

DARYL FOX: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, "Bridging Inequalities--Legal Services and Victims' Rights Enforcement for Underserved Communities," hosted by the Office for Victims of Crime.

At this time, it's my pleasure to introduce Silvia Torres, Grants Management Specialist with the Office for Victims of Crime for some welcome remarks and to begin the presentation. Silvia?

SILVIA TORRES: Thank you, Daryl. Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for joining us in this webinar to, kind of, walk you through the goals and may--your deliverables for the solicitation. My name is Silvia Torres. I am a Victim Justice Program Specialist with the Office for Victims of Crime and I am overseeing this solicitation.

During this webinar, as I said, we are going to describe the type of organizations that we--are eligible to apply, explain the application components and required documentation, as well as briefly discuss the key deadlines in the application process. We will then open up the session for questions.

Just as way of background information for those of you that may not be familiar with OVC or, you know, the Office for Victims of Crime, we administer the victims crime fund, [Crime Victims Fund] which is financed by fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders and not from taxpayers' dollars. OVC channels that money towards victim compensation and assistance throughout the United States. Also raise awareness about victims of crime issues, promote compliance with victims' rights laws, and provide training and technical assistance and publications and products to victims' rights professionals. As you can see, we support a variety of programs, including for Tribal communities, state for victim compensation and assistance programs, provide training and technical assistance and informational resources, and support victims of human trafficking. As a matter of fact, we are the largest human trafficking funder from all the federal agencies. And then, we also have the national-scope demonstration and service projects.

Let's talk about--a little bit more about the eligibility for this particular program. All federally--federally recognized Tribal governments or Tribal organizations can apply, as well as profit and nonprofit organizations, small businesses, and institutions of higher education. Just as a note, because of the nature of this program, an organization is expected to have legal experience and experience delivering technical assistance or propose a client that can bring that experience. Just to keep that in mind.

As far as the key deadlines for this application, there's a two-step process. The first step is to submit the Required Application for Further Assistance, which is a standard for SF-424, as well as a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities through Grants.gov. That deadline is set for 11:59 PM, Eastern Time, on Thursday, June 16th, 2022.

The second step is to submit the full application, including all required attachments in JustGrants--@JustGrantsus.gov--I'm sorry. [JustGrants.usdoj.gov](https://www.justgrants.usdoj.gov). And that has to be submitted no later than 8:59 PM, Eastern Time, on Thursday, June 23rd.

I recommend that you review the "How to Apply" section in the [OJP Application Resource Guide](#) and the JustGrants website for more information and resources and training on this. All grants, the notices of the selected applicants are expected to be issued not later than September 30th. And all awards have a starting date on or after October 1st, 2022.

Now, as far as the description of this program, some of the audience may know legal services are one of the most needed services by victims of crime. And for many years, obviously we have supported various initiatives to help meet this need. So this is also-- This need has been identified by survivors, service providers, advocacy administrators, and other allied professionals as that number one need that survivors need to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of crimes. So this program furthers our current efforts to increase the legal assistance to crime victims in underserved communities to improve their access to legal services and to better address the legal needs regarding their victimization and enforce their victims' rights.

What are the goals for this program? Well, within this program, we aim to concentrate efforts to support a fellowship of about 20 lawyers to be housed in organizations located in underserved communities across the United State--States, so that they can provide civil legal services to crime victims. In addition, to support the selected fellows, we envision the applicant to directly or perhaps with the aid of a partner to provide technical assistance to the legal fellows so that they can increase their knowledge on any needed legal topic and also to facilitate peer learning activities. The legal fellows will provide a presentation in civil and administrative proceedings at the appellate level to enforce crime victims' rights and on collateral matters. Civil legal matters affecting the victims' recovery may include but, obviously, not limited to housing, consumer finance, civil matters related to domestic violence, sexual assault, family law, fraud and identity theft, immigration, financial exploitation, and other matters related to victims' rights and recovery. Please note that tort and criminal defense matters are not allowed under this program.

The major deliverables that the award recipient will have to fulfill under this program are, first, to issue a competitive request for proposals, to seek those are--host organizations that will house the 20 leader fellows. And then in consultation with us, OVC, the organizations--we will select the organizations that will host the legal fellows. Third, the awardee will execute and monitor the 20, or perhaps less, subawards with the selected host organizations. And I say it could be less because it depends if a host organization wants to have one more fellow, legal fellow so that would be less subawards. Then--and the awardee will also host an annual meeting with all legal fellows. And, as I said, the awardee, either directly or indirectly, will provide technical assistance to those host organizations and to the fellows, throughout the course of their fellowship.

This year, the Office for Justice Programs has some priority areas. And that's because OJP is committed to advancing work that promotes civil rights and racial equity, and increases access to justice, supports crime victims and individuals impacted by the justice system. And it also strength--it strengthens community safety, and protects the public from crime and evolving threats, and builds trust between law enforcement and the community.

So consistent with priority considerations supporting the Executive Order 13985, which is about Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Throughout the Federal Government. So we, OVC, and OJP will give priority consideration to applications that will include projects that will promote racial equity and the removal of barriers to access an opportunity for communities that we have been--that have been historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected by inequality when making award decisions. And to receive this consideration, the applicant must describe how the proposed project or projects will address potential inequities and barriers to equal opportunity and to contribute greater access to services for underserved and historically marginalized populations.

The second consideration is giving priority consideration to applicants that can demonstrate that their capabilities and competencies for implementing their proposed projects are enhanced because of the applicant, or at least one of the proposed subrecipient, will receive at least 30 percent of the requested award funding as demonstrated in their budget and it identifies also as a culturally specific organization. So the applicant will have to demonstrate and describe in the narrative how they're being--they are a culturally specific organization or the subawardee. And should also specify which culturally specific populations are intended to, or expected to, be served or to have their needs addressed under the proposed projects.

And in terms of the federal award, while we wish we could make more awards because of the size of this fellowship, there will only be one award expected to be selected from the applications that are submitted. The maximum amount of the award will be up to \$5 million. The applicant has to budget for the fellowship stipends, fringe benefits, and travel, language access, indirect assistance to clients to facilitate their participation in legal action, for example, transportation, childcare expenses to attend court appointments, and the like.

And OVC may, in certain cases, provide additional funding in future years to awards made under this solicitation that perhaps is done through continuation awards. All awards are subject to the availability of the appropriated funds and to any modification or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. The--As you can see, the period of performance is expected to be October 1st, 2022 and that will be a 3-year program. Although, as clarification, the fellowship term is expected to be a 2-year fellowship.

And the type of award, this will be issued as a cooperative agreement, which means that the OVC staff work closely with the grantee on the implementation of the award.

And this is done through regular communication, calls, and like we call check-ins, to see where we are in the--in the progress of the project. And we also review and input on the materials to be developed through this program and provide input and recommend any changes in implementation.

Now, let's turn a little bit to discuss the application and the submission of the application for this program.

These are, on this slide, the Abstract, the Proposal Narrative, and the Budget Worksheet and the Budget Narrative are the elements that must be included in the application submission for it to meet what we call the basic minimum requirements, and that is for the application to be able to advance to peer review and receive consideration for funding. The Abstract has to become--completed in the JustGrants web-based form. And if you look at the solicitation, you'll see that it contains detailed information about each of these components, including font sizes, the number of pages, and, you know, each of these steps and what is--what is contained in each of these components. And please note that you have to adhere to the Proposal Narrative formatting requirements in order to--the app--for the application to be reviewed or to receive--not receive a lesser scope because of that. You would also have to identify which communities will be targeted throughout the proposed project. OVC describes the eligibility requirements and process for selecting the subrecipients for this award, meaning the host organizations that will have the legal fellows. And, also, describe how you will work with key partners, or other stakeholders, or perhaps subawardees who will assist in implementing the proposed program. Each of the--As you can see under the Proposal Narrative, each section has a percentage next to it. And that is the weight that is assigned to each of those components when the application is being peer reviewed. So you can see the project design and implementation, you have a 35 percent weight, as well as the capabilities and competencies, 30 percent. So being detailed and clear will, you know, enhance your score and--while the application is being reviewed.

For the Proposal Narrative, if you are looking for priority consideration for--under Priority 1A, you should address in this section how the proposed project will promote racial equity and/or the removal of barriers to access and opportunity, and to contribute to greater access to services for communities that have been historically marginalized, underserved, or adversely affected by inequality. And in this section, you should obviously include your goals, your objectives, and the activities and--that align with the solicitation for this program. Like I said just a couple seconds ago, we recommend to be brief, yet concise, and clear in your--in your narrative. And make sure that the information is consistent throughout your proposal. We recommend the objectives to be SMART, meaning specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound.

Another key component of the budget application, the--I'm sorry, the application is the Budget Worksheet and Narrative, which is a web-based form. It used to be, that you could attach an Excel spreadsheet with the budget, but that's no longer the case. We recommend to break out--well, it's not like a recommendation it's more like a requirement. To complete each of the 3 years in that Budget Worksheet and--that will

create your summary page reflecting the 36 months of total funding requested for your project. Just as a reminder, as you work on your budget, you would have to allow enough allocation towards the fellowship expenses that I mentioned before that are required under this program, and not only the stipends and related other expenses for the fellows but for the direct assistants for the clients. In addition, if you're proposing a partnership to deliver the required TA or in other ways that you may propose, you would have to also allow funds for that purpose.

Just like with the--we recommend the SMART strategy for your narrative, we also encourage you to think about a SMART approach for your budget. So make sure that your costs are measurable. That your budgets are attain--budget items are attainable. That the--each of the items in your budget is accounted for so that, you know, your budget should be relevant to the timeline and your goals. And also that it's time-bound and broken down year by year or month to month, however you decide.

In this screen--sorry it's a little lengthy, but it lists the other documents there to be included and--as mentioned on the application checklist of the solicitation. We recommend that you use the checklist in your review prior to submitting your application. The DOJ Application Submission Checklist is another resource to aid you in developing your application.

So let's turn now into the Application Process.

As I said earlier during this session, the application is a two-step process. And the first application, which is through Grants.gov and the--which is the submission of the SF-424 and the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities is due by Thursday, June 16th by or before 11:59 PM Eastern Time. The second step is your full application submission into JustGrants, and that is due before or by 11:00--I'm sorry. 8:59 PM Eastern Time on June 23rd. It's okay if you want to enter your budget, or your preliminary budget, programmatic data in Grants.gov and then, update it later in JustGrants. I do encourage you to review the "How to Apply" section in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) in the JustGrants website for more information, resources, and training.

I just wanted also to point out to you that as of April 4th of this year, the Unique Entity Identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS number to the Unique Entity ID, which is generated by SAM. And we are aware that there is a backlog issue with that because of the many requests for the entity validation, support requests that they have received. So what used to take about 48 hours, it's now taking 7 to 10 business days, or more. So this is obviously largely affecting new entities, for instance for SAM--in SAM.gov for the first time and entities that have changed their legal business or physical address. So what--how they are dealing with this backlog is that SAM.gov is providing like an automatic 30-day extension for expiring registrations and will be communicating the extension to the affected entities. So for that reason, I strongly encourage you to start the entity validation request as soon as possible, especially as I said, if you are a new or anything about your organization has changed,

the name or the address. Without that, obviously you won't be able to submit any of the required steps and documentation.

These are the web-based forms that must be submitted directly into the system. The system meaning JustGrants. The abstract, this solicitation-specific data submitted with the application, the goals, objectives, deliverables, and timelines, your budget, and the application disclosure of the--of duplication cost items.

And what to expect after you submit your application. Again, if this is your first time, you might wondering what the process is for you to submit your application. And the first thing is, as a--information or as a reminder, the Entity Administrator and Authorized Representative will be the point of contact for communications, so it's pretty important that you have the correct individual's name in those roles. They will be notified when the deadline for applications will be changed, if changed and notifications about when the application has been received from JustGrant--from Grants.gov. And, ultimately, the Entity Administrator will be the one to receive a notification, if the application is selected for an award. If you submitted your application, obviously the status will show as "submitted." You may also see a banner that indicates that it's past due. This banner indicates that the submission deadline has passed, not that the application is past due. That has created a little confusion amongst applicants.

JustGrants created a series of training resources on the DOJ website to aid you to get acquainted with the way--the way the system works and it has a series of Job Aid References--Reference Guides. Sorry. And that provides a step-by-step videos. And there is also written guidance with instructions with screenshots to help you work--walk through any of the tasks that you may want to complete in JustGrants. So I really recommend visiting the training resources and familiarize yourself, if you're not familiar with JustGrants.

The [OJP Grants Application Resource Guide](#) is--also provides guidance to applicants for the preparation and the submission to OJP of applications for funding. If this solicitation expressly will define any provisions in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide. The applicants should follow the guidelines in this solicitation as to that provision. So any changes have to be followed. And you see at the bottom of the--of the screen of this slide, the website where you can visit the resource--application resource guide.

To assist potential applicants in developing strong proposals in response to our current funding opportunities, we have developed a series of educational webinars for anybody--any interested stakeholder to learn more about the program objectives and submission requirements, such as this webinar. There are also a series of pre-application webinars that are recorded and available for viewing. So this is--if this is your first time applying for OVC funding, these webinars have--we have received pretty good reviews and most participants have found them very useful. We also encourage you just, if you are interested in further funding or further information from OVC, just to stay up-to-date on

the webinars and the current funding opportunities by reviewing our website, under Funding Opportunities.

This slide lists some of the important web resources available to you. I encourage you when--once this--the slides for this webinar are posted, to just take a quick look at that. Like I said, this might be resources for you and--to help you in the process of preparing your application.

And here's a list of contact information that will be important to you, again, as you prepare your application, and technical assistance, as well if you encounter any issues in submitting your full application into JustGrants. As you can--there is the phone number to call, 833-872-5175, and also their website, their email address to contact. And finally the OJP Response Center is available to you to provide technical assistance with programmatic requirements. That's their number, at the bottom of this slide, where they can be reached either by phone or also by email.

Again, this is the website where you can [sign up](#) to stay connected and receive OVC--any and all OVC announcements.

We are also on social media. [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#).

Okay. And that brings me to the end of my slides. And now we'll open it up for questions and I thank you for your attention and your time in participating in this webinar. Daryl, I turn it over to you. Thank you.

DARYL FOX: Thank you for that. What a good list of information there. Just a reminder, if you do have a question, the bottom right side of your screen, the box, send that to all panelists and we'll get through it in the time we have remaining.

Also, the recording PowerPoint transcript for today will be posted to the OVC website. We will be send a notice to the email you're registered with today once those are available, if you need to reference anything that was spoken to you today.

"So if the applicant is partnering with a TTA partner, must that be a subaward or a contract?"

SILVIA TORRES: In this case, because technical assistance is a requirement under this program or solicitation, that is considered a subaward because that subawardee will help you to achieve one of the goals of that program of the solicitation. So we consider it to be a subaward.

DARYL FOX: "Can you explain what it means for a host organization to be located in underserved communities? Does that mean the organization's physical office must be located in this jurisdiction or is it just for serving those in the underserved community?" So...

SILVIA TORRES: I believe the office could be located in an--in--what is it called? In that underserved community. However, there has to be a clear relationship with the underserved community, and would have to describe that in your proposal how you have a presence in that community even though your office could be, let's say, 30 minutes away in any--another neighborhood.

DARYL FOX: The next question is similar to the one on the partnering of--the TTA partner. "If a TTA is proposed to be carried out by a different entity from the applicant, can they write the TTA partner in the proposal when applying instead of conducting a competitive procurement action post-award?"

SILVIA TORRES: Yes. They can include their partner in their application because as-I'm sorry, Daryl. As we said, if you--to the person asking this question, I recommend to take a look at the eligibility section. It does mention that you can come in with a proposed partner. However, only one entity can be named as the award--awardee or main applicant.

DARYL FOX: That's the end of the Q&A cue at this time. We'll just wait a few more moments. If you have a question, go ahead and enter that in. In the meantime, I'm going to put this slide up for important contact information. If you have any questions regarding either Grants.gov, the 424, LLL, JustGrants with the full application, or anything related to programmatic requirements and the solicitation itself, the OJP Response Center is going to be your main contact there. These have been entered in the chat as well. If you can, copy and paste the information.

"Is it okay to include additional program components, like summer law students fellows, in addition to attorney legal fellows?"

SILVIA TORRES: That would depend on the way that you propose to implement the project that you're thinking. We did not specify a--any particular order than the legal fellows. I hope that was clear.

DARYL FOX: "So the solicitation, it says fellowship expenses must include fellow stipends, fringe class, travel, etc. Can their proposed budget include those items other than stipends and fringe class to be combined into one for administrative efficiency or do they all need to be separate budget line items?"

SILVIA TORRES: They should be separate line items. We want to ensure, for instance, for the reviewers to understand what the stipend for each of the fellows will be, as well as, I guess, ensure that the fringe benefits and that the travel costs are included. And if you are proposing like in-kind, which in-kind is not required for this solicitation, but if you're, for instance, proposing in-kind, that has to be described in the Budget Narrative and obviously in your Program Narrative as well.

DARYL FOX: And just some more clarification on the TTA provider. "They're just trying to confirm that applicants that propose a subaward TTA provider in their application are

not required to further complete--compete that subaward, assuming the applicant is selected. Is that correct?"

SILVIA TORRES: I can look more into that and provide an answer. To the technical assistance service, I believe you can, but in past experiences, it depends how the proposal is made. In the past, if it was named, it didn't have to be competed but I also recall one time that it was included in the application ,yet it had to competed. So it depends I think. And, again, I can back to the person asking that question through the technical assistance that provides the--helps us with our--answering the programmatic requirements, which is the OJP Response Center...

DARYL FOX: Exactly.

SILVIA TORRES: ...and see if there is...

DARYL FOX: Yes. So this bottom line here. If you do--to the person that did ask that question, if you want to clarify through the grants@ncjrs.gov email address, that will get received and, you know, will provided a response to that once it's researched further.

It's the end of the questioning at this time but we'll just hang on a few more moments. If anything comes to mind, just go ahead and enter that in.

And I'll also put this up as well. As Silvia mentioned, the timelines are a very important part of the whole process, meeting these well in advance of the deadlines here for both Grants.gov and JustGrants. And notice the 8:59 PM Eastern for JustGrants. That's new this year. Then the 11:59 PM for the Grants.gov.

Okay. So I think with that, that will be it for today. So on behalf of the Office for Victims of Crime and our panelist, thank you for joining today's webinar. This will end today's presentation.