



Consultation Question: How can the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) encourage tribes to apply for OVW funding to help ensure that violence against women grant funds reach more tribal communities?

BACKGROUND

Through prior consultations with tribal leaders, OVW has received input on ways to administer funding for tribal governments to make it easier for tribes to access funds and administer their funded projects. OVW has pursued various methods to make grant funds more accessible to tribes:

- increasing national promotion and outreach to tribes to offer more resources and training;
- holding listening sessions at national conferences to gain input from tribal leaders;
- building capacity for tribes that do not currently receive OVW grant funding;
- consolidating and/or reducing special conditions, where possible;
- increasing funding caps and extending project periods;
- limiting existing tribal grantees' eligibility for continuation funding;
- eliminating the questionnaire and reducing the application requirements for OVW's Tribal Jurisdiction Program; and,
- conducting extensive consultation and collaboration with tribes to determine whether or not to administer tribal funding on a formula basis.

Despite these efforts, tribal interest in OVW tribal grant funding to respond to violence in tribal communities is not robust:

- In FY 2018 and FY 2019, OVW posted its Tribal Jurisdiction Program solicitation twice due to a low response rate.
- Although there are 573 federally recognized Indian tribes, OVW receives, on average, approximately 60 applications annually for its Tribal Governments Program through the Consolidated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS).
- On average, OVW receives approximately 10 applications annually for its Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (TSASP).

OVW previously consulted with tribes regarding whether OVW's Tribal Governments Program should shift from a competitive model to an annual formula distribution under which each tribe would receive a base amount of funding. After consultation and the formation of a tribal working group on the subject, there was no consensus from tribal leaders to move to a formula model. Instead, the overall consensus was that OVW should expand tribes' access to Tribal Governments Program funds by a number of strategies, including providing capacity-building technical assistance to tribes that have not received awards under the program. Accordingly, OVW continues to pursue the underlying goal of ensuring consistent and sustainable stable funding for as many tribes as possible while also providing support for comprehensive victim services programs. To this end, and informed by tribal leader recommendations, we plan to continue to do



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the following:

- administer tribal grants on a competitive, discretionary basis;
- provide technical assistance to help tribes successfully compete for funding from other OVW programs;
- defer new awards to tribes that have large outstanding balances on existing awards;
- give priority to tribes that have not received funding in the two most recent fiscal years;
- issue three-year awards rather than two-year ones; and,
- each fiscal year, provide tribes with the greatest possible notice of OVW funding change plans so that tribes may plan in advance.

At prior consultations, several tribal leaders have testified regarding a number of concerns related to the administration of OVW's tribal grant programs, including the number and complexity of grant requirements and limitations on how funds may be used. Conditions and limitations on grant awards are often necessary to fulfill legal mandates. OVW has worked to clarify and simplify funding requirements and will continue to identify ways to give tribal grantees more flexibility, where possible.

QUESTION

Consultation Question: How can OVW encourage tribes to apply for OVW funding to help ensure that violence against women grant funds reach more tribal communities?

OVW continues to be interested in exploring strategies to enhance the ability of tribes to access violence against women funding. Do the tribes have any feedback on the steps that OVW has already taken to expand tribal access to its grant funding? Have any of the tribes that have received technical assistance on competing for funding successfully applied for funding? Have any of OVW's efforts to simplify funding requirements made a difference? What additional steps could OVW take to increase tribal access to discretionary funding? What are the reasons why the response rate for the TSASP solicitation is so low, particularly given the high rates of sexual assault in Indian country?

The Department welcomes any suggestions for additional actions OVW should take that are permitted by law.