

Report To OCVA



**From
Community Voices**

***Victims of Crime
From
Marginalized Communities***

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Why Does Culture Matter?

We learn who we are and how we should behave in this world when we are infants and children. The types of interactions that we have, interactions like socialization, love, communication with other people and observations of the role models around us, help us determine how we will interact appropriately and behave with other people. The self, then, is a culturally determined being, a member of a specific racial, ethnic or social group. All behavior of the person we become, including thought, action, customs, values, beliefs, communication style and pattern is learned early as this developing self is socialized in the culture. These patterns create expectations of human behavior that are basic to the health of this individual.

Is it any wonder, then, that most people, these culturally identified individuals, are more open, naturally comfortable, and more willing to seek help from agencies that are created and staffed by and for people of a like culture?

Who we are, and how we view ourselves and others, is closely intertwined with our cultural identity. The particular strengths of each culture is an important resource to our healing when we are hurt or traumatized.

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When we turn to healing, there seem to be three types of treatment options available to us:

- **One:** Mainstream agencies, exclusively utilizing established clinical approaches to healing, generally without regard to culture.
- **Two:** Mainstream agencies, realizing the need for some adaptation to culture for some clients, programmatically add some specific cultural enhancements to mainstream treatment.
- **Three:** Culturally grounded agencies which utilize treatment approaches which have emerged from the culture, have been developed by and for service to specific racial/ethnic/cultural communities, to serve specific needs of the culture. These are agencies which, at the core of their programs, embody the central cultural values of the community to be served. These programs, at their best, have partnerships with mainstream services, some of whose specific treatment options are available strictly on an as-needed basis.

The second program type does acknowledge culture and attempts to provide some service for clients of different ethnic/racial/cultural groups. Nevertheless, Community Voices cautions that there is a danger that tokenization may occur and overall services not be culturally relevant. The services, then, may not be either accessible or effective with the community to be served.

Additionally, Community Voices believes that privilege makes the assumption that academics are always relevant to legitimate services and that ONLY academics can legitimize service delivery. The opposite of this, which is embraced by Community Voices, is that culture is as significant and oftentimes more significant than academic credentials in the delivery of services.

It therefore becomes clear that by embracing such values, Community Voices can only believe that the most desired type of program is the third. Only those services grown by and for specific cultural communities can produce the most favorable outcomes, both needed and deserved, by those clients.

Further, surveys conducted by Community Voices in preparation for this report, indicated a great desire on the part of members of marginalized communities for services in agencies which were culturally and linguistically accessible, culturally competent, and culturally familiar.

This report which presents data from these marginalized communities, supports the need for specialized services developed and provided by and for the various cultural groups. Community Voices supports this efficient use of limited resources to appropriately serve the whole community.

In this report you will also find words, written by community members in response to their surveys, while expressing their wisdom and experience

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in help-seeking in their communities. They are identified only by the geographic location from which these comments were gathered. The words of these community members are reflected as captions to pictures of persons representing the marginalized community in which they live.

While Community Voices is pleased that many mainstream agencies are making efforts to serve marginalized community members in a culturally competent way, we recognize the need for service providers who come from within the marginalized community as well. It is clear that while some members of these communities will avail themselves of mainstream agency services, many have told us that they will not.

As helping professionals, we are challenged to accept and honor people where they are, not where we think they should be. We therefore cannot assume that all people are culturally identical, or that one service delivery system is suited to the needs of everyone.

The entire system of service, from OCVA through all service providers, needs to be representative of the constituency they are responsible to serve. Community Voices is most pleased with and grateful for the support from OCVA, which recognizes that for service providers to serve all victims of crime, there must be services representing all voices in the community. Community Voices encourages OCVA to further demonstrate its commitment to marginalized communities by striving to provide the opportunity for additional marginalized community members to join their

staff and enrich the diversity informing the important work of this office. Such a commitment will enhance the discussion of victim services on a state level, further demonstrating OCVA's commitment to diversity, and mirror to all the values they promote.

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What We Know and Understand

We understand that a safe environment is important for stable childhood development, for healthy, adult functioning, good health, and successful interaction with the education system and job market. A safe environment is also necessary for a stable child rearing environment and for stable communities.

No single measure can capture the enormous difficulties caused by crime. However, a combination of statistical data and anecdotal information from responses to a statewide survey will go a long way toward making clear a very important reality. We know that the responses to the survey from community members, many of whom have been victimized, paint a clear and informative picture.



I grew up in a white family. I don't know what cultural services are available for me.
...Yakima



Our community needs helpVancouver

We know that the experience of victimization limits life. The victims experience many fewer options in their lives and feel less free in the environment. Fear, intimidation, judgment and confusion limit the life choices of those who have been victimized.

As a state, we have witnessed, and suffered from the fact that victimization has psychological effects, economic effects and increases health costs. One of the ways we have addressed these

problems is by creating the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy. As a state we have funded much of the work that must be done, to mitigate the various problems caused by crimes against persons. There is, however,

more work to be done so that every citizen of Washington has recourse to culturally and linguistically appropriate assistance.

A Partnership With Community Voices

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As a result of this partnership, Community Voices members conducted 238 surveys statewide. As in previous endeavors, the group received much information about how members of their various communities felt about and utilized the services available to them.

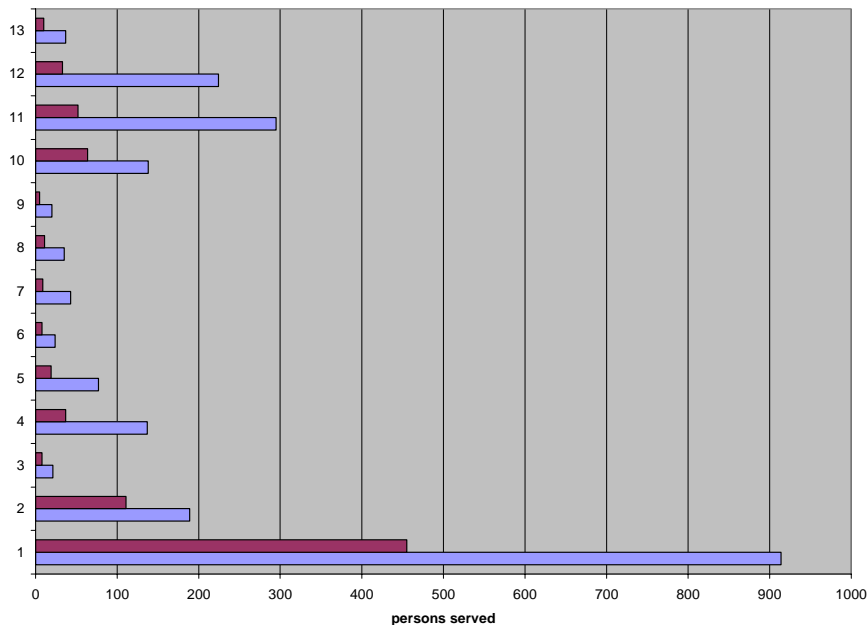
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The following historically marginalized communities were represented in surveys:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Native American | Middle Eastern |
| African American | GLBT (Gay/Lesbian/
Bi-sexual/Transgender) |
| Asian American | Disability |
| Mexican American or Hispanic | Russian / Slavic |

The Present State Programs – From First Quarter OCVA Reports
Members of Marginalized Communities Served
Total Persons Served in Each
Washington Region (Regions 1-13)

OCVA Quarter 1, 2006



Community Voices has a membership from many marginalized communities representing Native American, African American, Asian, Hispanic, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Disability communities.

Reports from existing Crime Victim Programs, in the first quarter of 2006, show that there are great differences across the state for those who have utilized existing services. More than 2100 victims of crime have been served in the first quarter of the year (2007). Of those persons, approximately 800 persons are members of marginalized populations, or 38% of those served. By region, the measure varies from 15% of victims served were members of a marginalized community, to 59% of those served were marginalized community members. The larger, metropolitan areas are reaching more marginalized members of their communities. It was clear that in more rural segments of the state, agencies which provide services are fewer and more distant from many community members. This results overall in a lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate, accessible services for many marginalized community members. Access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services may also be limited by language, distance, cost or mistrust of formal institutions. There are also large differences in the needs of different populations and the surveys illuminated many reasons for these

We need services that are friendly to Hispanic people, who understand our lifestyles, which will help- not judge us...Othello

differences in the populations served.

Statewide Survey Results

The



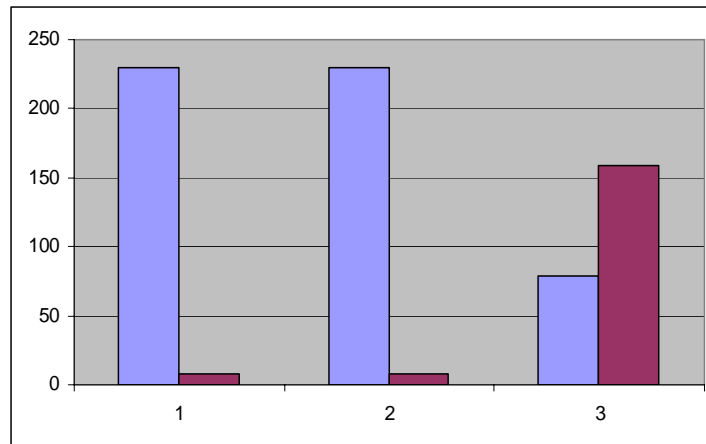
people surveyed told us that marginalized community members were more likely than whites to be victimized. It surprised individual members of these communities that they were asked about whether crime in their community

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was a problem. This, they thought, was a silly question. Obviously there was a problem with crime.

Marginalized Community Members

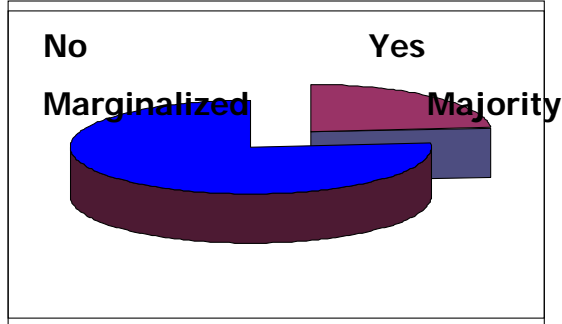
Majority Community Members



Three Questions

1. *There are problems with crime & victimization in our community.*
Marginalized community members answers affirmed that crime and victimization happened in far greater numbers, proportionately, in their communities than in the majority community.
2. *I know of an adult or child who has experienced victimization.*
Again, marginalized community members reported that they knew of someone experiencing victimization in far greater numbers than did those in the majority community
3. *I have heard of services or programs for victims of crime.*
Majority community members much more readily reported hearing of services or programs for victims of crime than did members of marginalized communities.

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*We need services
for all people –
people working in
programs that
understand us
...Puyallup*



Would You Utilize Services You've Heard Of?

When asked, "Would you (marginalized community members) go to the agencies you have heard of?", the results were startling. By a large margin, marginalized communities reported that they would not go to those agencies of which they have heard. When responding so overwhelmingly that they would not go to the agencies of which they had heard, the reason for this response varied. For some it was a matter of not knowing what services were available. For others it was that they were sure the people there would not understand their cultural needs, or that no

one there looked like them. Some were afraid that law enforcement would get involved, and they wanted a response without law enforcement involvement. Prior experiences in their communities counseled caution with law enforcement.

Additionally, marginalized community members identified inadequate education about resources available to crime victims in the community.

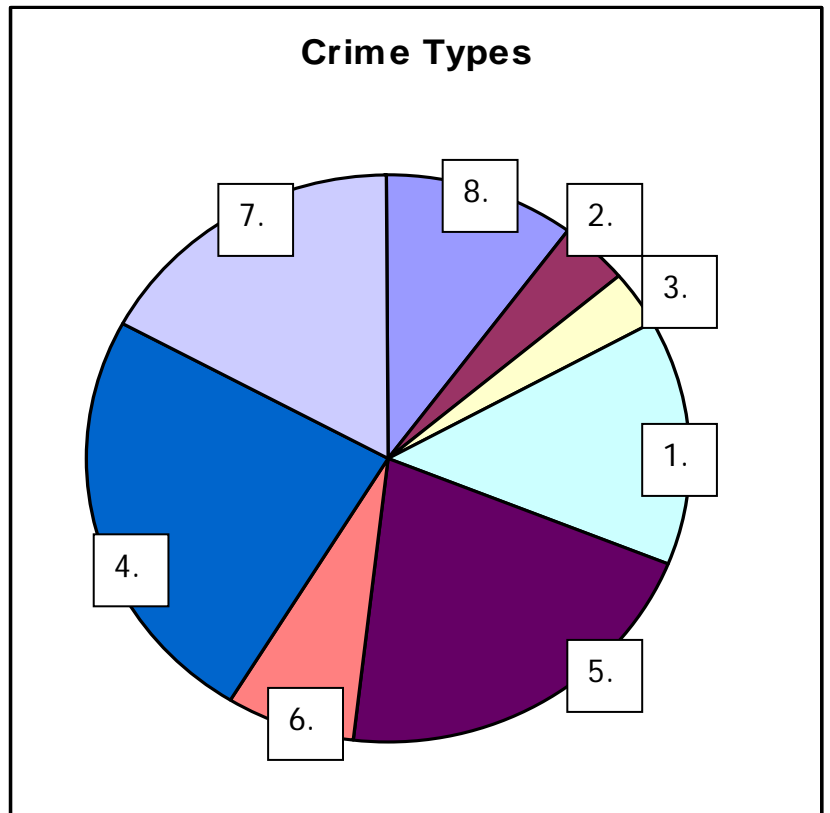
Clearly, There Are Cultural Differences

Some marginalized community members will never go to a majority agency. However, as clearly as there are cultural differences, the most recent OCVA quarterly report shows us that there are people who are willing to utilize existing programs and agencies. The funding of Region 14 will begin to provide services to a) those citizens marginalized by the majority society and unwilling to go to majority appearing agencies, and b) those who would feel more comfortable and be better served by persons providing services primarily *by and for* the marginalized community.

Types of Crime

- 1. Gangs
- 2. Assault
- 3. Homicide
- 4. Child Abuse
- 5. Kidnapping
- 6. Hate crimes
- 7. Identity Theft
- 8. Human Trafficking

The types of crimes people are experiencing vary, but



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the most prevalent mentioned in the surveys were gangs, kidnapping, child abuse, identity theft and human trafficking. This last was most mentioned in the Asian community. Gang violence was most often mentioned in African American and Native American communities, although all of these crimes were mentioned in every community. Often people described the existence of hate crimes in concert with other crimes. Though hate crimes occur in all communities, members of the GLBT community most commonly reported this crime. They reported, as well, that if they were a member of an already marginalized community, as well as being gay, the problem of being targeted by others and experiencing real difficulty with the legal system and appropriate services is increased.

In terms of help seeking, community members listed a variety of locations where they thought appropriate help would be available. Agencies *by and for* people of color were cited most often. Community services provided by churches or tribes were mentioned as accessible and helpful. Schools and campus programs were next most often mentioned, but these were distant from those mentioned first.

When it came to people, (individuals or staff people) the following were most often listed as persons (or places with staff) to whom crime victims from marginalized communities often do turn:

- Pastor
- Church congregation
- Friends
- Family
- Women's center staff

I have been a victim of many crimes; assault, hate crimes, and identity theft. I went for help and the white people treated me like I was dumb or stupid. ...Spokane



Language barriers, both spoken and ASL, and physical accessibility were listed as reasons that people did not utilize some of the existing services available for victims of crime.

When asked about law enforcement as a viable help, there were rather reactive responses throughout most marginalized groups. Law enforcement was not seen as a help and often seen as an oppressive force to contend with.

When queried about where crime occurred in their communities, the four top locations were in the neighborhood, in parks, in the home and foster care. Fully one half of respondents marked all of the possible locations (see survey, attached) Racism on the job and hate crimes were mentioned everywhere.

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One additional concern became apparent from the surveys. One group of people who found it particularly difficult to find accessible, culturally appropriate services, were those who were bi-racial or bi-cultural. Determining who the *self* identifies as a cultural being is difficult for many bi-cultural individuals. Determining who the *healing professional* responds to is an additional challenge. And determining which cultural services are an appropriate response is difficult for those offering help or making referrals. In any case, the services available may or may not be appropriate.

What is reported by bi-cultural individuals is that they suffer hate crimes, bias crimes and assault as often as any single racial or ethnic group and are often marginalized in other ways.

These survey results, in combination with the OCVA Quarterly Report make most clear the need for work to be done. Firstly, OCVA's existing programs have done a creditable job in serving some measure of marginalized clients. Some of the programs serve many. Some programs, far less. What is true, however, is that all of the communities around the state reported a need for more information, and more services *by and for* marginalized communities. They spoke of a need for service providers that understood, not only physical needs, but cultural needs. They needed this without fear or judgment from others.

I am involved in our community center. I always get information from other Non-Governmental Organizations who bring the brochure to the center...Seattle



The following are recommendations which reflect what the various marginalized communities expressed.



*People don't go because there is a lack of people who look like them in the programs.
...Davenport*

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Recommendations

1. Increased effort toward more community awareness related to available services in every community should be made by local service agencies and OCVA.
2. Staff of local service agencies and OCVA should include staff members of varied racial/ethnic/cultural groups, who are able to understand and address cultural and language issues.
3. OCVA and local programs should evaluate their hiring processes to ensure that the hiring pool, thus their staff, will be representative of the area they are responsible to serve.
4. Agencies should create partnerships with and referral resources to traditional cultural healers so that referrals can be made should the need arise.



*There should be
partnerships and
referrals to
traditional cultural
healers.*

*...Jamestown
S'Klallam*

5. All agencies should provide all of their employees with cultural competency training. This training is not the responsibility of staff from the different marginalized communities who may be employed in their agency, but of unaffiliated trainers.

6. OCVA should continue to fund, support and encourage services by and for marginalized communities.



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The most profound words about real experiences come from members of these marginalized communities. Their words carry subject content, meaning, and sometimes the disappointment and pain in their experiences. We have much to learn from them.



As a black male I am seen as a threat to many. I have to be very careful as people are always watching me as if I am a criminal. People in programs have to understand how black men feel mistrusted.

...Everett

OCVA Missions Statement

The mission of the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy is to identify the opportunities and resources victims need in order to recover and to facilitate the availability of those resources and opportunities in communities statewide.

Listening to the wisdom and experience of individual communities statewide is critical to achieving the mission of this vital office.



We need a better understanding of each group. This is a very broad topic and issue which will require sincere hearts and dedication to solve. In other words, it will take a change of mind and heart to overcome. The city is one community. You can't fix one section and expect the rest of the community to be okay. We must all be seen.

...Tacoma

Community Voices Crime Survey

Identified

*community*_____

Every community has remarkable strengths and a variety of health and safety problems. By community I mean **(name identified community)**

Of the many kinds of crime/violence problems that occur in a community. Our purpose in asking these questions is to gain information that will help us figure out ways to best help people in our community who may have had these problems. This information in no way defines our community. It will only describe conditions that need to be addressed. Hopefully it will describe strengths and potential solutions, as well. We will not be asking for any individually identifying information. We appreciate your willingness to participate. We need your guidance.

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We will begin generally:

1. What do you identify as sources of strength within your/our community?

2. What would you say are the safety problems in your/our community?

Of the list that I read you, choose the top three in order of concern. Choose the number "one" for the most serious concern. Choose the number "two" for the next most serious concern. Choose the number "three" for the third most serious. If you choose "other", tell me where it ranks in the top three.

You can indicate others that are a concern that rank out of the top three. I will put a check mark by those.

Some examples might be:

- Gangs
- Drugs and alcohol
- Assault
- Homicide
- Child abuse
- Kidnapping
- Hate Crimes
- Trafficking

3. Are you familiar with groups in your/our community who provide cultural, health and safety services for its citizens?

Can you name, for example:

- Chemical dependency treatment center_____
- Victim Support programs_____
- Cultural programs_____
- Traditional cultural healers/programs_____
- Resource Centers (child and family,...)_____
- Health Clinic_____
- Counseling_____
- Youth programs_____
- Churches
- Community Centers

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Some specific types of stressful events that many people have experienced are a range of general crimes which include the following:

- ❑ Gangs
- ❑ Drugs and alcohol
- ❑ Assault
- ❑ Homicide
- ❑ Child abuse
- ❑ Kidnapping
- ❑ Hate Crimes
- ❑ Trafficking

4. Do you believe there is a problem with any of these general crimes in your/our community? Yes No

Comments:

5. In what places do you think violence/ crime occurs in your/our community?

I will read you a list of some places that crime might occur.

Please indicate "yes" if you agree that it is a location where violence/crime happens in your/our community. Indicate "no" if it is not.

- School
- Pow-wow's
- Job
- Church
- Medical provider or facility
- Cultural Events
- Traditional healer
- Counselor
- Foster care
- Child care
- Clubs
- Home
- Church
- Community Centers

6. This is a "yes" or "no" question. We are not asking for identifying information. Do you know of any adult in your/our community who has experienced violence/crime?

Yes

No

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7. If you know, where did those people or their families go for help? *(if they did)*

8. Have you heard of local services or programs for victims of crime?

Yes No

9. Would you or people in your/our community go to see them?

Yes No Don't know

Why or why not?

10. If the victims you know of did not utilize the formal services for victims of crime, who else would they have talked to?

- Friends
 - Families
 - Church
 - Teacher
 - Co-worker
 - Internet
 - Other
-

11. Who do people in the community trust when they have been hurt?

12. Where do people in the community go for help when they are hurt?

Why?

13. Where won't people in the community go for help when they are hurt?

Why?

14. Often, different communities value and utilize traditional or culturally specific forms of - or opportunities for- healing. What forms of - or opportunities for- healing are you aware of in your community?

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15. Do you know if there is help for the person who hurt others in the community?

Yes **No**

Where?

16. What stops people in your/our community from getting help?

17. Which of these statements is true for your experience of your community? More than one might be true.

In my community

- We never talk about crime in our community.
- We talk about it if and when we hear that it happens.
- We sometimes talk about that it happens, but don't talk about how to prevent it.
- We talk about it in community and school groups hoping that we can prevent it.
- Parents talk with children and teens and other adults with the focus on safety.
- Community policy-making groups discuss these crimes and the community responsibility to prevent it.

18. Is there enough education in the community about the general crimes we have listed?

Yes No

19. Are you aware of any statewide resources that are available to assist communities with the problem of violence/crime?

Yes No

Which, if any, are you aware of?

20. Please describe any specific criminal justice concerns related to violence/crime that your/our community faces.

Thank you. You have been a great resource to us as we try to understand violence/crime and healing in our many communities. Can you recommend someone else for us to talk to?

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