Transcript - Completing the FY22 TVSSA Program Checklist on Your Own: What You Need to Know

Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. Welcome to the webinar Completing the Fiscal Year 2022 Tribal Victim Services Set Aside Program Checklist on Your Own-- What You Need to Know, presented by the Office for Victims of Crime. My name is Roicia Banks, and I'll be moderating for you today. Thank you for joining us, and I will now turn the time over to our panel from the Office for Victims of Crime, Miss Bonnie.

All right. Thank you, Roicia Joining us today in the webinar with me is Kimberly Woodard and Tanya Miller. So once again, welcome. So our goal for this afternoon is to highlight the simplest and most effective way to complete the checklist on your own.

We'll start by examining why OVC has offered checklist options, how OVC uses the checklist information, what makes a good checklist, and which sections of the checklist are the most important Thanks to all who have taken the time to introduce yourselves in the chat, and we want to make this webinar as interactive as possible.

So we've created opportunities for you all to comment, share your options and your opinions, and ask questions as we proceed. As we start to break down the checklist, you will have an opportunity to weigh in using the chat feature. If you have questions as we go along, please enter them into the chat. As Roicia mentioned, we also have time reserved at the end of today's presentation to answer questions.

Fox Valley Technical College sent copies of the handout for today's webinar to all those who registered prior to the start of the webinar. And we recommend that you have the handouts available, as well as a blank copy of the fiscal year '22 checklist so that you can take notes. If you don't have copies of those documents handy, you can download them from the chat.

So let's get started. So we're going to start with the overview. OVC first introduced a checklist option in the fiscal year '21 Tribal Victim Services Set Aside program funding cycle. We did so because we anticipated that some applicants would have challenges completing a traditional 20-page program narrative due to staffing shortages and other problems created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We had a good response to the checklist option in fiscal year '21, and quite a few applicants chose to submit checklists. However, as OVC staff reviewed the checklist last year, we noticed that some applicants provided too little information and detail for OVC to figure out the specifics of the program.

To address these issues for fiscal year '22, OVC made changes to the solicitation and the checklist and scheduled this webinar to simplify the checklist, provide additional guidance to applicants, and provide and improve the quality of the checklist that applicants complete on their own. Ideally, the checklist that you complete on your own should be short and to the point and give our staff enough information so that we can fulfill our administrative and oversight responsibilities.

OVC is charged with administering the funds from the Federal Crime Victims Fund. One of our primary tasks in carrying out that responsibility is to ensure that the funds are used for the purposes that Congress intended and that they are being put to good use. This slide illustrates how we do that using the four major sections of the checklist.

When OVC reviews a program narrative or a checklist, we are evaluating quite a few things, including whether the proposed project is limited to activities that are allowable under the TVSSA program, is achievable, meaning that the proposed human and other resources and timelines are sufficient to achieve the project goals, has adequately considered the barriers to success and make plans to address them. If not, we make note of any potential TTA that might be needed and includes a plan for collecting and reporting the required performance measurement data.

This is the data that we use to demonstrate to Congress and others that the Set Aside program is effective in fulfilling Congress's intent in authorizing the program. Without it, it could be impossible for OVC to justify the continued need for the program.

Throughout today's presentation, you'll hear the term good enough. What we mean when we say good enough is that the checklist content is short and simple but provides just enough detail to allow OVC to fulfill its duties. A good enough checklist is one that answers the questions fully and clearly and is consistent with the itemized budget.

OVC does not expect every applicant to execute the checklist perfectly. Rather, our goal is to get enough information to answer the basic questions about the project. Who, who will be served sort of by the project? What, what will the applicant do with the funding? When, what's the project period and the timeline? Where, where will the services be provided, in a private office, at a crime scene, or someplace else? Why, why is this project necessary right now? And how, how will the applicant collect and report on TVSSA performance measurements?

We encourage you to use handout number two, "How to Create a Good Enough Checklist," to evaluate your checklist once you have completed it. If your checklist response satisfactorily answers each of the questions on the handout, then it's good enough.

Because our goal is to have everyone complete a good enough checklist, we're going to focus the remainder of our time today on just three sections of the checklist, the description of the issue, goals and objectives, and the timeline. If you pay enough attention to these three sections, you will have a good enough checklist. I'm now going to turn things over to Tanya, who will guide us through our first exercise.

So now we've come to our first exercise, you'll need handouts 1, 1A, B for this section. If you do not have a copy of it, you can download it from the chat feature.

All right, so thanks, everyone, for sharing your thoughts. We're now going to take a look at some of the problems with this example. Let's start with the information about the applicant's geographic location.

The information here is confusing. There are two data points specific to tribal members under the age of 18, but the applicant closes the section with a statement that elders are an underserved population. The applicant does not provide any specific details about its current victim services, making it difficult to assess whether the applicant has enough experience and human resources to carry out its proposed project.

The information that the applicant provides about its current needs and challenges is not consistent with the demographic information above. Whether they'd like to serve youth and/or elders in particular or the general population is unclear. The applicant's failure to include information about how it will address the challenges and barriers hampers OVC's ability to assess whether the proposed project is achievable.

Here we'll find more conflicting information about who will be served by the project. There is no demographic detail about the elder population and the geographic description of the community to be served. And finally, the answers to what forms of crime victimization will the project address further confuses the focus of the project by stating that the funds will be used to address child abuse, property crimes, elder abuse, none of which identified as needs or challenges facing the community.

Now we'll take a look at good enough responses for the section by reviewing handout 1B. The first thing we noticed was a good enough response to the description of the geographic location is that the demographic data sets the stage. This is a project about elder abuse.

This is further emphasized by just one sentence, which lets the reader know that elders are at risk for abuse because of their dependence on younger family members who are struggling financially. In just four sentences, the applicant has given OVC enough information to do its job.

The applicant also provides critical information about its current victim services program. This lets OVC know how much experience the grantee has with providing services and enables OVC to assess the applicant's capacity to expand the project.

The applicant's first sentence description of its current needs and challenges are rich with details that can be expanded on in other sections of the checklist. They also establish the link between the information in the geographic description section and make it clear that this is a project about elder abuse.

We all see one sentence description of how the applicant will use the funding to address the challenges. These responses are short and have great details that can be further explained in subsequent sections of the checklist and illustrates to OVC that the applicant has a good understanding of how to address elder abuse at a systemic level.

The applicant responses to who will be served by the project and what forms of crime victimization will address the project are consistent with one another and reemphasizes that the project that is clear about elder abuse.

Let's take a look at the questions and comments that have been coming through the chat. Roicia are you able to read the comments out loud?

Yes. I have a one question from Miss Debbie, and she is saying, "If we are doing an interview for the narrative, we will be asked these checklist questions. Is that correct?"

Yes, that is correct.

OK. And so far, it seems like that is the only question.

OK. OK, thank you for that. All right, so let's close out this section by summarizing what makes a good enough description of the issue. This slide summarized what a good enough description of the issue section should include. Always keep it narrowly focused on the project that you'd like OVC to fund and make sure that all of the sections logically flow from this one.

Thank you, Tanya. The goals and objectives are the meat and potatoes of the community description section of the checklist, and we're going to spend the next several minutes talking about what they are and how to create them. This slide includes the distinction between a goal and an objective.

The goal tells the reader what you want to accomplish, and the objectives or your roadmap. They explain how you will achieve the goals. Both goals and objectives should be outcome-focused. And you've probably heard a lot about SMART goals, and they're considered by some to be the gold standard when it comes to writing project goals and objectives.

SMART goals are helpful in helping both you and OVC in assessing the progress that you've made in developing and implementing your project. This slide breaks down the SMART acronym and gives you questions that you can use to help you write SMART goals.

Now we're at our first exercise for this section. Here you will see a sample goal. We've rated it not quite good enough, because it is too broadly stated. It's also missing key SMART criteria.

It's not specific. We don't know why this is a goal or who needs to be included in the effort. Measurable, we don't know how many victims of elder abuse are being served now or might be served in the future.

Achievable, there's no indication of whether the applicant has the skills and resources to pull this off. Relevant, it's unclear why this goal is needed right now. Time-bound, there's time period specified to achieve the goal.

How would you rewrite this goal to make it SMART? Let's take a few minutes to record your response in the chat.

OK, well, thanks to everyone who responded in the chat. Now let's take a look at how you could make this into a SMART goal. OK, share in the chat why do you think this goal is good enough based on the SMART goal principles by entering responses in the chat. We'll give it about a minute or two.

OK. Thank you for everyone for who has entered their information into the chat. So why is this good enough? It's specific. It explains what the applicant wants to accomplish, increasing the number of elder abuse victims served annually.

It specifies who needs to be included in the victim services program. It states the timeline for accomplishing the goal, 36 months. And it explains why this goal-- the needs assessment, why this is a goal. The needs assessment shows that the program may be under serving victims of elder abuse.

Measurable, it explains how success can be measured, increasing the number of victims served annually from 10 to 25. The applicant can measure success by whether it accomplishes the goal of serving 75 victims, and the applicant can also periodically measure progress by examining whether it is serving 25 victims a year.

Achievable. It's not clear based on this information whether this goal is achievable. Technically, the SMART goal is not perfect. But again, we're looking for good enough, not perfect.

Relevant. There is evidence from the recent needs assessment that the Victim Services program is not meeting demand for services. Time-bound. The goal anticipates an overall annual increase in the number of victims served at modest and realistic increased rate of just over one new client a month.

Good objectives are SMART, just like goals. They tend to be quantifiable, or measurable, and they identify a specific result that's related to the stated goal. They are feasible because it can be realistically achieved during the award period.

They should also identify associated activities or tasks that need to be completed before the objective can be implemented. What objectives might you propose for this goal? Please take a couple of minutes to enter your responses in the chat.

OK, thanks to everyone who responded. And now let's see what some potential objectives for this goal might be. These objectives are good enough because they are quantifiable. We know the applicant will hire one FTE advocate, print and distribute 1,200 brochures, host two quarterly community outreach events, and place quarterly ads in the tribal newspaper.

Outcome-focused. They are all geared towards a goal of increasing the number of victims of elder abuse served annually from 10 to 25. They identify specific results. The applicant will have additional human resources, outreach events, printed materials, training, and written protocols.

They describe associated activities. The activities associated with the goals have been summarized in a way that's easy to understand. The summary demonstrates that the applicant has considered other required activities and must be completed in order to achieve the objectives, such as advertising and interviewing candidates for the advocate position and obtaining prior approval from OVC on its written publications before they are published.

Now let's close out this section on goals and objectives. In order for your goals and objectives to be good enough, they need to pick up on the focus of the project that you establish in your description of the community section. The goals and objectives should match your needs and challenges and address the target population for this project. They should also be consistent with your project timeline.

OVC strongly encourages you to periodically revisit your goals and objectives during the award period. If you're using SMART goals and objectives then you should be able to easily evaluate whether you are meeting the milestones that you have created for yourself. If you're not meeting those milestones, you should consider revising the goals and objectives of your project.

For example, if you are not meeting your goal of increasing the number of elder abuse victims you were serving from 10 to 25 each year, then you should consider why. If you need to change course, or if you need help thinking through what's not working, that's where OVC and the TTA providers can help.

Now I'm going to turn things over to Kimberly, who will close out our presentation with a demonstration of how to complete a good enough project timeline using the checklist template.

Thanks, Bonnie. For this, our third and final section today, you will need a copy of hand out number 3, "How to Generate a Project Timeline." OVC is suggesting applicants use a five-step process to prepare a project timeline. It starts with reviewing your objectives and related activities, then deciding which order and award year of the project period that you'd like to start or complete the objective or activity, as well as who will be responsible for the implementation.

Once you have written out the details of how you will accomplish steps two and three, you can copy and paste them into the timeline that is included as part of the checklist. If the activity will reoccur, then copy and paste it into the remaining quarters of the timeline. So I am now going to give us a look at what this might look like if you do it yourself.

So we're going to work on adding the activities associated with this goal to the timeline template. In the interest of time, I have already outlined the activities that need to be added to the timeline. One way-- so we'll start in step two here. One way to organize activities as part of the step is by the order in which they would need to occur.

For example, one of the Set Aside program's special conditions requires grantees to submit any documents or other materials that will be created with grant funds for publication or public distribution to your assigned OVC grant manager at least 60 days prior to the planned dissemination. Please keep that 60-day requirement in mind as you plan your project timeline so that you give yourself enough time for OVC to review and approve your documents before they are published or shared with others.

In this case, if we assume that the elder advocate will be responsible for creating the content for the ads and brochures, we want to give the new hire a reasonable amount of time to create that content. So perhaps we would have her start on that in the second quarter of year one.

That would give the person up to 90 days to create it and submit it to OVC once she has started, once he or she has started. We know that OVC will need up to 60 days to review and approve the material, so we might not want to plan to start placing the ads and distributing the brochure until the following quarter. Come here and save. I'm going to start this maybe in the third quarter of year one.

Make sure you give yourself enough time to accomplish more complicated involved tasks. For example, it could take six months to develop the written response, referral, and screening protocol. And if the elder advocate is tasked with coordinating that effort, it may be realistic to submit the draft protocol to your OVC grant manager towards the end of the first year of the project. So for this activity, perhaps we would start that in the fourth quarter.

Now that we've settled on the time frame to launch each activity associated with the goals and objectives, we can move on to step three, deciding who will be responsible for each activity. So in step three, the most efficient means of making the identification is by position and job title in the timeline. Might take up too much space to type out someone's full name, or if the position is vacant and doesn't make sense to add a name.

For some activities, you may want to include a consultant to assist with the work. For example, you may want to hire a consultant with subject matter expertise to train the health center and elder program staff on how to identify elder abuse.

So we would come here to this activity about training. And we would add a training consultant. And if you don't know who that is at this point, that's fine. You could just put TBD. You may also want to split responsibilities between more than one person. For example, you may want the elder advocate to facilitate the development of the written protocols, but you may also want to hire a consultant to assist with actually writing them.

So here we might put elder advocate. Now we're ready to add these activities to the timeline itself. So here we have a version of the timeline template that's in the checklist for this year. In the interest of time, again, I've already added most of the activities to the timeline, but I do want to highlight a couple of features of this timeline before we get started with what's been added.

Keep in mind that this template that's part of the checklist is based on a 36-month award period. However, if you are proposing a project that is less than or more than 36 months, you can fill it out partially to reflect activities that will not take a complete 36 months to complete, or you can add a second page to it to reflect more than 36 months of activity if that's what you need to do.

It also has included in it already the submission of required regular and final quarterly financial and performance measurement reports, as well as your semi-annual program progress reports. Again, you can address this information as needed to accurately reflect your own project timeline if you're planning a project that is less than or more than 36 months.

So if you recall in step five, the suggestion is that you can copy and paste-- you use the copy and paste future to complete the timeline. And looking at the activities that are scheduled to take place for this project, there are two that should be repeated. And those two are placing ads in the newspaper and distributing at least 100 brochures per quarter and also participating in two community outreach events.

So assuming that the same individual will be responsible for carrying out these activities for the remainder of the reward period, you can simply just copy and paste this information again and again without typing it so that you complete your timeline in a pretty fast and effective manner.

So this method works if you've already pre-populated. It works best if you've already pre-populated your checklist with information about activities that kind of a one off thing, things that you are going to do just once. Then that makes it easier to go back through and just use a copy and paste feature to add in everything else because, again, these are activities you're going to be repeating through the award period, and there's no need to type them more.

Once you are finished adding in the one-time activities in the recurring activities, your timeline should be complete. And I am going to turn things over again to Roicia with Fox Valley to lead us through the question and answer period. Roicia I'll let you guide us through this last bit.

OK, all right. So I have Miss Christine. "So if I use grant money to get brochures printed, put articles in the paper, et cetera, do I send those to my grant advisor?"

Yes, again, if you were using grant money to create, meaning you are creating the content for the brochures, and you're creating the content for the ads, and/or you're using the grant money to print that information, then yes, you would need to submit that ahead of time to your OVC grant manager. Just keep in mind that whenever you print something with grant funds, you need to put the standard OVC disclaimer on it. You can also find that in the special conditions on your award.

OK. And then I am going to jump to Kim Goodbear. I see that you have your hand up.

I just wanted to make it clear. All the questions we had somebody to ask before about all the questions that are on there we do in the interview. If we agree to the interview, when will that be set up?

OK, so the deadline to request an interview is on the 19th, so it's on a couple of days. So I believe once we have all those requests in, then we will need to sit down and schedule those, and someone will contact you with the information about the date and the time and how to access the interview.

I see there was also a question about how you might use the questions on the checklist to prepare for an interview. That's a very good question. What we want you to do is to take a look at the checklist, sit down, and think through what it is you might like to do with the funding. The better organized you can come to the interview, the more smoothly it will flow.

So if you haven't had a chance to sit down with all those who will be involved in the interview process on your end to talk through how you might want to use your funding for FY '22, now's a good time to do that. But if you come in, and you have your information organized about what you'd like to do, that will make that process a lot smoother.

Thank you.

Thank you. I have-- I likely missed this information-- this is from Julia, "Do all expenses need to be pre-approved or just written outreach material?"

So the documents that you would need are the materials that you would to submit to OVC for prior approval to your grant manager is going to be anything that is published. So that could be anything from a brochure to a billboard or a pamphlet or standard operating procedures for your program. Anything like that, any type of tangible product that's going to be printed with grant funds needs to come in, content needs to come in ahead of time for a prior review and approval.

It also applies to audiovisual materials that you might be creating. So if you're planning on using your funding to create a video or website, again, you want to get that content approved by your grant manager before you finalize anything. So we asked for a 60-day lead time.

However, there are circumstances where we may not be able to get you a response in a timely manner. You may need to talk to your individual grant manager about that if they aren't able to get you a timely response. The one thing you should always do, however, is to include the standard disclaimer on anything that is created with grant funding.

So just make sure you have the disclaimer on it and work with your grant manager on getting the prior approval. If you have questions about whether or not you need prior approval, definitely contact your grant manager and ask.

OK. I have also from Miss Christine, "Where can I find the standard OVC disclaimer for me to use?"

Again, it should be in one of the special conditions on your award agreement. If it's not, there is a web page that you can go to that-- if you Google OVC publications, that's probably the easiest way to find it. But you can also find it on that web page. There's a disclaimer that's a little bit different for printed materials versus audiovisual or websites, but both disclaimers are on that website.

And if we can get that information on the webinar, we might drop it into the chat. Otherwise just contact your grant manager if you can't find it.

OK. And then I have another from Miss Colette. "Is there a Word version of the project checklist? The PDF format doesn't allow for the responsive areas to expand, and the font gets progressively smaller, almost too small to read when entering information for some of the responses."

OK. So that's something that we can look into. I think right now, what we have available on our website is a global PDF version. But if it is buggy or if other people are having problems using it, we can try to explore putting up a Word version that might make it easier for folks to manipulate. But we'll look into that.

Miss Linda says, she agrees with the Word version of the checklist. They have run into the same issue. So it does sound like it is a little problematic for them.

OK, so that's helpful feedback for us to know. And like I said, we will look into trying to get out a Word version of it to folks. It looks like there's also someone with a raised hand.

You're up, miss Melanie.

So it had just come to my attention that there's three programs. And I don't know where you-- I'm looking online that had applied within the tribe for this same grant. So just kind of looking at this right now, who do I need to contact? I know our program and then victim assistance and then I think our women's shelter had applied, too. So there must have been a miscommunication somewhere.

Is this all with the-- is this all for fiscal year 2022?

I'm looking here. Oh, I see. OK, that's 2023. OK, never mind. I was looking at the wrong page. I apologize.

OK, that's OK. But if you have questions or need help with finding your grant manager at OVC, definitely let us know. We can try to help. We'll get you connected to the right person.

OK, thank you.

Well, this concludes our webinar today. Thank you to our panel, Kimberly, Bonnie, and Tanya from the Office for Victims of Crime for sharing this information with us. And thank you to our attendees for joining us today. We hope that you can join us again for future webinars. Thank you, and have a wonderful day.