

SPECIAL TRIBAL CRIMINAL JURISDICTION GRANT PROGRAM (TJP): Targeted Support for Alaska Native Tribes Special Initiatives



OVW Overview

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). OVW administers grant programs authorized by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and subsequent legislation and provides national leadership on issues of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. OVW grants support coordinated community responses to hold offenders accountable and serve victims.

The Tribal Affairs Division (TAD) within OVW is responsible for the administration of tribal specific grant programs and initiatives, management of tribal specific training and technical assistance, and coordination with other federal departments, and DOJ offices on domestic violence, dating violence, sex assault, sex trafficking, and stalking in tribal communities.

Program Overview

The OVW Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction Grant Program (Tribal Jurisdiction Program), supports tribes in their efforts to exercise special Tribal criminal jurisdiction (STCJ) over non-Indians who commit “covered crimes” (assault of Tribal justice personnel; child, dating, sexual and/or domestic violence; obstruction of justice; sex trafficking; stalking; and protection order violations) within the Tribe’s jurisdictional boundaries and provides technical assistance for planning and implementing changes in their criminal justice systems necessary to exercise jurisdiction to ensure that all victims find safety and justice and that non-Indians who commit certain crimes are held accountable.

This targeted FY 2023 special initiative solicitation under the Tribal Jurisdiction Program is designed to assist Alaska Native tribal governments, or consortia of Alaska Native tribal governments, that plan to seek designation by the Attorney General as participating tribes able to exercise jurisdiction over non-Indians through the Alaska Pilot Program for STCJ, which was established by the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022, 25 U.S.C. § 1305(d).

Alaska Pilot Project

For more information on the Alaska Pilot Program, including a description of the statutory requirements regarding designation, see the Department of Justice’s tribal consultation framing paper on the Alaska pilot, available at www.justice.gov/file/1518536/download.

An award under this special initiative does not constitute or replace designation by the Attorney General as a participating tribe to exercise STCJ under the Alaska Pilot Program.

Funding under the TJP may be used to:

- strengthen tribal criminal justice systems to assist Indian tribes in exercising special Tribal criminal jurisdiction, including for law enforcement; prosecution; trial and appellate courts; supervision systems; detention and corrections; treatment, rehabilitation, and reentry programs and services; culturally appropriate services and assistance for victims and their families; and criminal codes and rules of criminal procedure, appellate procedure, and evidence;
- provide indigent criminal defendants with licensed defense counsel, at no cost to the defendant, in criminal proceedings in which a participating tribe prosecutes covered crimes;
- ensure that, in criminal proceedings in which a participating tribe exercises special Tribal criminal jurisdiction, jurors are summoned, selected, and instructed in a manner consistent with all applicable requirements; and
- accord victims of covered crimes rights that are similar to the rights of a crime victim described in section 3771(a) of title 18, United States Code, consistent with Tribal law and custom.

Program Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to: Governments of Alaska Native Tribes, or consortia of Alaska Native Tribes, whose Native village(s) are within an Alaska Native Village Statistical Area.

Mandatory Program Requirements

1. **OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance (TTA).** This includes joining and actively participating in the Inter-tribal Technical Assistance Working Group (ITWG) on Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction, in addition to other OVW training and TA opportunities, including those specifically designed for Alaska Tribes. The ITWG is a working group of tribal representatives who exchange views, information, and advice about how tribes may best exercise STCJ and address comprehensive systemic responses to the covered crimes. Recipients are encouraged to ensure all Memorandum of Understanding/Internal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU/ IMOU) partners and other systems partners have multiple opportunities to participate in OVW training and TA throughout the project period.
2. **Planning Period.** Award recipients must engage in a planning period to further develop the project and corresponding budget. Recipients will participate in webinars and in-person planning sessions to develop additional grant documentation. An award condition will limit available funds to those needed for costs such as travel for training and TA and staff salary and fringe during the planning stage. This condition will be removed for full project implementation once all documentation has been reviewed and approved by OVW.
3. **Dedicated Project Coordinator.** Minimally, award recipients must dedicate a staff or contracted position .5 FTE to this project. The Project Coordinator duties must include, at a minimum: coordinating regularly scheduled meetings of the MOU/ IMOU STCJ Planning and Implementation partners; coordinating training and technical assistance for the MOU/IMOU STCJ Planning and Implementation partners; coordinating achievement of project goals and objectives.
4. **MOU/IMOU.** Award recipients will develop and submit an MOU/IMOU during the planning stage of the grant project. Applicants should not submit the MOU/IMOU at the time of application. Recipients must engage partners, representing various disciplines, to plan, implement, and exercise STCJ. Required partners for the Tribal Jurisdiction Program are: Tribal Leadership; Tribal Judge; Tribal Prosecutor's Office; Tribal Attorney/ In-house General Counsel; Law Enforcement; and

Victim Services Provider. A victim services provider is a nonprofit, nongovernmental or tribal organization or rape crisis center, including a state or tribal domestic violence and/ or sexual assault coalition, that assists or advocates for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victims, including a domestic violence shelter, faith-based organization or other organization, with a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(50). Victim service providers must provide direct services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as one of their primary purposes.

5. **Attorney General Designation.** All awards will include an award condition that requires that the recipient may not exercise STCJ over non-Indian offenders who commit covered crimes unless and until the Tribe is designated by the Attorney General to participate in the Alaska Pilot Program, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 1305(d). Attorney General designation will be required prior to grant funds being used for the prosecution or incarceration of non-Indian defendants.
6. **Collection and reporting of performance indicators.** Forms, instructions, training, and related tools for each OVW program are available on the VAWA Measuring Effectiveness Initiative webpage at: www.vawamei.org/grant-programs
7. **Assessment or Evaluation.** Recipients may be expected to dedicate some OVW-funded time and resources to participating in an assessment or evaluation.

Solicitation Information

The 2023 solicitation to apply for this program can be found on OVW's website at:

www.justice.gov/d9/2023-05/OVW-2023-TJ-AK-solicitation.pdf

Additional solicitations can be found at:

www.justice.gov/ovw/open-solicitations

Contact:

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OVW Tribal Affairs website at:

www.justice.gov/ovw/tribal-affairs