

**FY 2011 Second Chance Act Grant Recipients**  
**Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Compliance with Federal Grant Management**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

---

**1. When did the grant term begin?**

Generally, for most grantees, the start date of the grant is October 1, 2011, but check the “PROJECT PERIOD: FROM” dates in the award documents you received from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) via the OJP [Grants Management System](#) (GMS). However, please review the special conditions of your award to determine whether you are permitted to obligate, expend, or draw down funds.

**2. What are the first steps to take after receiving the grant?**

Step-by-step post-award instructions found on the website below:  
[http://ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/pdfs/post\\_award\\_instructions.pdf](http://ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/pdfs/post_award_instructions.pdf).

Carefully read the award document and special conditions because this award is a legally binding agreement. If you accept the terms and conditions of the award, have your designated official sign a copy of the award document and special conditions. A "designated official" is the person authorized by your organization to sign awards and may include, but is not limited to, county executives, executive directors, governors, and mayors.

You have 45 days from the award date to accept the award. Notify your program office if your organization is unable to accept the award within this time. Failure to accept within 45 days may result in de-obligation of funds.

**3. How do I access funds?**

Funds may be accessed using the online Grant Payment Request System (GPRS). A detailed GPRS user guide, which includes registration guidance and GPRS frequently asked questions, can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/about/pdfs/gprsuserguide.pdf>.

**4. There is an active special condition withholding funds for Conditional Clearance. What does this mean and how do I clear this special condition?**

The special condition withholding funds for Conditional Clearance means that your grant was approved for award purposes only, but the grant budget has not been approved. Therefore, you may not obligate, expend, or draw down funds until the OJP OCFO has approved your budget and has issued a GAN to retire the special condition.

The OJP OCFO will review the budget for each grant award and either issue an Initial Budget Review or a Financial Clearance Memo. Your assigned State Policy Advisor will be your liaison during this process and will contact you requesting a revised budget, or contact you to inform you that your budget has been approved. It is extremely important that, if a revised budget is

requested, you address each budget item by the due date specified and submit a complete, revised budget detail worksheet and budget narrative by email to your assigned State Policy Advisor.

**5. The SCA solicitation that I was awarded under requires matching funds. I submitted a request to waive the cash match requirement with my original application. Does this mean that my cash match waiver request is approved?**

No. Though the waiver request was submitted with the application, you must submit a Program Office Approval Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN) in GMS to request official approval. Please follow the instructions below:

- Log in to GMS: <https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmsexternal>
- Click the grant adjustments link on the left side of the main page.
- Click: Create grant adjustments.
- Select Program Office Approval category from the pull down menu.
- Highlight the circle next to your grant.
- Complete each section of the GAN. Please check the “Other” box and write “Cash Match Waiver Request.”
- Attach the letter on letterhead signed by the Authorized Representative.
- Submit.

**6. I included matching funds in my grant application, but I did not submit a cash match waiver request. Do I still have the opportunity to waive the cash match?**

No. As per the applicable solicitation that requires matching funds, match waiver requests must be submitted with the original application.

**7. What rules and regulations must I adhere to during the administration of my grant award?**

There are Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars and Common Rules and other important information you will need to know for the administration of your award. The most up to-date versions of these documents are available through the Internet, as noted:

- For OMB Circulars, go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/index.html>
- For the Code of Federal Regulations, go to <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>
- For the current OJP *Financial Guide*, go to <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/index.htm>

OJP grantees with questions concerning the content of the *Financial Guide* should contact OCFO Customer Service: 1-800-458-0786, option 2 or [ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov](mailto:ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov).

**8. I recently received an email from OJP regarding food and beverages costs for conferences, training and meetings. Are food and beverage costs allowable?**

No. As of 10/21/11, food and beverage costs are unallowable costs under OJP grants.

**9. I am not listed as a contact person GMS for this grant, but I would like to be included in all grant correspondence. Is that possible?**

No. Grant correspondence is only provided to the individuals listed in GMS. You are responsible for keeping the information current in GMS.

**10. I need assistance with OJP's online Grants Management System (GMS). What resources are available?**

OJP has several resources available to assist you with GMS. Please visit <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/training/gmstraining.htm>, which will assist you with the following:

- [Get Started in GMS](#)
- [Apply for/Accept an OJP Grant](#)
- [Submit a Payment Request through the Grant Payment Request System \(GPRS\)](#)
- [Create, Save and/or Submit a Grant Adjustment Notice \(GAN\)](#)
- [Submit a Progress Report](#)
- [Submit a Financial Report \(SF-425\)](#)
- [View Site Visit Correspondence and Follow Up on Issues for Resolution](#)
- [Report Conference Costs](#)
- [Submit a Closeout](#)

The GMS computer based online training tool can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmscbt/>. If you require further assistance, please email the GMS Help Desk at [gms.helpdesk@usdoj.gov](mailto:gms.helpdesk@usdoj.gov) or call 1-888-549-9901, option 3.

**11. What are the reporting requirements under the SCA grant?**

Reporting requirements must be met during the life of the grant. OJP payment systems will deny requests for funds if reporting requirements are not met on a timely basis. BJA will also reject any Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN) submissions by the grantee if reports are not up to date. In summary, SCA grant recipients must submit the following:

*Details regarding each reporting requirement can be found below:*

- 1) Quarterly Financial Status Reports (SF-425) in GMS (<https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmsexternal/>)
- 2) Quarterly Performance Reports in PMT ([www.bjaperformancetools.org](http://www.bjaperformancetools.org))
- 3) Semi-annual Progress Reports in GMS (<https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmsexternal/>)
- 4) FFATA Reports in FRS ([www.fsr.gov](http://www.fsr.gov))

### Financial Status Reports (SF-425):

A step-by-step guide for filing Financial Status Reports can be found at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/training/pdfs/gms\\_userguide.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/training/pdfs/gms_userguide.pdf). If you did not obligate or expend funds during a reporting period, enter 0.

Financial status reports are due thirty days following the close of each quarter on the following schedule:

- October 1 – December 31 (due January 30)
- January 1 – March 31 (due April 30)
- April 1 – June 30 (due July 30)
- July 1 - September 30 (due October 30)

### Quarterly Performance Reports (PMT):

Performance measurement reports must be submitted on a **quarterly** basis via the BJA [Performance Measurement Tool](#) (PMT). Performance measurement reports are due thirty days following the close of each quarter on the following schedule:

Quarterly PMT reports must be submitted at [www.bjaperformancetools.org](http://www.bjaperformancetools.org) on the following schedule:

- October 1 – December 31 (due January 30)
- January 1 – March 31 (due April 30)
- April 1 – June 30 (due July 30)
- July 1 - September 30 (due October 30)

In addition, grantees are responsible for downloading their PMT reports uploading them into GMS with their Semi-annual Progress Report (see below) by **January 30 and July 30**.

### Progress Reports:

Grantees must submit narrative progress reports on a **semi-annual** basis in GMS on the following schedule:

- January 1 – June 30 (due July 30)
- July 1 – December 31 (due January 30)

The Semi-Annual Progress Report in GMS must include the PMT report attachments covering the reporting period. For example, a Semi-Annual Progress Report for January 1 – June 30 must include the PMT attachment for the two quarters within that period (January – March, and April – June).

The Final Progress Report is due 90 days after the grant end date. However, the Final Progress Report should be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant end date to

allow for BJA review and approval of the Final Progress Report. The Final Progress Report must be approved in order for the grantee to submit the closeout package by the due date, which is also 90 days after the grant end date.

Performance and progress reports must be submitted on the following schedule:

<b>Activity Period</b>	<b>Type of Data</b>	<b>Submit to GMS?</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
January 1- March 31	Numerical	No	<b>April 30</b>
April 1 – June 30	Narrative and Numerical	Yes	July 30
July 1 – September 31	Numerical	No	<b>October 30</b>
October 1 – December 31	Narrative and Numerical	Yes	January 30

FFATA Reporting:

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) was signed on September 26, 2006. The intent is to empower every American with the ability to hold the government accountable for each spending decision. The end result is to reduce wasteful spending in the government. The FFATA legislation requires information on federal awards (federal financial assistance and expenditures) be made available to the public via a single, searchable website, which is [www.USASpending.gov](http://www.USASpending.gov).

Prime Grant Recipients awarded a new Federal grant greater than or equal to \$25,000 as of October 1, 2010 are subject to FFATA sub-award reporting requirements as outlined in the Office of Management and Budgets guidance issued August 27, 2010. The prime awardee is required to file a FFATA sub-award report by the end of the month following the month in which the prime recipient awards any sub-grant greater than or equal to \$25,000.

FFATA Reports are to be submitted using the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) at <https://www.fsr.gov/>. FAQs for FSRS can be found at <https://www.fsr.gov/#a-faqs>. Guidance from OMB can be found at: [https://www.fsr.gov/documents/OMB\\_Guidance\\_on\\_FFATA\\_Subaward\\_and\\_Executive\\_Compensation\\_Reporting\\_08272010.pdf](https://www.fsr.gov/documents/OMB_Guidance_on_FFATA_Subaward_and_Executive_Compensation_Reporting_08272010.pdf). Additional information about FFATA requirements is available in the attached documents.

## 12. When should I submit a Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN)?

It is important to keep BJA up-to-date on your project scope and contact information. If you wish to change the scope of your project, or make any corrections to your award or contact information, you must submit a Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN) via GMS. In addition, it's important to submit a GAN when requesting rates for consultants that exceed \$450/day, or if you need to request a modification to your budget.

Please make sure that you enter a full digit zip code.

Once you submit a GAN please do not assume that it was approved. If more information or correction is needed a GAN will be send back to you in GMS and will be in a CHANGE REQUEST status pending your correction and resubmission. Please make sure that you check GMS and your e-mail (to include Junk/SPAM folder) for notices from GMS on action taken. To avoid duplicates, please do not submit a new GAN.

Please make sure you are current with all reports when you submit a GAN. A GAN cannot be approved if the grant recipient is overdue with a report in GMS.

Please respond to any requests for additional information and/or changes efficiently. Nonresponsive behavior and noncompliance to office requests may affect your future funding.

- Budget Modification

*Submit a GAN for approval when proposing these modifications to your budget:*

- Modifying line items within your budget that exceed 10% of your total award amount. If you need to modify the budget, you may reallocate dollar amounts among budget categories up to 10 % of the total award amount, provided there is no change in project scope.
- Adding an unapproved budget category that was not included in your original budget.
- Making changes to your indirect costs.

NOTE: Budget modification GAN is reviewed as a new budget from scratch. You must submit:

1. Complete revised budget; and,
2. Budget narrative.

You must show all your computation, categories and clearly indicate the proposed changes.

- Consultant rates

*All consultants are restricted to \$450 per 8-hour workday; however, you can submit GAN to request a daily rate of more than \$450 with justification.*

- Change of Scope of Grant  
*Submit a GAN to request approval to change project scope. You must receive prior approval to make changes such as:*
  - Altering programmatic activities, or
  - Affecting the purpose of the project, or
  - Changing the project site, or
  - Changing a subgrantee.
  
- Sole Source  
*Submit a GAN to request permission for sole source procurement over \$100,000 for review and approval. Provide a description in the justification that includes:*
  - A brief description of the procurement and what it is being contracted for.
  - An explanation of why it is necessary to contract noncompetitively, to include the following:
    - a. Expertise of the Contractor
    - b. Management
    - c. Responsiveness
    - d. Knowledge of the Person
    - e. Expertise of Contractor personnel
  - Time constraints.
    - a. When contractual coverage is required and why
    - b. Impact on the program if dates are not met
    - c. How long it would take another contractor to reach the same level of competence (equate to dollars if desired)
  - Uniqueness
  - Other points that should be covered to “sell the case.”
  - A declaration stating that this action is in the best interest of the Agency.

For more information, please see the Guide to Procurement for Recipients of DOJ Grants and Cooperative Agreements:

[http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/PDFs/New%20Procurement%20Guide\\_508compliant.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/PDFs/New%20Procurement%20Guide_508compliant.pdf).

### **13. I need more time to complete the project. May I request a project period extension?**

Yes. Requests for a no-cost extension of an award period must be submitted through GAN module in GMS. Award recipients may request a no-cost extension by submitting a GAN at any time after accepting the award, but no later than 45 days prior to the end of the award. A narrative justification and a revised budget and project timeline must be attached to the GAN in GMS.

- The maximum extension allowable for any project period is generally 12 months.
- Generally, requests for retroactive extension of project periods may not be considered.
- Generally, only one extension per award will be permitted.

**Project Period Extension:** must include

- the amount of additional time needed
- why the extension is necessary
- why the project activities were not completed within the original time period
- what you intend to do in the extended time
- the most recent unobligated balance

For more information, please see the OJP Financial Guide:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/financialguide/PostawardRequirements/chapter7page4.htm>.

**14. What are the steps to closeout an award?**

Once your project is complete and all funds have been expended, you need to close out the grant. You are required to submit all closeout documents & complete all requirements within 90 days after the end date of the grant. All expenses must be obligated by the last day of the project period, including match. All obligated costs must be expended within 75 days from the project end date. Leftover funds must be returned to OJP.

Please be aware of the project end date and complete the standard closeout in GMS:

**Standard Closeout:**

- Submitted within 90 calendar days after the grant end date.
- All administrative, programmatic, and financial requirements have been met.
- All expenses must be obligated by the last day of the project period.

**Administrative (non-compliant) Closeout:**

- On the 91<sup>st</sup> day after the grant end date, GMS will automatically freeze funds, initiate an administrative closeout and notify the grant recipient.
- The grant recipient is unwilling/non-compliant or unable to complete closeout requirements

**TIP:** start the closeout process as soon as the program is completed and all monies have been spent.

To closeout your award, you will need to complete the five components of a closeout module in GMS and submit your closeout package for official closeout:

- To initiate the closeout, log in to GMS and follow the closeout module which includes the following 5 components:
  1. Final progress report – submit FINAL report in PMT and GMS
  2. Final Financial Status Report (SF-425)- submit FINAL report

3. Special condition compliance – e-mail your SPA\*
4. Financial reconciliation, and
5. Programmatic requirement certifications – once you provide a response you will be able to click SUBMIT button in the closeout module and submit the closeout package for a review

Once your final reports have been approved, you will be able to submit your closeout package.

\*You should e-mail your State Policy Advisor (SPA) with a notification that you have reviewed all your special conditions and are in compliance. (Please include your award number.) At this point, you should confirm that all special conditions have been reviewed and you have been compliant, and they have been met.

OCFO will conduct financial reconciliation and contact you with any financial outstanding issues. If your reported unobligated balance of Federal funds is more than your draw downs, draw down the difference. If your reported unobligated balance of Federal funds is less than your draw downs, submit a check for the difference to OJP to:

Office of Justice Programs  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer  
ATTN: Funds Control Branch  
810 Seventh Street, NW. - Fifth Floor  
Washington, DC 20531

## 15. What should I know about audit reports?

If you are a non-Federal entity that expended \$500,000 or more in Federal funds (from all sources including pass-through subawards) in your organization's fiscal year (12-month turnaround reporting period), then you are required to arrange for a single organization-wide audit conducted in accordance with the provisions of [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Circular A-133 \[PDF - 176 Kb\]](#).

If you are a non-Federal entity that expended less than \$500,000 a year in Federal awards, you are exempt from Federal audit requirements for that year. However, you must keep records that are available for review or audit by appropriate officials including the Federal agency, pass-through entity, and U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

- Audit reports are due 9 months after the close of your agency's fiscal year.
- State and local governments, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit institutions should submit reports to:

Federal Audit Clearinghouse  
Bureau of the Census

1201 East 10th Street  
Jeffersonville, IN 47132  
<http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>

- Commercial organizations and individuals should submit reports to the OJP Control Desk.
- For more information on Audit Reports, please contact:

Linda Taylor  
Lead Auditor, OJP  
(202) 514-7270  
[Linda.Taylor2@usdoj.gov](mailto:Linda.Taylor2@usdoj.gov)

## 16. Who should we contact with other questions about the grant?

If you have a question about your specific award requirements, including budget and compliance issues, please contact the BJA program manager identified in your award notification materials.

- **State Policy Advisors:** <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/resource/ProgramsOffice.pdf>

Also, important contact information has been included in the footer of each page:

- For GMS Questions, contact the GMS Help Desk: 1-888-549-9901, option 3 or [gms.helpdesk@usdoj.gov](mailto:gms.helpdesk@usdoj.gov)
- For financial questions, including GPRS questions, please contact OCFO Customer Service: 1-800-458-0786, option 2 or [ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov](mailto:ask.ocfo@usdoj.gov)
- For PMT questions, please contact the PMT Help Desk: 1-888-252-6867 or [BJAPMT@csrincorporated.com](mailto:BJAPMT@csrincorporated.com)