



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP TITLE:	FY26 Violence Against Women Act Funding
RFP ISSUE DATE:	July 23, 2026
PROPOSAL DUE DATE:	August 20, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.
ISSUING DEPARTMENT:	Department of Public Safety & Justice Services 2079 East 9th Street, Room 5-200 Cleveland, Ohio 44115
PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE:	August 7, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. 2079 E. 9th Street, Room 5-207 Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Cuyahoga County Public Safety and Justice Services will hold a pre-proposal conference before the application deadline. Information on the requirements, expectations and guidelines will be addressed. The conference will be scheduled via Microsoft Teams.

Teams Meeting Link: [FY26 VAWA Pre-Proposal Conference | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

Call in (audio only)

+1 440-462-2064

Phone Conference ID: 541 976 842#

ATTENTION: This solicitation is for grant funding that the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Safety & Justice Services (PSJS) administers on behalf of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services and that originates from the United States Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women. To continue program activities designed to maintain public safety services, PSJS will proceed with this solicitation, however, PSJS anticipates that new grant guidance may be issued in 2026 to reflect DOJ's revised policies and priorities. Updated DOJ guidance could impact terms and conditions and the availability of funding for any grants that are awarded from this solicitation. PSJS will share new grant conditions, guidance, and requirements with all grantees as they become available. In some instances, executed grant contracts may be revised or cancelled.

By submitting an application, the potential subrecipient understands that if awarded funding pursuant to this solicitation, the terms, the conditions, and the availability of continued funding are subject to future communications and guidance from DOJ.

Violence Against Women Act Grant Program
2026 Request for Proposals
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	4
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	4
ATTACHMENT A SUBMISSION	4
COLLABORATION BOARD	4
DELIVERY OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE CERTIFICATION	4
PROSECUTOR ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION	5
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	5
WHAT TO EXPECT	5
ACTIVITIES THAT COMPROMISE VICTIM SAFETY AND RECOVERY	7
CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY PROTECTIONS	8
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT NON-DISCRIMINATION PROVISION	8
CONFIDENTIALITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	9
PROGRAM PURPOSE	9
OHIO STOP VAWA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	12
NEW AND CONTINUATION PROJECTS	12
FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS	13
MATCH REQUIREMENTS	14
CASH MATCH	14
IN-KIND MATCH	14
FEDERAL ALLOCATION REQUIREMENTS	14
COURT ALLOCATION CATEGORY	15
SEXUAL ASSAULT SET-ASIDE	15
CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SET-ASIDE	15
FOOD AND BEVERAGE/COSTS FOR REFRESHMENT AND MEALS	15
CONFERENCE PLANNING AND EXPENDITURE LIMITATIONS	16
PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS	16
POST AWARD REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	17
CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE	17
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES	18
STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) PROPOSAL NARRATIVE COMPONENTS	19
PROGRAM AREAS AND REQUIREMENTS	19
PROBLEM STATEMENT	20
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	21

SUSTAINABILITY/ACCCOMPLISHMENTS/OBSTACLES	22
PROJECT OBJECTIVITIES	23
TIMELINE AND ACTIVITIES	24
ORGANIZATION AND STAFF CAPACITY	24
COLLABORATION BOARD	25
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	27
BUDGET REQUIREMENTS	27
FORMAT AND SUBMISSION	28
PROPOSAL COMPONENTS CHECKLIST	29
CUYAHOGA COUNTY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS	30

The STOP Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding is federally administered by the Office of Justice Programs, Violence Against Women Office within the U.S. Department of Justice. The subgrant program emphasizes coordinated community approaches to reduce violence against women and to create mutually respectful partnerships between the justice system and victim services.

Eligible Applicants

All VAWA applicants must have an organization, or subrecipient¹, that will serve as the fiduciary agent and assume overall responsibility for the grant. Eligible VAWA subrecipients include:

1. A unit of local government or council of governments. A unit of local government has legislative autonomy, jurisdiction, and authority to act in certain circumstances. Units of government include a city, county, township, or village. If two or more jointly apply, they must designate one body to take the lead role and identify that agency's fiscal officer, or
2. Local and state nonprofit, non-governmental victim service programs.
3. Law enforcement agencies applying under this solicitation must be in compliance with crime statistics reporting, using either the [Ohio Incident-Based Reporting System](#) (OIBRS) or the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Collection Application (NCA), per [Ohio Revised Code Section 5502.62\(C\)\(6\)](#).

Eligibility Requirements

1. All applicants, with the exception of nonprofit victim service providers, must submit a signed Attachment A with the application. The *Attachment A* consists of two components:
 - a. A letter that states the applicant has consulted with a state or local nonprofit victim service provider during the course of developing the application.
 - b. A victim service consultation certification form signed by both the applicant and victim service provider. [Download the Attachment A template](#). The *Attachment A* must be submitted with the Collaboration Board Letters as an attachment.
2. All applicants applying for projects under VAWA must have a collaboration board representing law enforcement, prosecution, victim service providers, and any other applicable agency/representative that will help to inform the project's activities and goals.
3. Delivery of Legal Assistance Certification (if applicable). Pursuant to [34 U.S.C. § 12291\(b\)\(12\)](#), if the state is planning to issue subgrants with STOP funds to provide legal assistance, the state must certify in writing to the following and ensure that legal assistance subgrantees make the same certifications to the state: any person providing legal assistance with funds through this program – (A) has demonstrated expertise in providing legal assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking in the targeted population; or (B)(i) is partnered with an entity or person that has demonstrated expertise described in subparagraph (A); and (ii) has completed, or will complete, training in connection with domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and related legal issues, including training on evidence-based risk factors for domestic and dating violence homicide;
 - a. any training program conducted in satisfaction of the requirement of paragraph (1) has been or will be developed with input from and in collaboration with a tribal, state, territorial, or local domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking victim service provider or coalition, as well as appropriate tribal, state, territorial, and local law enforcement officials;

¹ The terms Grantee/Recipient and Subgrantee/Subrecipient/Subawardee are used interchangeably throughout this document.

- b. any person or organization providing legal assistance with funds through this program has informed and will continue to inform state, local, or tribal domestic violence, dating violence, or sexual assault programs and coalitions, as well as appropriate state and local law enforcement officials of their work; and
- c. the grantee's organizational policies do not require mediation or counseling involving offenders and victims physically together, in cases where sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or child sexual abuse is an issue.

[Download the Sample Legal Assistance Certification Letter.](#)

4. Prosecutor Eligibility Certification (if applicable)- [34 U.S. Code § 10454](#) (Grant eligibility regarding compelling victim testimony)

In order for a prosecutor's office to be eligible to receive grant funds under this subchapter, the head of the office shall certify, to the State, Indian Tribal government, or territorial government receiving the grant funding, that the office will, during the 3-year period beginning on the date on which the grant is awarded, engage in planning, developing and implementing—

- a. training developed by experts in the field regarding victim-centered approaches in domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking cases;
- b. policies that support a victim-centered approach, informed by such training; and
- c. a protocol outlining alternative practices and procedures for material witness petitions and bench warrants, consistent with best practices, that shall be exhausted before employing material witness petitions and bench warrants to obtain victim-witness testimony in the investigation, prosecution, and trial of a crime related to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking of the victim in order to prevent further victimization and trauma to the victim.

OCJS previously hosted a state-wide training on Prosecutor Certification, presented by John F. Wilkinson of AEquitas. For convenience, the recorded sessions are available at the links below for any prosecuting agency that wishes to review or reference the material.

Training Recordings (AEquitas – John F. Wilkinson):

- [Prosecutor Certification Training, Part 1](#)
- [Prosecutor Certification Training, Part 2](#)

Technical Assistance

For questions regarding the STOP VAWA program or technical assistance on any part of the VAWA application, contact Senior Grants Coordinator, Linda Jones, at (216) 698-6463 or ldjones@cuyahogacounty.gov.

What to Expect

Cuyahoga County Public Safety and Justice Services (PSJS) implements a competitive application review process. Applications are evaluated and recommended for funding by the VAWA Allocation Committee, which is comprised of professionals from the field. Final funding recommendations are

made to the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS). Once approved, provider service contracts go before the Cuyahoga County Board of Control for approval.

Award notifications and expectations: Applicants that are recommended for funding will be notified via email and required to complete all forms and pre-award conditions. **All awards will be for 12 months of funding, operating from January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2027.**

Forms and assurances included with pre-award conditions include but are not limited to:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Certification Form
- Civil Rights and EEOP Questions Part 1 Form
 - The Federal Office of Civil Rights has temporarily paused the collection of EEOP information. Public Safety & Justice Services (PSJS) will notify subgrantees selected for award via email when additional information, the website and/or associated tool become available.
- Standard Assurances Form
- Special Conditions Form
- [Confidentiality and Privacy Provisions](#)
- [Stop VAWA Statement of Acknowledgement](#)
- Registration in the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM.gov)
- [Acknowledgement of Notice of Statutory Requirement to Comply with the Confidentiality and Privacy Provisions of the Violence Against Women Act](#)
- [Conditions of Suitability to Interact with Participating Minors](#)
 - The pre-award conditions will include submitting the following:
 - A description of the criteria for identifying persons that require a background check (Background checks are allowable budget costs)
 - A description of how the searches will be conducted (sex offender database, background checks)
 - A description of how background checks will be tracked
 - A submission of the form used to document background checks (programmatic site visits will require submitting completed forms to PSJS for review upon request)
- [Policy Workplace Response to Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence and Dating Violence](#)
 - The recipient and any subrecipient at any tier must have a policy, or issue one within 270 days of the award date, to address workplace-related incidents of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and dating violence involving an employee, volunteer, consultant, or contractor.
 - A policy must be available for PSJS to review upon request
- Fidelity Insurance/Surety Bond (Note: Only applicable for non-profit applicants)

- Proof of Tax-Exempt Status (Note: Only applicable for non-profit applicants)

In addition to the pre-award condition requirements and this Request for Proposal, all subrecipients are bound by the [Federal Subgrant Conditions Handbook](#). Project directors are required to attend a mandatory online orientation.

Please note: STOP Violence Against Women Act is a reimbursement grant. Projects will submit Monthly Subgrant Reports to request reimbursement for grant expenses. Reimbursements are contingent on meeting the requirements of the grant including, but not limited to, performance reporting requirements as described in the Pre-Award Conditions.

Activities that Compromise Victim Safety and Recovery

OVW does not fund activities that jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions. Below are lists of these activities, including a separate list for each OVW grant program. The first list applies across all OVW programs, and the program-specific lists may include activities that are relevant to other OVW programs, depending on the scope of a recipient's project.

1. Procedures or policies that exclude eligible victims from receiving services based on the classifications identified in [34 U.S.C. § 12291\(b\)\(13\)\(A\)](#) or their actual or perceived mental or physical health condition, criminal record, employment history or status, income or lack of income, or the age and/or sex of their children.²
2. Procedures or policies that compromise the confidentiality of information and/or privacy of victims.
3. Procedures or policies that require victims to take certain actions (e.g., seek an order of protection; receive counseling; participate in counseling, mediation, or restorative justice/circle processes; report to law enforcement or other authorities; seek civil or criminal remedies) or penalize them for failing to do so.
4. Procedures or policies that fail to include conducting safety planning with victims.
5. Project designs, products, services, and/or budgets that fail to account for the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, with limited English proficiency, or who are Deaf or hard of hearing, including accessibility for such individuals.
6. Using technology without addressing implications for victim confidentiality, safety planning, and the need for informed consent.
7. Partnering with individuals or organizations that support/promote practices that compromise victim safety and recovery or undermine offender accountability.

For additional information on activities that compromise victim safety please visit the [FY 2026 Application Companion Guide](#).

² If an award is made, the recipient will also be subject to statutory prohibitions on discrimination. For further information on the civil rights requirements governing recipients of federal funding, go to [Requirements for All OVW Applicants and Recipients](#). In addition, OVW regulations provide that victim eligibility for direct services is not dependent on the victim's immigration status. [28 C.F.R. § 90.4\(c\)](#).

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections

OVW grantees [recipients] and their subgrantees [subrecipients] are prohibited from disclosing personally identifying information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through the grantee and their subgrantee's programs, to any third party or third-party database without informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent of the person, unless compelled by statutory or court mandate. Where there is a mandate to release information, grantees and subgrantees must make reasonable attempts to provide notice to victims affected by the disclosure of information. They must also take necessary steps to protect the privacy and safety of the persons affected by the release of the information. Regarding unemancipated minors or persons with disabilities lacking capacity to consent, a parent or guardian may consent to the disclosure; however, an abuser of a minor, person with disabilities, or the minor's other parent is prohibited from giving consent to the disclosure. If a minor or a person with a legally appointed guardian is permitted by law to receive services without the parent's or guardian's consent, the minor or person with a guardian may release information without additional consent. Due to a requirement in VAWA 2013, grantees and subgrantees must document their compliance with the confidentiality and privacy provisions required under this section. ([34 U.S.C. 12291\(b\)\(2\)](#) & [28 CFR 90.4\(b\)](#)). Personally identifiable information shall not be included with any programmatic or fiscal reporting to PSJS.

Nonprofit victim service providers/agencies that receive funding under this solicitation are not required, nor should they report identifying information regarding clients served to the Homeless Management Information System. The term 'personally identifying information' or 'personal information' means individually identifying information for or about an individual including information likely to disclose the location of victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, regardless of whether the information is encoded, encrypted, hashed, or otherwise protected, including:

- (A) a first and last name
- (B) a home or other physical address
- (C) contact information (including a postal, e-mail or Internet protocol address, or telephone or facsimile number)
- (D) a social security number, driver license number, passport number, or student identification number; and any other information, including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation, that would serve to identify any individual. [34 USC § 12291\(a\)\(25\)](#)

Violence Against Women Act Non-Discrimination Provision

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), as amended, prohibits OVW grantees from excluding, denying benefits to, or discriminating against any person on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability in any program or activity funded in whole or in part by OVW ([34 U.S.C. § 12291\(b\)\(13\) \(A\)](#)). Recipients may provide sex-segregated or sex-specific programming if doing so is necessary to the essential operation of a program, so long as the recipient provides comparable services to those who cannot be provided with the sex-segregated or sex-specific programming. ([34 U.S.C. § 12291\(b\)\(13\)\(B\)](#)).

Confidentiality Acknowledgement

Under section 40002(b)(2) of the Violence Against Women Act, as amended ([34 U.S.C. § 12291\(b\)\(2\)](#)), grantees and subgrantees with funding from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) are required to meet the following terms with regard to nondisclosure of confidential or private information and to document their compliance. This includes mandated compliance on nondisclosure, release of information, information sharing, statutorily mandated reports of abuse or neglect, oversight, and confidentiality assessment and assurances.

Refer to the Confidentiality Acknowledgement for further information on the mandated compliance requirements concerning victim confidentiality.

Program Purpose

Please be aware that all projects are subject to the current Presidential Action and Executive Orders of the President's Administration. Applicants at a minimum must be aware of and compliant with Presidential Actions and Executive Orders. [View the complete list of Presidential Actions and Executive Orders.](#)

STOP VAWA funding requests must meet one or more of the following applicable federal statutory purpose areas:

1. Training law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence, including the use of nonimmigrant status under subparagraphs (U) and (T) of section 101(a)(15) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a));
2. Developing, training, or expanding units of law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and domestic violence;
3. Developing and implementing more effective police, court, and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and domestic violence, as well as the appropriate treatment of victims, including implementation of the grant conditions in section 40002(b) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12291(b));
4. Developing, installing, or expanding data collection and communication systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts or for the purpose of identifying, classifying, and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and domestic violence;
5. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening victim services and legal assistance programs, including sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence programs, developing or improving delivery of victim services and legal assistance to underserved populations, providing specialized domestic violence court advocates in courts where a significant number of protection orders are granted, and increasing reporting and reducing attrition rates for cases

involving violent crimes against women, including crimes of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and domestic violence;

6. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing the needs and circumstances of Indian tribes in dealing with violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and domestic violence;
7. Supporting formal and informal statewide, multidisciplinary efforts, to the extent not supported by state funds, to coordinate the response of state law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, victim services agencies, and other state agencies and departments, to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence;
8. Training of sexual assault forensic medical personnel examiners in the collection and preservation of evidence, analysis, prevention, and providing expert testimony and treatment of trauma related to sexual assault;
9. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs to assist law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and others to address the needs and circumstances of individuals 50 years of age or over, individuals with disabilities, and Deaf individuals who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or sexual assault, including recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling, legal assistance, and other victim services to such individuals;
10. Providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in immigration matters;
11. Maintaining core victim services and criminal justice initiatives, while supporting complementary new initiatives and emergency services for victims and their families including rehabilitative work with offenders;
12. Supporting the placement of special victim assistants (to be known as “Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants”) in local law enforcement agencies to serve as liaisons between victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and personnel in local law enforcement agencies in order to improve the enforcement of protection orders. Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants shall have expertise in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and may undertake the following activities:
 - developing, in collaboration with prosecutors, courts, and victim service providers, standardized response policies for local law enforcement agencies, including the use of evidence-based indicators to assess the risk of domestic and dating violence homicide and prioritize dangerous or potentially lethal cases;
 - notifying persons seeking enforcement of protection orders as to what responses will be provided by the relevant law enforcement agency;
 - referring persons seeking enforcement of protection orders to supplementary services (such as emergency shelter programs, hotlines, or legal assistance services); and;
 - taking other appropriate action to assist or secure the safety of the person seeking enforcement of a protection order.

13. Providing funding to law enforcement agencies, nonprofit nongovernmental victim services providers, and State, Tribal, Territorial, and local governments (which funding stream shall be known as the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Protocol Program) to promote—
 - the development and implementation of training for local victim domestic violence service providers, and to fund victim services personnel, to be known as “Crystal Judson Victim Advocates,” to provide supportive services and advocacy for victims of domestic violence committed by law enforcement personnel;
 - the implementation of protocols within law enforcement agencies to ensure consistent and effective responses to the commission of domestic violence by personnel within such agencies such as the model policy promulgated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (“Domestic Violence by Police Officers: A Policy of the IACP, Police Response to Violence Against Women Project” July 2003); and
 - the development of such protocols in collaboration with State, Tribal, Territorial and local victim services providers and domestic violence coalitions.

Note: Any law enforcement, State, Tribal, Territorial, or local government agency receiving funding under the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Protocol Program shall, on an annual basis, receive additional training on the topic of incidents of domestic violence committed by law enforcement personnel from domestic violence and sexual assault nonprofit organizations and, after a period of two years, provide a report of the adopted protocol to the Department, including a summary of progress in implementing such protocol. As such, States and Territories are responsible for ensuring that each subgrantee [subrecipient] receiving funds under this purpose area will receive the required annual training. States are also responsible for ensuring that subgrantees [subrecipients] submit their two-year report to the Department. States and Territories must notify and provide OVW with a list of subgrantee recipients awarded STOP funds under the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Protocol Program.

14. Developing and promoting State, local, or tribal legislation and policies that enhance best practices for responding to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;
15. Developing, implementing, or enhancing Sexual Assault Response Teams, or other similar coordinated community responses to sexual assault;
16. Developing and strengthening policies, protocols, best practices, and training for law enforcement agencies and prosecutors relating to the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases and the appropriate treatment of victims;
17. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing sexual assault against men, women, and youth in correctional and detention settings;
18. Identifying and conducting inventories of backlogs of sexual assault evidence collection kits and developing protocols and policies for responding to and addressing such backlogs, including protocols and policies for notifying and involving victims;
19. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs and projects to provide services and responses targeting male and female victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whose ability to access traditional services and responses is affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity, as defined in section 249(c) of title 18, United States Code;

20. Developing, enhancing, or strengthening prevention and educational programming to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or female genital mutilation or cutting; with not more than 5 percent of the amount allocated to a State to be used for this purpose;
21. Developing, enhancing, or strengthening programs and projects to improve evidence collection methods for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including through funding for technology that better detects bruising and injuries across skin tones and related training;
22. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening culturally specific victim services programs to provide culturally specific victim services and responses to female genital mutilation or cutting;
23. Providing victim advocates in State or local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and courts and providing supportive services and advocacy to Indian victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;
24. Paying any fees charged by any governmental authority for furnishing a victim or the child of a victim with any of the following documents:
 - A birth certificate or passport of the individual, as required by law.
 - An identification card issued to the person by a State or Tribe, that shows that the person is a resident of the State or member of the Tribe.

Ohio STOP VAWA Implementation Plan

The goal of the Implementation Plan, which is applicable to federal fiscal years 2022 through 2025, is to identify and fund programs that increase the awareness of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence, and to facilitate and enhance collaborative efforts amongst courts, law enforcement, prosecution, and victim service agencies to foster a stronger coordinated response toward the elimination of violence against women.

Applicants are required to demonstrate how the proposed project aligns with the state's implementation plan priorities.

Definitions for Identified Goals

OCJS has previously developed a definitions document to provide guidance, clarity and expectation on the terms expressed within the plan's identified goals. [The document can be accessed at STOP VAWA Implementation Plan– Definitions for Identified Goals.](#)

The current state [STOP VAWA Implementation Plan](#) should be used for FY 2026 VAWA applications while the Office of Criminal Justice Services is currently developing the FY 2026–FY 2029 STOP VAWA Implementation Plan. Once finalized, the plan will be published on the OCJS website and made available to the public.

New and Continuation Projects

A new project is one that has never received VAWA funding. If an agency applies for a project substantially similar to a previously awarded project, the project proposal is considered a continuation of the earlier program. New and continuation projects compete equally for funding.

Fiscal Considerations

- [View the unallowable costs list.](#)
- Applicants may apply for 12 months of funding, operating from January 1, 2027, to December 31, 2027. Application requests must reflect realistic and allowable project costs that can be expended during this project period.
- Lodging and meal per diem rates cannot exceed the rates set by the federal Government Services Administration (GSA). The rates can be found at [GSA Per Diem Rates](#).
- Mileage rates cannot exceed the rates set by Ohio Budget Management (OBM). These rates can be found at [OBM Travel Rule](#). The current OBM mileage rate is .58 per mile.
- Single, External, or Financial Statement Review Audits. Applicants are required to submit a copy of the organization's most recent Single, External, or Financial Statement Review Audit with the application. This allows OCJS to ensure requirements are met for 2 C.F.R. § 200.331(f). Single Audit Act Amendment of 1996, and the OMB Circular A-133. 2 C.F.R. 200.331(f) requires any organization exceeding \$750,000 in federal funds for federal grants issued prior to 10/1/2024 or \$1,000,000 after 10/1/2024 to have a Single Audit completed and uploaded into the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. External or Financial Statement Review Audits must be dated within the last 24 months. **Failure to provide the necessary audit documents may impact OCJS' ability to fund an organization.**
- Refer to the OCJS [Financial Budget Definition Reference Guide](#) for additional information on budget related terms.
- **General Ledger.** Applicants are required to confirm the ongoing active use of a general ledger defined as a complete record of all the financial transactions over the life of your organization. The general ledger holds all the information needed to prepare financial statements and includes assets, liabilities, equity (net asset), revenue and expenses.
- Specific cost limits exist for certain allowable costs including:
 - Lodging and meal per diem rates, which cannot exceed the rates set by the federal Government Services Administration (GSA). The rates can be found at [GSA Per Diem Rates](#).
 - Mileage rates cannot exceed the rates set by Ohio Budget Management (OBM). The current rate, .58 per mile, can be found at [OBM Travel Rule](#).
 - Laptops, which cannot exceed \$1,250.
 - Cell phones, which cannot exceed \$600.
- OCJS has implemented a Gift Card Policy for any organizations providing gift cards as part of a grant. Each organization is required to implement a gift card policy meeting the requirements. The policy and requirements can be found at: [OCJS Gift Card Policy](#)
- A cash or in-kind match of at least 25 percent is required for most VAWA subrecipients. **Nonprofit victim service providers are exempt from this requirement.**
- The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) created a regionally adjusted [pay schedule](#) for some shelter staff positions. This document includes recommended salaries for program staff by region. Please review this document prior to completing budget requests, if applicable to your application.

Each application receives a Pre-Risk Assessment to determine risks associated with financial integrity. If an applicant is determined to be moderate, high, or priority high risk, specific conditions of awards may be required as part of the award process.

An applicant may be deemed unqualified due to poor performance history or lack of demonstrated honesty or ethics.

Match Requirements

All VAWA awards are required to provide a cash or in-kind match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost. The match requirement excludes nonprofit victim service providers. OCJS determines the allocation categories and Cuyahoga County will notify projects regarding their matching requirements. Costs associated with match must be allowable, reasonable, and able to be supported with documentation. The maximum allowable rate for volunteer match is \$15.00 per hour.

Cash Match

Acceptable forms of Cash Match include:

- State or local budget items or appropriations identified as binding commitments of project match
- Funds contributed from private sources, like corporate or private donations
- Funds from the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. 5305, et. seq.
- Funds from the Appalachian Regional Development Act
- Project income

In-Kind Match

Acceptable forms of In-Kind Match include:

- Donations of expendable equipment, supplies, workshop or classroom materials, or workspace.
- The value placed on donated services must be consistent with the compensation rate paid for similar work in the organization or labor market. Loaned or donated equipment may not exceed its fair market value.
- Monetary value of donated time contributed by volunteers such as professional, technical, skilled, or unskilled personnel if services are an integral and necessary part of the project. The maximum allowable rate for volunteer hours is \$15.00 per hour.
- Volunteer services must be documented and supported by the same methods used by the grant recipient for the recipient's own employees.

Match does not need to be applied at the exact time or in proportion to the obligation of federal funds; however, it must be obligated by the end of the project period.

Federal Allocation Requirements

OCJS determines funding categories for projects based on the agency implementing the project and the services most directly supported by the project. All the allocation categories mentioned below

are disbursed based on the type of organization that benefits from the VAWA program and the type of services supported by the program; however, discretionary funding may be used for any of the categories at the discretion of OCJS.

- Law Enforcement 25%
- Prosecution 25%
- Victim Services 30% (of which 10% is a culturally specific set-aside)
- Court 5%
- Discretionary 15%

Court Allocation Category

Funds awarded from the court allocation are required to be awarded “to” courts rather than “for” courts.

Sexual Assault Set-aside

Twenty percent of funds granted to the state shall be allocated for programs or projects in two or more federal allocation categories (victim services, courts, law enforcement, and prosecution) that meaningfully address sexual assault, including stranger rape, acquaintance rape, alcohol or drug-facilitated rape, and rape within the context of an intimate partner relationship.

Culturally Specific Set-aside

Pursuant to the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (H.R. 3402), STOP funding decisions must take into consideration that 10% of the 30% that is allocated to victim services must be distributed to community-based organizations that provide culturally specific services.

The term ‘culturally specific services’ **means community-based services that include culturally relevant and linguistically specific services and resources to culturally specific communities.** ([42 U.S.C. 13925\(a\)\(6\)](#)).

The term ‘culturally specific’ means primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups (as defined in section 1707(g) of the Public Health Service Act ([42 U.S.C. 300u-6\(g\)](#))).

The term ‘racial and ethnic minority group’ **means American Indians (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts); Asian Americans; Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; Blacks; and Hispanics** ([12 U.S.C 300u-6\(g\)\(1\)](#)).

Food and Beverage/Costs for Refreshments and Meals

Generally, food and beverage costs are **not allowable**, and under no circumstances may OVW funding be used to supply food and/or beverages during refreshment breaks. OVW funds may be used to provide food and/or beverages for a meal at a meeting, conference, training, or other event, if one of the following applies:

- The location of the event is not in close proximity to food establishments. It should be a priority to try to secure a location near reasonably priced and accessible commercial food establishments.
- Not serving food will significantly lengthen the day or necessitate extending the meeting to achieve meeting outcomes.
- A special presentation at a conference requires a plenary address where there is no other time for food to be obtained.
- Other extenuating circumstances necessitate the provision of food.

Justification for an exception listed above must be included in the budget narrative, and funds may only be used to purchase food and/or beverages for a meal at a meeting, conference, training, or other event if OVW approves the specific expenditures in advance.

Conference Planning and Expenditure Limitations

Applicants should be aware of all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and guidance (including specific cost limits, prior approval and reporting requirements, where applicable) governing the use of Federal funds for expenses related to conferences (which is defined to include meetings, retreats, seminars, symposiums, training and other similar events), including the provision of food and/or beverages at such events, and costs of attendance at such events. [View information on pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and guidance.](#)

Applicants should also be aware of the following specific restrictions on conference planning and expenditure limitations:

- Cost of Logistical Conference Planning
- Cost of Programmatic Conference Planning
- Conference Space and Audio-Visual Equipment and Services
- Prohibition on Trinkets at Conferences
- Entertainment at Conferences
- Food and Beverages at Conferences
- Prior Approval Required Before Entering into Contracts or Expending Funds for Conferences
- Conference Reporting

Updated Department of Justice and OVW guidance on conference planning, minimization of costs, and conference cost reporting is accessible on [the OVW website](#). Federal assistance awards are governed by the provisions of 2 CFR Part 200. Additionally, OVW awards are covered by [the DOJ Financial Guide](#).

Program Assessments

Grantees under this program are prohibited from using OVW funds to conduct research. Funds may be used to assess their work for quality assurance and program improvement purposes, which can include but is not limited to, surveying training participants about the quality of training content and

delivery or convening discussion forums with key stakeholders. Applicants considering such assessments must refer to the [DOJ/OJP decision tree](#) to ensure that the activity does not qualify as human subjects research. Find additional information on federal requirements related to assessments or surveys, in the [Application Companion Guide](#).

OCJS has made available a pool of academic researchers who are willing to provide technical assistance at no cost to those applicants who seek assistance in the planning, implementation, and/or evaluation of their proposed program. These researchers are part of the [Ohio Consortium of Crime Science \(OCCS\)](#), and their mission is to provide evidence-based solutions to the real-world problems faced by local criminal justice agencies. Please complete all components of your proposal and note in the Project Description whether you are considering requesting assistance from the OCCS, and if so, the type of assistance you would like to have. If your grant application is funded, once all pre-award conditions have been met we will direct you to complete the “Request for Assistance” form to begin the process to be paired with appropriate researchers in the field. For further information on the OCCS and the types of assistance they can offer, please go to the OCCS website.

Post Award Reporting Requirements

All VAWA subgrantees are required to submit an annual performance report referred to as the MUSKIE report. Subgrantees are required to report on any grant funded activity that occurred during the calendar year (January 1 – December 31). Project Directors listed on the application will be emailed specific reporting information as it becomes available. Failure to timely report may impact the amount or availability of future funding an organization is eligible to receive.

Civil Rights Compliance³

As a condition for receiving funding from OVW, recipients must comply with applicable federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Department of Justice (DOJ) regulation for the Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations. Depending on the funding source, a recipient must also comply with the nondiscrimination provisions within the applicable program statutes, which may include the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (“the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act”). Collectively, these federal laws prohibit a recipient of OVW funding from discriminating either in employment (subject to the exemption for certain faith-based organizations discussed below) or in the delivery of services or benefits on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability. In addition, recipients of OVW funding may not discriminate on the basis of age in the delivery of services or benefits.

As a condition of receiving funding, recipients also must comply with a nondiscrimination provision in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), as amended, that covers any program or activity funded in whole or in part by OVW. 34 U.S.C. § 12291(b)(13)(A). Under this provision, recipients may provide sex-segregated or sex-specific programming if doing so is necessary to the essential operation of a program (e.g., in the case of women’s safety), so long as the recipient provides comparable services to those who cannot be provided with the sex-segregated or sex-specific programming. Id. §

³ [FY 2026 Application Companion Guide](#)

12291(b)(13)(B).

Recipients of federal financial assistance, including subrecipients, are reminded that the denial of language assistance services can be evidence of discrimination on the basis of national origin or disability under certain circumstances. Applicants for OVW's grant programs also must include within their project budgets sufficient costs for providing interpretation and translation services to eligible individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) or explain how language access will be provided if grant funds are not needed for this purpose. This should include an explanation of other funds, services, or resources that the applicant has secured to provide language access.

Similarly, recipients are responsible for ensuring that their programs and activities are readily accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities. Applicants for OVW funding must allocate grant funds or explain how other available resources will be used to ensure access to their programs. This should include an explanation of other funds, services, or resources that the applicant has secured to provide access. Examples of how grant funds can be used include supporting American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services for Deaf or hard of hearing individuals or adaptive equipment for individuals with mobility or cognitive disabilities. For resources, see www.ADA.gov or contact OVW.

Supporting victim safety and recovery requires programs to be accessible to people with disabilities and those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, to provide language access to LEP individuals, to ensure that any sex-segregated or sex-specific services are comparable, and generally to serve all survivors free from discrimination.

For technical assistance on complying with the civil rights laws linked to the receipt of federal financial assistance from OVW, please contact:

Office of Justice Programs
Office for Civil Rights
810 7th Street NW Washington, DC 20531
202-307-0690
FAX: 202-616-9865
TTY: 202-307-2027

Americans with Disabilities

The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) is committed to ensuring equal access to assistance programs, information, and services, regardless of disability. OCJS understands some individuals with disabilities may need an accommodation in order to have access to or participate in OCJS programs or services. OCJS understands accommodations vary depending upon the needs of the individual. Therefore, accommodation requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For more information regarding accommodations, or to request an accommodation, please [email the Department of Public Safety's ADA Unit](#). Additional information regarding disability accommodations can also be found on the Privacy Notice and Policies page of the Department of Public Safety's website.

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) Proposal Narrative Components

ATTENTION: This solicitation is for grant funding that the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Safety & Justice Services (PSJS) administers on behalf of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services and that originates from the United States Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women. To continue program activities designed to maintain public safety services, PSJS will proceed with this solicitation, however, PSJS anticipates that new grant guidance may be issued in 2026 to reflect DOJ's revised policies and priorities. Updated DOJ guidance could impact terms and conditions and the availability of funding for any grants that are awarded from this solicitation. PSJS will share new grant conditions, guidance, and requirements with all grantees as they become available. In some instances, executed grant contracts may be revised or cancelled.

By submitting an application, the potential subrecipient understands that if awarded funding pursuant to this solicitation, the terms, the conditions, and the availability of continued funding are subject to future communications and guidance from DOJ.

Program Areas and Requirements

Applicants must select a relevant program area on the "Title Page" of the application for their project as listed below. The project scope must be eligible as defined within the federal statutory purpose areas, and applicants must specify the purpose area(s) that they are proposing to address within the project description. Applicants are also expected to refer to the [state's implementation plan](#) which defines the state's current priorities, goals, and objectives. The applicant must also include at a minimum the following elements within the project description for the program area selected.

VA 1 Training Requirements

- Identify training topics, speakers, audience, dates, and locations.
- Describe policies and procedures resulting from training.
- Identify evaluation instrument to determine training effectiveness.

VA 2 Enhancement Efforts Requirements

- Describe strategy to improve investigation and evidence collection.
- Describe domestic violence/sexual assault training for new law enforcement officers or prosecutors.

VA 3 Policy and Protocol Development Requirements

- Describe current policies and protocols.
- Identify how and when the proposed policy or protocol will be implemented.

VA 4 Data Collection and Communication Systems Requirements

- Identify whether project will develop a new system or update existing system.
- Describe technical, procedural, and organizational changes required.
- Identify staff for technical support after grant ends.
- Describe how data will be shared among agencies.
- **Personnel costs are unallowable; consultant costs are permitted.**

VA 5 Victim Service Programs and Visitation Centers Requirements

Victim Services

- Describe how project provides safety planning, legal advocacy and confidentiality for victims.

Visitation Centers

- Describe Visitation Center security, space, supervision, and hours of operation.
- Describe how often and what type of domestic violence training project staff receive.
- Demonstrate need/uniqueness of the service area.
- Describe procedures to address liability issues.
- Provide letters of participation from Court and Jobs and Family Services.
- Describe sources of referrals to the Visitation Center.
- Describe the target population.

VA 6 Stalking Programs Requirements

Law Enforcement

- Describe preventive/self-protection measures victims will receive.
- Identify how project will enforce foreign protection orders.
- Describe law enforcement training on various stalking issues, including laws, early intervention, stalking case monitoring, and lethality assessments.

Prosecutors

- Describe victim education to collect offender behavior evidence.
- Describe support for victims seeking protection orders.
- Describe training for prosecutors on laws and prosecutorial techniques for stalking cases.

Victim Service Providers

- Describe preventive/self-protection measures victims will receive.
- Describe support for victims seeking protection orders.
- Describe victim education on stalking issues.

VA 7 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) Requirements

- Identify training topics, speakers, audience, dates, and locations.
- Provide number of agency staff to receive SANE training, and their job responsibilities.

Problem Statement

Applicants should define, explain or clearly describe the problem or issue to be addressed, and its impact on the community. The application should clearly describe the nature and scope of the problem, including how it aligns with the definitions of identified goals, justifies the need for assistance, and relates the problem and the need for assistance to the scope of the Violence Against Women Act Grant Program. The development of the nature and scope of the problem should be data driven and the applicant will need to provide relevant state and local level data/statistics as well as agency statistics to document the problem addressed.

Applications will be evaluated on how clearly the following items have been responded to within

the narrative.

- Provide local data/statistics that show how the community/population you serve has been impacted by the scope of the problem. Responses should include:
 - Population size, location, geography
 - Relevant crime data and other documentation to support the need for specialized services (may include but not limited to local law enforcement data, court and prosecution data, and relevant agency data, for example number served with legal assistance, shelter and supportive victim service activities, waiting lists, etc.).
- Discusses both the short and long-term consequences for the community if the problem identified is not addressed. More specifically, the applicant should discuss what will happen to the community if the proposed project is not funded.
- Identify other resources in the community that are currently available to address the problem. Responses should:
 - Explain why existing resources are not sufficient to address the problem. If no resources exist, the applicant should discuss the gaps in services, and
 - Describe how the proposed project will help alleviate those gaps. Explain how the proposed project will help connect victims to any other community resources.

All projects must describe previous strategies related to outreach, collaboration, and partnerships. The discussion must also describe the population size and demographic characteristics for the population(s).

Project Description

Applicants should describe a plan of action that the proposed project will implement in order to address the identified problem discussed in the problem statement. The applicant must also define how the project fits within the state's implementation plan.

Applications will be evaluated on how clearly the following items have been responded to within the narrative.

- Clearly describe the proposed activities and approach (i.e., model or practice) to be taken given the nature of the problem to be addressed. The approach should seem logical given the characteristics and needs of the identified target populations.
 - Explain why the particular program model(s) or best practice was selected for implementation.
 - Provide a detailed discussion on the plan to implement the model(s) or practice that is evidence-based or grounded in best practices of the field. [Find more information on evidence-based practices.](#)
 - Discuss the evidence that the model(s) or practice chosen is (are) appropriate for the outcomes the program wants to achieve.
 - Note: Applicants that will be implementing lethality assessments or danger assessments must submit a copy of the tool with the application. **Submit the tool with the Collaboration Board Letters as an attachment.**

- Demonstrate how the applicant will implement the program in a way that incorporates the core elements of the chosen program model or best practice. Responses should describe:
 - How core services, components, and procedures are consistent with the evidence-based model or best practice utilized.
 - The necessary resources that are required to implement the approach or response outlined. The resources should be reasonable given the scope and detail of the identified approach.
 - Any data or information collected and reviewed to ensure that the program is being implemented consistently over time and across program participants.
- Describe how trauma informed services are provided for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking who may also be victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking is defined by the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel victims into performing labor or commercial sex acts. The vast majority of human trafficking victims also experience multiple forms of abuse, such as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, familial violence, and sexual assault. For example, victims of human trafficking may be in an intimate relationship and have children with their trafficker, who may use physical abuse as a mechanism to control and coerce the victim.⁴

Sustainability/Accomplishments/Obstacles

Applicants should describe a plan of action that the proposed project will implement in order to sustain the program activities discussed in the Project Description. Applicants should also describe previous accomplishments and obstacles that have been presented when carrying out similar activities that were discussed in the Project Description.

Applications will be evaluated on how clearly the following items have been responded to within the narrative.

- Explain the steps that will be taken to ensure [long-term program sustainability](#) (i.e. the ability for the program to maintain its services over time).
 - The applicant must demonstrate a commitment to the program by describing a plan for maintaining programmatic activities in the event that funding support from PSJS is ended.
- Describe any previous program accomplishments and how these accomplishments influence program activities.
 - If the current proposal is requesting funds for a continuation of programming activities, these accomplishments should be related to programming that was completed under previous funding.
- Describe any previous or ongoing programmatic obstacles or challenges and how they were addressed.

⁴ [The Intersection of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking. Center for Court Innovation.](#)

- If the current proposal is requesting funds for a continuation of programming activities, these obstacles should be related to programming that was completed under previous funding.
- Elaborate on collaboration with community resources and how various agencies and stakeholders have played a role in sustainability, accomplishments and obstacles.

Project Objectives

- Applicants should describe the outcomes or changes anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The achievement of the objectives should provide an outcome that reflects a measurable change for the target population due to the services offered by the program. [Go to the OCJS Grants Performance Objectives](#) and select two objectives that correspond with the application's program area.
- **Objectives should be defined to align with [the state's implementation plan](#) priorities.**
- Objectives must link to the problem statement and project description and must be consistent with the program area selected.

There are two types of objectives:

- Outcome objectives describe the measured changes (impact) that will occur as a result of implementing the proposed project.
- Process objectives (also known as "output") describe the "process" (activities/steps) that a program will implement.

Applications must provide two objectives, and at least one objective should be an outcome objective. Each objective should include performance indicators, baseline numbers from the previous year and data collection methods that further the goal of the selected Program Area.

Performance Indicator

Describe the evaluation method and performance indicator (measurement) tool that will be used to examine the change that will occur in the client base as a result of the services that the shelter/program provides.

The performance indicator should relate to each mandated objective.

Baseline

Include the result of past evaluations or results of data collection efforts (this is the baseline). If no attempts to evaluate services have been made to date (then the baseline is zero), indicate why this method of doing so proves to be the most effective.

Performance Data Collection

Discuss the procedures and strategies for collecting, analyzing, storing and reporting the data. This should include discussing how anonymity and confidentiality are maintained. The application will be evaluated on how effectively it:

- Clearly identifies project objectives (measure change as a result of implementing the proposed project). If the objective demonstrates a percentage of increase then indicate how the calculation is derived (i.e. 20% out of 25 individuals (5 individuals)).

- Tip: Be sure that using a percentage of increase makes sense, for example, 21% of 25 individuals is 5.25 which is not a “whole” person and not inclusive of the data to be demonstrated.
- Clearly identifies performance indicators (how you will measure that change, what instrument and/or tools are to be used, etc.)
- Clearly identifies any baseline data that exists from the most recent prior year of the project.

Timeline and Activities

Applicants should describe how the programmatic and grant administrative activities as well as the related outcomes and objectives will be reasonably achieved in the given project period. Applicants should present a timeline of activities that is comprehensive and well defined.

Applications will be evaluated on how clearly the following items have been responded to within the narrative.

- Specify **what** will be done, **who** (individuals and organizations) will do it, and **when** it will be accomplished. Responses should include:
 - Tasks and activities specific to the project and stated objectives.
 - Tasks and activities associated with Collaboration Board meetings.
 - Tasks and activities associated with PSJS reporting deadlines. To include:
 - Programmatic reports
 - Fiscal reports
 - Program deliverables that will be created and used throughout the project.
- The timeline of activities should be detailed, align with the project description and be clearly organized. Activities may be grouped together as daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly (divide into quarters), and annually.

Organization and Staff Capacity

Applicants should provide a comprehensive discussion of the history and accomplishments of the organization responsible for implementing the project. Identify any key staff that will be involved in the project, including the project director and other individuals who will be responsible for administering the grant and implementing the program.

Applications will be evaluated on how clearly the following items have been responded to within the narrative.

- Describe the mission of the agency that will serve as the subgrantee and/or implementing agency.
- Describe the capacity of the subgrantee and implementing agency’s ability to administer grants of similar size and scope.
 - Applicants should **identify/name** the specific grant programs and funding amounts that have been administered.

- Describe adequate resources available (i.e. personnel/staff, infrastructure to support additional program, computers, software, etc.) to implement the project as proposed.
- Identify key staff, including any volunteers and/or contracted staff that will be participating in the proposed project.
 - Include a description of qualifications, experience, education and training that support the role they will hold on the proposed project.
 - Explain the staff recruitment process and describe staff retention techniques.
 - Special detail should be provided as to those personnel who are identified in the budget.
 - Include a description of how the implementing agency works with contracted staff, including interpreter services, to maintain confidentiality of clients.
 - Pursuant to [O.R.C §4757.02\(B\)\(1\)](#): No person shall use the title "licensed professional clinical counselor," "licensed professional counselor," or any other title or description incorporating the word "counselor" or any initials used to identify persons acting in those capacities unless currently authorized under this chapter by licensure to act in the capacity indicated by the title or initials.
 - If advocates provide specialized services (e.g., legal or medical advocacy), please provide information on specific training they will receive. For example, legal advocates need to receive training on the unauthorized practice of law, protection order processes, victims' rights (including Marsy's Law) and other aspects of this role. All advocates are expected to receive an introductory 40-hour training offered by a state organization (e.g., OAESV, ODVN, OAG, etc.), training on victims' rights (including Marsy's Law) and information on new best practices or legal changes (e.g., Strangulation statute). If an advocate is credentialed, please note if it is through OAN or NOVA.
 - **OCJS may request proof of licensure or proof of completed training.**
- Discuss how successful completion of the project is realistic given the key staff implementing the project.
 - In cases where positions have not been filled, the applicant should clearly describe a reasonable approach and criteria to hire experienced and qualified staff.

Collaboration Board

Collaboration Boards provide leadership and direction and can help applicant agencies achieve project goals and objectives through a shared community vision. Collaboration Boards can allow for the sharing of resources to maximize capacity and project impact. Community task forces, steering committees, coalitions, working groups, advisory groups are samples of the types of Collaboration Boards that may be applicable for the project.

Collaboration Boards are comprised of the applicant agency representatives as well as various stakeholders from the community and include but are not limited to: Victim advocates from domestic violence, sexual assault and other agencies, children services, community organizations,

hospitals, law enforcement, the court system, prosecutors' offices, and representatives from underserved and culturally specific community-based organizations.

Programming targeted for schools, underserved and culturally specific populations should have appropriate representation on the collaborative.

The Collaboration Board must conduct meetings at least quarterly and keep minutes of discussion items.

The application must include a description of the collaborative effort between the applicant and the Collaboration Board, as well as how it relates to the proposed project. Referrals and requests for services does not equate collaboration.

Applications will be evaluated on how clearly the following items have been responded to within the narrative.

- Identify the organizations that will participate in the Collaboration Board that will be responsible for overseeing the project.
- Describe their roles and demonstrate their commitment to the project.
- The applicant may use an existing community board or group to provide oversight to the project and act in the capacity of the Collaboration Board.
 - **The Collaboration Board is not an agency's Board of Trustees or Advisory Board.**
- Current commitment letters are required from all representatives on the Collaboration Board (letters must specify and reference the proposed FY 2026 VAWA grant program).
- Describe the extent and nature of the collaborative effort and how the role and function of each organization will support the overall goal of the proposed project.
 - Partner agencies should be clearly linked with their role and function within the collaborative group.
 - Describe how the collaborative group will provide oversight of project goals and objectives.
- Provide details describing the management of the collaborative group.
 - Describe when quarterly meetings will be held, how members will be notified of upcoming meetings, and the process for distributing and maintaining records of minutes of meetings.
- FY 2026 VAWA Collaboration Board commitment letters must be submitted from each member agency and written on each member agency's letterhead.
 - Each letter must be current and must specify and reference the proposed FY 2026 VAWA grant program.
 - Each letter must describe the member agency's role and commitment to the proposed project.
 - Letters MUST be included as an attachment with the application.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary serves as a concise and accurate description of the proposed project and should not introduce new information. The information provided should serve as a summarized version of the overall application narrative.

Purpose Statement

The purpose statement should be clear and concise. It describes what the applicant is going to do, the population that is going to be served, how the project will be accomplished and why it is important. Information provided within the purpose statement is reported to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting system in response to FFATA legislation.

Problem Statement and Project Description

The applicant must provide a condensed version of the problem statement and project description and ensure activities, dates, data/statistics align with previously presented statement narratives.

Participating Agencies/Collaboration

The applicant must provide a detailed collaboration board list.

Budget Requirements

Describe any costs associated with implementing the program. Applicants should refer to [the OCJS Financial Budget Definitions Guide](#) for assistance with developing the budget and budget questions.

Applications will be evaluated on how clearly the following items have been responded to within the budget forms and narratives.

- Present a clear and detailed budget.
 - The budget forms **must** include **detailed** budget narratives that clearly explain and justify the budget information.
 - Costs **must** be determined reasonable in view of the types and range of activities to be conducted, the number of participants to be served, and the expected results and benefits.
- Clearly state how the match funds will be used and the source of the match funds.
- External Audit or Financial Report. Applicants are required to submit a copy of the organization's most recent external audit or most recent financial report with the application. This allows OCJS to ensure requirements are met for 2 C.F.R. § 200.331(f). Single Audit Act Amendment of 1996, and the OMB Circular A-133. The external audit or most recent financial report should be dated within the past 24 months.
- General Ledger. Applicants are required to confirm the ongoing active use of a general ledger defined as a complete record of all the financial transactions over the life of your organization. The general ledger holds all the information needed to prepare financial statements and includes assets, liabilities, equity (net asset), revenue and expenses.
- All costs associated listed in the grant budget must be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient performance and administration of the grant; be consistent with policies,

regulations, and procedures that apply uniformly to both Federal and state awards; and be allocable to the grant.

- **Unallowable costs for STOP VAWA** funds includes but is not limited to: direct payments to survivors, vehicle purchases/leases, security deposits, moving expenses, construction cost, renovation cost, billboard/advertising costs.
- [View Unallowable costs for OCJS](#)
- Specific cost limits exist for certain allowable costs including:
 - Lodging and meal per diem rates, which cannot exceed the rates set by the federal Government Services Administration (GSA). The rates can be found at [GSA Per Diem Rates](#).
 - Mileage rates, which cannot exceed the rates set by Ohio Budget Management (OBM). These rates can be found at [OBM Travel Rule](#).
 - Laptops, which cannot exceed \$1,250.
 - Cell phones, which cannot exceed \$600.
 - Gift cards for clients, which cannot exceed \$100.

Format and Submission

- If applying for a local project in Cuyahoga County, applications are submitted via email to Linda Jones at ldjones@cuyahogacounty.gov
- All parts of the proposal, as listed in the proposal components checklist, must be submitted at the same time. Proposal may not exceed twelve (12) pages. Format should be single-sided pages using Times New Roman 12-point font, double spaced, with one-inch margins. Required forms, including budget pages do not count as part of the twelve-page total.
- The deadline for submission is **August 20, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.** via email to the P.O.C. listed above. **Late applications will not be reviewed or considered for funding.** Failure to follow the specified requirements will also result in the application not being reviewed or considered for funding.
- **For technical assistance on any part of the VAWA application,** contact Senior Grants Coordinator, Linda Jones, at (216) 698-6463 or ldjones@cuyahogacounty.gov.

Proposal Components Checklist

ALL components within each section of the RFP must be addressed and clearly described. Use the following as a checklist to ensure all required components are addressed. Read the entire 2026 VAWA RFP before completing and submitting proposals.

Application Components:

- ☐ Title Page (Selection of program area)
- ☐ Problem Statement
- ☐ Project Description
 - ☐ Explain program model and best practices used
 - ☐ Explain lethality assessment used, if applicable
- ☐ Sustainability/Accomplishments/Obstacles
- ☐ Project Objectives
 - ☐ At least one objective should be an outcome objective
- ☐ Timeline and Activities
- ☐ Organization and Staff Capacity
- ☐ Collaboration Board
- ☐ Executive Summary
- ☐ Budget
 - ☐ 25% match is required for all subrecipients except non-profit victim service providers

Attachments:

- ☐ FY 2026 VAWA Collaboration Board Letters
 - ☐ Letters must specify and reference the proposed FY 2026 VAWA grant program on each agency's letterhead
- ☐ External Audit or Financial Report

(if applicable)

- ☐ Attachment A (non-profit service providers exempt)
- ☐ Delivery of Legal Assistance Certification (agencies providing legal assistance)
- ☐ Prosecutor Eligibility Certification (prosecution agencies)
- ☐ Lethality assessment (if used)

CUYAHOGA COUNTY
PSJ-1498
FY26 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
Insurance Requirements

Contractor shall procure and maintain for the duration of the contract insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of the work hereunder and the results of that work by the Contractor, his agents, representatives, employees or subcontractors.

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to be a waiver of defenses or immunities afforded to the County under applicable law.

MINIMUM SCOPE AND LIMIT OF INSURANCE

Coverage shall be at least as broad as:

- (a) **Worker's Compensation Insurance** as statutorily required by the State of Ohio.

For Contractors with employees working outside of Ohio, Worker's Compensation Insurance as required by the various state and Federal laws as applicable including Employers' Liability coverage with limits of no less than \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury or disease.

- (b) **Commercial General Liability Insurance** with limits of liability not less than:

\$2,000,000 each occurrence bodily injury & property damage;
\$2,000,000 personal & advertising injury;
\$2,000,000 general aggregate;
\$2,000,000 products/completed operations aggregate.

Such insurance shall be written on an occurrence basis on the Insurance Services Office (ISO) form CG 00 01 or its equivalent. If a general aggregate limit applies, either the general aggregate limit shall apply separately to this specific project/location (ISO CG 25 03 or 25 04) or the general aggregate limit shall be twice the required occurrence limit. This policy must include coverage for Sexual Abuse and Molestation in the same amount (\$2m) aggregate and at least \$1m per occurrence. This must be explicitly noted on the Certificate of Insurance.

(c) **Professional Liability Insurance/Errors & Omissions Liability Insurance** appropriate to the contractor's profession providing coverage for claims arising out of the provision of design, architectural, engineering, consultants, counselors, medical professionals, legal and/or **other** professional services with a limit of liability not less than:

\$2,000,000 per occurrence;
\$2,000,000 aggregate.

(d) **Cyber Risk Insurance** for **all** vendors. This coverage shall respond to privacy and network security liability claims with limits of liability not less than:

\$1 million per occurrence;
\$1 million aggregate.

Coverage shall be sufficiently broad to respond to the duties and obligations as is undertaken by vendor in this agreement and shall include, but not be limited to, claims involving security breach, system failure, data recovery, business interruption, cyber extortion, social engineering, infringement of intellectual property, including but not limited to infringement of copyright, trademark, trade dress, invasion of privacy violations, information theft, damage to or destruction of electronic information, release of private information, and alteration of electronic information. The policy shall provide coverage for breach response costs, regulatory fines and penalties as well as credit monitoring expenses.

Insurance Coverage Terms and Conditions

1. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to be a waiver of defenses or immunities afforded to the County under applicable law.
2. All insurance policies of the Contractor required for this Contract shall:
 - (i) Provide that, for each insurance policy provided above, coverage shall not be canceled except with notice to the County of Cuyahoga.
 - (ii) Name The County of Cuyahoga, its officers, officials, employees, and volunteers as additional insureds with respect to liability arising out of work or operations performed by or on behalf of the Contractor including materials, parts, or equipment furnished in connection with such work or operations. This provision shall apply to all insurance policies evidenced by the Contractor except for Workers' Compensation.
 - (iii) Be primary and non-contributory as respects the County of Cuyahoga, its officers, officials, employees, and volunteers for any claims

related to the work or operations of the Contractor under this contract. Any insurance or self-insurance maintained by the County of Cuyahoga, its officers, officials, employees, or volunteers, shall be excess of the Contractor's insurance and shall not contribute to Contractor's insurance. This provision shall apply to all insurance policies evidenced by the Contractor except for Workers' Compensation.

(iv) Grant the County of Cuyahoga a waiver of any right to subrogation which any insurer of said Contractor may acquire against the County of Cuyahoga by virtue of the payment of any loss under such insurance.

(v) Provide the County of Cuyahoga with a Certificates of Insurance evidencing policy coverage as well as reference to and provide evidence (via physical policy endorsement) that each of the terms and conditions identified in Sections 2. (ii) through 2. (iv) have been met by the Contractor and their respective insurer(s) by providing proof of Additional Insured, Primary and Noncontributory, and Waiver of Subrogation via policy endorsements.

3. The insurance required for this Contract shall be provided by insurance carrier(s) licensed to transact business and write insurance in the state(s) where operations are performed and shall carry a minimum A.M. Best's rating of A-VII or above, or a state regulated captive also licensed to transact business and write insurance in the state(s) where operations are performed
4. The terms of this Contract shall be controlling and shall not be limited by any insurance policy provision.
5. These insurance provisions shall not affect or limit the liability of the Contractor stated elsewhere in this Contract or as provided by law.
6. The Contractor shall require any and all of its subcontractors to procure, maintain, and pay premiums for the insurance coverages and limits of liability outlined above with respect to products, services, work and/or operations performed in connection with this Contract. Any deviation from the above insurance requirements shall require prior approval from the County of Cuyahoga Risk Management.
7. The County reserves the right to require insurance coverages in various amounts or to modify or waive insurance requirements on a case-by-case basis whenever it is determined to be in the best interest of the County.
8. If the Bid/Proposal/RFQ specifies the need for higher limits of liability for any applicable insurance provision, the Bid/Proposal/RFQ specifications shall govern.
9. Where coverages are made on a claims-made basis the claims-made retroactive date on the

policy shall be prior to the commencement of professional activity related to this Contract. Where Commercial General Liability is claims-made policy such General Liability policy shall provide coverage for claims arising out of the incidents that occur during the policy period, regardless of when claims are reported.

- a) The Retroactive Date must be shown and must be before the date of the contract or the beginning of contract work.
 - b) Insurance must be maintained, and evidence of insurance must be provided for at least five (5) years after completion of the contract of work.
 - c) If coverage is canceled or non-renewed and not replaced with another claims-made policy form with a Retroactive Date prior to the contract effective date, the Contractor must purchase "extended reporting" coverage for a minimum of five (5) years after completion of work.
10. The Contractor shall furnish a Worker's Compensation Certificate and Certificate of Insurance evidencing the insurance coverages required herein are in full force and effect.
11. Acceptance of a non-conforming certificate of insurance by the County shall not constitute a waiver of any rights of the parties under this Contract.
12. The Certificates of Insurance evidencing the above coverage shall contain the following language or equivalent where applicable:

"Cuyahoga County and its officers, officials, employees and volunteers, are included as additional insureds on a primary and non-contributory basis with respects to each of the insurance policies referenced within this certificate of insurance except for Workers' Compensation. A Waiver of Subrogation is granted in favor of Cuyahoga County and its officers, officials, employees and volunteers with respect to each of the insurance policies referenced within this certificate of insurance. Any applicable Umbrella or Excess Liability policy referenced within this certificate of insurance shall follow form to the underlying Commercial General Liability, Commercial Automobile Liability and Employer's Liability policies referenced within this certificate of insurance and not contain exclusionary language restricting coverage afforded within the underlying insurance policies."
13. Proof of Additional Insured status from Contractor's Commercial General Liability policy must be evidenced in the form of an endorsement to said policy and be at least as broad as ISO Form CG 20 10 11 85, or through the combination of the CG 20 10, CG 20 26, CG 20 33, or CG 20 38 endorsement; and CG 20 37 endorsement if a later edition is used.
14. Cyber Liability and Professional Liability Insurance shall cover third-party claims.