



# Office of Victim Services

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## **OVS RESOURCE CONNECT REACHES MILESTONE OF 1,500 USERS A MONTH, STREAMLINES ACCESS TO SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME AND THEIR FAMILIES**

### ***Tailored Search Engine Developed by Woman-owned, Monroe County-based ConcernCenter Connects Individuals with Location-Specific and Need-Based Resources***

New York State Office of Victim Services Director Elizabeth Cronin today announced that [OVS Resource Connect](#), an online platform that streamlines access to programs and services for victims of crime and their families, has reached a milestone of 1,500 users a month. Developed in partnership with woman-owned, Monroe County-based [ConcernCenter](#), the platform allows individuals to find help and resources by using everyday language to search for support for a specific concern or need, by zip code. OVS Resource Connect then generates a list of programs that can provide services to meet their needs.

“We want all victims of crime in New York State to know that they are not alone, and it’s even more critically important that they know where to go for help when they need it,” **Director Cronin said**. “We’re doing everything we can to ensure that they are provided support from their neighbors, their communities, state government agencies and private service provider partners who can assist them. This tool makes it easier for victims of crime and those assisting them to find support and services to recover, heal and move toward a brighter future.”

OVS Resource Connect allows users to quickly locate and connect to programs that provide direct services and support, including victim compensation, counselling, legal help, assistance with filing claims, advocacy and other critical supports that victims of crime need.

The user-friendly resource directory links victims of crime to appropriate resources based on location, as well as specific, tailored concerns each individual may have. More than 450 resources and programs throughout New York State can be located by concern, category, keyword and geographic location. The programs and resources provide support to address concerns and meet needs arising from hate crimes, elder abuse, food insecurity, domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and other crimes.

ConcernCenter President Erin Halligan-Avery PhD said, “When people are struggling they simply aren’t in a mental space to be navigating websites, following links, reading web pages, or getting the run around. It’s a brave decision to ask for help and that decision should be rewarded with easy-to-use technology like ConcernCenter. It is not until people get the help they need in a way that make sense to them that we know we’ve truly made a difference.”

OVS funds more than 200 victim assistance programs statewide and provides a critical financial safety net for individuals and/or their family members who have no other resources to pay for crime-related expenses, such as medical and counseling bills, and funeral and burial costs, in addition to compensating them for lost wages and support, among other assistance.

New York is the only state in the nation with no cap on medical or counseling costs, which means individuals can receive assistance as long as they need it. In 2021, the agency provided more than \$18 million in financial assistance to victims of crime and their families last year, at no cost to taxpayers. Funding for compensation to victims of crime is generated by fines, fees and surcharges paid by certain offenders convicted in state or federal court.

Visit [the Office of Victim Services' website](#) for more information and follow the agency on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

### **About ConcernCenter**

[ConcernCenter](#) is a private business that helps good intentioned organizations such as government agencies, colleges and universities, companies, non-profits, K-12 school districts, and veterans’ organizations provide the people they care about with quick access to the resources they need to address their specific concerns. By putting a prioritized list of support options in their hands, ConcernCenter empowers people to connect with the resources that matter most, so they can find the support they need in just a few clicks, achieve greater wellness, and improve their outlook.

Follow [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for more information.