



## Victims Services Grant Program

### Guidance on Budget Amendment Requests

The following guidance is provided to assist Victims Services grant programs with the budget amendment/in-line budget adjustment process. As stated in the award conditions, any changes to your budget **MUST** be approved by your DCJS grant monitor in advance of funds being obligated and/or expended. Subgrantees must properly track the use of award funds and maintain adequate supporting documentation. The subgrantee may only charge to the award allowable costs incurred during this grant award period.

To request a budget amendment, log on to the On-line Grants Management System ([OGMS](#)), open the applicable grant and select Contract Amendments. Refer to the system instructions on screen and/or follow the instructions available on the [OGMS Training and Resources](#) page.

#### What is a Budget Amendment?

A budget amendment allows grantees to move a portion of the approved budget from one category to another. No more than two (2) budget amendments will be permitted per fiscal year. Budget amendments must be submitted no later than 45 days prior to the end of the grant period, as noted in the special conditions of your award package. The budget amendment request must make it clear:

- Why the change is being requested
- Where the funds are being moved *from*
- Where the funds are being moved *to*

All proposed changes must include a description, itemization (basis of computation) and appropriate justification explaining how the request is allowable and essential to the project. Please double check all figures and ensure that the narrative aligns with the proposed budget amendment. Be sure to round to the nearest dollar. The total amount of the request cannot exceed the total amount awarded. Verify the total award against the Statement of Grant Award (SOGA). If additional space is needed, upload a narrative, quotes, or invoices to support the request.

#### What is an example of an adequately justified/itemized request?

Sample Request: Two mobile hotspots for two Court Advocates to use at our offsite counseling office @ \$234 each = \$468. The area is rural and often the network coverage is unstable making it difficult to communicate clearly and securely with office staff and other victims services providers during service provision. One printer/scanner/copier for shelter staff to print intake screening materials and victims resources for \$602.48 to replace outdated model that is not compatible with other hardware and software upgraded five years ago. Two sets of ink bundles for the printer @\$380 each, projected to last 5-6 months each.

## **What is the Review/Approval Process?**

For all contract amendments, grant monitors have two weeks to review the request. Once the grant monitor approves the request, the grant monitor will negotiate the itemized budget forms (ex. personnel, travel, supplies) so that the grantee can make the necessary revisions. Once all the forms have been revised, the grant monitor will update the forms as current in the system. Grants Management will update the main budget grid in OGMS. Grantees should be advised that this process can take up to 30 days for final approval and budget changes in OGMS.

If the request doesn't meet the requirements listed above, the grant monitor can negotiate it back to you for revisions. The monitor will provide details on the reasons why the request was denied and ask the grantee to contact the grant monitor if further guidance is needed.

## **What is an In-Line Budget Adjustment?**

In-Line Budget Adjustments allow grantees to move money within one (1) budget category. In-line adjustments can be reviewed anytime during the year, but must be approved by your grant monitor prior to the end of the fiscal year and prior to funds being expended. There is no limit on the number of in-line adjustments per award period.

To submit a request for an in-line adjustment, please submit the request in OGMS by selecting "in-line adjustment" in the drop-down box of the Contract Amendment component and include the required information below. As stated above, all budget changes must have an adequate description, itemization, and justification.

- Why the change is being requested
- Where the funds are being moved from
- Where the funds are being moved to

## **General Guidance for VOCA-funded Budgets and Budget Amendments/Adjustments**

Please note that the following general guidance is provided in an effort to assist with the budget amendment process. The Grant Guidelines for your program can be referenced for more detailed information on each budget category. Your grant monitor has the discretion to exercise their judgment in the approval of costs. In addition, the VOCA Rule (add link) should always be referenced when there are questions of allowability. All cost in your budget must be **Allowable, Reasonable, Necessary** and **Allocable**.

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## **Allowable**

VOCA has 8 expressly unallowable costs:

- 1) Lobbying
- 2) Research and Studies
- 3) Active Investigation and the Prosecution of Criminal Activities
- 4) Fundraising
- 5) Capital Expenses (including construction)
- 6) Compensation for Victims of Crime (except where specifically allowed elsewhere in the VOCA Rule)
- 7) Medical Care (except where specifically allowed elsewhere in the VOCA Rule)
- 8) Salaries and Expenses of Management (except where specifically allowed elsewhere in the VOCA Rule)

Please see the VOCA rule for more information about these unallowable costs.

Outside of these unallowable costs, there are a wide variety of direct services that are allowable under VOCA. Direct services are efforts that:

- 1) Respond to the emotional, psychological, or physical needs of crime victims
- 2) Assist victims to stabilize their lives after victimization
- 3) Assist victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system
- 4) Restore a measure of security and safety for the victim

The VOCA rules lists examples of these types of services. When you are considering costs, the focus should always be on enhancing direct services to victims or increasing victim security and safety.

Costs must occur in the current fiscal year in order to be considered for approval.

## **Reasonable**

Requested costs must be reasonable. The Department of Justice Financial Guide defines reasonable as those costs that a prudent person would have incurred under similar circumstances.

In order to determine if a cost is reasonable, all requested budget line items must be itemized. Your grant monitor should be able to easily understand how you arrived at or estimated the requested cost.

## **Necessary**

Requested costs must be necessary to the operation of the program and delivery of services for crime victims. The justification for each requested cost should make the necessity of the item clear.

## **Allocable**

Requested costs must be allocable. A cost is allocable if the goods or services involved are assignable to that Federal award. The justification should make it clear that costs are allocable (e.g. stating that a computer purchased with grant funds will be used 100% of the time by a grant funded staff person). If a cost is not readily assignable to a specific project but is necessary to the operation of the organization/project, it might be an indirect cost. Please see your grant monitor or the grant guidelines for more information about indirect costs.

## **Additional Resources**

DOJ Financial Guide

<file:///C:/Users/azj63383/Desktop/doj-financial-guide-2022.pdf>

VOCA Rule

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-07-08/pdf/2016-16085.pdf>

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