



WHAT ARE CJD VOCA FUNDS?

- » All states receive Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to help support local victim assistance and compensation programs. The Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor (CJD) VOCA funds devote resources to provide direct services to victims of crime to help them recover and to navigate the justice system.
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HELPING SURVIVORS IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

- » Transitional housing helps meet the needs of domestic violence survivors for safe places to live and pathways to economic stability. After a 2016 change to federal funding rules, Texas domestic violence programs receiving transitional housing funds from the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor (CJD) can now use these funds to assist survivors with the costs of transitional housing, relocation, supportive services, and some other immediate needs.
 - » Programs can use CJD Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) transitional housing funds for direct client assistance by directly paying for certain goods and services for survivors who are relocating to transitional housing.
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EMERGENCY NEEDS, SAVINGS, AND ESCROW

- » Programs may use CJD VOCA funds to pay third-party providers for survivors' transportation to housing, emergency services, legal services, and other services. Allowable transportation expenses include bus fare, bus passes, taxi fare, or staff mileage reimbursement.
 - » Security at home is a critical component of survivors' safety. VOCA funds can be used to pay for emergency repairs to doors and windows, lock replacement, and other emergency repairs necessary to ensure the security of survivors' housing.
 - » Transitional housing programs that maintain their own housing units for survivors may not charge rent, but they may set up an optional escrow account for survivors to pay into monthly on a voluntary basis, at up to 20% of the survivor's income. These funds must be insured by the program.
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DIRECT CLIENT ASSISTANCE

- » Programs can create a Direct Client Assistance pool line item in their original application for CJD VOCA transitional housing funds. In the justification, this line item should provide a breakdown of anticipated expenses in allowable areas.
- » To get approval for unanticipated direct client assistance expenses not included in the original approved budget, programs can submit a budget adjustment detailing needed items, up to 31 days before the end of their CJD contract.
- » For smaller unanticipated direct client expenses, programs should contact their CJD contract manager for approval.
- » In addition to using CJD VOCA funds to cover the cost of transportation to services, programs may use CJD VOCA funds to purchase a vehicle for the program to use to transport survivors to services.

DIRECT CLIENT ASSISTANCE (CONTINUED)

- » CJD VOCA funds may be used to pay for cleaning and make ready services for units and to furnish units with beds, other furniture, lighting, window coverings, and other necessary decorations. This doesn't include decorations such as rugs, art, or wall decor.
- » When other health insurance or health care funding sources are not available in time to meet an emergency need, CJD VOCA funds can be used to pay for non-prescription and prescription medicine, treatment to prevent HIV/AIDS infection or other infectious disease, durable medical equipment (such as wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, eyeglasses), and other healthcare items that survivors in transitional housing urgently need.

MOVING, RENTAL, AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE

- » Transitional housing programs can use CJD VOCA funds to pay for survivors' moving costs. Examples are: travel, hiring a moving van, renting a moving truck, hiring movers, and first and last month's rental costs for a storage unit.
- » For domestic violence programs that provide transitional housing through scattered-site transitional housing or other types of community-based housing, VOCA funds may be used to pay for survivors' startup rental expenses: rental applications, security deposits, and first and last month's rent. VOCA can also be used to pay for additional months of rent, however funds cannot be used to pay for rental arrears.
- » As part of assisting survivors in moving to a new safe location, programs may use VOCA funds to pay startup utility costs at the survivor's new address. This includes the costs of establishing electricity, gas, and landline telephone services. Survivors may also be eligible to have the security deposit requirement waived. More information about utility waivers is available at <https://tcfv.org/survivor-resources/>.
- » Many survivors who move into transitional housing from emergency shelter or from an abusive home must leave almost everything behind, including basic household necessities. CJD VOCA funds can be used to purchase essential household goods for survivors: furniture, bed linens, towels, pillows, blankets/comforters, and a startup supply of food. Small necessary appliances such as toasters are also permissible purchases.
- » Necessary clothing, including work clothes for adults and school uniforms for children, is also considered an essential household good.

KEEP IN MIND

- » Moving costs must be itemized in a budget.
- » Programs that use VOCA funds to pay for security deposits, including utilities, must submit to CJD their policy for collecting and refunding to CJD those deposits that have been returned to survivors from landlords and utility companies.
- » Essential household items purchased for survivors, including furniture, do not need to be returned to the program.
- » CJD VOCA funds may not be used to purchase vehicles for survivors or to pay for repair or maintenance of survivors' vehicles.
- » VOCA funds may not be used for general maintenance outside of emergency repairs for survivors' homes.
- » Since cash payments to survivors are unallowable, programs should have a policy in place to ensure that monies are never given directly to the survivor and that the program always pays the third-party directly for any emergency travel expenses.

**SUPPORTIVE
SERVICES TO
THINK ABOUT**

- » CJD VOCA transitional housing funds may also be used to provide, or pay for, supportive services. Allowable services include:
 - Emotional support, inclusive of counseling, support groups, and, with appropriate training or certification, traditional, cultural, and/or alternative healing or therapies.
 - Legal advocacy, emergency legal assistance.
 - Crisis intervention, hotline counseling, safety planning, information and referral, and medical accompaniments.
 - Personal advocacy and case management.
 - Childcare.
 - May also be used for multidisciplinary teams or case coordination, program assessment evaluations, and public awareness education about victim services.