

Questions and Answers about the Children and Youth Grant Program

Applying to a federal grant program can be a daunting task. This document provides helpful information for developing an application to the annual solicitation for the Children and Youth (CY) Program at the Office on Violence against Women (OVW) at the U.S. Department of Justice. Please consider this information alongside your close reading of the solicitation. Thank you for your work and interest in this program. We sincerely hope you will consider applying.

Question: What does the Children and Youth Program fund?

The CY Program supports comprehensive, community-based efforts to develop or expand prevention, intervention, treatment, and response strategies to address the needs of children and youth impacted by domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. CY grants are awarded up to \$500,000 total for a three-year project. You can read about recently awarded CY projects and find other helpful information on the OVW web page (www.justice.gov/ovw). Resources include the CY solicitation and our pre-application webinar, which is streamed live, recorded, and posted after the solicitation is released each year.

Question: Am I eligible to apply?

All of the following entities are eligible to apply:

1. nonprofit, nongovernmental entities including community-based organizations, population-specific organizations, and culturally specific organizations such as Urban Indian organizations and Native Hawaiian organizations (other than institutions of higher education)
2. tribal organizations and Indian tribal governments
3. units of local government or agencies of units of local government in the United States or U.S. territories

If you are eligible to apply, you must also have a project partner that meets the partnership requirement in the solicitation. This partnership is a key component of a successful application. Grant recipients must actively collaborate with their required partner as well as their broader coordinated community response (CCR) throughout the project.

Question: What are the Children and Youth purpose areas?

Your application must clearly address one (and only one) of the three Children and Youth purpose areas described in the solicitation. You can think of this purpose area as the lane or track for your project.

Within your selected purpose area, you do have some flexibility. For instance, CY Purpose Area 1 is "Providing services and Training to Address Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Sex Trafficking (within ages 0-10)." You could successfully propose a project for this purpose area that focuses on children exposed to domestic violence who are ages 6-10, including siblings older than 10 who also disclose victimization and seek services.

Question: What are the OVW Priority Areas?

The OVW Priority Areas are office-wide priorities. Although you are not required to address the OVW Priority Areas for the CY Program, we strongly encourage applicants to address one or both. Meeting the criteria for the Priority Area(s) will earn special consideration for your application during the review process. You should show how you address the Priority Area(s) throughout your application: in the Project Narrative, Budget Worksheet and Narrative, and Memorandum of Understanding.

The OVW Priority Areas for the CY Program are:

1. Advance equity and tribal sovereignty as essential components of ending sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking by improving outreach, services, civil and criminal justice responses, prevention, and support for survivors from historically marginalized and underserved communities, particularly those facing disproportionate rates or impacts of violence and multiple barriers to services, justice, and safety.
2. Expand economic justice and financial advocacy for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, including as a tool for violence prevention.

Question: What is the CY program-specific priority?

In response to the widespread and severe harm to children and youth caused by technology-facilitated abuse (such as sextortion, online stalking, and non-consensual image sharing), the CY Program has made it a priority to address online harm and promote online safety. During the review process, special consideration will be given to applications that incorporate activities that prevent and respond to online harm. If you decide to address this CY program-specific priority, your application should clearly describe your project's specific plans to do so. As with the OVW Priority Areas, you are not required to address the program-specific priority and will not be penalized if you do not address it.

Question: How is an application scored?

If your application meets the basic minimum requirements detailed in the solicitation, it will be carefully reviewed by a panel of three external peer reviewers, who will hold a consensus meeting to determine the final score for your application. Each reviewer will closely read, comment on, and score these (and only these) three documents out of 100 points total: Project Narrative (70 points), Budget Worksheet and Narrative (20 points), Memorandum of Understanding (10). Each of these three documents will be scored according to the criteria listed in the solicitation for each document.

As you write, please keep your readers in mind. Peer reviewers are experts in the field but not experts on your community and work. To help your peer reviewers understand your proposed project and ability to implement it, your application should respond directly and clearly to the solicitation.

Question: What should I keep in mind when writing an application?

To effectively communicate your proposed project, please keep these guidelines in mind. This will help to clearly communicate your proposed project to your peer reviewers and readers at OVW.

1. Submit only the materials requested by the solicitation. Your peer reviewers will not read or score other materials that you submit (such as job descriptions, project timelines, or letters of support).
2. When writing your Project Narrative, create a sub-heading (in bold or italics) for each numbered item under the "Purpose of the Proposal", "What Will Be Done", and "Who Will Implement the Proposal" sections of the Project Narrative. This will make it much easier for you to respond directly to each section and for your peer reviewers to assess your project.
3. Meet all criteria for the Project Narrative, MOU, and Budget Worksheet and Narrative, such as the budget requirement to include sufficient funds to ensure access for individuals with limited English proficiency, who are Deaf/hard of hearing, or who have disabilities. During the review process, you will lose points for not responding to these requirements.
4. Use the OVW resources for creating a budget and MOU.
5. Avoid acronyms, jargon, and generalizations, which can make it difficult for your readers to understand your specific proposal to meet the distinctive needs of your community.
6. Closely follow the solicitation's "Formatting and Technical Requirements," such as font, spacing, and page length. During review, your application can lose points for not following these requirements.

Question: Should I apply?

We sincerely hope you will consider it! Even if unsuccessful this year, applying can help to make your application more competitive in future years. Your application will be closely read by a panel of experts during peer review. They will provide detailed feedback in the form of consensus comments for OVW to consider during award decisions. You may request and discuss these consensus comments with a CY program specialist.