



Relocation Assistance Program Overview Ohio Domestic Violence Network

FAQs

How is the program funded? The program is funded through Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) funds, distributed through a grant from the Office of the Ohio Attorney General.

Who is it for? The project provides *relocation assistance* for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking who are eligible and who need to relocate for safety reasons.

What kinds of assistance can be paid for? The following are some items the program can assist with: 1st month's rent and/or security deposit (with proof that housing is available upon payment); 2nd and 3rd month's rent if security deposit and 1st month's rent are already paid; back rent owed to Metro Housing/Housing Authority (with proof that housing is available upon payment); lock change; temporary boarding of pets; utility start-up (gas, water, electric, propane delivery); transportation (bus, airfare, U-Haul, fuel-only gas card; airport shuttle); documents needed to secure housing (birth certificate, social security card); storage unit for 30 days; move to assisted living program.

What is the maximum funding request? The maximum funding request is \$1200 per survivor. Referring organizations should assess survivors' needs with the mindset of the many survivors in need around the state; thus, organizations should not automatically seek the maximum amount for a survivor, but can certainly do so if deemed appropriate for the survivor's emergency needs.

What makes an individual eligible?

- The individual is a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking.
- The survivor needs to relocate for safety reasons.
- The survivor is referred by a VOCA-funded domestic violence/sexual assault program.
- The survivor has first attempted to access all applicable local emergency funding sources (including HEAP, in-house VOCA funds that are earmarked for relocation, JFS and HUD).

What are the requirements for agencies that want to refer survivors? Referring agencies must be VOCA-funded domestic violence and/or sexual assault programs.

How long will the program run? The program is funded through September 30, 2019, and ODVN plans to seek continuation funding if eligible to do so.

What are ODVN's expectations of a DV/SA program regarding the screening in of applicants? An in-person appointment is necessary to screen a survivor into the relocation assistance program. In accordance with VAWA, FVPSA rules and 2015 ODVN Promising Practice Standards, DV/SA organizations should not require or mandate victims to participate in a service or program in order to receive another service that they would be eligible for (such as mandating a support group in order to access shelter), and the same principle applies to the relocation assistance program. However, service exposure (letting survivors know of the resources available) should be happening at any survivor/advocate contact. This also applies to an intake process for the relocation assistance program, at which time survivors can be offered safety planning assistance, as well as other resources the DV/SA organization has to offer. For some survivors in danger, quick and safe relocation may be one of the only appropriate services at the time of screening.

How does an advocate know who they should or shouldn't screen in? During the process, DV/SA organizations should use the same criteria they use to determine if other clients (callers, contacts, etc.) are eligible for services. DV/SA programs cannot deny services based on an individual's actual or perceived age, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health condition, physical health condition, criminal record, work in the sex industry, relationship to the perpetrator, or the age and/or gender of their children. DV/SA organizations routinely determine if someone is appropriate for shelter, support groups, etc., and if they are not, are able to offer them alternatives. The same process applies to the relocation assistance program. Proof or evidence of domestic violence is not a permitted requirement for other DV/SA program services, and the same principle applies to the relocation assistance program. Please note that allowed relocation is flexible: It can occur within the same city, out of county or out of state.

Tips on Completing the Relocation Request

- **Page 1:** Read the application's page 1 instruction page carefully. It contains details on the process of submitting, on items needed to complete the application, and on items that cannot be covered by the program.
- **Page 2:** In the "Local Emergency Funding" section, be sure that, for each answer you circle (with the exception of "NA," which should only be circled if the source obviously does not apply to the request), an explanation is provided, either of why the alternate source could not be used, or, if used, how it was applied. Example: If in-house VOCA funds are no longer available at the referring advocate's organization, an advocate would circle "No," and explain in the "Explanation" line that there are no available funds left. If some funds were left, and were applied to the survivor's need, but more are still needed for the survivor, the advocate would circle "Yes" and explain that the survivor needs more funds than what was available from the local source.
- **Page 3:** Be sure to total the funds request in the "total relocation request" column.
- **Page 4:** Double-check the demographics page to make sure it is fully filled in. (Demographics and family size information are for statistical reporting purposes only, and are not criteria for accepting or denying applications.)
- **Page 5:** Fully complete the check request information with vendor or program names, addresses, and phone numbers.

- **Page 6:** Be sure to fill out, sign, have the survivor sign, and date the release of information form.
- **Page 7:** Make sure to complete the checklist on page 7 prior to faxing the application.
- **ODVN will need a W-9 tax form filled out by the landlord to accompany any lease that is generated by a private landlord (one who is an individual, not a leasing agency).**
- The application and all accompanying information must be **faxed** for confidentiality purposes. Please email Shryiell Owens at shryiello@odvn.org and let her know you have sent the fax attention to Shryiell Owens. (If your organization does not have a fax machine, ODVN will work with you to find an alternative method of supplying the information.)
- A referral completed in the area the survivor plans to relocate to would be best practice, although it is not required.

Important to Note

- For each item that you are requesting to be paid, it is necessary to provide ODVN with full documentation (lease for rent or security deposit; receipts for transportation, U-Haul, utility paid, etc.)
- If paying a survivor's start-up utilities through your program and then requesting reimbursement, make sure to request that the utility company email or mail a payment receipt that you can provide to ODVN for purposes of reimbursement.
- If the survivor is relocating to a shelter out of the area, the advocate will need to provide ODVN with a careful write-up on agency letterhead outlining the survivor's plans, and the support the survivor will receive when they move.
- The advocate can request that ODVN provide either direct payment to a vendor, or reimbursement to their program. Checks may take up to 2 weeks or more to be cut and mailed.
- If a leasing company refuses to provide a lease until payment is rendered, you can solicit a letter on company letterhead from the leasing agency stating that, upon receipt of payment, the agency will rent to the survivor. Provide this letter to ODVN. If the leasing agency will not provide either a letter or a lease without payment, another option is for the DV/SA agency to pay the leasing company directly, and request reimbursement from ODVN.
- Prior to applying for relocation assistance for a survivor, the advocate should have offered to complete the following: creation of a safety plan with the survivor, provision of information on the address confidentiality program, and planning on how to maintain housing.

For more information, please email or call Shryiell Owens at shryiello@odvn.org; 614-781-9651