



# Trauma-informed Victim Services

Victim outreach increased by **9%** in 2016

The SFDA office of Victim Services spearheaded the Mass Casualty steering committee with the **9** Bay Area counties and worked to develop a plan for each county

Helping victims to recover from the impact of crime is not merely a “service” of the SFDA, it is a fundamental public safety strategy.

## Victim Outreach

In 2016, the number of victims of violent crime served in the SFDA office was a staggering 7,000. Since DA Gascón took office in 2011, the number of victims we serve has increased over 21%. We are accomplishing this by meeting our victims where they are: going into vulnerable communities, reaching victims at community-based organizations where they feel comfortable, and conducting public awareness campaigns to reach traditionally underserved victims, such as the elderly, limited English proficient, LGBT, and victims of community violence. Our Victim Advocates have significantly expanded their capacity to provide a holistic approach that enables them to meet a wide range of victims’ needs, bringing a “parallel justice” approach to the services that supports both offenders and victims in our criminal justice system.

In response to the growing need to provide immediate crisis intervention and support to victims in the most critical moments, we are instituting new trauma-informed mental health crisis services that will provide short-term interventions for victims of crime. We will continue to provide referral resources with the goal of helping to make their lives whole again.

## Repeat Victimization

The impact of victimization on future crimes is significant, and well documented. Research has established that crime leaves victims vulnerable to more crime. This phenomenon – repeat victimization – has been demonstrated across diverse categories of crime, including sex offenses, assaults and threats, and burglaries. Victimization also leads to future offending, and back to victimization. Children who have been victims of abuse and neglect are more likely to commit delinquent and criminal acts; indeed, among teenagers, the strongest predictor of future criminal behavior is a prior experience as a crime victim.



# Trauma-informed Victim Services

Victim advocacy increased from **21** to **30** advocates in 2016

In 2016 SFDA Victim Services was awarded **numerous** grants which include; elder abuse, mass casualty and human trafficking

## Community Partners

Our approach to victim services has led to a new community partnership in one of our most high-crime, high-violence communities: San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point. Through a US Department of Justice/ Bureau of Justice Assistance Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) grant, the SFDA is partnering with community stakeholders, including law enforcement, City agencies, nonprofits, and residents, to reduce crime by helping community members to heal from exposure to crime and violence. Through this multi-year project, aptly called "Safer Together," the SFDA is helping service providers to bring a trauma-informed approach to their work, develop new services to fill critical gaps, and strengthen relationships between the community and law enforcement.

## Legislation

Finally, our office has spearheaded legislation to reform California's Victims Compensation laws and process to remove a myriad of obstacles facing victims and witnesses who seek treatment and services to help them heal and recover from victimization. Signed into law in September 2015, SB 519 makes 22 changes to the law, including ensuring domestic violence victims are no longer barred from compensation if they fail to cooperate with law enforcement at the scene of the crime, ensuring that crime victims receive compensation application materials in their native language, eliminating the previous bar on compensation for most parolees and probationers, and adds new provisions to keep up with changing crimes and technology.

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