



OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN RESOURCE GUIDE ON COVID-19 APRIL 21, 2020

Introduction

The Office on Violence Against Women knows that the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States is having a dire effect on all Americans, but victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are uniquely burdened by this crisis. You have shared with us the heartbreaking stories of survivors who are desperately seeking help in this new reality, and your heroic efforts to invent new ways to meet their needs. We hear you. OVW is doing everything we can to help you help survivors by granting administrative flexibilities in our grant programs within our existing authority.

As is always the case, however, you are in the best position to understand the unique challenges facing your clients and your organizations, and to identify possible solutions. As this situation evolves, so much is dictated by local circumstances, and we urge you to continue to work with your local and state authorities to continue to provide the life-saving services that you do day in and day out.

OVW has developed this Resource Guide to help you answer some of your most pressing questions about your obligations and options regarding how to operate, provide services, and manage OVW grants.

Employment and Operations

Many of you have asked questions about employment and operations in the face of changing workloads and workplaces. The following resources are designed to help answer questions about paying salaries, granting leave, ensuring workplace safety, and managing job duties.

- [OVW COVID-19 FAQs for OVW Grantees Regarding the Payment and Use of Leave for Grant-Funded Staff](#)
- [The Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#)
- [The U.S. Department of Labor COVID-19 Resources for Employers and Workers](#)
- [The CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators and Leaders of Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to COVID-19](#)
- [National Network to End Domestic Violence \(NNEDV\) How to Operate as a Remote Workplace during a Public Health Crisis](#)

As your agency and your partners reevaluate your operations in response to the pandemic, we offer the following tips:

- Assess the need to deliver services in-person, and determine what activities may be delivered remotely.
- Follow your existing policies regarding telework. If you do not have a tele-work policy, develop one and train your staff accordingly.
- Follow your existing policies regarding sick leave, administrative leave, vacation time, and time and attendance. If necessary, update these policies to address leave in the case of unexpected or extraordinary circumstances. You may wish to provide a refresher training to staff on these policies.
- Update the contact information of all your staff and the staff of your partners, and develop procedures for communicating about your project activities.
- Inventory the equipment and communication devices that are currently issued to staff, and assess if you should redistribute this equipment among staff or purchase additional or upgraded equipment for staff.
- Consult CDC guidance and coordinate with state and local health officials on best practices regarding personal protective gear, sanitizing workplaces, and other methods to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Services and Advocacy

Many of you have asked questions about how to continue serving survivors during this crisis. OVW Technical Assistance providers are working diligently to help grantees strategize about how continue to provide high quality support and advocacy to survivors. This information is being consolidated at [OVW's TA Provider Resource Center](#). Please check this site regularly for webinars and other technical assistance materials on how to provide remote support and advocacy, ensure accessibility for Deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors and survivors with disabilities, provide legal and medical advocacy under state social distancing mandates, adapt shelter protocols in consideration of public health, and other topics that may help your programs during this pandemic. OVW will be updating our TA Provider Resource Center webpage regularly with information related to COVID-19.

Housing and Shelters

Below are some resources for programs that provide housing and emergency shelter.

- [CDC Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Screening Clients at Entry to Homeless Shelters](#)
- [National Resource Center on Domestic Violence Preventing and Managing the Spread of COVID-19 Within Domestic Violence Programs](#)
- [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Infectious Disease Toolkit for Continuums of Care: Preventing and Managing the Spread of Infectious Disease Within Shelters](#)

Legal Advocacy

Below are some resources for programs that provide legal services and court advocacy.

- [WomensLaw.Org FAQs Involving Courts and COVID-19](#)

- [National Center for State Courts COVID-19 and the Courts State Profiles](#)
- [Tahirih Justice Center Guide on Adapting Trauma-Informed Lawyering Best Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [American Bar Association Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence Webinar on Remote Representation and DV Clients: Privacy and the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Remote Advocacy and Support

Below are some resources for programs that are providing counseling, support, and advocacy remotely.

- [NNEDV Best Practices When Using Mobile Devices for Advocacy](#)
- [NNEDV Using Technology to Communicate with Survivors During a Public Health Crisis](#)

Consent and Confidentiality

Below are some resources to help programs comply with the confidentiality requirements in VAWA while providing services remotely.

- [NNEDV Digital Written Consent to Share Information](#)
- [OVW FAQs on the VAWA Confidentiality Provision](#)

Medical Advocacy

Below are some resources for programs that provide medical accompaniment and advocacy.

- [International Association of Forensic Nurses \(IAFN\) Collaborating with Advocacy during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [IAFN Guidance to Forensic Nurses During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Indian Country

Below are some resources for grantees in Indian country.

- [Indian Health Service \(IHS\) FAQs on Federal Response to COVID-19 in Indian Country](#)
- [IHS Resources for COVID-19 in Indian Country](#)

Law Enforcement Agencies

Below are some resources for law enforcement agencies.

- [International Association of Chiefs of Police COVID-19 Library of Resources](#)
- [CDC What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know About COVID-19](#)

Grants Management

If your organization has an open OVW award, has submitted an application for an FY 2020

funding opportunity, or is planning on submitting an application to an FY 2020 open solicitation and your organizations has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are several resources available to help you.

- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Additional Flexibilities for the STOP Formula Program](#)
- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Guidance to Award Recipients Impacted by COVID-19: Short-term Relief for Various Administrative, Financial Management and Audit Requirements](#)
- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Monitoring, Conferences, Grants Extensions, Progress Reports, and Solicitations](#)
- [OVW COVID-19 Update for Grantees – Relief from GANs for Personnel Policies](#)

Please direct specific questions about an open award to your OVW program specialist or to OVW's GFMD at OVW.GFMD@usdoj.gov or 888-514-8556. OVW is committed to working with you to provide as much flexibility as allowed by our governing authorities. OVW has already extended our open solicitations and does not anticipate any further extensions to the remaining solicitations currently posted on the website. However, if there are any additional changes to these deadlines, they will be posted [here](#).