

Handout #6

STATE OF ARKANSAS

OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL SERVICES



Department of Finance and Administration

1515 West Seventh Street, Suite 400
Post Office Box 8031
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-8031
Phone: (501) 682-1074
Fax: (501) 682-5206
<http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joint Performance Review Committee

FROM: Doris Smith, Administrator *DS*

DATE: October 24, 2022

SUBJECT: Discussion of DFA's Management of Victims Justice Assistance Funds

DFA is the State Administering Agency for VOCA and other victims' services grants with required oversight to ensure compliance with federal rules, regulations, and guidelines. The Office of Intergovernmental Services administers the following Victims Justice Assistance federal grants in accordance with relevant federal and state regulations and guidelines. The funding sources are:

- Department of Justice (DOJ) Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- Department of Justice (DOJ) Violence Against Women Act (STOP/VAWA)
- Department of Justice (DOJ) Sexual Assault Services Program – these funds are passed through to the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ACASA) via a subgrant
- Department of Health and Human Services – Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), FVPSA-
- ARPA Supplemental Funds and
- FVPSA-ARPA Sexual Assault Services Funds.

(See Attachment 1 for a full preview of the Funding Sources and Purposes of the Victims Justice Assistance grants administered by DFA/IGS.)

SUMMARY OF ISSUE

The VOCA grant has decreased annually since 2018. However, requests for funding have increased significantly each year. The 2021 applications received by DFA/IGS for VOCA funding was approximately \$35M. Compared to subgrants awarded in 2020 totaling \$27.5M, requests for funding increased by over \$7.5M (or about 25%). Due to the limited VOCA funding available, all applicants were asked to cut their application's **requested budget** by 40% initially; ultimately, the final cut was around 32%. 2021 subgrants awarded to service providers totaled \$25.6M – which was a decrease of around \$1.9M from the 2020 level – a 7% reduction.

The following is a timeline of relevant events relating to 2021 cuts in VOCA subgrants:

February 26, 2021: RFP/Application period opened online with a deadline of April 9 for submission. Included in the RFP is a request for applicant organizations to submit a sustainability plan for continuance of services in the absence of federal funds. See attachment 2 RFP Sustainability Plan and Table of Content of the RFP.

- March 2021:** DFA/IGS received notification of a pending decrease in the VOCA grant from Department of Justice (DOJ), however, only estimates were given at that time as the actual state allocations had not been finalized.
- March 16, 2021:** DFA/IGS held a meeting with the Advisory Body and informed them of the pending decrease, among other items of discussion.
- July 14, 2021:** Once DOJ allocations were finalized, notices sent regarding initial reduction percentages for budgets requested in the applications. Final reductions to **requested budgets** were lower than anticipated. The reduction request was for the applicants to reduce their 2021 requested amounts. (See Attachment 3 for Letter to Applicants)
- October 2021:** Subawards were made to a total \$25,655,575.27; a difference of \$1,925,671.12 over the prior year.
- 2022** 2022-2023 is a continuation year for applicants which is an abbreviated process. Due to the available VOCA funding and the need to reserve a portion of funding for the 2023-2024 awards, applicants were again asked to make reductions to their existing budgets. The letter sent to applicants allows for them to determine where cuts are applied – while identifying specific areas to target. (See Attachment 4 for notice letter).
- October 2022:** 2022-2023 subgrants are expected to be between \$18-20M once finalized. VOCA's annual awards are not sufficient to continue this level of demand unless the federal award increase tremendously or another source of funding is applied.

The 2022 VOCA award is slightly higher than the 2021 award at \$13,194,602 (5% of which is allocated to administration costs). This federal award was received during September 2022. The 2022-2023 subgrant awards are still being finalized.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (FVPSA) – ARPA 1 Supplemental Grant

FVPSA funding is not a direct substitute for the VOCA shortfalls. FVPSA ARPA is a one-time grant award. The FVPSA federal program is governed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) which has its own regulations and guidelines regarding use of funds. The total award was split equally between existing shelter recipients to be used for one-time costs. See Attachment 5 for a list of FVPSA ARPA-1 recipients.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (FVPSA) –SEXUAL ASSAULT ARPA-2

Again, FVPSA funding is not a direct substitute for VOCA shortfalls. FVPSA ARPA-2 is a one-time grant award. For FVPSA ARPA-2 program funds, a plan was developed by IGS and submitted to DHHS for review and approval. DHHS reviewed and approved the plan; IGS has implemented the ARPA-2 plan as approved by DHHS. See Attachment 6 for a copy of FVPSA ARPA-2 Plan.

ACASA is included in the federally approved plan and was awarded a large portion of the ARPA-2 funds. ACASA is a coalition of voluntary member organizations; not all sexual assault service providers are members of the coalition.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT (VOCA)

VOCA Historical Funding

The chart below depicts funding and sub granting activity over the past few years. The federal grant has decreased annually since its high of \$30.6M in 2018. Conservative spending through 2018 allowed for reserve balances to build. When subgrant funding was around \$17M, there was approximately 2.5 years' worth of funding on reserve. However, there was a large spend out in 2019. The carryover of unspent funds made it possible to issue subgrants at a much higher level in 2019.

	Federal Award	Reserve for Admin Cost	Available for Subgrants	Subgrants Awarded
2017	17,130,890.00	856,544.50	16,274,345.50	\$12,598,703.77
2018	30,601,737.00	1,530,086.85	29,071,650.15	16,808,631.73
2019	20,780,140.00	1,039,007.00	19,741,133.00	36,151,111.61
2020	15,424,391.00	771,219.55	14,653,171.45	27,581,246.39
2021	9,726,874.00	486,343.70	9,240,530.30	25,655,575.27

The high level of spending in 2019 included approximately \$18M in funding that was expiring at the end of the grant cycle. However, the additional \$18M in spending depleted our residual (carryforward) fund balance to a level that could not sustain future spending at the same level. Combined with the **continued** decreases in the annual VOCA award since 2018, the only option remaining was to cut spending.

In short, expectations and dependency far exceed what the federal VOCA grant will support. Unless and until additional monies are directed toward these organizations from other sources, the cuts are absolutely required in order to realign spending with available VOCA funding. This means looking at every budgeted line item within the subgrants and determining where cuts can occur.

Executive Directors pay is one area explicitly excluded per the VOCA guidelines – with the exception that only the portion where executive directors provide direct victim services is allowed. This was proposed in 2021 in the initial cycle of cuts and imposed with the 2022 cuts to get spending to a more manageable level. See Attachment 7 for the Federal VOCA Guidelines Regarding Executive Director Pay.

Grant Funds Allocation Procedures

IGS has always employed a methodology which include the following:

- **Spend old monies first** – so subgrants issued to organizations are normally funded from prior years grants, including unspent carryover monies from previous subgrants. This ensures proper spend down before federal authorization expires.
- **Maintain a supportable level of spending** (total subawards issued) so that we leave enough residual funds to support the same (or near the same) level for the next year's subgrants.

- Last if, after applying the two approaches above, there are still unused monies that will expire soon – **issue one-time subgrant awards to be used for one-time spending**. These subgrants are not to be incorporated into the recipients ongoing operations need as this increased level of spending would not be sustainable from future awards.

ARPA Funding Request

IGS requested supplement from the State ARPA Fund in October 2021. Funds were not provided at that time. However, a few of the VOCA-funded organizations did receive direct approval for ARPA funds in 2021.

- Women and Children First – \$1,754,107 for one year.
- Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ACASA) – \$6,290,000 over 3 years
- Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ACADV) \$8,280,000 over 3 years
- Ozark Rape Crisis - Approved for \$374,896 over 3 years

In November 2021, IGS requested and reviewed the applications obtained from the ARPA Steering Committee for the organizations above and determined the following:

- Based on ACASA's planned activities for the ARPA funds, there was duplication of services compared to those activities funded by the subgrant award issued from DFA/IGS, which began October 1, 2021.
- Based on ACADV's planned activities for the ARPA funds, there was a partial duplication of services compared to those activities funded by subgrant award issued from DFA/IGS, which began October 1, 2021.
- The other two organizations were found to have ARPA projects that were unrelated to their federally funded project.

Applicants are required to disclose all sources of funding in their applications to IGS for Victims Justice Assistance grants. ARPA funding was not disclosed in the applications of these organizations as required.

DFA/IGS notified both parties of the potential duplication in services. Both adjusted their subgrants to eliminate the duplication of services.

IGS has again requested funding from ARPA in the recent months. This request is currently being considered.

Coordination with Advisory Body

Meetings with the Advisory Body are held routinely, particularly during the RFP solicitation year. Meetings regarding the anticipated change in VOCA funding was held in March 2021 (see the timeline above).

The Advisory Body is invited to review applications submitted for funding via DFA/IGS online grants management system (IGS Connect).

Workshops are also held during the open application year to interested applicants. A notice of Important Dates and Deadlines and other resources are provided as part of the RFP process on DFA/IGS website to assist those applying.

Quarterly spending reports are posted to DFA/IGS webpage.

Grants Manager - National Recognition

Debbie Bousquet is the Grants Manager for the Victims Justice Assistance grants. She has served in this role over 20 years and has worked with the VJA programs even longer. Ms. Bousquet has been recognized on several occasions by federal and national partners for the work she has done with these grants. At the request of the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), Ms. Bousquet currently serves as a mentor to new VOCA administrators nationwide. She also serves as a board member for the National Association of Violence Against Women Administration (NAVAA).

In 2018, DFA/IGS underwent an extensive audit of the VOCA programs and administration of those funds by the U.S. Office of the Inspector General. There were no major findings. DFA/IGS received recognition at the National VOCA Conference in 2019 for our performance in administering the VOCA awards.

Under Ms. Bousquet's leadership and foresight, DFA/IGS has administered the VJA grants in a manner that implements cuts when absolutely needed to avoid a complete funding cliff to service providers.



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

Office of Intergovernmental Services

1515 West Seventh Street, Suite 400

Post Office Box 8031

Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-8031

Phone: (501) 682-1074

Fax: (501) 682-5206

<https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/intergovernmental-services>



DFA-IGS

The Office of Intergovernmental Services administers the following federal funding sources in accordance with each of their federal guidance and guidelines. The funding sources are:

- Department of Justice (DOJ) – Office for Victims of Crime (OVC): Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- Department of Justice (DOJ) – Office of Violence Against Women: Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution (STOP)
- Department of Justice (DOJ) – Office of Violence Against Women: Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)
- Department of Health and Human Services – Administration for Children & Families: Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), FVPSA-ARPA Supplemental Funds and FVPSA-ARPA Sexual Assault Services Funds.

FUNDING SOURCE PURPOSES:

VOCA:

The goal of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victims Assistance funding is to improve the treatment of victims of crime by providing victims with the assistance, support, and services necessary to aid their restoration after a criminal act, and to support and aid them as they move through the criminal justice process. States and territories shall use funds to support eligible crime victim assistance programs that provide direct services to crime victims.

STOP:

Activities supported by this program are determined by statute, federal regulations, and OVW policies.

Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 10441(b), funds under this program must be used for one or more of the following purposes:

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 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including the appropriate use of nonimmigrant status under subparagraphs (T) and (U) of section 101(a)(15) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)).
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 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
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 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, as well as the appropriate treatment of victims.

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 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
5. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening victim services and legal assistance programs, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking programs, developing or improving delivery of victim services 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 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
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 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
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 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
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 older and disabled women who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling, and other victim services to such older and disabled 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.

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:
 - a. 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;
 - b. notifying persons seeking enforcement of protection orders as to what responses will be provided by the relevant law enforcement agency;
 - c. referring persons seeking enforcement of protection orders to supplementary services (such as emergency shelter programs, hotlines, or legal assistance services); and
 - d. 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, 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:
 - a. 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;
 - b. 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
 - c. 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, and any subgrantee of such an agency, shall (1) receive specialized training, on an annual basis, from domestic violence and sexual assault nonprofit organizations on the topic of incidents of domestic violence committed by law enforcement personnel and (2) provide a report to the Department of the protocol(s) adopted in connection with the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Protocol Program, including a summary of progress in implementing such protocol(s), once every two years. 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, and ensure that all subgrantees satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

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. 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.
18. 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 of the United States Code.
19. Developing, enhancing, or strengthening prevention and educational programming to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, with not more than 5 percent of the amount allocated to a state to be used for this purpose.
20. Developing, enhancing, or strengthening prevention and educational programming to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, with not more than 5 percent of the amount allocated to a state to be used for this purpose.

FVPSA

Family Violence Prevention Services Act funds are designed to assist states in their efforts to support the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of programs and projects to: 1) prevent incidents of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence; 2) provide immediate shelter, supportive services, and access to community-based programs for victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, and their dependents; and 3) provide specialized services for children exposed to family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, including victims who are members of underserved populations (45 CFR 1370.10(a)).

FVPSA funds awarded to sub-recipients shall be used for, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provision of immediate shelter and related supportive services to adult and youth victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, and their dependents, on a regular basis, including paying for the operating and administrative expenses of the facilities for such shelter (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(A));

- Assistance in developing safety plans and supporting efforts of victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence to make decisions related to their ongoing safety and well-being (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(B));
- Provision of individual and group counseling, peer support groups, and referral to community-based services to assist family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence victims, and their dependents, in recovering from the effects of the violence (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(C));
- Provision of services, training, technical assistance, and outreach to increase awareness of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence, and increase accessibility to services (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(D));
- Provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(E));
- Provision of services for children exposed to family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, including age-appropriate counseling, supportive services, and services for the non-abusing parent that support that parent's role as a caregiver, which may, as appropriate, include services that work with the non-abusing parent and child together (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(F));
- Provision of advocacy, case management services, and information and referral services concerning issues related to family, domestic, or dating violence intervention and prevention, including the following: 1) assistance in accessing related federal and state financial assistance programs; 2) provision of legal advocacy to assist victims and their dependents; 3) provision of medical advocacy, including referrals for appropriate health care services (including mental health, alcohol, and drug abuse treatment), but not to include reimbursement for any health care services; 4) assistance locating and securing safe and affordable permanent housing and homelessness prevention services; 5) provision of transportation, child care, respite care, job training and employment services, financial literacy services and education, financial planning, and related economic empowerment services; and 6) provision of parenting and other educational services for victims and their dependents (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(G)); and
- Provision of prevention services, including outreach to underserved populations (42 U.S.C. 10408(b)(1)(H));

FVPSA-ARPA-1

ARP Allowable Use of Funds Guidance: States and Tribes

Prevent – Activities that assist domestic violence survivors by providing supportive services, shelter options, and supplies, which will reduce the exposure and risk of COVID-19.

- Outreach and education to local domestic violence programs and tribes on strategies that reduce COVID-19 transmission, using existing materials where available. Please note that grantees are expected to use materials from federal agencies and/or local public health departments.
- Dissemination of educational materials and resources to local domestic violence programs and tribes on precautions to prevent, contain, or mitigate COVID-19 and other respiratory

illnesses. Please note that grantees are expected to use materials from federal agencies and/or local public health departments.

- Provision, on a regular basis, of immediate shelter and related supportive services to adult and youth victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, and their dependents, including paying for the operating and administrative expenses of the facilities for such shelter; o These FVPSA supplemental funds can be used to provide temporary refuge in conjunction with supportive services in compliance with applicable state or tribal law or regulations and includes:

- Housing provisions including assistance locating and securing safe and affordable permanent housing and homelessness prevention services;
- Rental subsidies;
- Temporary refuge or lodging in individual units such as apartments (which is not required to be owned, operated or leased by the program);
- Safe homes; and
- Hotel or motel vouchers.
- Provision of prevention services, including outreach to underserved populations to increase access to domestic violence services and reduce the exposure and risk of COVID-19; and
- Strengthening of partnerships with local and state public health authorities, local and state human services agencies, emergency services managers, health care providers, housing and homelessness services, culturally specific community-based organizations, tribes, and domestic violence programs to improve emergency operations and related outcomes for victims and their dependents.

Respond – Activities and technical assistance for ensuring the continuity of domestic violence services during the COVID-19 public health crisis which includes responding to issues including adapting to fluctuating needs and circumstances. Please note that the provision of remote services continues to be an allowable activity:

- Provision of services, training, technical assistance, and outreach to increase awareness of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence and increase the accessibility of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence services;
- Provision of advocacy, case management services, and information and referral services concerning issues related to family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence intervention and prevention, including—
 - (i) Assistance in accessing related federal and state financial assistance programs;
 - (ii) Legal services and other advocacy to assist victims and their dependents in navigating court processes, including, but not limited to, restraining orders, child custody, eviction, and domestic violence-related firearm removal;
 - (iii) Medical advocacy, including provision of referrals for appropriate health care services (including mental health and substance use services), but which shall not include reimbursement for any health care services;

- (iv) Assistance locating and securing safe and affordable permanent housing and referrals to homelessness prevention services;
 - (v) Provision of transportation, childcare, respite care, job training and employment services, financial literacy services and education, financial planning, and related economic empowerment services;
 - (vi) Parenting classes and other educational services for victims and their dependents; and
 - (vii) Advocacy to assist victims in safely and effectively navigating human services systems and processes, including, but not limited to child welfare and child support enforcement services.
- Provision of direct crisis intervention services, including counseling, mobile advocacy, telehealth, peer support, and in-person assistance. Mobile advocacy allows for advocates to work out in the community in order to support domestic violence survivors wherever it is safe and convenient for the survivor.

Prepare – Activities that include assessing needs of survivors during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Activities that provide training, information, and assistance necessary to ensure the continuity of domestic violence services. Assessing the capacity of local domestic violence programs' and tribes' emergency operation plans and plans to address the needs of survivors and reduce the exposure and risk of COVID-19. Please note that the provision of remote services continues to be an allowable activity.

- Assessment of the capacity of agencies, local domestic violence programs, and tribes to provide continuity of domestic violence services, including emergency operations plan and plans to address increasing service demands, remote services operational capacity, potential provider closures, and staff unavailability due to illness, caretaking, or other reasons related to the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- Reviewing, updating, and/or implementing emergency operations plan and plans to address increasing and/or shifting service demands, remote services operational capacity, potential provider closures, and staff unavailability due to illness, caretaking, or other reasons related to the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- Activities to build capacity to provide core shelter and supportive services through flexible and survivor-centered approaches that are adaptable to changing program, community, and survivor needs (e.g., mobile advocacy, flexible funding, non-congregate sheltering options);
- Development of safety plans, and supporting the efforts of victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence to make decisions related to their ongoing safety and well-being during the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- Provision of individual and group counseling, peer support groups, and referral to community-based services to assist family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence victims, and their dependents in recovering from the effects of violence during COVID-19 public health emergency;
- Provision of services for children exposed to family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, including age-appropriate counseling, supportive services, and services for the non-abusing parent that support that parent's role as a caregiver, which may, as appropriate, include services that work with the non-abusing parent and child together, during the

COVID-19 public health emergency. Please note that the provision of remote services would be an allowable activity; and

- Enhancement of capacity to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services during COVID-19 public health emergency and address racial disparities exacerbated by the public health emergency.

FVPSA-ARPA2

The purpose of the ARP Grants to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault is to 1) assist with the transition to virtual/remote services for rape crisis centers, sexual assault programs, tribal programs, and culturally specific programs that provide crisis services, support services, and assistance to survivors of sexual assault, and 2) support the increased emergency needs of sexual assault survivors as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

All ARP Grants to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault provide flexibility in how recipients use the funding to support a range of in-scope activities including counseling, mobile advocacy, telehealth, teletherapy, peer support, temporary housing, rental assistance and nominal relocation expenses, supplies, equipment, and software to assist in carrying out virtual services. All activities listed must align with each recipient's program narrative and budget. If necessary to meet the emergency needs of survivors and increased demand for services resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency, the ARP Grants to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault may be used to purchase supplies needed to continue to safely and adequately staff and operate rape crisis centers during the COVID-19 public health emergency. In addition, the ARP Grants to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault may be used to increase the workforce or sustain the current workforce needed to safely staff and operate rape crisis centers during the COVID-19 public health emergency. This list is not exhaustive, as there may be other allowable uses of funds consistent with the operation of virtual services and meeting the emergency needs of sexual assault survivors in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Recipients of the ARP Grants to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault may implement subawards to programs whose primary purpose is to provide direct intervention and related assistance to victims of sexual assault inclusive of, but not limited to rape crisis centers, sexual assault programs, tribal programs, culturally specific programs, LGBTQ+ organizations, and such programs within underserved communities.

DFA-IGS submitted a subgrant and spending Plan to FVPSA for review and approval as required. (See Attached ARPA-2 Plan)

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES PROGRAM (SASP)

Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 12511(a)(1), funds under this program must be used for one or more of the following purposes:

To provide intervention, advocacy, accompaniment, support services, and related assistance to:

1. Adult, youth, and child victims of sexual assault.
2. Family and household members of such victims.

3. Those collaterally effected by the victimization, except by the perpetrator of such victimization.

Specifically, funds under the SAS Formula Program must be used to support the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of rape crisis centers and other nongovernmental or tribal programs and projects to assist individuals who have been victimized by sexual assault, without regard to the age of the individual. See 34 U.S.C. § 12511(b)(1).

SAS Formula grants shall be used by states and territories to provide grants to rape crisis centers and other non-profit, nongovernmental organizations or tribal programs for programs and activities that provide direct intervention and related assistance. The term "rape crisis center" means a nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organization, or governmental entity in a state other than a territory that provides intervention and related assistance to victims of sexual assault without regard to their age. In the case of a governmental entity, the entity may not be part of the criminal justice system (such as a law enforcement agency) and must be able to offer a comparable level of confidentiality as a nonprofit entity that provides similar victim services. See 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(25). Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 12511(b)(2)(C), intervention and related assistance may include:

1. 24-hour hotline services providing crisis intervention services and referral.
2. Accompaniment and advocacy through medical, criminal justice, and social support systems, including medical facilities, police, and court proceedings.
3. Crisis intervention, short-term individual and group support services, and comprehensive service coordination and supervision to assist sexual assault victims and family or household members.
4. Information and referral to assist the sexual assault victim and family or household members. Community-based, culturally specific services and support mechanisms, including outreach activities for
5. underserved communities. Development and distribution of materials on issues related to the services described in numbers 1 through 5

This office issues Request for Proposals (RFP's) every two (2) years, whereby eligible applicants submit proposals for services. In 2021, three (3) RFP's were issued statewide for the following:

- FVPSA Specific Services
- STOP/VAWA
- VOCA

INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET IS THE 2021 VOCA REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

2

VOCA
Request for Proposals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	<u>AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS ANNOUNCEMENT</u>	3
II.	<u>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</u>	4
	Resources	9
III.	<u>APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS</u>	10
	Eligibility	10
	General Requirements	16
IV.	<u>IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES</u>	19
V.	<u>GRANT APPLICATIONS INSTRUCTIONS</u>	20
	Applications Forms	20
	Authorized Official Contact Information	20
	Project Summary	20
	Project Narrative	23
	Financial Overview	25
	Goals & Objectives	26
	Employee Detail Form	26
	Project Budget & Budget Narrative	28
	Submitting the Application	29
VI.	<u>APPLICATION REVIEW & DETERMINATION PROCESS</u>	30

EVALUATION PLAN

It is of the utmost importance that these grant-funded projects demonstrate an achievement of the purpose for which the funds were requested. It is equally important to be able to determine that if the project is unable to achieve its intended purpose, what necessary changes need be made to the project design to ensure its success. To accomplish this, all proposals must contain a clearly written evaluation plan. Good evaluation plans are closely tied to the program's proposed goals and objectives and should answer the following questions:

- Did the project accomplish its projected outcomes?
- How do we know this? What data supports this claim?
- Did we achieve the objectives in an efficient and measurable manner?

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Federal funds are provided as a **temporary** means to accomplish specific goals. These federal funds should therefore be administered in a manner that ensures long-term sustainable activities. Applicants must devise a plan to continue services in the absence of federal funds.

This section provides the applicant an opportunity to "sell" their project as a wise investment. A complete response will describe the organization's sustenance, a plan to continue its benefits without the need for continual federal support, and the time frame needed to achieve sustainability. Be sure to describe any modifications in the project which may be needed as a result of decreased funds.

The organization's submitted sustainability plan will be reviewed and included in the Special Conditions section of the sub-grant agreement if the project is funded.

Financial Overview

Project Title: List the name to the project/program for which you are requesting funding.

Organizational Fiscal Year End: List the month and day in which the applicant's fiscal year ends.

Questions 1 – 5: Answer the questions about the applicant's financial practices.

Funding Source: List all revenue sources and amounts for the entire organization during the proposed project's fiscal year (October – September). Governmental entities provide a listing of revenues for the department under which the proposed project will operate. If additional lines are needed, click the **Save** button.

Click the **Save** button after all questions on this page have been answered.



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

Office of Intergovernmental Services

1515 West Seventh Street, Suite 400

Post Office Box 8031

Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-8031

Phone: (501) 682-1074

Fax: (501) 682-5206

<https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/intergovernmental-services>

MEMORANDUM

TO: 2021 VOCA APPLICANTS
FROM: Debbie Bousquet, Program Manager
DATE: July 14, 2021
RE: AVAILABILITY OF VOCA FUNDING

In February 2021, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration – Office of Intergovernmental Services (DFA-IGS) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Victims of Crime Act Funds (VOCA) in the amount of \$13 million dollars for subgrants to organizations which serve crime victims. In response, DFA received 124 applications totaling more than \$34 million in requests. Although the response was incredible, available VOCA funds will not support the proposals at the requested levels.

In the past three (3) years the amount of VOCA funds to the state has dramatically decreased. In 2018, the state received \$30 million in 2019 \$20,780,140; and in 2020 we received \$15,424,391 from the VOCA fund. In 2021, it is anticipated that the state will receive approximately \$10 million from the VOCA fund. During this same period, the number of subgrantees has grown considerably.

As a result of the decrease in VOCA funding and to ensure two years of sustainability if the 2022 funding remains flat, VOCA applicants must reduce their submitted budgets by forty percent (40%). DFA-IGS understands that a 40% reduction in program budgets will mean a reduction in services provided; thus, we strongly encourage applicants to prioritize direct services to victims in their revised budgets. Also, applicants should revisit the submitted program narrative and revise this section as needed to reflect changes. Final changes will be made during the Consultation process with your Grants Analyst/Coordinator as additional adjustments may be necessary.

DFA-IGS understands decreased funding creates significant challenges in victim services programming; however, these changes are necessary to sustain services over the next year with the hope that VOCA funding will increase in the near future.

We look forward to working closely with you during the Consultation process. Your Grants Analyst will be in contact with you to schedule your consultation.



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

Office of Intergovernmental Services

1515 West Seventh Street, Suite 400

Post Office Box 8031

Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-8031

Phone: (501) 682-1074

Fax: (501) 682-5206

<https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/intergovernmental-services>

METHODS OF REDUCING APPLICATION BUDGETS



The methods below will be the priority DFA-IGS will use to reduce requested budgets to ensure funding limits are not exceeded. Please assist by considering these priorities as you review and revise your request for funding.

1. **Removing the position of Executive Director (ED) from every budget.**
Because priority is given to direct victim services, the ED position will be eliminated from the budget to ensure funding is available for direct services.
2. **Only one subgrant per organization from VOCA funds.**
To ensure that DFA-IGS funds as many organizations as possible to provide the widest array of victim services.
3. **Support Services positions to be funded at no more than 10 hours per week**
Positions other than the ED which provide support services for the VOCA grant can be supported with grant funds for time spent performing administrative duties for the VOCA grant
4. **If a position is not identified in the "Project Narrative" as having a pertinent role in carrying out service delivery functions to victims, it should be removed from the application budget.**
All positions listed in the application's budget should be described in the application's Project Narrative. Refer to page 24 – "Project Activities" and page 28 "Project Budget & Budget Narrative" in the VOCA Request for Proposals (RFP)
5. **No request for purchase or lease of vehicles will be approved.**
The drastic reduction in VOCA funding prohibits DFA-IGS' ability to support the purchase or lease vehicles for sub-recipients.

ARPA -1 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS

CASA Women's Shelter
Compassion's Foundation, Inc
Crisis Intervention Center
Domestic Violence Prevention, Inc.
Families In Transition, Inc.
Family Violence Prevention Inc. - Safe Haven
Family Violence Prevention Inc. - Taylor House
Grant County Unified Resource Center
Haven of Northeast AR
Lonoke County Safe Haven
Margie's Haven House
Northwest AR Women's Shelter
Options, Inc.
Ouachita Children's Center
Peace At Home
Restoration of Hope
River Valley Shelter
Saline County Safe Haven
Samaritan Outreach, Inc.
Sanctuary, Inc.
Second Chance Shelter
Serenity, Inc.
Stone County Abuse Prevention, Inc.
The Family Center
The Safe Place, Inc.
Turning Point, Inc.
White County Domestic Violence Prevention, Inc.
Women and Children First - ~~WCS~~
Women's Crisis Center of South AR



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

Office of Intergovernmental Services
1515 West Seventh Street, Suite 400
Post Office Box 8031
Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203-8031
Phone: (501) 682-1074
Fax: (501) 682-5206

<https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/intergovernmental-services>



2022-2023 DFA-IGS FUNDING PLAN

Over the past three (3) funding years, federal funding to the states for victim services has been on a sharp decline. VOCA funding to the State of Arkansas has decreased from a high \$30.6 million in 2018 to \$9.72 million in 2021. STOP and FVPSA funds received by the state have also been in decline during the same time period, but just not as much as VOCA. The continued reduction in funding created a situation where DFA-IGS was forced to cut funds to subgrant organizations by 35% during the last funding cycle. Last Fall, Congress passed legislation (VOCA FIX) that was designed to fix issues with the VOCA Fund and increase payouts to the states. Unfortunately, the plan will not significantly impact state budgets for another 2-3 years.

With the continued reduction in federal funds, DFA-IGS has reviewed multiple options for supporting services. In an effort to support as many victim service providers across the state as possible, DFA-IGS is proposing the following funding plan for the 2022-2023 funding year.

The plan includes, but is not be limited to the following:

- Removing all Executive Directors and Administrative staff from subgrant budgets - By removing these positions, only the positions providing direct services to victims are funded; further VOCA regulations specifically disallows Executive Directors.
- Trimming Travel and Training
- Trimming hourly rates to actual rates paid (see subgrant budgets) - Some budgets contain hourly rates that are higher than the rates that are actually paid, according to paystubs.
- Trimming Insurance rates to actual rates according to supporting documentation submitted with reimbursement requests.
- Removing all "Place Holder", these are line items that do not have significant purpose to the project.

Agency officials are encouraged to begin reviewing their current year grant budget to determine which line items can be trimmed back so that the reduction in funding will have as minimal an impact on the delivery of services to survivors as possible. DFA-IGS staff will reach out to each agency to schedule a consultation time where proposed changes to the budget will be discussed along with a discussion of your organizations goals & objectives for the upcoming year. It is strongly encouraged that agencies included their Authorized Official in these

consultations. Agencies will be required to sign off on all proposed changes to the budget, as well as a draft budget before the subgrant agreement process is finalized.

This proposed process and cuts is not a punitive action towards any agency, but as a means to adjust to the funding limitations we now face. Victim services needs far outweighs the financial support that can be provided. With your continued support and assistance, the State of Arkansas can ensure that its survivors of crime have access to high quality victim service programming that provides them with the support and encouragement needed to overcome their victimization.

Sarina Webb - Analyst	Sarina.Webb@dfa.arkansas.gov	(501) 682-5150
Brian Lawson - Coordinator	Brian.Lawson@dfa.arkansas.gov	(501) 683-2539
Margaret Pace -Coordinator	Margaret.Pace@dfa.arkansas.gov	(501) 682-5021
Lisa Breeding - Coordinator	Lisa.Breeding@dfa.arkansas.gov	(501) 682-3766
Tamiya Howard – Analyst	Tamiya.Howard@dfa.arkansas.gov	(501) 682-4723
Vestas Green	Vestas.Lea- Green@dfa.arkansas.gov	(501) 683-1685
Debbie Bousquet-Grants Manager	Debbie.Bousquet@dfa.arkansas.gov	(501) 682-5266

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely



Debbie Bousquet
Grants Manager

III. UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of this subpart, no VOCA funds, or other funds used as Match to the VOCA award, may be used to fund or support the following:

1. ***Lobbying***—Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (*cf.* 18 U.S.C. 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly.
2. ***Research and studies***—Research and studies, except for project evaluation under section II.C.10. “Project evaluation”.
3. ***Active investigation and prosecution of criminal activities***—The active investigation and prosecution of criminal activity, except for the provision of victim assistance services (*e.g.*, emotional support, advocacy, and legal services as described under section II.A., “Allowable Direct Services and Costs”) to crime victims, during such investigation and prosecution.

Witness notification, expert witness fees or time for VOCA-funded staff to testify, victim/witness protection costs, questioning of victims and witnesses, preparation of testimony, and participation in grand jury are all examples of unallowable costs under VOCA. Additionally, VOCA funds cannot pay for transportation, meals, lodging, or interpretation services for a victim who is also a witness.

4. ***Fundraising***—Any activities related to fundraising, except for fee-based, or similar, program income authorized by CVSSD.

This includes VOCA-funded personnel performing fundraising activities. For example, volunteer coordinators who coordinate or organize fundraising events should not be charging these activities to VOCA.

5. ***Capital expenses***—Capital improvements; property losses and expenses; real estate purchases; mortgage payments; and construction (except as specifically allowed in section II.C. “Allowable Costs for Activities Supporting Direct Services”).

Mortgage expenses, whether they are for office space, shelter, or emergency services for victims, are unallowable.

6. ***Compensation for victims of crime***—Reimbursement of crime victims for expenses incurred as a result of a crime, except as otherwise allowed by other provisions described in section II. “Allowable Costs and Services”.

Examples of expenses that are not allowed under VOCA include, but are not limited to, insurance deductibles, stolen property replacement, funeral expenses, and medical bills.

VOCA funds also cannot be used to restore the financial losses suffered by victims of fraud.

7. ***Medical care***—Medical care, except as otherwise allowed by other provisions described in section II. “Allowable Costs and Services”.
8. ***Salaries and expenses of management***—Salaries, benefits, fees, furniture, equipment, and other expenses of executive directors, board members, and other administrators (except as specifically allowed elsewhere in section II. “Allowable Costs and Services”).
9. ***Criminal Defense and Tort Actions***—Any costs related to criminal defense and tort actions.
10. ***Prison Costs***—Any prison costs, such as prison guard salaries or administrative expenses.
11. ***Pet Food & Vet Bills***—pet food or vet bills except as otherwise allowed by other provisions described in section II.A.3. “Mental health counseling and care”.
12. ***Costs Incurred outside the Project Period***—Any costs that are incurred either before the start of the project period or after the expiration of the project period.
13. ***Food and Beverages at Meetings, Conferences, and Trainings***—No purchase of food and/or beverages for any meeting, conference, training, or other event, except when:
 - a. Sustenance is not otherwise available (e.g., extremely remote areas);
 - b. The size of the event and nearby food/beverage vendors would make it impractical to not provide meals and/or refreshments; or
 - c. A special presentation at a conference requires a plenary address where there is no other time for sustenance to be obtained.

These food and beverage restrictions do not apply to:

- a. Water provided at NO cost (the restriction does apply to any and all other refreshments, regardless of the size or nature of the meeting or event); and
- b. Direct payment of per diem amounts to individuals in a travel status under your organization’s travel policy.

Any exceptions to the purchase of food and/or beverages for any meeting, conference, training, or other event due to the circumstances outlined above require prior approval from CVSSD. If an exception is approved by CVSSD, the following restrictions will apply: