

Transcript - Using Your TVSSA Funds to Address Issues Related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP): What You Need to Know Right Now

Good morning, good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us today and welcome to this webinar titled, using your TVSSA funds to address issues related to missing and murdered Indigenous people-- what you need to know right now.

It will be presented today by the Office for Victims of Crime. My name is Kevin Poleyumptewa, and I will be your moderator for today. I'm pleased to introduce to you our presenters today from the Office for Victims of Crime-- Kimberly Woodard, a senior tribal affairs specialist; Jessica Andrew, victim justice specialist; and Mary Atlas-Terry, victim justice specialist. And with that, Kimberly, the time is yours.

Thanks, Kevin.

So this slide outlines the topics we will cover during today's webinar. We'll start with an overview of MMIP issues, we'll discuss other helpful resources, and then explain how to add MMIP activities to your existing award. As Kevin mentioned previously, if you have questions, please enter them using the Q&A feature and we will respond to all the questions at the conclusion of the presentation. Let's get started.

So starting with the overview, while the subject of this webinar is missing and murdered persons, OVC wants to emphasize that the costs and activities listed here related to serving a victim of a homicide have always been allowable under the TVSSA program. These costs and activities continue to be allowable in instances in which the remains of a person from your community who was reported missing are located and positively identified.

Please keep in mind that OCV's expectation is that grantees will use their reward funds to supplement the costs associated with transporting the body of a homicide victim for burial or paying for funeral costs. Ideally, program staff should first, make a reasonable effort to assist the surviving family members with completing and submitting a state victim's comp claim for these costs when these costs are authorized expenses under the relevant state Crime Victims Compensation program.

Grantees should then use their award funds to pay for any portion of the costs not covered by the comp claim. However, we also recognize that circumstances and needs may vary and it may not always be possible to wait for a state comp claim payment. If that is the case, grantees should document their efforts to reasonably comply with the requirement to help survivors file a comp claim, including documenting the circumstances which made it not possible to do so.

So the recently announced change in the scope of the TVSSA program is intended to allow grantees to expend funds to assist family members of missing persons, generate awareness about missing persons cases, educate the community about MMIP issues, and improve the systemic response to MMIP cases. So this slide outlines the parameters around using TVSSA funds to support MMIP efforts. We will discuss each of these topics in depth in the next several minutes.

Legally, adults and children who disappear are treated very differently. There are federal laws which require law enforcement to enter the details of a missing persons report they receive on a child under the age of 18 or an adult age 18 to 21 into the FBI's National Crime Information Center, or NCIC, database within two hours of receiving the report. State and local laws typically govern when the details of a missing persons case involving an adult over the age of 21 are entered into NCIC.

For adult Native people who go missing outside of Indian country, the variation in state and local laws may impact when law enforcement may take a report. For example, some states require a 24-hour waiting period after the person is believed to be missing before a police report may be filed, while others do not. Further complicating the situation is that the law enforcement response to reports of missing adults-- further complicating law enforcement response to reports of missing adults is the fact that adults may go missing for a variety of reasons, including personal choice, abduction or foul play, physical, developmental, or cognitive disabilities, natural catastrophes that displaced individuals, such as a hurricane or a wildfire, or certain high-risk behaviors, including gang involvement, drug use, or other high-risk circumstances.

As adults are free to voluntarily relocate without notifying their family and loved ones, it is important to keep in mind that OVC expects its grantees to respect the privacy of all individuals and their right to limit with whom they choose to share information about their whereabouts. Because relocation may be part of a safety plan for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, grantees should proceed with extreme caution in sharing information about missing persons who have a history of such violence. This is particularly true if your program has come into contact with or actually provided services to the missing person. Grantees should exercise this same caution for any missing person who previously contacted your victim services program or received assistance from your program after being the victim of any type of crime.

If your staff knows for certain that the missing person has voluntarily relocated as part of a safety plan, you are prohibited by the special conditions on your award from sharing this information with a third party, including the victim's family and loved ones. The only exception is if you have a signed, written, time-limited authorization to release information from the victim. Keep in mind, that the TVSSA special conditions do not trump a subpoena or a court order to release the victim's PII. If your program is served with a subpoena or court order requesting a victim's PII, consult with your legal counsel.

Again, all TVSSA awards are made with a special condition that requires grantees to have written confidentiality policies and procedures that meet specific criteria or standards. Even though OVC no longer requires grantees to submit their confidentiality policies and procedures for review and approval, you are required to have them in place and you are expected to train your staff on them and to follow them.

Your policies and procedures should ideally outline procedures on how your program will protect a victim's PII, including their whereabouts and contact information, when and how you will obtain a written authorization for release of information from a victim, how to respond to a subpoena or court order to disclose a victim's PII, how staff should respond to inquiries from a third party, such as a family member, and how your program will proceed with releasing information in exigent circumstances-- for example, when a victim goes missing or disappears.

Also, keep in mind that another special condition on your TVSSA award requires grantees to make a timely report to OVC if your program experiences an unauthorized release of a victim's PII. If you do not have written confidentiality policies and procedures or believe that you need to strengthen your existing policies and procedures, you can submit a TA request to your assigned OVC TA provider.

This slide includes two tips that will help keep your program in compliance with its award special conditions. First, do not reveal the PII, including the present whereabouts or contact information of a crime victim without a written, time-limited authorization for release of information that has been signed by the victim. And number two, make sure your written confidentiality policies and procedures sufficiently address how to manage a victim's PII if the victim is reported as missing.

TVSSA funds can be used to assist family members in MMIP cases if one of four factual circumstances exists. The first circumstance involves situations in which it has been confirmed that the missing person has been kidnapped or is or is suspected to be a victim of human trafficking. The second circumstance includes instances in which the person's disappearance is the subject of an ongoing law enforcement investigation.

The third includes situations in which the family or loved ones of a missing person fear that the person is a victim of crime. OVC again cautions grantees to proceed carefully in this circumstance and to remember your obligation to protect the victims PII from unauthorized disclosures.

The fourth and final circumstance includes instances in which the missing person has a known history of victimization that may directly or indirectly be related to their disappearance. For example, when a missing person has a history of being a victim of interpersonal violence that may be considered directly related to their disappearance. It also includes situations in which the missing person was engaged in high-risk activities as a consequence of their previous victimization. That would be an example of someone whose disappearance may be indirectly related to their prior victimization.

The family and loved ones of a missing person have a legal right to conduct a search for the person on their own independent of law enforcement. If your program would like to provide financial assistance to a search organized or led by private individuals, both of the circumstances listed here must be present. So what that means is the situation must involve exigent circumstances which require immediate action, such as when a child or a vulnerable adult disappears, and the situation must also involve one in which law enforcement resources are not readily available. So the law enforcement response may be delayed by weather, geographic distance, or human resource shortages.

The costs identified on this slide are generally prohibited if the search for the missing person is being led by a law enforcement agency. Also remember, again, both of the two circumstances that I just outlined on the last slide must be present before you can use your set-aside funds to pay for these expenses. You are not required to provide advance notice to OVC before spending funds on these costs, but you should notify your OVC grant manager by email as soon as it is reasonably possible to do so. Providing this notice to OVC will help us to track and report on these activities.

The tips offered here are taken from a recent publication that we'll talk about again in a few minutes entitled, what to do when a loved one goes missing. It was authored by our Operation Lady Justice task force.

Family members may be eager to initiate a physical search for a missing person, however, OVC wants to underscore the importance of maintaining open communication with law enforcement when law enforcement is not involved or present during a search organized and led by private citizens. This is crucial for several reasons, the chief of which is to ensure that critical evidence related to a possible crime is properly preserved. OVC also encourages you to consider how to best support families during a private search by helping them identify an individual or individuals who can act as a liaison between the family and law enforcement, volunteers, victims services providers, and others.

Your set-aside funds can be used to generate awareness about a missing person who has gone missing under one of the four circumstances we reviewed earlier. The allowable expenses include commemorative or memorial events, as well as printing materials or advertising on a billboard about an individual case or cases.

OVC strongly encourages its grantees to respect the privacy of victims of crime at all times, even after they are deceased or otherwise, unavailable to authorize disclosures of their PII. One way to respect the victims' privacy and their right to confidentiality is to not use their PII-- meaning their name, age, photos, et cetera-- in a campaign to raise awareness about their disappearance or death without the approval of the secondary victims in the case, their family members. Again, if the missing or murdered person contacted your OVC-funded program or accessed its services, your obligation to maintain the confidentiality of their PII continues in their absence and after their death.

OVC has imposed a 3% limit on expenses to paying for costs incidental to a private search for a missing person and activities intended to generate awareness about individual missing persons cases. This 3% limit is based on your total award amount. For example, if your total award amount is \$600,000, you can budget up to \$18,000 of that amount to pay for these costs. We'll provide further details on how to add these costs to your existing budget in a few minutes.

This slide lists several allowable services for family members, but the list is not exhaustive. The activities identified here are meant to assist families with coping with the emotional, psychological, economic, and legal needs that they may experience in the wake of their loved ones' disappearance. This type of support could involve substantial advocacy assistance, as well, including helping the family identify resources, facilitating the flow of information between investigators and the family, accompanying family members to interviews and meetings with investigators, assisting with delivering a death notification of family members, or facilitating the return of a victim of homicides personal property to their loved ones.

Set-aside funds can be used to help improve the systemic response to MMIP cases in your community by covering costs related to supporting the establishment and operation of a multidisciplinary inter-jurisdictional group of individuals to develop response protocols and procedures that outline how the agencies or organizations responsible for responding to MMIP cases will work collaboratively. For example, your written protocols might cover making the initial notification to the missing persons' next of kin about their disappearance, establishing regular updates on the case status with family members, giving family members advance notice about community alerts, such as AMBER Alerts, Silver Alerts, social media posts, et cetera, notifying family members about changes in the investigative team.

Your protocols might also address communication between key stakeholders in the MDT or community response, including who will attend law enforcement briefings and share that information with the family and/or community as appropriate, keeping the lead investigator informed about family dynamics, cultural practices, and traditions, facilitating information sharing amongst partners on a regular basis, and planning for the reunification of a missing person who's been identified and wants to return home or in certain circumstances, delivering death notifications that the missing person has been found and is deceased.

OVC is making a distinction between using your award funds to generate awareness about individual MMIP cases and using your funds to generate general public awareness about MMIP issues. Costs associated with generating awareness about individual MMIP cases again should be grouped with the costs incidental to a private search for a missing person. The total combined that you can spend on these search costs is limited to no more than 3% of your total award. Costs associated with the activities identified on this slide, however, are not subject to the 3% limit.

The amount budgeted for general community education, outreach, and awareness activities related to MMIP must still be reasonable. You can use your general MMIP awareness funds to educate the community about what to do when a loved one goes missing, incorporate MMIP issues into your existing National Awareness Month activities, and/or generate awareness among community members about the availability of grant-funded services related to MMIP.

Set-aside funds can be used for the cost of reunification. In this context, reunification refers to the circumstances when the remains of a missing person from your community have been identified. The funds can cover the cost of exhuming the body, returning the body to the community, and funeral costs. But again, keep in mind, OVC expects you to make a reasonable effort to assist the survivors of homicide in filing a state Crime Victims Compensation claim for the transportation and burial expenses before using your set-aside funds to cover these.

It is important to keep in mind that set-aside funds can only be used for reunification expenses if there has been an autopsy of the remains and a medical examiner or coroner concludes that the cause of death was homicide or the medical examiner or coroner is unable to determine a cause of death. If the medical examiner or coroner concludes that the cause of death was suicide or an accident, TVSSA funds cannot be used for the reunification costs because neither cause of death constitutes.

Now, I'm going to turn things over to Jessica, who will walk us through the MMIP-related costs that are unallowable under the set-aside program.

Thank you, Kimberly.

VOCA funding, including TVSSA funding, cannot be used to support law enforcement activities, whether they are carried out by law enforcement officers or by private investigators. As Kimberly mentioned earlier, TVSSA funding can only be used to pay for costs of incidentals to a search. So volunteer management, refreshments, search supplies only if the search is organized and led by a private individual. And there are other free resources to support for missing persons' investigations and forensic services to aid in the identification of unidentified or unclaimed remains, including skeletal remains. And I'm going to talk a little bit more about those resources in a few minutes.

As detailed by this slide, CFR 200 includes a blanket prohibition on using federal funding for fundraising activities, including soliciting money, gifts, et cetera, regardless of the intended benefactor. As a practical matter, this prohibition means that TVSSA funding cannot be used to raise funds for family members of missing persons. That prohibition extends to grant-funded personnel and other grant-funded resources, we well.

Over the next couple of slides, we're now going to go over some resources that are available to you. On this next slide is NamUs. So NamUs provides free technology, forensic services, investigative support to resolve missing persons and unidentified remain cases nationwide, including Indian country.

And NamUs is funded and administrated through and by the National Institute of Justice, which is also called NIJ, and managed through a contract with RTI International. And all NamUs resources are provided at no cost to law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, aligned forensic professionals, and family members of missing persons. And in addition to the database, NamUs offers free forensic services to help identify unidentified and unclaimed remains and support for the investigative process.

NamUs is also working very closely to close the gaps related to missing Indigenous persons and to ensure that every tribal law enforcement agency knows about and can use the NamUs program to help resolve cases. NamUs publishes monthly trends, reports that offer a snapshot in time for MMIP cases recorded in NamUs. And last, medical examiners and coroners, as well as law enforcement agencies and family members of missing persons, can all add information about a missing person into the NamUs database.

The next slide discusses the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, also known as NCMEC, and it provides a wealth of resources to support the investigations into a disappearance of a child under the age of 18 and assist with the recovery and reunification of family members. NCMEC also supports the efforts to identify and assist children who are sexually exploited and provides the same resources to support the investigation of cases involving missing adults 18 to 21.

A potentially helpful resource is a guide published by the Operation Lady Justice later last year. It's entitled, When a Loved One Goes Missing and this guide is targeted towards the families and friends of missing American Indian and Alaska Native persons and it includes practical resources, easy-to-read step-by-step instructions on how to file a missing persons report, cope with the emotional and psychological distress of having somebody go missing, and how to support victims who are found alive and are reunited with their families. And OVC encourages everyone to download this free resource and reproduce it for dissemination within your own communities.

On the next slide-- and Kimberly mentioned this before-- the state Crime Victim Compensation Programs can be an important resource for families of missing and murdered persons. And we want to emphasize that American Indian and Alaska Native victims of crime are eligible to receive compensation from state compensation programs, even if the offense happens in Indian country. Specific eligibility requirements and reimbursement expenses are determined by each state. However, in general, there are some eligibility requirements that can be common among state compensation programs, including the four-bulleted list that are on the slide. And you can also find the contact information for your state Crime Victim Compensation Program by using the link that's embedded in the slide and also, Rachel just put the link in the chat, as well.

So now, we're going to change gears and talk about how to address MMIP costs and activities in your existing award. And before we do, I'll turn to Kevin for the poll question.

We have a poll question and the question today is, do you plan to add missing and murdered Indigenous persons activities to your TVSSA program? OK. It looks like a majority of you are unsure yet, whether or not you will be planning to add missing and murdered Indigenous persons activities to your program and 39% of you stated that you will. So with that, we will go ahead and move on.

So if you would like to address MMIP costs in your existing TVSSA award, you will have to submit a GAM to change the programmatic scope of your existing award and this is because you're altering your approved program activities to add additional activities and/or change the goals and objectives for the award. If you're planning to reprogram less than 10% of your total award amount of one of your OJP budget categories to another, you will not need to submit a budget modification GAM. You will, however, need to attach an itemized list of expenses that you would like to add to your award as an attachment to your change in programmatic scope GAM.

If you're planning to reprogram more than 10% of your total award amount that's in your approved budget to pay for MMIP activities, then you will need to submit that budget modification plan, in addition to the change in programmatic scope GAM. So you'll need to submit two.

The same is true if you are reprogramming more than 10% of the award amount to pay for costs, but are adding funds to the budget category that was not included in the original budget.

But please, keep in mind that the 10% rule includes the cumulative total of reprogramming over the life of the award. Even if you're not planning to reprogram more than 10% of the total award amount to add to MMIP costs and activities to your award, please consult with your financial accounting staff to determine whether your MMIP reprogramming will result in your tribe's or organization's reprogramming a cumulative total amount of the funds that exceed that 10% threshold of the federal award amount. Also, remember that the budget modification GAM is not sufficient to approve the change in scope of the project and that you must attach the revised version of the last itemized budget to your OJP-approved award with your budget modifications GAM.

OVC must monitor how much funds of grantees budget for the costs that relates to searching for missing persons. We are, therefore, requesting that you identify these line items as search costs in your revised itemized budget if you are submitting a budget modification GAM or your itemized list costs. Again, that combination total that you can budget for these expenses cannot exceed that 3% of your total award amount.

So to summarize, you will need to submit a change in programmatic scope GAM if you are proposing to reprogram less than or equal to 10% of your total award amounts and will not be adding funds to the budget category that was not included in your original budget. You will need to submit both a budget modification GAM and a change in programmatic scope if you're planning to reprogram more than 10% of your award or add funds to a new budget category, in addition to adding MMIP costs and activities to your budget.

And that will bring us to the Q&A session.

All right. Someone is asking if there's a compressed version of this. So we are sharing this PowerPoint for you that you can refer to and you can also contact your grant manager if you have questions about what's available.

There is a note about our indirect cost rate is expired, can we use the 10% rate? That is a question that you should submit to your OVC grant manager.

So Mary, I see there are some other questions pending. I see one, a question that I received for survivor of homicide victims-- can set-aside funds being used to pay for fee-for-service legal assistance to allow surviving family to afford it?

I'm not quite sure I understand what you mean for a fee-for-service. Is that someone who is saying that they will provide representation for a flat-rate fee or are they looking for a retainer? I'm not quite sure what you're asking. So if you wouldn't mind adding some clarification to that, we'll try to get an answer for you if we can while live.

And there's some other questions that have come up. If we don't plan on changing scope of providing this service, but a situation occurs unexpectedly, can we still provide the service without providing a change of scope below the 10%? So keep in mind that if you are planning to alter your approved programmatic activities or your goals and objectives or add any new line items to your budget, even if it doesn't involve reprogramming 10% or more of the funds from one budget category to another, you still need to have approval from OVC to make those changes. No matter how minor or incidental they might seem.

To do something like this on an ad hoc basis would add an extra layer potentially, of delay to your ability to respond. Because if you don't have prior approval to add these costs or activities to what you've been approved to do, then you run the risk of the cost being determined as unauthorized. So I would say if you are thinking about doing it, get the approval now and if you never spend it, you never spend it, but at least, you would have the authorization to move quickly if you need to.

I think someone added something more about the attorney question-- the fee-for-service for legal assistance. Retainer and ongoing costs for an attorney to help the family through the criminal court costs, et cetera, such as not to exceed \$5,000--

I will say, in general, you can use the funds to provide civil legal assistance for survivors of homicide and the circumstances that we've outlined here. So if you have surviving family members who maybe need to get custody of victims' minor children or there's some sort of victims' rights that need to be enforced, those things can definitely be covered by the set-aside funding in this context. But I would say if you have questions more specific about a specific type of court case or something like that, follow-up directly with your grant manager.

OK. I see there's also a question-- there was a recommendation to contact TA re confidentiality policies and procedures. We do have that, but is there a preferred template? The answer to that is no.

If you look at the special condition that requires you to have confidentiality policies and procedures, it includes criteria and standards for how the policies and procedures should be set up. So as long as you're in compliance with those standards and that criteria, you should be fine. If you want to have your TA provider take a look at what you have and make recommendations, you can definitely do that.

Kimberly, there's a question that says, is MMIP training an allowable cost?

Is that-- it's not clear what you mean there. Is that training you want to attend or training you'd like to provide?

Could you answer both?

I think it depends on if you're talking about a training event that you might want to use your set-aside funds to attend, it kind of depends on what the focus or the purpose or topic area is. So if it's a training that's strictly for law enforcement or investigators, the answer would be no. If it's something that's multidisciplinary in focus or specific to victim advocates, then the answer would be yes. So it would just depend on the topic.

And the same would be true for any type of training you would want to provide with your grant award funds. It has to be related to victim services.

Thank you, Kimberly. There's a question here that says, we don't really plan on changing the scope of our grant to provide this service, but they're wondering, what if a situation does unexpectedly come up, can they provide it on short notice without previously providing a change of scope, particularly if the cost is below the 10% threshold?

Again, it goes back to what is included in your approved program narrative and your budget. So if you're not approved by OVC to provide these services, even if it is just a one-off, it is still technically not something you are authorized to spend your funding on. So again, I would encourage you to do it on the front end. Even if you never spend this money, I would encourage you to add this to the scope of your project so you don't experience a delay in circumstances where you might need to act quickly. Otherwise, you would have to submit a change in scope GAM and try to get a hold of your grant manager and try to get that rushed through if you were just looking to do it on an ad hoc basis or as needed.

OK. It seems like there's some questions about the process, again. Is there a form or a template for the approval to add these new funds? And I'm not certain about this, do you have the questions that were going to be asked, instead of the 20-page narrative? So this sounds like whether or not we're including questions about serving MMIP victims in any new application checklist that we might have.

Well, I would ask-- so in terms of the first question, is there a form for approval, no. If you're talking about adding these costs to an existing award, as Jessica went over, the way to do that is through the GAM process. So you would need to get prior approval from OVC to add this to what you've already been approved to do. And depending on how you want to do it, at a minimum, you're going to submit a change in scope GAM. If you're going to reprogram more than 10% of your total award amount to do this or you're going to add money to a budget category that was previously at zero, then you would need to do a budget modification GAM, in addition to the change in scope GAM.

And so, the question about the questions that we are going to be asked instead of the 20-page narrative, it does look like you are referencing the FY22 solicitation requirements, but if you wouldn't mind, clarifying what you mean there when you say the list of questions because it's not entirely clear.

OK. This is an interesting question, Kimberly. Can tribal victim service set-aside funds for MMIP, for example, be used for legislative advocacy or following discussions for MMIP within a state? In Oregon, there are several pieces of legislation. Could these funds be used to fund a position that will allow them to do that legislative work or contribute to those legislative discussions?

So this sounds a lot like lobbying or potentially, lobbying activity and there's a general prohibition on using any federal funding for lobbying activities. So you would not be able to use grant funds to hire someone to lobby elected officials at any level, to advocate for a change in policy or the enactment of particular legislation.

I do know that there are state and tribal coalitions who have legislative advocacy days, but the folks who organize those are presumably, trained because they are using federal funding to operate their organizations. They should have an understanding of the limitations of how to do that in a way that does not violate the prohibition on using federal funds for lobbying. So again, I would be careful about using any grant funds or assigning any grant-funded personnel to engage in activities that might be construed as lobbying.

If you have questions about a specific activity and whether or not it constitutes lobbying, again I would encourage you to contact your OVC grant manager and they can help you work through answering those questions a little bit more in depth.

Hey, Mary. This is Kevin. I did have another question, just kind of a little clarification for some people that may be wondering, as well, in regards to adding the MMIP services to their existing program. So maybe a grantee is providing victim services via emergency shelter or other things like that and they want to add these services to the grant. Would it constitute a change of scope or just a narrative revision?

So when we do a change in scope, we're not asking you to update your project narrative. We're asking you to provide a justification that explains what programmatic activities you are altering or what goals and objectives you are changing. So again, the change in scope covers changes in programmatic activities. It also covers changes in the budget that amount to reprogramming less than 10% of the total award amount between budget categories.

So again, when we give you a grant, these are discretionary funds. We have come to an agreement on what you will use the money to do. If you deviate from that in any way, you need to get prior approval to do so. So all of the activities that we've just gone over, OVC has declared are allowable activities. However, if they are not in what we already approved you to do, they are not authorized.

The problem that you run into when you start to spend your grant funds on unauthorized activities is if you are monitored or if there is an OIG audit, those costs would be labeled as unauthorized and you would be on the hook potentially for repaying those funds. That is why, again, we keep underscoring or emphasizing that you need prior approval to change what you said you were going to do, even if it is an one-off case, even if it's on an as needed basis. It's better to have it in writing that you were authorized by OVC to spend your funds in this way than to deal with the headache of trying to resolve this on the back end after you've already gone through an audit or monitoring action where these expenses have been identified as issues for us.

Kimberly, if I may, from another grant manager perspective to answer Kevin's question, also. So many current grantees, when they submitted their applications two, three, or last year, they said in their applications, this grant is going to be used for services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault or maybe they said this grant is to be used for surveying victims of child abuse and neglect or something like that. And most people never said we are planning to use grant funds to serve family members after a homicide or they definitely didn't say they were planning to serve families of missing persons.

So that's why the scope change is so important, is to update your grant to show who you're serving and who your grant funds can be used for. Most people-- I don't know of any grantees that said they were going to be serving families of missing persons previously. So that's why it's important because most people didn't include this at all in their original grant so the change of scope really is needed.

Yes. Mary, you're absolutely right because previously, our policy was that we did not allow grantees to spend on missing person costs at all. You're absolutely right. So again, it could be-- there's plenty of things that are allowable under the set-aside program, but the question is, do you have prior approval or authorization from OVC to spend your funds on it? If the answer is no, then you need to get that prior approval before you make that expenditure.

And I see that Jessica uploaded a link to the fiscal year 2022 tribal victim service set-aside checklist and a link to the webinar that's going to be held on how to complete that checklist for new funding. So yes, if you're interested in using any new funding to cover a portion of these types of expenses, you could integrate it into your new application and it is included as part of the checklist.

Yeah. And Mary, just to remind folks, if you are applying for FY22 set-aside funding, you have three options in completing your project narrative. You can do a traditional project narrative, which is about 20 pages, or you can request an interview with OVC staff and have them fill out the checklist for you with the information and input from you and anyone else from your community who should be involved in that process. If you'd like to schedule an interview, the deadline to request an interview is May 19th, I believe.

And as Mary mentioned and Jessica shared, we are having a webinar on May 17th that anyone who is interested in completing the checklists on their own should attend. We will walk you through that process and give you a lot of tips and ways to make that process efficient, while giving us the information that we need as a program office.

So Jessica, I know that we probably don't have-- we may not have anything in the pipeline definitive for technical assistance, but generally, grantees will be able to get technical assistance on updating policies and procedures and things like that or even submitting the change of scope GAM. That technical assistance is available, right?

Yes, Mary, and I'm so glad that you brought it up. So all TVSSA grantees have two types of TA that is available to them at no cost. You have a programmatic provider so your program is either working with Fox Valley Technical College or Unified Solutions and they can help you develop or provide feedback on any policies and procedures that you may have. If you developed confidentiality procedures that you want them to review, they can look and provide feedback. And they can do on-site training and they can also do virtual training. So you really want to work with your programmatic TA provider to see what kind of needs you have and figure out how they can best meet those needs.

The other type of TA is financial TA and we have TFMC, which is the Tribal Financial Management Training Center, and they can help you if you need any help with making a budget modification. So say you're adding additional costs and line items, they can help walk you through that process. And also, if you have questions about IDC. Or even, how you are supposed to be tracking costs related to victim services and what that should look like, they can work with you, as well.

And what's really great is that our TA teams, both programmatic and financial, they work great together and they're both willing to jump on a call. So if you want both of your providers on one line so that you can ask questions for programmatic and financial needs, they can do that for you. And if you have any questions about who your assigned TA person is, definitely follow-up with your OVC grant manager and they can direct you to your person. So definitely utilize them. They're there, they're wanting to help, and they are available.

So I know one of the early questions or comments we had was about information overload so I do want to acknowledge that this is a lot of information to take in at one time. And I know when we did the poll, more than half of you said you weren't sure about proceeding in this direction so I do want to emphasize that we, at OVC, are here to be supportive.

So if you have questions that come up after the webinar and you've had time to sit with this information, definitely reach out to your grant manager. We'd be happy to talk to you about the information that's been presented and answer any further questions that you might have and to get you connected with TA if that's what you're interested in. So I say this to say, don't feel pressure to do anything, but we are here to answer questions and help support you in the direction that you'd like to move.

All right. I'm not seeing any more questions come in so are there any final words?

Just, thank you so much for participating today and for your questions and we're all really excited to be able to help out in this way.

I agree and just wanted to echo that. And thank you all and again, please use your OVC grant managers. We are a resource, we are here to help you, and would love to talk to you about your programs and how you want to serve additional people within your communities. Thank you.

Yes, us, as well, here at NCJTC. We're always available to assist you in however way we can programmatically. So if you have any other programming questions, definitely feel free to reach out to us here at NCJTC.

And with that, that will conclude our webinar for today. Thank you to Kimberly and Jessica and Mary from the Office for Victims of Crime for sharing your time with us today and knowledge with us. Thank you all to our attendees, as well, for joining us today. And with that, we hope you all have a wonderful day and the rest of your week Thank you.