

Request for Match Waiver

Background:

VOCA regulations require grantees to contribute to the total cost of their VOCA-funded project by providing not less than 20% match, either cash or in-kind, from non-federal sources. VOCA regulations also allow for match waiver requests to be submitted to the federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) by the state on behalf of the grantee. OVC reviews these requests from grantees and makes a decision as to match waivers for individual projects.

Issue:

With the increase in VOCA funds for FY 2015, we anticipate many agencies will receive larger VOCA awards, which means larger match requirements. We also anticipate that many VOCA-funded agencies may have trouble meeting the full 20% match requirement of these larger awards and may want to request a match waiver from OVC.

Requesting a Match Waiver:

If your agency would like to request a match waiver, you should submit a letter, on your agency's letterhead, to the Office for Victims Programs (OVP) at the Division of Criminal Justice after you receive notice of your award. The letter should outline the reasons why your agency will have trouble meeting the full match requirement and should indicate the amount of match you are able to provide. Your OVP grant manager will review your waiver request to determine eligibility and if it should be forwarded to the federal OVC. OVP will compile all of the eligible match waiver requests and send them to OVC at one time. In order to request a match waiver, you should submit your letter via mail to: Office for Victims Programs, Division of Criminal at 700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000, Denver, CO 80215.

Your letter requesting a match waiver should include the following, minimum elements:

- A brief description of your agency and your VOCA-funded project
- A brief explanation of why the full match amount is a hardship for your agency
- A brief description of how not receiving a match waiver may result in fewer victims being served
- If using volunteers for match, describe why you are not able to retain the number of volunteers needed to meet the match requirement
- Indicate how much match you are able to provide and what amount you are requesting to be waived
- Any other important information you want to add

Keep in mind we have been told that OVC is unlikely to approve match waivers for the full amount of match. It is important that you consider the amount of match you are able to contribute to the project. For an example of how to structure your letter, please see the attached sample match waiver letter. Do not copy this example; instead, use it as a guide for writing your own letter that is applicable to your agency's circumstances.

AGENCY LETTERHEAD

12/10/15

Office for Victims Programs
Division of Criminal Justice
700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000
Denver, CO 80215

RE: VOCA Waiver Request for 2016/2017 One Time Award (from FFY 2015/FFY 2016 funds)
Grant #:

This letter is written on behalf of The ABC victims program to request a hardship waiver of our FFY 2015/2016 match requirement in the amount of \$4,000, which constitutes a partial match waiver request. The full amount of our match requirement is \$20,000, and our agency is able to provide \$16,000.

Without our 1.25 FTE VOCA funded positions, victims in the Santa Ana Valley (a rural area) would not have access to needed services to assist them in healing and enable them to return to their previous state of well-being. ABC victims program has been in existence for 15 years and provides crisis intervention and hospital accompaniment services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. We serve approximately 500 rural, non-English speaking victims per year.

ABC Victims Program has used volunteers since its inception, however, in last 3 years we have faced several challenges in recruiting enough volunteers.

Time commitment limitations:

- Our volunteers are required to commit to 40 hours of training before they can start working with victims. In addition, volunteers are required to attend monthly training sessions. We currently have a core group of five volunteers that are committed to the program, but this is not enough to provide the full amount of match required on the grant.

Other challenges:

- The Santa Ana Valley is a seasonal tourism hub with many transient residents during the winter months.
- The Santa Ana Valley is made up of two distinct populations; the rural community with a majority of low income, Spanish-speaking residents and the more affluent community. Many of our low-income residents do not have the ability to volunteer because of the costs involved, including gas, car insurance and car maintenance. In addition, many of these residents do not have childcare available.

Our more affluent residents say they are interested in volunteering for our program, but are not willing or able to commit to the amount of time we need them to train and volunteer. In addition, because we respond to victims twenty-four hours per day, many families find this disruptive to their employment or lifestyle.

- The Santa Ana Valley does have a community college nearby whose students could do an internship with our program; however, these internships are generally 6 weeks long. Because they would be required to complete the certification training before they could officially start their internships, they would not have much time to do actually work with clients, which is what they want to do.
- The Santa Ana Valley's ABC victim program has experienced significant cuts in funding over the past 4 years. Specifically, the Foundation for Crime Victims chose not to provide on-going support for our program in the amount of \$55,000. This loss has had a significant impact on our services in that we have been unable to fully fund a victim advocate position that served 100 victims per year. VOCA funds will cover the cost of this advocate, but having to provide match with this type of loss is very difficult.

VOCA match creates a huge burden that hinders our ability to provide critical victim services. Failure to meet this requirement puts our program and its services to sexual assault victims in jeopardy. We try very hard to meet the match requirement; however, we do not want to face closure or losing our grant simply because we cannot generate the match. We respectfully request a partial waiver of the match requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Donna Day
Executive Director