

Lawyers for Victims Program Funding Opportunity

FAQs

Funding/Eligibility

Q: Could the funding cover the cost of an attorney to be designated as the Program Manager?

A: Yes, personnel costs to implement the project are eligible and appropriate expenses.

Q: If our agency currently has an on-staff attorney, partly funded through regular VOCA funds to provide full civil legal services to victims, could this funding be used to expand our current civil legal project?

A: As long as your organization is not supplanting funds and this person will be providing eligible services tied to the project, this sounds reasonable.

Q: Is there an estimated number of pilot projects DCJ expects to fund?

A: No.

Q: What is the estimated amount of funds available for the 20-month grant period?

A: There is no estimate.

Q: Is there anything that would disqualify you for funds?

A: Applicants must meet the organizational and eligibility requirements to be eligible to receive funding through this opportunity.

Q: Would victims of elder abuse be a type of crime victim that would qualify under VOCA?

A: Yes.

Q: Would immigrant legal issues (ex. UVISA, etc) qualify?

A: Yes. Also, immigration status is not a determinant in regards to whether or not a victim is eligible to receive services.

Q: If we decide not to apply for this opportunity, would that preclude us from adding a program like this to our regular VOCA grant application?

A: No.

Q: If Project Safeguard does not operate in our county, can our agency still apply?

A: This funding opportunity is not to work directly with Project Safeguard's Lawyers for Victims Program, but to support eligible organizations in establishing their own program based on this model.

Q: Is there a limit on the amount of funds requested?

A: No.

Q: What is the scope of the quarterly reporting requirements? How much information will be gathered each quarter?

A: The reporting and data collection requirements are equivalent to what is required for all VOCA grants through OVP (quarterly PMT, quarterly financials and payment requests, quarterly CVS2 (narrative report)).

Q: Can projects be collaborative, meaning can multiple agencies partner to implement the project and submit one grant application?

A: Yes, collaborative applications can be submitted where one agency is serving as the lead agency and other agencies are partnering with the lead agency to implement the project. In these cases, the lead agency will submit the application and be responsible for ensuring its partners (subawardees) comply with the requirements of the funding. The application must fully outline the roles and responsibilities (both programmatic and financial/budgetary) that each partner are responsible for during the grant period. Agencies that are not the lead agency but will be subawarded funds through the project may also provide a portion of the required match. This should also be well-outlined in the application. Agencies who submit this type of collaborative application must also submit signed Letters of Support from the partnering agencies at the time of application as an attachment.

Q: Are costs associated with professional liability insurance for the attorney serving as the Project Coordinator an eligible expense?

A: Yes, a prorated amount of this expense is eligible.

Q: Can we use in-kind rent as match?

A: Yes, a portion of the rent associated with the personnel to be supported by the project can be used as in-kind match.

Q: Is training of contract attorneys an eligible activity?

A: No, but attorneys will be able to contact the Statewide Civil Legal Services Coordinator for technical assistance on working with crime victims. More details on this resource and potentially other resources will be released soon.

Programmatic Related

Q: Is having a Project Coordinator, preferably an attorney themselves, a required element of the project and grant application?

A: While not explicitly required, it is highly recommended. The Project Manager will have to review legal documents, make determinations on whether to refer cases to contract attorneys or not, and evaluate and decide what attorneys to contract with.

Q: Does an organization already have to have an attorney on staff to be eligible to apply?

A: No. This funding opportunity is to support organizations in creating their own Lawyers for Victims Program. Applicants can request funding to hire a full-time or part-time attorney or contract with one to serve as the Project Manager/Coordinator to create and run the program.

Q: If an attorney wanted to appeal a case, would the appeal count as another case?

A: The obligation of the contract attorney in Project Safeguard's Lawyers for Victims Program ends at the conclusion of the PPO hearing. If the attorney would like to handle an appeal, or another matter for the client that is between the attorney and the client and they may enter into a separate agreement.

Q: Please expand on the requirement for the organization to use volunteers. Would volunteer hours need to be related to the grant?

A: Organizations must use volunteers in some capacity to be an eligible organization. Volunteers used to fulfill this requirement do not need to be directly tied to the project. If an applicant plans to use volunteers as a source of in-kind match, then the volunteer activities must be directly tied to the project.

Q: Because this model uses a flat fee service model, how do you carefully focus the program to make sense for attorneys?

A: The agency will need to carefully choose a legal service that is appropriate for a flat fee payment arrangement. The amount of time necessary should be relatively predictable so that attorneys will be willing to accept referrals for a flat fee.

Q: Do you have to have victim advocates on staff, or can an entity partner with local victim advocates?

A: Providing victim advocacy is an essential aspect of the Lawyers for Victims Program model. Applicants should explain how they will offer these services in their Letter of Intent.

Q: Are only Project Safeguard clients eligible?

A: No.

Q: Does the victim have to have reported the crime to be eligible for services?

A: No, they do not have to have reported the crime to law enforcement.

Q: Is the intent that grant recipients adopt the model that Project Safeguard implemented, or would you consider models that vary from that model?

A: Projects should model their model, but can serve VOCA-eligible crime victims other than domestic violence victims and can assist with civil legal needs other than permanent protection order hearings as allowable under VOCA.

Q: Do contract attorneys get paid at the end of the case? Are there benchmarks within the flat fee arrangement, or would an attorney get paid the same amount for entering a stipulation that she would for completing a contested hearing? At what point in the representation is the flat fee earned?

A: In Project Safeguard's model, the contract attorney has earned his or her flat fee at the conclusion of the matter. The outcome does not affect payment, nor does the decision to go to hearing vs. enter a stipulation, agree to continue the TPO for up to 1 year, or voluntarily dismiss.

Q: Would we have the discretion to prioritize the cases according to our own criteria, provided that all cases are for victims of crimes (i.e. accept DV victims without children, and target other underrepresented groups, such as rural, disabled, or non-English speaking, victims)?

A: Yes.

Q: In terms of payment for the attorneys handling cases, at what point are they paid?

A: Per the webinar "Following the PPO hearing, the Legal Director sends surveys to the contract attorney and client. The contract attorney emails a completed request for payment form to the Legal Director. Once the request for payment is received and the attorney survey is completed, the contract attorney is paid \$750 within 30 days, no matter the outcome of the hearing." If awarded, agencies would be requesting reimbursement for this expense and all other project-related expenses approved in their application on a quarterly reimbursement basis.

Q: Can the Project funds only be used for assisting victims in obtaining a permanent protective order?

A: No, victims can be helped with any specific civil legal need as long as it is an eligible service under VOCA. This is just the type of need Project Safeguard's program assists DV victims with. Your program can assist victims with other types of civil legal needs.

Q: Do victims served through the program have to be domestic violence and have a child in common??

A: No, Projects can serve any type of VOCA-eligible crime victim, and are not limited to assisting domestic violence victims. VOCA-eligible crime victims types include: : Adult Physical Assault, Adult Sexual Assault, Adults Sexually Abused/Assaulted as Children, Arson, Bullying (Verbal, Cyber, or Physical), Burglary, Child Physical Abuse or Neglect, Child Pornography, Child Sexual Abuse/Assault, Domestic and/or Family Violence,

DUI/DWI Incidents, Elder Abuse or Neglect, Human Trafficking: Labor, Human Trafficking: Sex, Identity Theft/Fraud/Financial Crime, Kidnapping (custodial), Kidnapping (noncustodial), Mass Violence (Domestic/International), Other Vehicular Victimization (e.g., Hit & Run), Robbery, Stalking/Harassment, Survivors of Homicide Victims, Teen Dating, Terrorism (Domestic/International), Hate Crime: Racial/Religious/Gender/Sexual Orientation/Other.

The criteria of having a child in common is just a specific criteria Project Safeguard has chosen to use, but you do not have to structure your program this way.