

OVW Rural Program Pre-Application Information Session

CHARLOTTE TURPIN: Welcome to the Office on Violence Against Women Pre-Application Information Session for the Fiscal Year 2022 Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Program solicitation. This information session is being presented by OVW Rural team members Charlotte Turpin and Ni'Coria Gray, and is meant to serve as a source of information regarding the Rural solicitation application. It is strongly recommended that you read the full solicitation prior to listening to this information session. Although we will not review every page and section of this solicitation, we will be highlighting the Rural Program grant application requirements.

Application deadline and submission times. Application submissions and times are mentioned on the cover of the Rural solicitation and also on page 12. Applications are due by 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 12, 2022. All applications are submitted through Grants.gov and JustGrants. Grants.gov has two date requirements: a registration deadline of March 25, found in the How to Apply section on pages 19 and 20, and an application submission deadline of April 7 on the cover page.

The Rural Program was reauthorized in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013. The Rural Program supports efforts to enhance the safety of rural victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and supports projects uniquely designed to address and prevent these crimes in a rural area.

The Rural Program has three purpose areas. I won't read the purpose areas to you verbatim. However, in a nutshell, all the projects funded through the Rural Program must fall under one of these purpose areas. One, to identify, assess, and appropriately respond to child, youth, and adult victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in rural communities by encouraging collaboration among sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking victim service providers, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, other criminal justice service providers, human and community service providers, education institutions, and healthcare providers, including sexual assault forensic examiners. Number two, to establish and expand nonprofit, nongovernmental state, tribal, territorial, and local government victim services in rural communities to child youth and adult victims. And number three, to increase the safety and well-being of women and children in rural communities by dealing directly and immediately with domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking occurring in rural communities and by creating and implementing strategies to increase awareness and prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

In addition to the three purpose areas, Rural Program grantees must implement one or more of the five strategies as outlined and authorized in the statute. This information can be found on pages 5 and 6 of the solicitation. Implementing, expanding, and establishing cooperative efforts and projects among law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim service providers, and other related parties to investigate and prosecute incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking,

including developing multidisciplinary teams focusing on high-risk cases, with the goal of preventing domestic and dating violence homicide. Number two, providing treatment, counseling, advocacy, legal assistance, and long-term and short-term victim and population-specific services to adult and minor victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in rural communities, including assistance on immigration matters. Number three, working in cooperation with the community to develop education and prevention strategies directed toward such issues. Number four, developing, enlarging, and strengthening programs addressing sexual assault, including sexual assault forensic examiner programs, sexual assault response teams, law enforcement training, and programs addressing rape kit backlogs. And number five, developing programs and strategies that focus on the specific needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking who reside in remote rural and geographically isolated areas, including addressing the challenges posed by the lack of access to shelters and victim services and limited law enforcement resources and training and providing training and resources to community health aides involved in the delivery of Indian Health Service programs.

In FY 2022, OVW is interested in supporting the Office priority areas identified below. Applications proposing activities in the following areas will be given special consideration. Information on how to address the OVW priority areas can be found on page 6 and 7 of the solicitation. The first priority area we will address is, advance racial equity as an essential component of ending sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. And number two, strengthen efforts to prevent and end sexual assault, including victim services and civil and criminal justice responses. Both of these OVW priority areas fall in line with our Rural statutory requirements.

Advancing racial equity as an essential component of ending sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. OVW recognizes the diversity within the population in rural America and the existing gaps among current Rural Program grantees and providing services that fully reflect the rural communities they serve. OVW encourages applicants to consider developing projects that address racial equity and ensure that services are representative of their community demographics. Applications should include activities that address this OVW priority through partnership and funding culturally specific, community-based organizations and tribal organizations, including tribal government and tribal nonprofit organizations, as well as providing technical assistance for these programs. To qualify for this priority area, applicants must partner with culturally specific, community-based organizations or programs and include project activities that specifically engage, promote, and serve culturally specific communities. New applicants currently providing culturally specific, community-based domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking services are encouraged to apply. Continuation applications that are not currently serving culturally specific populations are encouraged to build capacity in their organizations to serve culturally specific, underserved populations within their service areas. Applicants should consider creating outreach and educational opportunities in your communities, hiring staff with experience serving culturally specific clients, and/or establishing partnerships with culturally specific organizations that may or may not have experience addressing these issues and offer

cross-training opportunities as part of the collaboration. For this application, the definition of culturally specific can be found on page 6 of the solicitation.

Number two, strengthen efforts to prevent and end sexual assault, including victim services and civil and criminal justice responses. There has been a gradual increase in Rural Program applications focusing on sexual assault. However, there still remains a need to encourage more program applicants to address this issue. New and continuation applications are encouraged to include activities that address this OVW priority area through one or both of the following strategies.

Strategy one, sexual assault applications focusing primarily on responding to non-intimate partner sexual assault, including sexual assault across the lifespan. This includes prevention, outreach, offender intervention, medical forensic care, civil legal assistance, and victim services. Applicants are encouraged to provide one or more of the aforementioned activities to provide comprehensive services that address physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of survivors of sexual assault and their families. Examples of activities include but are not limited to the list below, which can be found on page 6 of the solicitation.

Strategy two, sexual assault applications that focus primarily on improving the criminal justice response to sexual assault, including the investigation, charging, and prosecution of sexual assault crimes. These programs must include a partnership with sexual assault service providers to ensure that survivors receive comprehensive support throughout the criminal justice process. Applicants are encouraged to enhance investigation and prosecution of sexual assault crimes and provide advocacy throughout the criminal justice process. Examples of activities may include but are not limited to sexual assault training for law enforcement and prosecutors, sexual assault investigator or prosecutor positions, enhancement or creation of law enforcement and/or prosecutor sexual assault advocate positions, or providing criminal legal advocacy training for advocates.

Continuation applications that focus primarily 75% or more of their proposals and objectives, activities, and budget on developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing sexual assault in rural communities and areas will be eligible to apply for up to \$950,000. New applicants will be eligible to apply for up to \$750,000 and receive special consideration during the FY '22 funding recommendation process.

Rural statutory requirements. The statute requires that at least 75% of the total amount of funding made available for this program must be allocated to eligible entities located in rural states. The full definition and a list of rural states based on the 2010 Census data can be found on page 9 of the solicitation. VAWA requires that OVW allocate a designated percentage of appropriate Rural Program funds to meaningfully address sexual assault in rural communities. Applicants are not required to address sexual assault within their individual applications. However, interested applicants will be asked to identify the percentage of their project that addresses sexual assault. And OVW will give priority to projects that meet the needs of underserved populations.

Activities that compromise victim safety and recovery or undermine offender accountability. 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. Applications that propose any such activities may receive deductions in points during the review process or may be eliminated from consideration entirely. Information on activities that compromise victim safety and recovery can be found on page 17 in the Solicitation Companion Guide, located on the OVW website under Resources for Applicants.

Out-of-scope activities. Applications including out-of-scope or unallowable activities may receive a deduction in points during the review process or may be removed from consideration. The solicitation lists specific activities that are outside of the scope of the Rural Program on page 7 of the solicitation. These activities will not be supported by Rural Program funding.

Budget and award periods. The Rural Program grant award period is 36 months. Generally, the award period will start on October 1, 2022. Continuation applications are limited to \$750,000 for the entire 36 months. Continuation applications with 75% or more focused on sexual assault are limited to \$950,000. New applicants are limited to \$500,000 for the entire 36 months. And new applicants with a 75% or more focus on sexual assault are limited to \$700,000. I will add here that OVW has the discretion to make awards for greater or lesser amounts than requested and to negotiate the scope of work and budget with applicants prior to making an award.

The types of application OVW will accept for this program are the following. New applicants are those that have never received funding under the Rural Program or whose funding expired on or before April 12, 2021. Continuation applicants are those that have an existing or recently closed award under this program. Applicants that received funding under this award in FY 2020 and FY '21 are not eligible to apply. Also, continuation funding is not guaranteed. Additionally, current grantees with 50% or more of their previous award remaining as of March 31, 2022, without adequate justification may not be considered for funding or may receive a reduced award amount if selected for funding in FY '22.

Eligible applicants for the Rural Program are limited to states and territories; Indian tribes; local governments; nonprofit public or private entities, including states and local governments; Indian tribes; tribal nonprofit organizations; faith-based and community organizations; and Safe Policing for Safe Communities, which includes state, local, university, or college law enforcement agencies. For definitions of these entities, please refer to page 10 of the solicitation. I did also want to note that we receive lots of questions from potential hospital or university applicants on whether or not they are eligible to apply for the Rural grant, and the answer is yes, as long as you meet all the qualifying requirements.

Other program eligibility requirements include delivery of legal assistance certification. In previous years, legal assistance was limited to legal assistance and seeking protection orders and limited immigration matters. With the implementation of VAWA 2013, legal services have been expanded to include comprehensive legal services such as divorce, custody, and child support. Applicants proposing to provide legal assistance with funds under the FY '22 Rural Program must certify in writing regarding their expertise in providing legal assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the target population—or is partnered with an entity or person that has demonstrated the same expertise, and has completed or will complete training in connection with domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and related legal issues, including training on evidence-based risk factors for domestic violence/dating violence homicide. Any training program conducted in satisfaction of the above requirements has been or will be developed with input from and in collaboration with the tribal, state, territorial, or local domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victim service provider or coalition, as well as appropriate tribal, state, territorial, or local law enforcement officials. The grantee's organizational policies do not require mediation or counseling involving offenders and victims physically together in cases where sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or child sexual abuse is an issue.

Certification should be made in the form of a letter on letterhead and signed and dated by the Authorized Representative. A sample certification letter can be found on the OVW website via a link on page 11 of the Rural solicitation under this section. Failure to provide required certifications may disqualify an application from further consideration. At a minimum, an application missing the required certification letter will be required to submit a certification letter prior to receiving an award.

Other program eligibility requirements include the eligible service area. Applicants must demonstrate that they propose to serve a rural area or rural community. As stated previously, the Rural statute within the Violence Against Women Act requires that Rural funds are directed to victims residing within areas and communities that are Rural eligible. To demonstrate that the area that your agency is proposing targeting services to is Rural eligible, every application—other than those submitted by federally recognized Indian tribes, which are statutorily defined as rural—must include the proper printed documentation demonstrating that the proposed service area meets this eligibility requirement. Instructions to complete the documentation process can be found via the link provided in the Rural solicitation under Eligible Service Area on pages 11 and 12. Regardless of whether an application is submitted by an entity from a rural state or a nonrural state, all applicants must target services in rural areas or communities. I want to note here that due to the delayed release in the 2020 Census data, eligibility documentation requirements for the FY '22 Rural Program application will be based on the 2010 Census data information.

Required partnerships. Applications must include at least one project partner and must include a victim service provider as a formal project partner and/or the lead applicant, as demonstrated through a required Memorandum of Understanding or Letters of Support

for court applicants that cannot sign an MOU. All required partnerships must be demonstrated through a required MOU or Letter of Support. Additionally, eligible applications, including those submitted by a victim service provider, must include at least one project partner and must include agencies and organizations necessary to implement the proposed project. Additionally, eligible applications, including those submitted by a victim service provider, must include at least one project partner and must include agencies and organizations necessary to implement the proposed project.

NI'CORRA GRAY: Application and submission information. Letter of Intent. Applicants intending to apply for FY 2022 funding under this program are strongly encouraged to submit a Letter of Intent by March 25, 2022. The letter should be submitted to OVW at ovw.rural@usdoj.gov. The letter should state that the applicant is registered and current with SAM and with Grants.gov. The letter will not obligate the applicant to submit an application.

Formatting and technical requirements. Applications must follow the formatting and technical requirements outlined in the solicitation. Points may be deducted for applications that do not adhere to the formatting and technical requirements. A complete list of requirements can be found on page 12 of the solicitation.

Application contents. Applications must include the following required documents and demonstrate that the program eligibility requirements have been met (applications that fail to include all of the required documents will be considered substantially incomplete and will not be considered for funding): one, Project Narrative; two, Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative; three, MOU/Letter of Support (all applicants are required to submit a Memorandum of Understanding, also known as the MOU, with their applications; only state courts, tribal courts, territory courts, and local court applicants may submit Letters of Support in lieu of the MOU); number four, Eligible Service Area Documentation. OVW will not contact applicants for these missing items. Applications that do not include all of these documents will be considered substantially incomplete and will not be considered for funding.

Other required documents. The Data Requested with Application, also known as a DRA, includes two surveys that must be completed in JustGrants but are not scored.

Pre-Award Risk Assessment and Rural DRA. A list of these questions included in each survey appears at the end of this solicitation under the heading Survey Questions. Applicants should click on the survey name to access and complete the survey.

Accessibility. Applicants must include funds or describe other resources available to the applicant to support activities to ensure access for individuals with disabilities, Deaf/hard-of-hearing individuals, and persons with limited English proficiency. More information can be found on pages 6 and 7 of the Solicitation Companion Guide under Civil Rights Compliance.

The Grants Financial Management Division. 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 (also known as GFMD), reviews. More specifically, we'll discuss some items that GFMD has identified from prior-year applications that could help with expediting the 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 a budget that will be included in your application.

The first things we will highlight are the items identified in the Data Requested with Application sheet, which is completed by all applicants. So, specifically, two items 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 this information and leave out whether or not they have met the threshold, or the end date of the last fiscal year is not included. Please ensure this question is answered in its entirety on the Data Requested with Application sheet.

So, another item 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 executives' compensation, you must reference the Additional Information section that provides the requirement's disclosure letter. We'd like to highlight that there are four parts of this disclosure letter that must be provided to OVW in order to comply with this requirement. This sample letter outlines all four parts of this disclosure. So please be sure to follow the sample and provide a response to each of the four pieces.

The next item we'd like to discuss is the financial accounting practices which assist GFMD during 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 questions, which in turn requires GFMD to reach out to the applicant, which may delay recommendation. Some of the most common issues that we've encountered have been, for example, question number 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. Another example of incomplete responses includes question number 3, where the applicant does not provide a brief summary of the organization's process for tracking expenditures and, more specifically, whether or not it tracks budgeted versus actual expenditures. So, these are a few examples but, basically, please make sure you read each piece of each question and provide a full, comprehensive response.

Resources for GFMD. The next slide will quickly highlight some resources that are available that should be used as you're creating the budget to be submitted with the application. Over the last year, GFMD has worked to develop a detailed webinar

presentation on how to assist applicants in developing a budget to be submitted with their OVW application. They want to help reduce any challenges you may face with the budget and make it clear what they look for when they review your budget. This webinar provides some insight as to what OVW financial staff considers during their review. Use the following link, www.justice.gov/ovw/resources-applicants. The webinar can be found under the Budget Information section on this page. Next up is Uniform Guidance, which can be found at 2 CFR 200. Then, another resource is the DOJ Financial Guide, as well as the program-specific solicitation. If you need assistance finding these resources, please contact the GFMD Helpdesk. 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.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Letters of Support. The MOU is a document containing the terms of the partnership and the roles and responsibilities between two or more parties, and it must be included as an attachment to the application in JustGrants. The MOU must be a single document and must be signed and dated by the Authorized Representative of each proposed partner organization. During the development of the application, OVW will accept electronic signatures. MOUs that are missing signatures may result in a point deduction or removal from consideration, particularly if the MOU is missing the signature of a required partner. An MOU can include multiple signature pages, so long as each page includes the names and titles of all signatures to the MOU.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Letters of Support. All applicants are required to submit a Memorandum of Understanding with their applications. If you are a state court, a tribal court, territory court, or a local court applicant, you may submit Letters of Support in lieu of an MOU. Let me repeat. If you are state court, a tribal court, territory court, or a local applicant, you may submit a Letter of Support in lieu of an MOU.

Additional application components. The following forms will be generated and completed during the application submission process: Letters of Nonsupplanting; Confidentiality Notice Form; Disclosure of Lobbying and Activities (also known as the SF-LLL); DOJ Certified Standard Assurances; Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items; DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Submission, and Other Responsibility Matters and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements.

Registration and submission. Every applicant must obtain a Data Universal Number System (also known as a DUNS number), register online with the System for Award Management (also known as SAM), and register online with Grants.gov well before the grant deadline. It is important that you complete the registration process by Friday, March 25, 2022. There is a reason that we set a deadline of Friday, March 25, 2022, as the process to register for DUNS and SAM is extremely long. If you do not have a DUNS number and/or are not current in the SAM system, you should begin the process as soon as possible. Register with Grants.gov as soon as possible if you haven't already done so. The registration process is not one that can be completed quickly. It takes time, days, and you should begin the process as soon as possible. Every year, we

have a handful of applicants that didn't make the deadline because they were delinquent with their DUNS, SAM, and/or the Grants.gov registration.

All applications will be submitted through a new two-step process. The first step is, submission of the SF-424 and SF-LLL will be submitted in Grants.gov. Again, all applications will be submitted through a new two-step process. The first step, submission of the SF-424 and SF-LLL, will be submitted in Grants.gov by the April 7, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time deadline. This is an FYI. JustGrants has changed the SF-424 form. Applicants submitting their applications before March 30 should be okay using the old form, but if you'll be submitting your application after March 30, you will need to redo your SF-424 and submit the revised form of your application.

Submission of the full application, including the attachments, will be submitted in the Justice Grants system (also known as JustGrants) and Grants.gov. If you need any assistance with Grants.gov or JustGrants, please refer to the last slide in the presentation, where you will find contact information for the Grants.gov Applicant Support hotline and JustGrants Support. Applicants experiencing JustGrants technical issues should ensure that they are developing their proposals while they are working to address any issue. Applicants should follow the solicitation guidance regarding technical difficulties. This will enable them to submit a full proposal by the deadline using an alternate method, if necessary. We will update our submission guidance as necessary and as the due date nears. I will note, until April 3, 2022, entities that are not already registered in SAM.gov that wish to submit an application will need to obtain a DUNS to register with SAM. On and after April 4, 2022, entities can register directly in SAM.gov without a DUNS and will be assigned a unique entity ID SAM upon registration.

Submission deadlines. Applications are due 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, April 12, 2022. Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin their application submission process at least 48 hours before the application deadline. As a reminder, applicants must obtain a DUNS number and register online with the SAM system and Grants.gov no later than Friday, March 25, 2022. Letters of Intent are optional, but they should be submitted no later than Friday, March 25, 2022.

OVW policy on duplicate applications. 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 policy on late submissions. OVW offers several options for an applicant to provide advance notice of a delayed application. And applicants who request to submit an application after the deadline will be considered by OVW if all the steps are followed. These steps are listed on page 21 of the solicitation. Only in limited circumstances are extensions granted. Failure to begin the registration or application submission process in sufficient time is not an acceptable reason for a late submission.

Application review information. Applications will be subject to a peer review and programmatic review. Applications will be scored based on the degree to which the

application responds to each section and addresses each element in the section. Applications will be scored based upon the quality of the response, capacity of the applicant and any partners, and the level of detail provided. Each element must be addressed in the section in which it is requested. Points may be deducted if the applicant does not include the information in the appropriate section, even if it is included elsewhere within the application. Each section will be reviewed as a separate document and will be scored as such.

Federal award administration information, federal award notices. Successful applications will receive OVW award notifications electronically from JustGrants and not Grants.gov. This award notification will include instructions on enrolling in Automated Standard Application for Payments, also known as ASAP, and accepting the award. This award notification will be sent to the individuals listed as the Authorized Representative and the Point of Contact on the SF-424 and will include instructions on accepting the award. The award acceptance process involves physical signature of the award document and terms and conditions by the Authorized Representative and the scanning of the fully executed award document to OVW.

Application Checklist. Did you address all the criteria that will be rated? Please use the Application Checklist on page 25 of the solicitation. Did you include each of the required documents (the Project Narrative, Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative, Memorandum of Understanding, Letters of Support)? Remember, for state court, tribal court, territory court, or local court applicants, you may submit Letters of Support in lieu of the MOU.

Delivery of legal assistance certification letter, if applicable, and Rural eligibility documentation in your application. Did you review the deadline, April 12, 2022, 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time? Please make sure your Point of Contact listed in Grants.gov is responsive to emails and alerts. The Data Requested with Application and Pre-Award Risk Assessment are in the application as surveys. Both must be completed as part of your application package. Failure to complete the survey will prevent your application from being submitted.

Here are a few helpful tips to improve your chances of becoming a Rural Program grant recipient. Read the entire solicitation, start preparing your application early, attend to technical details, use headings to identify each section, keep your audience in mind, be organized and logical, identify the problems to be addressed, print out final documents and carefully proofread and review your application to ensure accuracy and completion, be careful in the use of attachments, limit the use of acronyms, and Points of Contacts must monitor their inbox for messages from Grants.gov and JustGrants.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Rural solicitation, please contact Charlotte Turpin from the Rural unit at the email and phone number listed in the slide. If you need technical assistance with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at the email and phone number listed on the slide. If you need technical assistance with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at the email

and phone number listed on the slide. If you need technical assistance with JustGrants, please contact OVW JustGrants Support listed on the slide.

Thank you so much for viewing the OVW FY 2022 Rural Program preapplication webinar. Good luck to each and every one of you during your application process.