



TALKING CIRCLE: FUNDING HEALING

QUESTION AND ANSWER SUMMARY

Determining how to spend federal funds for victim services can seem overwhelming. Whether an organization is starting, sustaining, or growing a victim services program, a broad range of resources are available to assist them in supporting the healing journey for victims.

During a virtual Talking Circle on June 16, 2021 titled, “[Start, Sustain, or Grow: Using federal funding for victim services](#)” representatives from tribal victim services programs discussed how to use federal funds to support victims of crime, define a program’s vision, mission, and goals; obtain supportive external partnerships; and use tools for financial and grant management. The Talking Circle webinar series is hosted by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), [Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center](#). Following are the questions and abbreviated answers provided by the panel of experts during the discussion, as well as answers to questions asked but not answered live.

How do you ensure appropriate cultural services are offered to assist victims on their healing journey?

There are 574 Tribal Nations in the U.S., and each nation comes with its own history, culture, language, and spiritual practices. There is no one size fits all in Indian Country, as each person must travel their own journey of healing. This will look different in each and every tribal nation, as the culture, resources, and availability of services will vary. Ensuring cultural services are accessible is critical to any journey of healing, and these may be informal or formalized through programs and services within a tribal victim service program, a tribal court, etc. Some tribal programs may offer healing practices like talking circles and traditional methods of prayer, while other tribal programs may not have formalized services.

Collaboration with tribal programs is critical to ensure victims from tribal communities have the autonomy to choose the resource they want, and need, to access. It is also important to note that tribal affiliation is extremely critical in accessing these services because cultural practices and traditional methods vary. It is very important to connect victims to their own cultural programs if possible. Also recognize some tribes are



matrilineal and some are patrilineal. This is another factor to consider what is culturally appropriate for the person seeking healing services.

Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside (TVSSA) funding can be used to expand victim services by requesting funding over multiple years. How has your program grown using this funding?

[Catawba Indian Nation](#) has been able to expand victim services by increasing not only the services provided but also the populations served through [TVSSA funding](#). By identifying areas with clear gaps in services, Catawba Indian Nation used TVSSA funding to expand services and fill those gaps. Individuals can now access services such as on-site mental health counseling, assistance with substance use treatment, child and youth victim advocacy, and advocacy for their at-risk seniors and incapacitated adults.

TVSSA funding also addressed some Catawba Indian Nation departmental needs as far as grant management and employee supervision. TVSSA funding for additional staff enabled advocates to focus on advocacy work. The director of justice services position is partially funded through a TVSSA grant. Part of this position's responsibilities include focusing on improving workflow, updating policies and procedures, and setting up [Memorandums of Understanding](#) with community partners.

Would you discuss how various partnerships can support a tribal victim services program?

The [Alaska Native Justice Center](#) (ANJC) convenes stakeholders interested in advocating for the fair and equitable treatment of Alaska Native people. It is impossible for one organization alone to address all the challenges. Community partnerships are powerful and can bring together folks involved in the issue. Start with identifying an issue impacting a community and then build a team to work on solutions. For example, ANJC partnered with the Department of Corrections to address an interest in looking at reentry. By convening all the individuals that could participate in reentry grant funding, it was possible for everyone to work together and secure a grant available to the state of Alaska for that specific purpose. The collaboration was a success and showed that together it is possible to achieve a particular outcome to benefit Alaska Native people.

Delivering a coordinated approach to provide comprehensive victim centered services and case management to ensure that victims' diverse needs are met becomes more manageable through partnership. Partnerships can help develop a "No Wrong Door" approach to service delivery and direct services including housing, mental health screening and therapy, educational and employability services,



legal services, substance abuse assessment and treatment, and health screening and medical care. Through partnerships, programs can offer culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including intensive case management, mental health, substance abuse treatment, housing, medical, dental, legal advocacy, and other necessary support services to help victims achieve immediate safety and stability. By working together, survivors benefit in reaching their goal of autonomy and economic self-sufficiency.

Managing grant funds can seem very overwhelming. How did you address this concern with your first federal grant?

Grants can feel extremely intimidating. One of the barriers in Indian Country is technology. Another challenge can be a single person responsible for a multitude of duties which can become overwhelming. This again, underscores the importance of collaboration and partnerships. One tip is to set aside time on a regular basis—once a week, once a month—to keep grant files up to date. Save everything to the files. If collecting data, try to collect information that can help improve the program. Not only will the data help with grant applications and management, but the data can also assist in program evaluations and benefit program sustainability. Creating internal processes and systems—like a crosswalk document—can help capture the what, when, and who aspects of the grant.

Strong relationships with technical assistance providers are an important tool in supporting a grant manager. Grant recipients simply need to request support and the federal grant manager can assist them in finding the support they need. Monthly reporting is also key in successfully managing grants. Monthly reporting captures the work in real time; being diligent in collecting data and information is important for grant management.

What is a crosswalk?

It is a spreadsheet or document to track all grant information in one place including grant managers, grant deadlines, goals, and objectives, etc. All the information ends up being similar to a strategic plan and helps stay on top of all of the tasks associated with the grants.

What are some cultural healing services used to support victims of crime?

There are a variety of services available in different communities depending on several factors like location. If a survivor is in their homeland as opposed to an urban area, cultural healing services may be more accessible. The system being accessed—federal or tribal—also impacts access to cultural healing services.



Editor's note: Some OVC grantees have used songs, smudges, dances, craft, regalia, and canoe making to celebrate a victim and community's connection to their heritage as a means to help a survivor heal.

Also, connect with the local organizations and tribal programs in your area as the best resource to get cultural services. [StrongHearts Native Helpline](#) and the [Tribal Resource Tool](#) are national programs that can provide referrals for local resources. When resources allow, employing staff to provide traditional healing is very beneficial. Also, remember the value and importance of partnerships and collaboration. Working with other programs can greatly benefit survivors by offering them access to cultural services an organization on its own may be unable to provide.

Who should we reach out to when we partner with other agencies and organizations?

Identify the services needed by survivors and where your organization falls short. Then look at your community and identify which organizations offer those services; there is no need to recreate the wheel. Also, it is important to partner with state and local agencies as well. These agencies can be valuable in offering survivor services. Collaboration provides more ways to support survivors on their healing journey.

Sometimes grantees will hire consultants for implementation. Is there a Consultant list anywhere?

The [National Center for Victims of Crime](#) and the [Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) has a cadre of subject matter expert consultants and training and technical assistance providers. In addition, OVC's Tribal Division Training and Technical Assistance is a no-cost resource to contact for assistance. Asking other local organizations for recommendations and forming those partnerships can also be a way to find consultants.

How do you use OVC funding to support traditional healers and healing practices? Is it allowed as a support system by the Feds?

It can be, depending on the grant's solicitation. OVC's largest Tribal victim services funding program, the Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside Formula program explicitly allows cultural healing activities and expenses. Read the specific solicitation in which you are interested. If cultural healing activities falls within the parameters of solicitation, include the information to fund a traditional healer and healing practices in both the narrative and the budget. Be very specific. Work with funding agencies as a valuable partner, sharing with them your community needs for victim services. Examples of traditional healers and healing



practices to include in grant narratives can be hiring a tribal healer, cultural educators, or someone who could engage in pottery or other healing through the arts programs.

HTI Labs and PAVE, have you heard of them? Can we partner with them on a grant?

[HTI labs](#) offers a platform for single screening, assessment, and referral process for victims of trafficking called [Providing Avenues for Victim Empowerment \(PAVE\)](#). These are specialized areas of work in victim services, which can be met by partnering with these types of programs. A good first step is to reach out, discuss partnership options, and find out how you can support each other. It is always productive to build a cadre of partners aligned to specific community needs. It is a common practice to ask for an introduction meeting to better identify what resources each may have to offer. In regard to partnering with programs to meet grant requirements, work with your grant manager to receive specific guidance. When applying for any funding, read the funding solicitation closely to meet any requirements. Formalize any partnerships prior to submitting the grant application by creating a [Memorandum of Understanding](#).

What should an organization consider when building partnerships to meet grant requirements?

Consider the goal and objectives for a partnership. Perhaps, you need expertise in a specific area and a partner can provide this expertise. When working with a partner organization, ensure partners have an understanding for the American Indian and Alaska Native culture and the issues being addressed. If partner organization do not have this knowledge, discuss learning opportunities to increase staff and program cultural understanding. Taking a leap of faith to work together when possible can give victims and survivors the most comprehensive services possible. Networking is a great way to begin partnership building and discovering potential partnerships. Start by reaching out to [OVC grantees](#) in your area. Participating in chats on webinars and training is also a great method of networking to other programs and people doing similar work.

How can TVSSA funding be used to reach Alaska Native and American Indian victims of human trafficking?

Recognizing the signs of trafficking and knowing how to offer support is critical in reaching victims of human trafficking. TVSSA funding can be used to support anti-trafficking projects. For example, ANJC received [2020 TVSSA funding](#) to support regional outreach in rural Alaska. The project is two phases. The first phase is conducting a community needs assessment with regional tribal organizations. Phase two will focus on three areas: (1) training for professionals likely to encounter victims of crime vulnerable to re-victimization by traffickers and victims of human trafficking; (2) victim advocacy, legal assistance, and



traditional healing consultations via distance delivery; and (3) coordination of regional stakeholders participating in a statewide communications campaign.

How do you expand a small victim services operation to offer more comprehensive support to victims? Can someone give a specific example?

A good starting point is to complete a comprehensive needs assessment, surveying the community about existing justice programs. This will provide input on what is working and where there are service gaps within your community. The Catawba Nation did this and the feedback informed both a strategic plan and an immediate action plan which informed a target expansion of services in needed areas like substance abuse treatment and mental health care. It is important to remember that not all services are appropriate for all communities; a needs assessment can help focus on a community's specific needs. A needs assessment can also help identify how proposed services will directly address issues in your community when applying for grant funds.

When you begin offering victim services, ensure services are victim-centered, [trauma-informed](#) and [survivor-centered](#). There are [Guiding Principles](#) for serving survivors of human trafficking to assist victim service providers with getting started. There are resources available for discovering if [starting a nonprofit is right for you](#) or administrative guidance for [establishing a nonprofit](#) organization. Regardless of where your organization or business is offering victim services, multi-disciplinary partnerships are key. Connect with a local [human trafficking taskforce](#) to meet with other victim service providers, learn about any gaps in services, and [build potential partnerships](#). The National Human Trafficking Hotline also maintains a [Referral Directory](#) where you can search for anti-trafficking organizations by city, state and zip code.

How can we submit a grant application that accurately represents the amount of personnel needed to execute the tasks and keeps us within the staffing limitations?

Generally, federal grants do not have staffing limitations other than salary caps. Strategic planning to identify program strengths, needs, and priorities can help ensure there is enough staff with the skills and experience to do the work in a grant proposal. Contact the [Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center](#) at contact@ovc-htcbc.org or 1-844-682-0411 to request assistance with strategic planning or navigating funding opportunities to support your victim services work.

Additional Information

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