

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



FY 2027 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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Room 500
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.

Mayor Bowser's Grow DC budget includes a series of strategic investments designed to enhance public safety, strengthen the District's fiscal foundation, and generate the revenue necessary to sustain high quality city services and programs. As part of this comprehensive approach, the budget also highlights the critical contributions of OVSJG in advancing the District's broader public safety goals. Through community-based, trauma-informed restoration efforts, OVSJG plays an essential role in supporting survivors, fostering healing, and reducing the long-term impacts of trauma across communities. These investments reflect a commitment to ensuring that all District residents have access to the resources and support needed to thrive.

For FY27, Mayor Bowser's proposed budget for OVSJG is \$77,090,845, which includes \$60.4 million in local funds and 41.7 FTEs. Twenty-seven of these FTEs are internal to OVSJG and 14.7 are intradistrict FTEs who serve residents at various District agencies. OVSJG's local operations and grants 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:

- \$43 million in Victim Services;
- \$9.8 million in Justice Grants;
- \$4.4 million for Access to Justice; and
- \$1.29 million in Agency Administration.

OVSJG dedicates more than 95 percent of its budget to grants that sustain community-based organizations (CBOs) and District agencies providing vital services to crime victims and supporting the healing and successful reintegration of returning citizens.

The FY27 projected local and federal budget for the Justice Grants programs and operations is \$20.1 million. Through this reentry budget, service providers will conduct individualized needs assessments and deliver support that help returning citizens reintegrate into the community, maintain

stable housing, and decrease the likelihood of recidivism. The Justice Grants division provides funding for a variety of services including but not limited to critical services such as parenting classes, financial management, family reunification support and pre-release services.

The FY27 proposed budget includes targeted investments to maintain services for victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and other forms of crime. The FY27 investment for both local and federal grants, and the operations budget for victim services is \$49.1 million. The investment will be used to develop and deliver accessible and comprehensive services that include trauma-informed mental health services, crisis intervention, advocacy, case management, housing and a host of other healing focused services.

The Targeted Services budget this year includes:

- \$693,000 for the Private Security Camera Incentive Program, including the renewal of the one FTE for additional program support.
- \$500,000 for the Community Capacity Building/Community Capacity Grant for targeted training, technical assistance, and funding for CBOs to enhance their ability to effectively manage District grant funding.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to Mayor Bowser for her steadfast support of OVSJG's mission and for championing our shared DC values to advancing healing as a means of preventing trauma and ensuring that survivors of all crime types remain at the center of District investments. The resources entrusted to our agency are vital to advancing healing, safety, and justice for residents across the District of Columbia. I also want to thank the Council and this Committee for being indispensable partners in this work. Your ongoing support of OVSJG is truly appreciated.

I am available to answer any questions.