

 **State of Vermont**

 **Special Investigations Units**

 **FY 26 Grant Guidance Handbook**

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Vermont Department of State’s Attorneys & Sheriffs

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**State of Vermont Special Investigation Units**

24 VSA §1940. Special investigative units; boards; grants

(a) Pursuant to the authority established under section 1938 of this title, and in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, investigative agencies, victims’ advocates, and social service providers, the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs shall coordinate efforts to provide access in each region of the State to

special investigative units which:

(1) Shall investigate:

(A) an incident in which a child suffers, by other than accidental means, serious

bodily injury as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1021; and

(B) potential violations of:

(i) 13 V.S.A. § 2602 (lewd or lascivious conduct with child);

(ii) 13 V.S.A. chapter 60 (human trafficking);

(iii) 13 V.S.A. chapter 64 (sexual exploitation of children);

(iv) 13 V.S.A. chapter 72 (sexual assault); and

(v) 13 V.S.A. § 1379 (sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult); and

(2) may investigate:

(A) an incident in which a child suffers:

(i) bodily injury, by other than accidental means, as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1021 or

(ii) death;

(B) potential violations of:

(i) 13 V.S.A. § 2601 (lewd and lascivious conduct);

(ii) 13 V.S.A. § 2605 (voyeurism); and

(iii) 13 V.S.A. § 1304 (cruelty to a child); and

(3) May assist with the investigation of other incidents, including incidents involving domestic violence and crimes against vulnerable adults.

(b) A special investigative unit organized and operating under this section may accept, receive, and disburse in furtherance of its duties and functions any funds, grants, and services made available by the State of Vermont and its agencies, the federal government and its agencies, any municipality or other unit of local government, or private or civic sources. Any employee covered by an agreement establishing a special investigative unit shall remain an employee of the donor agency.

(c) A Special Investigative Unit Grants Board is created, which shall comprise the Attorney General, the Secretary of Administration, the Executive Director of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs, the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Commissioner for Children and Families, a representative of the Vermont Sheriffs’ Association, a representative of the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police, the Executive Director

of the Center for Crime Victim Services, and the Executive Director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

Special investigative units organized and operating under this section may apply to

the Board for a grant or grants covering the costs of salaries and employee benefits

to be expended during a given year for the performance of unit duties as well as unit operating costs for rent, utilities, equipment, training, and supplies.

Grants under this section shall be approved by a majority of the entire Board and shall not exceed 50 percent of the yearly salary and employee benefit costs of the unit.

Preference shall be given to grant applications which include the participation of the Department of Public Safety, the Department for Children and Families, sheriffs’ departments, community victims’ advocacy organizations, and municipalities within the region. Preference shall also be given to grant applications which promote policies and practices that are consistent across the State, including policies and practices concerning the referral of complaints, the investigation of cases, and the supervision and management of special investigative units. However, a sheriff’s department in a county with a population of fewer than 8,000 residents shall upon application receive a grant of up to $20,000.00 for 50 percent of the yearly salary and employee benefits costs of a part-time special investigative unit investigator, which shall be paid to the department as time is billed on a per hour rate as agreed by contract up to the maximum amount of the grant. The Board may adopt rules relating to grant eligibility criteria, processes for applications, awards, and reports related to grants authorized pursuant to this section.

**Section I: Overview of Available Grants and General Guidelines**

##### Three types of SIU Grants may be applied for:

* **Program Support Grants -** These grants provide the SIU with funding to support the core operational needs of the unit with specific focus on supporting SIU in-house staff and some operating expenses. You must report any SIU-funded position vacancy to the SIU Grants Manager within 5 business days. Additionally, you will need to request in advance, and receive permission, to shift funds from one budget line to another. If the request is reasonable, it will likely be approved. The process will be that the SIU Grants Program Manager will consult with the SIU Grants Board Chair for approval. If approval is not first granted, the Board Chair will present the matter to the SIU Grants Board for final determination. This decision will not be subject to further review.
* **Law Enforcement Grants –** These grant funds are provided to a SIU solely as “pass-through” funds for the law enforcement personnel who are specifically assigned to the SIU, in whole or in part, for the law enforcement investigation work.
	+ The participating law enforcement agency/agencies agree to have their officer investigate SIU specific crimes throughout the designated SIU region.
	+ Vermont statute provides hourly reimbursement, based upon billable hours, to County Sheriffs with a county population under 8,000 residents (Essex and Grand Isle Counties).
	+ Also, per State statute, the Law Enforcement grants are strictly used for Level 3 certified law enforcement personnel / investigators.
* **Training and Education Grants –** To support SIU statewide education and training programs (Contingent on available funding)

# Grant Agreement Form (GAF)

The State of Vermont Grant Agreement Form (GAF) is the official agreement between the awarded Special Investigative Unit (SIU) and the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs (on behalf of the SIU Grants Board). It acknowledges that by accepting the funding, the SIU Executive Director and their Board will follow all State rules, regulations and requirements relating to State of Vermont funding, and will comply with requests from the Department of SAS and/or the SIU Grants Board in a prompt and comprehensive manner.

Each county SIU Executive Director – and as appropriate the county’s SIU’s Board Chair- will receive all reporting materials, inquiries and updates. Program Support payments will be issued to the SIU (registered non-profit organization) in its name only. Law enforcement grants may be issued to either the SIU or, in some circumstances, to the law enforcement agency. For purposes of training and education grants, payments will be issued to the SIU or, in certain circumstances, to the training or education organization, if appropriate.

The GAF should be filled out immediately upon receipt. An electronic copy of your signed GAF, in .pdf format, is the preferred method of return to the SIU Grants Program Manager. You are responsible for providing the signed GAF in electronic form and maintaining the originally signed GAF in your SIU grant file for each grant awarded.

The signed GAF must be received by the SIU Grants Program Manager within 15 days of the award. No monies will be released without this form.

CAUTION: If, after submitting the GAF, any information changes, you must promptly notify the SIU Grants Manager. Failure to do so may result in deobligated funding or non-funding in subsequent grant award periods.

**Award Identification Number (Example – 2026-VTSIU-PS-xx. (Name of SIU)**

The Award Identification Number (AIN) was developed to assist with tracking grant awards. Grant awardees can find this number on the Grant Agreement Form. This number should be filed in your records and be used with all correspondence regarding your grant. If you have more than one grant under the SAS/SIU Grants Board, each grant will have a different Award ID number. Use that number for all correspondence relating to that specific grant award.

**Things to Remember**

The SIU Grants Board requires all grantees to expend their funding specifically for the purpose(s) approved by the SIU Grants Manager on behalf of the SIU Grants Board. The SIU is required to satisfactorily document and keep receipts (as instructed by the SIU Grants Manager) relating to the full grant award. All original invoices, receipts, bank account records and any other documents pertaining to the expenditure of SIU Grant funds must be kept on file by the grantee for a minimum of three (3) years and must be provided to the SIU Grants Manager upon request.

The following SIU staff must be advised and trained in the SIU Grants requirements and expenditures by the SIU Executive Director, assisted by the SIU Grants Manager:

* Staff members who hold positions that are funded, in whole or in part, by a SIU grant.
* Individuals that will use SIU grant funding for travel and/or other expenditures.
* Staff or Board members that have any legal or administrative duties associated with SIU grants.

The SIU Grants Board Members expect staff being paid by the SIU grants to be working in the office. Hybrid work schedules (such as 3 days a week in the office, 2 days remote) must be reported to and approved by the SIU Grants Program Manager who will maintain this information for the Board’s review upon their request.

Weekly or bi-weekly timesheets and records of leave time for any reason must be maintained and up to date for each pay period. Failure to maintain accurate timesheets and leave records will be cause for a “deficit finding” and may result in loss or reduction in funding or a report of misappropriation of State funds to the State Auditor or law enforcement officials. Timesheets must be approved and signed by the employee’s supervisor or Board President or Treasurer and must be submitted with quarterly reports. This requirement is new for FY26.

**Section II – Allowable and Unallowable Costs**

The Vermont SIU Grants Board requires that the State funding for Special Investigative Units be utilized to support the continuance of the SIU programs. The focus of the Program Support money is to help pay for the allowable amount, by statute, for partial salary and certain benefits for SIU employees, and to help pay for the allowable operating costs outlined in Title 24 VSA §1940.

**Allowable Costs**

The allowable costs are embedded in the grant application documents. Not every possible cost is listed in the grant documents, but costs NOT listed must be discussed with the SIU Grants Manager in advance, and you should not presume grant payment for any expense not listed here or approved in advance. Please direct all questions about specific items to the SIU Grants Manager.

**Note: By Statute, SIU Grant Funding “shall not exceed 50 percent of the yearly salary and employee benefit costs of the Unit”.**

**Personnel:**

(e.g. Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, Forensic Interviewer)

* Salary and FICA
* Some Fringe benefits

 **Operating:**

* Rent or Mortgage
* Heat
* Electric
* Telephone and Internet
* Insurance; Building, Cyber, E&O Liability, Workers’ Compensation

 **Supplies/Equipment:**

* Basic office supplies
* Office equipment

 **Other:**

* Membership Dues

 **Training – Reimbursement must be authorized by the SIU Grants Manager**

Note: The SIU Grants Board will give preference to funding requests for in-state training or conferences vs. requests for out-of-state training. Out-of-state training must be pre-authorized by the SIU Grants Program Manager.

* Registration Fees
* Travel and Meals (in compliance with Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs and State reimbursement rules only)
* Training for MDT members must be pre-authorized by SIU Grants Program Manager

 **Travel (In and Out-of-state) In compliance with State reimbursement rules only**

* Airfare, Railway, Bus Fare (most economical coach class)
* Ground transport (to/from/between airports, hotels and conference centers only)
* Tolls
* Parking Fees, but no parking tickets allowed

 **Meals**

* Breakfast – only permitted out of state and when lodging establishment does not offer complimentary breakfast
* Lunch – only out of state and when training or conference does not include lunch as part of the registration fee.
* Lunch – in-state: Not reimbursable
* Dinner – in-state: only when not working within the SIU town/city or employee’s hometown/city and only when workday exceeds 7pm.
* Maximum rates are those approved by the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs.
* No alcohol is permitted to be charged to the grant.

 **Mileage**

* Auto Travel to work-related meetings, training, etc. are paid at the State of Vermont mileage rate only.
* No employee may charge mileage for their commute to and from their office.

 **Consultants**

* Expenditure may be approved only with pre-approval from the SIU Grants Manager for individuals who may provide services such as trainer, speaker, or other professional services, and must have a written agreement regarding scope of work, hourly rate, and all other proposed expenditures. No consultants may be charged to the grant without pre-approval of the SIU Grants Manager.

**Unallowable Costs**

Any expenditure not directly related to the Special Investigative Unit and its mission is not allowed. The list below are examples of items that the Program Support grant does not cover. For more information, contact the SIU Grants Program Manager.

* Any type of dual compensation for SIU employees whose salary is paid by the grant.
* Any type of employee bonus payments
* Cash payments in lieu of insurance
* Any overtime except as may be required by FLSA –Discuss with the SIU Grants Manager
* Any expense or work hours spent on state or federal lobbying
* Fundraising not related to securing income for the SIU program
* Any type of Alcohol
* Any expenses for food or beverages except as approved in advance by the SIU Grants Manager
* Any non-work-related mileage costs
* Auto insurance
* Any costs for non-SIU personnel (such as individuals from state agencies – DCF caseworkers or interviewers, SAS prosecutors or victim advocates, law enforcement agencies\* (\*may be supported through the Law Enforcement Grant).
* Out of State Travel, unless authorized by the SIU Grants Program Manager or SIU Grants Board. During out-of-state travel, no reimbursement is allowed for non-work or recreational trips; cancellation fees or ticket change fees; lodging or meals outside of the conference registration provisions; laundry; any type of rentals for recreation; tips or gratuity charges
* Late fees

# Grantee Programmatic and Fiscal Responsibilities

##### Quarterly Reports for Program Support Grants:

All program support grant awardees are required to submit quarterly reports. These reports consist of a *Narrative Reporting Form*, a *Statistical Data Form* (including NCATrak documentation), and a *Fiscal Documentation Form* with the appropriate fiscal documents illustrating how grant dollars were spent. Beginning in FY26, employee timesheets, signed by a supervisor or Board member must be submitted each quarter.

##### Quarterly Reports for Law Enforcement Grants:

All law enforcement grant awardees are required to submit quarterly reports. These reports consist of a *Narrative Reporting Form* and a *Fiscal Documentation Form* with the appropriate fiscal documents illustrating how grant dollars were spent.

##### Quarterly Reports for Training Grants:

All training grant awardees are required to submit quarterly reports unless specified otherwise in the award letter. These reports consist of a *Narrative Reporting Form* and a *Fiscal Documentation Form* with the appropriate fiscal documents illustrating how grant dollars were spent.

#### ALL reports are due on or before the following dates:

1st Quarter: October 15th (documenting July 1st, – September 30th,

#### activities and expenditures)

2nd Quarter: January 15th (documenting Oct 1st, – Dec 31st,

#### activities and expenditures)

3rd Quarter: April 15th (documenting January 1st, – March 31st,

#### activities and expenditures)

4th Quarter: July 15th (documenting April 1st, - June 30th,

#### activities and expenditures)

# Appropriate Fiscal Documentation

Appropriate documentation requires clear accounting and complete invoices and receipts of your grant expenditures. For the quarterly reports, the SIU Grants Program Manager will accept general ledger logs from your SIU’s accounting system (i.e. QuickBooks, Quicken, Peachtree, etc.) that clearly document the: check number, date of expenditure, amount expended and a detailed explanation of the expenditure. Profit and Loss Detail Reports are also acceptable. If the SIU’s accounting system is not capable of generating a general ledger log, copies of receipts, invoices, proof of payment, cancelled checks and/or copies of credit card statements for all purchases/expenditures must be submitted with an explanation of the expenditure. The original documents must be kept on file, at the SIU, for a minimum of three (3) years.

If a SIU has questions regarding appropriate documentation, please contact the SIU Grants Program Manager.

### Grant Close-Out

The end date for SIU Grants, unless otherwise specified, will be June 30th of each year (the end of the State of Vermont’s Fiscal Year). Expenses must be incurred and paid prior to the end of the grant award period.

### Programmatic Audits

The SIU Grants Board requires an annual on-site programmatic audit of each SIU to be conducted by the SIU Grants Program Manager. Audits of the previous year’s grant award will be conducted after the close of the current grant year, as scheduled by the SIU Grants Program Manager. Additional audits of the State funds may be required by the State of Vermont, the State Auditor, or the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs.

### Fraud Risk Self-Assessment

Annually, in conjunction with third quarter reporting due on April 15th, a completed Fraud Risk Self-Assessment Matrix should be submitted to include confirmation of review by the local SIU Board of Directors.

### Use of SIU Grant Award Funds for Travel

The Vermont Special Investigative Unit Grants Board recognizes that members of Special Investigation Units may need to travel in the performance of the work of the SIU. Travel will be done in the most economical manner and reimbursement for travel will be made within the guidelines established through the Vermont Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs collective bargaining contracts. Out-of-State travel must be approved, in advance, by the SIU Grants Program Manager.

# Dates, Destination and Purposes

For out-of-state travel, it is required that documentation of dates, arrival and departure times, destination, and the purpose of each trip is pre-submitted to the SIU Grants Program Manager on the State of Vermont Out-of-State Travel Form, available from the SIU Grants Manager. Since no policy can cover every conceivable circumstance, it is anticipated that on occasion, unique situations will occur. These situations should be directed to the attention of the SIU Grants Program Manager for resolution.

 **Mandatory Grant Forms**

All grant reports must be received prior to the issuance of award payments.

### 1. All Forms required as part of the application

### 2. Statistical Data

A statistical report will be included as part of the quarterly reporting requirements due on or before October 15th, January 15th, April 15th, and July 15th.

NCATrak is the standard system used to record statistical information for all SIU grant funded projects. To qualify for SIU Grant Awards, the applicant must validate the ability to report unit activity using NCATrak. This may be accomplished through a partnership agreement with another SIU.

### 3. Fiscal Documentation Reports

A fiscal report will be included as part of the quarterly reporting requirements due on or before October 15th, January 15th, April 15th, and July 15th.

### 4. Fraud Risk Self-Assessment

Annually, in conjunction with third quarter reporting due on April 15th, a completed Fraud Risk Self-Assessment Matrix should be submitted to include confirmation of review by the local SIU Board of Directors.

### 5. Required Certificates of Insurance

1. The State of Vermont Certificate of Liability Insurance

2. Certificates of Insurance for all policies relating to the SIU staff and work and paid for by the SIU grant must be included each year with the Program Support Grant application.

6. Attachment-C: State of Vermont Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants

Attachment C must be completed. It will be attached to the Grant Agreement Form (GAF).

### 7. Budget Modification

The SIU Grants Board recognizes that, in the development of SIU budgets and grant requests, it may be difficult to anticipate exact amounts for all line-item expenses. Some latitude in budget lines to grantees may be allowed with prior approval from the SIU Grants Program Manager. The SIU Grants Program Manager will consult with the SIU Grants Board Chair for approval. If approval is not first granted, the Board Chair will present the matter to the SIU Grants Board for final determination.

## Section V: Important Dates for Grantees – FY26

**May 15** Not later than May 15th, each SIU Director will receive the SIU grant application. The local Board Chair will receive notice of same.

**June 15th**  Not later than June 15th, grant applications must be received by SIU Grants Program Manager.

**June 20th** Not later than June 20th, the SIU Grants Program Manager will forward Completed Grant Applications to SIU Grants Board members.

**July 1st** By July 1st, grant applicants will receive notification of awards.

**July 15th** By July 15th, current year grant recipients receive the first quarterly installment of the Program Support Grant award and the full Law Enforcement Grant award, as applicable.

**July 30th** By July 30th of the calendar year, close-out grant reports (if applicable) for previous year grants covering the period of (January 1st through June 30th) must be received by the SIU Grants Program Manager.

 Deobligated Funds:

If a grant recipient is not eligible to receive a current year grant award, all unspent previous SIU grant funds must be returned to the Vermont Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs with the close-out grant report.

If a grant recipient has unspent funds from the previous year, and no permission was granted for changes to the budget, those funds will be deobligated. Failure to accurately report unspent funds will result in a “program deficit” finding and will affect future awards. The unspent funds must be returned to the Vermont Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs at the address noted below.

 Checks shall be made payable to, and mailed to, the following address:

**VT Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs**

**110 State Street, 1st Floor**

**Montpelier, VT 05633-6401**

**October 15th** By October 15th, the 1st quarterly reports (**Fiscal, Narrative and Statistical**) covering the period of July 1st through September 30th must be received by the SIU Grants Program Manager. Quarterly payments will be issued upon receipt of reports.

**January 15th** By January 15th, the 2nd quarterly reports (**Fiscal, Narrative and Statistical**) covering the period of October 1st through December 31st must be received by the SIU Grants Program Manager. Quarterly payments will be issued upon receipt of reports.

**April 15th** By April 15th, the 3rd quarterly reports (**Fiscal, Narrative and Statistical**) covering the period of January 1st through March 31st must be received by the SIU Grants Program Manager. **Fraud Risk Self-Assessments** are also due on this date. Quarterly payments will be issued upon receipt of reports.

**July 15th** By July 15th, the 4th quarterly reports (**Fiscal, Narrative and Statistical**) covering the period of April1st through June 30th must be received by the SIU Grants Program Manager.