



Dear Subgrantee,

On Sept. 20, 2021, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) issued a bulletin with new guidelines regarding the match waiver process included in **H.R. 1652 VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021 ("VOCA Fix")**.

Passage of the VOCA Fix represents a monumental victory for the future of victim services both nationally and throughout Montana. Sustainable funding to the Crime Victims Fund is critical to ensure that victims of crime are met with high-quality services that are trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and reflective of diverse communities. The increase in victims seeking assistance amid the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a real, tangible need for the continued investment in services.

Changes to the VOCA statute will provide for increased funding and flexibility in the management of VOCA awards, including:

- directing federal criminal settlements from non-prosecution and deferred prosecution agreements, currently deposited into the General Treasury, into the Fund.
- increasing the percentage that state compensation programs may be reimbursed from 60 percent to 75 percent;
- providing the U.S. Attorney General the ability to issue no cost extensions on VOCA awards; **(sub-recipient grants are still extended at the discretion of MBCC)**
- giving states the ability to waive the local match for VOCA assistance grants for the duration of the pandemic; and,
- providing additional flexibility for compensation programs to provide support for victims even if they do not interact with law enforcement prior to requesting assistance.
- removing the restitution recovery penalty from annual state compensation certification forms

The revised match waiver process includes a National Emergency Pandemic Mandatory Match Waiver which states in part : "Beginning on the date a national emergency is declared under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.) with respect to a pandemic and ending on the date that is one year after the date of the end of such national emergency, SAAs shall issue waivers for any matching requirement, in its entirety, for all eligible crime victim assistance programs contracted to provide services at that time." 34 U.S.C. 20103(a)(8). The national emergency with respect to the current pandemic began on March 1, 2020 and is ongoing as of September 2021.

The Board of Crime Control (MBCC) is creating a process to be compliant with this update. In the coming weeks you will receive an email from MBCC regarding the match waiver with instructions on how to opt out of the mandatory match waiver if your organization would like that option.

We are grateful for your partnership and critical work to support victims and survivors of crime in Montana.

Sincerely,

Montana Board of Crime Control

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