



# VOCA New Initiative Victim Assistance Grant Program Grant Application Frequently Asked Questions

## July 14, 2016

### Federal Guidelines/Regulations

#### **1. What information is available about the new VOCA Regulation?**

The Office for Victims of Crime (“OVC”) published the [final rule for its Victims of Crime Act \(VOCA\) Formula Victim Assistance Grant Program](#) in the Federal Register on Friday, July 8, 2016. The final rule goes into effect thirty days after publication, and sets forth the parameters for the use of funds under OVC’s Victim Assistance Program. OVC consulted extensively with the crime victim services field in developing the rule, and published a notice of proposed rulemaking (78 FR 52877) on August 27, 2013, which solicited public comments. OVC has taken these comments, as well as comments received during the inter-agency review process, into consideration in this final rule.

The rule goes into effect on August 8, 2016.

- It applies to any OVC Formula Victim Assistance Program grants awarded by OVC after the effective date.
- However, FY16 grant funding obligated by a state before the award date AND before the effective date (i.e., pre-award costs incurred before the effective date) is not subject to the rule, and remain under the VOCA Assistance Guidelines, but a state may choose to apply the rule to those funds.
- Funds under grants awarded by OVC before the rule’s effective date continue to be subject to the Guidelines, but a state may choose to apply the rule to any unobligated funding at the state or subrecipient levels under such a grant.
- Such discretionary decisions to apply the rule should be documented to facilitate monitoring and audit.

The final rule is intended to provide greater clarity and more flexibility to state VOCA victim assistance administering agencies to support a continuum of services to crime victims.

#### **2. How will the new VOCA regulation change the types of services that can be supported under DCJS’ New Initiative Victim Assistance Grant Program?**

DCJS staff are reviewing the new regulation to assess its impact. It appears that the types of services allowed under the regulation have expanded. For example, the regulation allows an expanded array of legal services. DCJS will consider supporting newly allowed services under the regulation, but retains authority to limit or disallow services and costs.

In general, funded services must be: allowable under the VOCA regulation (cite specific authority, as appropriate), consistent with VOCA Listening Session input, address locally defined needs, and be well designed to serve unserved and/or underserved populations in a manner which is reasonable, appropriate, cost effective, and well justified.

### Match & Award Limits

#### **3. How does match work?**

If I propose a project with a total cost of \$120,000 (VOCA + Match) would that require \$100,000 in VOCA and \$20,000 in match? No, a project with a total cost of \$120,000 would require \$96,000 in VOCA funds and \$24,000 in match. You can figure out the required match amount by multiplying the total cost of the project by .2. The federal VOCA Guidelines provide the following explanation: “Matching contributions of 20% (cash or in-kind) of the total cost of each VOCA project (VOCA grant plus match) are required for each VOCA-funded project and must be derived from nonfederal sources...”

#### **4. Can you clarify the award limits and what’s meant by “awards”?**

For purposes of these guidelines and establishing the maximum funding levels, “award” means total cost of the VOCA project (VOCA funds + match). Projects contributing to a full spectrum of direct services for crime victims in a single county or city are not expected to be awarded more than \$100,000, in total (VOCA funds + match), annually. Awards supporting projects contributing to a full spectrum of direct services for crime victims in a region and involving coordination and collaboration among multiple local governments and/or service providing agencies in multiple jurisdictions are not expected to exceed \$500,000, in total (VOCA funds + match), annually. Awards supporting projects contributing to a full spectrum of direct services for crime victims on a statewide or multi- regional basis, and involving coordination and collaboration among state and multiple local governments and service providing agencies, are not expected to exceed \$1,000,000, in total (VOCA funds + match), annually.

#### **5. If we are providing in-kind match, does it have to be a “line-for-line” match?**

The form will calculate a line-for-line match, but you can explain in your budget narrative what actually comprises the match that totals the required amount.

#### **6. Can indirect costs be used as our match?**

If you request indirect costs, they cannot also be considered match.

#### **7. Would strong evidence of regional collaboration through memoranda of understanding/cooperative agreements be sufficient to request the \$500,000 amount?**

Not necessarily. You must also ‘make your case’ in the application; make an explicit argument as to why you think your project is eligible for a certain award amount.

**8. If we have a clerical support staff person, can we count that person's salary/benefits as match?**

Yes, the portion that's supporting the grant-funded direct service staff and services probably can be counted as match. VOCA subrecipients must maintain records that clearly show the source, the amount, and the period during which the match was allocated. The basis for determining the value of personal services, materials, equipment, and space must be documented. Volunteer services must be documented, and to the extent feasible, supported by the same methods used by the subrecipient for its own paid employees.

Eligibility

**9. Are new Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) ineligible, since these guidelines say that start-up organizations aren't allowed?**

Further consultation with VA Department of Social Services and DCJS staff is recommended to assess eligibility and other factors.

**10. Can other types of crime victims, other than those specifically listed in the guidelines and training PowerPoint, be eligible service populations (ex. victims of financial crime)?**

Yes, the applicant must justify why the selected type of victim needs the services proposed in the grant application.

**11. Are transitional housing programs that charge some 'rent' to residents still eligible?**

Yes, but applicants must explain how this is not the same as charging clients for grant-funded services or for profit; that it is part of a practice model to prepare clients for independent living, etc. Also, applicant should review the VOCA Guidelines and Federal Financial Guide to understand whether any charges would constitute program income.

**12. Are human trafficking victim service projects eligible?**

Yes.

**13. Can we serve undocumented victims?**

Yes.

## Other

### **14. How is a crime victim defined?**

A crime victim is generally defined as someone who has experienced emotional, physical, or sexual harm as the result of a crime.

### **15. Does it matter at what age the victimization occurred?**

No, as long as services are being provided related to the victimization that person experienced.

### **16. Does the scope of the project need to be large for this year, or can the project build in expansion/growth over the years?**

You must design a program that you think you can implement during the grant period. Be ambitious but realistic; set yourself up for success. That will increase your chance of receiving future funding from DCJS and other sources. Plan for diversification of funding sources and cost assumption.

### **17. Can we submit memoranda of understanding (MOU) in place of cooperative agreements?**

Yes, as long as the roles/responsibilities are clearly described and defined in them.

### **18. What is the VOCA CFDA number?**

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number is 16.575.

### **19. Can we submit our Form 990 to document our agency victim assistance budget?**

Yes, but it would also be helpful to have additional detail to demonstrate non-supplantation.

### **20. Can VOCA funding pay for court costs/fines of victims?**

No.

### **21. What's included in fringe benefits?**

Fringe benefits typically include FICA, social security, taxes, health insurance, etc. These typically include any reasonable expenses included in your organization's usual benefits package.

### **22. Would the budget for a regional or statewide project only fund the lead applicant?**

There should be one lead applicant, but other agencies can be 'subcontractors' of that award; the lead agency would ultimately be responsible for meeting all grant requirements and ensuring the compliance of partner subcontractors. Budget documentation to demonstrate non-supplantation would be needed from all agencies, with primary focus on the lead agency and its assurance that no supplantation will occur in any agency receiving VOCA funds.

**23. Is it allowable to purchase a vehicle rather than lease a vehicle with these funds?**

No.

**24. Can the cost of a mobile service vehicle (such as a mobile forensic unit) be supported?**

Yes, this project could be supported, but DCJS would not support the purchase of the vehicle. DCJS may support the cost of leasing a vehicle for this purpose.