

VOCA Funds – Match Waiver Request Guidance

VOCA regulations require sub-recipients to contribute to the total cost of their VOCA funded project by providing not less than 20% of the total project cost (25% match of the total subaward funds), either cash or in-kind, from non-federal sources.

With increasing VOCA funds, many agencies may receive a larger VOCA award, which means larger match requirements. Many VOCA funded agencies may have difficulty meeting the full 20% match requirements of a larger award and may want to request a match waiver from OVC.

VOCA regulations allow for match waiver requests to be submitted to the federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) by the state on behalf of the sub-recipient. OVC reviews all waiver requests and makes a decision whether to grant the request on a case by case basis. Match requests are made with regard to a specific subaward. Requesting and receiving approval for a match waiver for one subaward does not extend the match waiver to any other subaward.

Requesting a Match Waiver

Your agency may request a match waiver either during a subaward application process or after a subaward has been approved if you later find that you are not able to meet your budgeted match amount.

If your agency is requesting a match waiver during the application process, upload a letter on your agency's letterhead in the Upload section of the application. The letter should outline the reasons why your agency will have trouble meeting the full match requirement and should indicate the amount of match you are able to provide. Your CVSSD fund coordinator will review your waiver request to determine eligibility and whether it should be forwarded to the federal OVC. CVSSD will compile all of the eligible match waiver requests received at application time and send them to OVC at one time.

If your agency is requesting a match waiver after subaward funding has begun, you must initiate an amendment in E-Grants to begin the process. You must then upload a letter on your agency's letterhead in the Grant Amendment section of the application in E-Grants in the Form/Document Upload section. The letter should outline the reasons why your agency will have trouble meeting the full match requirement and should indicate the amount of match you are able to provide. **If your agency is requesting a match waiver for Federal subawards expiring in fewer than 9 months, you must detail why a match waiver is necessary for an award that will be closing shortly.** Your CVSSD fund coordinator will review your waiver request to determine eligibility and whether it should be forwarded to the federal OVC. If your request is approved by the federal OVC you must submit an amended budget reflecting the change. Programs are encouraged to consider timing of this request because initiating an amendment in E-Grants effectively locks the subaward for purposes of submitting subaward reports during this time.

Your letter requesting a match waiver should include the following minimum elements:

- A brief description of your agency and your VOCA funded project;
- Indicate how much match you are able to provide and what amount you are requesting to be waived;
- A brief explanation of why the full match amount is a hardship for your agency;
 - Reasons could include, but are not limited to: fewer local resources, annual budget changes, a need to expand services without additional resources available, and/or unsuccessful efforts to secure match.
- A brief description of how not receiving a match waiver may result in fewer victims being served or a diminished quality of services;
- If using volunteer hours for match, a brief description of why you are not able to retain the number of volunteers needed to meet the match requirement; and
- Any other relevant information you want to add.

Keep in mind that OVC has indicated they are not likely to approve a match waiver for the full amount. It is very important you consider the amount of match you are able to contribute to the project. If you are unsure about allowable match sources, speak with your CVSSD fund coordinator.

An example of a match waiver request letter is included on the next page. This should only be used as a guide for writing your own letter that is applicable to your agency's circumstances.

THIS IS ONLY AN EXAMPLE.

If a waiver will be requested, this letter should not be duplicated but revised to meet your specific circumstances that make providing match a great hardship.

Agency Letterhead

DATE

Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division
Oregon Department of Justice
1162 Court St., NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: VOCA Waiver Request for 2017/2019 Campus-Based Funding Initiatives Subaward

Home of Hope, a Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault non-profit organization, is requesting a hardship waiver of our 2017-2019 VOCA Match requirement in the amount of \$_____, which constitutes a partial match waiver request. The full amount of our match requirement is \$_____ and our organization is able to provide \$_____.

Home of Hope has been in existence for 10 years and provides crisis intervention and advocacy services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Without our 1.00 VOCA-funded position(s), victims in the Home of Hope rural service area would not have access to critically needed services that assist them in healing and enables them to return to their previous state of well-being.

Home of Hope has utilized volunteers since its inception, however, over the past 3 years we have faced challenges to recruiting enough volunteers to meet our match requirement.

Some of the Barriers are:

Time Commitment Limitations:

- The ability to find volunteers to commit to meeting our required 40 hours of training before they can start providing direct service to victims has become difficult. In addition, volunteers are required to participate in monthly ongoing meetings. We currently have 3 core volunteers who are committed to the program, but it is not enough to provide the full amount of the required match for this subaward.

Other Challenges:

- Home of Hope is also a recipient of a 2015-2017 VOCA Non-Competitive award and the majority of our volunteer hours are committed to this award. The requested funds in this subaward are new and are in addition to the ongoing non-competitive funding this organization receives.

- The geographical area is made up of two distinct populations; the rural communities with the majority being low income, Spanish speaking residents; and the more affluent communities. Many of the low income residents do not have the ability to volunteer because of the costs involved including child care, gas and car insurance and maintenance.
- People in the more affluent communities, express interest in our programs, but they are not willing or able to commit to the amount of time necessary. In addition, because we respond to victims twenty-four hours per day, many families find this disruptive to their employment or lifestyle.
- Individuals in the more rural areas are hesitant to volunteer because they may know the survivors living in the small communities and do not want to be seen as being involved.
- There is a community college nearby whose students could do an internship with our program; however, these internships are generally 6 weeks long. Because they would be required to complete the 40 hour training before they could work directly with survivors they would not have much time to do actual work with clients, which is the reason they consider volunteering.
- Home for Hope has experienced funding cuts over the past several years. Specifically, our Rural VAWA federal grant was not renewed, we lost two foundation grants, and suffered a reduction in the city funds we have been receiving.

VOCA match creates a huge burden that restricts our ability to provide critical victim services. If we were not to receive these funds simply because we cannot generate the appropriate match it would leave our program at a disadvantage. We respectfully request a partial waiver of the match requirements.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sara Newel
Executive Director