

# FY 2024 Grants to Tribal Governments Victim Service Providers for Financial Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Special Initiative Pre-Application Information Session Transcript

JENNY MILLS: This solicitation was posted on or about July 11th, 2024. My name is Jenny Mills and I am a Grants Management Specialist with OVW's Tribal Affairs Division. Today, I will be reviewing information about this new special initiative focused on providing flexible financial assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. My colleague, Samantha Dziatkiewicz, is joining me today to monitor the chat and question box. We will answer questions at the end of this webinar.

It is recommended that you have the solicitation with you as you view this pre-application information session. This session will highlight key points related to the solicitation. All applicants are responsible for reading the solicitation and the OVW Fiscal Year 2024 Solicitation Companion guide to ensure that a complete application is submitted. This webinar is being recorded so it can be placed on our website so that people who were unable to attend today can review the recording as they work on their solicitation. As they work on their application.

OVW has been consulting with Tribal leaders across the country to better understand ways to improve services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. Tribal leaders have frequently cited a need to provide flexible financial assistance to victims to assist them in gaining safety, independence, and financial stability. Building upon OVW's consultation with Tribal leaders, OVW's Tribal Affairs Division held a series of listening sessions around the country in 2023. These listening sessions provided an opportunity for Tribal victim service providers and Tribal Coalition staff to provide input on a range of topics related to flexible financial assistance, including the types of assistance they would want to provide, barriers to providing the assistance, and what sort of training or technical assistance needs they had in relation to developing and implementing a flexible financial assistance program. After the listening sessions, OVW's Tribal Affairs Division consulted with OVW's Grants Financial Management Division and legal counsel to determine how to best to administer a program in compliance with 2 CFR 200, known as the Uniform Guidance. The Uniform Guidance establishes the rules for federal awards, including cost principles and administrative requirements. OVW then developed a shortened, streamlined solicitation for this special initiative.

The program focuses on flexible financial assistance. Flexible financial assistance is financial support to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking to meet self-identified needs quickly to address victim safety, stability, and independence. Many grant programs, including the Tribal Governments Program, have restrictions on the types of assistance that can be provided to victims. These restrictions can be tied to the scope of the project, or may be specific to the funding agency or funding program. OVW's Grants to Tribal Governments Victim Service Providers for Financial Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Special Initiative will provide

wider latitude to grantees to provide a wider range of financial assistance than they may be able to provide under their Tribal Governments Program award.

Direct financial assistance is assistance paid directly to a victim as opposed to a vendor. Program may choose to provide a victim with cash or prepaid cards to access financial assistance. Programs may also provide assistance by paying vendors directly. OVW will make approximately 15 awards for up to \$100,000 per award. The period of performance for this award is 24 months and the anticipated start date is October 1, 2024.

This solicitation was posted in early July. The solicitation will remain open until August 22th. Applications are submitted through a two-step process and involve the navigation of multiple systems. The first part of the submission process is to submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov by 11:59pm ET on August 20, 2024. We strongly encourage you to submit the required Grants.gov documents at least 48 hours prior to the Grants.gov deadline to allow for time to correct any problems or errors. Applicants who miss this first deadline will be unable to submit applications. Once the Grants.gov submission is complete, a new application will automatically be created in JustGrants. The full application must be submitted in JustGrants by 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 22, 2024.

This special initiative has one purpose area. Funds under this program must be used to provide victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking with flexible financial assistance. This assistance should be related to one or more of the following needs discussed on the next slide. On page 5 of the solicitation, we've listed examples of types of financial assistance that have been requested in the past. Under this program, funds can be used to support a wide range of assistance critical to victims achieving safety, independence, and financial stability.

Examples of costs that could be considered under this program are assistance with housing-related expenses such as rent, utilities, moving costs, etc. Technology needs could encompass phones, phone cards, internet access, or computer access. Education costs could include fees to attend professional development training or job training. Textbooks and school supplies would also be allowable. Debt assistance is also an allowable expense, however it is capped at no more than 10% of the total budget. That means that only up to \$10,000 can be used towards debt assistance for the entire program. The debt assistance should be tied to victim safety and stability.

Out-of-scope activities are discussed on Page 6 of the solicitation. Research projects are unallowable under this program. Outreach and education activities are also unallowable under this program. Direct victim services are also restricted under this award. Grant funds may only be used to support services to victims that are directly related to providing flexible financial assistance. What this means is you could not use funds under this program to provide support groups, provide court accompaniment, or pursue protective orders. Any activity funded under this award must be tied to providing flexible financial assistance. Staff time allocated to this award could include activities like developing flexible financial assistance policies and procedures, filling out paperwork with victims accessing this assistance, providing client education on financial assistance, etc. An example of unallowable staff time would be providing transportation to a victim to and from court. However, funds could be used to provide the victim with a bus pass, fuel for their car, or cab vouchers.

On Page 7 of the solicitation, program requirements are laid out. Grantees must participate in OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance. They must submit performance reports, and they must

develop a financial assistance policy and procedure for the distribution of direct financial assistance to victims. For programs choosing to pay victims directly with cash or prepaid cards, it will be critical that they develop policy and procedure for how they will implement this activity.

Now, let's talk about eligibility. Eligibility for this special initiative is limited to applicants with an active Tribal Governments Program award. This means you must have a current Tribal Governments Program award and are actively working towards completing your goals and objectives. Applicants without an active award will not be considered. As you consider applying for this award, please make sure you have a current, active award under OVW's Tribal Governments Program. For more information on OVW's Tribal Governments Program, please go to [www.justice.gov/ovw/tribal-governments-program](http://www.justice.gov/ovw/tribal-governments-program).

Next we'll discuss the application and submission information. The formatting and technical requirements are laid out on Page 9 of the solicitation. Please pay careful attention to this section as points may be deducted if you do not adhere to the requirements. Narratives must be double-spaced, on 8 ½ x 11 pages with one-inch margins. Applicants must use Arial font, no smaller than 11-point font except for footnotes which can be 9-point font. Applicants must include page numbers. There is a page limit of 10 pages and reviewers will not read past page 10. Acceptable formats are Word documents, PDFs, or text documents. Finally, the headings and sub-headings must correspond to the sections identified in the solicitation.

There are two required application documents: the narrative and the budget. Failure to include either of these documents means your application will not be considered. The budget must include narrative to support the costs included. The budget narrative can be included within the budget or submitted as a separate document. The proposal narrative cannot exceed 10 pages. It should be double-spaced, except for tables, and will be uploaded as an attachment in JustGrants. The proposal narrative should include the three required sections listed on Pages 11 and 12 of the solicitation.

The Purpose of the Proposal section is worth 15 points. This section tells us about the status of flexible financial assistance in the applicant's community including whether flexible financial assistance is available and identifying gaps in how it is provided. This section also requires applicants to briefly describe what other services they provide to victims and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. Applicants are limited to 10 pages for their narrative. This section is only worth 15 points, so applicants are expected to be brief in their responses but provide enough detail to answer the question being asked.

The What Will Be Done section is worth 45 points. Applicants should discuss the project goals and activities in detail. Applicants should carefully review all four items that are listed and address each of them. Applicants must describe how they will implement their program including discussion of the steps needed to develop the program and what the program requirements will look like. It will be important to understand how victims will access flexible financial assistance. What methods will be used to transfer funds, what caps or limitations will be put in place, what client eligibility will look like, and how confidentiality and safety will be maintained. It's also important to discuss what steps applicants may need to take to put this program in place. Items to consider are whether new policies and procedures should be developed, what types of intake forms or tracking forms may be needed, how staff will be trained, etc. Applicants may also want to consider how they will educate clients on potential impacts of flexible financial assistance. Some forms of assistance may be treated as income and could impact eligibility for other benefits.

The Who Will Implement section is worth 25 points. This section tells us about your organization and any partners' capacity and expertise to accomplish the activities identified in the What Will be Done section. It is important to clearly demonstrate your or your partner's experience providing flexible financial assistance. It is also important to discuss existing internal controls and mechanisms for tracking the distribution of these funds.

Budgets and budget narratives will be submitted as attachments. The budget must reflect a full 24 months of project activity. A sample budget is included as an appendix to the solicitation and a webinar on "Creating a Budget" is available on the OVW website. Please be mindful that the sample budget in the appendix is a general sample and not specific to this program. This program has very specific budget requirements that can be found on Page 13 of the solicitation. These requirements include caps on certain forms of assistance and a cap on the amount of personnel and fringe that can be allocated to this project.

Budgets should include the required OVW training and technical assistance set aside. The set aside is \$6,000 for applicants from the 48 contiguous states, and \$9,000 for applicants from Alaska. All budgets should include adequate funds to address language access and accessibility needs. If you have other resources to cover the cost of these services, please note that in your budget.

The purpose this special initiative is to provide victims with flexible financial assistance. Flexible financial assistance can be provided in a number of different ways. One method is prepaid cards provided to victims. Another way is cash payments directly to a victim. For the purposes of this program, prepaid cards are not the same as cash. Applicants may allocate up to 10% of their proposed budget to a cash payment line item. There is no cap on prepaid cards.

Applicants may want to be able to provide debt assistance to victims. Applicants may allocate up to 10% of their proposed budget to debt assistance. It is important to note that debt assistance can only be provided when the assistance facilitates victim safety and stability. An example would be a victim is attempting to secure safe housing but is delinquent on utility bills. If the program determines back-payment of the utility bills would enable the victim to secure housing, they would be able to make that payment provided they stay under the 10% cap. Finally, because the primary focus of this special initiative is to provide financial assistance, salary and fringe are capped at 15% of the total budget.

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, or GFMD, reviews. More specifically, we'll discuss some items that GFMD has identified from prior years' applications that could help with expediting our review process.

So, for today, we're 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'll highlight the items identified in the Summary Data Sheet, which is completed by all applicants. Specifically, two items that we would like to discuss are the Single Audit response and the IRS three-step safe harbor procedure. 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. If they have, then they indicate that and also specify the end date of their last fiscal year. However, GFMD is finding that

applicants do not always include all of this information. Please ensure that this question is answered in its entirety on the Summary Data Sheet, Question No. 3.

Another item that we'd like to highlight from the solicitation is specifically for non-profit organizations. If you use the IRS three step safe harbor procedure to determine your executives' compensation, you are required to provide a disclosure letter. Please refer to the solicitation for further details and a link to a sample letter. Note that there are four required parts of this disclosure letter. The sample letter provided outlines all four parts of the disclosure, so please be sure to follow the sample and provide a response to each of the four pieces.

The next item that we'd like to discuss is the pre-award risk assessment questions, which assists GFMD during their pre-award risk assessment review for all applications. Each applicant must prepare a response to all 11 questions, and each question has multiple parts. We've noticed from prior years that applicants do not always fully answer all parts of the questions, which in turn, requires GFMD to reach out to the applicant and which may delay funding decisions. Some of the most common issues that we've encountered have been, for example, question No. 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. On question No. 3, some applicants fail to provide a brief summary of the organization's process for tracking expenditures, and more specifically whether or not it tracks budgeted versus actual expenditures. These are just a few examples, but in general, please make sure that you read each piece of each question and provide a full and comprehensive response.

The next slides will highlight some resources that are available as you're creating the budget to be submitted with your application. Over the last couple of years, GFMD has developed a detailed webinar presentation on how to develop a budget to be submitted with OVW applications. This presentation addresses some of the challenges that you may face with your budgets and provides some insight on OVW's 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. Use your favorite search engine for this one. Other resources include the DOJ Financial Guide and the solicitation itself. We know this can be a lot of information to process, so if you have any questions about the GFMD information discussed, please feel free to contact the GFMD helpdesk at 888-514-8556 or by email at [OVW.GFMD@usdoj.gov](mailto:OVW.GFMD@usdoj.gov).

Finally, we're going to discuss How to Apply and some tips for applying. Please ensure you are registered in SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants and all accounts are active by August 1st. The deadline to complete the first step of the process in Grants.gov is August 20th. Step 1 involves the submission of two standard forms for federal funding. These are the SF424: application for federal assistance, and SF-LLL, which is the disclosure of lobbying activities. After submitting these forms, the applicant will receive an email notification from JustGrants to complete the rest of the application in JustGrants. The full application must be submitted in JustGrants by August 22, 2024.

Applicants will complete the proposal abstract, summary data sheet, pre-award risk assessment, and applicant questionnaire in JustGrants. The proposal abstract is entered into a text box within the application module in JustGrants. An optional template for the proposal abstract is included on page 10 of the solicitation and can be cut and pasted into the text box in JustGrants. If you choose not to use the template, remember, the proposal abstract can be brief.

The summary data sheet, pre-award risk assessment, and applicant questionnaires are also built into the application module in JustGrants. You will be able to click on the names in JustGrants to access and complete each of these items. The questions are also included in the appendices of the solicitation. These items are not scored. For more information, please review page 10 of the solicitation. The proposal narrative and budget will be uploaded as attachments in JustGrants.

There are some additional required documents that must be submitted with the application. A sample template for the Letter of Nonsupplanting and the Confidentiality Notice Form can be found on OVW's website under Resource for Applicants. The other forms listed on the slide are built into JustGrants and will be included in the application package. Please note, there is a helpful checklist located on pages 22 and 23 of the solicitation that you can use to track the required documents.

Applicants experiencing JustGrants technical issues should ensure that they are continuing to develop the proposal while they are working with the OVW JustGrants Support Desk to address any issues. Applicants must follow the solicitation guidance regarding technical difficulties. Instructions must be followed to the letter. Be sure to keep documentation that you did follow the guidance. This will enable you to submit a full proposal by the deadline using an alternate method, only if necessary. OVW will take the necessary steps to ensure that applicants are able to submit their applications on time and will update our submission guidance as necessary and as the due date nears. Some steps, such as registering with the System for Award Management or Grants.gov, may take several days or even weeks to complete. There's no way to speed up these registration processes. Therefore, we recommend that applicants confirm their registrations are current or begin their registration as soon as possible but no later than the date suggested in the solicitation. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they are properly registered with SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants.

Here are some common application challenges: Not reading the solicitation to understand eligibility or program requirements. Make sure you meet all solicitation requirements before you spend valuable time completing the application. Not allowing enough time to complete registration or activate accounts in Grants.gov, SAM.gov, and JustGrants. Start this process early to mitigate problems before the time of submission and ensure that all accounts are active by August 1st. Ignoring formatting requirements. Pay attention to page limits, remember to use the headings and subheadings from the solicitation in the narrative. Failing to submit a 24-month budget. This solicitation requires a 24-month project and budget.

OVW resources for applicants can be located at [www.justice.gov/ovw/resources-applicants](http://www.justice.gov/ovw/resources-applicants). Available on that site you will find the Solicitation Companion Guide, sample budgets, sample MOUs, tips and examples, a link to the DOJ Financial Guide, program specific information, and much more.

Contact information is presented on this slide. For programmatic questions related to this solicitation, please reach out to [OVW.TribalSpecialInitiative@usdoj.gov](mailto:OVW.TribalSpecialInitiative@usdoj.gov). For financial questions you can contact OVW's Grants Management Division. For Grants.gov support you can contact the grants.gov helpdesk, and for OVW JustGrants Support you can contact the OVW JustGrants support desk.

And now we will turn it over to you if you have any questions you would like to ask. Samantha, are there any questions?

SAMANTHA DZIATKIEWICZ: No, not at this time.

JENNY MILLS: It looks like there may be one in the Q&A box. And there is a question in the Q&A box. "Is there a page limit for the budget narrative?" No. The budget narrative is considered to be part of your budget so you are just explaining what those line items are that are included in the budget.

Are there any additional questions? OK, it seems there are no further questions. If you do come up with a question, again, you can always reach out to us at that [OVW.TribalSpecialInitiative@usdoj.gov](mailto:OVW.TribalSpecialInitiative@usdoj.gov). It looks like there is one other question. The question says, "Could you please clarify in what circumstance a project partner would need to be compensated, if not a government entity but performing work that is within the normal scope of work and activities, must they be compensated by the grant?" So, if you have a project partner and they are doing work they are not being compensated for, you would want to ensure they are being compensated for that work.

It looks like there are no further questions. So, thank you for joining us today. This webinar will be posted on our website shortly. It will also include the slides and a transcript of this presentation. Thank you so much and have a great rest of your day.