

Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Virtual Meeting

(In accordance with approved policy)

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Final Minutes

Committee Members Present

Maria Altonen, Elvira De la Cruz, Sanu Dieng, Marva Dunn, Nancy Fowler, Pyowook Han, Kristen Howard, Claudia Lopez-Muniz, Kike Oliver, Adrian Perry, Tammy Sharpe, Kristina Vadas, Jonathan Yglesias for Kristi VanAudenhove, Toni Zollicoffer

Committee Members Absent

Marybeth Adkins, Senator Barbara Favola, Kate Hanger, Krista Martinez, House of Delegates Representative (Vacant)

Guests Present

Teresa Berry, Sherry Hedrick, Eileen Longenecker, Ixchel Morrison, Trina Willard, Sandra Wright, Emma Yackso

DCJS Staff Present

Amia Barrows, Gleibys Gonzalez, Andi Martin, Anya Shaffer, Chrissy Smith, Amber Stanwix, Andrea Sutton

Welcome and Introductions

Sanu Dieng, Committee Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. and determined a quorum was present. Sanu welcomed back to the Committee Toni Zollicoffer, who was officially reappointed to the Committee. Roll call was taken, and members introduced themselves.

Approval of September 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Marva Dunn made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2023 meeting. Tammy Sharp seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Toni Zollicoffer abstained.

Sexual and Domestic Violence Funding Project

Trina Willard, Owner & Principal Consultant, Knowledge Advisory Group (KAG), presented to the Committee on the DCJS Sexual and Domestic Violence Funding Project. As a result of this project, KAG recommended that DCJS adopt a funding formula for sexual assault and domestic violence agencies that will support noncompetitive funding based on services and service area descriptors. During the

coming year, DCJS will test the proposed formula, determine whether changes are needed, and plan the best way to implement a funding formula. DCJS will not implement a funding formula for SFY 2025. A copy of Ms. Willard's presentation is attached to the meeting minutes.

State Agency Funding Updates

- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Kristina Vadas reported the following:
 - Regarding Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, the federal Crime Victims Fund balance is still very low. The proposed federal budget is showing significant decreases to awards to states and territories.
 - For the Victims Services Grant Program (VSGP) grant, grantees are in the middle of their state fiscal year (SFY) 2024 grant year. These programs received a 10% reduction to the VOCA portion of their awards. DCJS will release two VSGP solicitations for SFY 2025: one will be for competitive funds and the other for noncompetitive sexual and domestic violence (SDV) funds. The amount of competitive funds will be reduced in SFY 2025.
 - The Victim Witness Grant Program is in a continuation year. Programs received a 10% reduction to the VOCA portion of their awards. DCJS is unsure of the outlook for awards in SFY 2025.
 - DCJS has three Sexual Assault Services Program grants: calendar year (CY) 2023, which will end December 31, 2023; SFY 2024 one-time special funding opportunity, which will end June 30, 2024; and CY 2024, which will be open January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.
 - DCJS has two VSTOP grants: CY 2023, which will end December 31, 2023; and CY 2024, which is a 24-month grant that will be open January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025.
 - Regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) VSGP restoration awards: grants that received a 12-month extension will end June 30, 2024. DCJS is planning to release a new solicitation to award approximately \$2.8 million of additional ARPA funding from the state's SFY 2024 budget. These are likely the last of the ARPA awards.
 - The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Victim Fund (VSDVVF) SFY 2024 grants are underway. Deposits into this state special fund remain at lower levels than in the past. SFY 2025 grant funding amounts are uncertain at this time.

- Virginia Department of Health
Maria Altonen reported that the Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) grant is currently in year five of a five-year cycle, which ends on January 31, 2024. VDH recently applied to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for their next five-year cycle. VDH is currently awaiting the Notice of Award and will be preparing for the new year which will begin February 1, 2024.

- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
Kike Oliver reported the following:
 - The HOME ARP - Tenant Based Rental Assistance Grant Funding Opportunity Application is now open for submissions. DHCD is allocating \$8.1 million in federal funding to support tenant based

rental assistance for individuals and households who are experiencing homelessness. The application is due on January 16, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. HOME ARP funding is from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and was part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This opportunity that is currently open is only for tenant based rental assistance. If you have any questions regarding this opportunity, please contact Homeless and Special Needs Housing Program Manager, Will Kerner, at william.kerner@dhcd.virginia.gov.

- The Point-In-Time Count date is January 24, 2024. This is the annual community count to evaluate the need for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in different localities. Those who are interested in participating in the count are encouraged to contact their local community partners to discuss volunteering opportunities. If you do not know who your community contact is, please contact Will Kerner at william.kerner@dhcd.virginia.gov, or if you are located in a rural community, please contact Dr. Darl Wilburn at darl.wilburn@dhcd.virginia.gov.

- Virginia Department of Social Services

Nancy Fowler reported the following:

- Domestic Violence Prevention and Services grant has 52 grantees. The purpose of the funding is to support comprehensive domestic violence services. Fourteen grantees chose to add domestic violence primary prevention services. The average award is \$155,134. Total awards equal \$8,066,967.
- Domestic Violence Services for Underserved Populations grant has eight grantees. The average award is \$70,438. Total awards equal \$563,500.
- Sexual and Domestic Violence Programs ARPA grant has 47 Grantees. For Domestic Violence Services the max award was \$30,000. For Sexual Assault Services the max award was \$80,000. Total awards equal \$4,091,229.
- Vaccine Testing and Access to Mobile Health grant: applications are currently being reviewed.
- Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention grant has 14 grantees. Seven are new to primary prevention or new to being funded. Seven are experienced with doing primary prevention. Total awards equal \$2,252,500.
- Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Training and Technical Assistance grant has one grantee. The award is \$135,000.

Past Business

- Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards

Andrea Sutton reported that the last round of agency applications was due at the end of September 2023. Seven applications were received. The DCJS Professional Standards Team (Amber Stanwix and Andrea Sutton) are planning site visits at the beginning of 2024. The last Professional Standards Committee meeting of the year will be held virtually on December 14, 2023.

New Business

None.

Other Member Announcements

None.

Public Comment

None.

Proposed 2024 Meeting Dates: March 20, 2024, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (in-person)
June 5, 2024, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (virtual)
September 18, 2024, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (in-person)
December 11, 2024, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (virtual)

Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

VOCA Funding Formula

What it is and how we got here



DCJS

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

Agenda

- Why a funding formula?
- Who was on the team?
- Background research of other states
- Constituent involvement
- A walk through the formula
- Next steps

Why a Funding Formula?

In order to improve equity in grant-making and increase stability of awards, DCJS seeks to establish a funding formula for sexual and domestic violence (SDV) services in Virginia. Use of a formula will provide consistency, objectivity, and fairness when awarding grant funds. The formula will minimize significant discrepancies in grant award amounts among similar organizations, and it will provide a reasonable method to weather fluctuations in grant funds that are available. DCJS seeks to develop the funding formula in partnership with local sexual and domestic violence service providers, current grant recipients, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, and other relevant stakeholders. DCJS seeks to establish a funding formula that is understandable, reasonable, transparent, and impartial.*

**From the RFP for the consultants for this project*

Why a Funding Formula?

The SDV funding formula for sexual and domestic violence services in Virginia should:*

- Be specifically designed for the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, in order to optimize grant funding for sexual and domestic violence services
- Be developed in partnership with local SDV service providers, current grant recipients, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, and other relevant stakeholders
- Include objective factors that promote fairness and equity
- Provide a transparent method of allocation based on the most up-to-date information and factors available
- Establish a minimum funding level or allocation based on objective factors
- Be informed by other similar funding formulas, if available
- Be understandable and easily explainable to stakeholders

**From the RFP for the consultants on this project*

Who Was on the Team

DCJS

- Kristina Vadas
- Andi Martin
- Anya Shaffer

Consultants

- Knowledge Advisory Group – evaluation
 - Trina Willard
 - Sandra Wright
- Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities - DEI
 - Emma Yackso
- River City Grants – DV/SV, grants
 - Stacy Ruble

Background Research

- In February 2023, the consulting team communicated with national technical assistance providers to identify states that have relevant funding formulas
- Interviewed four states with existing formulas
 - Colorado
 - Washington
 - Iowa
 - Idaho

Key Findings from Background Research

- Each state has/had similar challenges as Virginia is having:
 - Getting good data on need and demand. One state started collecting data on waitlists for shelter and counseling.
 - Trying to equitably distribute the funds but also leave room for new programs/projects that are helping victims to request funds.
 - Handling funding fluctuations.
- Each state's approach is different and has varying levels of SDVAs in the process to develop the funding strategies.
- States vary in how they attempt to address marginalized groups – including definitions, set-asides, extra points during review depending on level of culturally-competent and populations-specific services, or not addressing at all.

Colorado's formula seemed to be the most equitable and least burdensome for applicants.

Constituent Involvement

- It was important to get input and feedback from SDVAs throughout the process
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Focus groups



Interviews

The Consulting Team interviewed 20 stakeholders to gather insights on their experience with the grant application process, the impact of past funding fluctuations, and recommendations for future funding strategies. This was done in early March 2023.

- 18 VOCA subgrantees
 - A sample was developed that made sure to reflect the field, specifically regarding: size of organizations, regions, rural v. urban service areas, identity-specific organizations.
- 1 representative from the Virginia Department of Social Services
- 1 representative from the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance

Interviews – Key Findings Page 1

- All programs indicate a strong dependence on DCJS funding.
- Most programs are working to diversify funding streams, but progress has been slow.
- Conditions have been very difficult with the combined effects of VOCA funding cuts and increasing service demands due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The funding structure was frequently characterized as competitive, in such a way that pits programs and localities against one another rather than striving to serve as many survivors as possible statewide. This was also inherent in frequent comments where programs compared themselves to others, suggesting a climate of “the haves and the have nots”.
- Programs have varied in their approach to the use and/or philosophy towards funding surges, and some noted that DCJS’ direction to “dream big” during the last windfall may have encouraged less conservative decision-making at the local level.

Interviews – Key Findings Page 2

- Interviewees noted a constant scramble to find financial resources that directly takes attention away from survivor services.
- Interviewees noted a mindset of scarcity rather than growth and service.
- The lack of predictability in funding and funding reductions has dramatically impacted staff morale, turnover/retention, ability to recruit, breadth of services and service quality.
- Staff are doing very emotionally challenging work and not being paid a living wage.
- Collaboration seems desirable to attain equal access to all survivors but difficult to accomplish in the current competitive funding climate.

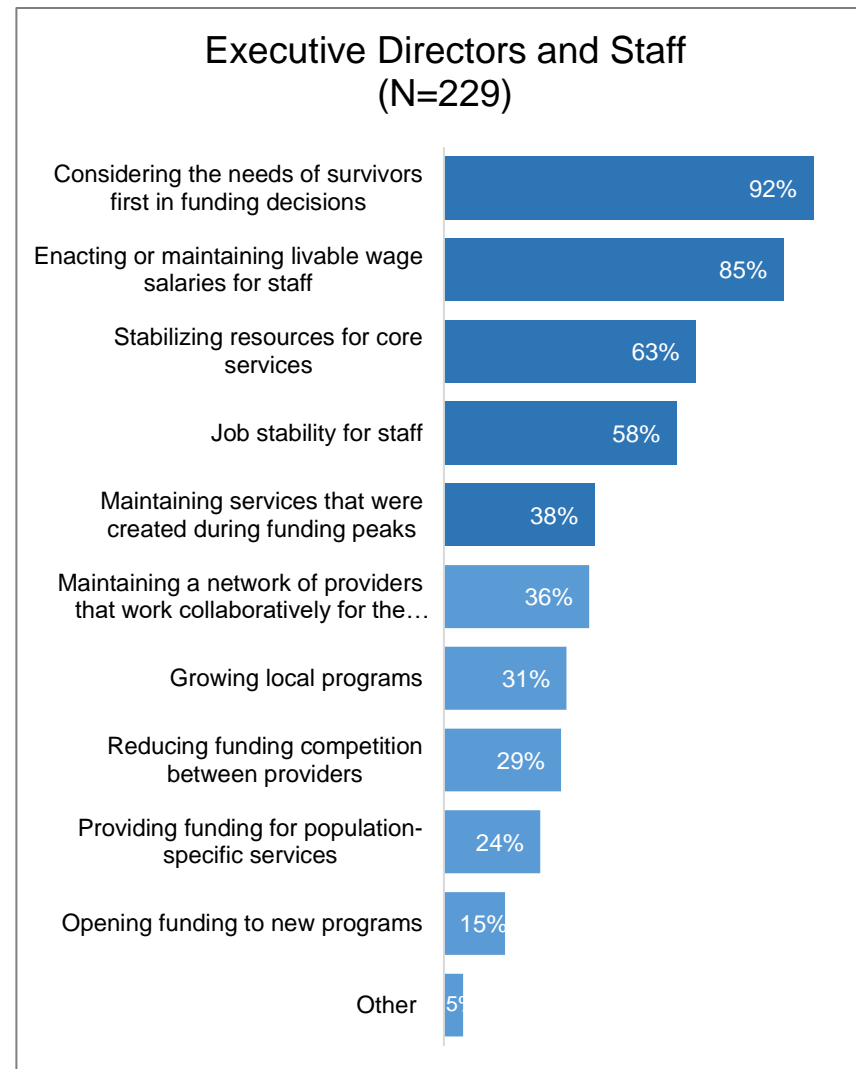
Interviews – Key Findings Page 3

- Opinions were split on whether accreditation/professional standards is a helpful step towards accomplishing fairer funding structures.
- Lack of clarity on terms and definitions seems to negatively influence understanding and communications.
- There is a lack of understanding about the current funding model.
- Need to acknowledge that equality and equity are not the same.
- Focusing on quality and impact needs more emphasis.
- Stability is a key desire.
- Flexibility is a key need.

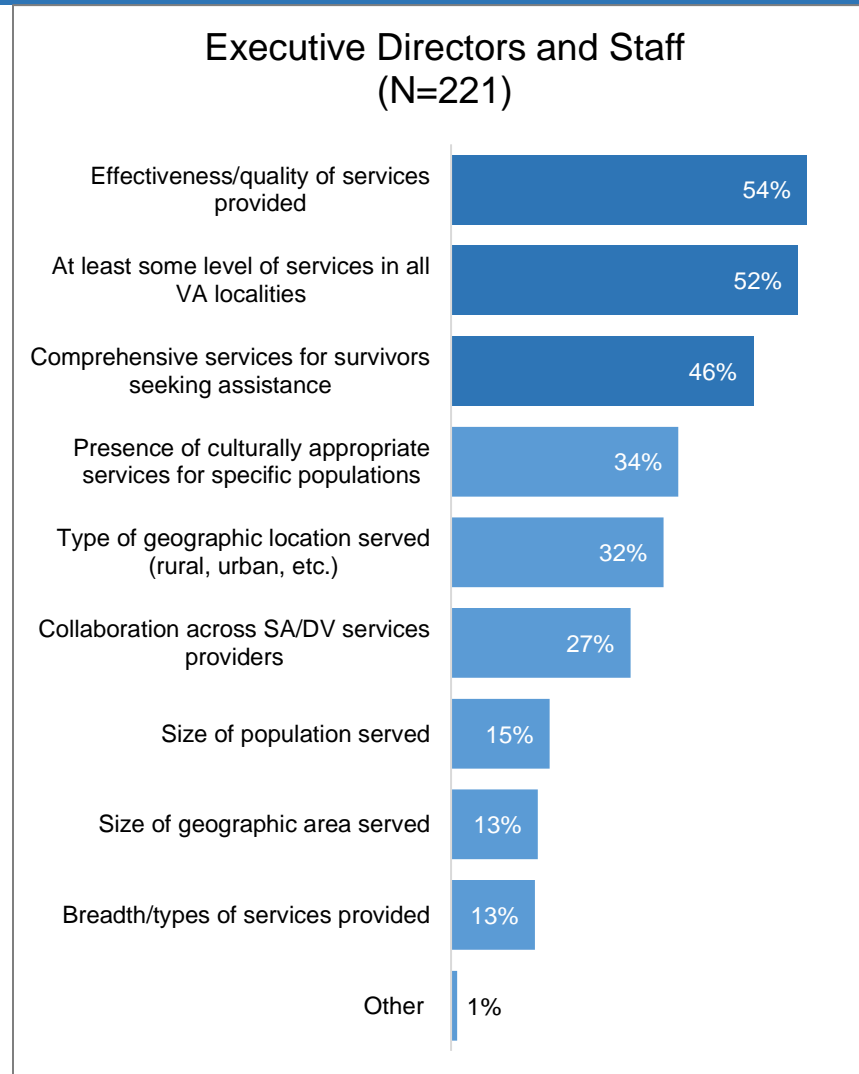
Surveys

- In late March 2023, consultants sent an electronic survey link to the Executive Directors of 58 organizations that receive SDV grants from DCJS to obtain feedback on potential changes to the funding formula for SDV grants.
- A total of 39 Executive Directors (or their designee) responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 67%.
- An additional 196 Staff from grantee organizations also completed the survey to obtain their perspectives on the funding formula.
- A total of 235 Executive Directors and Staff completed the DCJS funding formula survey.

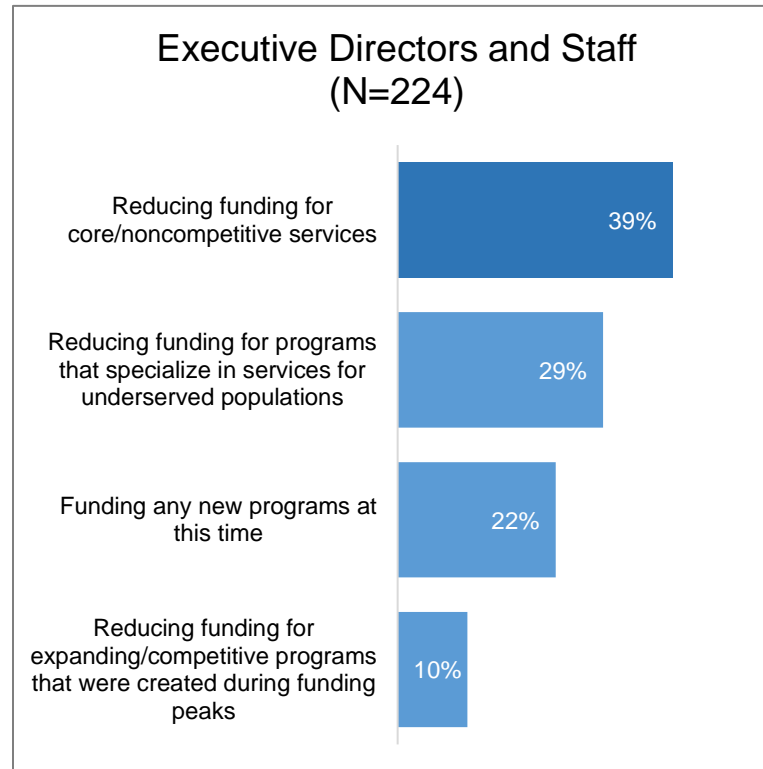
Key Finding 1- When asked which factors should be prioritized in determining funding allocations for domestic and sexual violence grants across the state, subgrantees indicated the funding formula should *consider the needs of survivors first in funding decisions* and *stabilize resources for core services*, while also providing staff with *stable, living wage jobs*.



Key Finding 2- When asked to identify the factors that are most essential when developing state-wide equity, subgrantees selected *Effectiveness of services provided*, *At least some level of services in all VA localities*, and *Comprehensive services for survivors seeking assistance*.



Key Finding 3- When asked to identify the most problematic response to funding reductions, subgrantees were more likely to select *Reducing funding for core/noncompetitive services* than any other response.



Initial Strategies

- After all this data collection, the consulting team develop an initial set of recommendations and a funding-formula philosophy.
- This was shared and further developed through meetings with the DCJS team.
- These initial strategies were then shared with the field for feedback through a series of focus groups.

Focus Groups

- Did focus groups in early August 2023
- 26 people participated across three focus groups
- Presented three concepts based on input so far and DCJS consultations
 1. Implementing collaborative one-year planning grants
 2. Using a formula model like Colorado's that requires less narrative in applications and would be based on tiers of funding depending on the extent of a service (e.g. housing) or demographics (e.g. poverty)
 3. Implementing new VOCA eligibility requirements including DEI plan, service model centered on survivor choice, and demonstration of program effectiveness

Focus Group Response to Concept One

- In general participants had mixed views on one-year collaborative planning grants and did not have clear ideas on how they could be used.
- Themes included:
 - Concerns that there would not be funding to implement the ideas generated with planning grants.
 - Programs already stretched too thin to consider new collaborations.
 - Programs already collaborating but with mixed results.
 - Collaborations could be used to fill gaps where there are no services.
 - Concerns this would pull money away from direct services.

Focus Group Response to Concept Two

- There were mixed responses to this concept and a desire to see more of the model before committing to supporting or opposing it.
- Themes included:
 - In general liked the idea of less narrative and administrative burden.
 - People liked that the model was more equity-based.
 - Both rural and urban programs were concerned they would see more cuts than the other.
 - Fears around eligibility and whether new kinds of programs would be able to compete.

Focus Group Response to Concept Three

- Feedback ranged from adamantly opposed to cautiously supportive.
- Themes included:
 - Concerns that small programs would not be have the capacity to write and implement new policies and program evaluation.
 - Most do not want funding formula to be tied to the professional standards.
 - Concern that some programs are already “checking a box” and saying they are doing something when they really are not.
 - Would need a long time to address equity, particularly as funding is being cut.
 - It is hard to measure program effectiveness for the kinds of services that SDVAs provide.

Funding Strategy Final Recommendations



DCJS

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

Overall Recommendations:

- Create a statewide opportunity to build capacity and enhance sustainability within current SDVAs (1 yr, up to \$100,000).
 - Option 1: Collaborative planning grants to address limited staff capacity and wide areas of need.
 - DCJS should consider allocating some of this funding to a facilitator for collaboratives, implementation funding, and a development/sustainability plan within the new ideas
 - Option 2: Offer grants to pay specialized consultants to build program capacity (1 yr, up to \$25,000). To ensure accessibility for programs with fewer staff, DCJS could prioritize smaller programs for this opportunity if needed.
 - Examples of consultant focuses include: development, equity, trauma-informed care, strategic/operational planning, evaluation, grant writing.

Overall Recommendations:

- Develop a criteria-based grant funding approach similar to the Colorado model, but further developed to fit Virginia's SV/DV landscape and the goals of this project.
 - A formula based on service provision all shifts us from a geographically tied model to one that centers the needs and choice of the survivor.
 - Acknowledges the role that identity and quality of services play in providing equitable support for survivors across the state.
 - Centers transparency, using clearly-defined allocations to determine each agencies level of funding.
 - Decrease administrative burden in application process, and levels the playing field between agencies that do and do not have in-house grant writers.

Funding Formula Walkthrough



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Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

Eligibility - Provide one of the following:

Full suite of services below:

- Information and Referral (I&R)
- Advocacy
- Case management
- Accompaniment
- Hotline/24/7 crisis response
- Housing
- Mental health services

OR

- At least one of the services to the left that is specific to an underserved/marginalized population (if I&R is selected, it must be paired with at least one additional service)
- AND the mission of the agency is specific to providing services to an underserved/marginalized population.

Underserved/marginalized populations does not include rural or low-income as they are addressed elsewhere in the formula.

Additional Eligibility Requirements Beyond VOCA Requirements

- Agency has been in operation and providing services to SADV survivors for at least 2 years.
- Agency or program mission clearly defined to support survivors of domestic violence/sexual assault.
- Demonstrated ability to meet match funds requirement based on financial statements or letters of commitment.
- Must be a government, 501c3, or tribal entity.
- Must provide a living wage to staff.

Funding Formula Factors

- Each element is given a percentage of all funding available. Then within that element (except for Service Model where both items need to be done), there are either tiers where the highest tier is chosen or arrays where the applicants check all that apply.
- Some elements have “boosts” which is extra money on top of the tier or array.
- The percentages are based on a combination of the importance of the service and the cost of providing the service.

Funding Formula Factors – Part One

Service Model	6%	Services must be provided through a trauma-informed lens and prioritize survivor-defined advocacy.
Evaluation	4%	Funds are based on the level of evaluation, measurement and consistent integration of results into programs.
Rural Area	5%	Formula uses census-based data to determine the percentage of agency's primary service area that serves rural localities.
High Poverty Area	5%	Formula uses census-based data to determine the percentage of agency's primary service area that lives at different levels of poverty.
Housing Services	25%	Funds are based on the type of housing service or services provided by the agency.

Funding Formula Factors – Part Two

Mental Health Services	5%	Funds are based on the type of mental health support services provided by the agency.
Hotline/24-7 Crisis response	8%	Funds are based on the level of hotline and 24/7 crisis responses, and whether services are provided in-house or contracted to a third-party provider.
Other Supportive Services	12%	Funds are based on the types of supportive services available at the agency, including information and referral, case management, advocacy, justice system assistance and transportation.
Historically Underserved Populations	25%	Funds are allocated regarding the ability and commitment of the agency to provide accessible, culturally responsive services for all survivors in their area.
Specific Mission and Service Model	5%	Funds are available to organizations that demonstrate culturally-specific or population-specific services that uniquely meet the needs of those underserved populations.

Additional Considerations:

- DCJS should consider developing an evidence-based logic model with other funding partners to drive the statewide funding strategies for SDVAs.
- Develop a clear definition of “effective services” based on this logic model that is applicable and equitable for all eligible agencies.
- If competitive funding becomes available, encourage grantees to use it for capacity building rather than direct services.
- Do not tie funding to current professional standards to ensure that identity-based and smaller/newer organizations continue to remain eligible for VOCA funds.

Questions?

Thank you!



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Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services