

**U.S. Department of Justice
Office on Violence Against Women**

**OVW Fiscal Year 2025 Electronic Service Protection
Order Court Pilot Program**

Call for Concept Papers

Call for Concept Papers Release Date: October 8, 2024

Call for Concept Papers Close Date: December 5, 2024, by 8:59PM ET

Contact Information:

For assistance with the requirements of this Call for Concept Papers, email OVW at OVW.ElectronicService@usdoj.gov . Applicants also may call OVW at 202-307-6026.

Overview of OVW

OVW is a component of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). Created in 1995, OVW administers grant programs authorized by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and subsequent legislation and provides national leadership on issues of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. OVW grants support coordinated community responses that provide services to victims and hold offenders accountable.

About the OVW FY2025 Call for Concept Papers – Electronic Service Protection Order Court Pilot (ESPOC)

This program is authorized by 34 U.S.C. §10462a. The Electronic Service Protection Order Court Pilot (ESPOC) (CFDA 16.062) supports efforts to develop and implement programs for properly and legally serving protection orders through electronic communication methods. The program requires the Department of Justice to award grants to state or Tribal courts that are a part of a multidisciplinary partnership, see [Post Award Requirements](#) for additional information.

OVW is interested in supporting court efforts to develop and implement programs for properly and legally serving protection orders through electronic communication methods.

For additional information about OVW grant programs and related performance measures, including how awards contribute to the achievement of program goals and objectives:

- OVW grant program information: [OVW Grants and Programs Webpage](#).
- Program performance measures under the Measuring Effectiveness Initiative: [VAWA Measuring Effectiveness Initiative webpage](#).
- Program-specific sections in OVW's [most recent report to Congress](#) on the effectiveness of VAWA grant programs.

For more information on the specific statutory purpose areas for the Electronic Service Protection Order Court Pilot, see the [Purpose Areas](#).

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are state or Tribal courts. As defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(37) the term “state” means each of the several states and the District of Columbia, and except as otherwise provided, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 10462a(d), funding shall be awarded to a diverse group of applicants, including, to the extent practicable:

- 1) a state court that serves a population of not fewer than 1,000,000 individuals.
- 2) a state court that serves a state that is among the 7 states with the lowest population density in the United States¹ and has a relatively low rate of successful service with respect to protection orders;
- 3) a state court that serves a state that is among the 7 states with the highest population density in the United States² and has a relatively low rate of successful service with respect to protection orders;
- 4) a court that uses an integrated, statewide case management system;
- 5) a court that uses a standalone case management system;
- 6) a Tribal court;
- 7) a court that primarily serves a culturally specific and underserved population.
 - Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8), “culturally specific” means primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups (as defined in section 1707(g) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 300u-6(g)); (“racial and ethnic minority group” means American Indians (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts); Asian Americans; Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; Blacks; and Hispanics.)
 - Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 12291(46), “underserved populations” means populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, underserved racial and

¹ As determined by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the states with the lowest population density as of 2020 are Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, New Mexico, and Idaho.

² As determined by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the states with the highest population density as of 2020 are District of Columbia, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Puerto Rico, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maryland.

ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age), and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as appropriate

Applicants must demonstrate that they are part of a multidisciplinary partnership that includes certain required partners and have the capacity to maintain and further build a multidisciplinary partnership should they be invited to apply. See [Required Partnerships](#) and [Post Award Requirements](#) for further details.

Due Date for all Concept Papers: December 5, 2024 by 8:59 PM ET

Purpose Areas

Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 10462a(c), state or Tribal courts with multidisciplinary partnerships shall use the funds to:

- Develop and implement a program for properly and legally serving protection orders through electronic communication methods to:
 - i) modernize the service process and make the process more effective and efficient;
 - ii) provide for improved safety for victims; and
 - iii) make protection orders enforceable as quickly as possible;
- Develop best practices relating to the service of protection orders through electronic communication methods;
- Ensure that the program developed complies with due process requirements and other procedures required by law or by a court; and,
- Implement any technology necessary to carry out the program developed, such as technology to verify and track the receipt of a protection order by the intended party.

OVW Priority Areas

In FY 2025, OVW has four programmatic priorities. The priority identified below is applicable to this program:

Advance equity as an essential component of ending sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking by improving outreach, services, civil and criminal justice responses, prevention, and support for survivors from historically marginalized and underserved communities, particularly those facing disproportionate rates or impacts of violence and multiple barriers to services, justice, and safety. This includes support for Tribal sovereignty in efforts to prevent and address sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in Indian Country and Alaska Native Villages.

- Tribal courts and courts that primarily serve historically marginalized and underserved populations are each encouraged to apply under this Call for Concept Papers.

Limit on Number of Proposals

OVW will accept no more than 1 concept paper per court.

Out-of-Scope Activities

The activities listed below are out of the program scope and will not be funded under this program.

1. Research projects. Funds under this program may not be used to conduct research, defined by 28 C.F.R. § 46.102(d) as a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Surveys and focus groups, depending on their design and purpose, may constitute research and therefore be out-of-scope. Assessments conducted for internal improvement purposes only may not be considered “research” as defined above, but may not exceed 1% of the project costs. For more information on distinguishing between research and assessments, see the [Solicitation Companion Guide](#).
2. Direct victim assistance, such as advocacy services, legal assistance, counseling, emergency housing, or transportation.
3. The development of a program for electronic service of orders other than orders of protection.
4. The development or improvement of a process to serve orders of protection that is not relevant to electronic service.

5. Activities solely related to compliance, monitoring, and the enforcement of protection orders that are not served electronically.

Concept papers 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.

Unallowable Costs

The costs associated with the activities listed below are unallowable and must not be included in applicants' proposal.

1. Lobbying.
2. Fundraising.
3. Purchase of real property.
4. Physical modifications to buildings, including minor renovations (such as painting or carpeting).
5. Construction.

Activities that Compromise Victim Safety and Recovery or Undermine Offender Accountability

OVW does not fund activities that jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to avoid responsibility for their actions. Applications that propose any such activities may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration. OVW may support survivor-centered alternative pathways to justice and non-criminal approaches to accountability that fall within the statutory scope of this program and do not compromise victim safety. Information on activities that compromise victim safety and recovery or undermine offender accountability may be found in the [Solicitation Companion Guide](#).

Concept Papers Content

Concept papers must include a Summary Data Sheet, a Proposal Narrative, and a Statement of Expertise. All application materials should be in Times New Roman or Arial font, no smaller than 12 point. The total point value for a concept paper is

100 points (75 points for project narrative and 25 points for Statement of Expertise).

A. Summary Data Sheet

Include a “Summary Data Sheet,” not to exceed 2 pages (single- or double-spaced). The Summary Data Sheet should include the following:

1. Lead Applicant
2. Project Title
3. Point-of-Contact for lead applicant: Name, Title, Address, Daytime Phone Number, and Email Address
4. Point-of Contact for required partner organizations: Name, Title, Organization Name; Daytime Phone Number, and Email Address
5. Estimated Budget Amount (up to \$1,500,000.00 for a period of 60 months). The estimated budget should include rough estimates for the following categories: personnel, fringe, contracts/consultants, supplies, equipment, and travel. In developing estimates, applicants should also consider: costs related to accessibility (including language access and physical accommodations); staff time involved on this project (including costs to support a designated full-time Project Coordinator); costs related to a two-year planning period; costs of regular meetings of the multidisciplinary partnership during the planning period to discuss the design and implementation of the project); and costs related to technology or software. A detailed breakdown is not needed at this time.

B. Proposal Narrative (75 points)

The **proposal narrative should be no longer than 10 pages**, double-spaced. The narrative must provide a basic description of the following:

1. The service area of the court’s jurisdiction, including the size, the population density, and demographics in the jurisdiction.
2. The communities in the service area, including but not limited to traditionally underserved populations, such as communities of color, people with disabilities, people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, persons with limited English proficiency, older adults, and LGBTQ+ communities.

3. If applicant is a Tribal court or a court that primarily serves a historically marginalized or underserved population, describe the challenges or needs of the identified population that the court primarily serves.
4. The process currently used for service of protection orders in the applicant's jurisdiction and challenges with such service. Include relevant statistics, if available, to support the challenges and/or needs identified.
5. The rate of successful service of protection orders. If not available, describe the challenges with tracking the status and confirmation of service of protection orders.
6. The rates of protection order enforcement in the court's service area for the past three calendar years.
7. Current efforts to address challenges related to the successful service of protection orders.
8. The court's current case management system and its existing gaps as it pertains to protection orders.

C. Statement of Expertise (25 points)

Statement of Expertise: Applicants must include a statement summarizing the qualifications of the applicant and required partner organizations. The statement should identify the names of the applicant and required partner staff who will develop and implement the project. OVW may contact partner organizations during the course of the application review process. **The Statement of Expertise is limited to eight pages, double-spaced.**

Required Partnerships:

For this Call for Concept Papers, applicants must include the following four types of partner entities in the statement of expertise:

1. a state, Tribal, or local law enforcement agency;
2. a victim service provider or state or Tribal domestic violence coalition. A victim service provider is a nonprofit, nongovernmental or Tribal organization, including a state or Tribal domestic violence 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. 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;

3. at least one state or Tribal court judge with expertise in domestic violence and issuing protective orders; and
4. the department(s) responsible for purchasing, designing, and/or court case management technology and integration infrastructure. This department may be within the court or other government agency.

Selection Criteria

Concept paper proposals will be assessed based on the degree to which the application responds to each element in the Proposal Narrative and Statement of Expertise and the quality of the response.

Pre-Application Webinar

OVW will conduct one pre-application webinar on **October 28, 2024, at 2:00 pm ET**. To register for the pre-application webinar, please email OVW.ElectronicService@usdoj.gov no later than **October 25, 2024, by 4:00 pm ET**. The pre-application webinar will be recorded and posted on the OVW website. The pre-application webinar will have English captioning and Spanish interpretation. Please indicate in your email registration for the pre-application webinar if you will require any other language interpretation and we will strive to accommodate this request.

Submission Process

Concept Papers must be submitted in PDF or Word format via email to OVW.ElectronicService@usdoj.gov by **December 5, 2024 at 8:59 pm ET**. OVW will send receipt of confirmation emails within 72 hours of the due date. All required materials for the call for concept paper (Summary Data Sheet, Proposal Narrative, and Statement of Expertise) must be submitted together in one email. If you encounter technical issues in submitting an application via email, please email OVW.ElectronicService@usdoj.gov no later than 72 hours of the due date.

Decision-Making Process

1. Concept Papers will be reviewed by panels that will consist of DOJ staff and/or subject matter experts.
2. OVW may elect to conduct virtual or in-person meetings with applicants as part of the review process. OVW may request the participation of proposed project partners in these meetings.
3. Selected recipients will be contacted by OVW via email and will be invited to submit a full “non-competitive” application via the Grants.Gov and JustGrants systems. The application must reflect the activities and full budget discussed during the decision-making process. In addition to the project narrative, the budget detail, and the budget narrative, applicants will be required to submit signed Letters of Commitment with each of the required project partners listed in the Statement of Expertise section.
4. Awards under this program for FY 2025 will be made for up to \$1,500,000 for a 60-month project period. OVW estimates that it will make up to four awards for an estimated \$6,000,000 total.

Post Award Requirements

1. During the first year of the award, applicants will also be required to make substantial efforts, to the extent practicable, to develop or expand partnerships with:
 - 1) a state, Tribal, or local prosecutor’s office;
 - 2) a provider of culturally specific services;
 - 3) a nonprofit program or government agency with demonstrated experience in providing legal assistance or legal advice to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault;
 - 4) the bar association of the applicable state or Indian Tribe;
 - 5) the state or Tribal association of court clerks;
 - 6) a state, Tribal, or local association of criminal defense attorneys;
 - 7) a judge assigned to the criminal docket of the state or Tribal court;
 - 8) and an additional state or Tribal court judge with expertise in domestic violence and issuing protective orders.

During the first year of the award, if any additional partnerships are established, applicants will be required to provide subsequent Letters of Commitment (LOC) as a deliverable post award.

2. Recipients of this award will be expected to engage in a planning period of up to 24 months in collaboration with OVW-sponsored technical assistance providers and implement programs for properly and legally serving protection orders through electronic communication methods. Pilot sites will receive intensive technical assistance engagement and support throughout the planning period (pilot sites may expect one-on-one planning calls, sample policies and procedures, in-person strategic planning and training, etc.).
3. Recipients of this award will be expected to participate in an assessment or evaluation, if OVW conducts one that requires grantee involvement.
4. Recipients of OVW funds must comply with applicable federal civil rights laws, which, among other things, prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and/or national origin. Compliance with these laws includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to recipients' programs and activities. Compliance also requires that these programs and activities are readily accessible to individuals with disabilities. More information on these obligations is available in the [Solicitation Companion Guide](#) under "Civil Rights Compliance." Recipients of awards under this call for concept papers will be required to allocate the appropriate amount of funds to support the use of interpreters (spoken language, American Sign Language, and other forms of interpretation as requested) and translators to fully allow the project to be accessible to all participants. Accessibility is important to OVW, and OVW encourages applicants to plan and budget for truly meaningful access.