



# Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office Criminal Justice Division Funding Announcement: ***General Victim Assistance Grant Program, FY2021***

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this program is to provide services and assistance directly to victims of crime to speed their recovery and aid them through the criminal justice process. Services may include the following:

- 1) responding to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims;
- 2) assisting victims in stabilizing their lives after a victimization;
- 3) assisting victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system; and
- 4) providing victims with safety and security.

## **Available Funding**

Federal funding is authorized for these projects under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) as amended and codified in 34 U.S.C. §20103, and under the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 Pub. L. No. 113-4 (VAWA 2013). All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated federal funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

## **Eligible Organizations**

Applications may be submitted by state agencies, public and private non-profit institutions of higher education, independent school districts, Native American tribes, councils of governments, non-profit corporations (including hospitals and faith-based organizations) and units of local government, which are defined as a non-statewide governmental body with the authority to establish a budget and impose taxes (includes hospital districts). Other local governmental agencies should apply through an associated unit of local government.

Additionally, per 28 CFR §94.112 (b), organizations applying to receive VOCA fund must 1) have a demonstrated record of effective direct services and 2) substantial financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.

Agencies applying for funds to support a CASA or Children's Advocacy Center program must apply through either Texas CASA, Inc. or Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas.

Organizations that have received a 24-month project in FY2020 may not apply for continuation or expansion funding.

## **Application Process**

Applicants must access the Public Safety Office (PSO) eGrants grant management website at <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov> to register and apply for funding. For more instructions and information, see *Developing a Good Project Narrative Guide*, available [here](#).

## Key Dates

Action	Date
Funding Announcement Release	12/13/2019
Online System Opening Date	12/13/2019
Final Date to Submit and Certify an Application	2/27/2020 at 5:00pm CST
Project Start Date	10/01/2020

## Project Period

Projects selected for funding must begin on or after 10/01/2020 and expire on or before 9/30/2021. Due to the availability of funding, CJD can no longer support 24 month project periods. Projects may not exceed a 12 month project period.

## Funding Levels

Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: No Maximum

Match Requirement: 20% of the total project

Note: Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for the amount of funding they can responsibly expend in the grant period. CJD will be tracking expenditure rates throughout the life of the grants and may take action to avoid large de-obligations at the end of grant periods.

## Standards

Grantees must comply with standards applicable to this fund source cited in the State Uniform Grant Management Standards ([UGMS](#)), [Federal Uniform Grant Guidance](#), and all statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable to this funding.

## Eligible Activities and Costs

The following list of eligible activities and costs apply generally to all projects under this announcement.

### Crisis Services

- Services that respond to immediate needs (other than medical care), emotional, psychological, and physical health and safety including:
  - Crisis intervention services;
  - Accompanying victims to hospitals for medical examinations;
  - Hotline counseling;
  - Safety planning;
  - Emergency food, clothing, and transportation;
  - Window, door, or lock replacement or repair, and other repairs necessary to ensure a victim's safety;
  - Costs of the following, on an emergency basis (i.e., when the State's compensation program, the victim's health insurance plan, Medicaid, or other health care funding source, is not reasonably expected to be available quickly enough to meet the emergency

needs of a victim (typically within 48 hours of the crime): Non-prescription and prescription medicine, prophylactic or other treatment to prevent HIV/AIDS infection or other infectious disease, durable medical equipment (such as wheel-chairs, crutches, hearing aids, eyeglasses), and other healthcare items; In all cases the grant must be considered the option of last resort; and

- Emergency legal assistance, such as for filing for restraining or protective orders, and obtaining emergency custody orders and visitation rights;
- Personal advocacy and emotional support including:
  - Working with a victim to assess the impact of the crime;
  - Identification of victim's needs;
  - Case management;
  - Management of practical problems created by the victimization;
  - Identification of resources available to the victim;
  - Provision of information, referrals, advocacy, and follow-up contact for continued services, as needed; and
  - Traditional, cultural, and/or alternative therapy/healing (e.g., art therapy, yoga – with appropriate training, certification, or licensure);
  - Transportation of victims to receive services and to participate in criminal justice proceedings;
  - Public awareness and education presentations (including the development of presentation materials, brochures, newspaper notices, and public service announcements) in schools, community centers, and other public forums that are designed to inform crime victims of specific rights and services and provide them with (or refer them to) services and assistance, this activity will only be funded in conjunction with programs providing direct services.

**Forensic Interviews (with the following parameters):**

- Results of the interview will be used not only for law enforcement and prosecution purposes, but also for identification of needs such as social services, personal advocacy, case management, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services;
- Interviews are conducted in the context of a multi-disciplinary investigation and diagnostic team, or in a specialized setting such as a child advocacy center; and
- The interviewer is trained to conduct forensic interviews appropriate to the developmental age and abilities of children, or the developmental, cognitive, and physical or communication disabilities presented by adults.

**Legal Advocacy**

- Facilitating participation in criminal justice and other public proceedings arising from the crime, including:
  - Advocacy on behalf of a victim;
  - Accompanying a victim to offices and court;

- Transportation, meals, and lodging to allow a victim who is not a witness to participate in a proceeding;
- Interpreting for a non-witness victim who is deaf or hard of hearing, or with limited English proficiency;
- Providing child care and respite care to enable a victim who is a caregiver to attend activities related to the proceeding;
- Notification to victims regarding key proceeding dates (e.g., trial dates, case disposition, incarceration, and parole hearings);
- Assistance with Victim Impact Statements;
- Assistance in recovering property that was retained as evidence; and
- Assistance with restitution advocacy on behalf of crime victims.
- Legal assistance services (including those provided on an emergency basis), where reasonable and where the need for such services arises as a direct result of the victimization, including:
  - Those (other than criminal defense) that help victims assert their rights as victims in a criminal proceeding directly related to the victimization, or otherwise protect their safety, privacy, or other interests as victims in such a proceeding;
  - Those actions (other than tort actions) that, in the civil context, are reasonably necessary as a direct result of the victimization;

**Multi-Disciplinary Teams and Case Coordination**

- Representatives of several agencies meet regularly to discuss common cases and share information to enhance investigation, prosecution, and victim restoration. Cases are followed through in this manner to closure. Participating agencies may include Child Protective Service, law enforcement, prosecutors’ offices, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners or other medical personnel, mental health professionals, etc.

**Peer Support Groups**

- Peer-support, including activities that provide opportunities for victims to meet other victims, share experiences, and provide self-help, information, and emotional support;

**Professional Therapy and Counseling**

- Mental health counseling and care, including, but not limited to, out-patient therapy/counseling provided by a person who meets professional standards to provide these services in the jurisdiction in which the care is administered;

**Program Evaluation and Assessment:**

- Evaluation of victim services programs and/or assessment of organizational or system effectiveness, needs, and/or appropriate responses.

**Protective Order Assistance:**

- Legal representation provided by program staff and/or staff attorneys to obtain protective orders and assistance
- May be provided by law enforcement personnel, prosecution staff or other service providers.

- Services may be available at non-traditional locations and times.

### **Shelter Programs**

- Providing a safe place for victims/survivors and their children;
- Short-term (up to 45 days) in-home care and supervision services for children and adults who remain in their own homes when the offender/caregiver is removed;
- Short-term (up to 45 days) nursing-home, adult foster care, or group-home placement for adults for whom no other safe, short-term residence is available;

### **Victim-Offender Meetings**

- Meetings between the survivor and the offender who perpetrated the crime against the survivor. At a minimum grantees must consider:
  - The safety and security of the survivor;
  - The benefit of therapeutic value to the survivor;
  - The procedures for ensuring that participation of the survivor and offender are voluntary and that everyone understands the nature of any meeting or other activity;
  - The provision of appropriate support and accompaniment for the survivor;
  - Appropriate debriefing opportunities for the survivor after a meeting;
  - The credentials of the facilitators; and
  - The opportunity for a survivor to withdraw from the process at any time.

## **Program-Specific Requirements**

All projects under this funding announcement must meet these requirements:

**Cultural competency:** Applicants must be culturally competent when providing services to victims. Victim service providers must have the ability to blend cultural knowledge and sensitivity with victim restoration skills for a more effective and culturally appropriate recovery process. Cultural competency occurs when: (1) cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity are integrated into action and policy; (2) the service is relevant to the needs of the community and provided by trained staff, board members, and management; and (3) an advocate or organization recognizes each client is different with different needs, feelings, ideas and barriers.

**Victim services assessment survey:** All recipients of funding under this announcement may be required to participate in a victim services assessment during their grant period, as directed by CJD.

### **Special requirements for vehicle purchases:**

Only non-profits will be eligible to purchase vehicles under this funding announcement. The vehicles must be for the purpose of transporting victims to receive various services. Applicants must explain in their eGrants application how the vehicles will be utilized and how that strengthens their delivery of victim services.

## Eligibility Requirements

1. Projects must demonstrate a record of effective services to victims of crime and support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.
  - A program has demonstrated a record of effective direct services and support when, for example, it demonstrates the support and approval of its direct services by the community, its history of providing direct services in a cost-effective manner, and the breadth or depth of its financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.
  - A program has substantial financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund when at least twenty-five percent of the program's funding in the year of, or the year preceding the award comes from such sources.
2. Entities receiving funds from CJD must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 66. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.
3. Beginning January 1, 2020, counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90 percent of convictions within seven business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety. By January 1, 2021, such reporting must take place within five business days.
4. Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting Part I violent crime data to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR). To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year.
5. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has established a goal set by the Texas Legislature for all local law enforcement agencies to implement and report crime statistics data by using the requirements of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). . Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) will collect required crime statistics solely through the NIBRS starting January 1, 2021. Due to the upcoming federal deadline, grantees are advised that eligibility for future grant funding may be tied to compliance with NIBRS. Financial grant assistance for transitioning to NIBRS may be available for your jurisdiction from the Public Safety Office.
6. Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all

provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to OOG and is active until August 31, 2021 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

7. Eligible applicants must have a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number assigned to its agency (to request a DUNS number, go to <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>).
8. Eligible applicants must be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM) database located at <https://www.sam.gov/>.

Failure to comply with program eligibility requirements may cause funds to be withheld and/or suspension or termination of grant funds.

## Prohibitions

Grant funds may not be used to support the unallowable costs listed in the [Guide to Grants](#) or any of the following unallowable costs:

1. Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (cf. 18 U.S.C. 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly;
2. The active investigation and prosecution of criminal activity, except for the provision of victim assistance services (e.g., emotional support, advocacy, and legal services) to crime victims, under 28 CFR § 94.119, during such investigation and prosecution;
3. Any activities related to fundraising;
4. Capital improvements; property losses and expenses; real estate purchases; mortgage payments; remodeling; and construction;
5. Reimbursement of crime victims for expenses incurred as a result of a crime;
6. Salaries, benefits, fees, furniture, equipment, and other expenses of executive directors, board members, and other administrators (except as specifically allowed);
7. Counseling or treatment for substance abuse (general counseling that includes a component addressing substance abuse is eligible);
8. Victim-offender meetings that serve to replace (or as a part of) criminal justice proceedings;
9. Services to incarcerated individuals;
10. Medical training;
11. Medical care or expenses (except as specifically allowed);
12. Forensic medical evidence collection to include the salary or overtime cost of SANE Nurses;
13. Cash payments to victims, gift cards, or fuel vouchers;

14. Creation of a voucher program where victims are directly given vouchers for such services as housing or counseling;
15. Transportation, lodging, per diem or any related costs for third-party participants to attend a training, when grant funds are used to develop and conduct training;
16. Leasing of vehicles;
17. Transitional housing - Travel, rental assistance, security deposits, utilities, and other costs incidental to the relocation to such housing, as well as voluntary support services such as childcare and counseling;
18. Research and studies, except for project evaluations under 28 CFR § 94.121(j);
19. Activities that may compromise victim safety;
20. Entertainment, including amusement, diversion, social activities, and any associated costs (i.e. tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) unless there is a clear programmatic purpose and the costs are approved in advance by CJD; and
21. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, state or local law or regulation.

## **Selection Process**

1. For eligible local and regional projects:
  - a. Applications will be forwarded by CJD to the appropriate regional council of governments (COG).
  - b. The COG's criminal justice advisory committee will prioritize all eligible applications based on State priorities, identified community priorities, cost and program effectiveness.
  - c. CJD will accept priority listings that are approved by the COG's executive committee.
  - d. CJD will make all final funding decisions based upon eligibility, approved COG priorities, reasonableness of the project, availability of funding, and cost-effectiveness.
2. For state discretionary projects, applications will be reviewed by CJD staff members or a review group selected by the executive director. CJD will make all final funding decisions based on eligibility, reasonableness, availability of funding, and cost-effectiveness.

## **Contact Information**

For more information, contact the eGrants help desk at [eGrants@gov.texas.gov](mailto:eGrants@gov.texas.gov) or (512) 463-1919.