

FY 2026 Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside NOFO Webinar Series

Part 1: Submitting the Population Certification Form Transcript

February 11, 2026

LeBretia White: Greetings, everyone, and thank you so much, Ashley. I am LeBretia White, the Director of the Tribal Division and the Office for Victims of Crime. And I must say I'm delighted to welcome you to this informational webinar on how to submit a population certificate.

Your certificate submissions are critical to informing the calculations for the FY 2026 Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside allocations for grant awards. This opportunity is open to all federally recognized Tribes, and this year, we're super excited that there has been an increase in the number of eligible Tribes from 574 to 575, which you may already be aware of with the inclusion of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, so welcome if you're on this particular webinar. Welcome, Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

OVC manages many grant award programs that are funded by the Crime Victims Fund, or CVF, the largest of which is the Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside. The set-aside is 5 percent as set by Congress each year in our appropriations of the CVF funds that come to the Office for Victims of Crime, or OVC, and so that's the amount that we're permitted to spend each year, and it does change from year to year. The amount of funding under the set-aside is based on congressional authorization as shared, and it may change.

For example, the set-aside totaled about \$133 million in FY 2018 when this program was first initiated. In FY 2025, OVC made 231 set-aside awards, totaling over \$79 million. And for those of you who did apply for FY 2025, and you may be in attendance to this particular webinar, you should have received award notifications. Those went out this week.

For FY 2026, we will use the population data you submit by March to calculate each Tribe's allocation for this non-competitive formula program. All federally recognized Tribes, including those that previously received a TVSSA award in FY 2025 or earlier, are invited to submit your population certification. A link to the online form will be placed in the chat for this webinar session.

There is no requirement to request TVSSA funds annually. For example, a Tribe that received awards in FY 2024 and 2025 have the option to decide to not request FY 2026 funding. This decision is perfectly fine, and the same Tribe will also be eligible to request future funding, for instance, in FY 2027 or other subsequent years.

For those of you who have not submitted your population certification or have not sought funding in the past, I want to share with you some unique features of the TVSSA formula program, many of which were implemented after consultations with Tribal leaders over the last several years.

First and foremost, this is a non-competitive program, and I think I've mentioned that already. We are not asking Tribes to compete for this funding. It's a population-based formula program. Tribes tell us what the population to be served is, be it enrolled members, residents of a specific community, or reservation or village. So, the population numbers for the formula come from you, not the federal government.

Allowable expenses include those related to culturally specific victim services, which can include traditional arts, ceremonies, and food as part of a ceremonial healing response to an individual who has undergone trauma and may be seeking to become realigned with the community and restored to health and balance.

Through this grant program, you have the option to spend funds on construction expenses. Grant recipients are using their construction funds to support various projects, including the construction of tiny homes, modular buildings, or renovating an existing building to service as a domestic violence shelter or office space.

Grantees can use their funds to address the needs of families of missing persons. We believe this type of programming creates an opportunity for Tribal communities to direct much needed funding towards serving the loved ones of missing or murdered Indigenous persons. We have also removed the cap on how much funding you can use to support search efforts in individual missing person cases.

So, something new, new for 2026, we are working diligently on a plan for TVSSA applicants to be approved for a 5-year project period and funded in annual increments. The formula process we use now will be used to allocate supplemental funding each year.

With this change in administering TVSSA funding, Tribes will have only one open set-aside grant during a 5-year period. And what does this mean for Tribes? This new way of administering TVSSA funding will reduce burden in submitting required reports and supports a simplified tracking of annual budgets.

This new process will be implemented in response to our 2024 consultation in which Tribal leaders and their designees testified in favor of streamlining the grant program, reducing red tape, and making it much easier for Tribes to use and report on their federal grants. If your Tribe has not previously applied for TVSSA funding, we appreciate your interest by participating in today's webinar, and we look forward to receiving your population certificate.

I will close my remarks by, once again, thanking you for joining us today, expressing appreciation for the tireless efforts that you and your staff, Tribal members, what you do every day to meet the needs of crime victims and their family members. Please know we look forward to providing you with support as you prepare to submit your population certification information by the March 23 due date.

Now, at this time, I will turn over today's presentation to the capable Tanya Miller and other OVC Grant Managers to provide you with critical information on the population certification process. Tanya.

Tanya Miller: Thanks, LeBretia. Good morning and good afternoon, everyone. As mentioned, I'm Tanya Miller, a Grants Manager with the OVC Tribal Division. It's great to be here with you all today. There's one other presenter you'll hear from today, Ramesa, a Grants Management Specialist with the OVC Tribal Division.

We're also joined by three additional OVC Tribal Division team members, Kimberly Woodard, Bonnie Robertson, and our newest pop cert member, Carmen Santiago. Kimberly, Bonnie, and Carmen will be monitoring the Q&A and answering your questions as we proceed with the presentation. Be sure to submit your questions through the Q&A feature instead of the chat. Next slide.

We're going to start with an overview of OVC, the Tribal Division, and the TVSSA program before we walk through the certification form and how to submit it. We'll round things out with a brief review of the additional resources and tools to aid you in finding other U.S. DOJ grant opportunities. We have built in two opportunities for us to pause the presentation to answer some questions, but we may also reserve time at the end of the presentation for Q&A. Let's take a look at OVC. Next slide, please.

The Office for Victims of Crime, which is a part of the Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, administers the Crime Victims Fund, which is financed by fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders and not from tax dollars. Each year, Congress allocates a portion of proceeds in the CVF fund to OVC as a part of the U.S. Department of Justice appropriation bill. This funding supports programs to states, territories, and Tribes, as well as many OVC discretionary programs from OVC.

OVC is organized into five divisions, including the Tribal Division. Next, we're going to learn more about what the Tribal Division does.

OVC's Tribal Division is led by our Director, LeBretia White, and one Deputy Director, Doresa Payton. Our staff includes 15 managers and a senior Tribal Affairs Specialist. We manage more than 900 grant awards and we work very closely with more than 300 individual grantees, including federally recognized Indian Tribes, Tribal consortia, authorized designees of federally recognized Tribes, and non-profit Tribal organizations who are providing victim services throughout Indian country.

Now, let's pause for a poll.

Before we start an overview of this year's set-aside program, we'd like to gain a better understanding of how familiar you are with the TVSSA program. Today's polling question is, did your community participate in the Tribal Set-Aside Formula Grant Program in FY 2025 or previous years?

Okay. Looking at the results, it's great to see that we have about 90 percent of you that have participated in the Tribal Victim Services Grant Formula Program in previous years, so we want to welcome you back. And those of you that are new, we are so excited to have you. All right, so I'll continue with the presentation.

OVC's Victim Services Set-Aside Formula Grant Program, also known as the TVSSA program, provides support to Tribal communities to enhance services for victims of crime through activities that address the needs of a wide variety of crime victims in Tribal communities.

The TVSSA awards are used to improve services for victims of crime through activities such as direct services for crime victims, traditional healing practices, needs assessment and strategic planning, developing and implementing new programs for crime victims, expanding existing programs, conducting community outreach and education, and training for service providers about crime victimization and available services.

Also, purchasing and procuring tangible items or supplies related to victim services and other activities as needed to address the individualized needs of victims and any type of crime victim in Tribal communities. Applicants are encouraged to use grant funds to support trauma-informed and victim-centered services that reflect your Tribal community's culture, values, and traditions. Next slide, please.

Since the Tribal Set-Aside program began in 2018, OVC has made hundreds of awards, and these awards provide healing to services for thousands of victims in Tribal communities across the United States. The types of crime victims that can be served with OVC grant funding is very broad.

An applicant may choose to submit a grant proposal that addresses all types of crime in their Tribal community or they can choose to address a specific type of crime or develop a specific new service that addresses a particular crime. Funds can also be used to access training and professional development to build staff capacity to serve any type of crime victim. Next slide, please.

This slide summarizes some of the most important things to keep in mind about the TVSSA program. We will take a closer look at some of the program's features in a few minutes. As of now, there will be an FY 2026 TVSSA Notice of Funding Opportunity, but we don't know the amount of the funds that might be available through the FY 2026 set-aside funding.

In looking at the key aspects of the Tribal set-aside program, each applicant's award amount is determined using a formula. Applicants can choose their award start date of October 1 or January 1. Applicants can choose their award period from 12 to 60 months. And applicants who wish to be considered for funding must submit their Population Certification Form and submit their traditional application in Grants.gov.

As some of you all know, the set-aside program is not enacted by statute, but rather it has been authorized by Congress each fiscal year since 2018. Let's take a look at who's eligible to apply for TVSSA.

All right, there are only three categories of eligible applicants for the TVSSA program: individual federally recognized Tribes, a consortium of federally recognized Tribes, and applicants who are acting as an authorized designee of a federally recognized Tribe. Now, we're going to take a closer look at the last two categories, consortia and authorized designees.

This slide summarizes what an authorized designee is and offers examples of who can act as one. The key takeaway is that almost any legal entity can act as the authorized designee of a federally recognized Tribe.

What is most important is that an applicant seeking TVSSA funding as an authorized designee of a Tribe, demonstrate that they have the legal authority to submit an application on behalf of a federally recognized Tribe. Next, we'll review a special application requirement for authorized designee of Tribal consortium applicants.

Tribal consortia and authorized designee applicants are the only two categories of TVSSA applicants who must submit a Tribal resolution with their applications. As detailed by this slide, there are alternative means of satisfying the Tribal resolution requirement. The link in the slide will take you to OJP's Grant Application Resource Guide, which has more detailed discussion of how to satisfy this requirement. We will also like to add that in the chat now.

All right, so you'll hear more about this in a few minutes, but Tribal consortia and authorized designees must satisfy the Tribal resolution requirement during Part 1 of the TVSSA application process. Tribal consortia and authorized designees who do not submit their resolutions concurrently with their Population Certification Form will not receive a funding allocation amount and will not be invited to submit a full application in Part 2 of the application process. Now, we'll take a closer look at the common scenario involving Tribal consortia and authorized designee applicants.

If you're applying for a Tribal consortium or authorized designee applicant, and the federally recognized Tribe who authorize you to apply for funding on their behalf submits their own Population Certification Form, OVC will accept the Tribe's

submission. For authorized designee applicants, this means that you will not be invited to submit a full TVSSA application in Part 2 of the TVSSA application process.

Tribal consortia applicants can still be invited to submit a full application in Part 2 of the application process, but OVC will reduce the total population to be served by the population size of each Tribe who backs out of the consortium application. For example, let's assume a consortium application submits a Population Certification Form for five Tribes whose combine total population is 1,500.

If two of the Tribes included in that total decide to submit their own Population Certification Form, and one of the Tribes has a population of 150 and the other has a population of 400, OVC would still include the Population Certification Form submitted by the consortium when allocating TVSSA funds. But instead of receiving an award based on a population of 1,500 people, the allocation amount will be based on the population of 950.

Now, we'll talk about the award period. As mentioned previously, OVC does not know how much funding each applicant will be allocated this fiscal year because we do not know the amount of the set-aside and we have not received the Population Certification Form. The total number of forms and the population total included in those forms are necessary for OVC to determine the individual award amount for each applicant.

For FY 2026, you'll need to have an option to choose between 12 and 60 months for your award period of performance. So, as mentioned previously, submitting a Population Certification Form is a part of the two-part TVSSA application process.

Staff from OVC's Tribal Division will review each certification form for accuracy, completeness, and eligibility. We will contact you if there are any technical issues with your form. We kindly ask that you please respond to our inquiry within 48 hours if we reach out to you.

Right now, you don't need to submit any forms other than the Population Certification Form and a Tribal resolution if you are applying as a Tribal consortium or an authorized designee. If you are invited to submit a full application as Part 2 of the application process, you'll need to submit all of the required application components in JustGrants. A date to submit Part 2 has not yet been determined. At this time, we'll pause for questions here.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: Tanya.

Tanya Miller: Yes.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: There is a question in the chat, and it is about, "Who is the population certification submitted to?"

Tanya Miller: You can submit that online.

LeBretia White: And the link is in the chat to the form as well. If you check the chat box, you'll see the link to the form to submit.

Tanya Miller: Do we have any more questions, Carmen?

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: Yes, there is a follow-up question. "For the population, can the certified official be the Tribal administrator?"

Kimberly Woodard: This is Kimberly Woodard with OVC. Your certifying official needs to be someone who has the legal authority to submit an application on behalf of the Tribe and who can attest to all the items that are in that bulleted list at the end of the certification form.

That would typically be someone who serves in the role of, say, an authorized representative, so that would be the same person who could accept the grant awarded terms and conditions on behalf of the Tribe. Even if that person is not completing the form, that is the person you would need to identify as a certifying official.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: There is another question. "Did you say that a resolution is required to be submitted with a population certification?"

Kimberly Woodard: The resolution is only required for authorized designee applicants and Tribal consortia applicants. Individually federally recognized Tribes who are submitting their own application do not need to submit an authorizing resolution.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: Thank you, Kimberly. There is another question, "Just to clarify, a Tribal consortium can submit the population certification to apply, and if a Tribe within the Tribal consortium decides to apply, they can, and OVC would reduce the population from the Tribal consortium?"

Kimberly Woodard: Yes, that is an accurate summary.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: Right, thank you. Great questions.

Tanya Miller: Okay, so we have another time reserved for a Q&A break later in the presentation, so at this time, I'm going to turn things over to Ramesa, but I just want to just emphasize that please continue to submit your questions in the Q&A section of the webinar. I'll now pass things over to Ramesa. Thank you.

Ramesa Pitts: Thank you, Tanya. As Tanya mentioned, my name is Ramesa, and I'm one of the many grant managers in the OVC Tribal Division. Moving into the next segment of the presentation, let's look at who needs to submit a Population Certification Form.

As some of you may recall, OVC previously allowed applicants to resubmit the same population form each year in the past when we used a fillable PDF version of the form. However, as of FY 2023, OVC transitioned to using an online form. The particular data

submitted in the online form is then downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet, which makes the internal review process more efficient and helps us to ensure that the information is accurate and complete.

The transition to the online version of the form means that all applicants must submit a new Population Certification Form each year. Please know that you can enter the same population data that you submitted in the past into the FY 2026 form if nothing has changed.

One question that comes to mind is, where do you go to find the [Population Certification Form](#)? Links to the FY 2026 TVSSA form and other related resources can be located on the [OVC TVSSA homepage](#), and the link for that homepage will be dropped into the chat. Now, we will go over how to complete the form.

The entity background information page is your starting point in completing the Population Certification Form. This page should look familiar to those of you who've submitted Population Certification Forms in the past or in previous years. Please make sure that the name you enter into this section for your Tribe or your organization matches the legal name as it is in SAM.gov.

I encourage you to go into [SAM.gov](#), look at the Tribe's name or the organization name there, make sure that name matches the exact name that you enter into this section of the Population Certification Form. Please note that all TVSSA applicants must have an active SAM.gov registration before you can submit Part 2 of the application. If you have never registered in SAM.gov or have an expired registration, you are strongly encouraged to update your information as soon as possible.

For the entity background section, we ask for two points of contact that we can reach out to with questions or follow-up information. Please enter the names of two separate or individual people who are familiar with the certification form as well as your entity's responses and the status of your entity's application.

Most importantly, I want to mention to please note that the email confirmation will go to the address listed for the primary point of contact, so please enter the correct email address for the primary point of contact. Additionally, OVC will also receive a copy for its records as well.

Next is the applicant type and documentation section. This is where you will be asked to choose your applicant type. If you choose Authorized Designee or Tribal Consortium, as mentioned previously, you'll be asked to upload the authorizing Tribal resolution or a legal equivalent.

As we heard earlier, authorized designee and Tribal consortium applicants are only eligible to apply for TVSSA funds if they have been authorized to submit an application on behalf of a federally recognized Tribe or Tribes.

The resolution that you submit will serve to document that you have satisfied the TVSSA eligibility requirements by obtaining the required document or authorization from a federally recognized Tribe to submit an application. OVC will not be able to consider your application if you do not submit a resolution or its legal equivalent.

Please also note that you can only upload one file, but it can be a zip file. If your file exceeds 250 megabytes, please reach out to discuss how to transfer your documentation. Next slide, please.

As it relates to your population data, OVC recognizes that Tribes are diverse. Federal datasets on Tribal populations are imperfect and no single dataset currently available adequately represents all Tribes. That said, please note that your population source response must be sufficiently detailed enough for OVC and/or a potential future auditor to independently locate the information source.

For an example, U.S. census would be way too vague, but on the other hand, if you enter 2020 U.S. census, this information alerts the reader to the specific U.S. census that you consulted to find the total population to be served. In general, OVC suggests using a population number that is well established for the applicant Tribe and that bears a reasonable relation to the services that the Tribe anticipates providing to victims.

OVC suggests that Tribes use one of the following as the basis for the certification, but will most certainly accept others. For an example, you could use the Tribal resident population, another one would be the Tribal enrollment or the service population. Next slide, please.

Certify and submit. Once you've collected all of your data and verified that the certifying official approves its accuracy, you are ready to add the certifying official's information to the form. And Kimberly has explained who that certifying official could be.

Once you've entered this data, please carefully review everything that you've already entered on your Population Certification Form. Once you have carefully reviewed your responses, then you should move forward with submitting the form. Next slide, please.

After your submission of the certification form, the individual who submitted the form, as well as the primary and secondary points of contact, will receive an automated email, confirming that OVC has received your entity submission.

The email will include the data that you enter into the form, and if you attach a resolution, a copy of the resolution will be attached to the confirmation email as well. If you do not receive a confirmation email or if you identify a data error, please send an email to the Tribal set-aside email inbox for technical assistance.

This slide summarizes your option for hands-on support as you prepare and submit your [Population Certification Form](#). More specifically, if you have technical questions

about the [Population Certification Form](#), eligibility requirements, submission deadlines, or other related questions about the TVSSA program, as a reminder, you can email your questions to the OVC Tribal set-aside email inbox.

Additionally, if you already have an assigned OVC Grant Manager, you can contact that individual requesting help with completing your certification form as well. We will pause here, and I'm going to turn it over to Carmen to see if we have any additional questions at this time.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: I think I see a question, Ramesa, is, "Where on your previous grant application can you locate the population certification you had submitted?"

Kimberly Woodard: That is not going to be in JustGrants. When you submitted that form, you should have received a confirmation email. As stated on the form, you should keep a copy of that receipt for at least 3 years for audit purposes. If you cannot locate it, you can email our OVC Tribal set-aside email account, and we will try to find that and send you a copy of what we have.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: Thank you, Kimberly. I don't see any other questions right now.

Ramesa Pitts: Thank you, Kimberly and Carmen. We are going to return to the presentation now, but please remember to continue to add your questions to the Q&A. Next, we are going to talk about what will happen over the course of the next few months with the TVSSA application process.

Over the next few months, OVC will complete a number of tasks critical to the TVSSA award-making process. Once we have completed the internal review of all of the Population Certification Forms and applied the TVSSA population-based formula, we will determine award allocation amounts based on the amount of the set-aside, the total number of Population Certification Forms that are approved to move on to Part 2 of the application process, and the total population to be served by each applicant.

The certifying official identified on your form will receive an invitation to submit a full application under the TVSSA Program Notice of Funding Opportunity, along with a table organized by state. The table will be organized by state and applicant name, which shows the total amount of funding allocated to each applicant. The table will also be available on OVC's TVSSA website.

We are nearing the end of our formal presentation, but before we wind things down, we'd like to highlight some important resources and upcoming events that we think you should know about. Next slide, please.

As it relates to resources, we encourage you to visit OVC's TVSSA webpage for the latest information on OVC's Tribal-specific programming and initiatives, including materials and information to help you with the FY 2026 TVSSA application process. Here's where you will also have the opportunity to hear about OVC's grant opportunities as they are released. Next slide, please.

For your information, OVC administers many discretionary grant programs for which Tribes are eligible to apply, including the largest share of grant funds authorized by the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act. If you subscribe to OVC's news service, you can receive announcements about these funding opportunities as they are released.

You can also sign up to receive notices from other OJP offices on a wide range of public safety issues. That said, there's also another important resource to help you find FY 2026 grant funding opportunities from all of U.S. DOJ's grant-making components. Next slide, please.

Each fiscal year, U.S. DOJ publishes a searchable database of all of the funding opportunities that OJP, COPS, and OVW have issued or plan to issue. The Department of Justice Grants Program Plan, the FY 2026 plan has not yet been released, but we encourage you to bookmark the page and check back for the FY 2026 update. The link is embedded in this slide as you can see, but we will also post the link in the chat as well.

With that said, we have reached the end of the formal presentation, and we'll now answer any additional questions that you may have about the TVSSA program and the application process as well. If you have questions, please place those questions in the Q&A if you have not already done so, and I'm going to defer back to Carmen to see if we have any additional questions that have not already been answered.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: No additional questions in the chat.

Ramesa Pitts: Thank you. And on this very next slide, that said, we really have reached the end of today's webinar. On behalf of OVC, we'd like to thank each of you for joining us today. We will be posting the PowerPoint slides and a recording of the webinar on the OVC TVSSA webpage.

Please remember to submit your population form no later than 11:59 p.m. Alaska time on Monday, March 23, 2026. As a reminder, please remember to submit your questions or concerns about the TVSSA program to the OVC Tribal set-aside email inbox [OVCTribalsetaside@ojp.usdoj.gov] or contact your assigned OVC Grant Manager.

Carmen Santiago-Roberts: Ramesa, there is a question in the chat, I'm sorry. "Is this the first step before the fiscal year 2026 application?"

Kimberly Woodard: This is the first step in the FY 2026 application process. If you do not submit a certification form, you will not be considered for an FY 2026 TVSSA

allocation. So, if you are an individual federally recognized Tribe, all you need to do is submit the form.

If you are applying as the authorized designee or a Tribal consortium, you need to submit the form and you also need to attach an authorizing resolution for every Tribe on whose behalf you are seeking funding. If you meet that criteria, once we get an allocation, once we get the set-aside, we will make the allocations and you will be invited to submit the second half of the application sometime this spring.

As we have stated, that date has not yet been identified, but again, you will not receive an allocation if you do not submit a form and the authorizing resolution for consortia and authorized designees only.

Ramesa Pitts: Thank you, Kimberly. And again, we'd like to thank you for joining today's webinar. Thanks, everyone, and take care.