

## **B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

### **1. Universe and Respondent Selection**

The 2023 National Census of Victim Service Providers (NCVSP) will be a complete enumeration of the approximately 17,000 active entities included on the national roster of VSPs developed for this data collection. The roster is a list of all civilian (non-military) entities nationwide that provide services to victims as the primary function of the organization or through dedicated programs or personnel.

Based on the work done in preparation for the 2017 NCVSP, “Victim Service Provider” is: “any civilian organization or entity which provides services or assistance to victims of crime or abuse.” The team identified two large categories of VSPs: (a) primary VSPs, or providers principally functioning to provide services to crime victims; and (b) secondary VSPs, or providers who assist crime victims as one of several functions but have a program, center, or specific staff dedicated to serving crime victims. Within these categories of primary and secondary VSPs, there are a range of different types of VSPs, including government agencies, hospitals, campus organizations, faith-based and nonprofit entities, and informal groups such as survivor networks.

With this broad definition in mind, the research team began to compile an all-inclusive, national list of VSPs. The team first gathered lists of federal grantees and subgrantees who received funding to provide victim services. Federal funding sources included VOCA, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Office of Trafficking in Persons (OTIP), Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), and Administration for Native Americans (ANA) funding. The contractor de-duplicated the lists. Initially, a total of 16,652 records were received from the federal grant providers, including the OVC, OVW, and OTIP grantees.

Other BJS data collections that collect information on victim service provision were also included in the national list, specifically the 2018 Census of Medical Examiners and Coroners, the 2018 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, the 2019 Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities, and 2020 National Survey of Prosecutors.

Expert panel members were also asked to provide their lists of providers or assist in gathering state and local lists from their members. These included the National Children’s Alliance, the National Association of Victim Assistance in Corrections, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, and the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Project partners also collected lists of VSPs. NOVA contacted their membership to obtain lists of VSPs operating in each of the 50 states to ensure those VSP organizations not receiving federal funds are in the frame. JRSA contacted additional national associations representing VSPs to obtain their lists of providers. Examples of national organizations included Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the National Association of Parents of Murdered Children. Project staff at NOVA and JRSA also identified other VSP lists and directories available online and cleaned those for inclusion in the frame.

Finally, in an effort to reach VSPs from provider types that do not have directories, email invitations to be added to the frame were circulated to providers by or in collaboration with the National Center on Elder Abuse, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the Clery Center, United Against Slavery, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Table 5 details the entity lists incorporated into the NCVSP roster.

The goal of this effort was to collect all VSPs regardless of their organization type and source of funding. The VSPs on the lists were combined and de-duplicated to ensure VSPs were only on the list once. This de-duplication effort reduced the initial total of 31,339 VSPs (shown in Table 4) to approximately 20,000 VSPs. Furthermore, this final roster will be compared to the sample of VSPs from the 2019 NSVSP to determine the level of overlap and if there are types of VSPs missing from the 2023 roster. We decided to compare to the 2019 NSVSP instead of the 2017 NCVSP because it's more recent. We also employed the same methods in 2017 and 2023 for updating the roster (gathering federal, state, and local lists) and therefore expect these new lists to be current.

Of note, the primary focus of the 2023 NCVSP is to better understand characteristics of the universe of primary and secondary VSPs. Many primary and secondary VSPs are easily identifiable because they receive federal funding for victim service provision or are connected to federal agencies such as OVC and OVW in other ways (e.g., through conferences, trainings). In addition, because primary and secondary VSPs have dedicated resources for serving victims, they need to be publicly accessible to victims or connected to victims through some identifiable mechanism such as referrals from other VSPs or law enforcement. Even VSPs that do not want to be geographically located (e.g., domestic violence shelters) or VSPs that only accept referred, substantiated victims tend to have a public profile (e.g., a public PO Box or phone number or website) or are connected to other service providers.

**Table 5. Entity lists incorporated into NCVSP roster**

ENTITY LISTS INCORPORATED INTO NCVSP ROSTER			Number of VSPs
LISTS OBTAINED THROUGH FEDERAL AGENCIES			
Federal Source		Description	
Department of Justice	Office for Victims of Crime	Discretionary Grantees, Human Trafficking Grantees, and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Subgrantees (Oct. 2021 – Jan 2023)	9,974
	Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)	OVW discretionary grantees (Current)	3,926
		Services Training Officers and Prosecutors (STOP) (FY 2021)	2,029
		Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) Subgrantees (FY 2021)	506
	Bureau of Justice Statistics	2018 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies dataset (identifying LEAs with victim services) (2018)	3,854

		2018 Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities dataset (identifying facilities with victim service programs) (2019)	520
		2018 Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices data set (identifying offices with victim service programs) (2018)	199
		2020 National Survey of Prosecutors (identifying offices providing direct victim assistance or referrals) (2020)	377
Department of Health and Human Services	Administration on Children and Families	Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) grantees (Current)	45
		Trafficking Victim Assistance Project (TVAP) grantees (FY 2022)	153
		Administration for Native Americans grantees (Current)	19
<b>TOTAL number of VSPs obtained through federal sources</b>			<b>21,602</b>
<b>LISTS OBTAINED WITH ASSISTANCE OF PROJECT SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS</b>			
<b>Entity</b>	<b>Description</b>		
National Children’s Alliance	Nationwide list of Children’s Advocacy Centers		998
National Association of Victim Assistance in Corrections	Post-Conviction Victim Services		60
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority	Illinois Victim Service Providers		513
National Network to End Domestic Violence	Requested Member Coalitions to provide lists. Lists received:		
	Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault		23
	California Partnership to End Domestic Violence		174
	Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence		25
	Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence		8
	Violence Free Minnesota VSPs		82
	Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault		99
	Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence		62
	Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence		24
	North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence		85
	New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence		34
	Ohio Domestic Violence Network		76
	Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault		55

	Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance	73
<b>TOTAL number of VSPs obtained through SME sources</b>		<b>2,391</b>
<b>LISTS OBTAINED DIRECTLY FROM ENTITIES OR INTERNET</b>		
<b>National Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	
	Mothers Against Drunk Driving	50
	National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children	42
	Anti-Violence Project Members	46
	State Attorneys General, Victim/Witness Assistance Programs	19
	U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Victim Assistance Coordinators	195
	Elder Abuse Service Providers additional listings nationwide	62
	Tribal Service Providers	361
	Additional National Victim Serving Organizations	13
	Mothers Against Drunk Driving	
<b>Subnational Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	
	Alaska Additional VSPs	19
	Alabama Victim Service Providers for Human Trafficking Victims	8
	Alabama Additional VSPs	14
	Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Shelters by City	14
	Victim Rights Arkansas	19
	Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Service Providers	19
	Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence, Program Resource List	125
	California Additional VSPs	52
	Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Providers	81
	Colorado Additional VSPs	25
	Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence, Member List	13
	Washington D.C. Victim Assistance Network	184
	Delaware Victim Service Agencies	115
	Florida Office of the Attorney General	343
	Florida Additional VSPs	11
	Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia, Victim Witness Advocate Contacts	98
	Georgia Additional VSPs	29
	Hawaii Additional VSPs	8

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	Iowa Sexual Abuse Service Providers	63
	Iowa Crime Victim Compensation Division Victim Service Providers	29
	State of Iowa, Community-Based Victim Service Programs	56
	Illinois Additional VSPs	4
	Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence	44
	Fayette County Domestic Violence Resources (Kentucky)	12
	Louisiana District Attorney's Association, Children's Advocacy Centers	14
	Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance	82
	Massachusetts Additional VSPs	6
	Calvert County Sheriff's Office, Victim Service Providers (Maryland)	91
	Maryland College and University Victim Services	6
	Maryland SAFE Programs	22
	Maryland Additional VSPs	6
	Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence	21
	Maine Office of the Attorney General, Victim Service Providers	29
	Michigan Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Victim Advocates	83
	Michigan Additional VSPs	5
	Minnesota Alliance on Crime	55
	Minnesota Office of Justice Programs, Victim Service Provider Directory	198
	Minnesota Forensic Nurses	15
	Mississippi Department of Corrections, Division of Victim Services	31
	Montana State List of Victim Service Providers	70
	Montana Board of Crime Control, Victim Service Providers	67
	Montana Additional VSPs	15
	Native Alliance Against Violence (Oklahoma)	26
	North Carolina Additional VSPs	5
	CAWS North Dakota, Advocacy Centers	24
	Nebraska Crime Commission, Victim Advocacy Program	29
	Justiceworks, UNH, New Hampshire Victim Services Directory	44
	New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault	31
	New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs	13
	New Mexico Additional VSPs	50
	Nevada Victim Service Providers	20
	New York Office for the Prevention of Domestic	181

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	Violence	
	New York Additional VSPs	23
	Ohio Prosecutor-Based Victim Advocacy Programs	141
	Oklahoma Additional VSPs	21
	Pennsylvania Office of Victim Services	250
	Pennsylvania Additional VSPs	29
	Puerto Rico Coordinadora Paz para la Mujer VSP Directory	116
	Rhode Island Helpline	11
	South Carolina 2022 VSP List, Office of the Attorney General	122
	South Carolina Additional VSPs	6
	South Dakota Statewide Victim Service Provider List	50
	South Dakota Network Against Family Violence & Sexual Assault	69
	Tennessee Department of Corrections	33
	TennesseeWorks Service Guide, Domestic Violence Services	77
	Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Victim Resource Directory	1,139
	Texas Department of Public Safety Victim Services Counselors	16
	Utah Office for Victims of Crime, Victim Resource Connect Roster	183
	ACTS Sexual Assault Services (Virginia)	19
	Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, Victims Assistance Directory	136
	Virginia Additional VSPs	8
	Vermont SANE Programs	12
	End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, Tribal Programs	11
	Wisconsin, Child Advocacy Centers, and CASA Programs	26
	Wisconsin Department of Justice, Medical Forensics Programs	53
	Wisconsin Sexual Assault Service Providers	68
	Wisconsin Additional VSPs	6
	West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information & Services	41
	Wyoming Division of Victim Services, SANE, V/W, CASA, and More	49
	Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	35
	<b>TOTAL number of VSPs obtained through other lists received or created</b>	<b>6,162</b>
	<b>Individuals Recruited through Email Outreach</b>	<b>1,184</b>

<b>TOTAL ENTITIES COLLECTED</b>		<b>31,339</b>

## 2. Procedures for collecting information

Data collection for the 2023 NCVSP will involve a series of contacts and nonresponse follow-up activities, emphasizing questionnaire completion via a secure web-based reporting system. BJS will use a multi-mode approach in which two main modalities will be available for the respondents to complete the instrument: web and telephone versions. Respondents will be directed to a web-based format as the primary mode of data collection, since a web-based collection is the preferred means to increase response rates, expedite the data collection process, simplify data verification, and facilitate report preparation. In the 2017 NCVSP, approximately 86% of respondents completed the instrument online, 14% completed the instrument over the phone, and eleven individual VSPs requested the paper version. This suggests that most VSPs are capable of and even prefer to complete the survey online, but that response rates can be increased by offering multiple modes as part of the nonresponse follow-up procedures. The option to complete the survey via phone will be offered to all VSPs with whom telephone contact is made unless they indicate a preference for using the other modality.

The proposed administration plan focuses on addressing the following potential vulnerabilities: low response rate, lengthy data collection, and high ineligibility. Our plan leverages what we know about the VSPs prior to the fielding of the survey by devising administration protocols based on completion and ineligibility rates from the 2017 NCVSP.

All VSPs will be emailed or mailed a prenote from BJS and OVC to the director of the VSP two weeks prior to data collection confirming their contact information and letting them know about the NCVSP and start of data collection (see **Attachment 7**). A formal invitation letter will be sent the first week of September and will announce the start of the 2023 NCVSP data collection (see **Attachment 8**). Each organization or program will receive unique login information and a notification that the web survey is available for completion. VSPs will be asked to complete the survey within one month. In order to maximize efficiency and decrease costs over the long term, the use of a web-based completion mode is emphasized by providing the web URL in the initial contact. In order to assure a high response rate, respondents who fail to complete the web-based questionnaire will still be provided with subsequent opportunities to complete it over the telephone as needed.

VSPs that do not complete the survey but do not refuse to participate will receive a series of follow-up prompts increasing in intensity and cost over time. This approach follows from the Dillman recommendation of a tailored, hierarchical approach to data collection that begins with the least expensive contacting strategy and mode to complete the maximum number of interviews at minimal cost and transitions to more expensive contacts and modes to improve completion rates.<sup>1</sup> Participants who start but do not complete the online survey will receive a

<sup>1</sup> Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). *Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method (3rd ed.)* (3rd. ed.). New Jersey: Wiley.

series of email prompts connecting them to their unfinished survey or be contacted by phone if email prompts do not lead to a completed survey.

Respondents completing the survey via the web instrument will enter their responses directly into the online instrument. Although the web-based questionnaire will include range checks for closed-ended response options during data entry to avoid incorrect responses, the data collection agent will also review frequencies from web survey responses. Any issues will be investigated and resolved. Throughout the remainder of the data collection period, staff will conduct regular data frequency reviews to evaluate the quality and completeness of data captured in both the data entry (i.e., telephone) and web modes.

If a victim service provider contacts BJS or the study team to inquire whether or not their organization is on the frame, the contractor will examine the frame to determine whether the organization is on it. If the VSP is not on the frame, the contractor will add the VSP's information to the frame which will initiate the data collection for that VSP. Additionally, if it comes to the attention of the contractor, by some other source, a VSP is not on the frame, the contractor will obtain the contact information for the organization, add it to the frame which will initiate data collection.

### **3. Methods to Maximize Response**

***Instrument development.*** The design of the 2023 NCVSP questionnaire and the plans for recruiting VSPs are consistent with current leading research on survey design and implementation.<sup>2</sup> The instrument has been designed to be short (15 minutes) and asks fairly broad questions about the VSP entity. All respondents are encouraged to complete the online survey which employs skip patterns to present only applicable questions to respondents. The instrument includes several design elements intended to increase the ease of reading and understanding the questionnaire. First, related questions are grouped together in topical sections. Questions and instructions are presented in a consistent manner on each page in order to allow respondents to comprehend question items more readily. Proper alignment and vertical spacing is also used to help respondents mentally categorize the information on the page and to aid in a neat, well-organized presentation.

***Outreach and recruitment efforts.*** Our recruitment strategies have also been designed to maximize response rates. Because this will be a complete enumeration of all eligible entities on the roster, initial outreach efforts will include broad-scale activities to raise awareness of the survey and promote enthusiasm for its success. The project team also plans to utilize external stakeholders, including OVC and OVW, the expert panel members, entities who provided lists, advocates who volunteered to be involved in response to outreach through NOVA, VOCA administrators, and others to encourage and increase cooperation among VSPs. This is expected to be particularly helpful in legitimizing the proposed NCVSP which is important because this is the second time the federal government is surveying all VSPs. Working through trusted

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<sup>2</sup> Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). *Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method (3rd ed.)* (3rd. ed.). New Jersey: Wiley.



intermediaries who are part of the project expert panel and project staff will undertake various outreach activities, including:

- Distributing short informational blurbs to be shared in organization newsletters or through social media. (One month prior to launch.)
- Asking expert panel members and other stakeholders to help advertise or co-host informational webinars that will be held for all VSPs. (One month prior to launch.)
- Asking stakeholders to distribute, through their networks, reminder blurbs urging service providers to take part in the NCVSP. (Throughout data collection.)
- Raising awareness of the NCVSP at provider conferences including the VOCA administrators conference and NOVA's annual conference (Throughout data collection.).

Each of those awareness materials will link to similar webpages hosted by BJS and JRSA that provide more information about the project and the importance of participation. These webpages will include a list of the trusted victim advocacy leaders and other stakeholders who are involved in the project, which should give participants additional confidence in the survey project.

***Nonresponse follow-up protocols.*** Once the data collection has launched, the approach to nonresponse follow-up is also consistent with best practices in survey research and entails the following steps shown in Table 6, which shows the procedures and timing of contacts to respondents. The “likely to respond” and “less likely” to respond are based on the response rates by VSP type in the 2017 NCVSP.

**Table 6. Contact Procedures**

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Likely to respond: Push to web</b>	<b>Timing of Contact</b>	<b>Less likely to respond: Earlier nonresponse follow-up</b>	<b>Timing of Contact</b>	<b>Details</b>
1	Prenote (postcard, email)  <b>Attachment 7</b>	14 days before data collection begins	Pre-note (postcard, email)	14 days before data collection begins	Send email to <u>all</u> sample members with email address, else send letter to <u>all</u> sample members with mailing address if email address is not available.
2	Invitation (letter, email)  <b>Attachment 8</b>	Begin data collection (Week 1)	Invitation (letter, email)	Begin data collection (Week 1)	Send email to <u>all</u> sample members with email address AND send letter to <u>all</u> sample members who have a mailing address.
3	Reminder (postcard, email)  <b>Attachment 9</b>	Week 2 of data collection	Reminder (postcard, email)	Week 2 of data collection	Send email to all sample members with email address AND send letter to <u>all</u> sample members who have a mailing address.
4	Reminder (postcard, email)  (Push to web)  <b>Attachment 9 (same as above)</b>	Week 3 of data collection	Phone prompt (continues through to contact 7 and is a push to web or phone interview)	Week 3 of data collection	Send reminder email to <u>nonrespondents</u> with email addresses AND send postcard to <u>all nonrespondents</u> who have a mailing address.
5	Reminder (U.S. Mail/FedEx letter, email)  <b>Attachment 10</b>	Week 4 of data collection	Reminder (U.S. Mail/FedEx letter, email)	Week 4 of data collection	Send email to <u>nonrespondents</u> with email addresses AND send letter to <u>all</u> <u>nonrespondents</u> who have a mailing address.
6	Phone prompting (continues through to contact 7)	Every three weeks	Continue phone prompts	Every two weeks until last chance prompt	Call all nonrespondents who have a phone number, up to 7 attempts.

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Likely to respond: Push to web</b>	<b>Timing of Contact</b>	<b>Less likely to respond: Earlier nonresponse follow-up</b>	<b>Timing of Contact</b>	<b>Details</b>
	<b>Attachment 11</b>				
7	Last chance (letter, email)  <b>Attachment 12</b>	Three weeks before the end of data collection	Last chance (letter, email)	Two weeks before final effort	Send email to <u>nonrespondents</u> with email addresses AND send letter to <u>all</u> <u>nonrespondents</u> who have a mailing address.
8	Final effort to establish eligibility among non- respondents  <b>Attachment 13</b>	Two weeks before the end of data collection	Final effort to establish eligibility among non- respondents	Two weeks before the end of data collection	Send postcard/email to ALL nonrespondents with IVR number to establish eligibility (e.g., name of organization, type of victim service provider).

**Attachments 7 through 13** include texts for each contact procedure. Based on the 2017 NCVSP response rate, we expect a response rate of at least 80% for the 2023 NCVSP.

### **Addressing nonresponse**

While the majority of respondents will participate after one of the aforementioned contact attempts, a small percentage of respondents will refuse to complete the survey for various reasons. There are two major types of nonresponse: “unit,” when no data are collected for the VSP entity, and “item,” when some questions are answered but others are left unanswered. For the 2017 NCVSP, hot deck imputation was used to impute item-level missing data for certain variables. Values were assigned from cases that were of the same VSP type. Specifically, cases were grouped by type of provider, type of government organization, and structure of the organization for nonprofit agencies. The percentage of unit nonresponse by survey item is included in the *2017 NCVSP Instrument Review Report* (see **Attachment 14**). We will assess item nonresponse for the 2023 NCVSP and use imputation methods as necessary.

Since we anticipate an 80% response rate, which is lower than the recommended 95% response rate for census collections, a nonresponse bias analysis will be conducted to assess the extent to which nonresponders differ from responders on key characteristics. Unit nonresponse will then be handled by creating weights to compensate for the reduced frame size and to reduce some nonresponse biases that this type of nonresponse introduces. Before considering how units that responded to the survey represent all the units on our national roster of VSPs, we will make extensive efforts to determine whether the entity/target respondent is not responding because the survey is not applicable to them (i.e., because they have stopped serving victims, become part of another agency in the sample, or the entity is defunct). These agencies will be removed from the national roster.

For most active VSPs, we are able to determine a few critical characteristics that can be used to create weights. We will know whether each VSP is federally funded or not, the state in which the VSP maintains an address, and whether the VSP is primarily located in a rural or urban area. In addition, for a sizable portion of the agencies we will know information whether they are a primary or secondary VSP and what types of victims they tend to serve. Agencies for which this information is unknown will be grouped together into an “unknown” category. These variables (i.e., federal funding, state, urbanicity, type, and primary victim services) will be used to estimate nonresponse bias and weight to the full national roster.

## **4. Testing of Procedures**

JRSA conducted two rounds of cognitive testing of the 2023 NCVSP instrument (OMB No. 1121-0339). Usability testing will be completed from June through August 2023.

### **Cognitive testing**

As part of readministering the NCVSP, the project team examined the 2017 NCVSP instrument, resulting data, and feedback to identify any issues. It became clear that the 2023 NCVSP needed new and revised questions to accurately capture information related to VSPs including VSP type

and structure, the focus of programming including crime type or population served, and estimates of staffing and funding. In addition, minor changes to question wording and structure were made to better capture data from VSPs.

Two rounds of cognitive testing were completed in January and February of 2023. Round 1 tested questions that were revised from the 2017 NCVSP and then additional revisions to those questions were tested in Round 2. Cognitive interviewers focused on the completeness of the information collected (were respondents able to furnish the requested information?) and the uniformity of understanding the survey from one respondent to the next (e.g., did each respondent define mental health services in the same way?). The cognitive testing aided the team in refining the questionnaire to reduce burden on the recipient, readability, and improved understanding of terms. Recommendations from the project team following cognitive testing were incorporated into the final 2023 NCVSP instrument.

VSPs were recruited for cognitive testing through subject matter experts who served as project advisors and through project staff at NOVA. A total of 30 individuals from VSPs participated in Round 1 of cognitive testing and 21 in Round 2. Cognitive testing procedures were previously approved by OMB through BJS's generic clearance (OMB No. 1121-0339).

New or substantially revised questions were drafted and tested in the following areas: identification of VSPs, VSP structure and unit of analysis, service provision, staffing, and funding.

*Identification of VSPs.* The NCVSP is intended to gather data from those VSPs who are intentionally seeking to serve victims of crime and abuse—as opposed to the many social service and other entities that happen to serve victims among their clients without any special attention. The original language in item S2 was revised to make this distinction clearer. The question was initially revised to ask whether providers had “intentionally” provided victim services. Findings from cognitive testing revealed that respondents were somewhat confused by the word “intentionally.” The research team determined that the best approach is to mirror the language used in item A1.a, which asks whether respondents “provided services to victims or survivors of crime or abuse through specific program(s) or designated staff.”

*VSP structure and unit of analysis.* Section A of the NCVSP contains a series of questions intended to identify the structure of the responding VSPs (i.e., primary or embedded) as well as the organization type (e.g., non-profit, tribal, government). Several new questions were introduced in the 2023 NCVSP instrument to capture the unit of analysis more effectively, including identifying any parent-child relationships among responding VSPs. Major revisions were made to the new survey items after each round of cognitive testing. Respondents are now asked whether their victim service activities are fully virtual (item A1.5) and, if not, whether their organization (for primary VSPs) or program (for embedded VSPs) operates through a single site or multiple sites (A1.6a and A1.6b). VSPs that operate through multiple sites are then asked to best describe their victim service site: one site that reports to a main office (child), the main office (parent), or other (A1.6c and A1.6d). Child sites are asked to provide contact information for the parent site; parent sites are asked to provide contact information for their child sites.

Respondents are then asked to provide contact information for those other sites via manual entry or upload (A1.7-A1.8). Several other questions were added to this section to ensure that a parent site can report data and determine what level of data they report (items A1.9, A1.9.5). Child sites are also asked whether they are co-located in another organization (item A1.10 (primary) and A1.10a (embedded)).

*Service provision.* Section G captures information on the services provided to victims of crime or abuse of VSPs. One new survey item and one area of major revision were made to Section G based on the review of the 2017 NCVSP and cognitive testing for the 2023 NCVSP. Item G1 is new to the 2023 NCVSP and asks respondents to best describe their service area (i.e., rural, suburban, urban). Initially drafted to require respondents to choose one option that best describes their service area, the question was revised after cognitive testing to allow them to select more than one response. One area was revised: a series of questions that aims to determine whether VSPs have a limited target clientele (G12 and G13). The review of the 2017 NCVSP, in which VSPs were asked about whether it was their mission to serve victims of specific crimes or specific populations of victims, revealed that respondents had difficulty conceptualizing a limitation tied to their mission. The question was revised to ask whether VSPs could “only serve” victims of certain crime types or certain victim populations. Cognitive testing revealed that such a strict limitation did not work for VSPs, who often reflected on the minority of victims served outside those limitations. The questions were further revised to ask about focus of services, by crime type or victim population. Response options are limited to 4 or fewer categories.

*Staffing.* Section H gathers information on VSP staffing. The questions produced inaccurate estimates in the 2017 NCVSP, particularly for some embedded providers who responded with figures that could only apply to the larger organization. In addition, questions designed to capture turnover rates were missing a key element: the number of staff who had left the program during the previous year. Questions were revised to focus embedded providers on staff related to their program, and a new question was added to capture the numbers of staff who had departed. Cognitive testers for the 2023 NCVSP had difficulty responding to these items. It became evident that asking respondents to report actual numbers/estimates for staffing was overly burdensome; many wanted to seek accurate information from their HR departments which would cause a significant delay. This series of questions has been revised to only ask about current staffing, with question variation for primary VSPs and embedded VSPs. The response options are no longer open-ended but rather presented in multiple-choice format.

*Funding.* The series of questions that captures funding for VSPs (Section I) presented the most problems for respondents to the 2017 NCVSP. Some respondents were unable to provide accurate information or did not respond to these items at all. Some embedded respondents appeared to have provided budget information for their entire organization, rather than their victim service program. The section was revised to attempt to focus providers on their victim service budget by first asking about the organization’s overall budget, and then the victim service budget. Open-ended questions related to particular federal grants were changed to a matrix of checkboxes asking about the types of grants received. Other funding sources remained as open-

ended questions asking for dollar amounts. In cognitive testing, this section was found to be overly burdensome. Testing also revealed an uneven understanding among respondents regarding the sources of funding their organizations received. In response, this section was further streamlined to ask respondents to select an approximate budget total from a multiple-choice list (I2); whether their victim service budget is supported by grants (I3); if yes, which categories of grants they receive (I4); if those include federal grants, to select an approximate percentage of their victim service budget supported by federal grants, with response categories are listed in multiple-choice format (I5).

*Record keeping.* Section J asks VSPs about the use of electronic records systems to manage and maintain case files. There was no indication of VSPs having trouble answering these questions in the 2017 NCVSP so they were not revised for the 2023 administration.

*Issues of concern.* Section K addresses current issues of concern to VSPs. The survey items included in the 2017 NCVSP were revised to better reflect the most pressing issues facing VSPs in 2023 based on feedback from the SME project advisors. Item K1 (new question) asks respondents to report their level of concern about vicarious trauma and staff burnout among victim service staff at their organization. Item K2 (new question) asks respondents about their organization's ability to reach and serve all victims equally. A new subset of questions has also been added to the 2023 NCVSP that addresses the organizational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another revision to the 2023 instrument is the incorporation of a specific reference date. It's important that respondents are referencing the same time period given the length of data collection (8 months) and that VSPs may collect data internally using either a calendar year or fiscal year. Item G2 asks respondents if they prefer to answer the survey questions using a calendar or fiscal year timeframe. Using a reference date has been successful in other BJS establishment surveys, including the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS)<sup>3</sup> program and the National Survey of Prosecutors (NSP)<sup>4</sup>. A reference date of January 1, 2023 will be used and was selected given an analysis of the 2017 NCVSP data. In 2017, about 29% of VSPs operated and reported data using a calendar year and 42% used a fiscal year. When examining VSPs that reported using a fiscal year, the majority started the year in July or October. Given that, using January 1, 2023, would give VSPs many months of data to report in the survey. Additionally, it coincides with the start of a calendar year which is helpful for VSPs that reported and operate data using that timeframe.

## **Usability Testing**

Between June and August 2023, the project team will prepare materials for and conduct a small (15 VSPs) usability test to ensure the online and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) instruments function as intended and are clear to VSPs. This testing was also previously approved by OMB using BJS's generic clearance (OMB No. 1121-0339). Ten VSPs will be asked to complete the web instrument and respond to a short online questionnaire about their

<sup>3</sup> <https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/law-enforcement-management-and-administrative-statistics-lemas>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/national-survey-prosecutors-nsp>.

experiences immediately after completion of the survey. The questionnaire will focus on user perceptions concerning the presentation of questions and response options, where the instrument could be made more user friendly, and other issues related to the general ease of navigating through the survey. In addition, the research team will examine para data for usability indicators such as the number of times VSPs log into the survey, overall time spent across all sessions, errors thrown, and help documents accessed.

Because we expect a portion of VSPs to complete the survey by phone, we will also conduct usability testing of the CATI script with five VSPs. The CATI script is designed to establish type of VSP and eligibility status early and to ensure that conducting the NCVSP by phone results in high quality, complete data. Recommendations and edits to the web questionnaire and CATI script will be incorporated prior to data collection.

## 5. Consultants on the Statistical Aspects of the Design

The Victimization Statistics Unit of BJS takes responsibility for the overall design and management of the activities described in this submission, including data collection procedures, development of the questionnaires, and analysis of the data. The following individuals consulted on statistical aspects and collecting/analyzing the data:

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