

Frequently Asked Questions on the OVW FY 2020 COVID-19/Violence Against Women Assistance to Tribes Solicitation

Eligible Entities

Q: On page 6 of the solicitation, the definition of “tribal nonprofit organization” for Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (TSASP) funds states that the applicant must be both a victim service provider and have staff or leadership with demonstrated history of assisting American Indians or Alaska Native victims of the four crimes. Must the applicant meet both of these criteria?

A: Yes. The applicant must satisfy both requirements in order to qualify as a “tribal nonprofit organization” for TSASP funds.

Q: Are tribal coalitions eligible for the TSASP funds?

A: Yes. The definition of “victim service provider” in VAWA explicitly includes tribal coalitions. However, this funding cannot be for an entirely new program, so the coalition would need to already be providing “intervention and related assistance” to victims of sexual assault. Page 3 of the solicitation provides the definition of “intervention and related assistance.”

Q: If a tribe applies for COVID funding under the Tribal Government Program (TGP) (also known as CTAS Purpose Area 5), may they also be included as part of a consortium that is applying for TSASP funds?

A: Yes.

Q: Can a tribe apply for COVID funding without having an existing OVW TGP grant?

A: Yes. Tribes are eligible regardless of whether they have an existing TGP grant or not.

Budget size

Q: On page 10 of the solicitation, OVW directs an applicant to include in the budget narrative a justification if requesting more than \$100,000. Can you give more information?

A: An applicant requesting more than \$100,000 should explain why the requested amount is necessary to meet its COVID-related needs. An example of such a justification might be, “we have had three times the number of victim calls and need to hire three additional victim advocates, which is going to cost us \$150,000.”

Q: Can you apply for less than \$50,000?

A: Yes.

Application Attachments

Q: If a tribal designee with an existing TGP grant has a resolution or equivalent legal authorization from the tribe as part of its TGP application, does the applicant need to get another resolution in order to apply for COVID funding?

A: Yes. If an applicant has such a resolution as a tribal designee, it will have to get a new resolution or equivalent legal authorization for this program. If you cannot obtain it by the due date, submit an attachment explaining why you were unable to get the resolution or equivalent

legal authorization. For example, you could say, “to the best of our knowledge we are going to be designated by the ___ tribe. The tribal council is not meeting because of COVID and will not meet until ___”. This documentation will suffice for application purposes, but OVW will not be able to make an award without the resolution.

Q: Do federally recognized tribes need to submit resolutions?

A: No. Only designees under TGP and consortiums under TGP or TSASP need to include a resolution or equivalent legal authorization. See page 6 of the solicitation for consortiums and 7 for designees.

Allowable Costs

Q: Can these funds be used to contract cleaning staff?

A: Yes. Program funds may be used for [specialized cleaning](#). If a recipient chooses to outsource cleaning to a contractor, this should be specified in the budget. Cleaning supplies can also be included.

Q: Can prepaid cellular phones be purchased for victims to use in emergencies?

A: Yes.

Q: Can an applicant use OVW COVID funds to purchase a vehicle to transport victims to shelters?

A: Transporting victims is an allowable cost, where the transportation needs are due to COVID. An example of this might be where congregate living is not usable due to COVID, and the staff needs to transport victims to other shelter or where the staff is not able to transport victims in their personal vehicles as they normally would due to COVID. Applicants should strongly consider leasing rather than purchasing a vehicle, given that this is a 12-18 month program that will not have continuation funding. OVW is unlikely to approve the purchase of a vehicle under this program without significant justification. Include the justification in the budget narrative, including an analysis of the costs of leasing versus purchasing a vehicle. This analysis does not need to be included at the time of application, but will be requested during the budget review process and you will need to justify the choice of purchase versus lease.

Q: Can this funding be used to pay current staff hazard pay?

A: Yes, but you need to have a policy that describes who is entitled to hazard pay, under what circumstances, and the hazard pay rate. This policy must apply to all staff equally – not just the staff members covered by OVW grants. This means that if there are staff who provide in-person services that are not linked to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, or stalking, they must also be entitled to hazard pay even though it would not be covered by OVW’s COVID funding. That means that you must find the resources to pay those employees their hazard pay from other sources. For example, if you are a tribe and want to pay hazard pay to your victim services program, you would have to offer hazard pay to all tribal employees. However, you cannot use this COVID funding to pay hazard pay for tribal employees who are not part of the victim services program.

Q: Due to COVID-19, our Sexual Assault Response Team lost access to their sexual assault response nurse. Can we use this funding to pay for another medical forensic nurse examiner, or would that be considered a new program?

A: You may use this funding to pay a medical forensic nurse examiner, but you should justify why the need is COVID-related. For example, you should explain how COVID caused the loss of the nurse examiner, why it is harming your tribe, and why replacing the nurse examiner is part of a previous program that has been affected by COVID rather than a new program. Also, please note that this is only allowable under TGP, not TSASP. This COVID funding is designed to increase the capacity of tribes and nonprofits to operate in this environment when services have shifted away from in-person settings.

Q: Are inmate medical costs for COVID treatment allowable?

A: Yes, if the inmate is convicted of a violence against women related offense.

Q: Our sexual assault response team needs a patrol car for our tribal police. Is this allowable?

A: Yes, with appropriate justification. As discussed above regarding purchase of vehicles for victim transportation, you would need to justify that this is not a new project and that it is specifically a COVID related need. The patrol car would also need to be used only for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking or you would have to prorate it in the budget (meaning that we would only pay for the portion that is for those crimes).

Reporting

Q: What will the reporting requirements look like?

A: OVW has not yet determined a final set of reporting questions. However, it will be significantly shorter and less burdensome than a standard OVW progress report form. Furthermore, some questions that typically require responses will be optional.

Q: Will these COVID clients need to be tracked the same way that current clients are tracked?

A: Yes. Recipients will need to report the numbers of victims served, partially served, and not served using the grant funds, as this is a statutory requirement applied to recipients of OVW discretionary funds. However, the Victim Services section will be significantly shorter than it is under other programs.