



# ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY

---

300 W. Adams Street • Suite 200 • Chicago, Illinois 60606 • (312) 793-8550

*This document will be updated weekly*

## VOCA LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR CRIME VICTIMS

### RESPONSES TO APPLICANT QUESTIONS

#### Questions regarding eligibility

1. Q: What kind of organizations are eligible to apply for the new funding for legal services. Is it only open to legal services agencies? Or is it also open to victim service agencies hoping to add legal services to their programs?

A: We have outlined the eligibility requirements on pages 14-15 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. In brief, eligible applicants include public agencies and nonprofit organizations, whose primary mission is the provision of legal assistance services through the use of attorneys. If a victim service agency doesn't currently focus on the provision of legal services, then it is not eligible. Eligible applicants without a history of providing victim services must enter into a collaborative working relationship with a victim service provider within the community to be served. This partnership can include funding to support a victim advocate position to work with the legal service agency to support the crime victims.

2. Q: Some of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs in the state feel they might qualify under this category so I wanted to reach out to see if this is the correct category for CASA. If not, could you please let me know what category CASA will be under and when the RFP is expected to be released?

A: ICJIA did not intent to fund CASAs under this NOFO. Please keep an eye on our website for future announcements.

3. Q: Is a state university law school eligible to apply for funding a project at one or more of its community based clinics?

A: Yes

4. Q: Our agency provides immigration legal services to victims of domestic violence through Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) accredited staff. We do not have lawyers on staff, every client is served by a highly qualified BIAS-accredited representative and regularly utilizes the expertise of attorneys working in the field. Are we eligible to apply for this NOFO?

A: The NOFO is eligible to agencies that provide legal assistance through attorneys. Please see our website for future NOFOs.

### State Regions Questions

5. Q: The NOFO states that applicants may apply for up to \$800,000 of the six million dollars. It is not clear if an organization may have more than one application with the total exceeding \$800,000.  
A: Organizations may submit one application per regional category. Multi-region is a unique category.
6. Q: How many applications will be selected for Cook County?  
A: The NOFO outlines that we hope to fund a minimum of one applicant per region and did not identify a maximum.

### Program Design and Services Questions

7. Q: Will there be another application that covers other services to victims of violent crime such as our current crime victim compensation project?  
A: Assistance with victim compensation paperwork is an allowable VOCA expense under this NOFO.
8. Q: Please define victim advocate.  
A: For the purposes of the CLS NOFO, a victim advocate position can complete the following activities, though this list is not comprehensive:
- providing legal advocacy in the criminal and civil court such as obtaining, modifying, or extending, or enforcing temporary and emergency orders of protection, stay away/no contact orders, and elder and child abuse petitions.
  - assisting victims in identifying their needs, facilitating access to those services and providing emotional support
  - assisting victims in securing rights and services from other agencies; locating emergency financial assistance, intervening with employers, creditors and others on behalf of victim; assisting in filing for losses covered by public and private insurance programs; accompanying victim to the hospital; etc.
  - assisting victims in filing victim compensation applications and subsequent procedures
  - assisting in childcare respite care to enable a victim to attend activities related to criminal justice and other public proceedings arising from the crime
  - providing transportation directly or through a paid service to ensure victims can access services.

This position requires completion of any mandatory trainings. For domestic and sexual violence, there is a 40 hr training. Other victim group trainings are varied

and it is the responsibility of the organization to ensure that the staff person receives the appropriate training.

9. Q: Can we assist crime victims that fall outside of the five victim areas outlined in the NOFO?  
A: No, this application is restricted to the five victim areas listed in this NOFO.
10. Q: How much detail is required in the letter of commitment?  
A: The letter of Commitment should include each party's roles and responsibilities as well as a regularly meeting interval to ensure program coordination.
11. Q: If you are an agency that has provided legal services to victims of DV does that make you an agency with a history of providing victim services?  
A: The applicant should clearly articulate any previous history of victim services.
12. Q: Are the specific goals/outcomes listed in the RFP the only ones we are able to report on? Do we need to put all the goals listed in the application even if the number is zero?  
A: There are additional reporting metrics from the Office of Victims of Crime that will be shared during the grant initiation process. Please keep the chart intact and type NA if it is not applicable.
13. Q: How flexible are the outcome projections? If we said we were going to serve X clients in one category, but do not reach that goal while exceeding another goal, will that reflect negatively on our program?  
A: Applicants should make reasonable yet ambitious projections. Grantees will be able to explain progress and challenges in the quarterly reports.
14. Q: Is representing crime victims at compensation hearings an allowable activity under this grant funding?  
A: Yes, it is an allowable under this NOFO. Applicant should explain the need for the specific services and outline the time spent on them.
15. Q: Can we represent the parents of a child sexual assault victim in obtaining help for the parent/family? For example, divorce from the abuser or a custody order against the abuser?  
A: Yes, as long as the legal action stems from the victimization.
16. Q: Does intervention with administrative agencies include representing clients before DHS and SSA (public benefits issues)?  
A: Yes as long as it is reasonable and directly resulting from victimization.

17. Q: If 95% of our services are in one region and 5% are statewide, should we apply just for Cook County? Or should we apply for multi-region?  
A: Cook County
18. Q: The application requires the availability of non-attorney legal advocates and these may be provided via domestic violence program partners. However, it is unclear whether such services if provided by a partner are to be reported and what data is needed. Is there the expectation of contracting with all domestic violence and sexual assault centers in each region? Will there be funding for these entities to apply for funds separately for non-attorney legal advocates? We have close to 25 different dv/sa organizations in our service areas and doing subcontracts will all could be very challenging and difficult to manage if data reporting of their work is needed.  
  
A: First, the NOFO states that the client must have access to a victim advocate. Victim advocates provide personal (not just legal) advocacy to eligible clients who receive services from a VOCA-funded attorney. The victim advocate direct services will be reported via the quarterly data reports. There is no expectation that the applicant will contract with ALL domestic and sexual violence centers in the region. The NOFO outlines that the client must have ACCESS to a victim advocate. The applicant should propose a program that meets all NOFO requirements while attending to their specific needs. In a large multi-county region(s) it is conceivable that a legal assistance organization may work with more than one victim service organization. The NOFO does suggest a coordinator position to assist in managing this. Please refer to the ICJIA website for more information regarding additional VOCA funds.
19. Q: During the information sessions today, you stated that an attorney and an advocate must be assigned to each victim's case. Does this mean that we cannot ask for dollars to fund supportive positions, i.e. legal aid case managers, intake staff, etc.?  
A: Your additional staffing is allowable as long as they are justified.

#### Budget Questions

20. Q: Will ICJIA be allowing requests for waiver of the 20% match?  
A: The Match Waiver is approved by the Office of Victims of Crime on a case by case basis.
21. Q: Is rental office space for the VOCA funded position a direct cost?  
A:
22. Q: Medical insurance varies by the type of coverage- if it is single or family. The budget form doesn't seem to permit this variability. Should we just use the highest cost rate?

A: Please use an average cost. Be sure to explain this in the budget narrative be sure to include the calculation for the insurance costs.

23. Q: Do we need to get sole source for contracts with domestic violence programs?

A: Yes.

24. The Webinar slides clarify that the supplantation rules do not apply to non-profits. However there is also info that says information presented in the webinars is not binding on ICJIA. Since we have had many discussion and issues related to seeking funding for existing staff positions, it is unclear how much we should address supplantation in the application if we are a non profit.

A: If they are a non-profit organization, they do not have to address supplanting in their application. However, applicants must still provide all required information (i.e. including funding sources) in their staffing plan.

25. Q: We have a current VOCA grant that run through September 30<sup>th</sup>. How should we address this in our proposed budget?

A: If selected under this NOFO, any current VOCA grant will be canceled so that only one VOCA funded grant is running at a time. The NOFO Application should take into consideration all current programs and positions now funded with VOCA funds.

#### Miscellaneous Questions

26. Q: Should the applicant create a file name (i.e. budget narrative) for each file that is emailed?

A: Section D2 outlines how to label and submit the documents. All documents should be saved with the appropriate document title, for example "Proposal Narrative", and then included as an attachment in the submittal email.

Documents that require a signature as part of submission should be downloaded, completed, printed, signed, scanned and saved as a PDF document. Save the scanned document under the name of the document. The scanned and properly labeled PDF document should be included as an attachment in the submittal email.

27. Q: I noticed today that there is a mandatory webinar, but the registration for it is closed. Would it be possible for us to still watch the recording of the webinar, and thereby submit a grant application?

A: The March 6<sup>th</sup> Comprehensive Legal Services Webinar Recording is now posted here at: <http://www.icjia.state.il.us/sites/required-webinar>

If you did not attend the March 6<sup>th</sup> webinar, please watch the recording and certify that you have done so. This will ensure you have met this mandatory requirement. Answers to any questions posed during the webinar will be posted on the webpage ASAP. And remember the last day to ask questions is March 24<sup>th</sup>. Until then, please send questions to [cja.grantsunit@illinois.gov](mailto:cja.grantsunit@illinois.gov). Thank you.