

OVW Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) Grant Program

HANNA KATZ: Welcome to the Pre-Application Information Session for the fiscal year of 2022 Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program, also referred to as the LAV Program. The Office on Violence Against Women, also referred to as OVW, is convening this pre-application session to go over the FY2022 solicitation for the LAV Program. The purpose of this session is to provide information regarding the LAV solicitation. We will highlight a few key points in this presentation. However, it is not the intent, nor is there sufficient time, to go over every aspect of the solicitation. All applicants are responsible for reading the FY2022 LAV solicitation and the OVW Solicitation Companion Guide and ensuring that a complete application is submitted.

LAV Program staff cannot provide any feedback to applicants about the quality of an applicant's proposal or provide any information outside of what is presented in the solicitation. However, we will be available throughout the period that the solicitation is open to respond to any questions about application requirements. Please feel free to send questions about the LAV solicitation to the LAV Program email box at ovw.lav@usdoj.gov or call the main line at 202-307-6026. It will be helpful to have the LAV solicitation in front of you a point of reference during this information session. Feel free to pause the video at this point if you need a moment to pull up the solicitation.

On the cover of the solicitation, please note that final applications are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Wednesday, March 16, 2022. Please refer to pages 18 through 19 of the solicitation for more information on submission and intermediate deadlines. Please note that OVW will not accept late applications. So applicants are strongly encouraged to begin submitting their applications 24 to 48 hours prior to the application deadline and to carefully review the OVW policy on late submissions, which can be found on pages 19 through 20 of the solicitation. OVW anticipates notifying all applicants of funding decisions by October 1, 2022.

Eligibility is mentioned on the cover of the solicitation, as well as on pages 8-9. Eligible applicants include private and nonprofit entities; publicly funded organizations not acting in a governmental capacity, such as law schools; territorial organizations; Indian tribal governments, including Indian tribal consortia; and tribal organizations. Pages 5 through 6 of the solicitation provide background on the history and goals of the LAV Program.

The LAV Grant Program is intended to increase the availability of civil and criminal legal assistance needed to effectively aid adults and youth ages 11 and older who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The LAV Program provides funds for comprehensive direct legal services to victims in legal matters

relating to or rising out of that abuse or violence. Comprehensive legal services should address the broad spectrum of legal issues that victims encounter. In addition to representation in emergency and nonemergency protection order hearings, this includes representation in family matters such as divorce, child custody, or child support; consumer or housing matters; and credit restoration. Services must include legal representation by a licensed attorney. Any services unrelated to the provision of legal assistance or legal advocacy are unallowable under the LAV Grant Program.

Examples of activities beyond direct legal services that may be supported with LAV funds include advocacy, as long as the advocate is providing services related to the legal assistance (for example, safety planning, court accompaniment, and preparation for court appearances); translation services, if these are related to the legal services; childcare directly related to legal assistance (for example, childcare to enable the victim to meet with his or her attorney or go to court); and transportation related to the legal assistance (for example, travel to meet with the lawyer or to go to court).

Please note that LAV Grant Program funds may not be used to provide criminal defense services. If you or a project partner provides services that are unrelated to legal services in connection with your project, you should make it clear in your proposal that LAV funds will only be used to support allowable activities.

Funds under this program must be used for one or more of the statutory purpose areas listed on the slide. The FY2022 LAV Grant Program has three purpose areas. You will find this information on page 5 of the solicitation. Please review this section carefully, as project activities funded through the LAV Grant Program must fall under one or more of these purpose areas. You will note that purpose area 3 states not more than 10% of the funds awarded may be used for pro bono legal assistance. This requirement applies to the entire amount of LAV funding appropriated for the year. This is something that OVW monitors internally. Applicants are not required to limit their proposals to 10% pro bono legal assistance.

Information regarding the OVW priority areas under the program can be found on pages 5 and 6 of the solicitation. In FY2022, OVW is interested in supporting the priority areas identified on this slide. Applications proposing activities under these priority areas will be given special consideration. Please note that to be considered under the first priority area listed, the lead applicant must be a culturally specific organization. To be considered under the third priority area listed, the lead applicant must be a population-specific organization. Definitions of culturally specific and population-specific are included on page 6 of the solicitation.

OVW recognizes the need to address the lack of available direct legal services for survivors of sexual assault and unique aspects of sexual assault trauma from which survivors must heal. Applicants proposing to focus 50% or more of their grant-funded activities on intimate- and nonintimate-partner sexual assault legal services will be given special consideration. In addition, applications that are submitted by sexual assault coalitions or nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organizations with demonstrated expertise on sexual assault, and which propose to focus 80% or more of their grant-funded activities on nonintimate-partner sexual assault legal services can apply for larger awards and may be eligible for an additional 24 months of noncompetitive funding.

For those of you who applied last year, note that the requirements for this 80% condition are now slightly different. The lead applicant no longer needs to be a victim services provider. In both cases, applicants should articulate the specific legal needs of sexual assault survivors within their communities and how project activities would meet those needs. Applications should also reflect the applicant's specialized training and experience in legal matters specific to sexual assault. Those applying to focus on sexual assault should demonstrate a commitment to addressing sexual assault and should clearly show that the applicant has the capacity to address the priority effectively. In order to be considered for the sexual assault priority area, applicants must respond to all of the sexual assault priority questions in the project narrative and MOU or MOE. These additional questions are required whether you're applying for the 50% or the 80% condition.

Pursuant to the LAV statute, at least 3% of funds made available for the LAV Program must be used for projects that assist adult and youth victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual assault on lands within the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe. Applications proposing to assist such victims will receive special consideration in order to meet this requirement. But they must include the percentage of proposed activities that will support services to victims on tribal lands.

OVW does not fund activities that jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions. Please refer to the OVW Solicitation Companion Guide for additional details. Please note: Applications that propose any activities that compromise victim safety and recovery or undermine offender accountability may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration entirely.

The LAV Program has specific out-of-scope activities that will not be supported by this program. We have highlighted some of these activities in this slide but a complete list can be found on page 6 of the solicitation. It is important to review this list thoroughly, as

applications that propose activities deemed to be substantially out of scope may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration.

The solicitation provides details on the federal award information beginning on page 7. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. There is no guarantee the funds will be available in the future. However, OVW may elect to make awards in a future fiscal year for applications submitted under the solicitation but not selected for FY2022 funding, depending on the merits of the applications and the availability of funding. The grant award period is for 36 months, generally beginning on October 1, 2022.

The LAV Program typically makes awards for \$600,000 or \$800,000. But amounts may vary. OVW estimates that it will make up to 56 LAV awards for an estimated \$35,000,000. All awards will be made as grants.

Applications submitted by sexual assault coalitions or organizations with demonstrated expertise in sexual assault and that are proposing to focus 80% or more of the project's activities on legal services for victims of nonintimate-partner sexual assaults may request up to \$800,000 for the entire 36-month period. Note, if funded, at the end of the 36-month award period, these grantees may be eligible to receive 24 months of additional noncompetitive funding to continue their projects. All other applications may request up to \$600,000 for the entire 36-month period. OVW has the discretion to award grants for greater or lesser amounts than requested and to negotiate the scope of work and budget with applicants prior to award of a grant.

The LAV Program accepts applications from two types of applicants. New applicants are organizations that have never received direct funding under the LAV Program or whose previous LAV Program funding expired on or before March 1, 2021. Continuation applicants are those who have an existing award under the LAV Program or an award that closed after March 1, 2021. Recipients of an FY2021 LAV Award or of an FY2020 LAV Award that was for 36 months are generally not eligible to apply as the lead applicant on an FY2022 proposal. However, recipients of an FY2021 or 2020 award may apply as the lead applicant if the FY2022 LAV application is for a distinct office that does not serve the same geographic area as the office that received funding in FY2021 or FY2020.

Current grantees with a substantial amount of unobligated funds remaining as of March 31, 2022, without adequate justification may be removed from consideration for funding or may receive a reduced award amount if selected for funding in FY2022.

The solicitation details other program eligibility requirements beginning on page 9. Please note that an applicant must include a nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organization with demonstrated expertise on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking, either as a lead applicant or a partner. The organization serving as a required expert on these crimes may be a larger multiservice organization that does not solely address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking but has a distinct or designated division or program that focuses on serving victims of these crimes. An example of this could be a YWCA that has a distinct domestic violence shelter. Applications where neither the lead applicant nor a partner has the required expertise will be removed from consideration.

The delivery of legal assistance certification is a letter that must be included with every application. Details may be found on page 9 of the solicitation.

SANDI VAN ORDEN: Application and submission information is included in the solicitation beginning on page 10. The complete application package is available on Grants.gov or at the OVW website at www.justice.gov/ovw. Applicants wishing to request a paper copy of the application materials should contact ovw.lav@usdoj.gov or 202-307-6026. Applicants should anticipate that failure to submit an application that contains all of the specified elements will negatively affect the review of the application and may result in the application not being considered for funding. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that a complete application is submitted by the deadline. OVW will not contact applicants for missing items. Applicants should refer to the chart on page 23 of the solicitation to ensure that all required steps and deadlines are met. Applicants should not submit documents that were not specifically asked for in the solicitation. Providing information that was not requested, such as letters of support from other organizations in your community or service area, will not increase the likelihood that an application will be selected for funding. So, when in doubt, leave it out.

Please carefully review the formatting and technical requirements on page 10. Points may be deducted for applications that do not adhere to the formatting and technical requirements. Please read the entire list of requirements.

Applications must include all of the required documents. The Proposal Narrative: This section must include the Purpose of the Proposal, What Will Be Done, and Who Will Implement the Project sections. Please refer to pages 11 through 13 of the solicitation for complete details. The Budget Detail Narrative and Worksheet: This section must include a budget and a budget narrative that links clearly to the project activities specified in the Proposal Narrative. The budget should not contain items that are

unsupported by the Proposal Narrative. You will fill out the budget and narrative in JustGrants via a web-based form. A sample budget and a webinar on creating a budget are both available on the OVW website. The Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Exemption: Please carefully review the distinction between the two and identify which is required for your organization. Applicants that do not include all of the required components will be considered substantially incomplete and will not be considered for funding. We will not contact applicants for missing documents. Please note there are additional questions in the project narrative and MOU or MOE if an application is addressing sexual assault.

The Data Requested with Application consists of two surveys which you will complete in JustGrants. These are not scored but are a required element of your application. A list of questions included in each survey is also included in the solicitation beginning on page 23. In JustGrants, you will click on each survey name to access and complete the survey.

The Proposal Abstract: Although the section will not be scored, your application should include an abstract that does not exceed two pages double-spaced. This section should not be a summary of past accomplishments. The abstract will be entered into a text box in JustGrants.

The Project Narrative section should not exceed 20 pages double-spaced and must include the required three sections: Purpose of the Proposal, What Will Be Done, and Who Will Implement the Project. Reviewers will not read more than 20 pages double-spaced. If your application is not double-spaced, reviewers will only read the equivalent of 20 pages double-spaced. The remainder of the Project Narrative will not be scored. Make sure that you respond to every question within each of the sections. See pages 11 through 13 of the solicitation for more information.

A budget and budget narrative are required. Applicants will complete the web-based budget in JustGrants. Please do not copy and paste formatted text from Microsoft Word, Excel, or the like. Instead, type directly into the text boxes or copy and paste from a plain-text program such as Notepad. Your budget must reflect 36 months of project activity. It must include funds to attend OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance in the amount of \$12,000 for proposals from organizations located within the 48 contiguous states and \$18,000 for organizations located within the territories, Hawaii, or Alaska. Please note that this amount is for the entire 36 months and not per year. Applicants may budget expenses in excess of the required training and technical assistance amount if you would like to attend relevant non-OVW-sponsored conferences or trainings. The budget and budget narrative will be reviewed separately

from the proposed Project Narrative. The budget narrative must describe each line item requested in the budget and explain all costs included in the budget, including how the costs of goods and services are determined and how they will fulfill the objectives of the project.

In the next couple of slides, we're going to focus on aspects of your application that relate to the documents that our financial team, the Grants Financial Management Division, or GFMD, reviews. More specifically, we will discuss some items that GFMD has identified from prior years' applications that would help with expediting our review process. So for today, we're going to highlight certain aspects of the Pre-Award Risk Assessment and provide you with a link to a detailed webinar on how to develop the budget that would be included in your application.

First, we'll highlight the items identified in the Data Requested with Application, which is completed by all applicants in the survey in JustGrants. A list of questions included in the survey appears at the end of the solicitation under the heading Survey Questions. Applicants should click on the survey name, Pre-Award Risk Assessment, to access and complete the survey in JustGrants. Specifically, two items that we would like to discuss are the Single Audit response and the IRS three-step safe-harbor procedure. OVW requests that all applicants provide a statement as to whether they have expended \$750,000 or more in federal funds during their last fiscal year. If they have, then they indicate that and also specify the end date of their last fiscal year. However, GFMD is finding that applicants do not always include all of this information. Please ensure that this question is answered in its entirety on the Data Requested with Application survey, number 3.

Another item that we'd like to highlight from the solicitation is specifically for nonprofit organizations. If you use the IRS three-step safe-harbor procedure to determine your executive's compensation, you're required to provide a disclosure letter. Page 15 of the solicitation provides further details and a link to a sample letter. Note that there are four required parts of this disclosure letter. The sample letter provided outlines all four parts of the disclosure, so please be sure to follow the sample and provide a response to each of the four pieces.

The next item that we would like to discuss is the Pre-Award Risk Assessment survey, which assists GFMD in determining their Pre-Award Risk Assessment review for all applications. Each applicant must prepare a response to all 11 questions, and each question has multiple parts. We've noticed from prior years that applicants do not always fully answer all parts of the question, which in turn requires GFMD to reach out to the applicant, which may delay funding decisions. Some of the most common issues

that we've encountered have been, for example, question 2, where the applicant indicates that they do indeed have internal policies but they don't provide a brief list of topics covered in the policies and procedures. On question 3, some applicants fail to provide a brief summary of their organization's process for tracking expenditures and, more specifically, whether or not it tracks budgeted versus actual expenditures. These are just a few examples. But in general, please make sure that you read each piece of the question and provide a full and comprehensive response.

This slide will quickly highlight some of the resources that are available as you're creating the budget to be submitted with your application. Over the last couple of years, GFMD has developed a detailed webinar presentation on how to develop a budget to be submitted with OVW applications. This presentation addresses some of the challenges that you may face with your budgets and provides some insight on OVW's budget review process. This webinar can be found at the link on the slide. Additionally, the JustGrants page has resources on completing the web-based budget in JustGrants. Next up is the Uniform Guidance, which can be found at 2 CFR 200. Use your favorite search engine for this one. Other resources include the DOJ Financial Guide and the LAV solicitation itself.

We know this can be a lot of information to process, so if you have any questions about the GFMD information discussed, please feel free to contact the GFMD Helpdesk at 888-514-8556 or by email at ovw.gfmd@usdoj.gov.

The MOU section can be found on pages 15 and 16 of the solicitation. For the purposes of this solicitation, the MOU is a document containing the terms of the partnership and the roles and responsibilities between two or more parties. That MOU must be a single document and must be signed and dated by the Authorized Representative of each proposed partner organization. An applicant must include a nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organization with demonstrated expertise on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking, either as a lead applicant or a partner. Please note that there are additional requirements for applications addressing the sexual assault priority.

The MOE section can be found on page 16 of the solicitation. This applies to applications from lead applicants that, as their mission or designated subdivision's mission, provide services to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking victims. Applicants may submit an MOE in lieu of an MOU if they demonstrate that they have the required expertise in providing services and/or legal representation for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking. Please note that all applications with project partners who will receive subawards should submit an MOU even if the lead applicant serves as a required expert. If the MOE is submitted

in lieu of an MOU and the applicant does not meet the criteria to submit an MOE, the application may be removed from consideration. Please note that there are additional requirements for applications addressing the sexual assault priority area. The applicant should carefully review the requirements for both the MOU and MOE and decide how best to proceed. The applicant should not submit both documents in their application. Only one will be scored.

Pages 16 through 17 provide information about additional documents that will not be scored during the review process but which should be included with your application. Failure to include any of these may result in your application being removed from consideration.

HANNA KATZ: Recipients of OVW funds must comply with applicable federal civil rights laws, which, among other things, prohibit recipients from discriminating on the basis of national origin and disability. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to grantees' programs and activities for individuals with disabilities, individuals who are Deaf and hard of hearing, and individuals with limited English proficiency. Applicants must include funds or other resources in their budget that support activities to ensure access for these individuals. See page 22 of the solicitation for more information on these requirements.

You may find this funding opportunity on Grants.gov by using the CFDA number, Grants.gov opportunity number, or the title of the solicitation, all of which can be found on the cover page. The FY2022 application submission process is a two-step process with significant differences from the process prior to last year. Application materials will be submitted in Grants.gov and JustGrants. We recommend starting the application process—even just the Grants.gov and JustGrants registration process—as soon as possible to allow time to learn the new system. Read the solicitation carefully to understand all steps required to submit an application and the time required to complete those steps. Some steps, such as obtaining a Data Universal Number System, or DUNS, number or registering with the System for Award Management, or SAM, or Grants.gov, may take several days to complete. We recommend that applicants begin these processes as soon as possible, but no later than the dates suggested in the solicitation.

Applicants must complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) in Grants.gov. The specific information required for this step is included on page 11 of the solicitation. Applicants must also complete and submit the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) in Grants.gov. After submitting these forms, the applicant will receive an email notification to complete the rest of the application in JustGrants. If the applicant

is a new user in JustGrants, the email will include instructions on registering with JustGrants. Applicants will submit the full application, including attachments, in JustGrants. If you have applied for OVW funding prior to last year, you will notice some significant changes in the application process. In the new JustGrants system, applicants will enter some application information directly into text boxes in the system, fill out web-based forms, and upload some documents as attachments.

We have included the following major elements of the application as examples of what applicants will submit in JustGrants. The Proposal Abstract will be entered in a text box. The Data Requested with Application will be completed as a web-based form on JustGrants. The Proposal Narrative will be uploaded as an attachment. The Budget Worksheet and Budget Narrative will be entered into a web-based form. The Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, or Memorandum of Exemption, or MOE, will be uploaded as an attachment. In addition to these major elements, other documentation will be required for all applications or when applicable. Read the solicitation carefully for a full description of all items required.

In JustGrants, each applying entity will have an assigned Entity Administrator who is responsible for managing entity-level information and assigning roles in the system. The Entity Administrator is also the E-Biz POC designated in SAM.gov. For more information on registering with JustGrants, please refer to the website justicegrants.usdoj.gov. Within 24 hours of JustGrants receiving your application from Grants.gov, the user submitting the application in Grants.gov and the SAM E-Biz POC will receive an email to register for a JustGrants account. The email is from DOJ's secure user management system—DIAMD, "Diamond"—and will include instructions on how to create an account. To ensure that you receive these emails and that they are not flagged as spam, we recommend adding DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov to the trusted sender list in your email settings.

The E-Biz POC at the applicant organization serves as the Entity Administrator and must log in to JustGrants to confirm the entity's profile and add users. The user submitting the application in JustGrants serves as the Application Submitter. Within minutes of completing their JustGrants account registration, the Application Submitter and the E-Biz POC (or Entity Administrator) users will receive an email from JustGrants with a link to the application that was started in Grants.gov. Alternatively, the Application Submitter can log in to JustGrants and locate the pending application in their work list on the home or landing page. The application number listed on JustGrants will be identical to the nine-digit number that begins with "GRANT" on Grants.gov.

Each lead applicant must have at least one Authorized Representative designated on JustGrants. An Authorized Representative is an individual with documented authority to sign an agreement with the federal government. Before the application is submitted, the Entity Administrator must log in to JustGrants to review the Authorized Representative or representatives associated with the organization. If an Authorized Representative does not have a JustGrants account, the Entity Administrator will need to invite them to register. Within minutes of being invited to be an Authorized Representative, the individual will receive an email from DIAMD-NoReply@usdoj.gov with instructions on how to create an account in DOJ's secure user management system. Once the Authorized Representative receives the email and completes the steps to create an account, the Authorized Representative will be available in JustGrants.

The Application Submitter will complete the application by entering data into web-based forms, uploading attachments, and accepting assurances and certifications. The Application Submitter will also need to select the Authorized Representative or representatives. Once all sections are completed, the Application Submitter will submit the application. The Application Submitter, Entity Administrator, and Authorized Representative will then receive an email from JustGrants confirming successful submission of the application.

The Department of Justice has made a collection of self-guided training resources, including training and a virtual Q&A session on application submission, available at the website displayed on this slide.

Final applications are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Wednesday, March 16, 2022. Carefully review the How to Apply and Submission Dates and Times sections on pages 17 through 19 of the solicitation for applicant actions with required deadlines and OVW's policy on late submissions. Submitting the application components at least 48 hours before each deadline—Grants.gov or JustGrants, as applicable—will enable applicants to receive notice of a failed submission and to provide an opportunity to correct the error before the applicable deadline. Applicants should only submit one application per program. If an applicant submits multiple versions of an application, OVW will review the most recent version submitted.

OVW offers several options for an applicant to provide advance notice of a delayed application. Applicants should thoroughly familiarize themselves with OVW's policy on late submissions on pages 19 through 20 of the solicitation. Extensions are rarely granted. Failure to begin the registration or application submission processes in sufficient time is not an acceptable reason for a late application submission.

Lastly, we have some tips that may improve your chances on becoming an LAV Grant recipient. Please note that the following list is not a guarantee that you will be funded, but rather a guide to navigate you through the OVW application process. First, please read the solicitation in its entirety. It is important to make sure that you do not miss out on any important information by just skimming through the solicitation and focusing on the How to Apply section. Read the solicitation, and contact LAV staff or submit your inquiry in the LAV email box if you have any questions.

Allow plenty of time to gather required information, and submit well before the deadline. Although this is not required, more time will allow for any unforeseen obstacles, such as power outages and natural disasters.

Attend to the technical details. A missing or incorrect DUNS number or an expired SAM registration are some of the reasons an application may be rejected.

It is important to keep your audience in mind and make it easy for them to read and review your application. Use the heading and subheading titles that are in the solicitation. This will help the reviewer follow along with your application. Also, number your pages. This will help the reviewer ensure you are following the solicitation formatting and instructions. Do not risk deduction in points for something as simple as formatting.

Please keep in mind that the reviewers will only review the information contained in the application. Be sure that the application and responses to the program requirements and expectations are complete and clearly written. Do not assume that reviewers are familiar with your organization, service area, or barriers to legal needs in your community. Keep the reviewer in mind when writing the application.

Organization, organization, organization—I cannot stress this enough! Many applications fail to receive high scores because the reviewers cannot follow the thought process of the applicant or because parts of the application do not fit together. Treat it like a puzzle. Let the pieces fall properly into place.

Print out the final document and carefully proofread and review your application to ensure accuracy and completeness. And finally, use acronyms judiciously, if at all. Remember that the reviewers are likely not familiar with your community and may not be familiar with the acronyms that your organization and project partners use.

Good luck. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.