



U.S. Department of Justice

Office on Violence Against Women

Washington, DC 20530

January 23, 2015

Dear Colleague:

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) is pleased to announce that the FY 2015 Rural Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Program (Rural Program) Solicitation has been released, and I want to bring to your attention enhancements to the Rural Program.

Of particular interest to legal service providers is the fact that the Rural Program is now able to support comprehensive legal services for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. Additionally, if your organization is located within a "rural state,"¹ you should note that by statute, at least 75% of the total amount of funding made available for this program must be allocated to eligible entities located in rural states.

As I am sure you are aware, victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking residing in rural communities face unique challenges and barriers to accessing assistance rarely encountered in urban areas. The geographic isolation, limited transportation options, economic challenges, particularly strong social and cultural pressures, and lack of available services in rural jurisdictions significantly compound the problems confronted by those seeking support and services to end the violence in their lives. These same factors also complicate the ability of the criminal justice system to investigate and prosecute sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking cases. The primary purpose of the Rural Program is to enhance the safety of rural victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking and support projects uniquely designed to address and prevent these crimes in rural communities. OVW welcomes applications that propose innovative solutions to achieving these goals and encourages applications that include collaboration among criminal justice agencies, victim services providers, social services agencies, health organizations and other community organizations.

For more detailed information regarding the FY 2015 Rural Program Solicitation, including OVW's funding priorities for FY 2015, you can access the solicitation at: <http://www.justice.gov/ovw/open-solicitations>. **Please note that the deadline for applications**

¹ VAWA defines the term "rural State" as "a State that has a population density of 57 or fewer persons per square mile or a State in which the largest county has fewer than 250,000 people, based on the most recent decennial census." The following states are designated as "rural" based on the definition of "rural state" within the VAWA 2013 statute and the 2010 Census: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming and the U.S. Territories: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands.

is by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (E.T.) on March 4, 2015. It is my sincere hope that your organization will be able to apply for Rural funds, or in the alternative that you can take a few minutes to share this information and encourage others to participate in the Rural Program for the FY 2015 funding cycle. Should you have additional questions regarding the Rural Program, please call (202) 307-6026 and ask for the Rural Unit.

Sincerely,



Nadine M. Neufville
Deputy Director for Grant
Development and Management