are announcing today will ensure professionals are available in each community of Massachusetts to provide survivors with the help that they need.”

VOCA funding comes through an award from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime. Funds are secured from non-taxpayer fines levied on criminal offenders in the federal courts and are administered by MOVA.

A list of the SFY 19 and SFY 20 VOCA awards can be found at:

https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/04/06/FY%2019%20%2020%20Victim%20of%20Crime%20Act%20%28VOCA%29%20Funding%20Award_0.pdf

For further information regarding programs available to assist crime victims in Massachusetts contact MOVA at (617) 586-1340 or visit their website at www.mass.gov/mova.

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