

[Transcript from the OVC Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist Program preapplication webinar, which was held March 3, 2020. The archived webinar can be found at: <https://www.ovc.gov/grants/webinars.html>.]

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Good afternoon, everybody. And welcome to today's webinar, OVC Fiscal Year 2020 Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist Program hosted by the Office for Victims of Crime.

At this time, we are going to turn it over to today's presenters.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Hello, everyone. My name is Kareem Izlar-Mathis and I am a Victim Program Specialist with the Office for Victims of Crime. I look forward to today's webinar and I look forward to today's experience. And I would now like to pass it over to my OVC colleague, Ms. Laura Ivkovich.

LAURA IVKOVICH: Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm a Policy Analyst at the Office for Victims of Crime and I have the pleasure of overseeing the LEV Program for the Office, so I'm here to switch in and out with Kareem as we present and hopefully answer your questions at the end of the session. And I will turn it back to Kareem.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Thank you, Laura. Really appreciate that. Well, today's webinar will outline the following in the presentation and it goes as, one, the mission of DOJ and OVC as well as [two] a breakdown of the solicitation, which will include the following, [a] program focus, b. required documents, c. application deadlines, award amount, and timelines. Three, application evaluation. Four, how to apply. And five, questions and answers.

The U.S. Department of Justice under this program, we wish to further the Department's mission by assisting law enforcement to better support victims through the criminal justice process.

OVC's Mission Statement will be to have us OVC--we're committed to enhancing the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to providing leadership in changing policies and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

During the program overview, I plan to discuss as to how OVC will provide grants to state, tribal, and/or local law enforcement agencies to hire [victim] service specialists to improve the overall response to victims of crime with a strong focus on reaching and serving victims in high-crime areas and communities particularly affected by violence. Grantees, you all will use program funds to hire victim service specialists, and successful applicants will ensure the development and training of these hired specialists.

The scope of this program--the--With the scope of this program, OVC looks to assist state, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies in developing or enhancing specialist--oh, sorry, enhancing victim specialist programs that connect victims and families to much-needed services. Up to 25 grants across four purpose areas that we are looking for. We are looking for the four purpose areas that will consist of small, which would be less than 100 full-time sworn officers; medium, which would be 101 to 999 full-time sworn officers. Large will be 1,000 officers or more--sorry, 1,000 or more full-time sworn officers. Last but not least, tribal agencies, federally recognized tribal governments with local--sorry, with the law enforcement functions. My apologies. Next slide.

The objective of this grant--of this solicitation will be to support law enforcement agencies in identifying victims, providing victims' rights information, and more quickly ensuring that victim

services are provided to meet the emotional, psychological, and/or physical needs of crime victims.

Program Deliverables based around this solicitation reads as follows, provision of, or referrals to, support services, such as crisis intervention services, emergency transportation to court, short-term child or elder care services, temporary housing/shelter, and security measures. Assistance in participating in criminal justice proceedings, as well as assistance obtaining state compensation and/or state-issued federal assistance for forensic medical examinations. Provision of other allowable victim assistance services identified by the grantee. Also a plan for how victim specialist programs will be developed or enhanced, implemented, and sustained at the conclusion of the 36-month project period.

Now, I will turn it over to my OVC colleague, Ms. Laura Ivkovich, and she will speak about eligibility and other priority areas. Laura.

LAURA IVKOVICH: Thanks, Kareem. And this is one of the questions that we typically get the most of, so I want to just be pretty clear about eligibility. We are looking at public law enforcement agencies, so state, local, and tribal agencies. The priority considerations will be given to applicants who have not received funding under either the 2018 LEV Program or the 2019 LEV Program because those are 3-year programs. They're already running, so we're not going to take those-- from those grantees. All recipients and subrecipients, including for-profit organizations, must forgo any profit or management fee.

Also under the solicitation, only one application by any particular applicant entity will be considered. An entity may however be proposed as a subrecipient or a subgrantee in more than one application. OVC may elect to fund applications submitted under the fiscal 2020 solicitation in future years, depending on, among other considerations, the merit of the applications and the availability of appropriations. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

I just want to make a note as well about page 6 and how the grants are going to be funded. We are talking about agencies that have full-time sworn officers. So, if you have a question about eligibility, please keep that in mind. If you don't have sworn officers and you're not tribal, then we're probably not going to be eligible. So I just want to put that out there now, but do pay attention to page 4 and 6 on that.

Next, on priority areas in fiscal 2020, OJP will give priority consideration, and this is new, to applications that address specifically challenges that our rural communities are facing. Applications that demonstrate that the individuals who are intended to benefit grants reside in high-poverty areas or persistent poverty counties, and applications that offer enhancements to public safety and economically distressed communities, such as Qualified Opportunity Zones.

So to explore that a little further, also on page 5, you can read more about it. Applicants under the rural priority must describe what makes the geographic service area rural, using, for instance, U.S. Census or other appropriate government data; how insulated the area--or excuse me, isolated the area is from needed services; and how they will address specific challenges in those rural communities. Applicants--applications under the poverty priority must demonstrate that individuals who are intended to benefit reside in high-poverty areas or persistent poverty counties. And I'm just going to stop there and say the high-poverty area means any census tract with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent and persistent poverty county--counties means any county that has had 20 percent or more of its population living in poverty over the last 30 years. Again, this information

can be found on page 5. For resources as well, we also are looking at applicants under the Qualified Opportunity Zones, or QOZs. Those must be specified and how the project will enhance those public safety--the public safety in those zones.

Going on to the Federal Award Information, we have four different categories. This information is on page 6. This is very similar to the last 3 years that we've been doing the LEV Program, but with a little bit of a difference. The award amounts will be cut by four different ways. Small, so those awards would be up to \$90,000 per year, over 3 years with a maximum of up to \$270,000. The medium or mid-sized would be awards of up to \$150,000 per year, over 3 years, so that would be \$450,000 total. Large size would be awards of up to \$275,000 per year, over 3 years with a maximum to \$825,000. And then tribal, awards of up to \$150,000 per year, over 3 years with a maximum up to \$450,000. The project period, as Kareem mentioned earlier, is 36 months. The period will begin on October 1st, the fiscal year October 1, 2020, and end at the end of the fiscal year September 30, 2023. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. Kareem.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Thank you, Laura. I appreciate that. Now I will discuss Grant versus Cooperative Agreement. Now with a grant, a grant is a legal instrument of financial assistance in which the awarding agency maintains an oversight and monitoring role without substantial involvement with awarding agency, which would be OVC. In reference to a cooperative agreement, in a cooperative agreement, there is a substantial involvement between awarding agency and recipient during the performance period. And the awarding agency closely participates in the performance of this program. Awards will be made as a grant under this solicitation.

Now I will discuss application and what must be included. This is a very important section. Please pay attention. The following application elements must be included in the application submission. A Project Narrative that contains a description of the issue, which is 20 percent of the application score. Project Design and Implementation, which is 40 percent of the application score. Capabilities and Competencies, which will be 20 percent of the application score. Plan for Collecting Performance Measurement Data, 10 percent of the application score. And last but not least, very important, Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative which is 10 percent of the application score. If you do not submit documents noted with the asterisk, which will be the Project Narrative and your Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative, the application will not be considered for funding. Again, if you do not have those items that are mentioned with the asterisk next to it, which will be the Project Narrative and the Budget Detail Worksheet, the application will not be considered for funding. So please make sure you have those elements when you submit your application.

Okay. Applications must also include the SF-424; a Project Abstract; the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable); the Financial Management Questionnaire, also known to us Feds as the FCQs, the SF-LLL; the Disclosure of Pending Applications; Disclosure and Justification - DOJ High Risk Grantees; Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable); Disclosure of Process Related to Executive Compensation; Documentation of Rural Challenges; Documentation of High-Poverty or Persistent Poverty Counties; and last but not least, Documentation of Federally Designated Qualified Opportunity Zones. Wow, try saying that fast.

Next I will discuss Program Narrative Format. The program narrative should be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point Times New Roman font, as well as 1-inch margins. Please make sure you do not--to not exceed 15 pages. Also please, please make sure that your pages are numbered. If the Program Narrative fails to comply with these length-related restrictions, OVC may negatively consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decisions.

Now I will speak about the Budget Detail Worksheet, a very important part of your application. Please use the DOJ standard form, Excel and PDF versions found online. Make sure to combine budget detail and budget narrative into one single document, people. Also, personal costs should relate to the key personnel for the project. The budget should include adequate funding to fully implement the project, broken out by year, reflecting 36 months. The Budget Narrative must--sorry, the Budget Narrative should be mathematically sound and correspond with information in the Budget Detail Worksheet.

Data Collection. If you are a grantee, you will submit quarterly performance data through the Transforming Victim Service module in OVC's Performance Measurement Tool, also known as the PMT. As an applicant, you should review the applicable performance measures at <https://www.ovc.gov/grants/pdfxt/TVS-questionnaire.pdf>. As an applicant, your application should demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the performance data reporting requirements for this grant program and detail how the applicant will gather the required data if funded.

Now I will discuss the Review Process. The peer reviewers (internal, external, or a combination) will review the applications to ensure they meet basic minimum requirements, also known as BMR to us Fed people, such as the application was submitted by an eligible type of applicant. The application requested funding within programmatic funding constraints (if applicable). The application was responsive to the scope of the solicitation. Also before award decisions are made, OJP also reviews information related to the degree of risk posed by the applicant.

Now another important part, which is really important, How to Apply. So, How to Apply, first you would want to make sure all applicants must register in and submit applications through Grants.gov. Again, please make sure you register and submit all your applications through the Grants.gov website. Registration steps are outlined in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#). There are a lot of steps. Please, I cannot stress this enough, start early. Please do not wait until the last minute. We do not want you guys scrambling at the last minute trying to get your applications in. So please, once again, start early and do not wait until the last minute. Applications are due April 20th by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time. Again, they will be due April 20th by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time. Submit application at least 72 hours prior to the due date. Again, please submit application at least 72 hours prior to the due date. Call the Grants.gov Customer Service Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 for any technical difficulties. They are open 24 hours, 7 days a week, as noted in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

Also some important information about the SAM.gov alert website. If you are a new entity registering in the System for Award Management, also known as SAM, or an existing entity that needs to update or renew your SAM registration, you must submit an original signed notarized letter appointing the authorized Entity Administrator within 60 days of the registration activation. Notarized letters must be submitted via U.S. Postal Service Mail.

Now I will discuss Federal Award Administration Information. Please see the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide for information on award notifications and instructions. Award notifications made by September 30, 2020 via email through GMS to the individuals listed in the application as the point of contact and the authorizing official. Detailed instructions on how to access and view the award documents and steps to take in GMS to start the award acceptance process. There are a lot of legal requirements, so please, please, please read carefully.

Now I will discuss with you all Technical Problems or Requests for Late Submission. See "Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues" in the How To Apply (Grants.gov) section

in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide. The following conditions generally are insufficient to justify late submissions. Failure to register in SAM or Grants.gov in sufficient time. (SAM registration and renewal can take as long as 10 business days to complete.) Once again, that SAM registration and renewal can take as long as 10 business days to complete. The information transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours, so please keep those times in mind when you are trying to register. Once again, that will be 10 days to complete the renewal. And the information to transfer from SAM to Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours. Failure to follow Grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its website. Failure to follow each instruction in the OJP solicitation. And last but not least, technical issues with the applicant's computer or information technology environment, such as issues with firewalls or browser incapability. Sorry. An applicant that experiences--oh, Sorry, I just wanted to note, an applicant that experiences unforeseen Grants.gov technical issues beyond its control that prevent it from submitting its application by the deadline must email the OVC contact identified below within 24 hours after the application deadline to request approval, to submit its application after the deadline. Please see page 2 and the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide.

Attachment Tips. OVC strongly recommends that applicants use descriptive names when labeling attachments. Some good examples will be for your file name, we could name it Budget Detail Worksheet, and that will let us know that this is your Budget Detail Worksheet as well as your narrative. As well as another good file name could be for your Letters of Support, which will tell OVC these are your letters of support, or even if you have MOUs. Bad examples will be file name--excuse me, file name Budget. That's very vague. Please be a little bit more detailed. As well as file name File 4. That will be very hard for us to understand what can be in that file. So for us to read them quickly, we will really appreciate you guys [could] be as detailed as possible when naming these files.

Next will be, I'll be discussing Adding Attachments. Grants.gov has two categories of files for attachments, which are mandatory and optional. OJP receives all files attached in both categories. Do not embed mandatory attachments within another file. Please do not do that. Also, applicants must use the Add Attachment button to attach a file to their application. Do not click the paperclip icon to attach files. I know it's kind of quick and easy to do, but please, do not click the paperclip icon to attach files. This action will not attach the files to the application. After adding an attachment, select the View Attachment button to confirm you attached the correct files. Also, to remove the files, select the delete attachment button.

Attachments and checking for errors. Please see "Registration and Submission Steps (Grants.gov)" of the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide. Applicants can check for errors in their application via Check Application button on the Forms tab of the Manage Workspace page. The button is active if the set of forms in the workspace matches those required in the application package. If you receive a Cross-Form Errors message after clicking the Check Application button, please refer to the Cross-Form Errors help article for more detailed information about this validation error.

All right. So once again, submission deadline will be at 11:59 Eastern Standard Time on April 20, 2020. Again, that will be April 20th, 11:59 Eastern Standard Time, not 12:00, but at 11:59 p.m., on April 20th. I cannot stress that--stretch that enough. Please do not wait until 11:58 or 11:58--11:59 to hit the Submit button, please click it at 11:59--11:55, but do not click that Submit button at 12:00 because if it's 12:00, you will not be able to submit your application. So once again, sorry to reiterate it, but I must, April 20th, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, please make sure you submit your--that will be your deadline. OJP urges all applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the application due date.

I will now send the mic back to Laura.

LAURA IVKOVICH: Thanks, Kareem.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: You're welcome.

LAURA IVKOVICH: I appreciate you walking us through all the things that are necessary to submit an application for review and consideration. So all of that, please remember that the application is only the first step of a very involved relationship with the federal government. There's lots of federal regulations associated with executing and management of the federal grant. We have great Victim Specialists and Grant Monitors on board here at the Office for Victims of Crime to help you out. But this is a very involved process. You must be willing and able to abide by all of those regulations and there are serious consequences associated with not following those regulations. Do ask for help, read everything, and ask others to read and discuss with you so that you have that--you're ahead of the game on that.

For a few tips, let's also look at starting your application process early. Kareem mentioned 72 hours but you can start way sooner than that. The application is actually up and alive now. I mean, the solicitation, excuse me. So you could begin your process now, adding to it as you go, and then click Submit when you're ready. So start the application process early, registrations in Grants.gov, identify your partner, if you have any, schedule any planning meetings with your proposed partners, that's how we're going to start now.

And then this is very important, apply under the correct competition ID. The main competition ID is OVC-2020, for the year, -17556. This is also found in the solicitation on pages 1 and 11. That's the main LEV solicitation. But you have to identify which purpose area you're going to apply under. Again, if you're a small agency, you need to apply under OVC-2020-17557. If you're a mid-sized agency, it's OVC-2020-17558. If you're a large agency, it's OVC-2020-17559. And if you're tribal, it's OVC-2020-17560.

You also have to use the Budget Detail Worksheet template, that's required. You must follow the same format headings, and subheadings, subsections, and the like, if you're not using the template for the critical element.

And then you ask for the amount of funding that you need. Again, those are broken down by those purpose areas, small, mid-sized agencies, large, and tribal. Those are all detailed in the solicitation. So you want to make sure you're falling into the right bucket for your location and your submission.

And I'm going to turn it now over to MJ, Mary Jo, to take us to the end.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Hi everybody, just going over a few slides to kind of summarize some of the things that were mentioned during the webinar and a couple other items that will help you. We invite you to stay connected with OVC and there's a couple ways that you can do that, you can subscribe to their email newsletter and there's a new feature called Text to Subscribe and you can do that by texting your email address to OJP OVC (and include your email address) to 468-311. And that will subscribe you to the email and you'll receive that in your email box. Just to note though, the text itself message and data rates may apply. You can also go online and subscribe to the email and there's that very long URL listed there,

[\[https://puborder.ncjrs.gov/Listservs/subscribe\\_newsfromovc.asp\]](https://puborder.ncjrs.gov/Listservs/subscribe_newsfromovc.asp) you can also just go directly to the OVC website and look for the subscription.

And OVC does have a social media appearance and you can follow them on Facebook, Twitter, as well as YouTube. The URLs for those items are also located on this slide.

So we are going in a few seconds here, to start answering your questions. But if for some reason, we do not have the time to get to all the questions that we have--that have been submitted because we're about--we only have about 20 minutes left in the webinar. You can submit those questions to what is called the National Criminal Justice Reference Service and they will work with Kareem and Laura to get an answer to you. They are located at <https://www.ncjrs.gov>. You can also email them your question at [grants@ncjrs.gov](mailto:grants@ncjrs.gov), or you can call them, they are available at 1-800-851-3420. They are open 10:00 to 6:00, Monday through Friday and they are open an extra couple of hours, I believe, the day the solicitation closes. However, as it was stressed multiple times during this webinar, you're not going to wait until the day the solicitation closes, you're going to submit it at least 20--72 hours in advance. But if you do need them, they are there.

We also invite you to sign up to--for their newsletter that comes out bimonthly, called JUSTINFO, or their weekly funding newsletter that comes out every Friday. The funding newsletter may be of particular interest because it will announce new funding opportunities that are not only offered from the Office for Victims of Crime but from the other agencies within the Office of Justice Programs. They'll announce webinars that will be held in reference to those solicitations and they'll also let you know when artifacts for the webinars have been posted. So it's a really great way to stay on top of opportunities that are available.

If you need technical assistance submitting your application, as mentioned previously, Grants.gov is where you need to go. They have a Customer support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035. They are open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day except on federal holidays. You can also email them at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

And this is a slide that lists a series of resources. Many of these were already mentioned throughout the webinar but these are the actual links. So we have the OJP [Grant] Application Resource Guide, the DOJ [Grants] Financial Guide, the Budget Detail Worksheet. When we go through and work through the questions I will leave this slide up here so that you can refer back to it as well as copy down some of the links that were provided. In addition, the links were added to the chat feature so you can grab it from the chat feature and copy that to a word document. As a reminder, I mentioned this earlier before we began, the slides, a recording, and a transcript for this webinar will be posted in the--to the OVC website. It will take approximately 5 to 10 business days. We will send an email to everyone that registered. So people that registered and didn't attend will get--have the opportunity to view and listen to this webinar. And that email will contain links directly to each of those items that I mentioned.

So at this time we are going to get into the Q & A box or the Q & A that have come in. Just give me a second to get to the top because I'm going to read them off according to how they were submitted.

"So we are a County District Attorney's Office and received your grant RFP. Are we ineligible to apply because we are not a police agency?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: So I'm going to take this. This is Laura Ivkovich. This is a question that's come up year after year and I just want to point back to the title of the solicitation. It is the Law

Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist Program. And also the intent of the program, we really want to make sure that we're meeting victims early, right after the victimization. That's why having it in a law enforcement-based, in a system that has sworn law officers who respond as quickly as possible to the immediate needs of crime victims is the intent of the program, to make sure we have those capabilities, and those services available to meet the needs of victims as quickly as possible. We would certainly encourage any county attorney's office to work very closely with some of the programs that are receiving grant funds to hire victim specialists because often those programs do need to coordinate their services as well as hand-off if a case ultimately does go--if somebody's actually apprehended, then actually is indicted, and then actually goes to trial, or goes for a plea and sentencing. So those hand-offs are very important. So certainly making those connections is important as well.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right. Next question. "Very interested in allowable and unallowable costs, they didn't seem to be outlined in the solicitation."

LAURA IVKOVICH: I'm going to take that one, too, if you don't mind, Kareem.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Thank you. Okay.

LAURA IVKOVICH: Sure. So on page 4 is the list of deliverables for the program that include, and the last bullet cites, provision of other allowable victim assistance services identified by the grantee but it references the VOCA [Victims of Crime Act] Victim Assistance Program rule regarding allowable costs. That's noted at the top of page 5. For example allowable direct service costs, and then there's other things that are expressly unallowable. So if you--if you reach back to the VOCA Victim Assistance Program rules, that gives you a really good outline of what is available under VOCA and what is not. This is important because we want these programs after 3 years to be able to vie for state VOCA funding and you obviously would want to make sure that you're using the rules that are applicable to your state VOCA. They are able to follow these VOCA Victim Assistance Program rules so we're confident that we're creating something in the LEV, Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist Program that will have more opportunity for continued funding as long as those services remain within the allowable categories that are already set out by the VOCA administrating offices.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Are training activities allowable? Specifically, can victim advocates do roll calls and other trainings for law enforcement officers to help them understand victimization, how to respond to victims' needs, and coordinate with victim advocates?"

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: I will take that. And for that response that would be a yes, you are allowed under this grant, I mean, under this solicitation. Yes, you're correct.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Can the victim specialist role be given to a subawardee and be co-located in the law enforcement agency?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: So, I'll take that. And yes, we've seen a variety of different ways that the victim specialist has been brought in for use to assist victims of crime. There, you know, certainly is an ability to hire in directly, perhaps civilian, and to have them as a full-time employee working for the law enforcement agency or the tribal agency. Or we've also seen where there have been law enforcement agencies who may already have a connection with a--for instance a Family Justice Center, an advocacy center where there are co-located services to assist victims of crime, so that they don't have to go to a variety of different places. So really, it's up to the entity that is looking at



your needs and identifying gaps and services and how it will best reach your victims in your community. That's what we want to make sure we're doing.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: So this next question is dealing again with District Attorneys in which we already answered. But they are also asking you to elaborate on the definition of "sworn officer."

The full question is, "I work for District Attorney's Office, do we count as a law enforcement agency and do our ADAs count as sworn officers or is that only police?" Please elaborate on the definition of "sworn officer."

LAURA IVKOVICH: I'm going to answer it this way. Because I used to work in a State Attorney General's Office and we did have a law enforcement function. As a matter of fact, the State Attorney General is the Chief Law Officer for the state. But by and large we had litigators. There were occasions when we had sworn gun-carrying officers who were attached to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. And they were handling certain types of crimes, gun violence or drug violence, those kinds of things that were statewide in nature. But those individuals even though they were sworn were not necessarily working on cases immediately following the aftermath of a crime. They were working the cases to prosecute. So those--they were taking packages from the local law enforcement who had already spoken to victims and then working those up towards prosecution in the--in the interest of the entire state. So without going into definitional differences, I would say the intent of the program is for local law enforcement. And I think you probably know whether you're local law enforcement or not. Thank you.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Does temporary housing assistance include security deposits and or first month rent?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: I'm going to take this one, Kareem.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Okay.

LAURA IVKOVICH: And say that it's really something that you need to check with your allowable VOCA Victim Assistance. Each state and territory has its own use of VOCA funding for a variety of different things including emergency services.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Um-hmm.

LAURA IVKOVICH: So it would be probably best to double check within your state. And you can find the state map on [ovc.gov](http://ovc.gov). Click on, from the state map, and it will give you the link to the VOCA Victim Assistance Program, and you can look up what is allowable, if you don't already have VOCA funds, you can look up what is available there. And let that be your guide for what it is you're wanting to do and reach out in advance of our deadline date of April 20th. Reach out and talk to others that are already being funded or the VOCA Administrator in your state about what they're allowing, and try and work in a way that's going to secure your funding, hopefully, beyond the 3 years that OVC is making this available as a demonstration national scope program.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Can this grant be applied to an existing position but that be--that could be expanded with this grant to cover more? I work in a Prosecutor's Office but also help with our police department; with this grant I could cover more with police."

LAURA IVKOVICH: I'll take this one, too, Kareem, if you don't mind.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: No, I don't mind. Go ahead.

LAURA IVKOVICH: So typically we do not want any funds that we're making available to supplant any other funds that are available. We don't want to take away from something in favor of this instead.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Um-hmm. Um-hmm.

LAURA IVKOVICH: But if you're, for instance, you're a 50/50 employee. You're--let's say you're only part-time employee and your part-time employment is in one area, but you have additional hours that you would like to apply toward this grant. As long as that is something that the entity applying for the grant, which under this, needs to be the entity and not an individual, it's not the individual who's applying for the grant, it's the entity who is eligible. If that entity thought it was okay to only have, let's say, a quarter of a staff, then it's up to the entity to describe why that makes sense, why that fits the eligibility criteria, and why there's a gap that only that could fill. All of that will be taken into consideration, peer reviewed if the grant application succeeds, and then decisions made against the rest of the applications that come in that are successful.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Can applications focus on specific victimizations or should they be responsive to all types of victimization?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: So having--this is Laura, again. Having grant applications now for the past 2 years coming in we have seen where they have focused, some that are existing programs that want to enhance their program services to meet a specific type of victimization issue. And yes, they have hired on a specific victim advocate, let's say, to work in human trafficking, or let's say, to work with their property crimes or to work with sexual assault, where they don't have, perhaps, the full complement of what they would like to be able to provide, given the stats and the data that show the need. So the answer is yes, you could have a specified specialist, if you will, to provide that. But if you don't have all the other victims' needs covered, that would be problematic to the rest of the victims. So you really have to describe the need and how this would maybe enhance what you're already doing for your community.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right. Just give us one minute while we scroll through these questions.

All right. So next question. "My concern is the data requirement in sanctuary counties. Often grants or asking specific immigration status questions. Is this true of this grant?"

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: No, of this grant--this is not true of this grant, in reference to your question.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Are university law enforcement agencies eligible to apply? We do have sworn officers."

LAURA IVKOVICH: So going back to the eligibility requirements page and who is eligible to apply on page 1, the following entities are eligible to apply, public law enforcement agencies, state, local, and tribal agencies. So if you're a public law enforcement agency, you have sworn officers, then you're eligible to apply.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right. "Does eligibility for this grant require compliance with Section 8 U.S.C. 1373, regarding communication between government agencies and the Immigration and Naturalization Services?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: Again, Kareem answered this, I think, already, which was being alluded to. This does not affect--This grant opportunity does not rest with any compliance with 8 U.S.C. 1373 regarding government agencies and Immigration and Naturalization Service. That is not something that this grant opportunity is restricted by or concerned with.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Can a medical examiner partner with a police agency as a sub?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: So this is Laura. So the police agency is the actual entity that would be applying for a grant. So the question really is the opp--the flip side of that. "Can a police agency partner with a medical examiner to make sure services are available to victims?" I would believe is really what you're asking. But the police agency would be making any subawards to their partners, as needed by a gap analysis, or a needs assessment, or anything else that would identify where there are gaps in services for victims of crime. Certainly, we have seen where there is--for homicide victims who need to go and perhaps identify a loved one, there--it's very helpful to have a victim service person with that victim survivor. And if the medical examiner's office doesn't have those kinds of services, they would be improved, certainly, by working with the police entity in making sure services are available. That's just a nice opportunity to make sure victims are not traumatized.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "If our city has more than 20 percent children living in poverty, but just under 20 percent overall poverty rate, would we qualify for the poverty priority area?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: This is Laura. I can't answer that one right off the bat. This is a brand new OJP priority area and we are still looking at what that looks like.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Um-hmm.

LAURA IVKOVICH: But I would say that if you were to submit anything that is contemplating a poverty area and you have looked at the guidance in the solicitation about that, and then you've taken your best data that you have to support why you believe that should be--you should be funded under that specially--specialty priority category, that is what you should do. I wouldn't--I don't feel comfortable saying "yes" or "no" to that because this is the first time we've done it, and I don't know the intricacies yet.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Are state Department of Corrections with sworn officers qualified for this grant?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: So, this is Laura. The idea behind the Law Enforcement-Based Victim Specialist Program is for immediate response to victims of crime. So, meeting victims where they are as soon after the crime event as possible. And I would imagine the corrections officers, while they may be sworn, probably aren't meeting victims directly after the crime victimization, but more so, if an offender were released or perhaps died incarceration and needed to notify victims, or if a victim was participating in parole. Certainly, those kinds of victim services are important and are useful for the victim, and VOCA Victim Assistance funds are available at the state level to help fund those. I know that there's an association of corrections-based victim specialists around the nation, so certainly others are funding those kinds of positions because they are very helpful to victims, and we would hope that you would avail yourself of other VOCA funding.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Um-hmm.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right. Give us one second, please.

All right, everybody. Sorry about the delay. We only have like, a minute left in the webinar. We are going to take about three more questions. If--We apologize if we were unable to get to your question. So please submit it to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, their information is currently showing on the slide. Again, it's [grants@ncjrs.gov](mailto:grants@ncjrs.gov). So the next question that we're going to take, "We are a recipient of the VOCA grant. Can we apply for this grant?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: Yes, you're not--this is Laura. You are not prohibited from applying if you're a recipient, as long as you are the entity that is eligible to apply, which, on page 1, is an entity that is a public law enforcement agency, and that includes state, local, and tribal agencies. So you are not prohibited from applying. As a matter of fact, programs that already have victim specialist and are funded by VOCA are able to apply to enhance their programs by adding to their program, so certainly, you would be eligible.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Does the victim specialist have to be a sworn police officer or could it be someone with a social work background degree?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: Thanks for asking that question. So that's been a similar question that's come up over the last 3 years, and while the app--the solicitation does not prevent the hiring of a sworn officer to provide victim services, it's intended for professional staff members as victim specialists. And hiring a law enforcement officer to provide services is not excluded by this solicitation. But the application--applicant should keep in mind the intent of the program, and it's to prevent--excuse me, and it's to reduce the trauma that victims suffer, it's to meet the needs as quickly as possible, it's to address the more urgent needs. If a social work professional, or civilian is able to do that, great. If a sworn officer is in a better position to do that, great. But your application needs to explain why that would be the case.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: "Given the intent of the program, where should the program be housed?"

LAURA IVKOVICH: So the program is designed to help law enforcement agencies hire new staff, train existing staff, and create 3-year programs that can more effectively support victims of crime. This initiative is intended to build the capacity of law enforcement agencies. There's--They need to better identify and respond to victims and give them things early on, like, this much-needed services, like Kareem mentioned, emergency shelter, assistance with crime compensation. All those things have to happen really early on in the--in the event for the victim. Law enforcement is usually the first, and often the only, contact victims have with the criminal justice system. So we hope that law enforcement agencies, of all sizes, will explore this opportunity to connect victims to trained compassionate providers who can quickly help them on the path to recovery.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right. And this is going to be our last question. "Please describe the QOZ consideration."

LAURA IVKOVICH: Well, this is Laura again. You are either a QOZ or you're not. And that--there's a link in the solicitation that allows you to understand better whether or not your geographic area has or has not been designated. That is something that is written out beyond this solicitation, and you would need to click on that to identify the parameters as to whether or not your geographic

area is a qualified zone. The--I don't know if there's a status where you're still waiting to hear whether or not you're qualified, but there is a very specific process to know whether or not you are a qualified zone. And that can be found in the solicitation, I believe, by clicking on the federally designated QOZ link.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: All right. So we do need to end this webinar. It is--we are four minutes over our given time. Again, we do apologize that we were unable to get to so many of your great questions, but please submit them to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at [grants@ncjrs.gov](mailto:grants@ncjrs.gov).

As a reminder, the PowerPoint presentation for this webinar, the entire recording, and a transcript will all be posted to the Office for Victims of Crime website. And you will receive an email, letting you know when that has happened, give or take 5 to 10 business days. So on behalf of Kareem and Laura, and the Office for Victims of Crime, we would like to thank you very much for attending.

LAURA IVKOVICH: Thank you.

KAREEM IZLAR-MATHIS: Thank you all.

MARY JO GIOVACCHINI: Have a great day.