

Crime Victim Services 2016

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 8/14/15

Q: Our agency has multiple types of funding (GC, DV, SA, AC, etc.). From what type of funding should our “Direct Client Assistance” expenses be budgeted?

A: You should budget according to the types of needs you anticipate having. If you expect that 60% of your direct client assistance expenses will be domestic violence related, you should budget that line accordingly. There are no restrictions about the types of crime victimization for which these funds may be used.

Q: I’m with a county attorney’s office and I’m having trouble meeting my match requirement. What are some examples of VOCA-eligible match I could use?

A: Match may be either cash match or in-kind. Potential ways to meet your match requirement include:

- Use funding provided by the county for the victim service advocate’s salary or fringe benefits.
- Use a prorated percentage of supervisory time spent supervising victim service staff, (i.e., 5% of the county attorney’s salary because 5% of his/her time is spent supervising and working with the victim/witness advocate who provides direct services to victims).
- Use a prorated percentage of other expenses currently covered by county funds such as the rent value of the victim service office space, printing and copying, office supplies, meeting room use, etc.
- See if the county will contribute additional funds.

Q: I’m with a county attorney’s office and I’m having trouble finding ways to budget my increased award given that the funding cannot supplant (replace) funding that the county typically contributes to my program. What are some examples of VOCA-eligible ways I could use the increase?

A: It is correct that the funding increase cannot replace funding the county typically contributes to your victim services program. If you find you don’t have a need for the full amount of the increased award, you may budget for the amount you need – you are not required to accept the total funding amount for which you are eligible.

Here are some VOCA-eligible expenses that could help expand or build up your program:

- Hire new part-time staff to supplement the victim/witness advocate’s work.
- Increase the salary of current staff (if possible within the county salary guidelines).
- Budget in more training money for the victim services advocate or other county staff that would fill in doing victim services work in the absence of the advocate.

Q: Could the county contribution to my victim services budget be used to create a multi-use client friendly room? We need a space to conduct interviews with victims, including for forensic interviews

with children, and for a space for victims and their support people to wait before/during court proceedings.

A: Yes. If you are using county funding for your match, it has to be for the same purposes as VOCA funding, and you should review the allowable and unallowable types of expenses for VOCA in the RFP (including construction restrictions). If you're not using county funding for match, then the funding should contribute to the work of the victim services advocate. Having a confidential space for victims fits the criteria.

Q: Must all match dollars be for direct services?

A: Match must be used for the same purposes as VOCA funds, on VOCA-eligible expenses related to providing direct services.

Q: Must the match line up in the same funding source? For example, if my program gets sexual assault and domestic violence funding, can I make up all the match with other sexual assault funding or must it be split between sexual assault and domestic violence in the same proportions?

A: Match does not need to correspond in proportion to how your funding is allocated. Match corresponds to the total amount of your award.

Q: If a program received increases in domestic violence and sexual assault funding at 60%, and in their shelter grant at 15%, can they use that 60% domestic violence increase to assist with raising salaries and benefits for all staff – both community based and shelter?

A: Yes.

Q: Are legal services considered direct services?

A: Yes, if working directly with crime victims. Legal advocacy (and assistance in working with the criminal justice system) is listed on the minimum programmatic standards as a basic activity direct service programs should be providing to crime victims.

Q: Can programs use the national hourly rate for volunteers as the cost basis for volunteer hours on the match?

A: The current "national value of volunteer time" is \$23.07 per hour. This figure includes the comparable pay you would incur if paying staff to provide the service, plus the cost of fringe benefits in your agency. Programs may use this figure in determining the value of volunteer time for their match if

the figure is applicable to both the volunteer work and the going rate in your area of the state. For example, some jobs within your agency would pay higher rates than others if you were paying staff to fulfill them, thus the value (for match purposes) would vary.

The following articles may be helpful in determining the value of volunteer hours for match:

https://www.tgci.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Valuing%20Volunteer%20Time_0.pdf

https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time

Q: Does OJP have any information/direction around use of cafeteria plans for benefits, or models?

A: We know some grantees are looking closely at cafeteria plans as an affordable way to provide health care. This is a decision each non-profit board of directors must determine for themselves and OJP is not able to provide guidance. The variables, from various areas of the state, are too many.

Q: My Notice of Eligibility states that I will be allocated federal VOCA funding. Does this mean we will not be allocated any state funding, and therefore, all of my budgeted expenses have to be “VOCA-eligible?”

A: No. All grantees will be allocated state funding for expenses that are not “VOCA-eligible” such as direct client assistance and administrative costs. However, if more than 25% of your award is budgeted under the “Other” column for expenses that are not direct service based and thereby not “VOCA-eligible,” please contact your grant manager.

Q: How do I find out which legislative district I am in?

A: Go to: <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=1725>.

Q: In this application are there changes required in the amount of information we need to provide in the budget narrative form?

A: The large VOCA increase has come with a message to expect increased audit scrutiny. Many grantees will likely be asked by their grant manager to provide greater detail in the budget narrative. This is one reason OJP has asked grantees to submit their application early if at all possible, as we anticipate budget revisions before applications can be processed. Please be aware, if your agency budget is larger than the crime victim services program, agency-wide expenses should be prorated across all funding sources. See page 26 of the OJP Grant Manual for direction on various methods of prorating costs: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants/Documents/grant%20manual%20current.pdf>

Also, please call your grant manager with questions.

Q: In considering using the 10% indirect costs it states we must provide a “detailed list of expenses.” Can you elaborate? Does it mean just a list of expenses that are not line itemized elsewhere or will they need amounts and/or percentages?

A: Indirect costs are used mainly when it is difficult to break out (prorate) shared expenses an agency has among many different programs. So, the detailed list of expenses should just include the types of expenses (accounting, rent, etc.) that will be covered under “indirect costs.” It is not necessary to show amounts or percentages for each type of expense. These costs then may not be included elsewhere in the budget.

Q: How do I know if my agency already has an active registration on SAM.gov or if I need to create a new user account?

A: Go to SAM.gov, click on “search records” and enter your agency name or DUNS number. If your agency does not come up, click on the “inactive” box on the left to see if your agency has an inactive registration that just needs to be updated. If your agency still does not come up, you will need to create an account. The SAM.gov site has an FAQ section and user guides under “help” to assist you in creating or updating an account. Call 1-866-606-8220 if you need assistance.

Q: What is a DUNS number and how do I obtain one?

A: The Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by the company Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Call D&B at 866-705-5711, or via e-mail to govt@dnb.com, if you do not have a DUNS number.

D&B assigns DUNS numbers for each physical location of a business. The process to request a DUNS number takes about 10 minutes. All entities doing business with the U.S. government can receive a DUNS number FREE of charge and, under normal circumstances, within 1-2 business days when using the D&B web form process.

If you already have a DUNS number, a D&B representative will advise you over the phone.

Q: In the narrative section, it states that as a government agency, we must provide the funding amount contributed by this agency in FY15. Do you just need a dollar amount here or a more detailed explanation of how that money was spent?

A: A dollar amount is all that is requested but if it helps to explain the second question about how the increased amount will be used in FY16, then information about what those dollars were used for in FY15 could be included.

Q: Also in the narrative we have to explain how the increased award amount will be used to supplement. How much detail do you need here? We have ideas as to what we would like to do with the additional money, such as having our materials translated into many different languages, replenish supplies for the materials we hand out, promotional items, update our website (possibly hire someone to do this for us), and pay for a training in cultural differences. Do I need to explain each of these separately with a specific dollar amount? What if that changes or I can't get specific costs for those things at this time? I am looking for direction on how much detail is needed.

A: In the narrative, provide as much information as you think is necessary to show that you are using the increased award to enhance your program rather than replace county funding that was available to your program in FY15. The narrative can be brief in the specific amounts. However, for the budget detail, more specific information should be included. Use your best estimate, knowing that if needed, a budget revision can occur during the grant year.

Q: Is there anything else I need to address in the narrative (i.e., how we will meet the program standards)?

A: You only need to address in the narrative what is asked for in the RFP.

Updated 8/14/15

Q: I'm a non-profit and have a need for a new computer and printer. Should I budget them in my renewal application or will there be a good chance of me getting a technology improvement grant and therefore I should wait for that RFP?

A: If you can hold off on your technology needs until January, we recommend you apply under the upcoming Technology Upgrade RFP. OJP has a significant amount of VOCA funding available for technology needs, thus it's not a situation of just a few applicants getting funding. If you don't get what you request through that process however, you could revise your renewal grant to meet those unmet needs. As a reminder, the Technology Upgrade application will be VOCA funding only and will require a 25% match.

Q: In FY15, my county attorney program received funding from 1) the county budget, 2) fines and fees and 3) forfeitures. What do I need to consider in avoiding supplanting issues with our increased FY16 award?

A: The funds your program was allocated from the county budget are the main concern. This same amount must continue to be available to your program to avoid supplanting issues. Because fines, fees and forfeitures vary from year-to-year and are not connected to the county budget, those amounts are not subject to supplanting issues. Fines and fees, however, should continue to be allocated to victim assistance programs in each county as mandated by Minnesota Statute 609.101.

Facility Maintenance and Repair Questions (updated 8/12/15)

Q: How much do you anticipate awarding in these grants?

A: We anticipate providing funding up to \$15,000 in these 2-year grants. As always, expenses must be reasonable and allowable.

Q: What do you mean by a “competitive process?” Will this mean outside reviewers? Will formal applications be required?

A: We anticipate requiring a brief narrative to explain the budget request, a budget and a budget narrative. Our plan is to have these reviewed by OJP staff with grant management expertise. By “competitive process” we mean the funding will not be simply automatic upon submission of an application. Grantees will need to make their case for the expenses, justifying the need and providing a clear explanation of the costs. Applications are not really competing against each other – it’s more that they will be reviewed carefully against the RFP requirements. We have funding set aside to fund many applications.

Q: What if a program’s building is legally owned by the city but the program has 100% responsibility for the maintenance of the facility – will they qualify for this grant?

A: We will review these on a case by case basis. VOCA is clear in its restrictions against rental properties, but potentially a case could be made for this type of situation. We are continuing to research allowable and unallowable costs, and haven’t been able to secure definitive answers from OVC for some situations. More clarity will be provided in the RFP. We apologize we do not have answers right now.

Q: Will these things be eligible for facility maintenance and repair grants?

- a. Security system
- b. Parking lot resurfacing/repair
- c. Storage shed repairs
- d. Vehicles (purchase or upgrade)
- e. Damaged program sign

A: All applicants will be asked for details and costs must be reasonable. At this time, we anticipate each of these examples will be eligible, within reason and within available funding. From the OJP Grant Manual, page 17:

Reasonable – A cost may be considered reasonable if the nature of the goods or services and the price paid for the goods or services reflects the action that a prudent person have taken given the circumstances at the time of the decision to incur the cost. In determining the reasonableness of a particular cost, the following criteria will be considered:

- ✓ In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and business practices
- ✓ An “arms length” transaction (avoiding the appearance of a conflict of interest by hiring family members or businesses with which you have a financial interest)
- ✓ Consistent with established practices of the grantee
- ✓ Necessary to achieve the outcomes established for the program

Q: Any idea on when the RFP for the maintenance and repair applications will come out?

A: We hope to release the RFP during September, 2015, for 2-year grants beginning January 1, 2016.

Q: People assume we'll need 3 bids for work done. Is that correct?

A: For purchases or contracts of \$5,000 and above, bids are required and must be kept on file. Bids are a best practice for all significant purchases or contracts, however. See page 21 & 22 of the OJP Grant Manual for more direction on purchases:

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants/Documents/grant%20manual%20current.pdf>

Q: People assume they will be able to pay for the work needed to install or repair and not just the materials needed for repair. Is that correct?

A: Yes.

Q: Will people need to make sure that anyone hired to do work is paid a certain amount or meets certain federal requirements? (This may be an issue for remote, rural areas.)

A: There is no requirement of minimal payment such as minimum wage, as those hired to do the work are not employees of the organization. Use the “reasonable” measurement, and get bids for any work costing \$5,000 or over. Additionally, make sure the businesses you hire have current Worker’s Comp and liability insurance, and can ensure the local permit requirements will be met.

Technology Upgrade Application Questions (updated 8/12/15)

Q: When will the RFP come out?

A: It will be released at the same time as the Facility Maintenance and Repair RFP – in September, 2015, for 2-year grants beginning January 1, 2016.

Q: How much do you anticipate awarding in these grants?

A: We anticipate providing funding up to \$12,000 in these 2-year grants. As always, expenses must be reasonable and allowable.

Q: Will these things qualify for technology upgrades:

- a. Cellphones
- b. Real time software
- c. Backup systems
- d. Virus software
- e. Technology that links up satellite/remote staff or offices
- f. Fundraising databases

A: All of these will qualify except the last one. Federal VOCA funds may not be used for fundraising activities, as these are not direct services.