

OVC FY25 Services for Victims of Human Trafficking Notice of Funding Opportunity Webinar Transcript

Serena Roche: Hello everyone. Today's pre-application webinar for the OVC Fiscal Year 2025 Services for Victims of Human Trafficking Notice of Funding Opportunity will be presented by OVC Grants Management Specialists, Darian Hanrahan and Jalila Sebbata, and will provide an overview of one of their available grants. Thank you for watching. Now, let's turn things over to Darian and Jalila.

Darian Hanrahan: Thanks. So welcome again to the OVC Fiscal 2025 Services for Victims of Human Trafficking. Notice of Funding Opportunity, or NOFO, Pre-Application Information Session. As stated, your presenters today are myself, Darian Hanrahan, a grants management specialist within OVC's Human Trafficking Division. And I am joined by my colleague, Jalila Sebbata.

In this recorded webinar, we will talk about the Office of Justice Programs or OJP; OVC and OVC's mission; the NOFO, including the funding opportunity focus, eligibility, and required documents. Then, we will talk about the application process and resources. It will be helpful if you are following along with the NOFO and taking notes to help when you are submitting your application by the deadline.

The Office of Justice Programs, or OJP, provides grant funding, training, resources, and statistics to the criminal justice community. OJP is one of three grant-making components of the Department of Justice, along with the Office on Violence Against Women, or OVW, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, or COPS.

The Office for Victims of Crime—which is part of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, or OJP—administers the Crime Victims Fund, which is financed by fines and penalties from convictions in federal cases and not from tax dollars. This funding supports formula programs to states, territories, and Tribes, as well as many OVC discretionary grants programs for victims of crime. OVC raises awareness of crime victims' issues and supports programs that assist all victims in the aftermath of crime. The office provides leadership and funding for providing critical direct services, analyzing emergent needs and existing gaps in victim services, identifying and replicating best practices, and implementing data-driven and technical innovations in victim services.

Now, I'll provide an overview of the notice of funding opportunity, or NOFO. Here are some details regarding the funding opportunity. This information is also contained in

the NOFO. Please be sure to pay attention to the two listed deadlines and I will talk more about the deadlines later in the presentation.

There are two categories for this NOFO. Category 1: Developing Capacity to Serve Human Trafficking Victims and Category 2: Services for Victims of Human Trafficking. Both categories have a performance start date of July 1st, 2026, and a performance duration of 36 months. The categories have different competition IDs and anticipated award ceiling amounts. I will talk more about the categories on the next slide.

Applicants are responsible for determining which NOFO category or categories they choose to apply under. An applicant may submit more than one application within a category, if each application proposes a different project in response to the NOFO. Additionally, an applicant may submit an application under more than one category if each application proposes a different project in response to the specific category. Also, an entity may be proposed as a subrecipient in more than one application. This funding opportunity and awards under this funding opportunity are subject to the availability of funding and any changes or additional requirements that may be imposed by the agency or by law.

As stated earlier, this NOFO has two funding categories and will develop, expand, and strengthen victim service programs for victims of human trafficking, as defined by 22 U.S.C. § 7102(11). This program is intended for victim services programs serving adults, or a combination of adults and minors and youths. This program provides funding for comprehensive and specialized services for victims of all forms of human trafficking in the United States and its territories.

This NOFO has two funding categories. Category 1: Developing Capacity to Serve Human Trafficking Victims. Awards under this category will support victim service organizations that have limited or no prior experience in serving victims of human trafficking and/or victim service organizations that have limited or no prior experience in receiving direct federal funding to serve victims of human trafficking.

Category 2: Service for Humans Trafficking Victims. Awards under this category will be made to victim service organizations with a demonstrated history of serving human trafficking victims with either a comprehensive range of direct services or specialized services targeted at the unique needs of human trafficking victims.

As a note for all categories, applicants should address how they will be prepared to serve survivors of all types of human trafficking, including both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Please see the appendix in the NOFO for types of services that OVC funds.

This program is intended for victim service programs serving adults, or a combination of adults and minors and youth. Entities proposing to provide services primarily or solely to minors should apply under OVC's Fiscal Year 2025 Integrated Services for Minor Victims of Human Trafficking Program.

While applicants may propose to support some housing services as part of a plan to provide comprehensive services, applicants proposing to provide services primarily focused on shelter and housing—for example, more than half of the budget is allocated for housing services or housing-focused personnel—should apply under OVC's Fiscal Year 2025 Housing Assistance for Victims of Human Trafficking Program.

To be considered for FY2025 funding, all entities that have current OVC anti-trafficking awards with project periods that will overlap with the proposed project must clearly describe how the proposed project would differ from or expand upon their existing OVC-funded projects. For example, applicants could propose to serve a different geographic area or provide a new service to meet the needs of victims of human trafficking.

While applicants may apply for an amount up to the maximum level of funding allowed under each category, they should demonstrate sustained rates of individuals served or service expenses that merit the requested level of funding.

Eligibility requirements are detailed in the NOFO starting on page 7. Please be sure to confirm that your entity is eligible to apply in your desired application category.

While there are two separate categories for this NOFO, the overall goal of this program is to increase the quality and availability of services available to support victims of human trafficking by funding national, state, and local victim service organizations.

There are five program objectives. Please note that your application should address all listed program objectives. Objective 1: Increase the types of programs available to serve various types of human trafficking victims. Objective 2: Expand types of services provided. Objective 3: Train individuals to respond to human trafficking. Objective 4: Develop protocols and procedures to address sex and labor trafficking. And Objective 5: Enhance the capacity of the field to provide quality victim services.

OJP anticipates that funding through this initiative will support the development, expansion, or strengthening of victim service programs serving human trafficking victims. Specific objectives include providing comprehensive services to meet the individualized needs of victims of trafficking, collaborating with and providing training for local partners to ensure that trafficking victims are properly identified and referred

for appropriate services, and assisting with or referring human trafficking victims to other essential services.

OJP will provide priority consideration to applicants that propose projects designed to advance the goals listed in the slide and in the NOFO. Applicants seeking priority consideration should specify in the proposal narrative and in the budget detail form, if applicable, which of the following goals the project is intended to advance and how it will do so. Please note that addressing these priority areas is one of many factors that OJP considers in making funding decisions. Receiving priority consideration for one or more priority areas does not guarantee funding an award. Please consult the NOFO for more information on these priorities.

OJP will require each award recipient to submit regular performance reports that communicate progress towards achieving the goals and objectives identified in the program goals and objectives of this NOFO. Applicants can visit OJP's performance measurement page at OJP.gov/performance for more information on performance measurement activities. Applicants selected for an award will receive further guidance on post-award reporting processes.

Activities listed here are out of the program scope and will not be funded. Please be sure to review this guidance carefully as you prepare your application. Additionally, as you prepare your application, be sure to refer to the budget detail form for further information on allowable and unallowable costs that may inform the development of your project design.

Here are additional activities that are out of the program scope and will not be funded. Again, please be sure to review this guidance carefully as you prepare your application.

All awards made under this NOFO will be made as grants. This NOFO requires a 25-percent match based on the total project cost. Federal funds awarded under the NOFO may not cover more than 75 percent of the total cost of the project being funded.

Match means the portion not paid by federal funds or contributions. Items provided as part of the match must support the fulfillment of proposed activities, be allowable costs under this funding opportunity, and have documentation of their value. The match may not be used for and may not consist of costs that are unallowable for this funding opportunity. Recipients must satisfy the match requirements with cash and/or "in-kind" contributions. "In-kind" contributions may be in the form of services, supplies, real property, and/or equipment. Please consult the NOFO and Application Resource Guide for more guidance on the match requirements and how to calculate the match amount.

Now I will pass things over to my Colleague, Jalila, to talk about the application content.

Jalila Sebbata: Thank you, Darian. The next few slides will discuss what to include in your application. To be considered for funding, your application must include the SF-424, submitted in Grants.gov, as well as a proposal narrative, and budget detail forms submitted in JustGrants. I will talk more about the proposal narrative and budget detail form in the next few slides.

Your application must include a proposal narrative that follows all formatting and content requirements, as detailed in the NOFO. The narrative should be double spaced, use the standard 12-point font, have no less than 1-inch margins, not exceed 20 numbered pages, and be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants. If the proposal narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, OVC may consider such non-compliance in peer review and in final award decisions. Tables, charts, and graphs may be included in the proposal narrative and can be created in legible fonts smaller than 12 points. These items will count towards the page limit.

Your proposal narrative must include the four sections listed here and their merit review criteria. The sections are Description of Need, Project Goals and Objectives, Project Design and Implementation, and Capabilities and Competencies. Your application will be evaluated for technical merit based on how your proposed project addresses these criteria. An additional 5 percent will be assessed through your budget and associated documentation.

In the first section of the proposal narrative, you will identify the issue or problem you wish to address with this project. Using supporting information and data, you will need to demonstrate the needs' impact on the target population and how it relates to the purpose of the NOFO.

Here are a few more elements to include in the Description of the Need section of your application. These include a description of previous or current attempts to address the problem within the targeted geographic area. At a minimum, applicants must identify the total number of victims they previously served within the targeted geographic area and the types of victims they have served (sex and labor trafficking victims). Applicants must cite the sources of this data. Information that demonstrates existing and sustained victim service rates, caseloads, and expenses align with the requested level of funding and an explanation of how the proposed project is not duplicative of current efforts to address the service needs of trafficking survivors in the geographic area. Please be sure to address all elements listed for this section in the NOFO.

In the second section of your proposal narrative, you will identify your project goals and objectives and how these address the purpose of the NOFO. Please describe how the project goals and objectives relate to the goals and objectives of the NOFO and explain how the proposed project will enhance the community's response to trafficking.

The third section of your proposal narrative should be the Project Design and Implementation section. Here, you will detail the project activities that will help you meet your goals and objectives identified in Section 2.

Here are additional elements to include in the Project Design and Implementation section of your application. These include what deliverables, reports, and other items will be produced as part of the project. If the applicant plans to use sub-recipients or project partners to help conduct the project, please name them if they are known, or describe how the application will identify them. Please describe their role in conducting project activities. How the applicant plans to ensure project activities are trauma-informed and protect the safety and confidentiality needs of victims. How the applicant will meet the individualized service needs of victims and support victim-informed decisions and autonomy within the delivery of services. How the applicant will coordinate with community partners and stakeholders, including other OVC and federally and State-funded anti-trafficking programs, to meet the needs of trafficking victims, if funded. Please be sure to include all of these items in your application.

The final section of your proposal narrative should detail the capabilities and competencies that you bring to successfully complete your proposed project.

Here are a few additional elements to include in the Capabilities and Competencies section of your application. These include: For services or activities that are proposed to be conducted by project partners receiving subawards or provided as match by other organizations, the applicant must submit a corresponding MOU or letter of intent outlining the work to be conducted. A summary of relevant experience of team members with key responsibilities for implementing the project, including the capacity and expertise of lead and proposed project partners to respond to all types of human trafficking. Please be sure to address all elements for this section that are noted in the NOFO.

Your application must include a detailed line item budget using the JustGrants budget detail form. You may propose a budget that is less than the anticipated award ceiling amount. The budget should be reasonable to conduct the proposed project and be within your capacity to manage. The budget detail form collects the individual costs under each cost category needed to implement your proposed project. Applicants should ensure that the name or description of each cost is clear and provide the detailed calculation—for example, cost per unit and number of units for the total cost. Applicants should enter additional narrative as needed to fully describe the cost calculations and connection to the project goals and objectives—including, if applicable, describing connections to OJP priority goals.

Budget proposals should include the funding needed to implement the proposed activities. In preparing their budget proposals, applicants should consider what types of costs are allowable, if awarded funding. Costs are allowable when they are reasonable, allocable to, and necessary for the performance of the project.

Along with your budget detail form in JustGrants, your application may also require additional budget-related attachments. For those applicants with a current federally approved indirect cost rate agreement, you should upload it as an attachment in JustGrants. Additionally, if you propose a rate for a consultant on your project that is higher than the established maximum rate, then you will need to request approval before incurring costs at the higher rate.

Here are a few additional application components that should be attached, if applicable.

Your application must include the SF-424, proposal narrative, and budget detail form. In addition to these required elements, your application should also include many of the elements noted here. Please review the NOFO checklist carefully to identify which you should include, and use the checklist in your review prior to submitting your application.

To meet the basic minimum requirements to advance to peer review and receive consideration for funding, your application must: Be from an eligible applicant. Not exceed the award ceiling. Be responsive to the NOFO scope. Include an SF-424 in Grants.gov. A proposal narrative in JustGrants with a 20-page limit. Budget detail form, including budget items, their calculations, and explanations in JustGrants. Remember, if you fail to submit any of the required documents, your application will not be considered for funding.

Now I'll pass it back to Darian to talk about the application submission process.

Darian Hanrahan: Thanks, Jalila. We will now share a brief overview of the application submission process.

Before you can apply for funding, you must register or renew your entity with SAM.gov. This process can take over 30 days, so please begin this step immediately. Your entity must register with SAM.gov and obtain a unique entity identifier and you must maintain an active SAM.gov registration status at all times.

For entities new to SAM.gov, the registration process can take time, so please start early—and at any point during the year—to be sure that your status reaches "Active" before you need to submit a funding application. Renew your registration in SAM.gov every 12 months. Even if you've applied for a federal grant before, you need to check that your registration is current and renew it if it is not.

Applicants who do not have an active SAM.gov status will not be able to complete Step 1 of the application process in Grants.gov. Also be sure that your organization's points of contact in SAM.gov—especially the electronic business point of contact, or E-Biz POC—are current. The E-Biz POC may receive notices about time-sensitive actions they need to take during the application process.

The process for submitting your application begins in Grants.gov. Once you have located the funding opportunity in Grants.gov, you must submit the SF-424. This is the extent of the application requirement in Grants.gov. Once your application has been submitted and validated in Grants.gov, it will be sent to JustGrants for completion. It may take several days for Grants.gov to complete the validations and release it to JustGrants. You will then complete the rest of the application in JustGrants.

There are two application steps, each with their own deadline. You must submit the required documents by the Grants.gov deadline of March 11, 2026, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time to be considered. We encourage you not to wait until close to the deadline to submit your application.

Please keep in mind, during the final step of submission, the JustGrants system will check your application for completeness. Unfortunately, we have had applicants fail to successfully submit their application because the NOFO deadline passed before this process was completed. Those that are completed after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

You may enter preliminary information in Grants.gov even if you have not fully determined your budget or project scope. You will be able to edit and update all of your entries in JustGrants. Once you have submitted the form in Grants.gov, you will submit the rest of your application in JustGrants.

The deadline for the JustGrants full application is March 18th, 2026, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time. The JustGrants submission should include all items that are required in the NOFO. For technical assistance submitting your application in any of these platforms, please contact the appropriate help desk listed in the NOFO and at the end of this at the end of this training. listed in the NOFO and at the end of this at the end of this training. listed in the NOFO and at the end of this at the end of this training.

After the JustGrants deadline has passed, OVC will thoroughly review all applications. As a reminder, this process only applies to competitive NOFOs; non-competitive NOFOs follow a different process.

First, we check to confirm that the application contains the basic minimum requirements that were described in the funding opportunity. For applications that miss

these requirements, you will receive notice that your application has been eliminated from further review.

For competitive opportunities, peer reviewers who are subject matter experts assess the technical merits of an application. OVC staff then assess applications based on factors such as geographic diversity, past performance, and whether applications are likely to meet the funding opportunities, goals, and objectives.

We then evaluate the fiscal integrity of the applicant, examine proposed costs, and determine whether the budget and budget narrative accurately explain the project costs and whether those costs are allowable and reasonable.

Finally, OVC reviews potential risks presented by applicants prior to making an award. This pre-award risk assessment takes into account a variety of factors, including an applicant's financial capability and past performance. During the review process, OVC may contact you to clarify program or budget details.

Applicants are often eager to learn how their application is progressing through the review process. Unfortunately, DOJ staff—including User Support and the OJP Response Center—cannot share any information with you until final awards have been made public.

If your application has been funded, specific JustGrants users for your organization will be notified by email and will see the award appear in their JustGrants account. If you receive notice of an award, you must take specific steps in JustGrants to accept or decline it. The DOJ Award acceptance checklist on the JustGrants Resources website can walk you through those steps.

If you are not selected for funding, OJP will notify you by email after all award recipients have been notified. You can visit OJP's Grant Awards website to see all OJP awards made by year, program, and locality.

Applications submitted under this fiscal year 2025 funding opportunity may be funded in future fiscal years, including fiscal year 2026, depending on—among other considerations—the merit of the applications and the availability of appropriations.

I will now discuss available application resources.

We have many resources available to help guide you through the application process. Grants.gov has a comprehensive Quick Start Guide to help you register for and apply to OVC awards. This guide includes sections on registering, roles, workspaces, completing forms, and submitting your applications.

JustGrant's website has a collection of resources available for you to use. Training materials include self-guided, easy learning videos, supplemented by job aid reference guides, checklists, and infographics. These resources will help you learn to navigate the system to complete various essential grants management tasks during the application process.

The DOJ Grant Application Submission Checklist includes step-by-step instructions on preparing your OVC application.

The OJP Grant Application Resource Guide provides guidance to assist OJP grant applicants in preparing and submitting applications for OJP funding. It addresses a variety of policies, statutes, and regulations that apply to many—or in some cases, all—OJP program applicants or to grants in cooperative agreements awarded in fiscal year 2025. Some OJP programs may have program NOFOs that expressly modify a provision of this guide. In such cases, the applicant is to follow the guidelines in the NOFO as to any such expressly modified provisions.

The DOJ Grants Financial Guide is the primary reference manual to assist OJP, OVW, and COPS Office award recipients in fulfilling their fiduciary responsibility to safeguard grant funds and ensure that funds are used for the purposes for which they were awarded. Applicants will want to become familiar with the guide. It compiles a variety of laws, rules, and regulations that affect the financial and administrative management of your award. References to the underlying laws and regulations have been provided in the guide as much as possible.

The top 10 topics in the guide [are] listed here [and include] financial management systems, allowable costs, unallowable costs, federal financial reports, among others.

Please visit the OVC website to learn about OVC's history and funding, find multimedia products, and register for upcoming events.

Today, we've given you a brief overview of how to apply for the OVC Fiscal Year 2025 Services for Victims of Human Trafficking Program. For further detailed training on application submission, you can attend a live weekly training session, download detailed training slides, or watch a prerecorded version of this training.

Be sure to start your application in Grants.gov and JustGrants as soon as possible to confirm that you have access. If possible, please submit your application before the due date. OJP will only accept late applications if applicants can demonstrate that there is a technical reason they could not submit. So, you will want to ensure you have plenty of time to address any technical issues you may encounter.

JustGrants can be reached by phone at 833-872-5175 or email to JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov.

When contacting any of these system help desks, please be sure to request a tracking number so you can document that you sought assistance with your issue. This will be important in the event you need to document that you had a technical issue that prevented you from submitting your application.

Finally, the OJP Response Center is available to answer questions about the programmatic requirements of the NOFO. They can be reached by phone at 800-851-3420 or email to OJP.ResponseCenter@usdoj.gov. If you are a current grantee, we appreciate your understanding that your grant manager and other OVC staff cannot answer questions about an open NOFO directly. For purposes of fairness and transparency, if you reach out to us, we will have to refer you back to the OJP Response Center so that your question can be documented and addressed officially.

Finally, please keep in mind that the OJP Response Center is also who you need to contact within 24 hours of the Grants.gov or JustGrants NOFO deadline, should you experience any technical issues that prevented your application submission. Keep in mind that you will need to be able to document any technical issues, which is why starting your application early and maintaining any tracking numbers if you have reported an issue is critical.

If you need assistance when registering or working in SAM.gov or Grants.gov, please contact their help desk directly.

Thank you for your time and attention. I'll turn it back to Serena.

Serena Roche: Thank you, Darian and Jalila, for that thorough overview of this important funding opportunity. We hope you found the information presented here today helpful. If you are interested and eligible for this NOFO, here are the next steps to take: Access the NOFOs at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [ovc.ojp.gov](https://www.ovc.ojp.gov). Register in Grants.gov early, as this process can take several weeks. Review program specific application deadlines and requirements. And contact the OJP Response Center for any assistance. For more information about the Office for Victims of Crime, please visit [ovc.ojp.gov](https://www.ovc.ojp.gov). Thank you for your time and we hope to see you again.