

Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Office of Justice Programs, Crime Victim Services
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 2300
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1515
1-888-622-8799

Request for Proposals

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) S.T.O.P.
21-month Special Projects
Due February 25, 2021

Description

Purpose

This RFP is designed to solicit proposals to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. These funds are for time-limited special projects to **create systems change by improving the criminal justice system's response to violence against women.**

Funding priority will be given to:

1. Applications impacting historically underserved populations (Black, Indigenous, communities of color, LGBTQ, youth, elderly, disabled, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, etc.);
2. Applications that address the criminal justice response to missing and murdered Indigenous women (as identified in the "[Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force – A Report to the Minnesota Legislature](#)"); and
3. Applications addressing domestic violence homicide reduction.

Note: *These funds are not intended for supporting on-going direct advocacy services to victims, or to sustain existing victim service programming. These funds are also not intended for Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Response Teams (SMART).*

Grant Term

Applicants may apply for a project timeline spanning the 21-month grant period of April 1, 2021 – December 31, 2022.

Source of Funds

Funds authorized by 42 U.S.C. 3796gg to 3796gg-5, 3796gg-8 through the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), CFDA #16.588 – Violence Against Women Formula Grants.

Eligible Applicants

Public and private non-profit entities including local units of government and community-based

non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for these funds.

For non-profits: Federal 501(c)3 tax exempt status is not required. To be eligible, an applicant must be legally incorporated as a non-profit in Minnesota and possess state and federal identification numbers. Community-based groups that are not yet incorporated are eligible to apply if using fiscal agents with non-profit status.

Application Deadline

Applications must be submitted using the web-based E-grants system by **11:59 p.m. on Thursday, February 25, 2021**. No paper submissions will be accepted. Applications will not be received nor reviewed after this deadline. It is recommended you start early on your application. Do not wait to submit close to the deadline in case of technical difficulties.

Funds Available

Approximately \$1.3 million is available for special projects. **Eligible projects must be a collaborative effort between criminal justice system agencies and community-based sexual assault and/or domestic violence programs.** Applicants may apply for grants of any amount, however it is anticipated the majority of awards will fall within the \$50,000 to \$200,000 range.

Match Requirement

There is no match requirement for these funds.

Supplanting

Funds may not be used to replace state, local or other public funds that would otherwise be available for the same purpose.

Application Process

All applications must be submitted via E-grants, the OJP online grants management system, at <https://app.dps.mn.gov/egrants/>. **NOTE: When ready to submit your application, click on “View Status Options” from your Grant Menu and then click on “Apply Status” under the *Application Submitted* option.** If you fail to do this your application won't actually be submitted. For assistance submitting your application or navigating through the application, you should reference the Grantee/User Manual by clicking on the *Training Materials* link at the top of most E-grants screens.

To establish a new user account if you do not already have one, click on the purple “New User” option in the login box in the upper right corner of the E-grants homepage and fill out the profile. E-grants User Guides can be found on the OJP Grants webpage at:

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants/Pages/default.aspx>

TECHICAL ASSISTANCE

- **For questions regarding the application, please contact:**

Chris Anderson, Office of Justice Programs, Minnesota Department of Public Safety:
chris.anderson@state.mn.us

- **For questions regarding the E-grants online submission process, please call:**
1-800-820-1890 or helpdesk@agatesoftware.com
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):**
A [FAQ](#) document will be updated weekly with responses to questions received about the application, up until the February 25th due date.

Definitions

Domestic violence program: an organization, or program of an organization that has a primary mission of serving victims of domestic violence.

Sexual assault program: an organization, or program of an organization that has a primary mission of serving sexual assault victims.

Local unit of government: any unit of government (e.g., city or county attorney's office, law enforcement agency, etc.).

Accessible and appropriate services: services which are welcoming, culturally inclusive, physically accessible, and appropriate to all victims seeking assistance. Those working with victims are aware of the cultural, individual and role differences including those related to race/ethnicity, language, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical and/or cognitive ability, social class, economic status, education, marital status, religious affiliation, and residency, without regard to immigration status.

Traditionally underserved populations: populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services including underserved racial and ethnic populations; populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity; and populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status or age).

Unique Needs: applicants should demonstrate their understanding that women have unique needs that may be based on ethnic and cultural background, age, disability, sexual orientation, income, geographic isolation, immigration status and so on. Your application should reflect an understanding of the diversity of your community. It should also include plans for addressing the unique needs of groups in your community.

Technical assistance: includes a variety of methods (e.g., training, onsite and phone consultation, meeting facilitation, protocol development, etc.) designed to assist an

organization or community in improving their response to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence or stalking.

Statutory Purpose Areas

Grants supported through the VAWA STOP program funds **must** meet one or more of the following statutory purpose areas. Not all STOP purpose areas are listed here – only those that pertain to special project funding to create systems change in the criminal justice system.

1. Training law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence, including the use of nonimmigrant status under subparagraphs (U) and (T) of section 101(a)(15) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)).
2. Developing, training, or expanding units of law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
3. Developing and implementing more effective police, court, and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and domestic violence, as well as the appropriate treatment of victims.
4. Developing, installing, or expanding data collection and communication systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts or for the purpose of identifying, classifying, and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
5. Supporting formal and informal statewide, multidisciplinary efforts, to the extent not supported by State funds, to coordinate the response of state law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, victim services agencies, and other state agencies and departments, to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
6. Training of sexual assault forensic medical personnel examiners in the collection and preservation of evidence, analysis, prevention, and providing expert testimony and treatment of trauma related to sexual assault.
7. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs to assist law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and others to address the needs and circumstances of older and disabled women who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault, including

recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling, and other victim services to such older and disabled individuals.

8. Developing and strengthening policies, protocols, best practices, and training for law enforcement agencies and prosecutors relating to the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases and the appropriate treatment of victims.
9. Developing, enlarging or strengthening programs addressing sexual assault against men, women and youth in correctional or detention settings.

In addition to the STOP Statutory Purpose Areas listed above, OVW encourages projects that:

- Improve services for and/or the response to victims of sex trafficking and other severe forms of trafficking in persons who have also experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking.
- Increase support for survivors of sexual assault, including services, law enforcement response and prosecution.
- Meaningfully increase access to OVW programming for specific marginalized and/or underserved populations (based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, etc.).
- Increase the use of promising, evidence-based, and evidence-building practices, where available.

OJP Priority Areas

As stated on page 1, in this RFP competitive process priority will be given to the following:

1. Applications impacting historically underserved populations (Black, Indigenous, communities of color, GLBTQ, youth, elderly, disabled, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, etc.);
2. Applications that address the criminal justice response to missing and murdered Indigenous women (as identified in the [“Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force – A Report to the Minnesota Legislature”](#)); and
3. Applications addressing domestic violence homicide reduction.

Project Activities

The emphasis of VAWA funding continues to be on the implementation of comprehensive strategies addressing violence against women that are sensitive to the needs and safety of victims and hold offenders accountable for their crimes. All states, including Minnesota, are being asked to carry out these strategies by forging lasting partnerships between the criminal justice system and victim advocacy organizations, and by encouraging communities to look

beyond traditional resources and to look to new partners to respond more vigorously to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking crimes, such as faith-based and community organizations.

Special project grants funded under this RFP are intended to create permanent improvements in the criminal justice system's response to violence against women. Funded activities must add value and be efforts that are above and beyond what currently exist in the community. Funds are not intended to sustain existing programming. Applicants will be asked to complete a sustainability narrative to address sustainability of the systems change generated by this project funding.

Activities That May Compromise Victim Safety

Ensuring victim safety is the guiding principle underlying the VAWA funding program. The following activities have been found to jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions; and therefore cannot be supported with VAWA funding:

1. Procedures or policies that exclude victims from receiving safe shelter, advocacy services, counseling, and other assistance based on their actual or perceived sex, age, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health condition, physical health condition, criminal record, work in the sex industry, or the age and/or gender of their children;
2. Procedures or policies that compromise the confidentiality of information and/or privacy of persons receiving OVW-funded services;
3. Procedures or policies that require victims to take certain actions (e.g., seek an order of protection, receive counseling, participate in couples counseling or mediation, report to law enforcement, seek civil or criminal remedies, etc.) in order to receive services;
4. Procedures or policies that fail to include conducting safety planning with victims;
5. Project design and budget that fail to account for the access needs of participants with disabilities and participants who have limited English proficiency or who are Deaf or hard of hearing;
6. The use of pre-trial diversion programs without prior OVW review and approval of the program or the automatic placement of offenders in such programs;
7. Couples counseling, family counseling, or any other manner or joint victim-offender counseling as a routine or required response to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, or in situations in which child sexual abuse is alleged;
8. Offering or ordering anger management programs for offenders as a substitute for batterer's intervention programs;
9. Policies or procedures that require victims to report the crime to law enforcement, participate in the criminal justice system, or seek a protection or restraining order against the offender, and penalize them for failing to do so.
10. Procedures or policies that deny victims and non-abusing parents or caretakers and their children access to services based on their involvement with the perpetrator;
11. Requiring survivors to meet restrictive conditions in order to receive services (e.g.

- background checks of victims; clinical evaluations to determine eligibility for services; etc.,) or other screening processes that elicit information that is not necessary for services, such as questions about immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental health, and work or criminal history that the service provider does not need to know about to provide services safely;
12. Relying on batterer intervention programs that do not use court monitoring to hold batterers accountable for their behavior;
 13. Policies and procedures that fail to account for the physical safety of victims;
 14. Enforcing or promoting nuisance abatement ordinances, crime-free housing ordinances, or crime-free lease addenda (often associated with crime-free housing programs) that require or encourage the eviction of tenants or residents who may be victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking. See also the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for guidance on how such ordinances and addenda may violate the Fair Housing Act; and
 15. Policies or procedures that require testing of sexual assault forensic evidence in cases where the victim obtained a medical forensic exam but has not chosen to participate in the criminal justice system.

Unallowable Activities

The following activities are unallowable with VAWA funding:

- Lobbying
- Fundraising
- Purchase of real property
- Physical modifications to building, including minor renovations (such as painting or carpeting)
- Construction

Food and Beverage Costs

Neither VAWA funds nor match funds can be used to purchase food and/or beverages for any meeting, conference, training, or other event, except if the following applies:

- The location of the event is not in close proximity to food establishments. (It should be a priority to try to secure a location near reasonably priced and accessible commercial food establishments.)
- Not serving food will significantly lengthen the day or necessitate extending the meeting to achieve meeting outcomes.
- A special presentation at a conference requires a plenary address where there is no other time for food to be obtained; or
- Other extenuating circumstances necessitate the provision of food.

Justification for an exception listed above must be included in your application and budget. This may or may not be approved. Include this information in the narrative, section b. *Project overview, systems change & problems.*

Application Components

The following will be addressed in the E-grants application:

- A. Applicant Information Form
- B. Terms and Conditions / OJP Grant Manual
- C. General and Administrative Standards
- D. Narrative
- E. Work Plan
- F. Application Attachments
 - Financial Review Document
 - USDOJ Certifications
 - Confidentiality Notice Acknowledgement Form
 - Request to Use Indirect Cost Rate (if applicable)
- G. Budget

A. Applicant Information Form

Applicants will input directly into E-grants information such as the authorized representatives, tax identification numbers and other identifying information. This will be the cover sheet of the application.

B. Terms and Conditions / OJP Grant Manual

As part of submitting this application in E-grants you agree to the Terms and Conditions. These address State requirements such as worker's compensation and data privacy, and Federal requirements such as civil rights and affirmative action. In addition, grantees agree to follow the [OJP Grant Manual](#) which provides basic information on policies and procedures for grant administration. By agreeing to these you are certifying you have the authority to make these commitments. Please print and review these documents with the appropriate agency staff prior to submitting the application in E-grants. These documents become by reference part of the formal grant contract agreement.

C. General and Administrative Standards

All applicants must demonstrate that their organization meets or has a plan for meeting all *General and Administrative Standards* by December 31, 2022.

D. Narrative

Applicants need to address the following (a through d) in a *Microsoft Word* document with 1 inch margins, single spaced, with a 12 point font size. When ready to submit, upload the narrative in E-grants. **Please use the lettered headings and subheadings for the numbered lists.** *Out of respect for the application reviewers we ask that applicants follow the page guidelines provided.*

a. Overview of total agency – 10 points (1-page)

Provide a brief overview of the organization, including the agency's mission, brief history, and primary activities/purpose. (If the application project is focused toward a

particular underserved community or population, provide evidence of understanding the needs of women from that community who have been victims of violence.)

b. **Project overview, systems change & problems** – 40 points (2-4 pages)

Provide, in clear detail:

1. A clear, comprehensive description of the project;
2. Identify if your application is addressing one of the 3 OJP funding priorities from page 1;
3. Precisely what system changes are being attempted;
4. Identify the problems being addressed;
5. An explanation of the strategies you've chosen (e.g., why do you think the strategies you've chosen will work); and
6. How women who are victims of violence will benefit from this project. If applying to serve a particular underserved community or population, identify this and address the unique needs of women in this community.)

c. **Planning & collaborative partners** – 10 points (1-2 pages)

1. Describe the planning process that occurred for your project.
2. Describe who was involved, how collaborative partners were identified, and who was involved in key decision-making points when defining the project scope, primary activities, and project goals.
3. List all collaborative partners and their roles in the project.

d. **Evaluation plan** – 10 points (1-page)

Provide a comprehensive plan:

1. List measurable outcomes for the project;
2. Describe how the evaluation will be developed; and
3. Describe what evaluation methods and tools will be used.

All collaborative partners in the project should be included in the evaluation plan.

e. **Sustainability plan** – 10 points (1-page)

Provide evidence of a plan, from the outset, to sustain the accomplishments of the project after the grant period ends. Explain how the systems change efforts will continue and through what means.

E. **Work Plan** – 20 points (no page guidelines)

Applicants must download the blank *Work Plan* form in E-grants and then upload it back into E-grants. The work plan should include 1 to 6 measurable objectives identifying what you plan to achieve during the grant period. Each objective should have activities (1 to 6 steps or tasks in achieving the objective). Include time frames and positions responsible for each activity.

Reviewers look for clear, measurable objectives that are well planned and will create systems change, can be accomplished within the allotted time, and will be effective in

addressing the needs the applicant has identified. Reviewers look for how the proposed project intends to create systems change that will improve the criminal justice system response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and/or stalking.

F. Application Attachments

- 1) **Financial Review Document.** Determine which of the four financial review documents your agency is required to have and upload the document(s) below (a website may be provided instead for Certified Financial Audits and Single Audits).
- 2) **Certifications.** Recipients of federal funding are required to sign and upload these certifications found in E-grants:
 - USDOJ Certifications
 - Confidentiality Notice Acknowledgement Form
- 3) **Indirect Costs.** If your organization is requesting to budget indirect costs in this grant (using either the 10% de minimis or a federally-approved rate), you will need to upload a request form (and federal rate agreement, if necessary). The 10% de minimis rate is figured using Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). MTDC excludes equipment, rental costs, participant support costs (Direct Client Assistance), and the portion of each subaward and subcontract in excess of \$25,000.

Note – successful applicants will be required to address additional federal funding requirements in E-grants (e.g. agreeing to adherence with [VAWA Grant Program Guidelines](#), [Civil Rights Requirements – View Presentation](#) and [Acknowledgement Form](#), [EEO Certification](#), DUNS number verification, etc.) prior to having an executed grant agreement.

Please make sure you have a DUNS number and active registration at <https://sam.gov> now to avoid delays during the grant agreement signing process.

G. Budget

This criterion refers to the reasonableness of line items and total budget in relation to anticipated results. Budget forms will be assessed for the relevance and allowability of costs to program objectives, whether the outcomes appear achievable within the proposed budget, if personnel costs demonstrate adequate staffing and whether budget items are clearly described and justified.

Budget considerations include:

- Use only the VAWA budget column in E-grants.
- The budget covers a 21-month period from April 1, 2021 – December 31, 2022.
- All expenses must be itemized and allowable.
- Calculations should be provided for all budget amounts (e.g., staff travel: 60 miles roundtrip to courthouse x 8 trips/month x 21 months x \$0.56 per mile = \$5,644.80).
- Round figures to the nearest dollar.
- Funding may be used to supplement but not supplant state and local government funds.

Application Review Process

This is a competitive application process. Reviewers will read and rate applications according to the following scale:

Overview of total agency	10 points
Project overview, systems change & problems	40 points
Planning & collaborative partners	10 points
Evaluation plan	10 points
Sustainability plan	10 points
Work plan	<u>20 points</u>
TOTAL POINTS	100 points

To see the rating form go to [Rating Form](#).

Reviewers will be asked to rate each application based on the information provided and the clarity, substance and strength of the application, as well as:

- the complete and thorough response to all information requested in this application;
- the OJP funding priorities for this RFP;
- how well the needs of victims/survivors from underserved populations are addressed when developing project activities; and
- the compelling need for the project activities as described by the applicant and the strength of the case made for funding.

A 2nd level staff review will consider geographic locations, budget analysis, previous receipt of VAWA special project grants, and current and past grantee performance including outstanding reports due, uncompleted projects, unspent or returned funds, status in regard to compliance with applicable standards, and termination of a grant due to noncompliance with the terms of a grant agreement.

Applicants will be notified of grant awards by March 12, 2021. Any appeals should be submitted in writing by March 19, 2021, to Tricia Hummel, Assistant Director, MN Office of Justice Programs, 445 Minnesota St., Suite 2300, St. Paul, MN 55101.

Post Award Requirements

- **Grant contract process.** After being selected for funding, OJP staff will work with the applicant to negotiate a final budget. The formal grant contract will be initiated, signed by grantee and OJP, and fully executed. It is then a legally binding agreement. Grant agreements not signed and returned within 30 days of receipt may be canceled.

- **Administrative capacity and risk assessment review.** All awarded grantees will need to have an administrative capacity and risk assessment review completed by OJP staff before the grant becomes operational.
- **Training.** Grantees may be required to attend new OJP grantee orientation training.
- **Progress Reporting.** All programs awarded funds are required to complete program income and financial reports in E-grants. Grantees will also be required to submit the *U.S. Department of Justice VAWA STOP Annual Progress Report* at the conclusion of each calendar year.
- **Grant payments.** This is a cost reimbursement grant. Grantees will only be paid for eligible expenses (after the grant contract is fully executed) that are incurred and are consistent with the negotiated budget.
- **File Documents.** If selected to receive funding, the applicant must submit, or already have on file at OJP, the most current version of the following applicable documents prior to the issuance of a grant contract:
 - Current By-laws
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - IRS Form 990 for the 2 most recent years
 - Governing board roster
- **OJP Grant Manual.** Grantees agree to follow the [OJP Grant Manual](#) as part of the application process. The manual is a resource for how OJP manages grants and covers topics such as grant administration policies, program modification policies, general accounting requirements, etc.

Right of Cancellation

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposals. The State will not award a grant contract solely on the basis of an application made in response to this request, or pay for information solicited or obtained as part of this process.