OVW Fiscal Year 2024 Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (TSASP) Pre-Application Information Session Transcript

SYDNEY WEST: Welcome. This pre-application information session is for the OVW Fiscal Year 2024 Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program, commonly referred to as TSASP. This solicitation was posted on or about July 1, 2024. For this session, it is recommended that you have the solicitation with you so you can follow along.

The most important thing you must do before applying is read the solicitation in its entirety. You can find the solicitations along with other valuable resources on OVW's website. Application submissions in response to this solicitation will be done through a two-step process. Applicants will submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov and submit the full application in the Justice Grants System, also referred to as JustGrants. Potential applicants must have active SAM and Grants.gov accounts to be able to apply for this solicitation. Therefore, applicants that have never applied before for federal funding before should immediately begin the SAM registration process. Applicants that have previously received federal funds should confirm their SAM registration is active and up to date at least three weeks before the application's Grants.gov due date.

Applicants must submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time Wednesday, Aug 13, 2023. The full application package is due in JustGrants by 8:59 p.m. Eastern on Thursday, Aug 15, 2023. At a minimum, you should watch the Application Submission Training Video and download the Application Submission job aid from the JustGrants website to familiarize yourself with the application process. Additionally, DOJ is hosting virtual Q&A sessions on Application Mechanics: Submitting an Application. You can register for one or more of the virtual Q&A sessions from the JustGrants Trainings page linked here or by going to the main JustGrants website, clicking on Trainings, then clicking on Virtual Q&A.

Today, this is going to be a brief overview of the TSASP Program: I will review the registration and submission process. Next, we will quickly look at the award periods, amounts, and eligibility. I will review types of applications, program requirements, and unallowable activities, and then any optional program and OVW priorities. I'll provide an overview of the application package and financial information. I'll share what I hope are some helpful application tips and contact information.

Let's start about talking about OVW's Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program. What is TSASP? If you're following along in the solicitation, this is on Page 5. TSASP supports efforts to create, maintain, and expand sustainable sexual assault services provided by Tribes, tribal organizations, and nonprofit tribal organizations within Indian country and Alaska Native villages. TSASP-supported projects provide intervention, advocacy, accompaniment – that means accompanying victims to court, medical facilities, or police departments – support services, and related assistance for adult, youth, and child victims of sexual assault, non-offending family and household members of the victims, and those collaterally affected by the sexual assault.

Let's review some important deadlines for the solicitation. If you have not applied for a federal award before, there are some pre steps. You'll need to apply for a Universal Entity Identifier, or a UEI. This can take a while, so you will want to do this as soon as possible. This is obtained by registering in the System

for Award Management, commonly known as SAM, at the SAM.gov website. Please note, it can take two to three weeks to register, so you want to start these processes as soon as possible. We suggest by Tuesday, July 23, 2024.

Additionally, first-time applicants must also register in Grants.gov and JustGrants. The average completion time for Grants.gov is one week. These are only estimated times, and each step must be completed before you can go on to the next step. For Grants.gov, the deadline will be, Tuesday, Aug 13, 2024 – 11:59 p.m. and the Just Grants deadline is, Thursday, Aug 15, 2024 – 8:59 p.m.

Please be aware that for the solicitation that late submissions are not accepted except in extremely limited circumstances. If you have questions regarding a late application, you must refer to pages 21-23 of the solicitation for more information. The last thing you want to do, is if you are already registered in SAM, check to ensure that your Universal Entity ID and SAM registrations numbers have not expired.

Just to go over that again, there's a three-step registration process for DOJ federal awards, as you can see in the schematic here. The first step, you want to register in SAM.gov. That's where you'll obtain your Unique entity ID and confirm your Entity Electronic Business Point of Contact. Then you register in Grants.gov, so your point of contact with complete the onboarding process and assign and an Authorized Representative who will move your application forward in the process. At this point you'll submit the SF-424 and the SF-LLL. The final and third step is to register with JustGrants.gov and submit the rest of the application.

To aid you, there is JustGrants training. JustGrants developed tools and trainings to assist applicants with submitting an application. To access these, visit the JustGrants website and click on the Trainings tab at the top. Scroll down to view the training modules, and the one you want to click on is circled in red with the arrow and that's the Application Submission module. If you go to this page this is a screenshot of what you should see when you are on the training page.

Technical challenges. If you are experiencing technical difficulties with uploading the solicitation, please go to pages 21-23 of the solicitation and you'll see. You can reach out to the respective agencies for help, so if you're having issues with Grants.gov, you can reach out to Grants.gov. If you're having issues with JustGrants, reach out to JustGrants. Please note, while you are reaching out to respective agencies for help, please continue to work on your application. That is, please continue to write and gather all the necessary information so that you are ready to submit when the issue is resolved. OVW cannot stress enough how important it is to give yourself plenty of time to work through all the systems and submit your application. We'll go over some of the contact information again at the end of the presentation.

So, let's talk about the award period and the amounts under TSASP. All awards this year will be made as grant awards and there is no match required. Please note that OVW has the discretion to award grants for greater or lesser amounts than requested and to negotiate the scope of work and budget with applicant prior to awarding a grant. This year, we have an estimated $10,800,000 available in funding and we expect to make approximately 16 awards.

This year, there are two project types. There's the new type of applicant, which is Strengthening Tribal Advocacy Responses Track for Sexual Assault, which we call START-SA, and then there are continuation awards. The project types and amounts and length for each award is as follows. New applicants, or the START-SA projects, the maximum amount is $675,000 and the project can run for 36 months.

Continuation awards can apply for 24 months and ask for up to $450,000. We'll look more closely at these two project types further on in the presentation.

So now let's review what types of, or who is eligible to apply for this award. We have four categories of eligibility. The Tribal governments, Tribal consortiums, Tribal organizations, and Tribal nonprofit organizations with programs and activities in Indian Country and Alaskan Native Villages are eligible to apply for this award. When we say all programs and activities in Indian Country and Alaskan Villages, this means the activities need to be in the on Tribal lands or in Alaskan Native Villages. Unfortunately, it doesn't include programming for Tribal people in urban areas off of tribal lands. This is an important note. Please be aware that as you're thinking about applying and you're thinking about your eligibility and if you're a current grantee, if you have more than 50% of your funds, 50% or more remaining in the award as of March 31st of this year um, or you know when that when that time period hits, you may not be considered for funding. Or if you apply your funding may be reduced because you have so much remaining on the current award. If you are in this case, you might want to consider reaching out to OVW and asking the asking about the likelihood of getting a continuation award or asking if it's a good idea if you should apply at this time.

So, I briefly mentioned before that we have two application types this year. A little bit more information about that; so, we have the new applicants or the START-SA and these will be groups or organizations or Tribes that have never received funding under TSASP. Someone that is new to the program. Continuation applicants are those that have an existing or a very recently closed award that would be July of 2023. Continuation applications you should understand are not competitive and what that means is they don't go through the same peer review process as the new applicants. But continuation funding is not guaranteed.

OK, so more about TSASP its purpose areas, if you apply to this program the funds must be used to support the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of programs and projects within Indian country and Alaskan Native Villages to provide intervention and related assistance to those victimized by sexual assault. Note that while OVW's programs focus on crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking, this program is focused on sexual assault only. So, what does that include? For this program we look at intervention and related assistance for the sexual assault victim and that intervention and related assistance includes things like a 24-hour hotline that provides crisis intervention services and referrals. It includes accompaniment and advocacy, and this is assisting a victim through the medical criminal justice and social support systems, including medical facilities, police departments, court proceedings. It also includes crisis intervention, which under sexual assault service programming means things like short-term individual and group support services. These are things that provide a victim with the opportunity to share and hear from other survivors and it includes things such as individual and group therapy, holistic support services as well as coordination to services that may other services that may needed.

OK, it includes information and referral. This information and referral could be to a broad range of services available in the community and beyond to assist the sexual assault victim and the family or household members and it includes a community-based or culturally specific services and support mechanisms including outreach to the community, information about activities, and then lastly it includes the development and distribution of materials on any issues related to the services described in the previous points. So, a little bit more about the TSASP purpose area. It's important to keep in mind

that under TSASP projects are not limited to or restricted to, not unless we stop. TSASP projects are not limited or restricted to focus on a certain gender or age, nor are they bound by when the sexual assault happened. That means projects can provide services to women, girls, boys, and men as well as children youth, adults, and seniors. As you're preparing your project, please pay attention to what is and is not listed in the solicitation and what is out of scope. So, to review some out-of-scope activities for TSASP, and these are on Page 6 of the solicitation, this includes the following list. It includes research projects, it also includes activities focused on prevention efforts and public education, which includes things like bystander interventions, social norm campaigns, things like presentations on healthy relationships. Unfortunately, those are outside of the scope of TSASP. This is not a prevention-related project. The focus is on the interventions and the assistance after an assault has occurred. Another area that's out of scope for this project are criminal justice-related activities; so, activities that go beyond advocacy. You know, assisting the client through the legal system. Examples of what this might include is updating legal codes or funding law enforcement, um funding prosecution, courts, conducting forensic interviews, hiring a sexual assault investigator. All of those are out-of-scope. Also, out-of-scope is providing domestic violence or dating violence victim services that are unrelated to intimate partner sexual violence. Sexual assault forensic medical examiner programs are out of scope, although accompanying a victim through a SAVE or SANE is not. And then sexual assault response team coordination is also out of scope for this project. However attending the START team meetings, that is within scope. And then lastly, providing training to allied professionals and the community on things like what is sexual assault – that is out of scope, however, educating the community about the program is within scope. So just keep that in mind as you're writing your applications and note that if your application proposes out of scope activities, points could be deducted from your application, or it could be eliminated from consideration entirely.

OK, let's talk about something else that is out of scope for this program and that is victim safety and confidentiality. OVW does not fund activities that jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions. If you have question on these activities, you can refer to the Solicitation Companion Guide on the OVW website. It contains the full list of activities. And then TSASP-specific activities that are out of scope include any procedures or policies that deny individuals access to services based on their relationship to the perpetrator; any couples counseling, family counseling, or any other joint victim offender counseling as a routine or as a required response to the sexual assault, that's out of bounds and then materials, producing materials that are not tailored to the dynamics of sexual assault or to Tribal communities, that would be out of scope, out of bounds for this.

OK, so we always like to share some of the post-award program requirements. These are activities that if you are granted an award, you will be expected to, and that you must participate in potentially. One is a potential. So, OVW training and technical assistance, that is a must. We have certain providers that we work with. You'll be expected to attend at least one TSASP-related conference per year, there's more that you may attend if you wish. And then depending on, you may be required to work with them to bolster parts of your application and then they're also available just to support you. There is performance reporting, twice a year you are required to submit progress reports, narrative progress reports, and four times a year, federal finance reports. So that's a requirement. Depending, you could be asked to participate in an OVW-related assessment or evaluation if that is (unintelligible). New applicants in the START-SA program will be required to go through an initial review and a comprehensive assessment process that helps them identify the strengths in gaps of their community's responses to sexual assault

and once you've done that, you will work in consultation with an OVW-designated technical assistance provider to help ensure that the services that you are going to be implementing are in line with the program. And then lastly, another requirement is that you provide direct sexual assault victim services and these services are defined as the following: So there's a set of core sexual assault victim services that every program should be including at a minimum and that includes those areas of intervention, so we're looking to see that you provide the advocacy and accompaniment through systems, that you provide information and referrals for anyone who reaches out to the program, that you try and support with counseling or referral to counseling, and that the services that you provide are not only for the victim but for support for those collaterally affected by the victimization including potentially the victims non-offending family or household members. And then the victim services that you are expected to provide, they should be for a broad range of survivors so not just someone who has experienced non-intimate partner sexual assault, but you also should include victims of sex trafficking who have experienced sexual assaults, maybe adults who were sexually abused as children, not just women and girls but also males, so men and boy. And then adults sexually assaulted by maybe a non-intimate partner, a stranger, neighbor, family member, co-worker, coach. There's a range and you are expected to work with all those types.

OK. Now we're getting into a little bit of the nitty-gritty and the actual application information. The following are major elements of the application and are required to be uploaded as attachments in JustGrants. OK? These include the proposal narrative, the budget detail and budget narrative, and also documents authority to apply. These documents aren't required for Indian Tribes, but the documents are listed on page 18 of the solicitation and basically the authority to apply would be a letter if you are an organization, you would need a letter from the Tribe or all the Tribes that you are declaring that you are working with showing support, so you would need letter of support. Now the reason why these are considered the major elements, these are necessary as part of your application. If you don't have the proposal narrative budget detail worksheet and budget narrative and this document demonstrating authority to apply, if necessary, your application doesn't move on and none of it will be reviewed through peer review. This is the minimum that you need to submit to us to be considered for funding.

So, this year we have greatly streamed down the narrative, and we have also provided a new way in which to submit the narrative, pretty substantial. So, you can submit a narrative into one of two ways. You can take the traditional route, so you can be you can submit be up to a 15-page full proposal that follows the project proposal narrative outline, or you can submit a proposal project form. This form is found on the OVW Resources for Applicants page under, should be TSASP additional resources. This is a form we've created it's a PDF or a Word document, you can download it as a Word or a PDF and fill it out, and it will fulfill the proposal narrative requirement for this solicitation. Very, very streamlined. So again, I'm just going to repeat this, the proposal narrative, or proposal narrative or the proposal project form.

I'm taking a closer look at the proposal narrative and the different sections and what their points are worth. For new applicants there are three sections we ask you to complete. The first is the purpose of the proposal worth 15 points. Here we ask you to share a brief description of the community or communities in your service area and focus on describing underserved populations, such as people with disabilities, older adults, those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, etc. In this description or in your purpose of the proposal, you want to include why your project is needed and then we also ask you to state whether or not the project will establish new programming or expand on already existing sexual

assault programming. That's it. Second is the what will be done section worth 50 points and this is where we want to know what activities you're proposing to meet the needs that you discussed in your purpose section. So here is where you will detail what new services will be implemented or what your current services are that will be expanded with this project. You should also look to answer as to what services you might Implement to support victim safety. Last is the who will Implement section worth 15 points and this is where you will provide details on the proposed project coordinator. So basically, want to know about you know their personnel qualifications and their capacity to do the job. If you don't have a proposed project coordinator in mind, we'd love to see a job description that you might post to hire the coordinator. That's the process for new applicants.

That's the process for new applicants for continuation applicants the structure is similar. You fill out the purpose of the proposal section, you answer what will be done and also who will implement the services, and there's you know, we'll want to know what services you'll continue, what areas you might expand, but because you are an existing grantee you should be able to provide details of your project goals, your objectives, and your activities with a timeline. OK? Then in the past, if your past project has not included or focused on accessibility issues, this time around with your continuation project you're going to be required in this proposal narrative to speak to and propose some accessibility activities and then when you're looking at this, the sections on page 14, there's only a couple of questions under each section. So, like I said, we really streamlined the proposal this year. Some people like to use each question as a section header and respond to each question one-on-one, although if you use the proposal project form, we've kind of done that for you.

OK, let's talk money. The budget detail worksheet and budget narrative. This information is on pages 15 through 18. These are some high points. I'm not going to go through three or four pages of detail but things to focus on include OVW-required technical assistance and travel. You are required to set aside as part of your budget money for TA and for travel. For a new applicant you're required to set aside $35,000 um for new applicants who are in one of the 48 contiguous states $45,000 for applicants in Alaska. This is a set-aside, and this set-aside is for the entire time period, so new applicants for the entire three years or 36 months. You can break down the potential travel if you'd like or you can simply write one line that is TA and travel, $35,000 or $45,000, whichever applies for you. For continuation applicants because it's only going to be over two years or 24 months the money is slightly reduced. It's $25,000 for those in the lower 48 and $35,000 for those in Alaska. Please know we expect to see some funds to address accessibility issues and needs. That's a requirement. Your budget will go through if you don't post them, but you will be asked to revise your budget. Other points, if you're going to be working with project partners, please include in your budget something to compensate them. We expect to see that. With your budget there will be a budget narrative and some of this is detailed in the solicitation. You should break down the costs for your budget and then the narrative you explain how you came to those costs, right? If you need some resources or an example budget, we do have one on the OVW website at the OVW how to apply for funding resources for applicants. There's literally a sample budget that you can download and simply copy that structure for your budget.

I mentioned this before, but I'll review it again quickly. The documents demonstrating authority to apply on page 18, this letter of support is not required if you're an Indian Tribe, but Tribal organizations must provide a letter of support and the letter of support needs to be from the Tribe or each of the Tribes that will be served by the project. Tribal consortiums, which is two or more tribes who decide to join together and apply for an award should provide demonstration of the authority to apply from each member. And

then again, if you are looking for a sample to reference you can find that on the OVW resources for applicants' website.

On these next couple of slides I'm going to focus on aspects of your application that relate to the documents that our financial team, Grants Financial Management Division or GFMD reviews. More specifically, we'll discuss some items that GFMD has identified from prior your applications that could help with expediting their review process. First, I'll go over the pre-award risk assessment and then I'll touch on the summary data sheet, and finally provide you with a link to a detailed webinar on how to develop the budget that will be included in your application and some contact information should you have questions on any of these required documents for our financial team or the budget development. Both of these documents should be prepared as a Word, PDF or text document then attached in the proposal narrative section of the application. So first, I'll highlight the pre-award risk assessment survey. This assists GFMD during the 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 don't always fully answer all the parts of the questions, which then in turn requires GFMD to reach out to the applicant, which then may delay any recommendations. 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 then they don't provide a list of the topics covered in the policies and procedures. Another example of incomplete responses would be question 3 where the applicant does provide a does not provide a brief summary of the organization's process for tracking expenditures and more specifically whether or not it tracks budgeted versus actual expenditures. So, these are just a couple of examples but basically please make sure that you read each piece of each question and provide a full and comprehensive response. Understandably the individual that is best suited to provide answers to these types of financial questions may not be the same person that is writing or submitting this application, so you could provide a copy of the questions from the solicitation, give the individual best-suited to answer them so that the responses could be prepared in advance, then attach the document to the application and JustGrants in the appropriate section during the application submission.

Next let's look at the items identified in the summary data sheet which is completed by all applicants. So specifically, the question regarding the single audit. OVW requests that all applicants provide a statement as to whether or not they've expended $750,000 or more in federal funds during their last fiscal year. If they have, they indicate that and also specify the end date of their last fiscal year. However, GFMD is finding that applicants do not always include this information and leave out whether or not they have met the threshold, or the end date of the last fiscal year is not included. Please ensure all questions from the summary data sheet are responded to. If something does not apply to your Tribe or to your organization, do not skip the question or leave it blank respond to that question by specifically stating this does not apply to the XYZ organization or Tribe and then move on to the next question.

So, more on the budget. Here we are going to quickly highlight some resources that are available to help you create the budget to be submitted with the application. GFMD has worked to develop a detailed webinar presentation on developing a budget to be submitted with OVW applications. They did this because they want to help you reduce any challenges you may face with the budget and make it clear what they look for when they review your budget this webinar provides some insights as to what OVW financial staff can consider during their review. The webinar can be found at the link here or you can find it under the budget information section on the OVW Resources for Applicants page. Additional financial

resources you might find helpful are the Uniform Guidance, which can be found at 2 CFR 200, the DOJ Financial Guide, and of courser this program solicitation. Lastly the OVW Applicant Resource page and the Solicitation Companion Guide as well as sample budgets, budget narratives, and new this year FY23 sample proposal narratives.

The GFMD help desk. So, recognizing that this is a lot of information to process. If you have any questions about GFMD information that was discussed, feel free to contact the GMFD help desk. Their contact information is here, and it'll be also on the last slide.

All right, so now I'm just going to quickly go through some tips for submitting a strong and responsive application. OK. So first, read the solicitation and read it in its entirety. I have not reviewed every section of the solicitation, so it's up to you to read it. As I've mentioned it is it's your responsibility to do so. Everything that needs to be included in or with your application is mentioned in the solicitation including the supporting resources and the links that are referenced in this solicitation for you. As a reminder, applications to for applications to be considered complete and move to the next review process it's got to include those three components of the proposal narrative, a budget worksheet and narrative, and then if necessary that Letter of Authority or the document demonstrating authority to apply, a letter of support. And letters of authorization or letters of support that do not contain signatures are considered incomplete, so it must have a signature. If you, one thing that can be really helpful and guiding you through all the documents that should be or could be submitted is the application checklist, which is on page 27. It's very, very helpful so again consider utilizing the application checklist on page 27. And then last, and this is, think about specifically for the continuation applicants ensure that your project designs and your budgets account for accessibility issues and those again are individuals with disabilities physical or cognitive disabilities, those who are Deaf or hard of hearing as well as people with limited English proficiency. We find that many of our applicants skip talking to this point or budgeting for this point and they lose they lose points on their applications because of this. A few more tips. Please plan ahead and give yourself time to develop your application. It could take a bit of time to gather all the signatures necessary for different document, you know, those demonstrating authority to apply, so give yourself the time. Also, you want to avoid the possibility of missing any of the submission deadlines so if you can, submit your application as far in advance the deadline was possible. We find that technical issues sometimes do arise and the numbers of the individuals to seek assistance from at Grants.gov and JustGrants increases on or near the submission date. So, the earlier you ask your questions the less competition, probably the less amount of time you have to wait in line for a response. Do your best to make sure the application is easy to read and follow for all of the reviewers when you can use any heading and subheading titles that are in the solicitation for each section. Be sure the application and its responses to the program requirements and expectations are complete and clearly written as you can make them. Another thing to consider is to avoid using acronyms. We all do it, but you know sometimes we use acronyms that the reader doesn't understand and that makes it harder for them to review and score your application. JustGrants itself when you're trying to upload documents keep in mind it only accepts three formats this includes Microsoft Word, PDFs or Text document formats so if you're trying to upload any documents that aren't in those forms JustGrants won't accept them. For your own edification for your own files, you might want to print out your application prior to submitting it. This will help cover you in case, you know, something happens in the system or just you have the information so that you know what you submitted before you submitted. This one is really small but super helpful. If you have a multi-part application, number the pages specifically in the project narrative. When things get printed

out sometimes pages get shuffled and it's so much easier for a viewer to look through your application if the pages are numbered. Plus, it's also part of the directions and you will lose teeny points just for not following those directions, you know, regarding page numbers, font sizes, that sorts of thing

And then lastly, and this is super important in both Grants.gov and in JustGrants you receive email alerts or onscreen alerts for when your application was successfully submitted or if it was rejected and you want to monitor that. You know you can't move from Grants.gov to JustGrants until those two forms the SS-424 and LLL are accepted. The system will tell you that, so you have to look out for that. The same for JustGrants. You can upload all your documents but there is a "do you want to submit these documents" button you need to hit that button and I'm not completely sure, but it may ask you a second time "do you want to submit" and you have to hit that button. IF you don't formally submit, we don't actually receive your application. We think you've applied, and you haven't.

And the last thing is related to those email alerts um. If you are the POC, if you are the point of contact who submitted the application you want to monitor your inbox for these alerts and also check out your spam folders just in case there are times when your email system may not recognize the JustGrants email and put it in a funky folder.

OK, so that's it. Thank you so much for attending today. If you have, we hope you found this session helpful and if you have any questions, please refer actually to slide two. Therese an email that you can reach out to if you have further questions regarding this application session or the solicitation in general and that email is OVW.Tribal.SASP@usdoj.gov. It's at the bottom of the second slide. But just reach out we will monitor that inbox and we will respond to any of your questions. So, thank you.