

FY 2020 Pre-Application Rural Pre-Recorded Information Call Transcript

(SLIDE 2)-WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Welcome to the Office on Violence Against Women (also referred to as “OVW”), Pre-Application Information Session, for the Fiscal Year 2020 Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Program Solicitation.
- This information session is being presented by OVW Rural team member Sue Pugliese, and is meant to serve as a source of information regarding the Rural Application. It is strongly recommended that you read the full solicitation prior to listening to this information session. Although I will not review every page and section of the solicitation, I will highlight the Rural Program grant and application requirements.

(SLIDE 3)-DEADLINES-APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS AND TIMES

- Application submissions and times are mentioned on the cover of the Rural solicitation, and also on **pages 19-22**.
- Applications are due by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 27, 2020**.
- All applications are submitted through **Grants.gov**.

(SLIDE 4)-PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- The Rural Program was authorized in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013.
- The Rural Program supports efforts to enhance the safety of rural victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and supports projects uniquely designed to address and prevent these crimes in rural areas.

(SLIDES 5-6)-PURPOSE AREAS

- The Rural Program has **three** Purpose Areas. I won't read the Purpose Areas to you verbatim, however, in a nut shell; all projects funded through the Rural Program **must** fall under one or more of these Purpose Areas:
- **1.** To identify, assess, and appropriately respond to child, youth, and adult victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in rural communities, by

encouraging collaboration among sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking victim service providers; law enforcement agencies; prosecutors; courts; other criminal justice service providers; human and community service providers; educational institutions; and health care providers, including sexual assault forensic examiners;

- **2.** To establish and expand nonprofit, nongovernmental, State, tribal, territorial, and local government victim services in rural communities to child, youth, and adult victims; and
- **3.** To increase the safety and well-being of women and children in rural communities, by--
 - (A) dealing directly and immediately with domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking occurring in rural communities; and
 - (B) creating and implementing strategies to increase awareness and prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

(SLIDES 7-8)-STRATEGIES

- In addition to the **three** purpose areas, Rural Program grantees **must** implement one or more of the **five** strategies as outlined in the authorizing statute. This information can be found on **page 2** of the solicitation.
- 1. Implementing, expanding, and establishing cooperative efforts and projects among law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim service providers, and other related parties to investigate and prosecute incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including developing multidisciplinary teams focusing on high risk cases with the goal of preventing domestic and dating violence homicides;
- 2. Providing treatment, counseling, advocacy, legal assistance, and other long-term and short-term victim and population specific services to adult and minor victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in rural communities, including assistance in immigration matters;
- 3. Working in cooperation with the community to develop education and prevention strategies directed toward such issues;
- 4. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing sexual assault, including sexual assault forensic examiner programs, Sexual Assault Response Teams, law enforcement training, and programs addressing rape kit backlogs; and

5. Developing programs and strategies that focus on the specific needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking who reside in remote rural and geographically isolated areas, including addressing the challenges posed by the lack of access to shelters and victims services, and limited law enforcement resources and training, and providing training and resources to Community Health Aides involved in the delivery of Indian Health Service programs.

(SLIDE 9)- OVW PRIORITY AREAS

- In FY 2020, OVW is interested in supporting the three priority areas identified below. Applications proposing activities in the following areas will be given special consideration. Information on how to address the OVW Priority Areas can be found on **page 3** of the solicitation.
 1. Reduce violent crime against women and promote victim safety through investing in law enforcement, increasing prosecution, and promoting effective prevention.
 2. Empower victims to become survivors by growing them past their vulnerabilities to a place of self-sufficiency.
 3. Increase efforts to combat stalking.

Applicants are **not** required to address the three OVW Priority Areas.

(SLIDE 10)-STATUTORY PRIORITIES

- VAWA requires that OVW award 25% of appropriated Rural Program funds to meaningfully address sexual assault in rural communities. Applicants are not required to address sexual assault within their individual applications; however, interested applicants will be asked to identify the percentage of their project that addresses sexual assault.
- OVW will give priority to projects that meet the needs of underserved populations.

(SLIDE 11)-ACTIVITIES THAT COMPROMISE VICTIM SAFETY AND RECOVERY OR UNDERMINE OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Solicitation Companion Guide lists specific activities that compromise victim safety and recovery or undermine offender accountability. Applications that propose any such activities may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration entirely.

- Information on activities that compromise victim safety and recovery can be found on **page 17**, in the **Solicitation Companion Guide**, located on the OVW website under “Resources for Applicants”.

(SLIDE 12)-OUT-OF-SCOPE ACTIVITIES

- The solicitation lists specific activities that are outside the scope of the Rural program, and will not be supported by the program’s funding. Applications that propose activities that are deemed to be substantially out-of-scope may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration entirely.

(SLIDE 13)-BUDGETS AND AWARD PERIOD

- Grant award period is for 36 months.
- Generally, the award period will start on October 1, 2020.
- Continuation applications are limited to \$750,000 for the entire 36 months.
- New applications are limited to \$500,000 for the entire 36 months.
- Note that OVW has the discretion to make awards for greater or lesser amounts than requested and to negotiate the scope of work and budget with applicants prior to making an award.

(SLIDE 14)-TYPES OF APPLICATIONS

In FY 2020, OVW will accept applications for this program from the following:

- New applicants are those that have never received funding under the Rural Program or whose previous funding expired more than 12 months ago.
- Continuation applicants are those that have an existing or recently closed (within the last 12 months) award under this program and/or an applicant that received funding under this program in FY 2016 or earlier that does not qualify as a new applicant.
- Please note that grant recipients that received funding under the Rural Program in FY 2018 and 2019 are **NOT** eligible to apply.
- Additionally, current grantees with a substantial amount of unobligated funds remaining (50 percent or more of the previous award) as of March 31, 2020 without adequate justification may not be considered for funding, or may receive a reduced award amount if selected for funding in FY 2020.

(SLIDE 16)-ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are limited to:

- States and territories.
- Indian tribes.
- Local governments.
- Nonprofit (public or private) entities, including tribal nonprofit organizations in the United States or U.S. territories, faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements.
- For definitions of these entities, please refer to **pages 6-7** of the solicitation.
- I did want to note that we have received lots of questions from potential hospital and university applicants, on whether or not they are eligible to apply for the Rural Solicitation. The answer is yes, and you would be considered a non-profit (whether public or private) entity.
- Also, when reading the footnote at the bottom of **page 6**, where it references the states that have been designated as “rural” based on the definition of “rural state” and the 2010 Census. If you do not see your state listed, it does not mean you cannot apply. Regardless of whether an application is submitted by an entity from a rural state or a non-rural state, all applicants must target services in a rural area or community. The term “rural state” means a state that has a population density of 57 or fewer persons per square mile or a state in which the largest county has fewer than 250,000 people, based on the most recent decennial census.

(SLIDES 16-17)-DELIVERY OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE-CERTIFICATION

- In previous years, legal assistance was limited to “legal assistance in seeking protection orders and limited immigration matters”. With the implementation of VAWA 2013, legal services have been expanded to include comprehensive legal service such as divorce, custody, and child support.
- All applicants proposing to provide legal assistance with funds under the FY 2020 Rural Program must certify in writing the requirements that are noted on **pages 7-8** of the Rural Solicitation.

- Certifications must take the form of a letter, on letterhead, signed and dated by the authorized representative.
- Failure to provide required certifications may disqualify an application from further consideration. At a minimum, an application missing the required certification letter will be required to submit a certification letter prior to receiving an award.
- A sample Certification Letter can be found on the OVW website via a link on **page 7** of the Rural solicitation under this section.

(SLIDE 18)-ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREA DOCUMENTATION

- As I've stated previously, the Rural Statute within the Violence Against Women Act requires that rural funds are directed to victims residing within areas that are "rural eligible".
- To demonstrate that the areas that your agency is proposing targeting services to are rural-eligible, every application (other than those submitted by federally recognized Indian tribes, which are statutorily defined as "rural") **must include** the proper printed documentation demonstrating that the proposed service area meets this eligibility requirement.
- Instructions to complete the documentation process, meaning, the ("Rural Eligibility Documentation Process") can be found via the link, provided in the Rural solicitation on **page 8**.
- The Rural Program does not require a map of your service area, only the documentation that's noted on **page 8** of the solicitation.

(SLIDE 19)-REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS

- All eligible applications must include a victim service provider as a formal project partner and/or the lead applicant as demonstrated through the required Memorandum of Understanding or (MOU), or Letters of Support which applies for (for State, tribal, territory or local court applicants only, if applicable).
- A complete overview of the criteria used to determine "victim service provider" can be found on **pages 8-9** of the solicitation in this section.

- Additionally, eligible applications, including those submitted by a victim service provider, **must** include at least one project partner, and **must** include agencies and organizations necessary to implement the proposed project.

(SLIDE 20)-REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS con't

- DOJ has implemented a new policy related to grantees that will potentially have staff and volunteers interacting with any participating minor in the course of activities under the award. This requirement will be applied to all OVW award recipients as a special condition. The recipient (and any subrecipient at any tier) may not permit any covered individual to interact with any participating minor in the course of activities under the award, unless the recipient or subrecipient first has made a written determination of the suitability of that individual to interact with participating minors, based on current and appropriate information.
- More information about this award condition can be found on the OVW website included in this presentation.

(SLIDE 21)-APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- Letter of Intent: Applicants intending to apply for FY 2020 funding under this program are strongly encouraged to submit a Letter of Intent by **January 13, 2020**.
- The letter should be submitted to OVW at ovw.rural@usdoj.gov .
- The letter should state that the applicant is registered and current with SAM and with Grants.gov.
- This letter will not obligate the applicant to submit an application

(SLIDE 22)- FORMATTING AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must follow the formatting and technical requirements outlined in the solicitation.
- Points may be deducted for applications that do not adhere to the formatting and technical requirements.
- A complete listing of these requirements can be found on **pages 9-10** of the solicitation

(SLIDE 23)-APPLICATION CONTENTS

- 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)/Letter(s) of Support (which applies for state, tribal, territorial, or local court applicants only, if applicable).
 4. Eligible Service Area Documentation.
- OVW will not contact applicants for these missing items. Applications that do not include all of these documents will be considered substantially incomplete and will not be considered for funding.
- In addition, the following documents are required; and failure to submit them will not result in removal from consideration but may result in a loss of points:
 1. Summary Data Sheet.
 2. Proposal Abstract.
- Applications must follow the formatting and technical requirements outlined in the solicitation.

(SLIDE 24)-ACCESSIBILITY

- Applicants must include funds or describe other resources available to the applicant to support activities to ensure access for individuals with disabilities, Deaf/hard of hearing individuals, and persons with limited English proficiency.

(SLIDES 25-27)-GRANTS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION PRESENTATION

- “The next couple of slides are going to focus on aspects of your application that relate to the documents that our financial team, the Grants Financial Management Division or (GFMD), reviews. More specifically, they will discuss some items that GFMD have identified from prior year applications that could help with expediting your review process, our review process.
- Now I’m going to turn the over presentation to Suheyla Lasky.

- So for today, we're going to highlight certain aspects of the pre-award risk assessment and provide you a link to a detailed webinar on how to develop the budget that's part of your application packet.
- The first things we'll highlight are the items identified in the Summary Data Sheet, which is completed by all applicants.
- Specifically, three items we'd like to discuss are the nonprofit organization requirement, the Single Audit response and the IRS three step safe harbor procedure.
- So if you're an eligible victim service provider, nonprofit organization to receive funding under this program, you're required to submit a determination letter from the IRS recognizing your tax-exempt status. OVW cannot make an award to any nonprofit organization that does not submit a 501(c)(3) determination letter. We highlight this specifically because applicants are not including this as part of their application, and this further delays our review. Please ensure that this document is included, if applicable.
- OVW requests that all applicants provide a statement as to whether they have expended \$750,000 or more in federal funds during their last fiscal year. If they have, then they indicate that on the Summary Data Sheet, and also specify the end date of their last fiscal year. However, we're finding that not, not all applicants always include this information, and they leave out whether or not they've met the threshold, or the end date of the last Fiscal year gets left off. So please ensure that this question is answered in its entirety in the Summary Data Sheet.
- So another item we'd like to highlight from the solicitation is specifically for nonprofit organizations. If you use the IRS three step safe harbor procedure to determine your executives' compensation, you must reference the additional information section that provides the required disclosure letter. We'd like to highlight that there are 4 parts of this disclosure letter that must be provided to OVW in order to comply with this requirement. The sample letter outlines all 4 parts of the disclosure, so please be sure to follow the sample and provide a response to each of the four pieces.
- The next item we'd like to discuss are the financial accounting practices, and this assists us during the pre-award risk assessment review for all applications. Each applicant must prepare a response to ALL TEN QUESTIONS, and each question has MULTIPLE PARTS.

- So we've noticed from prior years that applicants don't always fully answer all parts of each of the questions, which in turn, requires us to reach out to the applicant which then delays recommendations. Some of the most common issues that we've encountered have been, for example, in question #2, where the applicant indicates that they do indeed have internal policies and procedures, but then they don't also provide a brief list of topics that they cover in those policies and procedures. So that's a multiple part question, and one part might get left off. Another example of an incomplete response includes question#3, where the applicant doesn't provide a brief list of the summary of the organization's process for tracking expenditures, and more specifically whether or not it tracks budgeted versus actual expenditures. So they might just say oh yes, we have a process in place for tracking expenditures, but then they don't go on to explain how they track budgeted versus actual.
- So these are just a few examples, but basically, please just make sure you read each part of each question and provide a full and comprehensive response.
- So these are just some resources that we have available and they highlight various aspects that we feel might be helpful during your application process.
- The first one on the list is the "Creating a Budget" webinar, and it was a webinar that we recently created for our applicants, to hopefully mitigate any challenges that you might face when you are creating your budget, and make it clear what we review when we look through your budget, so this webinar will hopefully provide beneficial for you.
- When you click the link at the top of this slide, it will take you to a list of resources for applicants. The first section is titled "Budget Information", and it has multiple links below it, and one of them is including this webinar the "Creating a Budget," one, and another link also is for the "Sample Budget Detail Worksheet" so you're going to use those in conjunction with each other, so when you watch the webinar, make sure that you also have a copy of the "Sample Budget Detail Worksheet" so you can go through that as well. We pull a lot of examples from that sample, while we go through the webinar.
- Next up is the uniform guidance, which can be found at 2 CFR 200, then another resource is the DOJ Financial Guide, as well as the program specific solicitation. If you need assistance finding these resources, please feel free to contact our helpdesk.

- Which brings me to the last slide, with our contact information. We know this can be a lot of information to process, so if you have any questions specifically about the financial information we just discussed, please feel free to contact the GFMD helpdesk at 888-514-8556 or by email at OVW.GFMD@usdoj.gov.

(SLIDE 28)-MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)/LETTERS OF SUPPORT

- The MOU is a document containing the terms of the partnership and the roles and responsibilities between two or more parties.
- The MOU must be a single document and must be signed and dated by the Authorized Representative of each proposed partner organization during the development of the application.
- An MOU can include multiple signature pages so long as each page includes the names and titles of all signatories to the MOU.
- MOU's missing signatures may result in a point deduction or removal from consideration, particularly if the MOU is missing the signature of a required partner.

(SLIDE 29)-ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION

- The following forms will be generated and completed during the application submission process:
 - Application for Federal Assistance, or the SF-424.
 - Standard Assurances and Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Form 4061/6).
 - Financial Capability questionnaire (if applicable).
 - Confidentiality Notice Form.
 - Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation (if applicable).
 - Pre-Award Risk Assessment.
 - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
 - Letter of Nonsupplanting.

(SLIDE 30)-REGISTRATION AND SUBMISSION

- 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 13, 2020**, as the process to register for DUNS and SAM is extremely 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 as soon as possible if you haven't already done so. The registration process is not one that can be completed quickly, it takes time – *days* – and you should begin this process as soon as possible. Every year we have a handful of applicants that didn't make the deadline because they were delinquent with their SAM and/or Grants.Gov registration.
- All applications will be submitted through Grants.gov. If you need any assistance, you can go to the Grants.Gov Applicant Support Hotline at 1-800 518-4726.

(SLIDE 31)-SUBMISSION DEADLINES

- Applications are due by 11:59 pm ET on Monday, January 27, 2020.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin the application submission process at least 48 hours before the application deadline.
- REMINDER: Applicants must obtain a DUNS Number, register online with the SAM system and Grants.gov. Letters of Intent are optional, but should be submitted no later than January 13th.

(SLIDE 32)-OVW POLICY ON DUPLICATE APPLICATIONS

- Applicants should only submit one application per program. If an applicant submits multiple versions of an application, OVW will review the most recent version submitted.

(SLIDE 33)-OVW POLICY ON LATE SUBMISSIONS

- OVW offers several options for an applicant to provide advance notice of a delayed application. An applicant's request to submit an application after the deadline will be considered by OVW if all of the steps are followed, these steps are listed on pages 20-22 of the solicitation.
- 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.

(SLIDE 34)–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.
- Applications will be scored based upon the quality of the response, capacity of the applicant, and any partners 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.

(SLIDE 35)-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, and will include instructions on accepting 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.

(SLIDE 36)-APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Please use the Application Checklist on page 28 of the solicitation. Did you address all of the criteria that will be rated?
- Did you include each of the required documents (Project Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet & Narrative, Memorandum of Understanding/Letter of Support, Delivery of

Legal Assistance Certification letter (if applicable), and Rural Eligibility Documentation) in your application packet?

- Did you review the deadline (January 27, 2020) and submit your application ON TIME?
- Please make sure your Point of Contact (POC) listed in grants.gov is responsive to emails and alerts.

(SLIDE 37)-HELPFUL HINTS

- Here are a few helpful tips to improve your chances of becoming a Rural Program grant recipient:
- READ the entire solicitation;
- Start preparing the application early;
- Attend to technical details;
- Use headings to identify each section;
- Keep your audience in mind;
- Be organized and logical;
- Identifying the problem to be addressed;
- Print out final documents and carefully proofread and review your application to ensure accuracy and completion;
- Be careful in the use of attachment;
- Limit use of acronyms; and
- Points of Contact must monitor their inbox for messages from Grants.gov.

(SLIDE 38)-CONTACT INFORMATION

- If you have any questions or concerns, please get ahold of the Rural Unit at (202) 307-6026, and ask for a member of the Rural Unit.
- You can send questions to the OVW Rural email box at ovw.rural@usdoj.gov.

(SLIDE 39)-THANK YOU

- Thank you so much for listening to the FY 2020 Rural Pre-Application Listening Session, and good luck to each and every one of you during your application process.