



**FY 2018 Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program Pre-Application
Conference Call
Tuesday, December 19, 2017**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome to the Pre-Application Conference Call for the Fiscal Year 2018 Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program (also referred to as the “LAV Program”). The Office on Violence Against Women (also referred to as “OVW”) is convening this pre-application conference call to go over the FY 2018 solicitation for the LAV Program. I am Jan-Sheri Morris and with me are Shannon R. Maultsby (formerly Gaskins), Sandi Van-Orden and Lauren Nassikas, Associate Director. Shannon, Sandi and I work on the LAV Unit. Lauren is the LAV Unit Supervisor. The purpose of this pre-recorded webinar is to provide information regarding the LAV solicitation. We will cover highlights of the solicitation in today’s call, however it is not the intent, nor is there sufficient time, to go over every aspect of the solicitation. All applicants are responsible for reading the solicitation and reviewing the contents of all application materials and ensuring that a complete application is submitted. LAV Program staff cannot provide any feedback to applicants about the quality of an applicant’s proposal or provide any information outside of that presented in the solicitation. LAV Program staff will be available throughout the period that the solicitation is open to respond to any questions about application requirements. Please feel free to send questions about the LAV solicitation to the LAV Program email mailbox at ovw.lav@usdoj.gov. If you have the LAV solicitation in front of you, today’s webinar will follow the order of topics as listed in the solicitation.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is mentioned on the cover of the solicitation, as well as on pages 6 -7. Eligible applicants: private nonprofit entities, publicly funded organizations not acting in a governmental capacity (such as law schools); territorial organizations; Indian tribal governments; tribal organizations; and Indian tribal consortia. Both new and continuation applications are being accepted. Grantees that received LAV funding for 36 months in in FY 2016 and 2017 are not eligible to apply.

DEADLINES

Also on the cover of the solicitation please note that applications are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on Thursday, February 1, 2018.

REGISTRATION

You will also note on the cover of the solicitation that you must “register” by January 16, 2018. Registration includes several steps: 1) obtaining a DUNS number; 2) ensuring that you register with the SAM system and 3) registering on Grants.gov.

Every applicant must obtain a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number and register online with System for Award Management (SAM) well before the grant deadline. There is a reason that we set a deadline of January 16th, as the process to register for a DUNS number and SAM can be lengthy. If you do not have a DUNS number and/or are not current in the SAM system, you should begin this process as soon as possible.

Register with Grants.gov no later than January 16th. The registration process is not one that can be completed quickly, it can take days and you should begin this process as soon as possible. Every year we have a handful of applicants that did not make the deadline because they were delinquent with their SAM and/or Grants.Gov registrations.

If you are considering applying, a Letter of Registration should be submitted to OVW by January 11, 2018. A letter of registration is not mandatory; however, they are very helpful to us internally in attempting to identify the potential volume of applications that are expected to be received and to plan accordingly for the peer review process. Refer to Appendix B for a Sample Letter of Registration.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding the LAV solicitation, contact OVW at 202-307-6026. This is our main number at OVW, but you may email any questions to ovw.lav@usdoj.gov.

SUBMISSION AND NOTIFICATION INFORMATION

LAV applications will be submitted through Grants.gov. If you have questions specific to the registration or submission process through Grants.Gov, please contact grants.gov customer support at 1 800 518-4726 (this phone # can be also be found on page ii of the solicitation and on the Grants.gov website). Grants.Gov customer service is open 24 hours a day; 7 days a week, with the exception of federal holidays.

OVW anticipates notifying all applicants of funding decisions by October 1, 2018.

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Page 1 of the solicitation provides background on the history and goals for the LAV Program. The purpose of the LAV Program is to increase the availability of civil and criminal legal assistance needed to effectively aid adult and youth victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking who are seeking relief in legal matters relating to or arising out of that abuse or violence, at minimum or no cost to the victims. The LAV Grant Program supports the provision of holistic legal services. For example, survivors may also need legal assistance with other legal matters relating to or arising out of the abuse or violence, including family matters such as divorce, child custody or child support, immigration, administrative agency proceedings, housing, and assistance related to human trafficking as described herein. Any services funded under the LAV Grant Program must be linked to legal assistance. Please note that LAV Grant

Program funds may not be used to provide criminal defense services. You can review some examples of activities that are beyond direct legal services but that are linked to legal assistance that may be supported with LAV funds on the top of page 2.

Program Scope

The FY 2018 LAV Grant Program has 3 Purpose Areas. You will find this information on page 2 of the solicitation. Please review the purpose areas carefully as project activities funded through the LAV Grant Program must fall under one or more of these Purpose Areas.

I do want to discuss Purpose Area #3 in a little more detail. You will note that Purpose Area #3 states, "not more than 10 percent of the funds awarded may be used for this purpose" - of pro bono legal assistance. This requirement applies to the entire amount of LAV funding appropriated for the year. This is something that OVW monitors internally. Applicants are not required to limit their proposals to 10% pro bono legal assistance.

OVW Priority Areas

Information regarding the two Priority Areas under the LAV Program, for this year, can be found on pages 2 -3 of the solicitation. Applications proposing activities in the following Priority Areas will be given special consideration during the review process:

Sexual Assault Focused Applications

The LAV Program will prioritize projects that meaningfully address and focus primarily on serving victims of non-intimate partner sexual assault. Applications submitted under this priority area that propose to serve 80% or more of their grant activities on sexual assault legal services may request up to \$800,000 in funding for 36 months.

Trafficking

Under the definitions and grant conditions applicable to the LAV Grant Program pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act, as amended, legal assistance includes services and assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons. This means that applicants can apply to serve individuals who are both victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The LAV Program will prioritize projects that meaningfully address trafficking. Applicants proposing to serve trafficking victims must:

- Specify that they are proposing to serve victims of trafficking.
- Demonstrate capacity to serve this population. The applicant can demonstrate this through their own expertise OR through the expertise of the partnership/agency they will be working with in the project.
- Partner with federal, state, and/or local law enforcement AND prosecution to develop comprehensive response protocols to ensure that trafficking victims are identified and referred for appropriate services.

- Specify the specific group of victims they plan to serve (for example, victims of sexual assault who are also victims of sex trafficking or victims of domestic violence who are also victims of forced labor trafficking).
- Specify any services they plan to provide to meet the unique needs of the population specified.

Note that throughout the Application Content section, the following sub-sections will ask for additional information if an applicant is applying under one of the two priority areas: Purpose of the Application, What Will Be Done, Who Will Implement the Project, and the Memorandum of Understanding or Statement of Expertise.

Pages 4-5 will address activities that Compromise Victim Safety and Recovery, Out-of-Scope Activities, and Unallowable Activities

Please note on page 4 of the solicitation, that #4 discusses cases involving the child protective system. Please note you may not use LAV funds for this type of representation unless the child dependency hearing involves allegations “relating to or arising out of” abuse of the client only. This does not include abuse to the children. Applications including items listed in these sections may be removed from consideration or may receive a point deduction during the review process. We are not going to spend time reviewing these sections, however we strongly recommend that you read these sections carefully and contact us directly if you have any questions, as additional language has been included in the solicitation to clarify several sections from previous years.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Availability of Funds

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. There is no guarantee that funds will be available in the future. Therefore, OVW encourages applicants to develop a plan to sustain project activities if federal funding through this program ceases to be available.

Award Period

The grant award period is for 36 months, beginning on October 1, 2018.

Award Amounts

Funding levels for 2018 are as follows:

- New and continuation applications that are proposing to provide primarily domestic violence focused legal services or less than 80% sexual assault focused legal services may request up to \$600,000 for the entire 36-month period.

- New and continuation applications proposing to provide 80% or more non-intimate partner sexual assault focused legal services may request up to \$800,000 for the entire 36-month period.

OVW has the discretion to award grants for greater or lesser amounts than requested and to negotiate the scope of work and budget with applicants prior to award of a grant. The LAV Grant Program typically makes awards in the range of \$400,000 - \$800,000. However, you may submit a proposal for less than \$400,000. OVW estimates that it will make up to 60 awards this year.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The list of eligible applicants is located on pages 6-7. Applications that are submitted by ineligible entities or that do not meet all program eligibility requirements will not be considered for funding.

In the solicitation, it states “Family Justice Centers are not considered domestic violence and/or sexual assault victim service providers under the LAV Program.” To clarify, a government-led Family Justice Center is not a victim service provider under the LAV Grant Program. A Family Justice Center led by a community-based agency MAY be a victim service provider under the LAV Grant Program if it is a non-profit, nongovernmental organization that assists or advocates for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victims, with a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Mere co-location of services provided by other organizations does not qualify without direct victim services provided by the organization itself. Victim service providers that are partners in government-led Family Justice Centers or community-based agency-led Family Justice Centers are also eligible to apply as partners under the LAV Grant Program if they meet all other requirements of the solicitation. Nonprofit lead family justice centers that do not meet the definition of victim service provider are eligible to apply but will need to partner with a victim service provider.

Other Program Eligibility Requirements

Delivery of Legal Assistance

Applicants proposing to provide legal assistance with LAV funding must certify, in writing, to the criteria listed on pages 7 and 8.

This certification shall take the form of a letter, on letterhead, signed and dated by the authorizing official. The signed certification letter must be uploaded as a separate attachment in Grants.gov. A sample certification letter can be found in Appendix F.

Required Partnership with a Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Assault Victim Service Provider

All lead applicants that are not domestic violence and/or sexual assault victim service providers are required to enter into a collaborative working relationship

with sexual assault and/or domestic violence victim service providers within the community to be served. A complete overview of the criteria used to determine a “domestic violence and/or sexual assault victim service provider” can be found on pages 8-9.

Additionally, the sexual assault and/or domestic violence victim service provider must be involved in the development and implementation of the project. If the lead applicant is an organization with a primary mission to provide services to victims of crime generally, a community action agency, a community-based improvement corporation, a law school or is a legal services program, that organization must partner with a domestic violence or sexual assault program. An applicant without the required partnership may be removed from consideration.

Limit on Number of Applications Submissions

An applicant can only submit one application per organization in response to this solicitation. If an applicant submits multiple versions of the same application, OVW will review only the most recent version submitted before the deadline.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Address to Request Application Package

The complete application package is available on Grants.gov or at the OVW website at <http://www.justice.gov/ovw>. Applicants wishing to request a paper copy of the application materials should email their request to: ovw.lav@usdoj.gov.

Application Contents

The required documentation for a complete application package begins on page 11 of the solicitation.

Applicants should anticipate that failure to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements will negatively affect the review of the application and may result in the application not being considered for funding. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that a complete application is submitted by the deadline. OVW will not contact applicants for missing items.

Applicants should not submit documents that were not specifically asked for in the solicitation. Providing information that was not requested (such as letters of support from other organizations in your community or service area) will not increase the likelihood that an application will be selected for funding.

Formatting and Technical Requirements

Please carefully review the formatting and technical requirements on page 10. Points may be deducted for applications that do not adhere to the formatting and technical requirements. Please read the entire list of requirements.

Application Requirements

Applications must include the following required documents and demonstrate that the program eligibility requirements have been met:

1. Project Narrative
2. Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative
3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Statement of Expertise in providing legal representation for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and/or dating violence (the Statement of Expertise replaces the Internal Memorandum of Understanding that has been required in previous years)

In addition to the application being scored on these documents, the Summary Data Sheet will also be scored. The Summary Data Sheet may be single or double spaced.

Applications that do not include all of the required components will be considered substantially incomplete and will not be considered for funding.

Proposal Abstract

Your application should include an abstract that does not exceed 2 pages, double-spaced.

Project Narrative

1. May not exceed 20 pages
2. Must include the following 3 sections: 1) Purpose of the Application; 2) What Will Be Done; and 3) Who Will Implement the Project.

The Budget

1. A budget and budget narrative (can be a separate document or included in the budget) are required.
2. Must reflect 36 months of project activity
3. Include funds to attend OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance in the amount of \$10,000 (minimum) for new and continuation applicants and \$12,000 (minimum) for applicants from the US territories, Alaska or Hawaii. Applicants may include more than the minimum amounts.
4. Refer to Appendix A for Budget Guidance and a Sample Budget

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Statement of Expertise

This section can be found beginning on page 17 of the solicitation. Please carefully read the requirements for the MOU and the Statement of Expertise found on page 17.

Some key highlights of the MOU:

The MOU is a document containing the terms of the partnership and the roles and responsibilities between two or more parties.

Applications from nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal victim service providers or governmental rape crisis centers that as their primary mission provide services to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and/or stalking victims who partner with an organization that has expertise in providing legal services must submit an MOU that includes the legal services organization and any other organizations that the applicant is partnering with to implement the project.

Applications from lead applicants who are legal services, law schools, organizations that provide services to victims of crime generally, community

action agencies and community-based improvement corporations must partner with at least one external domestic violence and/or sexual assault program and must submit an MOU.

Some key highlights of the Statement of Expertise:

Applications from lead applicants that are nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal victim service providers or governmental rape crisis centers that as their primary mission provide services to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and/or stalking victims may submit a Statement of Expertise if they demonstrate that they provide legal representation for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and/or dating violence.

If the nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal victim service providers or governmental rape crisis centers has expertise in providing legal services, an MOU is not required. In lieu of an MOU, the applicant must submit a statement describing its experience providing legal representation if legal services will be provided by in-house attorneys. This statement should be provided on agency letterhead and signed (electronic or typed signatures do not satisfy this requirement) and dated by the Authorized Representative.

If you are a victim service provider who will be contracting with individual attorneys and not a legal services organization, then you can submit a Statement of Expertise (not an MOU), but you should demonstrate in the Statement of Expertise the experience of the attorneys that will be providing legal services.

Statutory Requirements (Certification Letter)

This is the same certification that we discussed earlier – on pages 7 and 8 of the solicitation.

This certification must be in the form of a letter on agency letterhead and signed (electronic or typed signatures do not satisfy this requirement) and dated by the authorizing official. The signed Certification Letter must be uploaded as a separate attachment in Grants.gov. A sample Certification Letter is available at Appendix F.

Additional Required Information

Pages 20-23 provide additional documents that will not be scored during the review process but they should be included with your application. Failure to include any of the information may result in your application being removed from consideration from funding. Please review these pages carefully.

Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due by 11:59 pm Eastern time on Thursday, February 1, 2018.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin the application submission process at least 48 hours but no later than 24 hours before February 1, 2018.

Applicants must obtain a DUNS Number, register online with the SAM system and Grants.gov and submit an optional Letter of Registration no later than January 11th. Again, refer to Appendix B for a Sample Letter of Registration.

OVW Policy on Late Submissions

OVW offers several options for an applicant to provide advance notice to OVW if receipt of its application will be delayed. Applicants should thoroughly familiarize

themselves with the requirements as outlined by OVW in the chart on pages 26-27. An applicant's request to submit an application after the deadline will be considered by OVW if all of the steps outlined in the solicitation are followed. Only in rare circumstances are extensions granted. Failure to begin the registration or application submission process in sufficient time is not an acceptable reason for a late application submission.

Funding Restrictions

Food and Beverage/Costs for Refreshments and Meals

Generally, food and beverage costs are not allowable, and under no circumstances may OVW funding be used to supply food and/or beverages during refreshment breaks. OVW may approve the use of OVW funds to provide food and/or beverages for a meal at a meeting, conference, training, or other event, if one of the following criteria listed on page 28 applies. Justification for an exception listed on page 28 must be included in the budget narrative, and funds may only be used to purchase food and/or beverages for a meal at a meeting, conference, training, or other event if OVW approves the specific expenditures in advance.

Program Assessments

Applicants may not use any OVW funds to conduct research. However, up to three percent of the budget may be allocated for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of funded activities. For example, funds may be used to conduct pre- and post-testing of training recipients or for victim satisfaction surveys. In conducting such testing or surveys, grantees may not collect, analyze or disseminate any information that would disclose the identity of an individual.

Pre-Agreement Cost Approval

OVW generally does not allow pre-award costs. Please be aware that costs incurred prior to the start date of the award may not be charged to the project unless the recipient receives prior approval from OVW. Please see the DOJ Financial Guide for more information on pre-award costs (there is a link to financial guide on page 28).

Other Submission Requirements –page 30: Please review this section carefully to ensure your ability to submit your application on time.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Applications will be subject to a peer review and a programmatic review.

Applications will be scored based on the degree to which the application responds to each section and addresses each element in the section.

Furthermore, applications will be scored based upon the quality of the response and the level of detail provided. Each element must be addressed in the section in which it is requested. Points may be deducted if the applicant does not include the information in the appropriate section **even** if it is included **elsewhere** within the application. Each section will be reviewed as a separate document and will be scored as such.

Information regarding the Review and Selection Process begins on page 31.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices

Successful applications will receive OVW award notifications electronically from the OJP Grants Management System (GMS) (not grants.gov). This award notification will be sent to the individuals listed as the Authorized Representative and the Point of Contact on the SF-424 for the application that was selected for funding and will include instructions on accepting the award. Recipients will be required to login; accept any outstanding assurances and certifications on the award; designate financial points of contact; and review, sign, and accept the award. The award acceptance process involves physical signature of the award document and terms and conditions by the Authorized Representative and the scanning of the fully executed award document to OVW.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

There are a number of Administrative and National Policy Requirements listed on pages 33 – 34 of the solicitation. You should review these carefully.

Application Checklist

Please use the Application Checklist on page 35. This checklist will help you ensure that all required documents are included in your application.

Lastly we have some tips that may improve your chances on becoming an LAV grant recipient. Please note that following list is not a guarantee that you will be funded, but it is included as a guide to navigate you through the OVW application process.

- Please read the solicitation in its entirety. It is important to make sure you do not miss out on any important information by just skimming through the solicitation and just focusing on the “How to Apply” section. Read the application and contact LAV staff if you have any questions.
- Allow plenty of time to gather required information and submit well before the deadline. Although this is not required, more time will allow for any unforeseeable obstacles such as power outages and natural disasters.
- A missing or incorrect DUNS number or an expired SAM registration are some of the reasons an application may get rejected. Applications are also rejected because of files with names that exceed the Grants.gov 50 character limit or that don't follow the no special characters rule, or the files are saved in the wrong version of Adobe Acrobat or we receive unacceptable file types. Please ensure you are following the requirements with grants.gov. If you have any technical questions, please reach out to grants.gov directly for troubleshooting or feedback.
- Headings can be a big deal to the reviewer. It is important to keep your audience in mind and make it easy for them to read and review your application. Use the heading and sub-heading titles that are in the solicitation. This will help the reviewer more easily follow the application.

- Please keep in mind the reviewers will use only the information contained in the application to assess the application. Be sure the application and responses to the program requirements and expectations are complete and clearly written. Do not assume that reviewers are familiar with your organization, service area, barriers to legal needs in your community. Keep the reviewer in mind when writing the application.
- Organization. Organization. Organization. I can not stress this enough. Many applications fail to receive a high score because the reviewers cannot follow the thought process of the applicant or because parts of the application do not fit together. Treat it like a puzzle. Let the pieces properly fall into place.
- What are the issues in your community that you are trying to address? Is it in line with the purpose area or OVW priority area? Make your points understandable. Provide accurate and honest information, including candid accounts of problems and realistic plans to address them. If any required information or data is omitted, explain why. Your budget should also reflect back to the proposed activities.
- Print out the application before submitting it to ensure appropriate formatting and adherence to page limit requirements. Check to ensure that you included all attachments before submitting the application. Also, number your pages in your application. This will also help the reviewer track and insure you are following the solicitation formatting and instructions.
- Be sure to include all of the necessary attachments and label them appropriately when uploading them to the system. Cross check and double check. Points will be taken off for those items missing that are required.
- Use acronyms judiciously, if at all. Remember that the reviewers are not familiar with your community and will not be familiar with the acronyms that your organization and project partners may use.
- Create a checklist for all supporting documentation to make sure you submit a complete package by the deadline. If your name and contact information is listed as the POC, please monitor your inbox. There are times that the system may reject your application and you will need to make sure you are getting those alerts.

Lastly, please contact our office if you have any questions.