

Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission

Semi-annual Progress Report for the Rural Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Assistance Program

A. Justification

1. Statutorily Mandated Need for Information

The Rural Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (Rural Program) seeks to enhance the safety of rural victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking and support projects uniquely designed to address and prevent these crimes in rural areas. This program encourages collaboration among criminal justice agencies, victim services providers, social services agencies, health professionals, and other community organizations to overcome the problems of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in rural communities.

The Rural Program funds projects that implement, expand, and establish cooperative efforts among law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim service providers, and other related parties to investigate and prosecute incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking; provide treatment, advocacy, counseling, legal assistance, or other victim services to victims in rural communities; or develop or strengthen programs addressing sexual assault, like Sexual Assault Response Teams and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Programs.

Eligible applicants are limited to: states, Indian tribes, territories, local governments, and nonprofit (public or private) entities, including tribal nonprofit organizations.

(see 34 U.S.C. 12341)

Currently, there are different statutory and regulatory reporting requirements that affect Rural Program grantees. VAWA 2000 requires all VAWA grantees, including Rural Program grantees, to report on the effectiveness of their programs to the Attorney General who, in turn, must report to Congress every two years. Section 1003 of VAWA 2000 states that

(a) REPORT BY GRANT RECIPIENTS.- The Attorney General or Secretary of Health and Human Services, as applicable, shall require grantees under any program authorized or reauthorized by this division or an amendment made by this division to report on the effectiveness of the activities carried out with amounts made available to carry out that program, including number of persons served, if applicable, numbers of persons seeking services who could not be served and such other information as the Attorney General or Secretary may prescribe.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.- The Attorney General or Secretary of Health and Human Services, as applicable, shall report biennially to the

Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate on the grant programs described in subsection (a), including the information contained in any report under that subsection.

(See 34 U.S.C. 10238).

OVW must also comply with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) (Pub. L. 103-62) which was enacted to increase Congressional and Administrative focus on the results from government programs and activities. To meet its GPRA reporting obligations and elicit more meaningful information about grantee performance, OVW has recently developed performance measures, including output measures, regarding which the Rural Program grantees must report on an annual basis.

2. Use of Information

OVW uses data from the information collection¹ in different ways. OVW will use the information collected from Rural Program grantees to monitor their grant-funded activities and qualitatively assess those activities. In particular, OVW is seeking data that includes baseline information to review activities supported with Rural Program funds, including, for example, an increase in the number of trainings or an increase in the number of victims served. OVW will review semiannual progress report to monitor individual Rural Program grantee's performance and ensure that the goals and objectives set forth in applications for funding and award documents are met.

The Rural Program grantees collect information that addresses the following grant-funded activities (different sections on the reporting form): staff, statutory purpose areas, informational materials, and victim services. Narrative questions at the end of these different sections enable grantees to give more detailed qualitative information about their grant-funded activities. In addition, Rural Program grantees must answer narrative questions on the most significant areas of remaining need with regard to improving services to victims/survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, increasing victims/survivors safety, and enhancing community response (including offender accountability or sex offenders), what has Rural Program funding allowed the grantee to do that the grantee could not do prior to receiving funding, additional information about the Rural Program grant and/or the effectiveness of the grant and any additional information about the data submitted.

In addition to the proposed information collection, OVW will continue to use a number of other techniques to assess the performance of Rural Program grantees. These may include OVW

¹ Under a cooperative agreement between OVW and the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service, data collected from OVW grantees on all of OVW's progress report forms is transmitted to the Muskie School for analysis. For the analysis of the data, standard descriptive statistics (frequency, sum, percentage, mean, etc.) are used to describe the characteristics of the grantees and report basic findings. All analyses are conducted in SPSS 13.0.

staff attendance at site visits, grant-funded training and technical assistance events, staff review of products prior to dissemination, and ongoing consultation with OVW staff.

OVW will aggregate data from all Rural Program grantees' progress reports to assess the performance of the Rural Program as a whole and to respond to Congressional, Department of Justice, and other inquiries about how Rural Program funds are being used. In addition, information collected from Rural Program grantees will support the following OVW GPRA measures:

Number of victims receiving requested services;
Percentage of victims requesting services who received them;
Number of protection orders issued;
Number of grant-funded multidisciplinary training events that have occurred;
Number of professionals trained to respond to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking;
Number of policies developed/revised; and
Number of communities with improved Community Coordinated Response.

Information collected from Rural Program grantees will enable OVW to respond to statutory requirements to report on the effectiveness of grant-funded activities. The 2022 Measuring Effectiveness Report to Congress, which includes information about how funds were expended and an assessment of the effectiveness of funded programs- see <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/media/1348091/dl?inline>. This report is based on data submitted Rural Program grantees reflecting Rural Program awards made and Rural Program-funded activities engaged in during calendar years July 1, 2019- June 30, 2021.

The data that OVW collects on the semiannual progress reporting forms is currently not used in connection with an evaluation of the Rural Program. OVW is currently exploring the development of a multi-layered evaluation agenda for its grant programs.

3. Use of Information Technology

The collection of information will involve the use of automated, electronic, mechanical or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. OVW grantees are required to submit semiannual progress reports through the JustGrants system.

4. Duplication of Information Request

There is no other mechanism by which OVW collects information about grant funded activities including number of victims served, victims seeking services who could not be served, or persons trained.

5. Impact on Small Entities

There is no impact on small entities as the collection of this type of information is routinely kept by most grantees receiving funds under the Rural Program.

6. Consequences to Federal Programs or Policy

By statute, Congress has mandated that Rural Program grantees report to the Attorney General on the effectiveness of their activities funded under VAWA. If OVW was not able to collect the information necessary to complete these reports on behalf of the Attorney General, not only would it be failing to meet a statutorily required reporting mandate, but also the existence of this important and necessary grant program could be jeopardized.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances as identified in the specific instructions for a supporting statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.

8. Federal Register Publication

OVW has consulted with persons outside the agency who have advised that the data proposed to be collected is available, the semiannual collection of such data is not burdensome, the form is clear, and that the information is routinely kept by most grantees receiving funds under the Rural Program. OVW has solicited public comment on this form in accordance with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. A 60 day notice was published in the Federal Register on March 26, 2024 (Federal Register, Volume 89, page 21009) and a 30-day notice was published in the Federal Register on May 7, 2024 (Federal Register, Volume 89, page 38187). OVW received no public comments.

9. Payment or Gift to Respondents

There will no payment or gift to respondents.

10. Confidentiality

Although this information is needed for a public report to Congress, it will not involve any personal information about victims that could identify them as specific individuals. However, anecdotal, non-identifying information about the effectiveness of individual programs may be included in the report. There is no assurance to confidentiality.

11. Specific Questions

The semiannual progress report will not contain any questions of a personal, sensitive nature such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

12. Hour Burden of the Collection of Information

This semi-annual progress report is not overly burdensome. The data collection tool will be completed by approximately 165 Rural Program grantees twice a year. There will be 330 semi-annual responses and it is estimated that it will take grantees no more than 1 hour to complete the progress report form. Thus, the annual reporting and recordkeeping hour burden is 330 hours. Rural Program grantees are informed about the reporting requirements during the grant solicitation process and during the grant award process.

OVW is seeking basic information that is routinely kept by the grantees in the normal course of their operations. Thus, the requirement that grantees complete this progress report within a period of less than 30 days after receipt of it is not overly burdensome. OVW estimates that it will take approximately 1 hour for a grantee to complete the form. OVW developed this estimate based on the fact that information of this nature is already kept by grantees receiving funds under the Rural Program and that the grantees have been apprised of these reporting requirements during the solicitation process and reminded throughout the grant award process. The progress report is divided into sections that pertain to the different types of activities that grantees may engage in, i.e. training, product development, victim services. Grantees will only have to complete the sections of the form that relate to their specific grant-funded activities.

13. Cost Burden of the Collection of Information

OVW does not believe that there is any annual cost burden on respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of this information.

14. Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

The annualized costs to the Federal Government resulting from the OVW staff review of the progress reports submitted by grantees are estimated to be \$18,480.

15. Program Changes or Adjustments

There are no program changes or adjustments for the estimates identified in Section 13 and in Section 14. This is an information collection that is necessary for OVW and its Rural Program grantees to comply with the statutory reporting requirements and the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (Pub. L. 103-62).

16. Published Results of Information Collections

There will be no complex analytical techniques used in connection with the publication of information collected under the request. Information will be gathered once a year at the end of the reporting periods. OVW is statutorily required to submit a report on the effectiveness of all grant-funded activities on a biennial basis.

17. Display of the Expiration Date of OMB Approval

OVW will display the Expiration Date of OMB Approval in the upper right hand corner of the Progress Report and it will electronically appear on the interactive web-based form.

18. Exception to the Certification Statement

OVW is not seeking any exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions, of OMB Form 83-I.