



2016 VOCA Competitive Request for Applications Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Q: Can we use locally awarded funds which originally have federal sources (CSBG, ESG, etc.) as cash match?

A: No. You cannot use federal funds that were passed through another agency as match for the VOCA grant program. Please ensure that if you are receiving funds from a state agency and wish to use it as cash match, verify that the source is non-federal.

Q: Can the full 20% match be completed with volunteer hours?

A: Yes. Your entire match can be met with volunteer hours. Please ensure that your agency maintains and properly tracks the volunteer's time and services provided.

Q: For current VOCA grantees, may we request additional grant funds to increase salaries for our current staff members?

A: Yes, this would be an allowable expense but justify the increases by describing how your VOCA-funded program will benefit from the increases in salary.

Q: As a current VOCA subgrantee, if we were to receive this additional funding, would we be required to complete programmatic reports for two awards?

A: Where possible, we will combine your programs into one award to reduce the number of reports required. If that is not possible, you will have to complete a separate report for each award.

Q: We currently have two VOCA grants for our agency. Can we apply for a competitive grant for each program separately?

A: Yes. If they are separate programs, they should be separate. Please ensure that you clearly describe how additional funding will enhance your current program.

Q: If a single program in our agency addresses multiple priority areas (ex: sexual assault, DV, and culturally specific communities) and the information provided is the same, would it be best to submit one application?

A: That is possible if the programs cannot be separated. If they are distinct programs, there should be separate applications.

Q: Do we only submit the competitive proposal if we wish to increase/enhance services, or does everyone that receives a VOCA grant have to submit a competitive proposal?

A: No, you do not have to submit a competitive RFP. This competitive application is optional and separate from the continuation award.

Q: How do current VOCA recipients apply for continuation funding?

A: The 2016 VOCA Continuation RFP will be released on CJCC's website on July 8, 2016 and will be due on August 8, 2016.

Q: Do we only include the increased/enhanced services in our proposal and budget or do we include the entire program in the competitive proposal?

A: The detailed budget and narrative should address the increased/enhanced services. You may need to refer to your current programs in the narrative to put the increased/enhanced services in context.

Q: Would a Safe Haven program be appropriate for VOCA funding?

A: Safe Haven programs support supervised visitation and safe exchange options for families with a history of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and stalking. It is possible - but only for the direct services provided to victims of crime.

Q: Could children in foster care and receiving supervised visits qualify for VOCA funds as a victim?

A: It is possible but please note that VOCA funds cannot be used for supervised visitation if the offending caregiver is participating.

Q: If awarded additional VOCA funds in the competitive cycle, will it be combined into our existing VOCA award or will it become separate continuation funding?

A: The funding awarded via these applications will result in a 12-month award that will be continued for 2 additional 12-month periods for a total of 3 years (assuming continued compliance with grant conditions, etc.). If federal funding remains consistent, it is possible that funding will continue longer than that. Where possible, we will combine the award with your existing award to reduce reporting requirements, etc.

Q: There were several references to the "Federal Partners" made during the workshop. Who are the Federal partners?

A: Our federal partners comprise various agencies within the Department of Justice, including the Office for Victims of Crime and the Office of the Inspector General.

Q: Can fundraising income be used as match on the VOCA grant?

A: Yes, but keep in mind that proceeds from a fundraiser must be used on items that are allowable under VOCA if you wish to document those expenses as match. If cash is used for an expense that is not reimbursable under VOCA, then it cannot be used as match.

Q: Is food during support groups allowable under VOCA for victims?

A: Food during support groups would not be allowable as this would constitute a meeting. Food is generally only allowable for shelter residents or in emergency situations to meet the immediate needs of victims.

Q: If we currently have a VOCA grant and use volunteer hours to meet that match, can those same hours be used to meet the match if awarded a grant through this application?

A: No, a volunteer hour can only be submitted as match once. It is allowable to split your total volunteer hours among your various grants but these hours cannot be duplicated.

Q: Can you define what a “Crime Victim” is? Is it necessary for the crime victim to report the crime in order for us to serve them? Many victims do not report the crimes committed against them.

A: For the purpose of the VOCA crime victim assistance grant program, a crime victim is a person who has suffered physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm as a result of the commission of a crime. No, they do not have to report the crimes for VOCA funding but it may be required if seeking benefits from Victim Compensation.

Q: Is document shredding allowable under VOCA?

A: Yes, it is allowable if that is required to provide direct services to crime victims.

Q: If we needed a vehicle to transport clients to doctor's visits, job sites, etc. would this funding pay for a vehicle?

A: No, we cannot purchase vehicles with VOCA funds. The draft of the new VOCA regulations have indicated that the purchase of vehicles are unallowable.

Q: Our shelter has a confidential physical address to protect our clients. Do we have to provide our physical address or can we provide our mailing address?

A: The application will ask for both your agency’s physical and mailing address. All physical addresses provided to CJCC will remain confidential.

Q: What is difference between public presentations (allowed expense) and crime prevention (unallowable expense)?

A: VOCA funds may be used to support presentations that are made in schools, community centers, or other public forums, and that are designed to identify crime victims and provide or refer them to needed services. Specifically, activities and costs related to such programs including presentation materials, brochures, and newspaper notices can be supported by VOCA funds. VOCA funds cannot be used for activities exclusively related to crime prevention activities and educations presentations.

Q: Are we to submit a one year budget or a three year budget with our VOCA application?

A: The budget that will be submitted with your application should only be for one year.

Q: Our agency is moving to a new office space. Would renovation expenses be allowable if the new office space is not satisfactory in its current state?

A: Generally, no. However, renovation expenses may be allowed if the purpose of the renovations is to make the space ADA accessible.

Q: Who is responsible for completing the Subgrant Expenditure Reports?

A: Any staff member may complete the SERs or budgets but this person would need to be able to answer any questions about the grant.

Q: Is there a range or recommended grant request amount that we should keep in mind?

A: We have not limited the amounts that can be applied for.

Q: If we exist in one county but serve clients from many counties, should we list all their counties or just the one with a physical presence?

A: We understand that no agency will turn a victim away if they request your services but only list the counties where you market your services.

Q: Under types of services provided, do we check only the ones for which we are applying for VOCA funding or do we select all the service we provide, even those funded through other sources?

A: You may list all of the services provided by your agency regardless of funding.

Q: What documentation is required from a subgrantee to make the case for a higher volunteer hourly rate?

A: You will need to submit documentation justifying the value for the position (this can be researched online by searching 'value of volunteer time'). You will also need to submit credentials/resumes for the volunteers for some roles such as attorneys, accountants, etc. if they are providing those professional services on a volunteer basis.

Q: Can match funds from our current VOCA grant be used as match funds for both grants?

A: No, each matching dollar can only be used one time. You cannot use the same dollar as match for multiple programs.

Q: If we want to enhance our current services but create new programs as well, would that require two apps?

A: Yes, you would need to submit 2 applications.

Q: To be eligible as match, do volunteers need to be provide direct service to victims? I had been told by prior administrators that we could not use volunteer hours from individuals that volunteer by offering grounds and maintenance work or technical work so that we can continue providing services effectively to the victims.

A: If the volunteer services are essential to providing direct services to victims, the expenses are allowable.

Q: If we are not yet LVAP 5% certified can we still apply while we are working on getting that certification?

A: Yes, agencies without certification may apply for funding; however, the agency must complete certification requirements prior to being awarded VOCA funds. To ensure certification is granted in a timely manner, agencies without certification must apply for certification by July 31, 2016.

Q: Where is the budget template located on the CJCC website?

A: The Detailed Budget Worksheet is located attachment section of the VOCA funding announcement on CJCC's webpage: <http://cjcc.georgia.gov/funding-opportunities>

Q: If this is a new program, do the MOU's need to be signed and submitted with application or just unsigned copy?

A: If MOUs are submitted with your application, they must be signed.

Q: What about food for victims who attend court for trial?

A: No, VOCA funds cannot be used to purchase foods for victims attending court.

Q: Who should be designated as the "Authorized Official" for the VOCA grant?

A: This person must be the executive director of a state agency, chairperson of the county Board of Commissioners, mayor, or chairperson of the City Council. For nonprofit organizations, the Authorized Official must be the Board Chair.

Q: Can we provide VOCA sponsored food packages for persons exiting our shelter?

A: No.

Q: Are the costs associated with conducting a training for volunteers Victim Advocates (trainer, venue, etc.) allowable for a CASA?

A: Yes, these would be allowable expenses as they are necessary to providing services to the victims.

Q: Should the Budget Detail worksheet be in excel or word?

A: Your budget must be submitted in the excel format. You may also submit an additional document in Word format if you would like to provide additional detail that the excel format will not allow you to include.

Q: Are any administrative services allowable under the grant?

A: The only administrative services that are allowable under the VOCA grant would be time spent completing VOCA and CJCC required reports, such as Subgrant Expenditure Report(SERs), VSSRs, OPMs, etc. Please note that whomever is completing these allowable administrative functions must keep track of their time.

Q: Does a specific person need to be the Financial Officer; and does the Financial Officer need to be the one to complete the budget and the Subgrant Expenditures Reports (SER)?

A: Yes and No. If you are a state or local government agency the Financial Officer must be the chief financial officer of the applicant agency such as the county auditor, city treasurer or comptroller. If your agency is a Non Profit agency, the Financial Officer should be the person in your agency responsible for the accounting and record keeping of the grant funds or the person responsible for providing oversight over the organizations financial Activities. For example, the Board Treasurer, Chair of the Finance Committee, or a staff accountant. The Financial Officer does not have to complete the budget or SER but should provide continuing oversight of the grant funds.

Q: I see vehicle purchase is not allowed - but what about vehicle lease?

A: Yes, leasing a vehicle would be allowable. However you will still be required to maintain a travel log for the vehicle and support documentation to ensure that the vehicle is being used only for direct victim services.

Q: Would someone who recruits and trains CASA volunteers be an allowable staff position?

A: Yes, this would be allowable as this position is essential to serving the children in the CASA.

Q: In requesting funds for support of adding mental health services to both a Domestic Violence and Child Advocacy Center program, could VOCA funds be used for victims who would not be eligible for these services under the Victim's Compensation program?

A: Yes, VOCA funds may be used for mental health services such as counseling and therapy.

Q: Since this is not the continuation of our current grants, should this application only address the new funds requested in respect to the budget worksheet and how this will help the agency?

A: Yes, but you may need to discuss your current programs in your narrative to put the new services into context.

Q: I've been told a portion of rent for a CASA office can be covered? Does it make a difference if it we're purchasing the office? Would a portion of the mortgage payment be allowable?

A: VOCA funds cannot be used to purchase an office or make mortgage payments.

Q: Under unallowable cost it states "relocation expenses." Does this include bus tickets/gas cards to relocate DV victims to another shelter or a safe location?

A: VOCA funds cannot support relocation expenses for crime victims such as moving expenses, security deposits on housing, ongoing rent, and mortgage payments. However, VOCA funds may be used to support staff time in locating resources to assist victims with these expenses.

Q: If we do not yet have a SAM number, would you still recommend applying for VOCA considering that the processing of the SAM number application might not be complete by the end of July?

A: Yes, you may still apply for the VOCA grant while awaiting approval of your SAM number. Supporting documentation should be included with your application showing that you have completed the documentation needed to receive your SAM number. Please note that you will not be able to drawdown federal funds until your SAM application has been approved. To ensure your SAM registration is completed in a timely manner, agencies who are not currently registered must apply for registration by July 31, 2016.

Q: Can you provide additional details about using office space as in-kind rent and what would be needed for that justification.

A: Office rent is an allowable expense under the VOCA grant program. In order to claim this expense, you must determine the square footage devoted to direct victim services and obtain an appraisal from a licensed appraiser. A contractual agreement between the third party donor and the recipient should also be submitted.