

Tribal COVID Pre-Application Call

Introduction: Thank you all for coming to the pre-application information session for the COVID-19 Violence Against Women Assistance to Tribes Solicitation. My name is Marnie Shields and I am an attorney advisor at OVW. During today's call, I'm going to walk through the solicitation and highlight some of the key elements of the application and then I'll open it up for questions. We held four tribal consultations and listening sessions in June and July and used the recommendations we received to shape this solicitation. In an effort to quickly disburse available funds, we have tried to make the application as simple as possible. We hope to be able to make up to 75 awards.

Purpose: This solicitation was designed to help tribes address COVID-related needs in responding to violence against women. The solicitation includes funds from the Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program, as well as the Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (TSASP). Activities must be within the purpose areas of one of these two programs and must be related to COVID, although we will interpret "COVID-related" pretty broadly. We've included examples of fundable activities in the solicitation starting at the bottom of page 2. Some of the examples listed include things like purchasing personal protective equipment (or PPE), providing distance working supplies and equipment to staff, purchasing hotel vouchers to meet additional shelter needs, and funding extra staff time needed to accommodate higher numbers of victim calls. These examples are included as a tool for applicants, but you are not limited to the activity examples in the solicitation.

Eligibility: I also wanted to talk about who is eligible to apply. Because this solicitation is funded by two OVW grant programs, we have included a table on page five that outlines the types of eligible applicants for the Tribal Governments program and TSASP. Tribal governments and consortiums are eligible for both programs. Designees of Tribal governments are eligible to apply for the tribal governments program. Tribal organizations and tribal nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for TSASP. I also want to make sure to note that OVW will accept applications from any eligible applicants, regardless of the status of current applications or awards under these programs.

Programs: Eligible applicants are also permitted to apply to the tribal governments program, TSASP, or both programs. If you are planning to apply to both programs, you will need to submit two applications – one to each. If you have needs related to exercising special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ), we encourage you apply for the tribal governments program and we have included examples of how funds could support SDVCJ under program scope on page 2 of the solicitation. One important thing to note is that applicants applying to TSASP must include sexual assault services related expenses only.

Budget amount: The budget amount listed in the solicitation is between \$50,000 and \$100,000; however, I want to emphasize that this is not a cap. If you need more than \$100,000, you just need to include a sufficient justification in the budget and the narrative sections of the application. The duration of the award can be anywhere between 12-18 months.

Application content: Now I want to spend some time going through the content of the application. Some things will be different for consortiums and tribal designees applying under the tribal governments programs, as well as for tribal nonprofits applying under the TSASP program, and I'll address these differences as we go along.

There are only two things required at the time you submit your application in order to move it through to peer review – a **project narrative** and a **budget**.

- For the project narrative, there is no page limit but we suggest that you use 2-5 pages. The narrative is worth 70 points of the application score. The narrative itself has only two sections.
 - The first section should describe the need for the project – this can be presented in bullet point form and should describe the identified needs and a basis for a determination of need. Remember, the focus of the solicitation is on COVID-related needs. This is worth 20 points.
 - The second section of the project narrative should describe what will be done. This should include the goals, objectives, and action steps for each part of the project. You must also list the timing for each activity and who is responsible, as well as link each of the objectives to the already identified needs. To help organize this information, we recommend that you use the chart in Appendix A on page 26 as an example. We uploaded a Word version on our website so you will be able to type directly into it. To find it, go to <https://www.justice.gov/ovw>, click on “How to apply for OVW funding” on the left hand side, then select “Resources for Applicants”. If you scroll down to “Program-specific resources,” under the “Tribal COVID Program,” you should be able to click on the “table for narrative” and it will download as a Word document. This is worth 50 points.
- The budget and budget narrative is the same as for other OVW applications. **Note: this is not the same as the budget used for CTAS.** It is simpler and can be a word document or can be in Excel. Be sure to identify the award period (which is between 12 and 18 months) that you are requesting and also make sure the funds are budgeted for that period. We have uploaded a sample budget specific to this program to our website. It can be found in the same place on our website as the table for the narrative and is entitled, “Tribal COVID Sample Budget.”

I know earlier I said only two things were required to submit an application – and that is true. Applications containing only a project narrative and a budget can be considered for review and move through to the peer review stage. But for an award to ultimately be made, there are several other documents that will be needed.

- First, there is the **summary data sheet** that is worth 5 points in score. Please include all the items listed on page 10 of the solicitation. One specific note about the summary data sheet is that OVW requests 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 on the summary data sheet, and also specify the end date of their last fiscal year. However, we are 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 summary data sheet.

- For those applying to the tribal governments program, per statutory requirements, applicants must demonstrate that the proposal was developed in consultation with a **qualified partner**. A “qualified partner” is a tribal victim service provider, a tribal coalition, or an advisory committee. To demonstrate this collaboration, applicants must provide a letter of support from the partner or if you are a current tribal government grantee, you may provide a statement that indicates you will work with the same partner. More information on this can be found on page 7.
- All applicants must submit a **confidentiality notice form**. A link to this form is included on page 13 of the solicitation. All you have to do is sign and date it.
- Each applicant must also submit a **pre-award risk assessment**. If you have applied in 2020 or other recent years, you can use the same attachment as long as you look it over and make sure the information is still correct. Each applicant must prepare a response to all ten questions on page 14, 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 us to reach out to the applicant which may delay recommendations. 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. Another example of incomplete responses include question #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. These are just a few examples, but basically, please make sure you read each part of each question and provide a full and comprehensive response.
- Applicants that intend to charge indirect costs through the use of a negotiated indirect cost rate must have a signed, federally-approved **indirect cost rate agreement**. More information can be found on page 15 of the solicitation.
- There are also a number of required documents for **non-profit organizations** only:
 - Non-profits that have not received OVW funds in the last three years will have to submit a **Financial Capability questionnaire**. This questionnaire can be found on page 13.
 - Another item we’d like to note from the solicitation specifically for nonprofit organizations is the **disclosure of process related to Executive Compensation**. 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 required disclosure letter. There are 4 parts of this disclosure letter that must be provided to OVW in order to comply with this requirement. The sample letter outlines all 4 parts of the disclosure, so please be sure to follow the sample and provide a response to each of the four pieces. You can find a link to the sample letter on page 13 of the solicitation.
 - Tribal non-profit applicants applying to TSASP must also provide **proof of IRS 501(c)(3) status**. If you are an eligible nonprofit tribal organization, to receive TSASP funding, you are required to submit a determination letter from the IRS recognizing your tax-exempt status. OVW cannot make an award to any nonprofit organization that does not submit a 501(c)(3) determination letter.

Special Requirements: There are a few other special requirements that may cause a delay in award processing if they are not included.

- For applicants applying as a tribal consortium, you will need to include **documentation of authority to apply**. Look at page 6 of the solicitation for more information.
- For applicants applying as a tribal designee to the tribal governments program, you will need to include a **resolution or an equivalent legal authorization** from the tribe that authorizes your application. If you are not able to get this in time for the application due date, you can instead send a letter documenting your efforts. We will not be able to issue an award until we receive a valid resolution or equivalent authorization. See page 7 of the solicitation for more information.

Timing: Finally, I wanted to mention the application due date. Applications are due by September 16, 2020. We anticipate making awards by the end of November. However, we will review applications as they come in. For complete applications submitted by August 20, 2020, we may be able to make awards by September 30, 2020.