



U.S. Department of Justice

Office on Violence Against Women

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Washington, DC 20530

September 25, 2015

Dear OVW Award Recipient:

The federal government may experience a lapse in appropriations as of October 1, 2015. Should this happen, OVW award recipients will not be able to access the payment/drawdown system until the government re-opens. While OVW is projecting that staff will be able to continue operations for a period of time, the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) will cease operations after 5:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, October 2, 2015. Once OJP ceases operations, access to the Grants Management System (GMS) will also cease.

We are providing the following information, in question and answer format, regarding the availability of OVW systems and services.

**Continuation of Grantee Activities under Existing Grants**

**QUESTION:** Will I be able to continue activities and projects already funded under my existing OVW grants or cooperative agreements during a period of a funding lapse?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. Grantee activities and projects already funded under existing grants will generally be able to continue to the extent the grantee has funding available (see the Q&A regarding the status of OJP's payment system and the question below regarding payment requests after October 2, 2015). The exception to this guidance would be if the grantee's budget for an FY 2015 award has not been approved by OVW. While OVW staff will continue to review uncleared budgets and contact grantees with budget-related questions, we will not be able to process a Grant Adjustment Notice because GMS will not be available.

**QUESTION:** Will grantee-sponsored events (such as conferences, meetings, and trainings) scheduled during the period of a funding lapse be affected?

**RESPONSE:** Most approved grantee-sponsored events (e.g., conferences, meetings, trainings) scheduled during a potential funding lapse generally will not be affected and can proceed as planned. OVW will continue to review and approve conference requests however, conference requests that exceed \$100,000 or any of the DOJ established thresholds will most likely be placed on hold since those events involve staff from other offices that may be differently impacted by the lapse in funding.

**QUESTION:** Will I be able to request payments and draw down funds during a period of a funding lapse?

**RESPONSE:** No. The Grant Payment Request System (GPRS) will not be available to users after 5:00 p.m. EDT, October 2, 2015.

**QUESTION:** Will the Grants Management System (GMS) and the GMS Help Desk be available during a period of a funding lapse?

**RESPONSE:** No. The Grants Management System (GMS) will not be available to users. Users will not have access to apply for funds, submit progress and Federal Financial Reports (FFRs), request grant adjustment notices, submit closeout actions, or respond to on-site financial monitoring issues for resolution. Likewise, the GMS Help Desk will not be available to users. Grantees whose funds are currently frozen due to overdue reports or other reasons will remain in this status unless the issues are resolved prior to 5:00 p.m. EDT, Friday, October 2, 2015.

**QUESTION:** Will OVW's Grants Financial Management staff and my program specialist be available to answer questions or provide assistance during a period of a funding lapse?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. OVW staff, including OVW Grants Financial Management Analysts and Program Specialists, will be available during the period of the funding lapse until further notice. To the greatest extent possible, OVW staff is prepared to review and approve via email grant adjustments that normally would have been submitted through GMS.

**QUESTION:** Will requests for grant modifications be addressed during this lapse in federal funding?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. OVW staff are preparing themselves as much as possible to continue to assist you with your grant needs during this time. Since GMS will not be available, all requests will have to be processed by email. Grantees are advised to retain copies of email approvals in their own grant files. OVW staff will also retain copies. When the federal government fully re-opens and GMS is brought back on-line, any requests approved via email must be uploaded into GMS for record keeping purposes. Your OVW program specialist may contact you with questions regarding GANs that were pending in GMS. Additionally, OVW's Grants Financial Management Division will continue to review budgets from our FY 2015 awards. GFMD staff may reach out to you with questions about your pending budget. OVW staff will do all that we can to ensure that your projects can proceed however, we are aware that a lapse in funding will likely result in most projects having delayed start dates.

**QUESTION:** Will I be able to submit Federal Financial Reports (FFRs) or progress reports to the GMS system?

**RESPONSE:** No. The Grants Management System (GMS) will not be available to accept progress reports and Federal Financial Reports (FFRs) during a period of a funding lapse. Please note, to provide adequate time to grantees to prepare and submit their Federal Financial Reports (FFR) that are due on October 30, 2015, for the period July 1 – September 30, the deadline will be extended by the number of days GMS is not available due to the funding lapse.

**QUESTION:** Will the System for Award Management (SAM) remain operational during a period of a funding lapse?

**RESPONSE:** According to GSA, the System for Award Management (SAM) will remain operational during a lapse of appropriations. Users will be able to submit new registrations and updates to existing registrations. Users will be able to search for entity registration records and exclusion records on the SAM.gov web site. Please check the Federal Service Desk at [www.fsd.gov](http://www.fsd.gov) or the SAM.gov home page for any changes to SAM's operating status.

### **OVW On-site Monitoring Visits and Office-Based Desk Reviews Scheduled During a Lapse**

**QUESTION:** Will an OVW programmatic or financial on-site monitoring visit scheduled during the period of a funding lapse still occur?

**RESPONSE:** Maybe. OVW staff will continue to perform on-site programmatic monitoring of grants and cooperative agreements. However, OJP's OCFO staff will postpone or cancel any scheduled financial monitoring visits.

### **Applying for OVW Open Solicitations**

**QUESTION:** Will I be able to submit funding applications for open solicitations/funding opportunities during a period of a funding lapse?

**RESPONSE:** OVW has one open solicitation at this time. If the lapse in federal funding affects the ability of applicants to access Grants.Gov, OVW will extend the application due date. Applicants should check OVW's website and Grants.Gov for information regarding any changes to the application due date.

**OVW-Sponsored Websites**

**QUESTION:** If we operate a non-.gov website (e.g., .org) with full or partial grant funding from OVW, are any special actions required?

**RESPONSE:** No.

**Questions about this Guidance**

**QUESTION:** If I have a question relating to this guidance or the impact of a funding lapse on my grants, who can I contact to assist me?

**RESPONSE:** Until further notice, OVW employees will be available to assist you. We would also like to learn about any direct impact that the funding lapse has had on your program or the survivors you serve. Please contact your OVW program specialist with this information. You can find their contact information in your award document or they can be reached by calling the OVW main number at 202-307-6026. We realize the inconvenience and disruption this may cause in many local communities around the country, and we appreciate your understanding and patience. OVW staff will do everything they can to ensure that survivors are able to access the critical services they need.

Sincerely,



Bea Hanson  
Principal Deputy Director  
Office on Violence Against Women