

Enhancing Investigation and Prosecution of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Initiative Pre-Application Information Session Transcript

AISHA BATTLE: Welcome to the Pre-Application Information Session for the Enhancing Investigation and Prosecution of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Initiative, also referred to as the EIP Initiative. My name is Aisha Battle and I am the Associate Director at OVW and, on behalf of the Office on Violence Against Women, also referred to as OVW, and the Improving Criminal Justice Responses (ICJR) grant team, we are convening this pre-application session to go over the fiscal year 2024 solicitation for the EIP Initiative. Today, you will hear from OVW team members to include myself, Lashonde Beasley, Jason Petry, and Debbie Tanaka. And we have Natalie Teague manning the Q&A.

The purpose of this session is to provide information regarding the EIP solicitation. We will highlight a few key points in this presentation. However, it is not the intent, nor is there sufficient time to go over every aspect of the solicitation. All applicants are responsible for reading the FY 2024 EIP solicitation and the OVW Solicitation Companion Guide and ensuring that a complete application is submitted. ICJR team members cannot provide any feedback to applicants about the quality of an applicant's proposal or provide any information outside of what is presented in the solicitation. However, we will be available throughout the period that the solicitation is open to respond to any questions about application requirements. Please feel free to send questions about the EIP solicitation to the ICJR Program email box at OVW.ICJR@usdoj.gov. Or call the main line at 202-307-6026.

It will be helpful to have the EIP solicitation in front of you as a point of reference during this information session. You may take a moment now to open it if you have not done so already. Also, we will send these slides to you all after the webinar, so please do not feel that you must remember everything we tell you here. You may use the presentation alongside the solicitation and the Companion Guide as you prepare your application.

On the cover of the solicitation, please note that final applications are due by 8:59 PM Eastern Time on May 2, 2024. Applications are submitted through a two-step process. Step 1 is the submission of the SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Time on April 30, 2024. Step 2 is the submission of the full application, including attachments, in the JustGrants system. The application should be submitted no later than, as previously stated, 8:59 PM on May 2. It is also recommended that applicants submit a Letter of Intent, which is optional and nonbinding, to the ICJR Program email box at OVW.ICJR@usdoj.gov no later than March 25, 2024. Please note that OVW will not accept late applications. Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin submitting their applications 48 hours prior to the application deadline and to carefully review the OVW policy on late submissions, which can be found on page 23 of the

solicitation. OVW anticipates notifying all applicants of funding decisions by October 1, 2024.

The EIP Initiative is authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, PL 117-328, December 29, 2022, 136 Stat 4459. Congress appropriated funding for this initiative to promote effective policing and prosecution responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including evaluation of the effectiveness of funded interventions. This initiative encourages law enforcement agencies and prosecutor's offices to expand and improve their capacity to effectively investigate and/or prosecute domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and in doing so, to support victim safety and autonomy, hold offenders accountable, and promote agency trust within the surrounding community.

Over the course of the next several slides, we will discuss the EIP statutory purpose areas that applicants may apply to, as well as the OVW priority areas that apply to the EIP Initiative.

For those new to OVW grant programs, you may be wondering, what is a purpose area? Purpose areas provide the general guidelines on how funds are to be used under the grant program. Funds under this initiative must be used for one or more of the statutory purpose areas listed on the next few slides. The EIP Initiative has seven purpose areas, which can be found beginning on page 5. As we go through the purpose areas, please note that there are ones that have an asterisk next to them, which is to indicate that the purpose area is also related to an OVW priority area we will be discussing later in this presentation.

Purpose Area 1: to enhance law enforcement and prosecution responses to the four crimes (domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, which I will refer to as DVSAS as I read the purpose area)—that is, to enhance law enforcement prosecution responses to DVSAS as part of a coordinated community response.

Purpose Area 2: to fund law enforcement officers, prosecutors, investigators, and victim assistants dedicated to handling cases stemming from DVSAS.

Purpose Area 3: to support the identification, implementation, and evaluation of trauma-informed investigation and prosecution strategies.

Purpose Area 4: to support policies, practices, and protocols designed to ensure that DVSAS is properly and thoroughly investigated and appropriately charged and prosecuted, consistent with the Department of Justice 2022 Guidance on Improving Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias. You will learn more about the DOJ Guidance later in this presentation.

Purpose Area 5: to foster greater accountability, transparency, and building of community trust related to the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Purpose Area 6: to provide and support training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors who handle investigations related to DVSAS, including but not limited to providing strategies to build a case based on trauma-informed, victim-centered, and offender-focused practices.

Purpose Area 7: to promote enhanced criminal justice data collection, tracking, use, and reporting regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Now, we have OVW priority areas. Each year, OVW leadership identifies priority areas for which grant programs will give special consideration and/or point preference in the application review process. In FY 2024, OVW has four programmatic priorities. The two priorities that are applicable for the EIP Program are 1) increasing access to justice for all survivors and 2) strengthening efforts to prevent and end sexual assault. Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to address these priorities.

In FY 2024, all applicants meaningfully proposing to address Purpose Areas 1, 2, and/or 5 will meet the first priority. Purpose Areas 1, 2, and 5 are centered around creating avenues of access for survivors who choose to engage in the criminal justice system. Projects that meaningfully propose to implement this priority will address access to justice through implementing survivor-centered approaches and/or strategies within the criminal justice system. As stated before, an asterisk was used in the purpose area slides to indicate which purpose areas meet this priority area. Please note, to meaningfully address this priority area means that applicants should include appropriate detail in the Summary Data Sheet, the Proposal Narrative, and the budget, which will all be discussed later in this presentation.

In 2024, to meaningfully implement the second priority—preventing and ending sexual assault—applicants must allocate at least 25% of their proposed project activities and budget expenses toward addressing sexual assault committed by non-intimate partners. If found to be meaningfully implementing this priority area, applicants will receive special consideration. OVW will assess these applicants for special consideration during the application review process.

The EIP Initiative solicitation lists specific activities that are outside the scope of the EIP Initiative and will not be supported by the program's funding. Applications that propose activities deemed to be substantially out of scope may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration for funding. A complete list of out-of-scope and unallowable activities can be found on page 7 of the solicitation, and the complete list of unallowable costs begins on page 17. It is important to review these lists thoroughly, as applications may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration if they propose activities deemed to be substantially out of scope. Please note that out-of-scope

activities include research, direct victim services, prevention activities, family violence services, services for children under the age of 11, and the creation of sex offender registries.

Activities that compromise victim safety and recovery. OVW does not fund activities that jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions. Please refer to page 6 of the EIP Initiative solicitation and the OVW Solicitation Companion Guide for additional details. Please note that applications that propose any activities that compromise victim safety and recovery and undermine offender accountability may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration entirely. Now, to take us on to pertinent federal award information in the solicitation is my colleague Jason Petry.

JASON PETRY: Thank you, Aisha. We will now discuss federal award information as it pertains to the EIP Initiative, to include award period and amount, program requirements, eligibility, and related matters.

Beginning on page 8, the solicitation provides details on the federal award information. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. There is no guarantee that funds will be available in the future. However, OVW may elect to make awards in a future fiscal year for applications submitted under this solicitation but not selected for FY2024 funding depending on the merits of the applications and the availability of funding. The EIP Initiative is making awards for up to \$500,000 for a 36-month project period. All awards will be processed as new and will be made as grants. OVW has the discretion to award grants for greater or lesser amounts than requested and to negotiate the scope of work and budget with applicants prior to the award of a grant. Be sure to request the full amount of the award.

Recipients of an FY2024 EIP award will be required to participate in three program requirements. All awarded applicants are required to participate in OVW training and technical assistance, to complete performance reports, and to participate in an assessment or evaluation. Details regarding these requirements can be found under the Program Requirements section of the EIP Initiative solicitation.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) 2022 Updated Guidance on Improving Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender-Based Violence is central to this solicitation and the EIP Initiative this year. This Guidance, which includes eight principles, is intended to reflect and advance the department's partnership with law enforcement leaders, line officers, detectives, and other law enforcement personnel who work tirelessly to ensure that policing is bias-free and to uphold the civil and human rights in the communities that they serve. The department extends its appreciation to the many law enforcement leaders, victim and community advocates, and other experts who worked with us to develop the original Guidance in 2015 and have provided insights to inform this updated

2022 edition. Furthermore, the department recognizes that law enforcement officers at all ranks in communities across the country work tirelessly to ensure safety and justice for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. It should be noted that while this Guidance focuses on law enforcement agencies, many principles also apply to prosecutor's offices.

The Guidance provides several principles for departments to incorporate into their policies and training in order to improve investigations and ensure that victims of sexual assault and domestic violence receive a professional and appropriate response from law enforcement. We will go over the eight principles now.

Principle 1: Recognize and address biases, assumptions, and stereotypes about victims.

Principle 2: Treat all victims with respect.

Principle 3: Ensure that policies, training, supervision, and resource allocation support thorough and effective investigations.

Principle 4: Appropriately classify reports of sexual assault or domestic violence.

Principle 5: Refer victims to appropriate services.

Principle 6: Properly identify the predominant aggressor in domestic violence incidents.

Principle 7: Implement policies to prevent officer-perpetrated sexual assault and domestic violence, and hold officers accountable who commit these offenses.

Principle 8: Maintain, review, and act upon data regarding sexual assault and domestic violence.

To learn more about the DOJ Guidance, see the Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias and resource list. Each resource can be found on the OVW website.

Eligibility is mentioned briefly on the cover of the solicitation as well as in more detail on pages 9-10. Eligible applicants include state, territorial, county, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies and prosecutor's offices that investigate and/or prosecute crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking in the United States or U.S. territories. States, units of local government, and tribal governments may apply on behalf of law enforcement agencies and/or prosecutor's offices that lack the authority to apply on their own.

The solicitation details other program eligibility requirements, beginning on page 10, to include required partnerships. Please note that each applicant must partner with a victim service provider or a state, territorial, or tribal domestic violence and/or sexual

assault coalition. The term “victim service provider” means a nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organization or rape crisis center, including a state or tribal domestic violence and/or sexual assault coalition that assists or advocates for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victims, including a domestic violence shelter, faith-based organization, or other organization with a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This can be found at 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(50). Victim service providers must provide direct services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as one of their primary purposes and have a demonstrated history of effective work in this field. Applicants that do not meet this requirement will not be eligible for EIP Initiative funding and will be removed from consideration. Formal partnerships must be clearly documented in the form of a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Indian tribal governments can submit a Letter of Commitment in lieu of an MOU but must submit an MOU if awarded funds.

Finally, the applicant and the required partner must 1) have a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking, 2) must provide direct services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking as one of their primary purposes, and 3) have a demonstrated history of effective work in this field.

And I will now hand it off to my colleague Lashonde Beasley to discuss additional application information.

LASHONDE BEASLEY: Thank you, Jason. I will now review the EIP application and submission information. A Letter of Intent serves to certify that an applicant is registered and current with the System for Award Management (SAM) under a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. The Letter of Intent for the EIP solicitation is due no later than March 25, 2024. This letter is optional and does not obligate the applicant to apply.

Please carefully review the formatting and technical requirements on page 11 of the solicitation. Points may be deducted for applications that do not adhere to the formatting and technical requirements. Please read the entire list of requirements. I will also go through the list: The application should be double-spaced; charts may be single-spaced; 8½ by 11-inch pages; 1-inch margins; Arial font; type no smaller than 11 points, except for footnotes, which may be 9 points; page numbers; no more than 20 pages for the Proposal Narrative; documents in the following format: Microsoft Word (doc), PDF file (.pdf), or text document; and headings and subheadings that correspond to the sections identified in the section of the solicitation.

Applications must include all of the following required documents: the Proposal Narrative, the Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative, and a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Proposal Abstract must be entered into a text box in JustGrants, though it will not be scored but will be used throughout the review process. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the abstract template provided in the solicitation.

The Data Requested with Application consists of three sets of questions: the Pre-Award Risk Assessment, Applicant Questionnaire, and the Summary Data Sheet. You'll complete each as a survey directly in JustGrants. These are not scored but are required elements of your application. A list of these questions for each item is included on pages 41-49 of the solicitation and in the appendices.

The Proposal Narrative section should not exceed 20 pages, double-spaced, and must include the required three sections: the Purpose of the Proposal, What Will be Done, and Who Will Implement the Proposal. Reviewers will not read more than 20 pages, double-spaced. If your application is not double-spaced, reviewers will only read the equivalent of 20 pages, double-spaced. The remainder of the Proposal Narrative will not be scored. Make sure you respond to every question in each of the sections, and headings are highly recommended. See pages 13-16 of the solicitation for more information.

In developing the Proposal Narrative, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the DOJ's 2022 Law Enforcement Guide, as familiarity with this Guide is necessary to address the questions asked in the What Will Be Done section. Question number 1 in the What Will Be Done section includes a small chart. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the chart when formatting their answer to the first question in the What Will Be Done section. The Who Will Implement section should reflect the roles of the key personnel and/or the roles listed in the What Will Be Done section. When developing the Proposal Narrative, as stated earlier, headings and subheadings that correspond to the sections identified in the solicitation should be used, to include labeling the Purpose of the Proposal, What Will Be Done, and Who Will Implement sections. Please ensure that when you are prompted in the Proposal Narrative, your answer should appear in the section in which the question is asked.

Okay. So, let's talk about the Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative. This section must include a Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative that link clearly to the project activities specified in the Proposal Narrative. The budget should be for the entire 36-month period, not divided by year, and must include sufficient funds for persons with disabilities or who are Deaf or hard of hearing or must describe other resources available to the applicant to ensure meaningful access to such people. The budget should also include sufficient funds for persons with limited English proficiency. The budget should not contain items that are unsupported by the Proposal Narrative. You should include your budget as an attachment to your application. A sample budget is included as an appendix in the solicitation. And the webinar on creating a budget is available on the OVW website.

Additionally, the budget must include funds to attend OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance (TTA) in the amount of \$20,000 for applicants located in the 48 contiguous states, and \$25,000 for applicants located in the territories, Hawaii, or Alaska.

Applicants may allocate up to \$50,000 to compensate victim service providers, to include domestic violence and/or sexual assault coalitions, for their work on the proposed project. Activities that service providers are projected to complete include such activities as establishing and/or enhancing referral policies and protocols, assisting with training efforts, developing or updating communication guidelines, and other collaborative efforts outside of direct services to victims. No more than 20% of the funding can be allocated to training and technical assistance activities. Please note that this 20% limitation does not include the TTA set-aside of \$20,000 for the 48 contiguous states or \$25,000 for applicants located in the territories, Hawaii, or Alaska. Later in this presentation, we will be joined by a member of OVW's Grants Financial Management Division to provide more information regarding budgets.

We will now discuss the Memorandum of Understanding and Letter of Commitment requirement. Please carefully read the distinction between these two documents and identify which is required for your organization.

Applicants are required to submit an MOU, a document containing the terms of the partnership and the allocation of roles and responsibilities between two or more parties. The MOU must be a single document and be signed and dated by the Authorized Representative of each proposed partner organization during the development of the application. As the required partner, the victim service provider must be included as a signatory on the MOU.

Tribal law enforcement agencies or tribal prosecutor's offices or tribal governments applying on behalf of a tribal law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office that are unable to submit a signed MOU may submit a Letter of Commitment from each partnering organization. If funded, the tribal applicant will be required to submit a signed MOU as a post-award deliverable.

Now, please help me welcome Renee Hanson, a budget analyst with our OVW Grants Financial Management Division (GFMD), and she'll go into more detail about the budget requirements.

RENEE HANSON: Thank you, Lashonde. In the next couple of slides, we are going to focus on aspects of your application that relate to the documents that our financial team, the Grants Financial Management Division reviews. And more specifically, we'll discuss some items that GFMD has identified from prior-year's applications that could help with expediting our review process. So, for today, we are going to highlight certain aspects of the Pre-Award Risk Assessment and provide you with a link to a detailed webinar on how to develop the budget that will be included in your application.

First, we will highlight an item identified in the Summary Data Sheet, which is completed by all applicants. And specifically, what I want to mention is the single audit response. OVW requests that all applicants provide a statement as to whether they have expended \$750,000 or more in federal funds during their last fiscal year. And if they have, they then indicate that and also specify the end date of their last fiscal year. Now,

GFMD is finding that applicants don't always include all of this information, so please ensure that this question is answered in its entirety on the Summary Data Sheet, and this is question number 3.

The next item I'd like to discuss with you is the Pre-Award Risk Assessment questions. These assist GFMD during the Pre-Award Risk Assessment review of all applications. Each applicant must prepare a response to every question. There are 11 questions, and each question has multiple parts. Now, we've noticed from prior years that applicants don't always fully answer all parts of the questions, which in turn requires GFMD to reach out to the applicant, and this may delay funding decisions. Some of the most common issues that we have encountered have been, for example, question number 2, where the applicant indicates that they do indeed have internal policies, but they don't provide a brief list of topics covered in the policies and procedures. Another example is question number 3. Some applicants fail to provide a brief summary of the organization's process of tracking expenditures, and more specifically, whether or not it tracks budgeted versus actual expenditures. And these are just a few examples. But in general, just make sure that you read each piece of each question thoroughly and provide a full and comprehensive response.

This next slide will quickly highlight some of the resources that are available to you while you're creating the budget to be submitted with your application. Over the last few years, GFMD has developed a detailed webinar presentation on how to develop a budget to be submitted with the OVW application. This presentation addresses some of the challenges that you may face with your budget and provides some insight on the budget review process. This webinar can be found at the link on this slide.

Next up is the Uniform Guidance, which can be found at 2 CFR 200. You can use your favorite search engine for this one. Other resources include the DOJ Financial Guide and the program solicitation itself.

We know that this can be a lot of information to process, so if you have any questions about the GFMD information that has been discussed, please feel free to contact the GFMD Helpdesk at 888-514-8556 or by email at OVW.GFMD@usdoj.gov. These are monitored daily. And you will probably receive a quicker response if you email, but we do try to respond to every inquiry within 24 to 48 hours.

I will now hand it over to Debbie Tanaka to give you an overview of how to apply to this solicitation using the two-step application submission process. Thank you.

DEBBIE TANAKA: Thank you so much, Renee. So how to [NO SOUND] or the title of this solicitation, all of which can be found on the cover page. The FY 2024 application submission process is a two-step process, with significant differences from the process prior to three years ago. Application materials will be submitted in Grants.gov and JustGrants. We recommend starting the application process—even just the Grants.gov and JustGrants registration process—as soon as possible to allow time for registration or renewal and to learn the system.

Read the solicitation carefully to understand all steps to submit an application and the time required to complete those steps. Some steps, such as obtaining the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number or registering with the System for Award Management (SAM) or Grants.gov may take several days to complete. We recommend that applicants begin these processes as soon as possible but no later than April 9, as suggested in the solicitation.

The Grants.gov. Applicants must complete the Application for Federal Assistance or SF-424 in Grants.gov. The specific information required for this step is included on page 12 of the solicitation. Applicants must also complete and submit the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities or SF-LLL in Grants.gov.

After submitting these two forms, the applicant will receive an email notification to complete the rest of the application in JustGrants. If the applicant is a new user in JustGrants, the email will include instructions on registering with JustGrants.

Applicants will submit the full application, including attachments, in JustGrants. If you have applied for OVW funding prior to two years ago, you will notice some significant changes in the application process. In the JustGrants system, applicants will enter some application information directly into text boxes and surveys and upload some documents as attachments. We have included the following major elements of the application as examples of what applicants will submit in JustGrants. The Proposal Abstract will be entered in a text box. The Pre-Award Risk Assessment, Applicant Questionnaire, and Summary Data Sheet will be completed as surveys directly in JustGrants. The Proposal Narrative as well as the Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative will be uploaded as attachments. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letter of Commitment (LOC) will be uploaded as an attachment. In addition to these major elements, other documentation will be required for all applications or when applicable. Please read the solicitation carefully for a full description of all items required.

In JustGrants, each applying entity will have an assigned Entity Administrator who is responsible for managing entity-level information and assigning roles in the system. The Entity Administrator is also the e-business point of contact (E-Biz POC) designated in SAM.gov. For more information on registering with JustGrants, please refer to the website justicegrants.usdoj.gov. Within 24 hours of JustGrants receiving your application from Grants.gov, the user submitting the application in Grants.gov and the SAM E-Biz POC will receive an email to register for a JustGrants account. The email is from DOJ's secure user management system, known as DIAMD, and will include instructions on how to create an account. To ensure that you receive these emails and that they are not flagged as spam, we recommend adding the email address DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov to the trusted sender list in your email settings.

The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization serves as the Entity Administrator and must log in to JustGrants to confirm the entity's profile and add users. The user submitting the application in JustGrants serves as the Application Submitter. Within

minutes of completing their JustGrants account registration, the Application Submitter and the Entity Administrator will receive an email from JustGrants with a link to the application that was started in Grants.gov. Alternatively, the Application Submitter can log in to JustGrants and locate the pending application in their work list on the home or landing page. The application number listed on JustGrants will be identical to the eight-digit number that begins with the word GRANT on Grants.gov.

Each lead applicant must have at least one Authorized Representative designated on JustGrants. An Authorized Representative is an individual with documented authority to sign an agreement with the federal government. Before the application is submitted, the Entity Administrator must log in to JustGrants to review the Authorized Representatives associated with the organization. If an Authorized Representative does not have a JustGrants account, the Entity Administrator will need to invite them to register. Within minutes of being invited to be an Authorized Representative, the individual will receive an email from the DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov email address with instructions on how to create an account in DOJ's secure user management system. Once the Authorized Representative receives the email and completes the steps to create an account, the Authorized Representative will be available in JustGrants.

The Application Submitter will complete the application by entering data into web-based forms and text boxes, uploading attachments, and accepting assurances and certifications. The Application Submitter will also need to select the Authorized Representative or Representatives. Once all sections are completed, the Application Submitter will submit the application. The Application Submitter, Entity Administrator, and Authorized Representative will then receive an email from JustGrants confirming successful submission of the application. The Department of Justice has made a collection of self-guided training resources, including training and a virtual Q&A session on application submission, available at the website displayed on this slide.

I'll now hand it back to Aisha to finish this out so we can address any questions you may have. Aisha?

AISHA BATTLE: Thank you, Debbie. So federal civil rights law. Recipients of OVW funds must comply with applicable federal civil rights laws, which, among other things, prohibit recipients from discriminating on the basis of national origin and disability. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to grantees' programs and activities for individuals with disabilities, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, and individuals with limited English proficiency. Applicants must include funds or other resources in their budget that support activities to ensure access for these individuals. Final applications in JustGrants are due by 8:59 PM Eastern Time on May 2, 2024. Carefully review the How to Apply and Submission Dates and Times sections on pages 21-23 of the solicitation for applicant actions with required deadlines and for OVW's policy on late submissions. Submitting the application components at least 48 hours before each deadline—both in Grants.gov and JustGrants—will enable applicants to receive notice of any failed submission and provide an opportunity to correct the error before the application deadline.

So if you have questions, here are contact numbers and emails to know if questions come up during the process. If you have questions regarding what is programmatically allowable under this solicitation, please contact the ICJR Unit, either at OVW.ICJR@usdoj.gov or at 202-307-6026. You heard from GFMD earlier that you can direct your financial questions to them at OVW.GFMD@usdoj.gov or call them at 1-888-514-8556. And then, please note that technical questions about submissions—whether it be for the first level of submission (Grants.gov) or the second level (JustGrants Support)—can be answered. For Grants.gov, the email is support@Grants.gov, or you can call them at 800-518-4726. For JustGrants Support, that contact is OVW.JustGrantsSupport@usdoj.gov, or you can call them at 866-655-4482.

Now we will turn it to the Q&A to answer the questions that were submitted throughout the presentation. I will ask my colleague Natalie Teague if she can field the questions for us.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Fantastic. Thank you, Aisha. And thank you everyone on the team. We've gotten some wonderful questions, and I've pre-answered some of them, but I've saved some of them to pitch live. So go ahead and keep your questions coming, but I'm going to start with the first one. "So, can two different governmental organizations within the same geographic area submit separate applications and potentially both receive grant funds?"

AISHA BATTLE: I think it would be helpful to clarify that, since this award is for law enforcement and prosecution, that the government entity applying would be a conduit of theirs. And so, if there are two separate law enforcement departments within a jurisdiction, they can apply separately.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Thank you, Aisha. And if that did not get to the heart of your question, please reframe your question and re-add it in the chat. Another question is regarding the organizational chart requirement: "If a county is applying on behalf of a prosecutor's office, should we submit the county organizational chart or the prosecutor's office organizational chart?"

AISHA BATTLE: Great question. You should submit the prosecutor's office's organizational chart. And so, if this is the same case regarding law enforcement, then you should submit the law enforcement agency's organizational chart.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Thank you, Aisha. And we have lots of burning questions about victim advocacy and various types of victim advocacy activities that may be supported. So, we're turning to those. Hold your thoughts, folks. One other one before we go there is, "Can funds be used on a diversion program for misdemeanor or domestic violence cases? These would be for cases that are not deemed suitable to prosecute in court."

AISHA BATTLE: Please, as my team understands, I think we would need more information with what you mean. Can it be used for that, since the funding is for

investigation and prosecution of cases? Can the person who has their hand raised come on speaker?

MARK: Hello? Can you hear me okay?

AISHA BATTLE: Yes.

MARK: I'm part of a prosecutorial agency, and we do traditional prosecutions of many of these domestic violence and dating violence cases, but there are some cases that for various reasons are routed through other programs. They're alternatives to traditional court prosecution. And they generally involve either restorative justice, where we do some kind of community panel that hears the case and recommends ways that they can be reintegrated into the community, or they meet with somebody who acts as a kind of panelist to offer diversion terms—essentially, if you do anger management or community service, then we won't go ahead and file this in court. So they're in the spectrum of prosecution outcomes, but they are not traditional court prosecutions. So, my question was whether these funds could be used to in some way deal with those cases that go through these alternative programs.

AISHA BATTLE: Thank you for your clarification. And if anyone on my team has anything additional to what I'm about to say, please feel free to come on mic. We do not support diversion programs, and we do support alternatives like different compliance dockets or relating offenders to batterers' intervention programming. But we do not find it to be best practices to send people to anger management, and that's why I needed more information. But I will say, this program in particular is aimed at increasing prosecutions. And so, as to what you described, I would recommend you look at our Improving Criminal Justice Responses Program, which is the program that this is an offshoot of, which would be more in line with what you have described and does allow funding for alternative prosecution solutions. And that funding can also be used to fund prosecutors. The difference is who would be the lead applicant for that program. States, units of local government, victim service providers, courts, tribes, and coalitions can be the lead applicant, but what you described can be funded under there. We like to think of those different prosecution alternatives for that program, framing them as compliance-related, which would be helpful. And you can contact the same email address to find out more about that program. Does anyone have anything to add?

NATALIE TEAGUE: Yes, Jason.

JASON PETRY: No. I was going to say nothing else to add, but Mark, we can certainly help explore that question with you. And as Aisha mentioned, feel free to email us at the ICJR mailbox.

MARK: Great, thank you both for that.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Thank you.

AISHA BATTLE: And just one thing. Just to let you know, Natalie actually led us in a presentation of that solicitation last week, and we expect the recording to be coming out shortly, and that will be housed on the OVW website. If you would like to email us, we can also make sure that gets to you in time. Natalie.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Thank you. Yes. And I just dropped the link to that as well as to the OVW Resources for Applicants page. It does have a ton on it. It is chock-full of information, including our fiscal year 2024 Solicitation Companion Guide. But if you scroll down below that to Program-Specific Resources, there's a box for Pre-Application Information Sessions for fiscal year 2024. In the coming days, you will see the recording posted for ICJR as well as for EIP. And Aisha, if I may, we've gotten a little bit more of a clarification on the last question. So, to clarify, "Can a police agency and a prosecutor's office from the same geographical area both apply separately and potentially receive grant awards?"—I suppose through EIP.

AISHA BATTLE: There is nothing stopping you from doing that. I would encourage you all to see if you could apply together or if you want to apply separately, whichever is the best for your organizations.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Fantastic. And there's a similar question here. "If our agency is currently a recipient of a fiscal year '23 ICJR grant, are we eligible to apply for the fiscal year 2024 grant?" For ICJR, there's a section about if you have pre-existing funding, I believe on page 15 of that solicitation, so that would determine whether or not you could apply to the fiscal year 2024 ICJR. But if you're asking about EIP, Aisha, I believe that, yes, they could also apply for EIP, even if they had a current ICJR award, is that right?

AISHA BATTLE: Yes. And you can apply for both the ICJR Program and EIP. These are separate programs. And so technically, this program has no grantees and whoever is funded this year will be the first class of grantees.

NATALIE TEAGUE: So exciting. Excellent. We are so anxious to get our first class of EIP grantees. So, I'm going to turn to the big elephant in the Q&A box. And so they're all on the same theme of supporting victim advocacy services. "So we are a prosecutor's office in desperate need of a victim advocate dedicated to SADV cases. Am I reading correctly that this grant cannot fund a victim advocate salary if they are providing direct victim advocacy services?"

AISHA BATTLE: Yes. You are reading the solicitation correctly, because this is aimed at enhancing prosecution and investigation. The victim advocate is there to help lead the voice of the survivor, to improve policies and procedures, and to implement the DOJ Guidance. Now, we would like to recommend for you as well, the Improving Criminal Justice Responses solicitation. The seven purpose areas from this solicitation are very much offshoots of the ICJR Program. The ICJR Program houses this program. This has a different eligibility class, which is directly prosecutors and law enforcement. But you can fund prosecution and law enforcement as well as advocates to support them through ICJR. And there is no limit. There is actually an encouragement of direct

services under that program. And you can apply to them both. And so if you need some advocacy in this as well as improved training and technical assistance, you can apply to both solicitations in order to meet those goals. But unfortunately, direct services from victim service providers is not allowed, and that is why there is a limit to how much they can be funded. And I see someone with their hand up. Hannah?

HANNAH: I'm sorry to have to ask you to repeat yourself, but did you say that it can't be used for direct services done by folks outside of the law enforcement agency?—but could it be that it could fund a victim advocate or a counselor who's employed by the criminal justice agency?

AISHA BATTLE: Not to do direct services.

HANNAH: Okay. Okay.

AISHA BATTLE: Now, the Improving Criminal Justice Responses Program that Natalie put the solicitation link to can be used for that purpose.

HANNAH: Thanks.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And there was another question related to that as well, Aisha. "Can the required victim service provider be internal? We are a prosecuting agency that already has a victim services unit. Can we use our own internal unit to perform the functions of a victim service provider for this grant?"

AISHA BATTLE: That would still be considered direct services for the purposes of this program. And I encourage everyone to go and look at the victim service provider section of the solicitation, because we have at OVW a specific definition of what is a victim service provider as it pertains to this project and that is one housed outside of the criminal justice system.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And then, just to clarify on that last question, if they have victim services within a prosecution office, if that satisfies the required partnership requirements for EIP. I believe that it does not, correct?

AISHA BATTLE: It does not. The internal victim service provider—you can have them at the table, of course, informing you, because we do not want to say that their voice is not truthful, but the partnership requirement is with a community victim service provider, a nonprofit organization in the community.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Thank you, Aisha. And another twist on that—is the answer the same for a law enforcement agency that has its own internal victim services division. Does that internal division meet the partnership requirement for EIP? No, correct?

AISHA BATTLE: It does not. But I would refer you to the ICJR solicitation, where we are uplifting the co-responder model this year between law enforcement and advocates.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Yes. And I will say some of these questions came in early on, and I wrote a rather lengthy response. If you go to the Answer section of the Q&A, there's a very long response. And then there's also cites to the OVW Priority Area 2, which is the co-responder model, and where you can find that in the ICJR solicitation, if that interests you. But just to go a little bit further on this, here's another one. "I see on page 5 of the solicitation, item number 2, it says it can fund law enforcement officers and victim assistants. So, if I understand correctly, can we use some of this funding to pay for a victim assistant to provide direct services? I don't want to get this wrong."

AISHA BATTLE: Under the out-of-scope activities, direct services is included there, and so you cannot use this funding to provide direct services. You can...

NATALIE TEAGUE: And if I...

AISHA BATTLE: ...use the funding to train your victim assistant and to further your investigation.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And I just want to go back to many of the questions that were coming in about limitations on direct victim services and the definition of victim service provider. Again, the flagship ICJR solicitation greatly supports victim advocacy, and so actual victim service providers and state domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions can apply directly as a lead applicant to ICJR. What makes EIP unique is that the eligible applicants are prosecution offices and law enforcement agencies. Neither one of those can apply directly to ICJR on their own. For ICJR, the only folks that are eligible to apply are states, tribal governments, units of local government, victim service providers that meet the definition that was just posted, and state domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions. So, for ICJR, if there was a prosecution project or a law enforcement project, they have to come in with another entity applying on their behalf. For EIP, the beauty of this program is that this program is specifically funded for prosecution and investigation, enhancing both, and both of those entities can specifically apply. And let's see. I see we have a hand raised. If you can unmute.

PARTICIPANT: Hi. Just a clarification. We are a law enforcement agency. We do have our own victim service specialists who work within the department, but they are employees of a nonprofit sexual assault center and a nonprofit domestic violence agency that are contracted to work within the police department. And would those be allowed to be funded under this if they train our officers on their specialties and provide guidance on policy, procedure, best practice, things like that, not doing any of the direct service work?

AISHA BATTLE: That is exactly what the \$50,000 set-aside for victim service providers is for, for them to provide training, for them to help inform upon the training that you all are developing, and as well as on policies and procedures and protocols. And so, thank you. That can exactly be used for that. And your victim service provider partner, just to

take your example a step further, those organizations that they come to would be great organizations to have as your required partner on this project.

PARTICIPANT: Okay. Great. Thank you.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Let's see. "So, the city domestic violence prosecution office, the police department, and our county DV prosecution office use the same cloud-based, digital evidence management system but are all on different versions of the tool. Could we use EIP funds to work collaboratively with the system vendor, one, to get all agencies on the same version of the tool, two, to activate limited transcription services for those who are of limited English proficiency in the tool for all agencies? Could it be used to fund active functions, allowing victims and advocates to submit digital evidence after the incident? Could the funding be used to work across agencies to standardize how evidence is uploaded, labeled, and shared? And could the funding be used to provide training to front-line staff?"

AISHA BATTLE: Bridget, is this your question? Yes, it is? Bridget.

Participant: Yes, it actually is. All of those are part of the system upgrade. We weren't sure with that. We've got two prosecutor's offices and our largest law enforcement agency is using a pretty split digital evidence tool, but they aren't talking. So, if we could work with our system vendor to collaboratively work to get us all in the same system, make sure all the transcription and allocated resources that are available through that tool are turned on for all agencies, and we work collaboratively for how that information is uploaded and stored and shared in that tool, so we can kind of optimize evidence collection for prosecution. We would also work with our victim service partner to make sure that, as we're looking at evidence collection, be—like, on the scene and also victim upload later and prosecution practice are victim-informed. But most of the money would go to our IT vendor to upgrade the system.

AISHA BATTLE: While what you described does fall under Purpose Area 7, I would say that, given this is like both a grant fund and comes with intensive TA to help improve prosecution investigation, spending the bulk of the money on the data collection system may hinder your project. But what you described does fall under Purpose Area 7. Please someone on my team speak if you have different thoughts. I will say, Bridget, what you described seems to very much fall under the ICJR Program and under one of our statutory priority areas under ICJR regarding the sharing of information. And just to reemphasize what Natalie said, this is, of course, part of improving our handling of cases, leveraging the information we have and sharing it with our partners. This pool of money is very much intended to improve internal processes for law enforcement and prosecution.

PARTICIPANT: And so that would not include SOPs, standardization of how you do evidence collection, and making sure it's shared with your prosecution team for prosecution, with or without the victim? I feel like it is about how we can work with you all to give us guidance on how to effectively work together to make sure that our

evidence collection practices are appropriate and we're using the right tools. I just want to make sure, because we're looking at, collaboratively, the best outcomes. A lot of it has to do with information sharing and timely access to evidence.

AISHA BATTLE: I agree. And I think what you described falls under Purpose Area 7.

PARTICIPANT: Okay. Okay. But it sounds like maybe we look at ICJR?

AISHA BATTLE: I would encourage everyone on this call, because you can be funded under ICJR, to look at both programs and see how you can leverage both or either one of them. And so, I'll also say this is a smaller program, and so I just want to encourage you all to maximize what you all are doing and want to emphasize the differences between the programs.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

AISHA BATTLE: I see we have two more hands raised. I think, Sarah, you may have had your hand up first.

PARTICIPANT: Yes. Hi. I'm Sarah. I'm also in a prosecutor's office. My question is regarding the partnership and the MOU. So, we do have MOUs with different organizations in the community. However, what I'm thinking will be our project, which will be enhancing our prosecution capacity, will not be tied to those organizations we partner with for victims or things like that. Will we be fulfilling the requirement of having that MOU partnership just by providing that MOU even though maybe it is not part of our project for this application? Or is it necessary that that partner organization be part of the project we are asking money for?

AISHA BATTLE: Sarah, I want to make sure I understand you, so please let me know if I am not answering your question. As I understand it, you traditionally partner with organizations in your community to support this work and you're considering, under this initiative, partnering with a different organization?

PARTICIPANT: No. We are not considering partnering with any new organization. My question is the project. Once we apply to the solicitation, we'll not be including these partners as part of the project. We are asking money to be funded. But we do have a partnership, right? And so, my question is, are we fulfilling the requirement of the solicitation by showing we have partnerships even though maybe those organizations will not even be mentioned during the project activities or in our narrative, because that's not what we are asking money for, you know?

AISHA BATTLE: I understand, Sarah. Thank you. Under this program, it is rooted in the CCR, as all of our work is. There is a partnership requirement where you would need to not just evidence your existing MOU partners but where you would need an MOU demonstrating how you would be working with that partner on this project. And that required partner is the community victim service provider. And so you will see in the

Proposal Narrative section where there are prompts for you to address. You are asked to detail how your partner organization will be involved in the project.

PARTICIPANT: Okay. So, if we are asking for funding but that funding is not going to be used to pay for that partnership, but we can demonstrate how that partnership will work within the project, even though funding is not going toward them, that's okay?

AISHA BATTLE: Yes. You can write that they are providing their services in kind. There is no minimum amount of money that the partner should get, but we certainly want their work to be meaningful. And so, if you have an existing relationship, I would detail what that would look like and, if you are not funding them, how their time will be supported.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, thank you. That was useful. Thank you.

AISHA BATTLE: Thank you.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And, Aisha, before we go on, there's a somewhat related question as well in the Q&A. "Can an existing MOU be used for this application?"

AISHA BATTLE: It cannot. We require that a new MOU for specifically this solicitation be utilized. And so, for both programs we have spoken about, if you were applying to both, you would need a different MOU for each one. And you would need an MOU that was drafted during the time this solicitation is open for the purposes of addressing it.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And, Aisha, there had been a question that I believe I answered already in the chat, but to follow up on that: "The MOU is required in order to have a complete application, correct?"

AISHA BATTLE: That is correct.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Thank you

AISHA BATTLE: Hannah?

HANNAH: I just wanted to ask, back to what you were saying about Purpose Area 7, around data tracking, collection, reporting, etc. If someone could just point me to the right part of the solicitation in terms of what would be appropriate external support to fund that kind of project? So, using different kinds of criminal justice consultants and other people who work in that area, many of them probably are prosecution-focused, but it's not a law enforcement agency, if you're following. It would be like getting external support to enhance what we're doing based on using practices that are used in other jurisdictions or other places.

AISHA BATTLE: Well, we will be providing that through training and technical assistance. That is why the amount of training and technical assistance that you all can take on is limited, because this initiative comes with a robust amount of training and

technical assistance. And, of course, asking you to speak to the DOJ Guidance that was created and informed by many of the consultants that we work with, that we will be assisting you in addressing those things.

HANNAH: Specifically on Purpose Area 7, around data?

AISHA BATTLE: For the program in total, yes.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And, Aisha, there's a question in the chat that I was getting ready to answer, but I'll go ahead and pitch it live. "So, we want to find a system-based caseworker to work at an FJC, family justice center, with domestic violence and sexual violence victims from the criminal justice system perspective to support the FJC, family justice center. Does that qualify?" Would it qualify for EIP funding, I believe?

AISHA BATTLE: I apologize. I think that people utilize caseworkers differently, so it would be helpful to understand what duties they would have as the caseworker.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And what I was looking to respond is that they may also want to check out the ICJR solicitation, because that might be a better fit.

AISHA BATTLE: I think that you are correct. Typically, the caseworkers are providing some form of direct services or moving direct services forward. And this is really focused on law enforcement and prosecution. We, of course, want to always uplift victim services and recognize their importance, but we were very thoughtful in putting this together, knowing that we have a large funding pool for ICJR that can fund victim services and a large amount of the funding for that program goes to victim services. This is our first opportunity that we've had to directly fund law enforcement and prosecution, and so we really want to uplift and emphasize that, because we know there is not a ton of funding going toward you all, and it is definitely an exciting opportunity for us.

NATALIE TEAGUE: Yes. And I'll just piggyback onto that, that for ICJR, our current funding levels for fiscal year 2024 will be \$500,000 to \$1 million based upon the population size of your service area. And there's also a potential additional \$200,000 to increase that to \$700,000 to \$1.2 million if your application meaningfully addresses the sexual assault OVW Priority Area 3. And so, again, you can see that in the ICJR solicitation.

I do see a question. "Will current awardees be eligible for the FY 2024 ICJR applications?" So, there's a section of the ICJR solicitation, I do believe it is on page 15, that talks about how new and continuation applicants can both apply. However, if continuation grantees have 50% or more of their funding that has not been drawn down, they would have to provide an extensive explanation of why that would be the case, and continuation funding is not guaranteed.

AISHA BATTLE: I just wanted to uplift that. I know that this was stated, but I know there's been a lot of talk about funding victim services. And so, I just want to reiterate that the up to \$50,000 is for all three years, and not for a single year. And so, in looking at funding victim service providers' salary, I encourage you to look at the ICJR solicitation, which, as Natalie just stated, is not capped by any means at \$50,000 for 36 months. And, Hannah, just to bring it back to what you said about paying a consultant to teach you all. If you refer to the solicitation on page 17, it states that there is a 20% funding cap on training and technical assistance activities that are outside of OVW's because we have set aside quite an amount of funding in order to pay for training and technical assistance to help you across these seven purpose areas.

NATALIE TEAGUE: And Aisha, there's a question in the Q&A. "Aisha mentioned training available for this project, but I'm not sure if I understood it correctly. Is any information available on that training so that we may include it in our budget, or should we just set funds aside in the budget for use for this purpose?"

AISHA BATTLE: OVW training and technical assistance is free to you all. There is a requirement in the solicitation, detailed also on page 17—and I believe Lashonde went over it earlier—that we do ask that you set aside \$20,000 for the contiguous states and \$25,000 for Alaska, Hawaii, and the U.S. territories for travel to our training and technical assistance. But the training and technical assistance that OVW funds will be free to you all to utilize, and so there is no need to set that money aside to utilize our training and technical assistance outside of the requirement on page 17.

NATALIE TEAGUE: You can always email us with questions at OVW.ICJR@usdoj.gov.

AISHA BATTLE: I see, Sarah, you have your hand up.

SARAH: Well, yes, if I may. It's regarding again the partnership. I was reading in the solicitation, where they define the victim service provider, that it also says you can be part of a coalition.

AISHA BATTLE: Yes.

SARAH: So, if you're part of a coalition, and you have an MOU that you work with a coalition, will that fulfill the requirement of the MOU? I don't know if I understand correctly the paragraph there.

AISHA BATTLE: Yes. You can partner with a victim service provider or coalition, one of the recognized state DV or SA or dual coalitions, and that partnership needs to be evidenced by an MOU that was created for this project.

SARAH: Okay.

AISHA BATTLE: You can 100% partner with a coalition; you just need a new MOU with them.

SARAH: Thank you.

AISHA BATTLE: Of course. Well, thank you all. It has been such a pleasure to be with you. We are super excited about this program. It has been something that we have definitely been wanting for quite some time. And to see your turnout for this Pre-Application Information Session has been wonderful. Again, our email address is in the chat. Please do not hesitate to reach out. And when the recording is available, we will definitely send you an alert to let you know. Thank you and have a wonderful rest of your afternoon.