Chapter 1 Pre Award Requirements

The Victim Assistance Section of the Iowa Attorney General's Office typically awards victim service and training & technical assistance grant funds on a three-year grant cycle (Oct 1-Sept 30 of each year). The victim service funds have been awarded pending appeals for FY2027-2029 (7/1/2026-09/30/2029). The criminal justice grant funds have changed to a four-year cycle. The criminal justice funds have been awarded pending appeals for FY2027-2030 (7/1/2026-09/30/2030). A request for proposals is typically released roughly one year in advance of the start of the new three-year grant cycle. This chapter outlines the processes and requirements to obtain victim assistance grant funds.

All grants are submitted through the Iowa Department of Justice Grants Management system at https://iowadoj.intelligrants.com/. Click on Iowa DOJ GMS Grantee Manual for the instructions on how to navigate in the system.

Grants for Victim Services

The Section is designated with the responsibility of administering state and federal funding allocated for helping victims of violent crime. Iowa Code sections 13.31, 236.16, and 236A.16; and Iowa Administrative Code 61—9.50. Every three years, unless otherwise directed by the Victim Assistance Board, the Section administers a competitive grant application process. IAC 61—9.53.

The Section administers two types of grants:

1. Competitive grants**.** Applications for a competitive grant "will be awarded based on the availability of funds, history and demonstration of quality of services provided, compliance with the requirements of the section, number of victims served or other statistical data deemed useful by the program to demonstrate successful and cost-effective use of awarded funds, population served, and geographical distribution of funds across the state. A preference shall be given to continued funding of agencies and programs that have demonstrated success." IAC 61—9.53(1).
2. Focus grants. These are discretionary funding awards, requiring approval from the section chief and deputy attorney general for the criminal division. "Funds utilized for focus grant applications must comply with all applicable state and federal rules and regulations. The award total of focus grant applications from one funding source may not exceed 3 percent of the funds available from the source in one fiscal year." IAC 61—9.53(2).

Eligibility Requirements

Grant Eligibility

1. Funds will only be awarded to agencies which "provide victim services, justice support to victims of crime, training, community education, crime prevention, or technical assistance to victim service providers and allied professionals. Awarded funds shall not be used to supplant other available or mandated funds." IAC 61—9.56.
2. The applicant for funds must be "a local or statewide government agency or a public or private nonprofit organization, or combination thereof, IAC 61—9.51 and 9.56(1).
3. Services provided to victims shall include but are not limited to crisis intervention, civil and criminal court advocacy and support, group and individual follow-up counseling, transportation, and information and referral. IAC 61—9.56(2).
4. "An applicant providing services to victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and other violent crimes must also provide or arrange safe shelter or housing for victims and their children when needed at no cost to the victims." IAC 61—9.56(3).
5. "An applicant providing services to victims of sexual abuse must also provide support to victims at the time of an evidentiary sexual abuse examination." IAC 61—9.56(4).
6. "The applicant shall promote within the community a coordinated public and private effort to assist crime victims." IAC 61—9.56(5).
7. "The applicant shall be an equal-opportunity employer and provide services on an equal-opportunity basis." IAC 61—9.56(6).
8. "The applicant shall comply with applicable federal and state statutes and rules, all requirements specified in the grant between the section and any funding source, and all requirements set forth in the funding application or any other contractual document." IAC 61—9.56(7).
9. "The applicant shall assist victims in seeking state crime victim compensation benefits." IAC 61—9.56(8)
10. "The applicant shall have a grievance procedure established for victims, employees, and volunteers." IAC 61—9.56(9).
11. "The applicant shall ensure that all employees and volunteers of crime victim centers providing direct services to victims are trained as victim counselors as defined in Iowa Code section 915.20A." IAC 61—9.56(10).
12. "The applicant shall provide services within the geographical service area without regard to a victim's ability to pay." IAC 61—9.56(11).
13. "An existing program must document results of prior program activities demonstrating that the needs of victims have been met." IAC 61—9.56(12).
14. An applicant wishing to apply for victim services funding is not required to have a unique entity identifier (UEI); however, organizations who receive direct federal grants must have one. UEIs are free and are issued by the federal System for Administrative Management (SAM). To obtain a UEI, visit SAM.gov. It takes approximately 2 to 3 weeks to obtain a UEI.
15. Organizations or persons who have been notified they are suspended or debarred by the federal government cannot do business with the federal government. Those entities are published on SAM.gov. Causes for suspension or debarment include fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery, falsification of records, tax evasion, or other acts that violate federal regulations. For more information, go to General Services Administration website.
16. If not already a registered organization in Iowa Department of Justice Grants, at least one person from the organization must be a registered user. For more information, go to the grants management system and follow the instructions to register.
17. New and returning applicants must update their profile in Iowa Department of Justice Grants. Profile pages are found by clicking on the down arrow next to the username in the upper right corner of the screen.
18. The applicant must have a financial system in place to track and report on each funding source separately.
19. The applicant must be able to track and report victim services data.
20. The applicant must ensure the health and safety of victims and cannot engage in activities which compromise recovery, deter healing, or hurt victims.

21. The applicant must work collectively and cooperatively to ensure offenders are held accountable and victims are treated with dignity, respect and assistance as they navigate the criminal justice system.

- The applicant must have policies and procedures in place to meet federal and state requirements. See chapter five for more information.

Application Requirements

Application Requirements

“Applicants shall submit applications to the section in the form and manner prescribed by the section. Applications shall be available upon request to all interested parties.” IAC 61—9.54. All applications must be submitted to the “section by the designated due date” and “in the format prescribed by the section.” Requests for an extension to apply for a grant must be submitted to the Section’s grant services administrator. If a request for an extension is denied, the applicant may “file a written appeal to the chief delivered within seven days of denial.” IAC 61—9.54.

Applications for a grant must include:

“[C]urrent copies of the applicant’s table of organization and, for all private nonprofit programs, articles of incorporation as required.” IAC 61—9.54(2).

1. “[E]vidence of any insurance coverage the applicant carries for liability or property.” IAC 61—9.54(3).
2. “A paragraph describing the agencies, units of government, or public or private nonprofit programs requesting the funds.” IAC 61—9.55(1).
3. “A description of services for which funding is being requested, including:
    a. The geographical area to be served.
    b. The crime victim population to be served.
    c. Victim eligibility requirements for the applicant’s services.
    d. A description of substantial financial support from other sources.
    e. The intended use of volunteers, if any.
    f. The stated goals and objectives or measurable activities of the program.
    g. A description of the proposed services to be implemented during the funding year.
    h. The amount of funds requested.
    i. The amount of cash or in-kind resources or combination thereof that is committed where required by the section.
    j. Proof of coordination with appropriate agencies at the local level.
    k. A total program budget for all services provided by the applicant’s crime victim program.
    l. A proposed budget for the requested funds.
    m. A list of other anticipated sources of income, including written commitments, if possible, and plans for continued funding of the funded activities.
    n. Other information identified by the section to be included in the application to assist the application review committee and the board.
    o. Signed certified assurances as required by statute or regulation or otherwise designated by the section.” IAC 61—9.55(2).

A summary of the application process

The competitive grant application process begins with the release of a request for proposal (RFP), also known as a notice of funding available or grant solicitation. The RFP will include application instructions, a copy of the application questions as well as other information needed to apply for grants.

The victim assistance grant team will offer technical assistance workshops detailing how to apply for funding.

If victim assistance requests letters of intent to apply for funding, applicants will be instructed how to submit them, and their due dates.

Grant applications are posted in the grant management system, Iowa Department of Justice Grants. The applications are listed in the Funding Opportunities panel on the home page. Applicants must be a registered user to access and apply for grants.

Submitted grant applications are reviewed for eligibility and funding recommendations are made to the victim assistance board. If an applicant files an appeal (request for reconsideration) of the funding decision,

the victim assistance board will host an appeals meeting where appellants present their appeals to the board. The board makes the final determination regarding all appeals and their decisions are final.

Once award notifications are made and the appeals process is complete. The victim assistance grant team issues subawards electronically. Subawards are issued annually with the periods of performance October 1 through September 30, unless otherwise noted. For three-year grant cycles, the first year is the competitive year. Years two and three are noncompetitive grant years with grantees submitting continuing grant applications. Continuing grant applications are noncompetitive and reviewed by grant staff.

Selection Process

Selection Process for Competitive Grants

The Section will "conduct a preliminary review of each application to ensure that the applicant is eligible, the application is complete, and the proposed services are consistent with the section's mission of providing quality assistance to crime victims and crime victim programs throughout the state." IAC 61—9.57.

1. "In selection of competitive applicants, the program uses generally accepted methods of grant review, including but not limited to checklists; quality scales; written comments by application review committee members; and formulas based on past funding, population, clients served and available funds." IAC 61—9.57(1).
2. "In selection of competitive applications, the program shall establish an application review committee, selected solely by the section staff. The committee shall submit recommendations for funding awards to the chief. The chief shall submit to the board the recommendations of the application review committee and any alternative recommendations by the program staff. Review committee members must sign conflict of interest forms, ensuring their reviews and recommendations are free from conflict or bias." IAC 61—9.57(2).

a. "The application review committee shall be comprised of representatives from the victim assistance board and experts in the fields of victim services, funding administration and management, and criminal justice." IAC 61—9.57(2)(a).
b. "The program shall provide the committee with information related to an applicant's performance with previous awards, the quality and quantity of services provided, and community support for an applicant." IAC 61—9.57(2)(b).
c. "The committee shall review the contents of the applications and information provided by the section and members of the committee regarding an applicant and the geographical area to be served." IAC 61—9.57(2)(c).
d. All reviewers on the committee will be screened for possible conflicts of interest and must submit a conflict of reviewer form.

3. The Victim Assistance Board "shall consider the recommendations of the application review committee and the chief to determine final competitive awards to the extent that funds are available and to the extent to which applications meet the application criteria. The board may reject any or all applications." IAC 61—9.57(3).

Notification of applicants. "Applicants will be notified within 90 days after the application due date whether the application has been denied or approved" by the Victim Assistance Board. If the applicant is approved, the notification will also include the amount funded. IAC 61—9.58.

Requests for reconsideration. If an applicant is notified that it was denied for a grant or is approved for an amount of funding that is different than the amount the applicant applied for, it "may file with the board a request for reconsideration". IAC 61—9.59(1).

1. An appropriate request for reconsideration will meet the following requirements:

a. "The request for reconsideration must be submitted within ten working days of the date the notice of decision is mailed or otherwise issued by the section to the applicant." IAC 61—9.59(1).
b. "The request must be in writing and state grounds for reconsideration. The grounds for reconsideration the board shall consider are limited to the following: victim assistance misconduct, ineffective review processes, disparities in funding, or miscalculation of funding amounts. The appeals process is not an opportunity to resubmit an application or to provide additional information for consideration." IAC 61—9.59(1).

2. Requests for reconsideration will be reviewed by the Victim Assistance Board in a timely manner, and its decision “shall constitute final agency action.” IAC 61—9.59(1).
3. If the request for reconsideration may affect other approved applicants, they will receive “notice that a request for reconsideration has been filed”, and funds will not be disbursed until the request for reconsideration is resolved. IAC 61—9.59(2) and (3).

Laws and statutes related to victim assistance programming and services in Iowa

Iowa Administrative Code - Chapter 9 victim assistance program

Iowa Chapter 13 - Department of Justice; see subchapter III, 13.31 for the victim assistance program

Iowa Chapter 236 - Domestic Abuse Act

Iowa Chapter 236A - Sexual Abuse Act

Iowa Chapter 915. 20 - Victim Rights Act; see 915.20 and 915.20A for presence of victim counselors and victim counselor privilege

Certified Assurances

Certified Assurances and Required Promises

Applicants are required to certify they will abide by the certified assurances from the Victim Assistance Section and the federal government. Failure to certify agreement with certified assurances could result in denial of the grant application. If approved for funding but later found to have violated any one of the certified assurances, applicants risk funding suspension, contract termination, and possible repayment of grant funding. Contact a member of the grant team with questions or concerns regarding certified assurances.

1. **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding.** The purpose of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding is to provide high quality services that directly improve the health and well-being of victims of crime with priority given to victims of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault and services for previously underserved victims. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) makes annual VOCA crime victim assistance grants from the Crime Victims Fund to states. Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Assistance Certified Assurances for FY2027 (10/01/26-09/30/27).
   Key personnel, such as the project director, executive director, and fiscal director need to read, understand and comply with all conditions contained in the assurances. A copy of these certified assurances are to be part of an organization's grant file.
2. **Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding.** STOP VAWA funds promote a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to improving the criminal justice system's response to violence against women. This approach envisions a partnership among law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, victim advocates and service providers to ensure victim safety and offender accountability. STOP Violence Against Women (VAWA) Formula Certified Assurances for FY2027 (10/01/26-09/30/27).
   Key personnel, such as the project director, executive director, and fiscal director need to read, understand and comply with all conditions contained in the assurances. A copy of these certified assurances are to be part of an organization's grant file.
3. **Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funding**. FVPSA supports programs that prevent incidents of family violence, domestic violence and dating violence. FVPSA funds provide immediate shelter, supportive services and access to community-based programs for victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence as well as for their dependents. Family Violence and Prevention Services Certified Assurances for FY2027 (10/1/26-09/30/27).
   Key personnel, such as the project director, executive director, and fiscal director need to read, understand and comply with all conditions contained in the assurances. A copy of these certified assurances are to be part of an organization's grant file.
4. **Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) funding.** SASP is used to provide intervention, advocacy, accompaniment (e.g., accompanying victims to court, medical facilities, police departments, etc.), support services, and related assistance for adult, youth, and child victims of sexual assault, family and household members of victims and those collaterally affected by the sexual assault. Sexual Assault Services Program Certified Assurances for FY2027 (10/01/26-09/30/27).
   Key personnel, such as the project director, executive director, and fiscal director need to read, understand and comply with all conditions contained in the assurances. A copy of these certified assurances are to be part of an organization's grant file.
5. **Victim Assistance Funding.** All grantees must read and adhere to Victim Assistance certified assurances. Victim Assistance Certified Assurances for FY2027 (10/1/26-09/30/27).
   Key personnel, such as the project director, executive director, and fiscal director need to read, understand and comply with all conditions contained in the assurances. A copy of these certified assurances are to be part of an organization's grant file.
6. Additional Federal Assurances for FY2027 (10/1/26-09/30/27): Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension & General Assurances.

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