

# **OVC FY25 Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking Notice of Funding Opportunity Pre-Application Webinar Transcript**

**Serena Roche:** Hello, everyone. Today's pre-application webinar for the [OVC Fiscal Year 2025 Enhanced Collaborative Model \(ECM\) Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking](#) Notice of Funding Opportunity will be presented by OVC Grants Management Specialist Alissa Huntoon and will provide an overview of one of their available grants. Thank you for watching. Now, let's turn things over to Alissa.

**Alissa Huntoon:** Thank you and hello everyone. As mentioned, my name is Alissa Huntoon, and I am here to share some information with you about the Enhanced Collaborative Model, or commonly referred to as ECM, Task Force Program to Combat Human Trafficking.

And what we are going to talk about today is here on our outline slide. You'll hear a little bit about the Office of Justice Programs as well as the Office for Victims of Crime for those of you who may not be familiar with our office. We'll talk a little bit about the purpose and overall content of this particular NOFO, as well as some more mechanics around submitting your application and a variety of other resources to help you of other resources to help you with submitting your application for OVC. On [OVC's website](#), as you'll see here, there's several resources and you can find any available funding opportunities at our link, which is on this particular slide.

The Office of Justice Programs provides grant funding, training, research, and statistics to the criminal justice community. There on the right-hand side you'll see several of the program offices that comprise the Office of Justice of Programs. The Office for Victims of Crime is one of those. There are other grant-making components within the Department of Justice. Those are the Office on Violence Against Women, as well as the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

OVC, specifically, our mission is to raise awareness of crime victims issues and we support programs that assist all victims in the aftermath of any crime. We provide leadership and funding for a variety of programs, but primarily direct services, focused on understanding what the emerging needs are of the field, where any gaps exist, we want to identify and lift up and replicate best practices for the field, as well as being data-driven in our approach and looking for those technical innovations in victim services.

All right, a little bit more about the ECM funding opportunity, in particular. This slide here highlights just some key details for this opportunity. Please pay attention to the deadlines. There are two separate deadlines. One is for Grants.gov, as well as JustGrants deadlines. The Grants.gov deadline is March 11, just shy of midnight eastern time. And the JustGrants deadline is March 18, just before 9:00 p.m. eastern time. And the JustGrants deadline is March 18, just before 9:00 p.m. eastern time. Please make sure you pay attention and, as we always say, please start early---as early as you can, just

exploring the NOFO, understanding what all the aspects are so that you have plenty of time to get that application in well before March 11.

The anticipated start date for these awards will be July 1, 2026. And then there's some helpful links there to some other resources. As I mentioned before, that pre-application video, that link will take you to webinars for other OVC funding opportunities. But there's also a video there again just on the mechanics of how to submit your application. So, if you're a visual learner that might be a great resource for you to check out.

This funding opportunity has three different categories. These are the same categories and funding amounts as our FY24 ECM NOFO. So here I'll get into more of the details of what each category is about, but I wanted to pay particular attention on this slide to the anticipated award ceilings. So, applicants can apply for any award amount within the specified allowable range for your category. However, that award ceiling is never going to change. It's never going to increase. For example, category one, both partners can apply for up to \$700,000. But it can't exceed \$1.2 million per task force, so there's a little bit of math that you have to do when you're thinking about the total dollar amount that each partner is going to apply for.

The first category of funding is really focused on helping new task forces. Those task forces that might not have received funding before in the past or are new to ECM funding and they're going take that time in that first category really for focusing on starting or building upon or solidifying any sort of multidisciplinary effort that they have in place and take the time to focus on creating a strong foundation of your structure, really outlining roles and responsibilities, as well as developing processes and protocols.

The second category there is to help previously funded ECM task forces that are really able to talk about how the previous funding has helped them in their efforts to focus on human trafficking, identify victims, and offer services. In the third category, is probably the newer category of this program, but we've offered it the last couple of years, is really recognizing the challenges of doing this approach on a statewide level, given the geographic area that you're serving, the network of service provision that might be required across a state, as well as coordination with law enforcement and your overall leadership structure.

So, who can apply? Here it's any government entity that we have identified as a State, County, City, or a Township government, as well as Native American Tribal governments, nonprofits that have a 501(c)(3) status or other institutions of higher education. The NOFO also goes into a little bit more detail about what do we mean by state here. You have the definition that's any state within the U.S., the District of Columbia, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as well. And again, please make sure you read the full section in the NOFO about eligibility.

This particular program is one of the unique programs in that it requires two separate lead applicants. So, this requires a lead law enforcement agency, as well as a lead victim service organization and both entities need to submit your application separately into JustGrants. So, you're both applying together, jointly, but you need to submit separate applications. Each applicant is going to get a separate award, as well, and I want to raise

that applicants that do not apply with an eligible partner will not be considered for funding. So, make sure you know who your partner is, you both understand that you both have to name each other, and you both have to submit your application separately.

A few more details around eligibility for each of the categories. Here it says purpose area. We go back and forth. It's the same thing---interchangeable "purpose area" "category." For area 1---this is for any entity out there that might be newly formed or you've never received funding under this ECM program in the past. Purpose area 2---eligibility here is that the applicants must include at least one eligible applicant that has been a previous recipient of an ECM award. So, that could be the law enforcement partner or could be the service provider partner, but key is there needs to be at least one that is either currently or previously has received OVC ECM funding. Lastly, category three, since that is a statewide category, the applicant must be statewide, a state government, and nonprofit that has 501(c)(3) status.

The whole purpose of why we are putting out the funding for this particular approach is to help you all sustain and create a multidisciplinary co-led task force approach that is focused on increasing victim identification and that is of all forms of human trafficking to increase your provision of services to victims of human trafficking, in addition to seeking justice on their behalf, which can include both investigating and prosecuting traffickers at all levels, local, state, Tribal, and federal. That's the goal is, and then to meet the goal, working on these objectives to increase the number of partners that you have engaged in this work with you, focusing a little bit on strategic planning and a range of initiatives that will seek to identify victims of all forms of human trafficking. You're working to improve procedures and documenting how you are working on these as a task force collectively. Of course, increasing the number of victims identified and that you provide services to and, again, investigating and prosecuting traffickers.

I wanted to highlight the deliverables that are included in this NOFO. Deliverables meaning any tangible or intangible products that we ask you to provide to OVC or complete within the time period of your award. All categories will be asked to ensure that they create a co-leadership model and developed collaborative partnerships. You'll all be working on creating, updating, and implementing a variety of protocols. Working together to develop joint training and an outreach plan, which includes at least one engagement with individuals being served, as well as, providing comprehensive services to victims of trafficking.

There are a few deliverables/activities that are unique or focused primarily on specific categories. So here, if you're a category one, category 3 (New) task force, within the first year, year and a half, you are working on submitting a Memorandum of Understanding to OVC and you're also spending those first year, year and a half, conducting community assessment that gives you an understanding of what is happening in terms of trafficking within your community.

Category 2 task forces will be building upon that structure that was created during category one funding and expanding your set of approaches that you're using for victim identification and prosecution and specifically, moving beyond or in addition to online and vice-style operations, you are providing peer support. Please note this is only if

requested and under the direction of OVC. In addition, category 2 will be responsible for producing a publication describing your efforts to identify labor trafficking. Category 3, as a statewide, depending on if you're brand new or if you've had previous funding you will follow categories one or two in terms of the deliverables. And in addition, category three only is also going to be creating, updating, and implementing a statewide coordination plan.

Please be sure to review the section carefully here around funding priorities. And those applicants that will be seeking priority consideration, it's really important that you specify that and which one in the narrative and potentially in the budget as well, if applicable. These priority considerations are one of many factors that go into our decision making, and it does not necessarily guarantee funding. All of this is noted in the NOFO, as well.

Performance measures are pieces of data that every award recipient is required to submit to OVC and OJP. If you do receive an award, you will definitely get further guidance about what this looks like. If you are curious and want to know a little bit more as part of your review of the NOFO and submitting your application, please do visit the OJP's performance measurement page. There's a link where you can find several OVC and OJP information around just the performance measurement process.

Here's some information about unallowable use of funds. Please be sure that you review the section carefully and understand what these unallowable uses of funds are. They will not be funded. This information can be found in the program description section of the NOFO. The DOJ Grants Financial Guide also provides a lot of detailed information around certain unallowable costs, various activities that would be out of program scope and not funded.

The awards under this NOFO will be made as grants. This NOFO does require match and that is 25 percent. That is a requirement of both applicants. So, both the law enforcement provider as well as the victim service provider must provide that 25-percent match. Be sure that it is clearly indicated in the budget. Again, since there are two separate applications, this percentage can't be changed. So, it's not 50 percent total. For example, one applicant can't say, "Well, we'll do 30 and you'll do 20." It is 25 percent for both applicants.

OK, let's get into a little bit more information about what should be included in applications that you're submitting. There is information around the proposal, the narrative itself, again here, just some mechanical information around what the parameters of that narrative should be---double space, 12-point [font], it should not exceed 25 pages, and should be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants.

The narrative is reviewed and assigned points based upon the different sections. Each section has a certain amount of weight in terms of scoring. Information about the narrative itself is found within pages 20 to 24 in the NOFO. I wanted to pull out and highlight a few key items. Make sure that you are clearly identifying the service provider, law enforcement, and then prosecution partners, if you know who that is. Task Force Director or Coordinator---that particular position is clearly identified in the budget as a

full-time position. That you are identifying specific services to be provided. Depending upon what category you apply, there might be additional or unique information that we are also asking you to provide. On page 21, it's asking category two, so previously funded, to make sure you're describing past ECM efforts using specific examples, and then for category three, that's statewide, on page 22, we want you to make sure you're describing statewide coverage and coordination efforts.

There is a JustGrants web-based form that you should use. Make sure that that budget is reasonable, reflects costs that are allowable and are necessary to successfully and fully implement the project. It should be broken out by year and again, it's reflecting 36 months, or a 3-year time frame. You can't exceed the award ceiling in each category, and make sure that you are clearly explaining those costs and providing detail. If there's a calculation required, make sure you're including that information in the narrative, as well.

Again, some more specific information for this particular NOFO found in pages 22 to 26 for our victim service provider applicants, understand that sufficient funding should be dedicated to services and that can be either directly or potentially through project partners and that you are outlining what those specific services will be within the budget line item. For the law enforcement agencies, ensure that there's sufficient funding for personnel. Note that positions funded 100 percent as over time is discouraged and that personnel can be anyone to support an investigation, it could be prosecutions, analytical functions, outreach, etc.

Equipment is allowable as part of this NOFO, but that if you do propose any equipment or supplies, please ensure that you're demonstrating a clear connection to how that equipment or supply is supporting victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches to victim identification, delivery of your services, as well as investigating and prosecuting these cases. And then also note that there's a requirement regarding travel as far as budget and that we ask you to budget for travel to some OJP- or OVC-sponsored ECM trainings. You can propose other travel or training, as it notes that they will be considered but would require prior approval from OVC post-award.

There are several additional application attachments that we are asking you to submit. They can all be found on pages 26 and 27 in the NOFO. For category one, or those new to ECM funding, or who have not been funded before, we are looking for Letters of Intent. If you are applying under category two, previously funded or your past ECM, we are looking for MOUs. Any relevant resumes, as well as Tribal Authorization Resolution, if that's applicable, as well as a timeline. I think what's really helpful as part of the NOFOs is the checklist.

Once you submit the application to us, it is reviewed and, to ensure that you're moving on to peer review and that you are considered for funding, there's just certain pieces, basic information that must be included for you to move forward and so, for this NOFO, they are outlined here. The application must be responsive to this funding opportunity. So, if you submit an application to build a new building, that potentially is out of scope of this funding opportunity, so be sure you've read through the goal, objectives, deliverables, and that your approach is responsive to the NOFO. You must have a

Standard Form 424, the proposal narrative, as well as the budget. As a reminder, if you fail to submit any of these required documents, your application will not be considered for funding.

These are things you should be hopefully doing now. Checking out your SAM.gov registration and ensure you're registered there, or if you need to renew, you're working on that. This can take some time. Understand that it's a two-step process. First, applying in Grants.gov as well as applying in JustGrants. And, again, both entities are submitting their application separately in these systems. The deadlines for this NOFO are March 11 at 11:59 p.m. and March 18 at 8:59 p.m. Please complete at least 48 hours before the deadline. So, I would encourage you to do even earlier than that.

We absolutely understand the time it takes to pull this information together, but do the best that you can to get this submitted well in advance of those deadlines. Just reinforcing all the information---all the attachments---should be included in your JustGrants submission.

So, then what happens? Once you submit it, we are going to start our process of reviewing all the applications, one of which includes reviewing that application includes just those basic minimum requirements and if they do, it moves on to a peer review process. Then, it moves forward through programmatic and financial review and every application also has a risk review completed. All of these are part of ensuring that there is a fair and competitive process across all of our NOFO opportunities here as well as when we're making award decisions.

If your application goes through and if you receive an award, you get notified. If you do not get selected for an award, you will also be notified. Oftentimes that could take a couple weeks after the awards are made, but you can always visit the OJP Grant Awards website to view a listing of OJP grant awards, which is provided here at the URL. Those individuals or applications that do receive funding will get sent that notification through JustGrants. You will need to accept or decline that award within 45 days of that notification. More details are included in the DOJ Award Acceptance checklist.

I wanted to also point out that any application submitted for a funding opportunity may be funded in future fiscal years. That includes Fiscal Year 2026 and this is always dependent upon a variety of things, primarily the merit of the application itself, as well as any availability of appropriations or federal funding that we have in terms of an approved budget for that fiscal year.

Finally, some resources for you that might be helpful. Grants.gov has a quick start guide so, spend some time on the Grants.gov website if you haven't already. Familiarize yourself with the resources that they have there, a lot of guides, step-by-steps. JustGrants also has a wide range of training resources and a variety of formats that are very user-friendly. I use them myself. And again, different formats if video is better for you, or written step-by-step one pager. So, there's a lot of useful and helpful information on the [JustGrants Training Resource Page](#).

We have again some various checklists and other one-pagers. The DOJ has a Submission Checklist. OJP has an Application Resource Guide. These links are sprinkled throughout the NOFO as well. So, you can find this information in a variety of places. So, the Financial Guide is really our main manual that helps all of those grant-making components that I mentioned before---OJP, but also, the Office on Violence Against Women as well as the COPS Office---helps everyone in fulfilling their fiduciary duties and to safeguard grant funds. So, please make sure that you're familiar with the guide if you're not already. It's got a lot of different laws, rules, regulations that impact your oversight if you receive an award and we regularly refer to it.

There's on this slide 10 topics that are commonly referenced and quick links to them as well. So again, here you'll see allowable and unallowable costs, performance reports, as we mentioned earlier in the slide, costs, performance reports, as we mentioned earlier in the slide, subrecipient monitoring. So, please be sure and familiarize yourself with the DOJ Financial Guide.

A lot more information about OVC and our mission and our other programs and what we fund and helpful resources on our website at [ovc.ojp.gov](http://ovc.ojp.gov). More links to some training sessions you could attend live. You could also download those slides or you can view the recording later. More contact information for JustGrants, as well as the OJP Response Center. Any questions that you might have about the NOFO itself, please submit those to the OJP response Center. So, there's an email as well as a phone number. There's information in the NOFO in just the first couple of pages outlining contact information as well. Submit your questions and we will get back to you. SAM.gov as well as Grants.gov.

So, that is the pre-application webinar for the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force Program to Combat Human Trafficking for FY25. Thank you so much for listening.

**Serena Roche:** Thank you, Alissa, for that thorough overview of this important funding opportunity. We hope you found the information presented here today helpful. If you're interested and eligible for this NOFO, here are the next steps to take. Access the NOFO at [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) and [ovc.ojp.gov](http://ovc.ojp.gov). Register in Grants.gov early, as this process can take several weeks. Review program-specific application deadlines and requirements. Contact the OJP Response Center for assistance with the requirements of this NOFO at 800-851-3420 or [ojp.responsecenter@usdoj.gov](mailto:ojp.responsecenter@usdoj.gov). For more information about the Office for Victims of Crime, please visit [ovc.ojp.gov](http://ovc.ojp.gov). Thank you for your time and we hope to see you again.