

[Transcript from the OVC Fiscal Year 2018 Discretionary Training and Technical Assistance Program for Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Grantees webinar, which was held on May 22, 2018. The archived webinar can be found at: https://www.ovc.gov/grants/webinars_archive.html. The Solicitation can be found at <https://www.ovc.gov/grants/pdfxt/FY-2018-Discretionary-Training-and-Technical-Assistance-Program-for-VOCA-Victim-Assistance-Grantees-508.pdf>.]

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, the OVC Fiscal Year 2018 Discretionary Training and Technical Assistance Program for Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Grantees. Today's webinar is about open and competitive solicitation, and therefore in order to maintain fair and open competition, OVC staff will not be able to provide guidance on the research and design of your proposal, so any questions related to that will not--will not be able to be answered today. At this time, I would like to introduce you to today's presenter, Brian Sass, Grants Management Specialist with the Office for Victims of Crime. Brian, whenever you're ready.

BRIAN SASS: Wonderful. Thank you, Mary Jo. Hi, everyone. My name is Brian Sass. I'm a Grants Management Specialist here at the Office for Victims of Crime. And today we'll be talking about the OVC FY 2018 Discretionary Training and Technical Assistance Program for VOCA Victim Assistance Grantees. As Mary Jo mentioned in her introduction, we are accepting questions through the Q and A feature, and you can submit those throughout the presentation, and they'll be answered at the end.

Today for the agenda, we'll be going over the purpose and background of the grant solicitation, eligibility, the goals and objectives, critical application elements, how to apply, award information and grant agreement, and finally, the question and answer session.

Purpose and background. This project continues the Department's mission by providing resources to VOCA Victim Assistance grantees who will be able to support the training and technical assistance needs of victim service providers in their states. Similar funds were awarded in FY 2015 on a noncompetitive formula basis to VOCA Victim Assistance recipients. For this year, FY 2018, grant funds will be awarded on a competitive basis to ensure obligated grant dollars are used effectively.

Eligibility. Eligible applicants are limited to state administering agencies for the VOCA Victim Assistance Program Formula Grants, which are authorized by 34 U.S.C., section 20103, parts A and B. The term "states" does include the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States. Outside organizations are also eligible to apply when such an application is made in partnership with the applicant's VOCA Victim Assistance Program State Administering Agency.

The goal of this solicitation is to provide funding to VOCA Victim Assistance formula grant recipients to help facilitate training and technical assistance of victim service providers.

The objectives of this grant program are fourfold. To conduct a comprehensive statewide training needs assessment or review and update a recently completed comprehensive statewide training needs assessment in consultation with your key stakeholders. To develop a strategic plan for training state victim assistance service providers and others who work with crime victims. Three, to implement a system for receiving, tracking, and responding to requests for training and technical assistance, including an evaluation process that will allow OVC to assess user satisfaction of services. And, fourth, to provide training and technical assistance, either directly or via subawards, to victim assistance service providers and other organizations that work with crime victims.

Critical elements of the application include the program narrative, which much include a description of the issue, your project design and implementation, capabilities and competencies, and a plan for collecting the data required for this solicitation's performance measures. You should review the solicitation as posted for additional information on how to complete these items. Additionally, the budget detail worksheet and budget narrative are also critical application elements. The review criteria and scoring breakdown of how OVC will access applications may be found on page 24 of the solicitation.

To apply, refer to the section called "How to Apply" on page 20 of the solicitation. All applicants must register in, and submit their applications through, Grants.gov. We recommend submitting your application at least 72 hours prior to the application due date. And if you run into technical difficulties, you can call the Grants.gov Customer Service Hotline at 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035, 24/7 for technical difficulties.

The following conditions generally are not sufficient to justify late submissions of applications for the solicitation. Failure to register in SAM or Grants.gov in sufficient time. Registering and renewing SAM can take as long as 10 business days to complete, and the information transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours. We recommend planning ahead for this time. Failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on the website. Failure to follow the instructions contained within the solicitation. And technical issues with your computer or IT environment, such as issues with firewalls or browser incompatibility are not sufficient to justify late submissions of applications.

Award information. OVC intends to make up to 30 awards under the solicitation. Award amounts may range from \$25,000 to \$1.5 million, with awards at the top of that range being a rare exception for geographically large states with high population. The estimated total amount awarded is accept--is expected to be up to \$12 million. And the anticipated period of performance for these grants will be the starting date of the award

through September 30th, 2021. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

We will now go through Q and A to review questions that have been submitted. So go ahead and open those up. If you have a question and you have not submitted it, now would be a very good time to type that in.

So the first question is from Gary. He says, "I have a question about non-SAA, State Administering Agency, applications. Will non-SAA organizations be permitted to apply without the SAA agreeing to the contents and the organization and/or the effectiveness of the participation?" I would refer you, Gary, to the solicitation and the eligibility section. At the beginning, it does note that outside organizations are eligible to apply for funding when such an application is made in partnership with the VOCA Victim Assistance Programming--Program State Administering Agency of your state.

Question two, "is it appropriate for this funding to be used for training and technical assistance on certain focused areas of victim services or must funding be used to address any and all types of victim services?" Jennifer, we'd recommend you review the solicitation, and design the project that you submit in line with the goals, objectives, and deliverables as specified.

Question three, "if a state coalition wants to apply, do they apply together with the VOCA administrators directly to OVC or does the coalition apply directly to the VOCA administrators?" Dana, the solicitation on the front page notes that you are permitted to apply in partnership with an SAA, and so we'd recommend any outside entity working with the SAA from their state to develop an application for the solicitation.

Next question is, "are higher education institutions eligible to apply?" Any organization that's not a VOCA Victim Assistance State Administering Agency may apply, as long as that application is in partnership with the VOCA Victim Assistance Program and they meet all other eligibility requirements that may be noted within the solicitation.

Another question is regarding--"what is intended by the word partnership?" Partnership would be some, sort of, cooperation between the SAA and the additional entity, and they would specify that information including the partnership and how that is structured within the--within their application.

Next question is regarding--also regarding outside agencies. "May outside agencies apply for this grant if they already received VOCA money at the state level as a subrecipient?" Any outside organization that is not a VOCA Victim Assistance State Administering Agency may only apply if that application is in partnership with the--with the state administering agency.

Next question, "are grantees selected through this application process also available for OVC TTAC assistance for proposed trainings?" I'm not entirely--I don't quite understand the question. However, OVC TTAC does accept applications for assistance

with--providing training and technical assistance throughout the nation. And I--and I don't believe that participation in this solicitation would impact eligibility for OVC TTAC. So I don't believe that's an issue, but I may not understand the question correctly.

Next question is regarding partnership with the VOCA administrator. If an entity is not a VOCA state administering agency, they should work with a VOCA state administering agency to complete an application together in partnership, and that is a requirement in order to be eligible to apply for this funding.

A question at the actual application, "when entering the application budget, for the total budget you want the entire the program budget, even if there are other funding sources?" When doing the program budget, we recommend you review the budget documents that are distributed by OJP and follow those instructions regarding the proposed budget for any application and how those grant funds would be expended.

Next question, "is the amount awarded given on an annual basis for the grant period or is the total amount of funds spread across the grant period?" The amount of funds that you apply for would be the total amount of funds that last ask from the date of award through 2021, through the end date. It's not one amount of money every year for three years. It's one pot of money for a three-year budget period.

Next question, "for organizations that partner with VOCA administrators in multiple states, would all states need to sign on as partners for this grant application?" OVC is accepting applications for single states. So I don't believe we'll be accepting applications for one project that would cover multiple states.

Next question is regarding federally negotiated indirect costs. If you have specific questions, Robin, regarding indirect cost rates, I recommend you reach out to our financial office. It is kind of a tricky subject and not my specific expertise, so we may want to touch base offline to make sure that you get your question answered.

The next question, "if an outside agency applies for the award, who is responsible for the monitoring and administration of the grant programmatic and fiscal documentation?" The entity to whom the award is made is the organization that would be responsible for meeting the goals, objectives, and deliverables of the award, and OVC would go to that agency and also consider the--any sort of agreement and partnership that's dictated in writing between the two entities that they're working in partnership together.

Next question, "may an SAA refuse partnership with an organization's desire to apply?" Yes, I believe so. I'm not aware of anything that would require a state administering agency to work with any particular entity to work on an application.

Next person is confused about the definition of a VOCA administering agency. A VOCA administering agency is the state entity that receives direct funds from the federal government to administer the VOCA Program. Typically, these are state departments that have a direct relationship with OVC. And entities that receive funds from those

state divisions are then subrecipients of VOCA Victim Assistance Funding. Any application for this program must be in partnership with the state administering agency who is the direct recipient of the VOCA Victim Assistance Formula Program.

That appears to be all of the questions so far. I'm going to stay on the line to see if there are others that are coming in.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Brian, one more popped up.

BRIAN SASS: Yeah. Oh, thank you. So Maureen asks, "If the state that is applying for funds had just completed a training needs assessment, does the state still need to include a needs assessment?" I'd recommend Maureen that you review the goals, objectives, and deliverables. The first one does state that award recipients are expected to conduct a comprehensive statewide training needs assessment or review an update of recently completed comprehensive statewide training needs assessment in consultation with their key stakeholders. That's on page four of the solicitation.

Next question from Stacey, "if an organization is already partnering with VOCA administrations in more than one state to provide technical assistance in training, is it possible to submit multiple applications?" I'm not aware, Stacey, of anything that would--that would prevent that. I would advise any organization interested in applying for these funds and with the state to work with the SAA in that state to complete an application and submit it for competitive application.

Next question, I'm not quite sure I understand, is regarding pre-approval of the training areas. If--Angela, if you could please provide some additional clarification, that would be--that would be helpful.

The next question is regarding the time of the application. This is a shorter turnaround time because of the limited pool of the potential applicants. And the applications are going to be due for this solicitation on June 18, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. eastern time.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right. Brian, it seems like that's all. But, you know, maybe we want to give them a few more minutes to see if any other questions come through.

BRIAN SASS: Okay. Thank you. I would also note, if anyone during the preparation of an application has questions or needs assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, which is called NCJRS, will be able to provide that assistance to you. Their contact information is on the second page of the solicitation. They can be reached by email, via toll free phone, TTY for people who are hearing impaired. I think I said email. And they also have web chat. And they operate 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. eastern (time), Monday through Friday. And on the date that the solicitation closes, they will be open until 8:00 p.m. eastern time.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Brian, I also added this--oh, sorry. Go ahead.

BRIAN SASS: I'm sorry. There's a question regarding pre-approvals for training curriculums. I don't believe that this solicitation requires, in the application, pre-approval for training curriculums. However, when OVC makes awards, there are often special conditions, which may or may not require, typically, guidance with the OJP training--trained as practices. There may be other items added through a--through special conditions regarding training curriculum data or processes, but--typical--within the application for this solicitation, there is not specific pre-approval required for training curriculums.

And next question is regarding partnership with an SAA. "If a partner agency applies and receives funding, does the SAA have any other role indicating they are working with the agency and what are the parameters of that partnership?" The parameters of that partnership should be developed and explained within the solicitation. OVC requires only one entity to be an applicant. Others may be proposed as subrecipients. And the applicant entity is the one with primary responsibility for carrying out the award, including administering the funding and managing the entire program. So, hopefully that helps or answers that question.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Brian, if you wanted to, you can move to slide 14 and--the information for NCJRS is listed there, so people could have a chance to write that down if they wanted.

BRIAN SASS: Thank you, Mary Jo. That's helpful. I forgot about that slide. So, everyone, the contact information for NCJRS which I noted is now on your screen. And the NCJRS will be able to provide assistance with the--with any solicitation questions you have while you're submitting an application. Thank you, Mary Jo.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: You're welcome. I think we have another question as well.

BRIAN SASS: Okay. One question is regarding--"if hosting a large one-time training, would pre-approval of the cost be required outside of the application?" I'd refer--you know, OJP does have specific rules and guidance on conferences, and I'd recommend reviewing the OCF--the DOJ Grants Financial Guide which does contain information on conference cost. Awards made as grant funding instruments generally do not require a pre-approval. However, awards made as cooperative agreements may. But there are also certain restrictions on funding for conferences which does include meetings, trainings, etc., specifically, TV cost, room rental costs, and some other items. So, you know, anyone submitting a budget, writing a--an application for the solicitation, it would likely be a good idea to review this--the DOJ Grants Financial Guide for information on conference cost rules.

Okay. It seems like that's all the questions. I'm going to move to slide 15 which has my contact information. If people have questions or comments, feel free to reach out. But we would also recommend questions, specifically, regarding the solicitation, should go through NCJRS so that, you know, as Mary Jo mentioned at the beginning, this is a

competitive application, and we do work very hard to ensure all applicants have equal fairness, and so we recommend sending all questions through NCJRS to ensure an equal response to all questions.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: And while we're giving you guys a few more minutes to see if you have any other questions, I just want to give you a reminder too that these slides that Brian used as a presentation, as well the transcripts of this webinar, will be posted to the OVC website in approximately 10 days. You will receive an email notifying you that that information has been posted and it will contain a link taking you directly to the information, so you don't have to go to the OVC website and look around. You--you'll have an easier access to it. So that way you can refer back to it later on in the process, while you're in the planning process, or you can forward the information to somebody else as well.

So, Brian, I don't see any other questions that have come in. I will leave it to you to determine if you want to wait a little longer or how you want to handle that.

BRIAN SASS: I think we're probably good. It's been--it's been about three minutes since we've got one, so we'll go ahead and--go ahead and end the webinar there. Thank you everyone who joined us. I hope that this was valuable to you. You know, once again, I recommend reading the solicitation in detail, understanding the components of the solicitation, and working on any application in the--with that understanding of the solicitation. So thank you for your--for your time, and we look forward to receiving your applications. Thank you.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Bye.