

SFY27 VOCA NOFA TA FAQs and Recommendations

Summary

Below is a summary of the State Fiscal Year 2027 Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) and VOCG Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Technical Assistance Call.

- The deadline for the combined VOCA (federal) and VOCG (state) application is March 6th at 11:59 PM. Early submission is strongly recommended as technical support may not be available near the deadline.
- Best practice is to submit during business hours at least a day early so if there are any technical glitches, GOCPP staff and IT support will be available to assist. We expect a high number of applications. The closer to the deadline you get, the more likely the GMS will be overloaded, which may result in slow speeds or glitches.
- The funding period is from July 1st, 2026, through June 30th, 2027. The minimum funding request is \$50,000 for this highly competitive grant cycle.
- VOCA-eligible crime victims are defined as those who have suffered harm due to a crime and live, work, or were victimized in the state of Maryland. Services must directly relate to that specific victimization, and costs must be prorated if the agency serves other populations. Please see more details on VOCA-eligible crime victims in the section below.
- Administrative costs are capped at 30% of the budget. Staff positions are categorized as Direct Service or Administrative based on their primary job function.
- The indirect cost de minimus rate has been adjusted to 15% of the Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC).
- Federal funds cannot be used to meet the non-mandatory cost share/match requirement.
- Services are reported based on duration: Brief (under 30 min), Intermediate (30 min to 24 hours), and Extended (over 24 hours of accumulated service time per client).
- The Organizational Capacity Questionnaire (OCQ) is now an online form (via a Qualtrics link) and only needs to be completed once per year for all GOCPP grant applications.

Details

1. Application Logistics and Timeline

- **Application Type:** Single application for both federal VOCA and state VOCG funding.
- **Submission Deadline: March 6th at 11:59 PM.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit early to avoid potential glitches in the grant management system (GMS) and ensure staff technical assistance is available.
- **Funding Period:** July 1st, 2026, through June 30th, 2027 (State Fiscal Year 2027).

- **Funding Size:** The total anticipated funding is \$60 million, but this is subject to legislative changes.
 - Minimum request: **\$50,000**.
 - No maximum request, but it must be relevant to the need.
- **Award Process:** Approximately 150 awards are anticipated. Award (or denial) letters are expected to be sent in May, with award documentation in June.
- **Point of Contact (POC):** David Blum for programmatic questions and Heather Amador for policy related issues.

2. Application Requirements and Structure

- **Word Limits:** GMS does not restrict word count, but reviewers only see up to the specified limit (e.g., 500 words). Applicants must monitor their own word counts and adjust their submission to meet requirements.
- **Eligibility:** Agencies must meet specified criteria, including having a current SAM.gov or UEI number, and their services must be for those who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland.
- **VOCA-Defined Victim:** a victim of crime is defined as a person who has suffered physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm as a result of the commission of a crime. Additionally, all VOCA funded services or treatment must be directly related to the immediate needs of the crime victim. Only primary and secondary victims, as defined above, are eligible for VOCA/VOCG related expenses.
 - VOCA-defined victims must be identified and documented separately from any other populations an agency may serve, including members of the general public, individuals who trade sex, people experiencing homelessness, or those with substance dependence not caused by crime victimization.
 - When an agency serves a population broader than only VOCA-eligible crime victims, and provides services related to a victim's most recent victimization, the agency is required to clearly distinguish VOCA-eligible victims from other clients and non-VOCA-eligible individuals. Additionally, the agency must accurately report the percentage of clients who qualify as VOCA-eligible victims, separate from all other populations served.
 - Only VOCA eligible clients receiving services directly related to their recent victimization are eligible for VOCA funded services. Services to a victim that are unrelated to their crime victimization are considered unallowable.
 - Only victims who live, work, or were victimized in the state of Maryland are eligible for services under this funding.
- **Data Reporting:** Agencies must report data for all victims served.
 - Data is requested for fiscal years 2024 through 2027. Estimates are acceptable for early years if historical data is unavailable.
 - Performance Measure questions 1-4 are asking about VOCA funded services, questions 5-8 are asking about total victims served regardless of funding.
- **Service Classifications (for reporting):**
 - **Brief:** 30 minutes or less (e.g., brief calls, referrals).
 - **Intermediate:** 30 minutes to 24 hours (e.g., counseling sessions, shelter stays).

- **Extended:** Beyond 24 hours of accumulated service time per client.
- **New Form - Organizational Capacity Questionnaire (OCQ):** The previous PDF form (SOCQ) has been replaced by an online Qualtrics system. It only needs to be completed once a year for all GOCPP grant applications.

3. Budgetary and Fiscal Details

- **Cost Share/Match (Non-Mandatory):** Providing a cost share is not required but earns bonus points. The match is defined as either 20% of the total project cost or 25% of the requested grant funds. Applicants are encouraged to use the [Grant Cost Share \(Match\) Calculator and Provisions](#) resource on the GOCPP website to ensure the cost share is calculated correctly.
- **Indirect Costs:** The Federal de minimus indirect cost rate has increased from 10% to **15%** of the Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC).
- **Administrative Costs Cap:** Administrative costs (including salaries/fees for administrative work) are capped at **30%** of the budget.
 - While administrative positions are important and assist providing care, the focus must be on those providing direct victim services related to their crime victimization. A front desk receptionist could say she works with victims because she greets victims as they come in the door and directs them to forms or staff who provide services. However, the receptionist would still be considered an administrative position because she is not providing direct victim services related to their crime victimization. Please note that the same 30% limit is being used this year as it was last year, it has NOT changed.
- **Training Limit:** No more than two staff per training, with a maximum of three trainings per year per this funding source.
- **Consultant Rate Cap:** The maximum consultant rate is **\$81.25 per hour** or \$650 per day. Pre-authorization is required to exceed this.
- **Prioritization:** Applicants must prioritize their budget line items so that cuts (if needed due to statewide needs) follow the specified priority order. Unallowable costs will be cut regardless of priority.

Questions & Responses (Q&A)

Category	Question	Response
Documentation	What documents need to be uploaded into GMS?	Please review the checklist at the end of the VOCA NOFA. Any documents that require a signature but are not signed will not be considered submitted on time.
Documentation	Does anything get uploaded with the OCQ in the new external system?	No, only the OCQ is filled out in the external system (Qualtrics). Any required

		documentation should be uploaded as usual in GMS.
Documentation	How many times does an OCQ need to be submitted?	Only one OCQ is needed per funding year regardless of how many SFY27 GOCPP grants your agency applies for.
Documentation	For the new OCQ, is it right that we are only to submit that via the clickable link and not also through the GMS portal?	Correct. The OCQ is submitted through the Qualtrics link only. Any required supporting documents (if any are listed) should still be uploaded to GMS.
Documentation	Do we upload pre-authorization forms for consultant services above the \$81.25/hour rate (e.g., mental health therapists) with the application?	Yes, if you already have the pre-authorization, MOU, or contract in place, please upload it with the application. If not, a preliminary MOU stating the intent if awarded is helpful.
Data/Reporting	For fiscal year 2026, which ends after the application date, can we estimate based on current numbers?	Yes, please accurately project the numbers and explain the methodology used for the estimate (e.g., extrapolation).
Data/Reporting	What can I use if there's a lack of data on deaf victims in recent years?	Use the most recent and accurate data possible. If it's not specific to the direct population, make correlations and explain them. The review process will account for a lack of available data.
Auditing	Are there any auditing requirements to apply, or must an organization have been audited?	GOCPP complies with federal audit standards (e.g., for single audits) and has its own internal audit team. Agencies with prior audit findings must upload them along with a corrective action plan. Site visits for monitoring compliance and program success also occur.
Allowability	Are Forensic Nurses allowable under VOCA?	This depends on the billing and coverage structure. If the employing agency is billing the FNE's time under SARU (or another funding source) then it is unallowable under VOCA. If the nurse

		is not able to be paid through any other source it might be allowable.
Allowability	Is the applying agency responsible for outlining how the FNE is paid in the application?	Yes, please provide an explanation so that reviewers can confirm that a line item is not being double paid.
Allowability	How many trainings are allowed and can they be combined?	There is a limit of 2 staff per training to a maximum of 3 trainings per year. This means 2 staff could attend training A, 2 staff could attend training B, and 2 staff could attend training C. Having 6 staff attend training A and no staff attend training B or C is unallowable.
Allowability	Can we provide cleanup services for victims of homicide?	This may be possible, but GOCPP would have to look at whether other funds are being utilized first, and then review the justification for the VOCA funds.
Allowability	Will the GSA's proposed addition of "illegal DEI activities" to SAM.gov impact GOCPP's grant-making under VOCA/VOCG?	GOCPP will award funds for allowable activities. If something is deemed unallowable, the legal team and federal monitors will be consulted. An exact answer cannot be given until a specific line item is reviewed.
Allowability	Is it an allowable activity to conduct an investigation to determine whether someone was a victim of abuse or can we only use VOCA after the investigation confirms that a crime occurred?	Prosecution activities are completely unallowable under VOCA. Additionally VOCA eligible crime victims must be verified before VOCA funding is used for those services.
Allowability	Is suicide considered a crime so family members can get services?	No, suicide is not a crime victim classification for use of VOCA funds.

Allowability	Are expenses (FNE) under contract with a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) excluded?	It depends on the billing. If the FNE is being paid by another source, like a facility fee covered by SARU funds, then billing VOCA would be "double-dipping" and unallowable.
Allowability	Can we purchase items such as stress balls, pens, cups, bags for outreach events?	It depends on the justification. A stress ball as a giveaway trinket for prevention is not allowable. A stress ball used as a therapeutic tool in a counseling session with an identified victim could be allowable. The item must be justified by its direct service use.
Administrative	There is also a civil rights form that is not listed on the checklist. Is that form also required?	There is an EEOP form that is required, if the civil rights form is required as part of completing this form, then yes. Otherwise if there is a place to sign and verify compliance with civil rights laws, please upload it. It is better to include it to be safe.
Administrative	How do you differentiate a manager providing supervision to direct service staff? Is that an allowable cost?	If the supervision directly impacts the victim's care (e.g., for social work licensure), it can be a direct service cost. Otherwise, it is categorized as an administrative cost and falls under the 30% cap. The key is the staff member's main job function.
Administrative	If the Executive Director (ED) of a small nonprofit performs allowable duties, can their salary be requested? Can you clarify the rule against funding EDs?	If a significant bulk of the ED's time is used to provide direct services, they could be classified as a direct service provider. For small organizations, this is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Agencies can also use a staggered budget approach (via a Grant Adjustment Notification or GAN) if a direct service staff member is being hired to take over those duties.

Administrative	How does an agency determine if a person is “admin” and thus limited to the 30% cap?	If a staff’s main duties are not direct service in nature they would be considered admin. An executive director who counsels a victim of crime one hour a week is still mainly admin, But a social worker who works 80% with clients and 20% with documentation would mainly be considered direct service so not limited to the 30%.
Service Classification	Can you clarify the difference between an extended service (over 24 hours) and an intermediate service (30 min to 24 hours)? Does it have to be one continuous activity?	It does not have to be continuous. The 24-hour mark is cumulative per client . A client moves from the intermediate category to the extended category once their total accumulated service time passes 24 hours.
Service Classification	Would street outreach count as brief services?	It could be, but the agency must be able to identify and document that the person receiving the service is a VOCA-eligible crime victim (see definition in this document). A brief interaction, referral, or handoff of services could count as a brief service.
Service Classification	Do clients move from category to category (Brief, Intermediate, Extended)?	Yes, they move from category to category as their accumulated service hours increase, however only count victims in one category based on their highest service provided
Service Classification	Are there minimum numbers of individuals that need to be served?	No minimum numbers are set, but the request must be reasonable. For example, a \$4 million request to serve three people may not be highly competitive against an agency requesting \$100,000 to serve 3,000 crime victims.
Consultants	Can you clarify the difference between a contractor and a consultant?	A Contractor is usually set for a specific service deliverable related to project outcomes. A Consultant may not have a

		direct service deliverable and may be discussing methods of improvement.
Funding	If you are a new agency, what are the odds of being funded this go-around?	Funding fully depends on the competitiveness of the application. The more competitive the application (showing clear need and good budget usage), the higher the possibility of being funded.
Funding	Is there a maximum request for a first-time applicant?	There is no maximum request. The minimum request is \$50,000.
Application Style	If the GMS application questions and NOFA-related questions are similar, do we need to answer them twice? Can we use corresponding bullet letters (e.g., "A" instead of "Mission Statement")?	Reviewers should have an easy time understanding the response. You are welcome to use abbreviations, but use your best judgment to ensure clarity for the reviewer.
Word Count	What if the word count limitation doesn't allow for the list of all personnel being funded?	Try to abbreviate where possible to fit as much information as you can. Reviewers will reference the budget if the personnel list is abbreviated in good faith. The applicant can also group same positions together (i.e. Social worker 1-10...) as long as the positions are identical.
Cost Share	Does cash or in-kind cost share include volunteer time?	Volunteer time can be an in-kind match for services rendered, valued at the industry standard rate for the work performed (e.g., a lawyer doing administrative work is valued at the rate of an administrative assistant, not a lawyer).
Cost Share	Can I use federal funds as a match? If I am currently funded through a federal grant, are line items that are not currently funded eligible to show match?	No. Federal funds cannot be used to meet a federal match requirement. You must use non-federal funds such as state funds, general funds, or fundraising funds.

Grant Personnel	The NOFA says to include personnel on the GMS face sheet, but also personnel for which funding is requested. Which is correct?	Both are correct. The authorized official, project director, and fiscal specialist (from the face sheet), as well as any staff being funded under the grant should be listed in the “Key Grant Personnel” section of the narrative. Any staff funded under the grant would also need to be listed in the budget.
Budget/Proration	If all victims are VOCA-served, do you have to give proration formulas for each line item?	In the narrative, one overarching justification for the 100% proration is acceptable. However, for the budget justification section, the proration calculation should be included for each individual line item.
Bonus/Deductions	Do you have a published points document for deductions and bonus somewhere that we can reference?	Page 14 of the NOFA outlines the bonus and deduction point areas.
VOCA Victim Definition	How are you differentiating between individuals who trade sex (not considered a VOCA victim) and sex trafficking victims (who are victims)?	Services can be funded if VOCA-eligible victimhood can be shown. If a client's experiences meet the legal definition of trafficking, they can be counted as a victim, even if they do not self-identify as such. This remains an area of ongoing review.
VOCA Victim Definition	Could you further define victims from underserved populations? Would staff salary providing outreach and food services to the homeless be acceptable to include case management and coaching?	An underserved population means resources for crime victims that are lacking in the community. Homeless individuals must be homeless due to a VOCA-eligible crime victimization for VOCA funds to be allowable. For example, sheltering domestic violence victims. If they are homeless for other reasons, VOCA cannot fund those services.