

Needs Assessment Report Template: Incidents of Mass Violence and Terrorism

In the context of incidents of mass violence and terrorism, a needs assessment is a process of identifying and estimating specific needs, available resources, and costs of meeting those needs, based on best available data and the literature on previous mass casualty events.

State Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) administrators and local officials should consider working with a community agency, evaluation specialist, consultant, or academic institution with a background in the evaluative process and skill in conducting needs assessments. Experience in helping communities develop funding strategies to address complex issues is also helpful.

A needs assessment report includes information on the scope of the event, the specific needs of victims and those affected by the event, and the resources that are necessary to address these needs in the short and long term. A successful needs assessment will provide the information needed to seek and secure available local, state, and [federal funding assistance](#). For example, the needs assessment can be a helpful tool in developing strategies for emergency funding grant applications (e.g., the Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program). Consider coordinating with grant writers to assist in the development of federal, state, and local grant submissions. Identify the primary agency that will manage the application process in coordination with the primary agencies providing victim services during the recovery phase.

The needs assessment report template on the following pages may provide some ideas for questions to include in such a grant application.

Needs Assessment Report Template: Annotated Outline

I. Overview

(Include background information on the event, relevant research/data, scope of problem, impact on victims, data collection results, identification of needs—both apparent and unanticipated—and recommendations.)

II. Background

(Describe the details and timeline of the incident.)

III. Theoretical and Data Support

(Describe data collection and analysis. An evaluation specialist will be able to identify and recommend the most appropriate theoretical models to guide the needs assessment, based on the nature of the event.)

- A. *Example: Population Exposure Model*
- B. *Example: Models of Individual and Community Response to Trauma*
- C. *Example: Ecological Model of Community Impact*

IV. Scope of Problem

(Describe the methods used to determine the victim impact initially, in the immediate aftermath, and across time. Explain how these methods were of assistance in identifying needs and potential resources for those affected.)

V. Review of Literature

(Review recent articles, research, case studies, reports, etc., related to mass violence and terrorism incidents.)

- A. *Example: Fatalities*
- B. *Example: Injuries*
- C. *Example: Mental Health Impact*

VI. Victim Impact

(Explain the scope of needs for those affected by the incident.)

VII. Response: Location of Incident and Related Areas

(Describe the initial onsite response and followup responses of local and regional law enforcement, including FBI involvement. Describe the victim assistance response of the Office for Victim Assistance, local victim service providers, and first responders.)

- A. *Law Enforcement Response*
- B. *Victim Assistance Response*

VIII. Needs Identified, Addressed, and Anticipated

(Describe and organize by categories of impact and need. See the sample categories below.)

- A. *Physical/Medical*
- B. *Emotional/Mental Health*
- C. *Insurance/Financial*
- D. *Civil-Legal/Logistical*

- E. Media Impact*
- F. Anticipated Needs*

IX. Data Collected and Results

(Describe the methods and formats used for data collection, including in-person interviews, Web-based surveys, telephone interviews, and informal narrative reports from victims, witnesses, community members, and responders and providers.)

X. Future Focus: Meeting Anticipated and Unmet Needs

(See the following sample list of anticipated and unmet needs.)

- A. Equitable Geographic Distribution of Victim Services*
- B. Behavioral Health Services*
- C. Civil-Legal Assistance*
- D. Resiliency Center*
- E. Community Needs*
 - 1. Ongoing Needs Assessment*
 - 2. Community Outreach and Educational Campaigns*

XI. Summary and Recommendations

- A. Summary*
- B. Sample Recommendations*
 - 1. Upcoming Needs*
 - 2. Unique Considerations and Anticipatory Preparation*
 - 3. Evaluation Process for Recovery Efforts*

XII. References

XIII. Appendices