

OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
RESOURCE GUIDE ON COVID-19
APRIL 30, 2020

Introduction

The Office on Violence Against Women knows that the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States is having a dire effect on all Americans, but victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are uniquely burdened by this crisis. You have shared with us the heartbreaking stories of survivors who are desperately seeking help in this new reality, and your heroic efforts to invent new ways to meet their needs. We hear you. OVW is doing everything we can to help you help survivors by granting administrative flexibilities in our grant programs within our existing authority.

As is always the case, however, you are in the best position to understand the unique challenges facing your clients and your organizations, and to identify possible solutions. As this situation evolves, so much is dictated by local circumstances, and we urge you to continue to work with your local and state authorities to provide the life-saving services that you do day in and day out.

OVW has developed this Resource Guide to help you answer some of your most pressing questions about your obligations and options regarding how to operate, provide services, and manage OVW grants.

Employment and Operations

Many of you have asked questions about employment and operations in the face of changing workloads and workplaces. The following resources are designed to help answer questions about paying salaries, granting leave, ensuring workplace safety, managing job duties, and complying with workplace antidiscrimination laws.

- [OVW COVID-19 FAQs for OVW Grantees Regarding the Payment and Use of Leave for Grant-Funded Staff](#)
- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- [The U.S. Department of Labor COVID-19 and the American Workplace](#)
- [The CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators and Leaders of Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to COVID-19](#)
- [The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws.](#)

As your agency and your partners reevaluate your operations in response to the pandemic, we offer the following tips:

- Assess the need to deliver services in-person, and determine what activities may be delivered remotely.
- Follow your existing policies regarding telework, If you do not have a telework policy, develop one and train your staff accordingly,
- Follow your existing policies regarding sick leave, administrative leave, vacation time, and time and attendance. If necessary, update leave policies to address leave in the case of unexpected or extraordinary circumstances. You may wish to provide a refresher training to staff on these policies.
- Remember that policies regarding telework, sick leave, administrative leave, vacation time, and time and attendance must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the nondiscrimination provision in the Violence Against Women Act. This may require employers to make exceptions to telework or leave policies in response to requests for reasonable accommodations.
- Update the contact information of all your staff and the staff of your partners, and develop procedures for communicating about your project activities.
- Inventory the equipment and communication devices that are currently issued to staff, and assess if you should redistribute this equipment among staff or purchase additional or upgraded equipment for staff.
- Consult CDC guidance and coordinate with state and local health officials on best practices regarding personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizing workplaces, and other methods to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Services and Advocacy

Many of you have asked questions about how to continue serving survivors during this crisis. OVW Technical Assistance (TA) providers are working diligently to help grantees strategize about how continue to provide high quality support and advocacy to survivors. The National Center for Juvenile and Family Court Judges is consolidating this information at its OVW-funded TA Providers Resource Center, TA2TA. Please check the TA2TA website regularly for webinars and other technical assistance materials on how to provide remote support and advocacy, ensure accessibility for Deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors and survivors with disabilities, provide legal and medical advocacy under state social distancing mandates, adapt shelter protocols in consideration of public health, and other topics that may help your programs during this pandemic. If you have specific questions, please reach out to your program specialist or your TA provider.

Below are some general resources that may be particularly useful for OVW recipients, including shelter providers, tribal governments, and law enforcement agencies:

- [CDC Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Screening Clients at Entry to Homeless Shelters](#)
- [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Infectious Disease Toolkit for Continuums of Care: Preventing and Managing the Spread of Infectious Disease Within Shelters](#)
- [Indian Health Service \(IHS\) FAQs on Federal Response to COVID-19 in Indian Country](#)

- [IHS Resources for COVID-19 in Indian Country](#)
- [CDC What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know About COVID-19](#)

OVW recipients are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, disability, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. This means that recipients should continue to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs by persons who are limited in the English proficiency because of their national origin. Recipients must also ensure that all services are accessible to persons with disabilities, including providing effective communication to people with communication disabilities.

Grants Management

If your organization has an open OVW award, has submitted an application for an FY 2020 funding opportunity, or is planning on submitting an application to an FY 2020 open solicitation and your organizations has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are several resources available to help you:

- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Additional Flexibilities for the STOP Formula Program](#)
- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Guidance to Award Recipients Impacted by COVID-19: Short-term Relief for Various Administrative, Financial Management and Audit Requirements](#)
- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Monitoring, Conferences, Grants Extensions, Progress Reports, and Solicitations](#)
- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Relief from GANs for Personnel Policies](#)

Please direct specific questions about an open award to your OVW program specialist or to OVW's GFMD at OVW.GFMD@usdoj.gov or 888-514-8556. OVW is committed to working with you to provide as much flexibility as allowed by our governing authorities. OVW has already extended our open solicitations and does not anticipate any further extensions to the remaining solicitations currently posted on the website. However, if there are any additional changes to these deadlines, they will be posted [here](#).