



## **VICTIM/WITNESS INTIMIDATION, RETALIATION, ENGAGEMENT, & SUPPORT TRAINING**

Victim and witness intimidation has been a significant issue in the United States for decades. Between the 1990s and 2005, the FBI found that in cities with populations of 500,000-1,000,000+, violent crime increased, while the number of violent crimes resulting in an arrest decreased from 45 percent to 35 percent. Further, very few local courts and jurisdictions have established response procedures and strategies to prevent intimidation. This is highly problematic, as witness and victim intimidation disrupts the processes of the criminal justice system and prevents law enforcement and prosecutors from effectively investigating and prosecuting violent crimes. Thus, it is imperative for law enforcement officials to develop prevention and response strategies that effectively reduce witness and victim intimidation. This would result in more crimes being reported, greater victim and witness cooperation with law enforcement, more efficient arrests, and ultimately a higher rate of accurate convictions.

### **Goals and Objectives**

- Understand how victim/witness intimidation can affect a victim and hinder an investigation.
- Identify the various factors that contribute to victim/witness intimidation.

**TTA Type:** Training

**TTA Format:** Available in person and virtually

**Intended Audience:** Law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim service providers

**Length:** This training is designed to be presented as a whole or in parts as deemed most relevant to the site.

### **Agenda**

- What is witness/victim intimidation?
- Prevalence of witness/victim Intimidation
- Identifying who is vulnerable to witness/victim intimidation
- Factors that contribute to witness/victim intimidation
- Identifying who is affected by witness/victim intimidation
- Responding to witness/victim intimidation
- Measuring the effectiveness of responses to witness/victim intimidation
- Case study

**SMEs:** Darlene Averick joined the Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in September 2006 as the program manager/national coordinator for the Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP). Ms. Averick has over 35 years of experience working in the field of victim and witness services, including program development and direct service to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gender bias. Ms. Averick has developed and provided victim/witness training to ATF personnel, U.S. Attorneys, and federal, local, and state law enforcement personnel. She has also conducted workshops and has been a keynote speaker at local and national conferences. Her federal government experience has included grants program specialist for the DOJ-Office on Violence Against Women, and victim services specialist for the Department of the Navy. Prior to joining the federal government in 2001, she was the executive director for the National Association of Women Judges; director for the New Jersey AIDS Education Program; and founder of the New Jersey Sexual Assault Program.