

Name:

# General Victim Assistance Grant Program, FY2026

Available

12/16/2024

Due Date

02/13/2025

## Purpose:

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The purpose of this program is to provide services and assistance directly to victims of crime to speed their recovery and aid them through the criminal justice process.

Services may include the following:

- Responding to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims;
- Assisting victims in stabilizing their lives after a victimization;
- Assisting victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system; and
- Providing victims with safety and security.

This solicitation is for programs seeking to provide general victim services to broad categories of victim populations that may include victims of commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking, including emergency and long-term residential (shelter) for children and transition-age youth as well as drop-in centers.

Information about other related funding opportunities is provided below and on the *Funding Opportunities* tab of the [eGrants](#) homepage:

- **Specialized Advocacy for Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth, FY2026.** Projects to support advocacy services for children and transition-aged youth within the CSEY Advocacy model.
- **Texas Model for Care Coordination, FY2026.** The purpose of this funding opportunity is to support programs to implement the Texas Model for Care Coordination for Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY).

Agencies applying for funds to support a CASA or Children's Advocacy Center program must apply through either Texas CASA, Inc. or Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas.

## Available Funding:

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Funding is authorized for these projects under the following sources:

- Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) as amended and codified in 34 U.S.C. §20103. VOCA funds are made available through a Congressional appropriation to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.
- State funds are authorized under SB30, Section 2.26 passed during the 88<sup>th</sup> Regular Session for Truusted Programs within the Office of the Governor.

All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

## Eligible Organizations:

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Applications may be submitted by state agencies, public and private non-profit institutions of higher education, independent school districts, Native American tribes, councils of governments, non-profit corporations (including hospitals and faith-based organizations) and units of local government, which are defined as a non-statewide governmental body with the authority to establish a budget and impose taxes (includes hospital districts). Other local governmental agencies should apply through an associated unit of local government.

## Application Process:

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Applicants must access the PSO's eGrants grant management website at <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov> to register and apply for funding.

1. For eligible local and regional projects:

- Applicants must contact their applicable regional council of governments (COG) regarding their application.
- Each of Texas' 24 COGs holds its own application planning workshops, workgroups, and/or subcommittees and facilitates application prioritization for certain programs within its region. Failure to comply with regional requirements imposed by the COG may render an application ineligible.

2. State agencies, and other organizations proposing projects with a statewide impact, may submit applications directly to PSO.

Applicants are required to submit fully developed and detailed grant budgets at the time of application, PSO will not accept placeholder applications and/or budget line items in lieu of a well written and detailed grant application.

Non-profit applicants are limited to a single application per agency, and all other eligible organizations are limited to one application per unit, district or division.

## Key Dates:

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Action	Date
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Funding Announcement Release	12/16/2024
Online System Opening Date	12/16/2024
Final Date to Submit and Certify an Application	02/13/2025 at 5:00PM CST
Earliest Project Start Date	10/01/2025

## Project Period:

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Projects **may not exceed 12 months** and must begin on or after 10/01/2025 and expire on or before 9/30/2026.

## Funding Levels

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Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: No Maximum

Match Requirement: 20% of the total project

**The match requirement can be met through cash or in-kind contributions.**

Note: Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for the amount of funding they can responsibly expend in the grant period. PSO will be tracking expenditure rates throughout the life of the grants and may take action to avoid large de-obligations at the end of grant periods.

## Standards

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Grantees must comply with standards applicable to this fund source cited in the Texas Grant Management Standards ([TxGMS](#)), [Federal Uniform Grant Guidance](#), and all statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable to this funding.

## Eligible Activities and Costs

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The following list of eligible activities and costs apply generally to all projects under this announcement.

### Crisis Services

- Services that respond to immediate needs (other than medical care), emotional, psychological, and physical health and safety including:
  - Crisis intervention services;
  - Accompanying victims to hospitals for medical examinations<sup>[1]</sup>;
  - Hotline counseling;
  - Safety planning;
  - Emergency food, clothing, and transportation;

- Window, door, or lock replacement or repair, and other repairs necessary to ensure a victim's safety;
- Costs of the following, on an emergency basis (i.e., when the State's compensation program, the victim's health insurance plan, Medicaid, or other health care funding source, is not reasonably expected to be available quickly enough to meet the emergency needs of a victim (typically within 48 hours of the crime): Non-prescription and prescription medicine, prophylactic or other treatment to prevent HIV/AIDS infection or other infectious disease, durable medical equipment (such as wheel-chairs, crutches, hearing aids, eyeglasses), and other healthcare items; in all cases the grant must be considered the option of last resort; and
- Emergency legal assistance, such as for filing for restraining or protective orders, and obtaining emergency custody orders and visitation rights.
- **Personal advocacy and emotional support including:**
  - Working with a victim to assess the impact of the crime;
  - Identification of victim's needs;
  - Case management;
  - Management of practical problems created by the victimization;
  - Identification of resources available to the victim;
  - Provision of information, referrals, advocacy, and follow-up contact for continued services, as needed;
  - Traditional, cultural, and/or alternative therapy/healing (e.g., art therapy, yoga – with appropriate training, certification, or licensure);
  - Transportation of victims to receive services and to participate in criminal justice proceedings; and
  - Public awareness and education presentations (including the development of presentation materials, brochures, newspaper notices, and public service announcements) in schools, community centers, and other public forums that are designed to inform crime victims of specific rights and services and provide them with (or refer them to) services and assistance, this activity will only be funded in conjunction with programs providing direct services.

#### **Forensic Interviews (with the following parameters):**

- Results of the interview will be used not only for law enforcement and prosecution purposes, but also for identification of needs such as social services, personal advocacy, case management, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services;
- Interviews are conducted in the context of a multi-disciplinary investigation and diagnostic team, or in a specialized setting such as a child advocacy center; and
- The interviewer is trained to conduct forensic interviews appropriate to the developmental age and abilities of children, or the developmental, cognitive, and physical or communication disabilities presented by adults.



## **Legal Advocacy**

- Facilitating participation in criminal justice and other public proceedings arising from the crime, including:
  - Advocacy on behalf of a victim;
  - Accompanying a victim to offices and court;
  - Transportation, meals, and lodging to allow a victim who is not a witness to participate in a proceeding;
  - Interpreting for a non-witness victim who is deaf or hard of hearing, or with limited English proficiency;
  - Providing child care and respite care to enable a victim who is a caregiver to attend activities related to the proceeding;
  - Notification to victims regarding key proceeding dates (e.g., trial dates, case disposition, incarceration, and parole hearings);
  - Assistance with Victim Impact Statements;
  - Assistance in recovering property that was retained as evidence; and
  - Assistance with restitution advocacy on behalf of crime victims.
- Legal assistance services (including those provided on an emergency basis), where reasonable and where the need for such services arises as a direct result of the victimization, including:
  - Those (other than criminal defense) that help victims assert their rights as victims in a criminal proceeding directly related to the victimization, or otherwise protect their safety, privacy, or other interests as victims in such a proceeding; and
  - Those actions (other than tort actions) that, in the civil context, are reasonably necessary as a direct result of the victimization.

## **Multi-Disciplinary Teams and Case Coordination**

- Representatives of several agencies meet regularly to discuss common cases and share information to enhance investigation, prosecution, and victim restoration. Cases are followed through in this manner to closure. Participating agencies may include Child Protective Service, law enforcement, prosecutors' offices, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners or other medical personnel, mental health professionals, etc.

## **Peer Support Groups**

- Peer-support, including activities that provide opportunities for victims to meet other victims, share experiences, and provide self-help, information, and emotional support.

## **Professional Therapy and Counseling**

- Mental health counseling and care, including, but not limited to, out-patient therapy/counseling provided by a person who meets professional standards to provide these services in the jurisdiction in which the care is administered.

## **Protective Order Assistance:**

- Legal representation provided by program staff and/or staff attorneys to obtain protective orders and assistance;
- May be provided by law enforcement personnel, prosecution staff or other service providers; and
- Services may be available at non-traditional locations and times.

## **Shelter**

- Providing a safe place for victims/survivors and their children;
- Short-term (up to 45 days) in-home care and supervision services for children and adults who remain in their own homes when the offender/caregiver is removed; and
- Short-term (up to 45 days) nursing-home, adult foster care, or group-home placement for adults for whom no other safe, short-term residence is available;

## **Transitional Housing**

- Travel, rental assistance, security deposits, utilities, and other costs incidental to relocation of survivors into transitional housing, as well as voluntary support services such as childcare and counseling. Provision of this service is limited to 18 months in duration per client and must require active participation in program services designed to enable self-sufficiency of the client. PSO should be considered the payee of last resort for this service. To be eligible, this service must be included in the original application budget prioritized by the local Council of Government's Criminal Justice Advisory Committee.

## **Victim-Offender Meetings**

- Meetings between the survivor and the offender who perpetrated the crime against the survivor. At a minimum, grantees must consider:
  - The safety and security of the survivor;
  - The benefit of therapeutic value to the survivor;
  - The procedures for ensuring that participation of the survivor and offender are voluntary and that everyone understands the nature of any meeting or other activity;
  - The provision of appropriate support and accompaniment for the survivor;
  - Appropriate debriefing opportunities for the survivor after a meeting;
  - The credentials of the facilitators; and
  - The opportunity for a survivor to withdraw from the process at any time.

## **Victim Notification Systems**

Agencies seeking grant funding to implement crime victim notification systems are encouraged to include the following features:



- Automatically, and without the requirement to download a software application to opt-in to notifications, notify a victim or relative of a deceased victim by e-mail or text message of all the following regarding a victim's case:
  - The date on which the incident report is created;
  - The case number;
  - The names of investigators who are assigned to the case;
  - The date an arrest is made;
  - The date an affidavit alleging probable cause is presented to the attorney representing the state;
  - The date the defendant is arraigned under Chapter 26, Code of Criminal Procedure;
  - Whether the case has been dismissed by the attorney representing the state; and
  - Any other information relevant to the case;
- Interface with the law enforcement agency's system of records;
- Provide configurable triggers to directly send messages;
- Provide the capability:
  - To attach informational brochures or other electronic attachments to the messages;
  - For a person to check the case status;
  - To transmit notifications in English or Spanish; and
  - To respond to questions via artificial intelligence;
- Monitor the number and types of messages sent and enable a user to visualize that data; and
- Provide a survey tool so the law enforcement agency can solicit feedback on victims services.

### **Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Residential and Community Based Services**

**Note: Applicants seeking to apply for one of the following CSEY activities should select the Funding Opportunity titled "Victim Assistance, Residential and Community-Based Services for Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth" in eGrants. These applications will be scored and prioritized by the Regional Councils of Governments (COGs) as part of the General Victim Assistance program. Please be sure to contact your local COG for information on local COG policies, eligibility requirements, and deadlines for Fiscal Year 2026 General Victim Assistance funding. Failure to abide by COG policies may render your application ineligible.**

- **Community-Based Drop-in Centers:** Development, expansion, or enhancement of a drop-in center which may include street outreach programs for children or transition-age youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation or are victims of crime that place them at high risk for commercial sexual exploitation. The project must provide safety planning, individualized and immediate trauma-responsive assessment and case management including connecting the survivor to needed medical and behavioral health care, legal and other resources, counseling, support groups, and assistance with securing emergency and

long-term residential services. Applicant must accept survivor walk-in self-referrals and be accessible, either on-site or through an on-call response, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **Emergency Residential Placements:** Development, expansion, or enhancement of a program that provides emergency placement for community children, children in the care of DFPS, and/or Juvenile Justice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The program must provide physical safety, safety planning, individualized and immediate trauma-responsive behavioral healthcare, legal, educational, vocational, and housing resources, community and relationship-building opportunities in an empowering, non-judgmental environment, and re-engagement after runaway episodes or other disruptions in placement or services. Programs must identify strategies to promote survivor's tangible safety and felt safety. Clinical, behavioral milieu, and service planning approaches must follow recognized promising practices or evidence-based programs. Stabilization and Assessment Centers providing brief placements for highly dysregulated survivors are included in this category.
- **Long-term Residential Placements:** Development, expansion, or enhancement of a program that provides long-term treatment, foster care or residential treatment for both system-involved and non-system involved children and transition-age youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Programs must provide access to intensive case management and wraparound facilitation, 24-hour clinical and behavioral crisis services, safety planning, individualized and immediate trauma-responsive case management (including connecting survivors to needed medical and behavioral healthcare, legal, educational, and vocational resources), community and relationship building opportunities in an empowering, non-judgmental environment, and re-engagement after missing events or other disruptions in placement or services. Residential programs for transition-age youth must support empowerment through services that engage survivors in vocational and educational opportunities in the community. Strategies employed in clinical, behavioral milieu, and all other service planning must follow recognized promising practices or evidence-based programs.
- **Innovative Direct Services for Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth:** Innovative direct service projects to support child and youth survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Applicants must clearly articulate the population that will benefit directly from this innovative service, survivor outcomes that will be different because of this innovation, and any research that supports the effectiveness of the proposed project.

[1] Note related to hospital accompaniment with sexual assault survivors: In accordance with Art. 56A.351, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, a victim shall be offered the opportunity to have a sexual assault program advocate available during a sexual assault forensic exam. Sec. 420.051, Texas Government Code defines a sexual assault program advocate as an individual who has completed a sexual assault training program certified by the attorney general and is an employee or volunteer of a sexual assault program.



## Program-Specific Requirements

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All projects under this funding announcement must meet the following requirements:

**Cultural competency:** Applicants must be culturally competent when providing services to victims. Victim service providers must have the ability to blend cultural knowledge and sensitivity with victim restoration skills for a more effective and culturally appropriate recovery process. Cultural competency occurs when: (1) cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity are integrated into action and policy; (2) the service is relevant to the needs of the community and provided by trained staff, board members, and management; and (3) an advocate or organization recognizes each client is different with different needs, feelings, ideas and barriers.

**Victim services assessment survey:** All recipients of funding under this announcement may be required to participate in a victim services assessment during their grant period, as directed by PSO.

### **Special requirements for vehicle purchases:**

Only non-profits will be eligible to purchase vehicles under this funding announcement. The vehicles must be for the purpose of transporting victims to receive various services.

## Eligibility Requirements

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1. Entities receiving grant funds must demonstrate a record of effective services to victims of crime and financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund; or substantial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.

- A program has demonstrated a record of effective direct services and support when, for example, it demonstrates the support and approval of its direct services by the community, its history of providing direct services in a cost-effective manner, and the breadth or depth of its financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund.
- A program has substantial financial support from sources other than the Crime Victims Fund when at least twenty-five percent of the program's funding in the year of, or the year preceding the award comes from such sources.

2. Local units of governments must comply with the Cybersecurity Training requirements described in Section 772.012 and Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code. Local governments determined to not be in compliance with the cybersecurity requirements required by Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code are ineligible for OOG grant funds until the second anniversary of the date the local government is determined ineligible. Government entities must annually certify their compliance with the training requirements using the [Cybersecurity Training Certification for State and Local Governments](#). A copy of the Training Certification must be uploaded to your eGrants application. For more information or to access available training

programs, visit the Texas Department of Information Resources [Statewide Cybersecurity Awareness Training](#) page.

3. Entities receiving funds from PSO must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 66. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.

Counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90% of convictions within five business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety.

4. Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting complete UCR data and the Texas specific reporting mandated by 411.042 TGC, to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Crime in Texas (CIT) publication. To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year by the deadline(s) established by DPS. Due to the importance of timely reporting, applicants are required to submit complete and accurate UCR data, as well as the Texas-mandated reporting, on a no less than monthly basis and respond promptly to requests from DPS related to the data submitted.

5. Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to OOG and is active until August 31, 2026 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.



6. Each non-profit 501(c)(3) organization must certify that it does not have, and will continue not to have any policy, procedure, or agreement (written or unwritten) that in any way encourages, induces, entices, or aids any violations of immigration laws. Additionally, the organization certifies that it does not have in effect, purport to have in effect, and is not subject to or bound by any rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) encourage the concealment, harboring, or shielding from detection of fugitives from justice or aliens who illegally came to, entered, or remained in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, the organization certifies that it will not adopt, enforce, or endorse a policy which prohibits or materially limits the enforcement of immigration laws, and will not, as demonstrated by pattern or practice, prohibit or materially limit the enforcement of immigration laws.

Each non-profit organization must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/NGO Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements.

7. Eligible applicants must be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM) database and have an UEI (Unique Entity ID) number assigned to its agency (to get registered in the SAM database and request an UEI number, go to <https://sam.gov/>).

8. Use of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT) is required for programs serving commercially exploited children funded by this award. A CSE-IT screening must be conducted in Lighthouse for each client entering services. Scores of Clear Concern must be reported to DFPS Statewide Intake.

Failure to comply with program or eligibility requirements may cause funds to be withheld and/or the suspension or termination of grant funds.

## Prohibitions

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Grant funds may not be used to support the unallowable costs listed in the **Guide to Grants** or any of the following unallowable costs:

1. Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (cf. 18 U.S.C. 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly;
2. The active investigation and prosecution of criminal activity, except for the provision of victim assistance services (e.g., emotional support, advocacy, and legal services) to crime victims, under 28 CFR § 94.119, during such investigation and prosecution;
3. Any activities related to fundraising;
4. Capital improvements; property losses and expenses; real estate purchases; mortgage payments; remodeling; and construction;
5. Reimbursement of crime victims for expenses incurred as a result of a crime;

6. Salaries, benefits, fees, furniture, equipment, and other expenses of executive directors, board members, and other administrators (except as specifically allowed);
7. Counseling or treatment for substance abuse (general counseling that includes a component addressing substance abuse is eligible);
8. Victim-offender meetings that serve to replace (or as a part of) criminal justice proceedings;
9. Medical training;
10. Medical care or expenses (except as specifically allowed);
11. Forensic medical evidence collection to include the salary, overtime or on-call cost of SANE Nurses;
12. Cash payments to victims, gift cards, or fuel vouchers;
13. Creation of a voucher program where victims are directly given vouchers for such services as housing or counseling;
14. Transportation, lodging, per diem or any related costs for third-party participants to attend a training, when grant funds are used to develop and conduct training;
15. Leasing of vehicles;
16. Training of external partners or the community;
17. Local Criminal Justice Advisory Committee program income;
18. Research and studies;
19. Activities that may compromise victim safety;
20. Entertainment, including amusement, diversion, social activities, field trips, excursions and any associated costs (i.e. tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) unless there is a clear programmatic purpose and the costs are approved in advance by PSO; and
21. Nonessential maintenance on buildings, lawn care, and landscaping; and
22. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, state, or local law or regulation.

## Selection Process

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PSO will screen all applications to ensure that they meet the requirements included in the funding announcement.

### 1. For eligible local and regional projects:

- Applications will be forwarded by PSO to the appropriate regional council of governments (COG).
- The COG's criminal justice advisory committee will prioritize all eligible applications based on State priorities, identified community priorities, cost and program effectiveness.
- PSO will accept priority listings that are approved by the COG's executive committee.
- PSO will make all final funding decisions based upon eligibility, approved COG priorities, reasonableness of the project, availability of funding, and cost-effectiveness.



2. For state discretionary projects, applications will be reviewed by PSO staff members or a review group selected by the executive director. PSO will make all final funding decisions based on eligibility, reasonableness, availability of funding, and cost-effectiveness.

PSO may not fund all applications or may only award part of the amount requested. In the event that funding requests exceed available funds, PSO may revise projects to address a more limited focus.

## Contact Information

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For more information, contact the eGrants help desk at [eGrants@gov.texas.gov](mailto:eGrants@gov.texas.gov) or (512) 463-1919.

Total Funds

**\$TBD**