

DARYL FOX: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, the FY 2024 New Grantee Orientation for Preventing Trafficking of Girls Projects, hosted by the Office for Victims of Crime. So at this time, it's my pleasure to introduce Cindy Erich, Senior Advisor with OVC to begin the presentation. Cindy?

CYNTHIA ERICH: Okay. Thank you, Daryl. Good afternoon, good morning, depending on where you're calling in from. My name is, again, Cindy Erich. I am the Juvenile Justice Program Coordinator in the Human Trafficking Division with the Office for Victims of Crime and the program manager for the Preventing Trafficking of Girls initiatives. So I want to briefly say welcome and congratulations on your new award. I am really excited to be walking alongside in support of your efforts over the next three years. It is my privilege to turn the stage over to your incredible training and technical assistance providers with Youth Collaboratory. This team has supported every cohort since the inception of this initiative, since Fiscal Year 2020, and they have so much to share with you today.

So with that, thank you, welcome, congratulations. And Lenore, over to you.

KANESHA LENORE BROWN: Thank you so much for that, Cindy. Again, congratulations to you all for such an amazing opportunity. We look forward to really being in service and collaboration with you all. My name is Lenore Brown, and I am a Training and Technical Assistance Manager here with Youth Collaboratory. And just to briefly share with you all about me, I'm from Las Vegas, my pronouns are she/her, and I'll be one of the TA providers really supporting you in this effort, so thank you all for joining us on today's call. And I'm going to pass it over to Joy.

JOY THOMPSON: Thank you so much, Lenore and Cindy. I am Joy, I use she/her pronouns. I am located in Oakland, California. I'm so happy to be here with you all today. I serve as the Director of Program for Building Community and Liberation here at Youth Collaboratory where I get to work alongside this amazing team, and now I get to work alongside you. My work is focused on strategy and vision for preventing and ending human trafficking, enhancing nurturing practices, and ending youth homelessness for programs spanning about 40 states here in the nation. And again, I'm really happy to be here with you and look forward to walking alongside you. And I'll pass it over to Dasha.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: Hello, everyone. So my name is Dashamir Pettway, but I do go by Dasha. My pronouns are she/her, born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, so yeah, shout out to Detroit. My lived experience has deeply shaped who I am and how I approach my work here. So as a survivor, I really carry, you know, my own personal strength and resilience that I've gained into my role as a Training and Capacity Building Manager here at Youth Collaboratory. So I am really passionate about advocating for the well-being of youth and adults and driving systematic change throughout. My work focuses on--includes preventing and addressing the sexual exploitation of youth and adults, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of Black girls. My goal is to really

ensure that these young voices are heard, valued, and supported in every space. So yes, I'm super excited to be here, and that's just like a great segue into our next slide.

So our Girls Action Board. You know, this is my baby, you know. This is where I really birthed this and just seeing where we are now is so amazing. But our Girls Action Board is a national leadership team made up of young Black women ages 18 to 24 with diverse experiences. Our team is driven by the belief that Black girls should have real opportunities to lead into this work that focuses on their healing, resilience, and professional development. We recognize that Black girls are disproportionately affected by trafficking and we are really committed to making sure that their voices are heard and valued in this space. So, you know, you'll have an opportunity to really walk and meet some of our GAB [Girls Action Board] members and just them being another support throughout this grant.

We provide training and technical assistance to you all, you know, in organizations that aim to serve Black girls, helping them to truly understand and address their needs. Our goal is to build capacity within these organizations, encourage genuine collaboration with youth, and strengthen community ties. We really lead with this team with passion, really constantly pushing for change and leveraging our experiences and insight into support efforts and that prevent trafficking and provide early intervention for Black girls. So that is my team, love them so much. Now we could go on to the next slide.

So really just quickly going over some objectives of today. We really want to begin by welcoming each one of you to the space where we really try to aim to cultivate community of change agents. Our goal is to empower you to bring about meaningful change within your communities and organizations during the course of this grant. Here, we really recognize the value of collective strength and the power that comes with that when we come to--come together and create better outcomes for youth. So we really want to build a community where shared learning and mutual support are at the forefront for today. And so yeah, I can go to the next slide and pass it to Joy.

Oh, no, it's on me again. Oh, no, I'm moving too fast. Okay. So I got a lot of talking. So I really want to take this time to know who you are, who you are in the room, so I want to, in the chat box to the side, can you add your name and your pronouns, the project name, the role that you have in your organization, the OVC grant, and a fall favorite. In a minute, we're going to go to the next slide and we're going to go by the order that is listed on the screen, and we're going to drop this in the chat so you all won't forget it. One second. So it was dropped in the chat, so we go right in there and we can go to the next slide really quick.

So we're going to start off with Girl Power. So anybody from Girl Power, please, please, please drop in the chat your name and your pronouns, what is the project name, what is your role here for the OVC grant, and then what is a fall favorite? Do I have a fall favorite? I'm going to pick on Joy. I know, Joy, your fall favorite is pumpkins.

JOY THOMPSON: Yes. I have--I--my favorite--spoiler alert, my favorite season is the fall and I love pumpkins, absolutely. But my favorite thing is, like, different shades of pumpkins. And so having, like, a centerpiece on the dining room table that has green pumpkins and then white pumpkins by the TV, like I really enjoy pumpkins and sweaters in the fall. I know you like something about the fall, Dasha.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: I think fall time, me and my kids, we love hot chocolate. So I think fall, we're more into letting them drink it more, I guess. Because the hot--you know, the colder weather. The colder weather. I think--I think it's the hot chocolate. And the movies. All the holiday movies and things that come around this time, so yeah, for sure.

So again, we're just going by the order that's listed here above. So Girl Power Rocks. Any one of you all want to drop your name, pronouns, project name, role in the grant, and then what is your fall favorite? I'm not sure if it's popping up halfway, but I'm only seeing half of the chat.

JOY THOMPSON: I'm seeing them start to come through. It looks like kids enjoy sweet potato casserole and cooler weather during the fall, which are two of my favorites as well.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: Do you mind doing a check? Because I cannot see it, I don't know if I'm doing something wrong.

JOY THOMPSON: I don't mind at all.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: Okay.

JOY THOMPSON: And I see Kareem, a Kareem from Covenant House. Knowing that winter is coming. And that's Covenant House Alaska, welcome. I see Sunandia from Roca. Crisp but sunny days and apple picking. Yeah. Absolutely. There's so many good things you can make with apples. And Cynthia Islas from Saving Innocence, Program Director, pumpkin and pecan pie. Absolutely. Rosa from VOA-Greater New York, cool weather. Uh-hmm. [INDISTINCT] yes, it means winter is coming. Karina from Roca, fall fashion. Yeah. Boots and sweaters, all that. And maybe we can go to the next slide for the next set of programs.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: Yeah. And I can see the chat now, too at the moment, I can grab it from you.

JOY THOMPSON: Perfect.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: So yeah. Samuel Merritt University. We have YMCA of North (Enough), and then we have--that's--I'm not even going to try to say that [Ho'ola Na Pua], but I've seen Kent's. So anybody from these organizations just want to drop it in the chat, kind of like the flow that's already been going, I'm not going to mess that up. Or if everybody shared, I'm not sure. Think so? Well, keep them coming. We definitely

want to hear who's in the room and want to know what organization you are currently with, and then we can go to the next slide. And I'll pass it to Joy.

JOY THOMPSON: Thank you, Dasha. And thank you everyone. This is a reminder for me to get some of this goodness in my fall season. I will share a little bit about us and about--and we've heard a little bit about you, but more about Youth Collaboratory. So, yes, we are absolutely your TTA providers, and we're so happy to be on the road with you alongside you in this journey. But Youth Collab also is involved in additional work, and we just want to be sure you know who we are. Youth Collaboratory is an intermediary of sorts. We serve organizations and professionals working to improve the lives of young people, their families, and communities. We harness the power of the youth services community to innovate, evaluate, and drive effective strategies that assure the safety and well-being of youth and young adults, unlocking their limitless potential.

We do this in three specific ways. The first is preventing and addressing relationship violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking of youth. That is the work that we are doing here together. We also support opportunities for young people to build community with family, peers, and others to enhance their assets, explore their strengths, and develop lasting connections through mentoring. And also, we do a lot around coordinated community responses to youth and young adult homelessness. So, if you are curious and want to learn more about Youth Collaboratory, feel free to check us out on our website. And we can go ahead and go to the next slide.

You will notice that Lenore and Dasha and myself and the Girls Action Board Team, who are here with you, who will be walking alongside you in your work throughout the grant, are members of the Liberation Team. I just want to share our focus area. The Liberation Focus Area centers youth and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by exploitation, trafficking, gender-based and relationship-based violence. In collaboration with these communities and local leaders, we create equitable and culturally responsive prevention and intervention practices and strategies for holistic healing. And so we're really excited to do this work with you, to do it in intentional ways. And to learn more about the Liberation Team's work here at Youth Collaboratory, we will also share a link in the chat so that you can learn more about us. With that, I'll pass it over to Lenore to talk more about our focus in the work.

KANESHA LENORE BROWN: Absolutely. Thank you for that, Joy. So again, we are excited to really be in community with all your--all you organizations. And a lot of our work is centered around supporting programs and identifying gaps and services and addressing those gaps. And one of the gaps that we've been able to identify in our work are biases. We know that a lot of times in our work when providers are able to identify their biases in service delivery, then we're able to really address and provide better services. So, if you could follow me on to the screen. I'm sorry, you all. There's a lot of traffic going on around me. But if we could focus on the screen and some of the data that we have here, one is nationally, Black girls represent 31% of girls referred to law enforcement by school officials, and 43% of those arrests on school grounds, but only

consists 17% of overall student population. We also know that while only 14% of children under 18 in the United States are Black, 35% of the girls in juvenile facilities are also Black. Black girls are suspended at higher rates, which are 12%, than girls of any other race or ethnicity and most boys. So when we talk about really being able to address gaps in services, we want to walk alongside organizations and being able to identify who aren't we serving, who are we seeing an overrepresentation of and how do we provide better service provisions. If we can go to the next slide, please.

Why we center Black girls. So if you could just take a moment just to read some of the things that we have on the slide and I'll read some of them out loud. For instance, Black girls are high risk for exploitation and trafficking and arrest for prostitution. Now, although we understand that no youth through federal laws can be arrested for exploitation or prostitution, sometimes life-sustaining criminality happens and we're seeing that across the nation.

Some of the things that we also see is there's a lack of research out there regarding Black girls and trafficking. Another thing that we've noticed is that Black girls become trafficked at younger ages than their racial counterparts. And we're talking as young as five to twelve years old. We're seeing that there are more experiences exploitation at younger ages for Black girls.

Another one I want you to focus on, and this is the last one that I'll read out loud, is at the end of the corner. Centering marginalized individuals and communities positively impacts everyone impacted by human trafficking. So, the reason why we tend to center those that are most impacted, because we know that those most impacted, are we-- once we start centering them, they will become closer to the solution. So, in a lot of our TA that we'll be providing you all, you'll see the centering and the focusing on equity, on biases, and how to evaluate our best practices. And this is the reasons why.

Next slide. So I'll pass it over for Our Approach.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: Okay. So, yeah, I'm going to talk through just how we approach our TA within--with you all. So, really develop--sorry. Develop and utilize an assessment tool, so what should our baseline assessment to establish strong equity baselines and benchmarks for youth service delivery. So, really just saying, we're here to help you establish those strong equity baselines and benchmarks for use--for your youth service delivery. There's no cookie cutter solutions. Really just trying to tailor an approach that fits your organizations and the unique strengths and areas for your growth. Our goal is to really help you get a clear picture of where you stand and where we can go next.

Address the prevalence and persistence of racism and ethnic bias that continues to shape our practices. So we know that racism and ethnic bias are stubborn issues that continue to influence practices and we're committed to addressing these head on. So our approach is really grounded in what works. So evidence-based practices, you know, the tried and true models, and equity lenses that ensure no one gets left behind. We

really want to share resources that actually make a difference, guiding you on how to integrate them into your organization's work.

Informed by those with lived expertise. So of course, you know, earlier we talked about our Girls Action Board. And most importantly, we really want to center those who lived through it, and their lived expertise. We believe in centering the needs of folks we're serving. And we know that the best ideas come from the voices that have been ignored for far too long. So really think about it as a people-first human--people-first, human-first approach with a side of heart and soul, you know? So your deliverables are important to us, too. And we're here to make sure that you hit those goals while keeping young people at the center of it all.

Customized to strengths and areas of interest for growth and development. So, we really want to put an emphasis on giving you all a chance to connect with our GAB members and create opportunities for young people in your communities to shine. So I'm really big on if you have those youth groups and youth alumni, we'd love to connect or, you know, want to make opportunities to try to connect with them as well, too. We know that every organization is different. So we take time to understand your needs and offer the right resources at the right time. It's also about helping you level up, you know, wherever you are in the journey.

Assist programs to shift practices to better serve youth where needed. We want to make--we want to help you make changes that really stick so you can serve youth better than ever. That's why our monthly check-ins, they're not just another Zoom call. I'm going to, I think, talk about those a little later. But they are really strategic, focused, and designed to uncover new opportunities for your growth and will tackle emerging trends. And, you know, we like to celebrate the wins. I like to hear about the exciting things that you're doing within your organization. And just really spot areas where, you know, there may be a little--need a little tweaking or, you know, we could--or challenges that you all--that sometimes what happened within our organizations that we just need a little help to try to get over. And we do all this again with that human rights approach because at the end of day, we really want youth and adults, and the people that you work with to, you know, feel more empowered and seen and supported. So we can go to the next slide. And I will pass it to, Joy.

JOY THOMPSON: Thank you so much, Dasha. Yeah. So part of the work that we'll do together is a baseline assessment. So following this conversation, this webinar, we will reach out to you to schedule an initial call to meet you all, but also to learn more about your vision and also to talk to you about the baseline strategy. So the baseline assessment is an opportunity for us to understand where you're strong, what the promising practices are. I know a lot of the work that we have done up until now in this field, we have a lot of evidence-based practices, but there are practices that are happening in your programs, in communities, that are promising, that you're seeing good results and positive impacts out of. So we want to pull those out. We want to be able to elevate those practices and share them with the field. But we also want to kind of gauge where the opportunities for growth are with respect to the grant. And so that--

doing that baseline assessment gives us an opportunity to identify where the priorities are for the next three years. And from that, we'll create a capacity plan, a TA plan that will kind of govern our--how we collaborate over the next three years. We want it to be responsive rather than "this is what you must do." We want it to support the work that you're actually doing, the goals that you have in the things that are outlined in your grant. So the--it is a bit lengthy. It is something that you will have to take some time with. But in that time, the hope is that we can build relationships. You can build relationships with TA managers, with the GAB team, with the Youth Collaboratory. We can understand more about the inner workings of your program. And we can really work together collaboratively for you to reach your goals. We can go ahead and go to the next slide.

In terms of participation in this initial meeting, we ask that at least two people are present from your team. But as many who are on the project who will be directly involved in the project are welcome.

In terms of completion of the baseline assessment, we usually ask people--tell people that it will take about two weeks to complete. And it's usually between three to four individuals to fill it out who have different roles within the organization. So we welcome as many people who want to be at that initial call so that we can really get a feel for you all. You all can get a chance to meet us and our team. And people can ask any questions they have about the baseline and the process and how it relates to them and their role with completing the baseline. We can go ahead and go to the next slide, and I'll pass it to Dasha.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: Yeah. So our check-ins. What I love about our check-ins, I love the monthly check-ins with you all. But what I love the most is that they're designed with your organization's needs in mind. So we focus on what matters most to you all. And again, as Joy explained about those baselines, those baselines really help us get an understanding on what's going on in your organization, where you are, where you maybe we need to focus our goals on just a little bit more. So they're really up to your challenges and goals.

The whole purpose of these check-ins is to see how you're progressing, figure out where you are in the work, and really find the best ways that we can support you. So think of us as a resource for those little tweaks or those big boosts that we can take you throughout this time on the grant. So during these monthly virtual check-ins, we'll also keep you updated on, like, some trainings that are coming up within like our Learning Collaboratives, things like that, emerging research, and just any changes in the field that might be relevant to you.

Since, you know, it is your organization and it is the work that you all are doing and it's always evolving, so we know that your needs for technical assistance will shift over time and that's why these regular check-ins are so valuable. They help us understand where you are in support right now and then give us a chance to share changes we're also seeing across the board.

And honestly, what I love the most about these virtual check-ins is the sense of community that we build together. So it's more than just a meeting. It's really a space where the connections can be made and where we can truly become allies to one another. Some of my favorite moments has come from these sessions and just hearing all about the amazing work that you're doing in the field. And learning, always really big for me, just about things that you're saying that's happening or things that are going on. It's always a growth moment and I'm genuinely excited to continue building that sense of support and collaboration with you.

But what I'm even most excited about and how else it helps me really understand the community is--can we go to the next slide? Is the annual grantee in-person meeting. We just had one and it was so exciting. I think like last year was great but this year was even better, so I can only imagine what next year is going to be like. But it will be late summer or fall 2025. There is no concrete date as of right now, but when that will happen, you know, we will receive emails from us and things of that sort. Just preparing you for that. So know that it is coming.

I might be a little biased again about the one that just happened but I felt like nobody wanted to leave. I'm sorry if you can hear the motorcycle outside. But I felt like nobody wanted to leave. I felt like everybody was truly engaged and everybody just had so much fun just connecting and sharing and meeting our grantees. It was really a great time. So we're looking forward to doing it all over again in 2025. This meeting is all about creating opportunities to build real in-person connections with programs, partners, and just stakeholders or people that you bring honestly in your organization. It's a space where we can share knowledge, network, and problem solve together. There's room to be creative. I know we did a lot of activities where we thought outside the box about things that we might not even be considering in our organizations. And it was just like a lot of "aha" moments, like, "Wow, like I didn't think of it like that." And it--and it really came from the brains of so many of our grantees just working together and just having that genuine conversation with one another.

So it's always about like learning and growing as a national network not just as an individual organization. So it also gives you an opportunity to connect across the state. Like there are real life times when we were at this grantee meeting that someone say,



"Hey, I can connect you or connect one of your youth here, so like, please call us and please let us know." So it's just really, really great time and it helps us like outside of the Learning Collaboratives and the monthly TA check-ins really just have that intimate in-person experience with one another. So mark your calendars and get ready for just another great time of learning, sharing, and just overall building community with one another.

And I'm going to stop going on my spiel because I can keep talking about that on and on. I'll pass it to Lenore.

KANESHA LENORE BROWN: You're actually--you're actually getting me excited for the next grantee meeting and we are a ways away from that, so please. You know, our work really is to support your programs and equip you all with a community of service providers, experts to assist you with your programming. So with this a part of the TA that you receive is that you're going to get invited to the Learning Collaborative, which is an interactive learning experience, where service providers and community stakeholders receive and share resources, training, evidence-based, and promising practices from their peers and leading field experts.

So the Learning Collaborative is designed to enhance the youth service field by teaching, sharing knowledge, identifying collaboration and efforts to improve the well-being of young girls impacted by trafficking. So, this community is perfect for your program and direct care staff. So we ask that you all have direct care staff in attendance during our Learning Collaborative. We will be sending out invitations for that, so please be looking out for those emails. And again, once you're in that space with us, we'll make sure that we have all the folks that you need to be connected to including each other. Next slide, please.

So a deeper dive into our Learning Collaborative is that we ask that you all have at least four people within your organization or your project partners that actually attend and a young person within your programming. We understand that that could be a little bit difficult and challenging, so in the event that you're not able to, we do ask that you reach out to us and let us know prior. Organization and youth leaders are all expected to commit at least a full year, so that's 12 months to our Learning Collaborative. What it will be--what it would entail will be six live 90-minute opportunities to join. And then we'll also have--when you have that real-time learning sharing space, but in addition to that, we will be sending out a lot of the videos. We'll send out a lot of the materials via email. But we do ask for you all to be in-person in space with us, virtually of course, for the Learning Collaborative sessions.

And again, all of us come from direct care, so we understand that sometimes things might be a little bit challenging. We ask that you communicate with us so that we can make sure that we can make those provisions. And if you want to have more individuals attend Learning Collaborative, also just share that out with us prior. But be on the lookout for those emails as we start the Learning Collaborative sessions.

Next slide, please. So now we want to hear from you all. So this is our Q&A. And I know sometimes with Q&A it's like, this was a lot of information being thrown at you all, so we don't expect you to have all of your questions. So in the event that you need to email your questions to us later, please feel free to do that. But if there's any questions that you all have for us, please click the three dots at the far bottom right side of your screen and once you click it, you'll be able to have a selection. Select Q&A and send those questions over and we'll be able to answer some of your questions today. And again, in the event that you don't have a question, feel free to send us an email.

JOY THOMPSON: All right. Well, hearing none. I will assume that we will hear from you over email. So we can go ahead and go to the next slide, which includes all of our contact information. So please be in touch with us if you have any questions, any ideas are coming up. We will be in touch with you soon regarding scheduling the initial meeting, recurring meetings, and the baseline assessment. And just give me a few more seconds. I'm checking in, Cindy, is there anything else you wanted to add?

CYNTHIA ERICH: Nothing to add. Again, there's so many opportunities for us to continue to connect, to reach out as you think of questions. We know we're coming to the end of the Friday for many of us, so keep the questions coming. You have all of our contact here. But again, we are so excited to be working with you and to welcome you to our community of Preventing Trafficking of Girls cohort.

JOY THOMPSON: Thank you, everyone. We look forward to being in the community more soon. Take good care.

DASHA PETTWAY: One second. It's a question that just came in.

JOY THOMPSON: Oh, okay.

DASHA PETTWAY: It's from the baseline assessment. Does that need to be completed before the initial TA check-in or will the initial TA check-in help build the roadwork for the assessment?

JOY THOMPSON: Yeah, no, no need to complete that in advance of the session. So we'll talk through it. We'll send it to you, but we'll talk through what it is and the timeline for that during that initial meeting. Great question.

DASHAMIR PETTWAY: Thank you.

DARYL FOX: Okay. Great. So on behalf for the Office for Victims of Crime and all of our panelists and Youth Collaboratory, we want to thank you for joining today's webinar. This will end today's presentation.