



Victims of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Fund 2024 Solicitation

Overview:

The Victims of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Fund (“Fund”) was established by the Mississippi Legislature during the 2020 legislative session (HB 1559, 2020 Session). *See also* Miss. Code. Ann. §97-3-54.11. The Victims of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Fund Committee (“Committee”) seeks applications from direct victim service providers to support projects serving both minor and adult victims of labor and sex trafficking throughout Mississippi.

Expected awards:

The Fund is mainly funded by assessments for convictions for certain crimes and legislative appropriations. The Mississippi Legislature appropriated \$2.5 million dollars to the Fund during the 2024 legislative session. The Committee anticipates awarding at least \$2.5 million during this application period. The Committee anticipates making multiple awards during this application period.

Availability of Funds:

This solicitation, and any awards made under this solicitation, are subject to the availability of the appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by the Committee.

Eligible Applicants:

Non-profit direct victim service providers having 501(c)(3) status with the IRS and registered with the Mississippi Secretary of State, including both shelter and non-shelter providers.

Application Evaluation:

Applications will be evaluated by a 3-person independent panel consisting of three (3) persons not currently serving on the Fund Committee. A board member or employee of a service provider applicant may not serve on the judging panel for that application period.

The 3-person panel shall consider the following, at a minimum, when judging applications for funding:

- 1) The geographic area of service;
- 2) The type(s) of services provided;
- 3) The population of those served;
- 4) The length of time the provider has served victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation; and
- 5) The current trends and needs identified for human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation victims in the area served.

Contact Information:

For assistance with submitting this Application, contact Abby Overby with the Office of the Attorney General at 601-359-3094 or abby.overby@ago.ms.gov.

All applications and required attachments should be emailed to:
HumanTraffickingFund@ago.ms.gov

Submission Deadline:

All applicants must submit the full application, including required attachments, by **5:00 p.m. on December 13, 2024**. Any applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Program Description:

The purpose of these awards is to expand direct victim services to both adult and minor victims of sex and labor trafficking throughout the state of Mississippi. Applicants are expected to use the funding to directly support victims of all forms of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, including but not limited to direct housing, housing referrals, trauma-informed therapy using evidence-based practices, job counseling and training programs, workforce training and other available social services.

Mandatory Program Requirements:

Shelter Providers: Applicants that provide shelter to victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation that receive funding under this solicitation will be required to:

- 1) Provide proof of incorporation in the state of Mississippi or recognized by the Mississippi Secretary of State as a private or public nonprofit corporation operating within the state of Mississippi.
- 2) Provide shelter on a twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week basis.
- 3) Maintain a twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week crisis line to provide counseling, emergency response or suicide watch.

- 4) Provide temporary housing and food facilities.
- 5) Provide referral services to existing services in the community and procedures to follow up on the outcome of the referrals, including, but not limited to, referrals for medical care, legal assistance and alcohol and drug treatment.
- 6) Provide information regarding reeducation, trauma-informed therapy, job counseling, and training programs, workforce training, housing referrals and other available social services.
- 7) Employ a Mississippi licensed therapist available on a twenty-four (24) hours a day basis.
- 8) Provide victim-centered, trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically appropriate care.
- 9) Utilize evidence-based interventions.
- 10) Agree to provide the Victims of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Fund Committee with a copy of your most recent annual audit prior to funding and annually during the funding period.
- 11) Perform background checks and maintain copies of such for each employee and volunteer on an annual basis.
- 12) Ensure adequate safety and security for staff and clients.
- 13) Require mandatory victim service training for staff and volunteers.
- 14) Require employees and volunteers to maintain confidentiality of any information that would identify individuals served by the shelter as required per Miss. Code Ann. § 93-21-125.
- 15) Collaborate with other nongovernmental and governmental agencies.
- 16) Maintain any required licensure and certification of staff and facility as required by the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health, the Department of Child Protection Services or any other regulatory body of the State of Mississippi.
- 17) Have established procedures for twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week admission of victims of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation who may seek admission to the shelter on a voluntary basis.
- 18) Certify that the provider receives local funds in an amount not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the requested award, which may include in-kind contributions, per Miss. Code Ann. § 97-3-54.12(3).
- 19) Certify that the provider does not discriminate in its provision of services on the basis of race, religion, color, age, disability, marital status, national origin or ancestry per Miss. Code Ann. § 97-3-54.12(2).
- 20) Have a Board of Directors and/or an advisory committee that represents the racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the area to be served, including, if

possible, at least one (1) person who is or has been a victim of human trafficking and/or commercial sexual exploitation.

Non-Shelter Providers: Applicants that DO NOT provide shelter to victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation that receive funding under this solicitation will be required to:

- 1) Provide proof of incorporation in the state of Mississippi or recognized by the Mississippi Secretary of State as a private or public nonprofit corporation operating within the state of Mississippi.
- 2) Provide referral services to existing services in the community and procedure to follow up on the outcome of the referrals, including, but not limited to, referrals for medical care, legal assistance and alcohol and drug treatment.
- 3) Provide information regarding reeducation, trauma-informed therapy, job counseling, and training programs, workforce training, housing referrals and other available social services.
- 4) Provide victim-centered, trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically appropriate care.
- 5) Utilize evidence-based interventions.
- 6) Agree to provide the Victims of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Fund Committee with a copy of your most recent annual audit prior to funding and annually during the funding period.
- 7) Perform background checks and maintain copies of such for each employee and volunteer on an annual basis.
- 8) Ensure adequate safety and security for staff and clients.
- 9) Require mandatory victim service training for staff and volunteers.
- 10) Require employees and volunteers to maintain confidentiality of any information that would identify individuals served by the provider as required per Miss. Code Ann. § 93-21-125.
- 11) Collaborate with other nongovernmental and governmental agencies.
- 12) Maintain any required licensure and certification of staff and facility as required by the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health, the Department of Child Protection Services or any other regulatory body of the State of Mississippi.
- 13) Certify that the provider receives local funds in an amount not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the requested award, which may include in-kind contributions, per Miss. Code Ann. § 97-3-54.12(3).
- 14) Certify that the provider does not discriminate in its provision of services on the basis of race, religion, color, age, disability, marital status, national origin or ancestry per Miss. Code Ann. §97-3-54.12(2).

- 15) Have a Board of Directors and/or an advisory committee that represents the racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the area to be served, including, if possible, at least one (1) person who is or has been a victim of human trafficking and/or commercial sexual exploitation.

Survivor Autonomy:

Programs which receive funding will be required to maintain the following:

- 1) Procedures and policies that provide all survivors access to safe shelter, counseling and/or other assistance without exclusions based on actual or perceived sex, age, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, mental health condition, physical health condition, criminal record, involvement in commercial sex, income or lack of income, or the age and/or sex of their children.
- 2) Procedures and policies that protect the confidentiality and privacy of information regarding those receiving services as required per Miss. Code Ann. § 93-21-125.
- 3) Procedures and policies that do not require victims to take certain actions (e.g. report to law enforcement or achieve sobriety) to be eligible for, or to receive services.

Unallowable Costs:

Programs or services that do not directly serve victims of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation will not be considered for funding. Further, all requests for administrative costs will be limited to 10% of the award.

Financial Management:

Award recipients must comply with standards for financial and program management as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.

Cost Match Requirement:

Awardees under this solicitation are required to show receipt of local funds in an amount not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the funding amount, which may include in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions are defined as the value of non-cash (i.e. property or services) that benefit the assisted project or program and are contributed by non-governmental third parties, without charge, to the assisted project or program.

Proposal Narrative:

The Proposal Narrative should be submitted with the Application and should not exceed 15 pages.

The following must be included in the Proposal Narrative:

- 1) Identify the nature and scope of the problem the proposed program/project will address. Cite sources of any data provided.

- 2) Identify the type of trafficking to be addressed (sex trafficking, labor trafficking or both).
- 3) Identify the age group to be served (under 18, over 18 or both).
- 4) Identify the geographic area the project will serve by County.
- 5) Identify the number of victims expected to be served with the requested award.
- 6) Describe any previous attempts by the applicant to address the problem.
- 7) Describe any current programs of the applicant which address the problem.
- 8) Demonstrate sustained victim services that correlate with the requested funding.
- 9) Clearly state the goals and objectives of the proposed program/project.
- 10) Provide a detailed description of proposed actions required to complete the program/project.
- 11) Identify specific services which will be provided to victims through the proposed program/project.
- 12) Provide a detailed description of victim service training provided to staff and volunteers.
- 13) Identify any program/project partners, if applicable.
- 14) Specifically describe how the program/project will utilize trauma-informed and evidence-based practices when serving victims.
- 15) Provide proof that the applicant will protect the safety and confidentiality of any and all victims served by the applicant as required per Miss. Code Ann. § 93-21-125.
- 16) Describe how the applicant will support victim-informed decisions and autonomy while providing services to victims.
- 17) Demonstrate institutional experience and expertise to implement the proposed program/project effectively.
- 18) Describe the specific roles and responsibilities of all staff who will be involved in the proposed program/project.
- 19) Demonstrate that staff has the appropriate training to carry out all of the duties proposed for the program/project (i.e. Curriculum Vitae, resumes, etc.)
- 20) Provide a plan for collection of performance measure data.
- 21) Submit copies of any and all Memoranda of Understanding with proposed partners for the program/project, if applicable.

Application Submission Information:

The following **must** be submitted with the Application to meet the basic minimum requirements to advance to the 3-person panel review and receive consideration for funding:

- 1) Completed Litigation Disclosure and Audit Finding Disclosure Form (provided by AGO)
- 2) Copy of Agency Anti-Discrimination Policy per Miss. Code Ann. §97-3-54.12(2)
- 3) Proposal Narrative
- 4) Budget Narrative and Worksheet
- 5) Overall Agency budget and sources of income
- 6) Most recent annual audit
- 7) Policy and Procedures Manual to include: a detailed description of your accounting system, handling of bank statements, disbursements and procurement and property control policy
- 8) Conflict of Interest policy
- 9) Client confidentiality policy as required per Miss. Code Ann. § 93-21-125
- 10) 501(c)(3) documentation
- 11) List of Agency's Board of Directors
- 12) Copy of Agency Mission Statement
- 13) Letters of Support – at least one (1) letter and no more than three (3)

Review Process:

Applications submitted must meet minimum requirements prior to being evaluated by the 3-person panel. These include:

- 1) The application must be submitted by an eligible applicant.
- 2) The application must request funding within the amount allowed in this solicitation.
- 3) The project narrative must fulfil the requests and requirements of this solicitation.
- 4) The application must include all necessary required documents as listed above.

It is important to note that the 3-person panel will consider other factors in its evaluation process, including but not limited to, prior performance with grant funded projects, priorities outlined in the project narrative, geographic area to be served by the program/project, ages and sex of victims to be served by the program/project, types of services proposed to be provided by the program/project, the length of time the provider has served victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, and current trends and needs identified for human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation victims in the area served.

Post-Award Reporting Requirements:

Post-award, recipients must comply with all standards for financial and program management as described in 2 C.F.R. 200. Awardees will also be required to provide quarterly financial reporting, semi-annual performance reporting, annual audits and final financial and performance reports to the Committee.

Modifications to approved funding must adhere to the spirit of the approved project and may be considered and approved by the Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Contact Information:

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