

KIANA: Now I am pleased to introduce to you Amy Solomon, the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs.

AMY SOLOMON: Thank you so much, Kiana. We really appreciate your assistance in putting this together and a warm welcome to everyone, our heartfelt thanks to all of you for taking time out of your very busy schedules to join us all today.

Before I begin, I want to give a big shout out to my colleague, Linda Seabrook, our Senior Counsel for Racial Equity and Justice. Yes, you heard that right. Linda is the first person with this title and responsibility for the Office of Justice Programs. Linda led the planning for this discussion and I know a great deal of time and thought went into making this a useful and informative conversation, and one that is worthy of the time that you're giving us, so thank you, Linda, and thanks to all of you for joining us today.

So we've invited you here today for an exchange. Our goal is to hear from those of you who do the vital work of supporting communities that are disproportionately impacted by crime, violence, and the criminal justice system. We know that many of your communities have long been underserved and have suffered from a lack of investment in community safety. And so we want to know, what can we do to help change that? How can we best use our resources to meet the critical needs you face? We also want to share with you some of what we've been doing over the past year and a half to advance racial equity and justice here at OJP, and how we're working to remove barriers to funding and technical assistance in an effort to reverse that underinvestment.

Our mission at OJP centers on providing jurisdictions with the support they need to keep their community safe and to do so in a way that respects the dignity and humanity of everyone who comes into contact with our criminal legal system. We believe that public safety and equal justice are twin goals that work together. And we're thinking about—our work in new ways, placing equity as a top priority along with safety.

Now, this approach is part of an administration-wide commitment to equity. On his very first day in office, President Biden signed Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Justice and Support for Communities through Federal Government. It calls on federal agencies to identify the barriers faced by historically-marginalized and underserved communities when accessing federal funding opportunities, and to take the necessary steps to lessen and ideally remove those barriers. Inspired by the President's executive order, we are, for the first time at OJP, giving priority consideration to projects that promote racial justice and equity into applicants that can demonstrate that their capabilities and competencies are enhanced because they identify as a culturally-specific or a by/for organization.

We've taken some other important steps as well. First, as I noted at the outset, we are so fortunate to get on board Linda as Senior Counsel for Racial Justice and Equity. And Linda came to us with extensive experience from the field, working to ensure greater racial and gender justice, and justice reform, and assistance efforts. From a programmatic standpoint, we're also making a concerted effort to design grant initiatives, touching every facet of the justice system, to reach historically marginalized and underserved communities.

For example, our Office for Victims of Crime is supporting Ujima, who you'll hear from a little bit later, to run a new national center to expand outreach and support to victim service programs when serving racial, ethnic, and cultural communities. We're also working closely with organizations that have deep ties to delivering community-based services. We recently awarded a hundred million dollars in community violence intervention grants to expand community services as a complement to law enforcement. As part of this effort, \$6 million is going to three organizations that will award micro grants or subgrants to community partners in historically marginalized and underserved communities. So that they can receive the funds they need while having to go between organization to take on the administrative work that comes along with receiving federal funding.

Now, part of the job of the intermediary organization is also to help build the capacity of newer or smaller CBOs that have not received federal funding before, so that they will be better equipped to apply for grants and take on the administrative work in the future. I believe that these are important and very necessary first steps, and I hope that you see them as evidence that the ground is shifting in positive ways.

OJP is taking an intentional and a varied approach to advancing equity. And you'll hear more about that in our first discussion with some of the staff here at OJP who are working in different ways to advance equity and racial justice through our programming and funding.

After that session, we are deeply honored to have with us today, Richard Ramos, from the Latino Coalition of Community Leadership, Shakyra Diaz from the Alliance for Safety and Justice, Anthony Smith of Cities United, and Chris Robinson of Ujima, the National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black community. These national and community leaders will provide a framework for the listening session that follows, where we'll be turning to you, community-based and culturally-specific organizations who have joined us, for your input and feedback.

What we're hoping to hear from you is whether you think we're headed in the right direction. What you see is successes that we can build on, what the issues are that we still need to address, and how we can ramp up our work to help communities meet the urgent challenges that you face. We appreciate that your time with us today is taking away from your community and from your important work, and we promise to respect this gift. We will do our best to make our time together meaningful, purposeful, and productive. We hope that you will consider this a space where you can be open, and candid, and honest, and we encourage you to think boldly and creatively about how we can work together to advance racial justice and equity. We want, and really, we need your feedback. And we hope that you'll give us the benefit of your insight and your experience.

Finally, at the end of our time together, our Chief of Staff, Brent Cohen, will moderate a discussion with OJP leadership. We will have with us the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Karhlton Moore, the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Liz Ryan, the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, Kris Rose, and the Director of the National Institute of Justice, Nancy La Vigne. They will share their vision for creating solutions to public safety, issues with community, and for all communities so that together we can reach our collective goal, safe communities that foster equal justice and equal opportunity.

And I should say that all of us, all of the office directors and our team here, including Dr. Nancy La Vigne whose name I just mispronounced, will all be listening to the whole session, and we really look forward to your input throughout the time.

So with that, I'd like to move forward into our first panel discussion, which I'll have the pleasure of moderating and I will be joined by my colleagues. First, Linda Seabrook, our Senior Counsel for Racial Justice and Equity, as you heard me say earlier Linda's role is to help OJP remove barriers to accessing funding for organizations that serve historically marginalized and underserved communities, as well as to advance racial and gender equity and justice throughout our programming. Eddie Bocanegra is a Senior Advisor who leads our work on community violence intervention. Eddie comes to us directly from the field where he pioneered community-based programs to address gun violence and trauma. And we've got Kevonne Small, Senior Counsel in OJP's Office of the Assistant Attorney General. Kevonne provides strategic guidance and support on issues including protecting civil rights, addressing inequities, and advancing juvenile justice reform. And finally, we are joined by former Baltimore judge, Karen Friedman. Karen is the Director of Criminal Justice, Innovation, Development and Engagement at the Bureau of Justice Assistance. She's probably spent more time out in communities across the nation than she has in her office, meeting a small, on-the-ground, and community-based organization to better understand their needs.

So thanks to everyone for joining us, this is a dynamo team and it's an honor to moderate this session, and we are going to get started. And Linda, I'm going to start with you. I mentioned in my opening remarks that the executive order on advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities, your role here is to really make this order come alive. So what are some of the ways that OJP is ensuring that our programming addresses racial equity and increases access and opportunities for underserved communities?

LINDA SEABROOK: Thanks, Amy, and welcome everyone, we're so excited that you joined us. So the executive order provides the floor of what federal entities need to do to advance equity and support for underserved communities, but we're aiming to reach the ceiling. OJP is the primary funding division of Department of Justice, for those who don't know. We provide resources and technical assistance to entities and organizations engaged in a wide range of justice-related programming, including assistance and support for people returning to the community after incarceration, community violence and intervention and interruption, substance use treatment services, community coalitions and partnership, and services for victims of crime, among many others. Because of this, we have reached into communities and we helped to provide support for public safety practices within those communities and throughout the nation. But as you know, Amy, not all communities have received support in equal measure, so that's why we are taking a very intentional approach to first listen to communities that have been historically marginalized and underserved to identify their needs, concerns, their public safety issues, like we're doing right now. And then we're taking that information to inform our approach and practices to achieving greater equity in our funding and our programming.

You mentioned some of our equity actions in your opening remarks, like, the first time priority consideration. But I want to share with our guests the impact of just that one action. As an example, the Office for Victims of Crime, out of 341 funding awards they made in Fiscal Year 2022, 259 of those awards went to support programs that focused on racial equity and increasing access and opportunities for historically marginalized

communities, or—and this is important, they also went to organizations or partnerships that included a culturally-specific organization. And why that's important is because if we're going to correct the underinvestment in communities of color, we have to invest in those organizations doing the work in their communities, and we let them lead. And then we provide the technical assistance they might need in order to be successful awardees.

So we're increasing our outreach, we are listening to needs, and we're taking proactive technical assistance steps such as OJP's Capacity Building Series, which covers topics identified through conversations with community-based and culturally-specific organizations, just like this, and look into the barriers that they experience to accessing federal funding or challenges once funded. And we do that in the hopes that we can reduce and eventually eliminate those barriers. And we're doing this in partnership with other grant-making offices here at DOJ too, such as the Office on Violence Against Women. So I'm very privileged to lead this initiative and this great team, and I'm so excited to hear what our guests have to share with us.

AMY SOLOMON: Thanks, Linda, thank you so much, and we will come back to you for more in just a moment. My next question is for Eddie Bocanegra, and I am so very grateful that Eddie is able to join us for this session. Eddie is the new father, two days ago, to a beautiful, healthy baby girl, and I didn't expect to be able to join us, but he is that committed. So Eddie, thanks for joining us and let me ask you a question right now. You call yourself a bridge builder. What do you mean by that and how are you building bridges for OJP?

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Well, Amy, I want to kind of share a quick thought around the way that I think about bridge building. For folks in our audience and for colleagues, I grew up in the west part of Chicago, and I must admit that for the very early age of my life, I was actually tearing down bridges between communities. Mostly with young people who look just like me, just because of where we lived at or because of the way who were we friends with so to speak. But in that journey, as far as being criminal

justice-involved and just learning how too often people from marginalized communities are often pitted against each other, it made me reflect in my professional work, how do we bridge communities, how do we bridge people together, both in the context of the community, but then how do we bridge the outside world, so to speak, to the community and vice-versa? And I think it's really important because as we think about community gun violence and we think about the several—no, thousands of people that have been killed in the last several years, to me, that's an opportunity to really engage individuals who have, really, maybe not the slightest idea of what it's like to live in these communities, or for the people who are engaging individuals who are in this lifestyle.

And at the end of the day, one of the things that I really enjoy about our colleagues and the leadership of the Attorney General, is the sense of public safety, the sense of creating safety in our communities, that we can't just arrest our way out of these issues. And then part of that is how do we humanize one another? Too often, when you see the news about a 15 year old or a 25 year old being shot and killed, and the perpetrator potentially being involved in the system before, it's almost the—way that it's phrased, it's almost as if we justify the death there and we don't take accountability as citizens of what can we do, what's our part here?

And so a couple examples that I'll draw in just a second about how do we build these bridges or the way that we're intentionally building bridges here is by engaging those who have not had the opportunity to be engaged with government, particularly with the Department of Justice. Too often, these communities that I'm referring to, communities like in the west side and east side of Baltimore, the south side or west side of Chicago, these communities have been impacted for many, many decades. And violence is a byproduct of disinvestment of these decades. And so part of our work here is to engage them, meet people where they're at, and I truly mean meet them where they're at, assess their needs, and recognize that too often the needs are surpassed, even the resources that one institution or one agency typically provide. And so, as you're building these bridges, it's important we're building bridges with other coalitions, other federal agencies, other departments as you have, Amy, just within your purview with the

Department of Justice, with OJP, being able to bridge various colleagues from different programs into one setting to really navigate and tackle the issue of community gun violence. The last thing that I'll say as a concrete example is that, back in July of this year, when the President made this huge announcement around the byproducts of Community Safety Act and investing in the next five years, \$250 million to gun violence. Shortly after that meeting, several of us in leadership here at Department of Justice, including myself, met with about 25 stakeholders from across the country. And that is one of many examples that we have been able to do. We've engaged philanthropy into our own building to tackle and talk about these issues. We've engaged people who have been victims of gun violence. We've engaged with criminal justice system and we recognize that not one of these areas alone can really address these issues that we're tackling with, which is why it's important that we continue to build these bridges and to continue to re-humanize the people that too often have been marginalized. And while there's a lot more that I could say, I hope that in the next two and a half hours or so, we hear from some of our partners in the community who have demonstrated some other examples.

AMY SOLOMON: Great. Thank you so much, Eddie, and I will circle back to you in this round if we have time. Karen, I'm going to turn to you. You have recently joined us relatively recently for many years on the ground in Baltimore, in the courtroom. And in this role, you have probably spent more time on the road than in the office. And that is a compliment from us and certainly for all of the folks who have joined today. So, what is your outreach look like and what are you hearing from the community-based organizations that you're meeting with?

KAREN FRIEDMAN: Thank you so much, Amy. As a former judge in Baltimore, for over 20 years, I have seen firsthand the hard work that you, the on the ground, in the trenches community organizations do day in and day out. I knew that if someone on probation to me connected with one of you in a meaningful way, they most likely would not come before another judge. Because you would make sure that the underlying issues that brought that individual into the criminal justice system was being addressed.

You are the magic ingredient for increasing public safety. It has been my honor to work with many of you over the years and visiting with you in my DOJ capacity. When I do come out and talk to you, you share with me your on-the-ground struggles. You share with me your lack of information about where to find grants that are available. The fact that you don't have a grant writer on staff to apply for those grants, like some of the larger, more mainstream organizations have, and if you are able to get a grant, you share how difficult it is to manage an account for all the dollars as a federal grant requires.

I want you to know that I have heard you and I have brought that message back with me, as well as shared with the leadership at DOJ the incredible, selfless, and difficult work you all do every single day. Seeing the innovative problem solving that you are engaged in to address real serious issues, to help people who are desperately in need of that help is so inspiring to me and to all of us here at DOJ. And I continue to learn from all of you every day. And if anyone wants me to come visit, as Amy said, I am happy to do so. So, please reach out. I love seeing your organizations. I love learning about what's going on in your neighborhoods and bringing that information back and keeping everyone here at DOJ informed of everything that's going on, on the ground. So please, please know I am here and feel free to reach out.

AMY SOLOMON: Great. Thank you. Thank you so much, Karen. And for that offer to everyone who is listening right now. I'm going to turn next to Kevonne Small, who we lured from the Civil Rights Division over to OJP to bring some of that expertise and perspective in-house. And Kevonne, can you tell us, what are some of the civil rights laws that grantees have to follow in order to receive federal funding? And how does our work to enforce those law help achieve racial equity in grant-making?

KEVONNE SMALL: Yes. Thank you so much, Amy, and it is such a pleasure to be here. Good afternoon, everyone. As Karen said, so many of our grantees really just haven't fully been informed of how civil rights laws directly impact the work that they do once they receive our funding. So, once you receive a grant from, say, the Department of

Justice, you are now a grantee. And you have been agreed to abide or to follow certain civil rights laws. These laws include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Omnibus Crime Control Act, Safe Streets Act, and also Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Now, I know I just spat out a lot of legalese there, but there will be a link, I think, on the next slide that will show you where you can go for more information about these civil rights laws. But the big takeaway is these laws protect individuals and protect people from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, and disability. And the way that these laws that we enforce play out in a real world setting for you, if someone is coming to your organization, the minute they walk in your door, they're coming to you to receive a benefit or a service. That person, however they may show up, they cannot be discriminated against based on their sex, their disability, their race, their color, or their national origin, which includes their language ability, their ability to speak English.

Also, and more importantly in the grant-making space, if an entity such as a state-administering agency who is a prime receives a grant or an award from a federal funding agency such as the Department of Justice, when that agency goes to put out policies or practices around how sub-awards are made, that policy and practice or those policies and practices also cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability. So, I really hope that they will put up a slide, the next slide that shows where you can go for more link for more information. And within the Office of Justice Programs, we have an office for civil rights that really is here to work with you to not only help educate you on the front end because we prefer to do it on the front end than on the back end, but also to hear from you should you feel like there is something that you're experiencing through the process of trying to apply for a grant. So, thank you so much, Amy, for your questions.

AMY SOLOMON: Great. Thanks, Kevonne. And for everyone listening, we'll make sure that you have the information you need after this webinar as well. I'm going to try and squeeze in two more questions, one for you, Linda and one for Eddie. Linda, an important part of our application and selection process is peer review. So, can you

explain it for our audience, as well as any efforts we're taking to diversify our peer reviewer pool? And why is that important? Thanks.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thanks Amy for that question. Peer review is really critical here. It allows those who work for community-based and culturally-specific programs that if they become peer reviewers, to have a say and input into who receives OJP funding by evaluating and scoring applications themselves. And that's why we're increasing our outreach in the hopes that we can better diversify the professionals who help us determine which organizations and entities have proposed the best strategies and need to be funded and are meeting the needs of the funding opportunity.

I hope if we could put up the next slide, Tenzing, I hope that everyone writes down that site address that is on the slide, so they can learn more about how to become a peer reviewer. And here's the best part. You get paid too, \$125 for each application reviewed. It's a great professional development opportunity as well, because it allows you to see different approaches and different strategies to public safety. And also what elements make for a successful proposal. So I hope everybody listening really consider becoming a peer reviewer because it's only through that we'll be sure to get the most effective awards that reach all communities.

AMY SOLOMON: Thanks for sharing that. It is really often an invisible part of the funding process and it's critical to how we're making decisions and identifying what are the strongest proposals that get teed up for award decision-making. So thank you, Linda.

And Eddie, I'm going to turn last question to you. Earlier, Linda mentioned some of the efforts underway to remove barriers to accessing federal funding. So, can you talk through a couple of the ways that we're making sure that we're reaching community-based organizations? These are new strategies and we're testing some of them out in the CVI context. So can you share a little bit more there?

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Absolutely Amy. But before I answer that question, there's a— there's a quick comment that I want to mention here. We've been very fortunate to have colleagues that come from various walks of life here at OJP. And that's really important because it really helps inform our policies and how we're thinking about the solicitation that we're providing here, even for CVI or for other related matters.

And one of the pleasures that I actually have is that there are two fellows here with OJP, specifically BJA, Angel Sanchez and John Bae, who I have the pleasure of working with them regularly, and we have--every other Friday, we have really intense conversations around the specific issue. And at the end of the day we hold communities to a higher standard than systems, and their learning curve for some of these organizations is often scrutinized. And we recognize that. We also recognize that communities know what's really best for their people and for their residents. But resources are typically get prioritized to systems in other entities. And at the end of the day, too often those entities that are not necessarily a proximity to some of the people who are working on these issues or serving in these communities. And so because of that, communities have to constantly do these big sales for resources and often cut from opportunities for million dollar funds.

And at the end of the day, what OJP has been doing here intentionally, and you mentioned this in your earlier remarks, Amy, as well as Linda, is this idea of inter--intermediary, how do we support organizations that have the back-office support to really absorb these resources and redistribute it to subcontract organizations to do a couple of things here. The first, to make sure that organizations that are culturally relevant doing this work are being funded, typically those organizations tend to be smaller organizations, \$500,000 to maybe \$2 million organizations as an example. And at the same time, it is a key priority for us in the office to really help build capacity of these organizations.

And there's a couple of ways that we're doing that. One is through our TTA providers, and recently, we just awarded three organizations in that phase. We're also leveraging

other resources to help organizations build their capacity. But at the same time, these three other intermediary organizations that I'm referring to and that you referenced earlier, they're also, inadvertently, helping to build the capacities of these organizations, so they too have a competitive advantage or I should say advantage, but at least be able to compete with other organizations for these resources. And that's critical as we think about not only diversity, but we think about expanding some of the resources communities and hence the topic of today, how do we continue to—those communities that have been marginalized, bring them into a community that's been doing this work for some time. So, a lot more that I could discuss around that, but really, this is an opportunity for us to continue to learn from the field, and to be able to bring this back to our office.

AMY SOLOMON: Great. Thank you so much, Eddie. Thank you all so much, both, for participating, but more importantly, for your incredible work for being part of this team, there's a lot that's been done, but this is just a seed. I know that there are so much more to come, so just great thanks to each of you. And now, we're going to turn to the main event of the day, where we'll hear from our special guests and from all of you working in and with communities on the ground. So I'm going to pass the mic over to Linda. Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you, Amy. Thanks so much. So, now we are going to be joined by our very special guests. I'm going to introduce them first, and then we will get right into the questions. Anthony Smith has joined us, the Executive Director of Cities United, Shakyra Diaz, the Chief of Federal Advocacy at the Alliance for Safety and Justice, Chris Robinson, Director of Training and Technical Assistance for Ujima, The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community, and Richard Ramos, Founder and CEO of the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership. Lots of Cs in there.

So, thanks so much to all of you for taking the time to share your thoughts and concerns with us. To start our discussion, I'll ask each of you to tell us a little bit about your

organization. Each of which has a network. So, I'll also ask what types of organizations or individuals are included in your network and how do you keep in community with them? Sorry. And I will start with Anthony.

ANTHONY SMITH: It's all good, Linda. Good to see you. And thanks for the invite for Cities United to join. Again, I'm Anthony Smith, Executive Director of the Cities United. And we support a network of cities that includes mayors, community-based partners, and young leaders who are all working to create safe, healthy, and hopeful communities for young Black men and boys with a focus on reducing the homicide rate of young Black men and boys ages 14 to 24 in half by 2025.

So we help cities develop their comprehensive public safety plans. That includes looking at how to enhance CVI ecosystem, but also looking at how cities view all of the government to really help create these communities that are safe and hopeful for young Black men and boys and their families. So, we come in and start doing an assessment of the city where they are, but then help them really walkthrough our roadmap to safe, healthy, and hopeful communities, helping them develop that strategy and that plan, and helping them really think about what's the long-term work look like over the next five to 10 years. So far today, we've been around for about 11 years and have partnered with over about 130 cities over that time, any given year we're working in-depth with about 25 to 30 cities. And again, really helping them think about how to build those big tables, to bring all of the key stakeholders together to really think about these strategies and partnership, but also focusing in on those who are most impacted by community violence, not just the people, but those communities that they live in as well. So, again, just excited to be here, excited to be a part of the conversation, but that's our network. That's what we do and just looking forward to the conversation today.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you so much, Anthony. Safe, healthy, and hopeful, I love that. Shakyra, I'll turn to you next.

SHAKYRA DIAZ: Hi. Good morning. Good afternoon wherever you are in the world. I am Shakyra Diaz. I'm the Chief of Federal Advocacy for the Alliance for Safety and Justice. And I'm going to tell you and show you who we are. I need to create like a meme that does this thing that I'm about to do.

We are a multi-state organization working to reduce the reliance on incarceration and increase investments in best practices to stop the cycle of crime. Our constituents, our membership, our advisors are people who are underserved victims of crime, which we call Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice. And we have our time-done constituency, which is our membership of people with past convictions, people with records.

And I'm now going to overlap these two circles and in the middle it's really important. There is a relationship that exists between unaddressed trauma and contact with the justice system. So our membership is both and oftentimes, and it's important to note that we are our membership, the majority of our staff at the Alliance for Safety and Justice identify as one, both, or the other. And for us, we are doing in terms of how do we stay in community? We are the community. Our work is really centered around policy, legislative budget, budget and research advocacy, but we're doing that in partnership with our membership.

So everything that we're elevating whether it's identifying research gaps, that is coming directly from our membership, whether we are elevating a policy reform at the state level or a budget recommendation at the federal level. Everything that we're elevating is done in partnership with our membership, which are the folks who are experiencing a weird dynamic of targeted indifference. Targeted when we are in need of support, when we are victims, we are most vulnerable, and ignored in many ways, right? But feeling disproportionately targeted when it comes to responses. So that's who we are and that's how we do the work that we do across the country. Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: Wow, targeted indifference, that's really powerful. I have a bunch of phrases I've been writing down, so it's going to be in my lexicon from now on. I'm

going turn over to Chris now. Please tell us a little bit about Ujima and all the amazing work that you do in your network.

CHRIS ROBINSON: Thank you so much, Linda, and hello everyone and thank you all for inviting us here today. So yes, my name is Chris Robinson and I am the Director of Training and Technical Assistance at Ujima which is the National Center—I'm sorry, the National Center on Violence against Women in the Black Community.

So we partner with SCESA and on The National Center for Culturally Responsive Victim Services, funded by the Office of Victims of Crime, so our mission is to mobilize the community to respond to an in-domestic sexual and community violence in the Black community.

We actualize this mission through research, public awareness, community engagements, and resource development. Ujima serves as a resource to survivors of violence, advocates, and service providers, and also the community at large. So I think it's important to highlight that. Ujima's network is broad and even though it's broad, it's specific. At all times, we are centering the needs of Black women and girls, and the Black community as well. We're also partnering with a broad range of programs, advocates, and [INDISTINCT] within the Black community by creating a safe space for critical conversations, formal training, technical assistance, and strategic planning.

So thank you so much for inviting us here today, also if I could mention one more thing. Ujima is on the forefront of new training outreach tools and public policy to reduce violence against homicides of Black women and girls. So thank you so much.

LINDA SEABROOK: That's amazing. And I just wanted to let everyone know if they may not know, when Chris said SCESA, she's talking about Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault. So I know, those of us who work in or around DC, we love our little acronyms.

CHRIS ROBINSON: We do.

LINDA SEABROOK: But we appreciate you, Chris. And now last but certainly not least, Richard. We're going to go to you.

RICHARD RAMOS: Hi, Linda. Thank you and thanks for the invitation. I appreciate being here today. Hi, everybody, I'm Richard Ramos. I'm the CEO and President of the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership.

Essentially, we exist to bring equity to the inequality of funding of the marginalized minority-led nonprofits. And we've been doing that for over 18 years and I think one of the best ways to describe our organization is that we are insuring to funders their social return on investment. And most of the time businesses look for a return on investment, we're looking for that social return on investment for the funders that are giving us the money that we grant.

We do this by finding the marginalized nonprofits that are meeting the needs of individuals and families, and we are providing them access to federal funding that they probably would never have had an opportunity as you've heard because they don't know what to do, they don't know where to go. And most of the faith-based and community-based organizations that we fund are very small, some of them are just starting, two people, three people, what you guys are I'm sure all familiar with. But we are providing them that funding and access to that philanthropic, corporate, and federal state funding.

We also are forming them, these grassroots nonprofits through the capacity building that our staff provides them, could be anything from data collection, financial management, case management, board development, and technical assistance, and really part of what our staff is doing is holding these organizations accountable so that they can achieve the desired outcomes of why they received the grant. We stay in community by including our community partners in the process to provide solutions and we are

constantly in communication through our monthly site visits or sometimes they're more than that but we're constantly in touch with them.

And just one last data point, last year we invested \$10.7 million to marginalized nonprofits. And this year, we're on track to this fiscal year to invest \$14 million to the nonprofits that are in marginalized communities and minority-led. So thank you for having me today, I appreciate being here.

LINDA SEABROOK: Wow, that's fantastic. And I think everyone can see why we have this incredible panel here to share their time with us and we thank you again. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Eddie for the next question.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Thank you, Linda. I'm in awe. Amy mentioned in her opening remarks or when she was moderating the panel is having a child. And literally, I mean, less than 24 hours, I just had my baby girl. And given this topic that we're discussing here, right? And all the work that went behind for today to actually happen, recognizing that we have people who are in leadership across our country right now, both at the federal level, but here in this particular panel, I owe it to you at the end of the day. Because you are on the ground doing this work, and you're building coalition, you're building community, you are that bridge that we referenced earlier. You are that bridge, you're an important part of that bridge. And that bridge right now as we're speaking, right, there's a bridge between you, and the community, and us. And we definitely see that value that you bring. And the fact that you could demonstrate to your other comment, Richard, about being able to show and ROI, right, return on investment, whether it's taxpayer's money, or philanthropy, or corporate, so I just want to take a moment to just acknowledge that and to thank you, because there's so many people right now that get to benefit from the field overall, and particularly these marginalized communities.

And at the end of the day, this question is for Anthony. I could tell you if someone who's only been here at DOJ for maybe nine, ten months already, but it feels much longer

than that, I can attest to that. The challenge has always been for organizations to be able to tap into these federal dollars. I mean, even I—10 months in—I could tell you that every week, I learn more about different grants that I think could be applied in some of our community, some of our work. And it's part of my job to just like push that information out because it's public and sometimes the folks on the ground, particularly small organizations don't have those kind of in-road, so to speak, right, for this kind of information. And I could tell you just by—because I know all of you here, every single time there's federal grants that are being pushed out. You push those opportunities, those resources out into your networks.

But I also have to ask you, Anthony, can you share of what your pathway was, at first, for seeking out applying for these federal funds, and then what was some of the obstacles that you encountered? And the last thing—a lot of questions here, but the last thing I'll have to say — what do you need? And given the fact that you work with so many cities, what do they need, right, to be able to remove some of those obstacles?

ANTHONY SMITH: Good question, Eddie. Congrats on the baby. Glad to see you here. Loved you and the family [INDISTINCT] bringing in new life. So, federal grants for us started—I used to work in the city of Louisville with Mayor Fischer [INDISTINCT] neighborhoods. We were one of the national former youth violence prevention grants, right? So we were doing that work and we were able to really use that to stand up to office and really go to work.

But I think the beauty of what came with that was not only the grant and the resources, there was also—there's a network that was supportive and [INDISTINCT] a lot of resources came in with that as well.

This go around, we went in a partnership with our friends over at the Community Based Public Safety Collective in [INDISTINCT] when we did a joint grant and the collective work to lead, but I think the question that you're asking really is just like how do you even get the courage to apply for a federal grant when all that goes with it. And the

hoops you got to jump to get to it, but then also once you get at the management of it. It's not as easy as it could be but I think the reason that it was important for us to go for this go around is that all that had been set up to get us to this point, right?

So when administration came in and had the conversation around advancing racial equity and really been hopeful about the grants, and all of our advocacy and push to kind of help some of that was important for us to not just allow this to go by, right? So we came together and said, "We asked for this, they made some investment, they made some shifts, let us go forward and see what we can do but also how do we then move those resources to the ground. The grant that we got in partnership together to provide technical assistance to other local community-based organizations on the ground, so we're really trying to map that out and move forward.

And I think some of the hiccups in note have always been is that, one, it's a tough process which is understandable, but it still does feel sometimes like who and how you get into the pipeline and sometimes folks in the field just don't get the notification, don't get the information, don't know that there's [INDISTINCT] sessions to help them fill out the grants and move through it. But I think the biggest barrier really is, is that the management of it, that sometimes it's overwhelming, right? It's like I got to have a whole team just to manage the grant while I'm still trying to do the work. So trying to figure out how to take this on and do it is a lot than a lot of folks do.

And the one thing I will say your question about working in cities, the biggest struggle for cities especially with the offered knowledge and some other is that do they get resources because of some of the regulation, but then also some of the rates that they put on when they get it, they're asking folks to do the work and then ask for reimbursement, and it's hard for those community-based organizations to do work and, and do all the work, but then wait on payments, right? Because—you pin them up where they can't do payroll, they can't be as nimble and flexible as they need to be with this work. Or this because you've done it, you might think you got a good plan, but the community and the work shift that plan, and at times it's just to maneuver. But I think

what cities need to continue access that they have but also helping them understand how to move those dollars more quickly, but a lot of those, they are [INDISTINCT] right? They're still stuck, they may be the big—they may be big [INDISTINCT] but they're just not moving and I think that might be the same thing [INDISTINCT] federal grants were also—I hope that would sound helpful when you [INDISTINCT] that you pulled up. But think just how we move those dollars quickly and a lot of them can be more nimble and flexible, it's going to be key as we continue to advance our racial equity around funding through the Department of Justice.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you, Anthony. We know reimbursement is an issue and we're definitely looking into it and working on it. But thank you for lifting that up to us. So the next question for Shakyra. Shakyra, what does equity mean to organizations such as the Alliance for Safety and Justice that are working to ensure equal access to—or equitable access, right, to services, assistance, support, and healing for communities that are most impacted by crime and violence and victimization, and the criminal justice system overall?

SHAKYRA DIAZ: Thank you for that. I want to echo Anthony's sentiment about reimbursements. That's a challenge. Just want to elevate that.

So for the Alliance for Safety and Justice, Linda, in our membership, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice and time done, for us it's an acknowledgement of our dignity, our expertise, our humanity, our experiences. But overall, the fact that we're all deserving of safety, right? So, earlier, I mentioned targeted indifference. There's so many examples of moments where people have felt very, very vulnerable and felt ignored.

Eddie referenced that there are community-based organizations who are doing fundraisers on their own, so like spaghetti dinners and all that. That same strategy exists for families who are raising resources to bury their loved ones when there are actually government resources available. But the barriers of victims of crime and communities that experience violence as well as the barriers that folks with past

convictions experience are very much the same, the ways that we're managing those experiences and trying to navigate them is the same. I think one thing that I want to acknowledge is the fact that this administration's intentionality around listening, around convening conversations like this. And just acknowledging very outrightly that these barriers that exist, right?

For example, the reimbursements. What we see a lot is that community-based organizations who started these organizations because there was no one there to help them, right? When they were struggling with coming back home and trying to get a job and were met with closed door after closed door, right? When people have lost their children to gun violence, when people have been victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, there was no one there to help them, right? So what's happening in our communities is the people are starting up their own organizations. Oftentimes what we see is that the larger organizations who are getting funding want to either do a MLU or very limited contract with these community-based organizations who have the subject matter expertise, right? But may not have capacities in some areas, right? I don't want to use the word capacity broadly because some larger organizations don't have capacities in areas that really matter, right? So, the fact that there is this effort around increasing management capacity is really important. But for us it's just understanding that duality. I'm Dominican, I grew up in Cleveland.

I'm always fascinated by the silos of American society, even though I've been here since I was four years old, right? But there are multiple systems that touch us, right? And are involved in who we end up being or not being and how we respond to the world. But the responses or the ways to help people are not multisystemic at all. There is almost little to no acknowledgment that a harm that someone experience when they are eight years old without support, right, you completely ignore the harm that a child experience, don't intervene in any way, shape, or form, and then are completely surprised that 20 years later, this child has grown up and caused harm to someone else, right? Those are the seeds of indifference, right? That there were 20 years of that

that happened along the way, and there were multiple systems that could've intervened but did not.

So that coordination is so important. That coordination to really be invested in the humanity of someone, right? Acknowledging that when someone loses a child, they need support. That the fact that a parent who lost a child to gun violence and may have had a 20-year-old felony from minor drug possession or anything else. None of that matters, right? That parent deserves a support to bury their child. Then on top of the loss that they're experiencing, right, a tremendous, horrible loss, they should not also be subjected to the indignity of not being able to afford to pay for a funeral because they have a prior conviction and that prior conviction is preventing them from getting a job. It's preventing them from burying their child.

But these are the real situations that happen every single day. The fact that so many victims of crime—I mean Chicago is a good example but it's not just in Chicago, it's all over the country, where there are victims of crime who will never hear back from the system who initially engaged them. They cannot get a callback, right? And part of it is that we've made things so big that they do not work. So we have to be able to be more intentional and listen because in order for us to build and move forward, in order for us to ensure that our communities are safe, that these policies, legislation, budgets, and practices are truly equitable. That intentionality in listening and identifying gaps, right? People who have lived experiences can let all of us know, right, that all of these gaps exist, that the reason that we cannot get from A to Z is because we have gaps from B to Y. I got lost with my alphabet. But those gaps are real. And sometimes they're very unintentional, right? Sometimes laws and policies and budget regulations are written with good intention, sometimes they're not. But a lot of times they are written with good intention, but there's gaps along the way that happen in implementation. So if your words are not having the impact, then these conversations are so important because that's how we're able to make sure that the mission and vision that this administration has elevated, actually comes to fruition, right? That we're actually changing lives for generations to come.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you so much. I feel like a little bit like I'm in church, right? Like, all right. Eddie, next question.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Shakyra, I just want to say thank you for your comments there. They're very thought-provoking and I'm glad that our listeners, I'm sure many of them would affirm with you. And there's probably some that are probably wondering, "Okay. Then how do we make something differently?"

Which is why I'm really glad that our leadership here in OJP are on this call right now, it affirms some of what they're learning, what they're seeing, their expertise, and it's encouraging, right, that we get to hear from folks on this call because of who, in many ways, you're an ambassador for hundreds, if not thousands of people, right, in the field. So thank you for that. And I would say A through Y, I'm with you on that too. Who uses Z by the way, Shakyra?

So my next question is actually for Richard. And Richard, I had the pleasure of connecting through Paul Cario a couple of years ago right when the pandemic hit. And the question that we're exploring at the time, I was at Heartland Alliance and managing about a hundred and plus staff. And even though I was working at a large organization, we were struggling, we're struggling to our plan for grants, we're struggling to help build organizations, build their capacity. COVID really did a wonder for many organizations who already were, in many ways crushed by the way that philanthropy government typically supports this kind of work.

And in those conversations, we talked a lot about youth development, the importance of that, the importance of Latino voice in these conversations, including even government and so on. So really much appreciate your leadership there. When I heard you say \$14 million earlier and going back into the community, that's wonderful. We need to continue to learn from those kind of efforts and we look forward to that as well because we also

know you're one of my grantees, so we look forward with you to staying in contact with you around this specific topic.

But my question at the end of the day is really—it's around engagement. You engage many networks, you mentioned that earlier and you have been able to fundraise for these organizations to be able to implement their work with organizations that, as you pointed out, maybe two or three staff. At the end of the day I'm curious to know, for those who might not know why is building capacity really important, particularly, when we think about the operational, the professional development. We celebrate people who've been in prison, they turn their lives around. We celebrate people who used to be in gangs and now they're peacekeepers, right? We celebrate people who've been victims, survivors of gun violence, and then we ask them to do all these different things, right?

But at the end of the day, there's a lot that needs to happen there, from healing to professional development of them, and so on. So I just want to kind of get your thoughts around that. If you could just, elaborate just a little bit.

RICHARD RAMOS: Thanks a lot, Eddie. Actually I want to go back to, just make a general comment about, we don't encourage people to apply for federal grants if they're not ready. And that's one of the roles of an intermediary. What we're doing is we're preparing them along the way because we are regranting the federal dollars we get but we're saying, look, you need capacity building, you need to understand how to manage your finances and fiscal management and all these other things that are required, the reporting, and everything else. So we are, preparing them, incubating them through that for two, three-year period of the grants that we've given them. Our grants are significant. We're giving them \$200,000 to \$300,000 grant because we understand that they need, not only the program money but they need the operational money.

And as far as capacity goes, the difference between capacity and capability. Capacity means that you're able to do more of what you're already doing. The capability to do

something means you're going to be able to do something you've never been able to do before. And so that's what we are moving and through that, that pipeline of building their infrastructure and helping them understand that without this kind of infrastructure, you're not going to be sustained. So the data collection and the financial management, the program development, the case management, the accountability, and all those different things, so we're, able to incubate them in that. And many of the organizations that we have funded over this 5 to 18 years, they have gone on to be able to apply for the wrong federal grants but that was just—and they have received them some of the—one story we always like to tell the guy—one of the guys we funded, he was working out of the trunk of his car, him with another guy. Today, they have over 70 employees and multimillion dollar buildings. And I could tell that story over and over again. As a matter of fact, Eddie, you know Paul, when I met Paul, he was doing tattoo removal and with another guy, we funded him. And you know how his organization grew and what he's doing now. So—but it takes time, so I just want to make that point.

But what I want to encourage here, there really needs to be a leadership innovation, I think, at the policy level. I mean, a revolution maybe, where people understand that we should be looking at non-profits just like you look at any business. And you know that any business, any startup, any entrepreneur, you need cash flow. And I don't know where this idea comes from. I know it's been for a long time but I'm hoping somebody out there can take—have the courage that—we cannot just continue to fund program. What good is funding a program if in three years the funding's over and it goes away? That entity needs to be funded with operational money not just program money. And that really stifles and handcuffs, especially young non-profits that are just trying to get ready, because then they're just scrambling from—they know and we only have three years, and that's the second point.

Again, I don't know why three years is some magic number, but from my experience, it takes three years just to get grounded, just to get the foundation built, of all the things I mentioned about having that capacity in data collection and financial management, case management, and all those different things. And then when you're just, kind of, getting

your roots and foundation built, then the money is gone. So I would hope that at that level of policy and as the federal and state level, they could look at a five-year period. That would be more realistic to have a five-year grant, and also a combination of operational money and program money. And I know there's a lot of excuses about why that can't happen, but I just want to encourage somebody to ask, "Why not?" If that's the way businesses are run and started, and non-profit should-, I always encourage you're a for profit, a non-profit, because you have to have to profit in order to continue to do the work you're doing.

And somehow this non-profit mentality needs to change, so I really want to encourage that. And the other thing that I'll say, as far as capacity goes, the main—I would say the main thing. Now, I just got done doing about a month of site visits in Colorado, California, different places that we have, our community partners. And the purpose of that time was we did a survey interview. And we're asking the executive directors and their staff, "How can we get better? We as an intermediary, how can we serve you better? What can we do?" Kind of like what you guys are doing. And we wanted to know, we want to do a better job. And I have to say that one of the main things that they express, their appreciation, their gratitude for, and their need was financial management teaching, understanding budgets, understanding indirect cost, understanding cost allocation, understanding that Greek language, that was Greek to me and sometimes still is, that a lot of non-profits, they are not in it for that. They're in it to serve people. They're in it to meet a need. They're in it to help that mom, that single parent, that guy coming out of prison, that woman coming out of jail reconnecting with their kids. That's why they were doing it. They don't understand all these Greek or Espanol or whatever you want to call it. But we're saying, "No, you got to—you got to do this. You got to do it. You can't just be out there saving people, which we know is the bottom line, but if you don't do these things, you're not going to be around anymore. So I would just encourage those things are—the operational funds, the cash flow that's needed, extending three- to five-year grants, for policymakers to start thinking that way about it. And then, the fiscal management teaching, that's so, so important. So [INDISTINCT]

EDDIE BOCANEGRAS: Well, Richard, I want to say, this is the reason why you're one of our grantees, right? And I just took a lot of scrupulous notes here which you've also just gave us an outline for 2023 Webinar Series for us. So we'll be in contact here. Linda.

LINDA SEABROOK: Hey. Yeah, and thank you so much, Richard. And you actually lead us really well into speaking to Chris, because Chris is an organization officer as an intermediary. Ujima because you're leading along with SCESA, the National Center for Culturally Responsive Victim Services. If you're really trying to be very intentional yourself, right, in promoting racial equity and victim services, by providing training and technical assistance and doing a lot of the work that Richard was talking about, right? To make sure that smaller organizations are ready, right? To eventually be the awardee of federal funding [INDISTINCT] to invest in organizations with lived experience within and working with communities, and why is that important?

CHRIS ROBINSON: Thank you, Linda. First, let me just say this panel is on fire. This is a dope panel. So let's see if I can definitely add to this conversation. So we know that the need for culturally-specific organizations is extremely important. We have a due diligence to consistently seek ways to support victims and survivors of color, in which we refer to as collective work and responsibility. Victims and survivors of communities of color have been disproportionately exposed to violence, and our lives are intersectional, yet, there are far few recent access to programs and resources that are developed by and for the community. And I think that's important to say that are developed by and for the community.

It's imperative that organizations serving communities of color are grounding in cultural realities language and have an understanding of the nuances of our lives in order to provide services that truly meet our need. So we know the culturally-specific organizations, they are doing the work. The work is being done but they are underfunded and under-resourced.

The Culturally Responsive Center allows us to increase access to resources for these organizations. So traditionally, when we talk about expanding services to meet the needs of communities of color, the approach has been to expand the capacity of mainstream organizations. We have to move toward investing in leadership of communities that are most impacted. The center of Ujima, through the center, Ujima and SCESA are focused on investing in our community. And so as you mentioned, we do that by increasing our resources and providing training and technical assistance and hosting listening sessions as well. So...

LINDA SEABROOK: Exactly. And we thank you so much for all of your work. So I'm going to turn it over to Eddie to get an—this is our opportunity—first of all, thank you. This really has been, like, incredible panel. We're so fortunate really that you've all spent some time with us today and I think you've created a great framework for what we're moving into next which is a listening session with culturally-specific and community-based organizations that have joined us today because we want to hear from you. So I'm going to turn it over to Eddie to start us off.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Thank you, Linda. Again, this is an incredible panel here and I sincerely mean this. I'm actually getting some text messages from folks who are actually listening in about how incredible this actually is and that the Department of Justice and OJP specifically is really open to this kind of conversation. I think this is a lot about our leadership too, the fact that on this call, even though you don't see their faces right now, right, that's intentional, they're listening in. And that's really critical. That's the kind of buy-in that, community actually has right now within us as well, so we're looking forward to these next steps and how this continues to inform our work here.

As Linda pointed out, this next section is really for us to listen from you, from you who on—actually on this call. And so this is an opportunity for us to learn, to hear some of your comments, advice recommendations, and all in between that we want to be able to bring back to us, back to the office, back to our leadership and career folks. And so before we go there, and because I know some folks who are on this call as well, I

wanted to just create some general guidelines here. We have limited time. This is not the time for you to raise your hand, jump in, and give us your resume, which might take five, ten minutes. It's not the kind of time that we have right now. We want to be very explicit around how do we maximize this time. We have several hundred people on this call right now. And so we would ask to please raise your hand. You'll be chosen to kind of time in, ask your question or share your comment and this is really an opportunity for us to listen. This is an opportunity for leadership right here at the department to listen from you.

So having said all that, I want to kick us off just with a general question that I would just ask this audience here, our esteemed guests who are joining us virtually. So we just heard from organizational leaders who have a network and share information and opportunities through their networks What are some other ways that you have learned about funding opportunities? So feel free to lift your hand and we have a team behind the scenes who are going to be selecting the hand. So feel free to raise your hand. No, I can't see these hands to be clear but I'm assuming our colleagues could.

LINDA SEABROOK: Oh, you're welcome too to write the answers in the Q&A and one of our colleagues, Kevonne, will say it for us.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: There you go. Thank you, Linda, for clarifying that.

KEVONNE SMALL: Yes, I have many questions ready to go. One of the biggest questions has been will we be providing contact information for the panelists? Because the panelists have been on fire and many people would love to be able to have your contact information.

LINDA SEABROOK: Absolutely. We are going to do that. But we're in the process of a listening session now, so I'm hoping that we can get an answer to that first question that Eddie just asked. So yes, we are going to give panelist information if that's cool with them, if I can get a thumbs up. And we'll get to some more questions later but for that

answer, Kevonne, if you can just choose a name if you see somebody's hand raised and then our magic behind the scenes will unmute them. So again, the first question is, what are some ways that you learn about funding opportunities?

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: And as Kevonne is looking towards the hands that are being lifted up, let me just fill in a little bit of the space here by saying one of the lessons that I've learned when it comes to philanthropy or even federal funds is that unfortunately, the culture of the work, those who are on the ground doing this work, have been very limited, sometimes competing against each other for these resources that too often we don't always forward these opportunities to others. And sometimes we become gatekeepers, even at the expense of the same communities that we're trying to support. And so that's why the people in this call, our panelists are extremely generous with their time but also could demonstrate how they've been able to do the opposite of that.

LINDA SEABROOK: And we do have some...

ANTHONY SMITH: I could even jump in.

LINDA SEABROOK: Oh, absolutely, Anthony. I was just going to say we also have some answers in the Q&A, which is thank you so much. So folks have said peer to peer network and social media. Thank you. Colleagues in the field, the daily Grants.gov emails and they learn about funding from other organizations. Coalition email listserv and current grantor emails. So thank you for all of that. And then definitely, Anthony.

ANTHONY SMITH: No [INDISTINCT] everything I was going to say, so no need for me to jump in.

AMY SOLOMON: We're going to start with a question from Eileen Arnold.

LINDA SEABROOK: All right, Eileen.

EILEEN ARNOLD: Hi. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. It's unnerving to go first. I am in rural Alaska. I do victim services, so that's what I can speak to, victim services in rural Alaska and I think in particular the Office of Victims of Crime has done an excellent investment in travel victim services. It's equitable. It's the right thing to do. We've seen a lot of new emergent victim services in our region, which is Western Alaska which has some of the highest rates of interpersonal violence.

I want to plant a seed about technical assistance. I am a person who, I get state money and then also I'm basically always applying for federal funds to make our budget work every year. I've learned a lot of good things from technical assistance over the years but these days, I'm really valuing how we've learned how to do things on the ground. And I think that some victim services programs should be given the opportunity to do some of the technical assistance for some of the emergent victim services programs in our region. We are already, because people are calling us and it only helps us for other victim services to develop in our region.

And my issue in my program is I need to pay my people more. I've raised people as much as I possibly can. I am at one or two percent overspent on every single budget. And I have good people right now who show me every day about how they're being recruited away from my agency to I would say places that have got easier jobs for more pay. We can't compete when we're trying to house people in a shelter because we have a shelter. I can't pay for people to live here and then also pay for payroll to keep people competitively here because I have a lot of single mothers working here.

So the solution that I keep thinking of that would be excellent is, to raise our capacity share what we're already sharing with the emergent victim services programs is to allow us to do victim services, because like I said, we're already doing it but we're doing it a lot of it uncompensated and we know how to manage grants. We have to do that every day. I cried buckets of tears over learning how to do those types of systems and how to understand a grant and understand how to do it all. And we already are helping people out here—I mean, others—other programs out here. Sometimes through a contact,

sometimes unpaid and I just think what we've come to learn about managing grants and also about doing victim services in rural Alaska is really valuable. Valuable in a way that technical assistance that is out of Anchorage or downstate or something cannot be.

So I think it would build our capacity and I think, like I said, we're doing it anyway and I just want to plant that seed for in the future. Not all on the ground programs would have the capacity I think or the interest in doing technical assistance but some of us are already doing it and are interested. And it would help me pay my people more or free me up to do some of the technical assistance if I could hire a grant manager or a deputy director or something like that, like, there's lots of ways that we could do it. But I want to plant that seed. Thank you for hearing me out.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you so much. And we know that, right? You're doing it on the ground— and you're doing it all because you have to, right? So we absolutely hear that. So, next to answer.

AMY SOLOMON: So we have another hand raised by Eric Weaver.

LINDA SEABROOK: Go ahead.

AMY SOLOMON: Eric, I believe you need to unmute yourself.

ERIC WEAVER: Yes. Can you— all hear me now?

LINDA SEABROOK: Yes.

ERIC WEAVER: Thank you. Yes. I'm Eric Weaver. I'm founder and chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Returning Citizens here in Washington D.C. I've been [INDISTINCT] areas of the system of where we're being in, where we're being perpetrated, where we're being a victim, where we're being—lose my son to violence. In regards to—I think you all attest on that and first I want to thank you all of

you for [INDISTINCT] this information. I'm actually excited. With me, I do good getting some help with funding on a local and a state level but I'm excited because I don't hear about this information you hear. And I think that's a big problem when you say how do we do with finding out or getting these funded federate. A lot of times we don't. I'm one of the small people on the ground that does a whole lot of work on the ground but, because I'm small and because I'm on the ground so much, I don't get to lift my head up to see what else is out there.

So I think one of the things that I'm always suggesting because it's a lot of people that do hear this stuff and the usual suspects that normally know how to go get this money, maybe if it's ever written in some of the grants that you got to [INDISTINCT] the grant is to bring the little person in with, I think that would do great for [INDISTINCT] making us aware, helping us build our capacity, helping us with technical assistance, if some of the usual suspects are required to bring the little guys in with them as part of their acceptance of their grant. And that's just my two cents on that. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

LINDA SEABROOK: Yeah, that's an excellent two cents, worth way more than that. And that is something that we're trying to encourage with the priority considerations is encouraging partnerships and meaningful partnerships, not what Shakyra was talking about, , those little grants that don't do anything, right? We want actual meaningful partnership, 30 to 40 percent of the entire projects funding to community-based culturally-specific organizations that are on the ground doing the work such as yours, so thanks for that comment.

In the interest of time, I am going to move us to the next question in the listening session but at the end you're going to see an email address which is ojpequity@usdoj.gov. I believe that's it. So you'll see it at the end of today's webinar. And you can absolutely email that anytime and I'll tell you, I will be reading it. So we would appreciate that follow up.

So our next listening session question, for anyone in the audience that has started an application for funding at OJP or any DOJ grant making office but you didn't complete it, what stopped you from completing and submitting an application?

AMY SOLOMON: So let's move to Gloria Dee.

LINDA SEABROOK: Hi, Gloria.

GLORIA DEE: Hi. Good afternoon from Four Corners, New Mexico, where Arizona, Utah, and Colorado comes together and I'm like 40 minutes away from each state. And so we provide services to the Great Navajo Nation that is the size of West Virginia State. And we have travel members who live in the desolate areas and live so far apart and we are one of the ones who are identified as underserved communities because of the desolate areas across Navajo Nation that are victims live and families. And so I was going to raise my hand to your previous question but we do...

LINDA SEABROOK: You can [INDISTINCT]

GLORIA DEE: Can you hear me?

LINDA SEABROOK: Oh, yes. I'm sorry. I was just saying you can answer both. We want to hear it all.

GLORIA DEE: Okay. So what we do, as stated, we do have our peer to peer where we get our information from, grant solutions of course. We've tried to use a third-party that brings up different grant opportunities. And some of the grants that we currently have, they will send a notice of funding opportunity especially from a lot of our a HRSA grant or your drug-free communities grant, prevention, SAMHSA, so we get all that information and it gets sent to us and we get those opportunities which is very valuable to us and we do have an OJP grant providing services to victims and what this particular program does is that we train university students who are willing to become victim

advocates and serve and provide services on the Navajo Indian Reservation. And so the program has been very, very successful and we are in our last year of the grant program. And hopefully the 2023 appropriations for continued grant for this program continues because I'd be more than willing to assist.

One problem that I have and in JustGrants was the budget portion. And I think that portion needs to get revisited because it kept rejecting even in our—in a OVW grant process, we just gave up because it wouldn't accept our budget and then I guess you have to have somebody who is really very budget savvy. And so it'll make you enter decimals like 000.1 or 1.000 just to get to a dollar amount, and it's really ridiculous. I've sat on with technical assistance help desk for the longest time to assist and get questions, but we never would get feedback. And so that's the one of our barriers that we had in the system itself. I don't know if any other grantees have had that problem, but that's one of the major problems we've encountered.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you, Gloria. So I want you to know the JustGrants team is listening in. And I'm going to ask you, Gloria, if you would be so kind as to email me in that—at that ojpequity@usdoj.gov address, so that I can get some more details from you, okay, if you'd be so kind.

KEVONNE SMALL: So let's move to Camilla Vieira.

CAMILLA VIEIRA: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to raise my hand. Sorry about that. I didn't realize I hit it.

LINDA SEABROOK: No worries.

CAMILLA VIEIRA: I didn't...

KEVONNE SMALL: What about Matt Havan Palan? I hope I pronounced that correctly.

MATT HAVAN PALAN: Hi. So I was just wondering when there are more than one community which are having discrepancies, how do you resolve it? Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: I'm so sorry. I didn't understand that question. Could say it one more time?

MATT HAVAN PALAN: If there are more than one...

LINDA SEABROOK: Apologies.

MATT HAVAN PALAN: My sincere apologies again. If there are more than one communities that are in the dispute, how do you resolve it? Thank you. Applying with the same funding and that sort of situation in the topic. Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: Okay. [INDISTINCT]

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: My...

LINDA SEABROOK: I'm so...

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: I want to make sure we could answer his question, but I wonder if you could elaborate a little bit more. Like could he give us an example?

MATT HAVAN PALAN: Hi. So [INDISTINCT] ? There are more than—more than one communities who have these inequities and are trying to apply for, solution and apply for this funding. How do you resolve it? Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: Okay. More than one community trying to apply for funding, how do you resolve it? Okay. So that is something that is done through peer review. Each application is scored and then the different program offices make the decision on which applications are—get the grants, basically. But, again, just like the last person who spoke up, I would love to kind of talk to you more about any particular examples you

have or issues that you have seen. So please email us at ojpequity@usdoj.gov. And thank you for your time.

MATT HAVAN PALAN: Thank you. Thank you.

KEVONNE SMALL: Okay. Let's go to Patsy Gardner.

PATSY GARDNER: Yes. Good afternoon. My name is Patsy Gardner. Thank you, panel. This has been very, very interesting and needed for me here. I'm Patsy Gardner, the Executive Director at A Second Chance Resource Center Network in North Charleston, South Carolina. And just listening—and I've been on the last one. This has been like Christmas for me. It's a lot of information. I'm excited. But we are a small nonprofit on the ground. We get overlooked a lot because there are larger nonprofits here that's doing the work. But if you visit our website, we are a reentry. We provide a holistic approach.

So I was listening to Ms. Diaz when she talked about being broad but at the same time being comprehensive. We serve the whole person, the whole family. And some people may say we're getting bogged down but we are not, because of the simple fact we know if we do not look at an individual holistically, we lose the children because they're probably involved already with Department of Juvenile Justice or with the young youth offenders.

Our line is operational funding. We do get some local grant funding and procurement services through our local Department of Corrections and DJJ, but the operation funding and the direct service funding that is much needed for the individuals when they are actually returning back home, and it made me—that—we need dollars for first month rent or deposits for water and lights, things like that, and we just don't have it to do. We had about three fulltime staff. Now we're down to one. Me, as an executive director, I do not get paid. I actually found this nonprofit in 2015 because I found myself being on that other side of the desk and being able to come back home and not being able to get the

services and get a work, get a job with my experience. I take this as a passion. And so that was the need. We are serving about a 190 some adults a year with the help of our college partners. We have a lot of partnerships with colleges. So we utilize those college intern students. So that's what has been able to help us be sustainable for—as being able to have the impact we have. And believe it or not, we get a lot of calls from all of the local jails and local municipalities and stuff, and we still serve. And I get a lot of calls that say, “How can you all keep surviving?” Well, it's because we are able to utilize the interns and the funding that we do get, we use it for our overhead.

I'm not sure if anybody is really familiar with the North Charleston area. We have a tri-county area, so we serve the tri-county. But here, again, the local funding and the procurement services that we get paid for, that's what we use to do our overhead and one staff and things like that. But we have a transitional house as well. We use the local funding and procurement services to maintain that.

So if you look at us, we are a holistic approach. We are doing a comprehensive service. So all the panels that are sitting here, I'm listening to Mr. Anthony, Mr. Richard, Ms. Diaz, Ms. Chris. We can benefit from any type of services, if someone would just take us under their wings and see what we have and help nourish us, because we are doing the work. We are doing the work out here in the tri-county. And our website is ascresource.org. And we just want the opportunity to continue with what we're doing, but we know if we do not get help, the offices will be closed down. We just can't do it, because we can't work outside of our homes. So we have to have the footprint that we have. So every time we get the \$50,000 or whatever, we are trying to pay the rent up, pay the lights up.

LINDA SEABROOK: Yes.

PATSY GARDNER: I pay for that one staff. So I'm just glad I have the opportunity to, at least, get to speak, and we are asking for help. So thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: Absolutely. And I just want to tell you, I know the tri-county area. Look at my last name.

PATSY GARDNER: Okay.

LINDA SEABROOK: That would be Dorchester and Berkeley County.

PATSY GARDNER: Okay. Okay.

LINDA SEABROOK: So I'm from Charleston, so I just want to thank you so much for all the work that you're doing. I was a defense attorney for a long time in Charleston, as well as a prosecutor. So thank you for all that you do. And I'm going to turn it over to Eddie to get to our next question, because we want to hopefully get all of our questions answered because we're so eager to hear from all of you. And thank you, everyone who has answered questions so far.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: I'm on mute. Sorry. I want to say thank you, Linda. And, Patsy, thank you so much for your comments there. One of things that I'm—my takeaway from this hearing and talk right now is that there are organizations that are about your size that are really trying to survive, and so what does it take to really be able to pair with a larger organization that might have the capacity to support in the areas that you might want to continue to build on. So the good thing is that we have recently awarded three organizations to build some of that TA support. We recognize this is a starting point. We still have to do a lot of work there. And if I think about our colleagues who are also in this space right now and our panelists that you highlighted, you folks have been doing that work for some time. So I would also encourage, connect with some of the people on this call as well, right? I'm sure there are coalitions that are actually working in those same cities as well.

Having said all that, just a quick reminder. I know we have limited time here. We have all of our directors. I need to hear as much as possible from you. As much as possible.

So we want to make sure we are able to rapid fire. So here's the question, and if you're able to either raise your hand or put your response in the chat for us, we'll record that. But this is really important for us that we constantly are discussing, which is, what are your number one funding needs right now? Like what exactly do you need? So just think creatively. Think like if there was no limitations, what would that actually be—? And what would receiving additional funding allow you to do? It goes back to what Richard pointed out. And, Richard, I took note of what you said, the difference between capacity and capability. I feel like I'm learning a lot right now. So I just want to throw that out there for this group, if you could put it in the chat or you could raise your hand. We'll probably take about two responses here, but if you could please be kind enough to write your comments in the chat as well. Thank you.

KEVONNE SMALL: So let's go to Natasha Pauling.

NATASHA PAULING: Hello, Linda.

LINDA SEABROOK: My friend.

NATASHA PAULING: I know, right? Congratulations. We are so happy to see that you're doing so well. I just want you guys to know, first of all, thank you so much for this, for hearing from us in the first place. It's really important that you're willing to listen and hear what we have to say. And with regard to this, our biggest funding need is capacity. Every time we get any sort of a program together and the program is working, I mean, three-year grants, we're lucky if the grant lasts more than a year in many cases. And so we're constantly reapplying for funding to continue services. And every time we get a great team together, they get recruited away because we can only pay them so much and other places are able to pay them a lot more money and people have to consider their own families and their own well-being. And so this whole idea that you should give us a single grant and have us get all of our money out of the grant itself, for one thing, it lessens the amount that we can do for the community and for two things, it lessens the capacity that we have to really pay people realistic salaries. Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you, Natasha. I adore you.

KEVONNE SMALL: And let's move on to Tina Rodriguez.

TINA RODRIGUEZ: Hi. Can you hear me? Okay. Thank you for...

LINDA SEABROOK: Yes.

TINA RODRIGUEZ: ...the opportunity to speak. I'm going to not repeat what's been shared. Of course, capacity is huge, especially for culturally-specific organizations. Second to that, hands down, is housing, followed by prevention. Culturally-specific organizations, it's not enough to just be able to access homeless funds because oftentimes the victims we serve all come with what's required in regards to deposit, credit, and the ability to—a lot of property owners now require ability to turn on PG&E in the person's name to secure the place.

So those are barriers that push a lot of the culturally-specific population out of the opportunity to get those services. So those two, prevention and housing, hands down, I would say, in addition to capacity—and I'll just name really quick that one of the things that would be helpful is if there was education. It was mentioned earlier about providing education on the funding. Also, the language. It would help some of these organizations score higher. So teaching, it's more than just saying, "We go out and help the community." It's saying specifically, "We provide crisis response and so they can score higher." And so I've tried to help but I'm one person. And so I think in addition to what's already named, financial building is huge but it also, it's learning how to use that language to score higher. Thank you.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Thank you, Tina.

LINDA SEABROOK: Yeah. That's a really good point. Thank you so much. Yeah, it's not just what you say but really how you say it. And, also, please look for our solicitations that are coming out for fiscal year 2023 because we're making a very concerted effort to help make the language itself a little more accessible and not speak in such government-ease. So we hear you and absolutely thank you for that comment.

We're going to move along to the next listening session question and appreciate any thoughts folks have on this next question. What are the primary public safety issues your community is facing right now, and are they being addressed, and if they're not being addressed, what ways do you think that they can and should be?

KEVONNE SMALL: So let's go to Natasha Pauling—or we did Natasha. Sorry. Her hand is still raised. So I'm trying to only ask for hands that are popping up after the question is asked. And Coles. Thank you.

COLES: Good evening, everybody. It's been a good session. And I serve in Washington, D.C. Ward 7, Ward 8 and also in Prince George's County, Maryland. And the biggest problem we have is gun violence. I'm just keeping it 100. And housing issues and mental health issues. And we don't get the funding. Every now and then, I'm able to get funding through the mayor's office for the "put your guns down" event that we do. It kind of deter people through different forms of art and provide a safe place where they're out of harm's way. But funding is a big issue. We are a very, very small organization. I'm with Healthy DC & Me and our website is healthydcandme.gov. We serve D.C. and Prince George's County. And actually I am a pastor that's involved. I grew up in Ward 8, so I know what the gun violence is like. I know what the health issues is like. And there are really no services. And I'm going to be honest, if you're not in the clique, you don't get any funding, you don't get any help. So the people that work with us we all volunteer. Most of us are retired people, and we give back into the community we came out of. But it is very frustrating and it is hard-heartening when people come and we can't give them what they need because we don't have the funding. And that's real talk, coming from D.C., you all.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: And thank you so much for your comment and thanks for keeping it 100 honesty. I'm just thinking about Director Karhlton Moore, who's on this call right now who's probably thinking like, "Yeah, we need to hear more of that." And here's just a quick response, and I know we're pretty much out of time here but I do want to glance at a couple of things. In my personal experience, doing implementation work, as it is for many of us whom had the opportunity, we think about—because you mentioned gun violence, you mentioned the issue that you're grappling here in D.C. The truth is—and I'm reminded by all of our panelists who are still here with us right now is that too often we give very little and then we expect them to do miracles with that. And when you mentioned about, for example, housing and mental health, they're still the education, there's children, right, as one of other folks was asking the question around reentry. There's reentry. There is a number of different things that too often the people that we're trying to support here are grappling with.

And so we have to be more savvy in the way that we're providing these resources, and at the same time, it's a dual street, right, because it's not going to happen overnight. , We do need to think about how does this investment—how do we think about impact? How are we measuring that? How does that encourage organizations to partner with research institutions or individuals that could collect the data, that helps them inform strategy, helps inform innovation and so on?

But at the end of the day, what I hear from you and I hear from others is that we need more resources to be able to innovate, to build capacity, to deal with capability, as Richard pointed out, to build coalition among organizations, to think about the positive changes that are needed. So all those things is why our office is really trying to tackle and why we created this space here today to just hear and learn more from you to help us then form and shape our, future solicitations. You'll see some of it in the upcoming year, as Linda pointed out, and some you'll continue to see in 2024 and 2025, if God allows. And for that, we need to continue to be in partnership with you. We need to

continue to build these bridges with, the folks who are in this call and others. So I know we're out of time now. Linda, something you want to say to me?

LINDA SEABROOK: Not quite. Oh, sorry, Eddie. Not quite. Not quite. We have a few more minutes. So I want to get to—definitely to one more question or maybe even two.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Okay.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you so much, Eddie, though. We appreciate those thoughts. So for community organizations that have received federal funding or actually any type of funding, what are some challenges that you face in implementing the funded projects, and did you feel like you received adequate assistance, and if not, what could have helped?

KEVONNE SMALL: Let's first go to Ciora Thomas.

CIORA THOMAS: Hello. Thank you. Yeah, again, thank you all for having this. This has really been a super learning curve for me and a few of my board members that are attending. My name is Ciora Thomas. I am the founder and director of SisTers PGH. We're a Black transgender-led organization in Pittsburgh serving Black trans-people in our area with housing and—through our community center, through several programs and resources that gives resources directly back to an equity back to our transgender population in our region of Pennsylvania. We just received—we went through the federal funding process, and it was—this was our first process but we actually just received—or waiting to receive but we got notice that we are receiving our first federal grant, which is amazing, so that we are able to amp up our staffing at our transitional housing space.

But I noticed one thing with funding from anyone is a lot of funders have ideas on how we need to serve our community without actually being there and understanding how we need to serve our community. And I noticed that mostly with program-based funding

where they have these ideas on how we should be serving our community but it's not actually helping our community. It's just more of a data-driven approach for someone who's not, again, on the ground, serving our communities.

So having more flexibility on how we're able to spend these funds or which I would say, spend these coins within our community, so we are able to actually, change their lives. Because we have certainly been—and I'm a Black trans woman. We have certainly been a community that has been displaced and no equity has gone into our community. The LGBTQ community at large, specifically those that are non-Black and Brown, are always the ones to get that type of funding. And organizations like mine, who has been around for a little over a decade now within our region, get missed or tokenized or used by different spaces or get crumbs. They'll get a billion-dollar grant and give us a thousand dollars. So it's these kinds of things that we are dealing with within our area when it comes to funding. And we have some local philanthropic groups that have started to educate themselves more so on how the transgender population needs served, because I do understand there's a huge disconnect with funders in the trans community specifically because they tend to lump us with the LGBQ community when we're a whole different community that needs resources around the country and the state that I live, so—and the portals. Those portals make me want to rip my hair off, trying to navigate those portals, , with the language that we don't particularly come from. I mean, we come from being homeless and—or houseless and, being folks that are not normally educated enough to function and understand that governmental language per se, in those spaces. And, I'm going back to school. I started school last year, and that's good, but at this—in the same token I'm thinking about other founders and directors that are Black trans people that are looking to federal grants or larger grants, because these 20,000, 50,000, these are not working for us., the reason we had to move into the more federal funding stream, so, that's what I wanted to add. Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: First of all, congratulations. And, secondly, I think you may have heard, if you were on when I was speaking about the OJP Capacity Building Series, first of all, I've gotten so many ideas from our conversation both with the panel and then with

all of you, but I would love it, Ciora, if you would, again, email me at that ojpequity@usdoj.gov, so I can get you what you need to be successful because your work is so important and we thank you.

KEVONNE SMALL: Next is...

LINDA SEABROOK: So let's pick one more. Let's pick one more answer to this question.

KEVONNE SMALL: And, Dr. Porter, thank you for your patience. You're up next.

DR. PORTER: Thank you, everyone. I was afraid you weren't able to hear me or see my comments in the chat, so I am emailing you as well. Thank you. I'm actually representing from Kings County, California. And our organization is an underserved, marginalized community group and had been in the community for over 40 years, but we've been doing it, of course, a nonprofit status. And we've just recently, a couple of years ago, entered grant mode. And very appreciative, and this is amazing, I want to say, just hearing from all of you.

So you asked the question. Actually, what we find as a little bit concerning is the ability to help the community directly. In other words, we get grants—and many of the grants tell you you can't directly help the participants or it can't go directly to the participants. The grants won't even allow for some of the awards or prize for a completion of a program or for participation in the program. And so if there was a way that we could have more of that stability in that arena, I believe that would help tremendously, because then they come to us. We can serve them by posing information and training but we're not able to serve them when they're needing housing or when they're needing some financial contribution for them to be successful.

We talk about those coming out of prison, for example, out of the justice system, juveniles. We work a lot with youth. And been able to help them and their families. The

monies is just not there. And to—even to keep them coming. And we find, even grants, they don't even allow you to transport them. Some do but some of the grants don't even allow you to [INDISTINCT] transportation to your facility, to be able to join the listening sessions or join the family sessions that you want to provide for them. So I think if we can find more of that in the grants, it would certainly help our community. Thanks. Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: That's an excellent point. And I've heard that before and I know that to be true. So thank you so much.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Thanks, Linda. So I want to ask what might be our last question. And, there's been conservative efforts that we've made to really build this bridge between DOJ and the community, whether it's been having stakeholder meetings, having these kinds of conversations, and so many other activities that we've done. One of the things that we have also been very intentional are the webinars, webinars such as this one, webinars with CVI, webinars for research. And those continue to be one of the few vehicles that we use to assimilate information and to just really create space to highlight some of the folks that we believe are doing some amazing work in the community. Some are grantees and some are not. Some actually chose not to apply for federal dollars as well, right?

And so I say that to simply point this out, it's really important for us to really hear from you whether or not you see the value or have you attended any of the webinars that we're referring to. And if you could put in the chat, "Yes, I have. This is what I've learned, or this is what's missing, or here's a topic that we would like for you to, cover more on." Please let us know. Let us know what's helpful, what's not helpful. What are we missing here?

The last thing that I would say in terms of just the with the question here is that, we could only be as good as our partners. And so this is a mutual accountability. We need you to hold us accountable and we're also politely asking you to like help us do our work

better so that we could be good stewards of these resources as well that we have, so that we could engage the stakeholders that we are trying to engage, the smaller organizations and large ones for that matter as well, but organizations that are on the ground doing the work. It's critical. And so I want to pause there to see if we have any questions or comments around whether or not you've seen these webinars being effective, whether or not you're attending them, and what's missing from them.

KEVONNE SMALL: And we have Mary Kuzma. Kuzma.

MARY KUZMA: Oh, I muted myself. Can you hear me? Okay. Thanks very much for taking my question. This has been very, very helpful. You really hit the nail on the head, in terms of government grants, even foundation grants. We primarily fund programmatic expenses and not administrative expenses. So I think we really need to make our boards—board of trustees—aware because they have to become engaged in helping us to build capacity for administrative costs. Can you recommend a TA provider who can provide a short training video on capacity building for administrative costs that each board member, current and future, can review?

LINDA SEABROOK: That is an excellent question. I need to do a little bit of thought about that and send you to the right people.

MARY KUZMA: Okay.

LINDA SEABROOK: So if you can email me at that ojpequity@usdoj.gov, I promise to respond to you. Thank you.

MARY KUZMA: I have that. That was my plan, if you didn't get...

LINDA SEABROOK: Right.

MARY KUZMA: ...a chance to look at my question. My—for some reason...

LINDA SEABROOK: Oh.

MARY KUZMA: ...my chat was disabled so I couldn't send it in the chat.

LINDA SEABROOK: Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah, no, you can, you can send...

MARY KUZMA: I'll email you at ojpequity@usdoj.gov.

LINDA SEABROOK: Perfect. Thank you so much.

MARY KUZMA: Linda—thank you very much.

KEVONNE SMALL: Next...

LINDA SEABROOK: Go ahead, Kevonne.

KEVONNE SMALL: Hi. Okay. Next, we have Samantha Williams.

SAMANTHA WILLIAMS: Thank you so much. I wasn't sure if my name was going to get called. I just wanted to say, I mean, I echo what the last two participants have said. This is absolutely a platform that I have been looking for, been waiting for. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to attend because I was seeing patients. I'm a family nurse practitioner. During the last two to three years, I stepped out of practice to focus solely on community health. And I've seen a number of community members that want to dig into building back our communities, knowing that we know what our communities want and what we want them to look like and what they need. And so really just building from within versus, having—honestly, versus having federal grants go to contractors who are not within our community.

And, like the other participant mentioned, I just wanted to say that, not just in the transgender space and some of our other marginalized spaces within the marginalized communities, even spaces like healthcare, it is very difficult for us to get funding. And oftentimes federal funding goes to more trusted, larger healthcare entities who then give us crumbs to do, honestly, work that we've always been doing.

I recently found out that, one of the organizations in San Diego County has received billions or millions of dollars throughout the pandemic, and then to find out that some of the local churches that they have been using to fuel a lot of their work, they gave them nothing. It was all uncompensated. And so many of our institutions within our community go uncompensated with the enormous amount of work that we do. And so I have been fortunate enough, only due to some of my network, to really have a little bit of funds to build capacity. But with the power and the things that we were able to do, that funding should have been a lot more available. And it was difficult for persons like myself, who—my specialty is healthcare. But stepping out of practice and into the entrepreneurial world is—places just like—through systemic and structural racism, even the spaces for federal grants was—it's a European-based structure, right, for people who are already connected to have capacity and structure already in place to take advantage of those grants.

So if you're somebody like myself that you're in a capacity-building stage and you're learning the whole framework, it's very difficult, it's overwhelming, and it puts us in a position to have to be dependent on others to allocate those funds after they receive most of it, and it's just—it's really not that helpful and I think it makes us look as though we weren't up to the job, right, versus when we could have done a lot more. So I just wanted—I pray and hope that this recording will be available for any of the participants that weren't able to attend or relate. And I just want to say thank you guys so much for opening up space to have these really critical conversations.

LINDA SEABROOK: So thank you for your comment. Yes, it will be. I want to say to your comment, right, that you just made, this is the first step in that, right? And just so

you know this is unprecedented that you have the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General on here listening, paying attention, and she's incredibly committed to this issue. And all of our leadership is here. And you're going to hear from the leaders in our next panel. So I just want you to know that you are being heard and we are going to use this information. We will not take the gift of your time for granted. So I just wanted to say that.

SAMANTHA WILLIAMS: And if I may, can I add one more comment/question? I want to know...

LINDA SEABROOK: Absolutely.

SAMANTHA WILLIAMS: Thank you so much. I want to know, how can one of my biggest pet peeves in some of the conversations on an executive level with the larger healthcare entities, when it comes to federal funding, I've been on the administrative side and I've been on the clinical side. And I know that these large institutions, they receive federal funding to impact marginalized communities. However, when you look at—so we know that due to historical racism, Black folks, especially when they travel up north, we have been very dispersed. So when you take a county like San Diego County, who we only make up five percent of the county, but then maybe in one specific area, it's sixteen percent of that community. Irrespective of that, we will still only be a very small number within those larger institutions. And so what I've seen is that, although they get federal funding and the grant is written based on our horrible outcomes, when they get that funding, they will work on fixing issues within another community because we're so statistically insignificant that it's not really moving the number, if that makes sense. And so I always try to understand like how can you receive federal funding and then you don't have not even one policy or protocol that is specific to African-American women, if we take something like maternal infant mortality and morbidity rates, right? And when I have these conversations with people on the executive level, I always ask, Kaiser, Sharp, all these institutions, "Can you name or show me one policy you have that is specific to African-Americans," and nobody has one.

And so I always wonder about the federal funding part when it comes to all of these different sectors and the impact that our African-Americans have. Why are they not being held to a higher level of, what their outcomes should be or their policy and practices should be.

EDDIE BOCANEGRA: Samantha, thank you so much for your comments there. I mean, I wish there was something that I could respond back to, right? The truth is you're bringing up some really good comments here. And in large part, while we also have folks like Richard and Shakyra, and I know that a couple folks had jumped up. I see Crystal here. At the end of the day—and this is—I'm—I want to recap some of the questions and comments that I heard, right? So I'm just going to tie in my comments, well, with your response in the question, Samantha. , I will be the first to tell you, as someone who spent most of my career on the ground providing services, working with veterans, with youth, with at-risk people who've been at risk of various issues, and working with survivors of gun violence and perpetrators of violence, and I will tell you that that is where I come from, but I would also tell you, being where I'm at now is that none of us in our federal—none of my colleagues are perfect. None of them. And we come to this space with the best intentions and recognizing that we're working within a system that needs to be further repaired, further corrected, right? And this is why partnerships like with you and others, right, is really critical because we need you to tell us what we need to be doing differently. That's really critical. Sometimes our follow-up isn't the greatest? We talk about capacity building, I could tell you at the federal level, we need more capacity too. But that's neither here or there.

My point here is that we're trying to do our best and we have good leadership that is really pushing us in the right direction. And I'm reminded by a good friend of mine, Ryan [INDISTINCT] who once told me—I was the ED at the YMCA. And the YMCA, it's a—it's a billion-dollar industry. And I'm used to working turn left quickly, turn right quickly and—when we make decisions. And at the Y, it doesn't work that way. Most organizations

don't work that way, and it's a cruise line. When you make a decision, right, you can't make a left turn right away. It takes some time for that turn to finally happen.

And I guess what I'm saying here with a lot of humility is to, one, please continue to call us out on our shortfalls, hold us accountable. And at the same time, I would also ask to, I want to say, be patient with us but just please recognize too that it's all human beings here who are working within the system that we're trying to also correct and fix. And so I appreciate your patience with that. And I hope, Samantha, that we continue to highlight some of the things that you and others have mentioned today both in the chat and in our questions. And I want to pass it on to Linda, who's going to transition us to our next session.

LINDA SEABROOK: Yeah. Thanks so much. But before I transition to Brent, I know that Richard just wanted to say one quick thing, Richard, and then I will turn it over to our chief of staff and our amazing OJP leadership.

RICHARD RAMOS: Okay. Thank you. For those of you that stayed on all this time, just think of this, there's no quick fix and I want to share a resource with you I believe will come to you if you excel with what you have.

Number one, this may be a role for your board. You need unrestricted funding. So if somebody can focus on unrestricted funding. They just give it to you and say you need it to use it for whatever is going to best serve you, and that's what you need. Also, if you don't already know of CRA funding, the Community Reinvestment Act that all banks are federally obligated to reinvest money from the bank into the community, I would encourage you to go to the bank, just ask for the CRA officer. There's always one there. And just say, "I'd like to,"—especially your bank and talk to you about CRA funding, because that's other funding that should be going into the community. There's a lot on that, but I just want to mention it to you.

And, third, if you believe in prayer, pray for that angel investor who will give you money for an endowment. And when you invest that money for an endowment, say \$500,000 to \$1,000,000, it could be more. Then you invest that money and the interest on that money, you can use for operations. So I just wanted to share those ideas with you, and God bless you all. Thank you, Linda. Thank you, Eddie. It's been a pleasure to be with you all.

LINDA SEABROOK: Thank you so much for...

SHAKYRA DIAZ: And real quick...

LINDA SEABROOK: Oh. Go ahead, Shakyra. Real quick though.

SHAKYRA DIAZ: One, I just want to thank you all for this panel. OJP is doing some unprecedented work right now. The fact that there is engagement, there's an open door. I want to say, I appreciate you all tremendously for just engaging us in the way that you are and I want to ask everyone to just show grace. It's important that as we are working to grow and transition, that we're doing so in partnerships. I just want to thank you all for your leadership and your engagement. Thank you.

LINDA SEABROOK: Very kind.

CHRIS ROBINSON: Can I...

LINDA SEABROOK: All right.

CHRIS ROBINSON: Can I say one thing? I just have one little second. I just would be in remiss if I did not share that in 2023, with funding from OVC, Ujima will be launching a funding opportunity for culturally-specific organizations serving victims of crime. So, please sign up with our website, www.ujimacommunity.org, so you can know the latest information for this funding opportunity. So thank you again for having us.

LINDA SEABROOK: Excellent way to end it. Thank you. Thank you so much. And I'm going to turn now to our Chief of Staff, Brent Cohen, and he's going to be in conversation with our amazing leadership team at OJP. I hope you'll stay for this. It's really important.

BRENT COHEN: Awesome. Thank you so much, Linda. Thank you, Eddie. Thank you, Richard, and Chris, and Shakyra, and Anthony. Just an incredible panel and thanks to everybody out there who raised their hands or typed into the Q&A with questions and answers, both equally important here in terms of really making sure that the listening session was in fact a listening session for us, which is so incredibly important to be able to hear from all of you.

If we can go to the next slide there, please. I am very excited to join in conversation with several of our office heads. So as many of you, or many of you probably know already, OJP, I think as Linda and Amy said at the outset, is the primary grant-making component within the Department of Justice, and we are in fact made up of six program offices and we are joined by the heads of four of those program offices today as you see there on the screen.

Liz Ryan is the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Karlton Moore, who's the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Nancy La Vigne, the Director of the National Institute of Justice. And Kris Rose, who's the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime.

So, really excited to be in conversation with these four incredible leaders and I know we'll have Kris up on screen here shortly. So I'm just going to go ahead and jump right in. Karlton, I'm going to turn to you first. Many of BJA's grants go to state and local jurisdictions, but many others go to organizations, right? And there's a lot of grants that are coming out of BJA in any given year. How do you think about and how do you incorporate equity into your grant-making as a director?

KARHLTON MOORE: That's a great question. I bet you think I have an answer. Well, I do have an answer for you, Brent. First, let me just say, that last panel was incredible. And I had such a great time listening to it. I've been taking notes and I think I'm going to try to probably, making my staff nervous, but incorporate some of the things I heard from that—from the previous discussion and to the way I look at grant-making.

And I look at grant-making as part of our entire organization. It starts with the way we engage people, and it really starts from the moment that we start to engage. We have to be engaging and in the field. I think we have to be accessible to people. They need to feel comfortable with us as an organization. I try—there are formal and informal, some of them just spent a little bit of time talking about the informal. And if I'm talking too long, Brent, give me some kind of sign or something like that.

But on the informal side, even the way we interact with people. I try to be accessible. I want people to know I'm a real human being who you can come talk to about issues you have, challenges you have. I use a lot of different things. Sometimes I use humor. Some of my humor is very, very, very, very funny. And some of it is just very, very funny. And so that's one way that I try to engage with people. I talk about my family, I talk about challenges I've had in my own life. And so to try to use these things so people are mindful of the fact that we're real people and we actually care about these issues, and then listening.

And there was so much that was said in the last discussion. Eric Weaver made a comment. How do you even hear about information? And so that that lets me know that we need to plug into some additional networks in order to get our information out. Maybe we can plug into this network because you heard about this webinar, but he's not hearing enough about our grants. So we need to do more work to make sure that we are getting our information out to people.

But it's also, is it part of the core value of your organization? Is it something that you talk about, that you believe in? Do your staff, do they believe it? It's something that really resonates with all aspects of your organization, and not just when you're talking about community-based grants. We've been in Tulsa for the last two days for PSP. We spent a good portion of that time talking about issues around racial equity. And whether people knew it or not, we were. So does your organization buy in, your staff buy in? Do they believe in it? Is it important to them? And I think we've done a good job. We can always do a better job. But I think we've done a good job in making sure from the language that we use to the listening that we do, to the folks we work with, to the people who are employed here at BJA, that this is something that's incredibly important to them.

BRENT COHEN: Thanks, Karhlton. And I love that point you made about getting our information out to the right audiences. And so really I think part of what we've been trying to do, even in short order, is really help folks rethink how we and how the world define stakeholders of OJP.

You may not have ever thought about applying for a federal grant before, but hopefully you will now, or think about a partnership in terms of applying for a federal grant, or somehow see that TTA or the resources we can offer as being hopefully beneficial, if not, letting us know what you need, like through like this and other ways, approaching Karhlton and his very funny jokes to let us know where we can do more, or where we can make it more accessible. So I'm going to pivot to Liz who's also a very real person. And the Administrator of OJJDP, and Liz, you were a fierce advocate in the field for a more fair, just, and equitable juvenile justice system for decades before coming on board here as the JJ administrator. How have you made equity a central focus of your work at OJJDP? What—excuse me, of the offices work more importantly?

ELIZABETH RYAN: Thanks so much, Brent, for that question. It's hard to follow Karhlton because he's so funny. He's got such a great sense of humor, I love it. But on a serious note, when I came into the Office, I brought the field's priorities into OJJDP.

So our priorities in the field are treating children's children, serving children at home with their families and communities, and opening up opportunities for young people involved in the justice system. And running across these priorities is a commitment to racial equity and fairness, and to centering directly impacted youth and their families. So I brought these priorities into the Office. And in our grant-making, we give priority consideration to applicants whose funding proposals show how they're promoting racial equity, and increasing access to justice, particularly for communities that have been historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected by inequality.

So we also have had this long standing provision in the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to address the overrepresentation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system. And in the last five years, the law was updated in 2018 to shift from focusing on over representation to focusing on reducing disparity. And so we have the opportunity here at OJJDP to really help states as they craft their state plans on how they're going to reduce racial/ethnic disparities. We have an opportunity to work with them to implement those plans.

And so, because it's something that's been a focus of my work over many decades, I know that this is hard work. And that it takes time, and it takes collaboration, like Karhlton was just saying, in terms of network. So we're committed to doubling down on our technical assistance to states and localities on how to implement these plans. We also want to ensure that everyone has access to more resources in communities that have been historically impacted, particularly by incarceration. So we also want to find ways to target resources so that we're talking about building up supports and services where there are gaps, right? We want to help localities look at places where there are gaps and services for young people, particularly communities that are impacted by incarceration.

So like Karhlton, I took a bunch of notes from this session. And I want to take that back to our team. And I hope this is the first of many conversations that we can have about this, because this is not just a one and done. We want to hear about this all the time.

And I'm excited that—to be on this call with my colleagues, Nancy and Chris, because they're doing such great work in this space. And I'm always learning from them on what they're doing as well. So thanks, Brent.

BRENT COHEN: Okay. Thanks, Liz. Nancy, I'm going to turn to you next as director of NIJ, the Research and Evaluation arm of the Department of Justice. I know you have a bold vision for ensuring that criminal justice science includes the experiences and expertise of communities that have been most impacted by violent crime, and otherwise with engagement with the system. And so what is your vision for making sure that science meets lived experience? What does that look like for you?

NANCY LA VIGNE: Sure. Thanks for that softball. I love talking about this issue, because I'm going to be real, I was trained as a very traditional researcher. I did my PhD training many years ago, more years than I'd like to admit. And traditional research methodologies are very objective. They tend to favor numbers. They—from an evaluation perspective, it's about keeping an arm's length from what they used to call research subjects. It was all very traditional. And I was trained in that way, although I never fully subscribed to it. It was a journey for me, in my own research. And in two decades, I was in the field, conducting research before taking on this position. I had to learn, I think, the hard way, but in a real way, that stuck with me the importance of doing research that really includes the people who are closest to the issue or problem under study. And that is very different from a lot of researchers' approaches. It's very different from, frankly, a lot of past NIJ grantees, and how they approach research.

But I think it's absolutely critical that we change the way we think about the research process. Now, that doesn't mean that we're only going to do qualitative or ethnographic studies moving forward. But I would argue that no matter where you are on the continuum of research methodologies, be it very highly empirical, or very, very qualitative, you can take the time to consult the people who are closest to the issue or problem, and particularly community members, and particularly people of color who are experiencing more than their share of violence, of inequitable involvement in the justice

system. We all know these issues very well and yet we're not really being intentional about how they play into research processes. We have to do more research with communities instead of research on communities.

BRENT COHEN: Thank you, Nancy. Thank you. Kris, the Office for Victims of Crime has really made great strides in calling in and lifting up the expertise of culturally-specific organizations, including so many of the folks who are on the phone or work with those who are here on the webinar. And you've really been a leader. Your office has been a leader in this way, in this space. And so as OVC Director, why is engaging in lifting up culturally-specific organizations so important to you?

KRIS ROSE: Thanks, Brent. I appreciate that question. And before I answer it, or maybe as part of my answer, I want to just thank the earlier panelists for such an honest and insightful conversation because so much of it pertained to ensuring that culturally-specific organizations are lifted up. And I just so appreciate the willingness of our panelists to engage with us on these topics in a way that is going to be so helpful to our work. So thank you, thank you. But for those of us who've worked in victim services, we know how important it is to take a culturally responsive approach to victim services, because that's how we stay victim-centered.

And that's how we stay trauma-informed. And we know that when victims of crime receive a response that is victim-centered and trauma-informed, there's going to be more likely to access services and participate in the criminal justice process. But right now, there are just too many communities that are encountering huge barriers to getting the help they need, especially communities with Black and brown individuals. And not getting those services is not enabling folks to heal from victimization in the aftermath of crime.

And, unfortunately, many communities don't trust the federal government or anyone outside of their community, which is why it was so important for us to form a partnership with—or form actually many partnerships with culturally-specific organizations that do

have the trust and that can create the bridges between the federal government and underserved communities. And that's one of the reasons why we funded Ujima and SCESA in 2020. And, you've heard Chris Robinson talk about this a little bit about the creation of the National Center for Culturally Responsive Victims Services. And you also heard about the \$2,000,000 supplement to their grant to provide subgrants or sometimes they're called micro grants to smaller culturally-specific organizations to increase their community's access to crime victim compensation and assistance. And we have learned that this particular approach is a necessary approach to being able to get to that goal of serving all victims of crime.

And that's one of the reasons we brought in what's called the snug workers in New York in the aftermath of the shooting at the Tops market in Buffalo. The snug workers are trusted messengers. And they're funded by the state of New York. And they already had established relationships in the Buffalo community. So they were able to help connect victims, survivors and their families with victim specialists, and eventually to the services that they needed

.
BRENT COHEN: Thanks, Kris, and it's really helpful to be able to put a really a concrete example in terms of the importance of credibility and trust within communities, and how that can expand services for folks who both need and deserve access to these resources, but may not otherwise either know about it, or take advantage of it, or feel like they've got access to it.

Nancy, jumping back to you for a moment here, you've advocated for researchers to approach their work with a racial equity lens. Can you describe more of what that means? And what the impact of that is?

NANCY LA VIGNE: So research traditionally, and in the world of criminal justice, tends to fall in one of two buckets. One, research that specifically is looking at racial disparities or strategies to reduce those disparities, and then everything else. And traditionally, NIJ has funded a lot of the first bucket and a lot more of the second, right?

And what I would argue is that everything else category is still a category where researchers need to be mindful of all the ways that race and racial disparities are baked into their research processes, the data they use, the findings they produce, how they interpret those findings.

And, this really dates back to the very beginning of our criminal justice system, and how it's inextricably linked with slavery, the history of slavery in this country, and Jim Crow. And everything that's come from it right up through today, and mass incarceration. And yet researchers, when they look at race, when they're not specifically looking at issues of racial disparity, they'll do things like put a race variable in their regression models. And then say that represents the impact of race on whatever they're examining without getting too technical. That really is not fully appropriate or even helpful, because what we know is that race variable is measuring a lot of things that researchers don't often take time to measure. Things like structural inequality, right? Other forms of access to justice. There's a whole lot of other things that are kind of carried in that variable. That's one thing.

Another thing is that a lot of the data that researchers use have—it has biases baked into it. So take for example using arrests as a measure of recidivism. And then saying, oh, and Black people are more likely to recidivate as based on arrest. Well, let's be clear here, more people are going to get arrested if they reside in certain communities that are heavily policed, or that are just based on the color of their skin. I think we have to be candid with ourselves, and with the research community about how these dynamics play out, and much more mindful about ways to attend to these issues, so that we don't infuse our own biases into the research process, and the research outcome.

BRENT COHEN: Thank you, Nancy. That's great. I actually, I'm going to pivot very quickly to Liz, because part of what Nancy was talking about there a little bit was centering directly impacted folks. And if you can—if you can talk about how, in the

importance of centering directly impacted people and people with lived experience, in the ways that your strategies are incorporating that.

ELIZABETH RYAN: Just following on what Nancy was saying about having researchers be paying attention to equity issues, no matter what issue they're studying, or researching. The same thing here at OJJDP, we feel really strongly that young people with lived experience need to be part of the conversation. In fact, they need to be a part of every major conversation that we have about what we're trying to do. We want to ensure equity and fairness in the programs that we have. We need to hear from young people.

So what one of the things that we did this summer is we did listening sessions with young people. We actually asked young people with lived experience to facilitate those sessions. So, the young people that were part of that felt comfortable sharing. And then this past week, we actually had a convening with all of our state partners and young people were right at the core. They were right at the center of the work, and sharing their recommendations for how to bring young people more into the center of the work. So they met, and they talked about the ways that our state advisory groups could ensure that young people were invited, and encouraged to be part of statewide conversations on juvenile justice. And that they would be supported in doing that work. They would be recruited to do that work. They would be assisted in understanding what the terminology is, and all of this kind of thing.

So it's pretty clear that we have a lot of work to do at OJJDP to get to that place where young people are centered. But I'm committed to doing that, and always open to— ways to think about that. And the young people themselves, what was really great—I mean their view is nothing about us without us. And that's our motto here at OJJDP now.

BRENT COHEN: Thanks, Liz. So I'm getting pinged that we need to—we should turn to Q&A here in just a moment. I'm going to—I'm going to toss one last one. Karlhlon, and quickly on as we think about engaging with community more, also think about how do

we encourage or the vision for encouraging state and local governments to also partner with community-based organizations? Given that they're such a significant stakeholder of ours as well. And how you're thinking about that or your vision for helping to encourage that type of a partnership to meet the public safety needs of all communities?

KARHLTON MOORE: Certainly. Let me answer. I know you said quickly, so I usually don't do that. But I'll try my best this time around.

One is to understand the reality in recruiting and retention. I know policing gets a lot of the discussion in that area. But that's a reality across the criminal justice system. So the criminal justice system needs and we need some additional resources and energy, and minds who are really focused on public safety. And CBI is an opportunity to take advantage of that appetite that exist amongst just normal everyday people to truly impact public safety and play an incredibly important role. So that's the first thing and just as a response in some ways to the reality that we don't have enough of what we need in criminal justice and so we need to have more people who are in CBI engaged in criminal justice.

But the other part is, if you look at some of the best outcomes of interventions, they involve the community. They involve the community. I just saw a presentation from Danville, Virginia, where they had had some racial issues going back to the 60s. They were not able to get by this. They had rising crime. And when they finally came together as a community, accepted responsibility for things that had happened 40, 60 years ago, then all of a sudden, you saw the partnership exist between law enforcement and the community. And legitimacy went up. And guess what happened to crime rates? They went down.

And that's not just an example. That's an example of one city, but that's the reality that has occurred in community after community across the country. I, myself, was involved in implementing focused deterrence throughout the state. We had a very important

criminal justice collaboration that involved the community. And while I had a thought of the most important aspects of the strategy going in, when we came out, and I saw 67 percent reductions in group of gang-related homicides in Cincinnati, 40 percent in Dayton, 100 percent in Kent. I came to the realization that the most important aspect—the most important aspect of that collaboration was the community.

BRENT COHEN: Thanks, Karhlton. So now, it's just—I really, really appreciate all of you and your leadership at the offices here at OJP and what it means and the impact that it has.

So I'm now going to turn. Kevonne, I know we have some—we have questions out there that have come in already. I'm going to take the one that you just pinged over to me.

Liz, there's a—there's a question about the sessions that we are doing with the young people. It's actually a question about getting young folks involved with it. I'm actually going to ask. I don't know who asked that question, but I'm going to go ahead and just say I think that's one we should email into OJP Equity. That email address that you heard before, I think is from Siora Thomas. I'm sorry if I mispronounced your first name, but please email that to OJPEquity@usdoj.gov, and we'll be sure to get back to you with the details there about the ways in which OJJDP is engaging young people in various listening sessions.

So, Kris, I'm actually going to turn back to you here for a moment and ask. You talked quite a bit about the importance of lifting up culturally-specific organizations and how it's really helped OVC better engage communities. And not just engage, but reach communities perhaps that in the past haven't been able to access or been engaged in services, victim services, as much. Can you talk a bit about the technical assistance that OVC has provided, specifically the technical assistance that you're providing with tribal communities? I know you've done a tremendous amount of work in, whether it's tribal communities or others around technical assistance. Anything you can share there?

KRIS ROSE: Well, the technical assistance that we provide, and I'm very proud to talk about this, because the OVC staff has always taken it very seriously when we talk about survivor engagement, when we talk about being able to lift up the voices of the folks who work in the field, we incorporate that into our requests for technical assistance providers, and we have been able to bring on some pretty incredible ones.

We had several of our technical assistance providers last week at our Indian Nations Conference in Palm Springs, California, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. And it was amazing what we have been able to do because of the tribe's willingness to speak so honestly to us and to our TA providers about what they need. For example, the tribes, through consultations, have told us that they don't want to have to compete against other tribes for the funds that they receive. So at OVC, what we were able to do is create a program through our Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside that is formula based and it is not competitive.

We heard that folks were having trouble with applying for other grants. Tribal community leaders were having trouble applying for grants, and that's on us. It can be difficult. It can be very complex sometimes. So what we did with the tribes is we enabled them to apply in different ways than the traditional ways that we have been using. And that has, I think, been very helpful to the tribes. And part of the TA that we offered at the Indian Nations Conference was we set up a computer lab, so that our TA providers could actually sit down with grantees at the conference and troubleshoot with them about JustGrants, about performance measurement, about their financial—our financial systems and being able to navigate those systems. So it—and folks really took us up on that. And we were busy the entire time. And we had over 1,700 people at that conference last week. So I think it's whether it's us at OVC, or here at OJP, or it's our TA providers being able to really listen, and really do everything that we can even when we think we can't, to be able to make it easier for communities to get access, that's how we will be able to reach all victims, so.

BRENT COHEN: Kris, I want to just jump on one thing you said there at the end, doing everything we can, even when we think we can't. And I think it's such a profound point in such a simple statement, because I think in some ways, there are very real limitations. And I want to be really honest with folks. There are very real limitations to what we can do in the federal government for a variety of reasons. There are things we want to do that we simply can't do because of federal law or other things that may, and we are absolutely going to follow the laws of the land, right? And so there are things are rules and regulations that provide certain parameters.

And then there are things, and this is what made me—when you said that what I thought of, there are things where we think we can't sometimes and we almost assume what we must not be doing this because there is a rule, or a regulation, or a law that says you can't do this. And so we start to peel those layers and say, "Well, why don't we do this?" And we haven't done it in five years. We haven't done it in 10 years. We haven't done it sometimes in 30 years. And then we can get to the bottom of that onion and it's, like, we just don't do it because practice.

And, so really investigating why we don't do something, and saying almost getting to the point of show me the paper that says I can't do it. And it's not in a confrontational way, but it's that I really need to understand way. And sometimes we get to the point where we all look at each other and understand, we can actually do this. And then we do something that's never been done before. And those moments are so exciting. And they're not always these huge wins, but they're like these wins that might be here that move us a little bit closer. And it's just—those are just such incredible moments, frankly. And to hear you say, doing it even when we think we can't. And you said it more artfully than I just restated there. But it certainly resonated. And I want folks who are listening to know how profound and significant that statement is. And, Nancy, I see you in there.

NANCY LA VIGNE: Yes. I just want to speak on behalf of all the Directors to say that there are no shrinking violets among us, and we don't take the first no we get or the second, or the third, especially when it comes for making an impact on equity and our

roles. And that includes the Directors that are not on this webinar. And you know this well, right? Because sometimes you're on the receiving end of our really? We really can't do that? Because here's what we want to do and here's why. And I'm really just so delighted to be a part of this team because everyone is so incredibly dedicated towards these issues and it's not lip service. It's real.

KARHLTON MOORE: I just want to build on what Nancy just said about the lack of shrinking violets, which is very true. But I think the other thing is that we all have a sense of, we want to get this right, and we want to be fair, and we want to make sure that we're taking care of problems that we've all seen throughout our experiences, and that we see now we have an even better opportunity to impact problems that we've seen our entire careers. And the other thing is we bring a new set of eyes of wondering why. Well, why can't we do this? Well, show me the rule that says we can't actually do this. And so I am very, very proud to be a part of this group.

BRENT COHEN: So I have one more question that we got in. And so I want to pose this and then I'm going to—I think after this answer, I'm going to ask Nancy to jump in with one final thought. I'm going to ask you one quick question after this. After we take this question from the public, and wrap and we'll take it back over to Amy after that. But the last question from the public I want to ask is, again, Liz, for you, curious how engaged OJP—actually, I'm sorry, I misread it. So the question is, can we take in from whomever—how engaged OJP has been working with transgender-led organizations around the country.

LIZ RYAN: Brent, I was going to say just quickly on the OJJDP end, we have just put in place a new training and technical assistance center to work with LGBTQI and Two-Spirit organizations and individuals across the country to provide technical assistance, because we know that our programs and services out there need to have a much more gender affirming lens in the way that they're doing the work. And so that is something that—and we also have an internal working group that's really focused on this. So, these are things where we're paying attention to. I know we can learn much more. And I

look forward to hearing about more organizations out there that are doing the work, so that we can be connected with them and support them in whatever ways we can.

KRIS ROSE: And I just want to say that a while back, we had created a transgender guide to sexual assault and that—services for survivors of sexual assault who are transgender. And we just made an award to update that, to go beyond sexual assault, and provide information for transgender victims of all crimes. So we're really, really excited. And the organization that received that award is one that we have worked with in the past and has very close relationships with the trans community. And we feel very confident in their ability to create this new product.

NANCY LA VIGNE: And if I can just add, we, at NIJ, recently made an award to look at hate crimes specific to LGBTQ, the population, looking at risk factors, looking at precipitators, looking at ways to prevent, and looking at the way to serve those victims.

BRENT COHEN: Amazing. Well, so I'm going to wrap this session up. I just want to thank my four colleagues, Karhlton, Nancy, Liz, and Kris. Thank you so much for engaging in such an honest and transparent conversation. Thank you for all the work in your leadership that you're doing at the offices. And I just really appreciate it. And, Nancy, I did promise I would kick it back to you because I know you—if we can just very quickly say the solicitations or the work that you're doing in the coming year on the research solicitation.

NANCY LA VIGNE: Yes. So, this is the second year that we're bringing back the W.E.B. Du Bois research solicitation. This is inviting research specifically on issues of racial disparities and ways to mitigate or prevent them. It's got a couple of components in it that encourage and prioritize principal investigators who represent diverse experiences and backgrounds, as well as the mentorship component. And so we're really excited to have that back in action after it took a four-year hiatus that happened to coincide with a different administration.

And we also are releasing a new solicitation. I can only speak about it briefly, so as to keep a competition fair for all. But it's focused on supporting historically Black colleges and universities, and other minority serving institutions to level the playing field as research grant applicants. Because a lot of our grantees, they tend to come from larger universities that are very well-resourced private universities. And that we need to build capacity and support more learning proposals from MSIs in a way that can also feed future researchers who are engaged in these topics and also represent a more diverse perspective.

BRENT COHEN: Great. Thank you, Nancy. And it's a perfect segue way, as we close this panel on your screen, you're going to see in just a moment a URL to the DOJ—excuse me, to the OJP Program Plan. Now, this is not up yet, but it will be soon-ish. It will be up soon. And when you are—if you continue to click on this link, eventually you'll see OJP's Program Plans, which show the upcoming solicitations for FY 23. This is where you can—even before they drop, even before they go live, you'll be able to take a look and see what we have coming down the line, the types of solicitations that you can apply for in FY 23. It's searchable by keyword. So if you focus on a particular area, if you're in community violence intervention, or you're working on hate crimes, or you're working on something specific, you can search this once these program plans are up. And it's really a good way to get a sneak peek of what's happening and begin to prepare. And so with that, it's my pleasure to turn it back over to our Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Amy Solomon.

AMY SOLOMON: Right. And thank you, Brent. And I want to thank all of our panelists today. You just heard from the dynamic, creative, and really committed leadership team here at OJP. I feel so fortunate to work alongside these leaders as well, as Alex Piquero at BJS, and Dawn Doran of the SMART Office. I especially want to recognize our special guest panelists today, Shakyra, Anthony, and Richard, and Kris, just thank you so much for joining us. I want to thank the OJP staff who helped organize this important discussion today. One more shout out for Linda here. And the OJP staff leadership who have been listening intently.

I can tell you so many of us have been listening to the whole session. I haven't answered one email. I haven't taken any meetings. We've really spent the afternoon focused on listening to you.

And so most importantly, I want to thank the people and the organizations who took time away from more important work, in and with communities. Today, you helped us learn more about your needs, your concerns, and how OJP can continue to remove barriers to accessing the support that you need to do your good work and reach your communities, so that together we can advance equity, fairness, and justice for all. This is only the beginning of what I hope to be a continuing conversation and partnership.

To that end, I hope you'll send us any additional thoughts or concerns to the email address you heard referenced today. We have it set up especially for your input. OJPEquity@usdoj.gov. Also know that everyone who registered, whether they attended or not, will receive a recording of this webinar. And now that we have your emails, we'll also share information with you about ways to engage, as well as, upcoming funding opportunities.

As I hope you've heard today, this is a top priority for us here at OJP, and I'm so hopeful and optimistic about the inroads we're going to be able to make in 2023. So thank you. Thank you all so much for joining. Please stay engaged. And for those who celebrate, I hope you have a safe, healthy and happy holiday season. Thanks, everybody.