

Jason Petry: Welcome to the Pre-Application Information Session webinar for the Grants to Improve the Criminal Justice Response (also referred to as “ICJR”) Program. My name is Jason Petry, and I am a Grants Management Specialist here at the Office on Violence Against Women (also referred to as “OVW”). The ICJR Unit is convening this pre-application information session to go over the FY 2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the ICJR Program.

A quick note about terminology. OVW no longer uses the term Solicitation for published funding opportunities. We now use Notice of Funding Opportunity, commonly referred to as “NOFO”, to be consistent with other federal agencies. Throughout the presentation we will be referring to the NOFO.

The purpose of this session is to provide information regarding the ICJR Program and NOFO. 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 NOFO and the ICJR Program. All applicants are responsible for reading the FY 2025 ICJR NOFO and the OVW NOFO Companion Guide to ensure you submit a complete application. It will be helpful to have the ICJR NOFO in front of you for a point of reference during this information session.

The NOFO was reposted on May 6, 2025, as a “REVISED” NOFO. Use only the current version of the NOFO. Please keep track of the noted deadlines as there are multiple. If you don’t submit the required SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov, then you cannot submit the rest of the application. Additionally, it can take around a week for the Grants.gov registration to work through the system, so it is important to submit documents earlier than later.

Organizations that have applied for funding previously must ensure that their accounts with SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and JustGrants are active and up to date. SAM.gov registration requires an average of 2-3 weeks and Grants.gov registration takes an average of one week.

We begin with an overview of the ICJR Program. The Grants to Improve Criminal Justice Responses, or the ICJR Program, is one of the oldest and largest OVW discretionary grant programs. The ICJR program is focused on helping governments and nonprofits improve their response to OVW’s four recognized crimes. Building relationships and partnerships to form a coordinated community response is fundamental to the work of an ICJR project. The core goal of the ICJR program is to promote victim safety and hold offenders accountable.

Let’s now talk about eligible applicants. There are five groups that are eligible for ICJR funding as listed here.

For units of local government, we are referring to the executive office in local government – for example the mayor’s office in a city or the county commissioner’s office in a county. This refers to any executive office of local government, not one of the agencies that they oversee. Police departments, prosecutor’s offices, sheriffs’ departments, probation and parole ... these entities are not eligible to apply but can be partners.

OVW statute defines victim service providers as nonprofits or nongovernmental organizations. These are often the organizations in your community that serve survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Victim service providers cannot be government entities; they must be community-based or they will not be deemed eligible. For example, they could be your local domestic violence organization which is a non-profit, but they cannot be an office of victim services in the government.

Please note that when you apply, you will be one of two types of applicants: new or continuation. You are considered new if you have never received funding under the ICJR program or if your most recent award closed any time before February 27th, 2025.

As the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) is at the heart of the ICJR program, every applicant must apply with a required partner. These are the people you have discussed working with in your “Who Will Implement” section and who will sign onto your MOU or LOC.

For government entities, this means working with your victim service providers or coalitions. Remember this partner must have a primary function to provide direct services to victims. They also cannot be another government organization even if that organization provides victim services. The partner must be based in the community or a domestic violence or sexual assault coalition.

Victim service organizations or coalitions must partner with a government entity (not including courts). As noted before, the government entity must be the executive office, so the Governor’s office for a state or mayor’s office in a city. It does not include agencies like police departments or prosecutor’s offices. These offices can be project partners, but they cannot count as the required government partner.

Remember you must have your government partner signed onto your MOU. MOUs without the required signatures may receive deductions on their application scores.

Successful grantees tend to focus on quality, not quantity, of purpose areas (typically 3-4), which allows them to focus their project narrative, goals, and objectives. For victim service providers, only apply to purpose areas in which you are eligible to avoid any deductions on your application.

A new element this year is for applicants who intend to apply to provide legal assistance. They must already have a legal apparatus in place or partner with an organization who does. Up to 30 percent of project activities can be dedicated to legal assistance. Applicants who plan to implement direct legal services must submit the Delivery of Legal Assistance Certification, something we will discuss later in the presentation

OVW statutorily prioritizes applicants that propose to implement activities that respond to sexual assault in their community. Each year for the past 4 years, the percentage of activities and budget that must be implemented to meet the priority has increased, reaching 45 percent this year. As such, to be eligible for additional funding, applicants must spend at least 45 percent or more of their project activities on addressing sexual assault.

If successful in receiving a FY 2025 award, applicants may be eligible to receive up to 24 months of noncompetitive additional funding

Activities that address sexual assault include but are not limited to improving policies and procedures for sexual assault investigations, hiring Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs), and improving interviewing processes for sexual assault investigations.

Applicants proposing to address one or more of these statutory priority areas must discuss how they meet one or more of these priority areas in the proposal narrative and identify the statutory priority area(s) addressed within the “Summary Data Sheet” section.

By addressing any of the statutory priority areas, an applicant will receive special consideration during the application review process. Please note it is not required to address a statutory priority area to be considered for funding.

Each year, leadership identifies priority areas for which grant programs will be given special consideration for implementing. There are three priority areas for which an ICJR grantee could be eligible to implement listed on this slide. If you intend to meet a priority area, ensure that it is clear in your project narrative what steps will be taken and by whom to meet the stated priority area.

Please note that there are more out of scope activities than in the past. Please read the NOFO to review all existing activities that are out-of-scope and ensure that your project is fully in compliance with the requirements. Applicants proposing any activities that are out-of-scope may have points deducted during the review process or may be removed from consideration

OVW also does not fund any activities that jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions. Please ensure that your application does not include any such activities, or you may receive a point deduction or even disqualification from consideration.

The budget should not include any of the following unallowable costs. Inclusion of unallowable costs can lead to point deductions of an application or even removal from consideration.

Now we are going to discuss the core elements of the ICJR FY25 Application.

Here are the core, required components of your application package. We will discuss these components in greater detail over the next few slides.

Please note that applications must adhere to the following technical requirements on this screen. Points will be deducted from applications who fail to meet the formatting and technical requirements.

We tend to see a few common formatting mistakes that we would like to help you all avoid.

For one, applications may be missing page numbers, be single spaced, or may go over the 20-page limit for the proposal narrative. These are all formatting errors. Peer Reviewers will not read beyond 20 pages, which means any content over those 20 pages will not be considered a part of your application.

Please be sure to include headings and sub-headings that correspond to the sections identified in this section of the NOFO. Including these headings helps reviewers read, follow, and score your applications accurately. They also can help you ensure that you address all of the required areas in your application.

Before we discuss the proposal narrative, I want to note that you will be required to submit a proposal abstract, which is a short summary of the proposed project in JustGrants. It will not be scored but will be used throughout the review process.

Now we are going to talk about the Proposal Narrative. This includes a “Purpose of the Proposal” section worth 20 points, a “What Will Be Done” section worth 45 points, and a “Who Will Implement” section worth 15 points.

The first part is the **Purpose of the Proposal** section.

This is your opportunity to really introduce your project. Think about your community and your service area and who is most impacted. Who are you serving? What are the challenges you all face? Do you not have trauma informed investigations? Are protection orders not being enforced? What do you want to achieve with this project. The purpose of the proposal section gives you the opportunity to let us know why you want to work on this project.

Next is the **What Will Be Done** section. This is where you describe what you plan to do in response to the challenges you noted in the previous section. So, when it says provide specific, measurable goals, objectives, and activities, *be specific*. This can mean anything from tracking how many survivors you served to how many cases were investigated and went to trial. Please do not just tell us that you will improve services for survivors – show us how you plan to do that.

The last part of the proposal narrative is the **Who Will Implement** section.

Consider who is working on this project, what is their experience – Have they worked in the field of domestic violence or sexual assault for multiple years? Are they experienced in providing training? Do they have specific kinds of training that are necessary to do this job? Who are your partners and what kind of expertise do they bring to the table? Most importantly, are they the right partners to implement your specific project?

Next up we have your budget. The budget worksheet and narrative should include all of the items listed here. There are a few particular areas we want to home in on today.

First, please make sure that your budget covers the entire 36-month project period with budgeted activities. You will be asked to amend your budget if it does not span the full length requested.

Second, ensure there are no surprises in your budget. This means activities included in the What Will Be Done section and the partners described in the Who Will Implement section match the costs of the budget. And for calculations, show your work. For example, if you provided health insurance or a 401K plan, let us know the exact percentages used to get the amount you requested.

One benefit of being an OVW grantee is your access to OVW training and technical assistance providers. These are national experts in the field working with law enforcement, prosecution, the community and more. We ask you to set aside funds to travel to training, but also to bring relevant training directly to your community. And don't forget to share these opportunities with your project partners.

We want to ensure that all victims and communities are provided with the services they need. We ask you to set aside funds to ensure there are resources available for accessibility purposes. This often includes translation of material and interpretation services, or language lines for services over the phone. Please make sure you are setting aside enough funds to service all the populations you work with in your community.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is your agreement with partners to implement the project. All applicants, with few exceptions, must submit an MOU following the requirements listed here.

Note that the Authorized Representative is the person with authority to apply for and accept grant awards on behalf of the organization or jurisdiction. This may be different from the Chief Executive Office who needs to sign the Certifications of Eligibility, something we will discuss later in the presentation.

For units of local government, the victim service provider is your required partner and must sign the MOU. For victim service providers, your government partner is your required partner and must sign the MOU.

OVW will accept electronic signatures.

The Letter of Commitment (LOC) is another form of partnership agreement that signifies support of a project for entities who cannot sign into a formal MOU.

For example, courts unable to submit an MOU may submit an LOC in its place. Tribal governments or Tribal Victim Service Providers may also submit a Letter of Commitment from each partnering organization(s). If funded, Tribal entities will be expected to submit a signed MOU as a deliverable post award.

This is important. If you are **not** a court, Tribal government, or Tribal victim service provider, and you are the lead applicant – you are still required to submit an MOU. This slide may not apply to you.

Now we will turn to the ICJR Application Information section of the NOFO.

Project budgets vary from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 depending on the project type and population size. For statewide projects, applicants will need to ensure that their activities cover the entire state and not a few cities or counties. Applicants must upload a service area map and include population size from the most recent credible government source. OVW will only provide funding for the population size of the communities you serve.

Additionally, any application that addresses the Sexual Assault Statutory Set Aside discussed before may apply for up to an additional \$200,000. Please note that the sexual assault set aside is at 45%, meaning at least 45% of project and budget activities must be focused on combatting sexual assault in order to be eligible.

There are two new certifications when applying for an ICJR award.

There is a Certification Regarding Out-of-Scope Activities where applicants must attach a letter to OVW's Director, signed by the Authorized Representative, certifying that grant funds will not be used for out-of-scope activities listed in the NOFO. Please note that nothing in this certification prohibits recipients from serving all eligible victims as required by statute, regulation, or award conditions.

State or local government applicants who are looking for priority consideration in the application can submit a certification affirming their compliance with federal immigration law, including 8 U.S.C. § 1373. To be eligible for this priority, an applicant must submit a letter signed by the applicant's Authorized Representative.

As an applicant, it is your job to ensure that you are in compliance or will come into compliance with all required certifications. Failure to do so may impact your ability to receive an ICJR award.

There are three Certifications of Eligibility that are required for all applicants, except for courts as shown on the screen here. Please note that these COEs must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the state, unit of local government, or Tribal government. "Chief Executive Officer" means the highest official of a state, unit of local government, or Tribe (for example, Governor or Mayor). Other government officials such as the District Attorney or Attorney General are not considered the Chief Executive Officer.

A victim service provider or state coalition cannot sign the COEs; their governmental partner must execute and sign the COEs.

State or local courts must submit one Courts Certification of Eligibility found on pg. 32 of the NOFO.

The first certification is the ICJR General Certification of Eligibility

A sample [ICJR General Certification of Eligibility is available on OVW's website](#). Please be sure to use exact statutory language; otherwise, the ICJR General Certification of Eligibility will need to be revised.

The second certification is the Prosecution Certification of Eligibility. The Prosecution Certification of Eligibility has three key components as listed here.

If you need to come into compliance, you must ensure that you meet the requirements as noted in the certification before the end of your award. Failure to do so can jeopardize access to future funding.

The Prosecution Certification of Eligibility is required for all applicants except for Court applicants. Only the governmental partner may execute and sign this certification. It must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer.

A sample [Prosecution Certification of Eligibility](#) is available on OVW's website. Please be sure to use the exact statutory language, otherwise the Prosecution Certification will need to be revised.

Lastly there is the Minor Certification of Eligibility

If you need to come into compliance, you will only have until the end of the next legislative session. This means, for example, if your state legislature meets in January and its session ends in September, you will have until September to come into compliance. If you do not, your funds will be frozen until you are in compliance.

The Minor Certification of Eligibility is required for all applicants except for Court applicants. Again, only government partners can sign this certification.

A sample of the [Minor Certification of Eligibility](#) is available on OVW's website. Please be sure to use the exact statutory language, otherwise the Minor Certification will need to be revised.

State and unit of local government applicants are required to submit some form of documentation for the HIV certification requirement whether it is a certification notifying OVW that you are in compliance or an exemption letter notifying OVW that you do not have the ability or authority to prosecute the relevant cases.

These certifications must be signed by the Authorized Representative.

Please note that although required, the HIV Certification is not a certification of eligibility.

For applicants who plan to include legal services in their proposals, no more than 30% of project activities may be dedicated to legal services in an ICJR award. This is not a certification of eligibility, but it is required for applicants proposing to implement legal services.

A [sample Delivery of Legal Assistance Certification letter is available on OVW's website](#). Please be sure to use the exact language, otherwise the Delivery of Legal Assistance Certification letter will need to be revised.

OVW Grant Financial Management Division or GFMD is involved in reviewing the applications. GFMD reviews the following information required of all applications.

The pre-award risk assessment, which is submitted directly in JustGrants and found beginning on page 48 of the NOFO, includes 11 questions with multiple parts to each question. Be sure to respond to all parts of each question.

The summary data sheet consists of 22 questions, many with multiple parts. Be sure to respond to all parts of each question. See pgs. 50-55 for a complete list of questions.

Applicants must upload the required documents as budget financial attachments in JustGrants. There is a sample disclosure letter available for you. Please review all questions for the pre-award risk assessment, the applicant questionnaire, and the summary data sheet to ensure you have provided the requested information

GFMD has worked to develop a detailed webinar presentation on how to assist applicants in developing a budget to be submitted with their OVW applications. They want to help reduce any challenges you may have or face with the budget and make it clear what they look for when they review your budget. This webinar provides some insight as to what OVW financial staff considers during their review. The webinar can be found on the OVW website under the budget information section of the OVW

Additional resources including 2 CFR Part 200 and the DOJ Financial Guide can be found [here](#).

We know this can be a lot of information to process so if you have questions about the GFMD information discussed please feel free to contact the GFMD help desk at 1-888-514 8556 or via email at ovw.gfmd.doj.gov.

Next, we will discuss some application submissions tips and resources.

The ICJR NOFO is available on the OVW website. Applicants have multiple ways to look up the funding opportunity on Grants.gov to begin their application process.

Read the NOFO carefully to understand all the steps required to submit an application and the required time to complete each step. Leave yourself sufficient time to engage relevant partners needed to prepare and submit your application. We recommend that applicants begin these processes as soon as possible but no later than the dates suggested in the NOFO.

There are two key steps for applying for an ICJR award, noted here, including submitting on Grants.gov and on JustGrants.

Please note that if you experience technological difficulties that prevent you from submitting an application on JustGrants, review the OVW policy for applicants experiencing technical difficulties found on page 41 of the NOFO. Applicants must reach out to OVW.JustGrantsSupport@usdoj.gov immediately to notify them of the issue. Throughout the process you will need to maintain documentation of your communication with the help desk as you resolve the issue. You must email OVW.ICJR@usdoj.gov the complete application, a detailed description of the problem, your contact info, and UEI number, BEFORE the deadline. This is only allowable if there is a documented technological issue that prevents you from submitting the application in JustGrants. Please do not email the application earlier than 4 hours prior to the deadline.

Cases of severe inclement weather or natural or man-made disaster are the only circumstances under which OVW may accept applications after the required deadline. Applicants must email OVW.ICJR@usdoj.gov to notify us about the disaster, when it occurred, and its impact on submitting the application. If an applicant is still able to email the application, then please do so. If not, contact OVW as soon as communications are restored.

Listed here are all of the mandatory requirements when submitting your ICJR application. Please be sure to include and check off all of these components when working to submit your application. It is beneficial to begin working on components that require different organizations or individuals support like the MOU or the ICJR General Certification of Eligibility as soon as possible.

Listed here are all of the requirements that may be required depending on the circumstances surrounding your project. Please read the NOFO carefully to determine if you are required to submit these additional documents. It is beneficial to begin working on components that require different organizations or individuals support like the Prosecution and Minor Certification of Eligibility as soon as possible.

Now let's discuss a few tips to help you submit a successful application

First, we recommend that you start early. Some steps, such as obtaining a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number or registering with the System for Award Management (SAM) or Grants.gov, may take several days to complete, so please start with those as soon as possible as you cannot apply without them – even if you have a fully complete application package. SAM registration takes an average of 2-3 weeks. Grants.gov can take up to 1 week.

Second, review and re-review the Application Checklist. Note that OVW will not contact applicants for missing items. Applications that do not include the Proposal Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative, and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or Letter(s) of Commitment (LOC) will not be considered for funding

Third, please do not submit “test” applications to see if Grants.Gov and JustGrants “works.” Also, avoid submitting an application multiple times. Finally, ensure your application is complete and final before hitting the “Submit” button at the end of the application in JustGrants.

Lastly, assume that your reader knows nothing about your organization because they are prohibited from engaging in external research. The best grant applications tell the story of your project. They clearly describe the needs of the community, provide clear actionable goals to address those needs, and demonstrate the experience and capacity of the project partners to achieve the goals. Strong applications show reviewers how you plan to implement your ideas and goals and describe how survivors will benefit from your proposed project.

Here are links to a couple helpful websites including general OVW Resources for Applicants and the OVW Application Companion Guide. These resources provide samples forms, tips, financial policies, and more relevant information that will assist you with the submission of your application.

Here is contact information for each group that can help with your application:

Note that email is preferred. Please do not wait to contact us with questions as inquiry volume is high during NOFO season.

Important deadlines are upcoming as noted previously. Please make sure you are aware of the deadlines to prepare your application with sufficient time to upload.

As always, if you have questions, please contact at us and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

That is our pre-application webinar. Thank you for taking the time to watch. We look forward to reviewing your applications this year.