

Praxis International – Advocacy Learning Center

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Advocacy Learning Center Application Informational Webinar

Praxis ALC staff

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>> Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. I'm Beth McNamara at Praxis International and I have been working as an advocate against gender-based violence since 1987 and working with Praxis since 2005. I am thrilled you are joining us to learn more about the advocacy learning Center which is one of the programs Praxis international -- without further ado, we're going to get started. I'm joined today by several colleagues. Diane Docis, Shelly Stoffel, Liz Carlson are often Praxis and each touch the ALC in different ways, and you will begin to hear our voices and learn a bit about how we contribute to help you sort through this process in applying to the ALC and eventually hoping you join us.

>> We are also joined by OVW virtually to the Department of justice, the office of violence against women and we partner in Praxis and the advocacy learning Center to put programming on for people across the country. You will begin to learn how they are engaged a little bit more in more detail later on. Before we go any further, I'm going to have lives step in and give a fit of that if it overview on the logistics of our webinar so you can fully participate and get questions answered.

>> Thanks, Beth. Hi, everyone. We are delighted you are were able to spend the next hour with us and learn more about the advocacy learning center. Just to help pave the way to your participation, I will touch upon a couple of logistical things relative to today's webinar. You will notice there are live captions at the bottom of your screen. With real-time captioning, sometimes there are mistakes so if you notice such a thing, don't be overly distracted by that. We have the phone lines

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muted for our webinar today, but we do want to interact with you to hear your questions about the ALC. The way in which you will be able to get your individual phone lines unmuted will be to use the hand raise function you see at the top of your screen. There is a little person raising their hand. Clicking on that will allow our webinar host, Patricia, to unmute your phone line individually. At that point, if you can try to have a quiet location around you, and if you could begin by introducing yourself and telling us your name, we would appreciate it. There is also a Q&A box in the middle column on your screen. If you prefer to utilize that, feel free to do so at any point during the presentation. Your questions will be routed to the ALC staff and we will respond orally within the presentation. That is available as well. This session is being recorded and will be posted on the ALC webpage. If you care to revisit it or want to recommend the recording to any of your colleagues or the other members of your team to have a chance to listen to it. I also want to clue you in as far as accessibility settings for the individual boxes on the webinar screen, there is a light gray icon on the far right of each box that will allow you to adjust those settings. Be sure to accommodate those display features to your own preferences.

>> The last thing I want to say is you will notice there is a box that says materials box on your screen at the bottom. That has today's PowerPoint. You can download it now and at the end of the presentation, the box will appear again. I don't expect it will be there for the whole session so when it reappears at the end of our time together, you will be able to download the PowerPoint for today's session as well. With that, I think we are ready to dig into introducing ourselves.

>> Thanks, Liz. We have come together with you all an organized this call in order to give you as much information as we can share about the advocacy learning center. To do this, we have organized some of the most requested questions we get along the way and put that in a PowerPoint presentation to share with you, not overwhelmed, but hopefully answer questions and most importantly those of you who have joined us on the call today, it will give you an opportunity to make sure your specific questions get answered.

>> Here is the flow of information we have organized for our time together. If this doesn't seem like it is going to get at your question, use the hand raise or put your

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question in the Q&A and we will be sure -- we want to make sure we get to those questions. We are going to start to unpack the design of the advocacy learning Center, the commitments and requirements we have, team composition, costs and subsidies, which is the biggest question we get, and the application process and timeline. Than any other lingering questions that come up for you on the call. We also understand sometimes when you listen to this and go back or want to download the application and start filling out, lots of the questions might bubble up so we also want to let you know we are available any time. You can e-mail advocacy@praxisinternational.org .We will put the e-mail up at the very end as well but during this call as things bubble up and you maybe have just called in, e-mailing advocacy@praxisinternational.org is a good way to get questions into us as well. Also, at any time we can set up a call with you and talk to you individual, to talk to you and answer questions that come up for you as well. That is our plan for today. Hopefully we get to all of your questions and then please feel free to ask your questions if we are not getting to them will contact us after the webinar.

>> Let's dive in and give you a bit of background about the purpose of the advocacy learning Center so I would turn it to my colleague Diane.

>> Thank you, Beth and welcome everyone. We are so happy to your picture interest in the advocacy learning center. I am Diane Docis, a longtime advocate. Most recently as the director of a -- program before he came to Praxis and have been with Praxis the last five years. I work full-time with the ALC. We would definitely cross paths in an ongoing way. I want to share a little background on Praxis international and how the advocacy learning Center, the ALC, came about. Praxis international is a nonprofit training and technical assistance organization and we were to eliminate violence in the lives of women and children. We do this through many approaches. They include local, statewide and national institutional reform initiatives where we were to bridge the gaps between what it is people need and what it is institutions provide. You serve as a national TA provider for the U.S. Department of Justice office on violence against women and our methods of institutional analysis and community assessment have been used by communities across the country to examine and improve responses to violence against women in the criminal and civil legal systems, in advocacy programs, supervised visitation centers and child protection. Our many years as a TA provider, we have connected

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with advocates around the country. We have also collaborated with many other state, tribal and national coalitions and organizations. One all those connections show was is there has been adrift in advocacy away from our origins in social change. We also saw in our connections with advocacy programs the ways work had become very separated and specialized. I imagine some of you have seen that as well where there is sexual assault here or trafficking here. We were seeing programs including exhausted advocates and volunteers who were struggling to sustain 24/7 services for survivors of violence. We saw advocacy programs increasingly reflecting the clinical approach rather than an antioppression social change framework. We saw social change orientation beginning to disappear. We also knew from our work that OVW frequently under specialized institutes and training to support the worker practitioners in the criminal legal system. Law enforcement, judges, prosecutors. Apart from conferences, there were not similar opportunities for advocates to connect and think together. With proposed the creation of such a place for advocates where those of us doing advocacy work could have the space and time to gather together to step back from the relentless daily work of advocacy and regroup and reenergized to think together about what it means to be an advocate and assess and strengthen our social change approach to advocacy. To develop the ALC, we held a visioning meeting back in 2007 that was OVW national TA providers and a number of individuals and groups. In that meeting we shaped the ALC. We decided to focus on all forms of gender-based violence and on the skills of advocacy programs, not individuals. We wanted to think about in created space for thinking about how we could make structural changes in our advocacy programs. We also set out to define or codify and strengthen the thing we call advocacy, that it is in fact a unique role and set of skills that is different from things like social work and psychology and the law. We launched our first-class in September 2009 and we have been going ever since. Since that time, 273 programs and 713 advocates have participated in the ALC. Teams are from community-based organizations working to end all forms of violence against women that include travel programs, rural and urban programs, campus programs and state and tribal coalitions and networks. Currently class P is in the ALC and graduating in November and you are here because as you know we are accepting applications now for our 17th and eight team classes. A little bit about how we have structured the ALC. We call it a learning Center deliberately. It

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is not a traditional training. We designed it as a space where we can teach and learn from one another. The course is structured around three topic areas. With focus on individual advocacy, and during that time we explore the core skills involved in our advocacy. We have individual survivors. We address institutional advocacy and during that unit of the course, we think about how we are working to improve those problematic responses we see time and again when systems and anything from the criminal legal system, child protection, campus judicial programs, health problems come about in the ways they are responding to survivors and we think about what we can do to create lasting change. Finally we focus on community advocacy which is about how our programs are engaging with and mobilizing our communities. Including those most affected by the violence, the women, the survivors we advocate for. How are we engaging them to shift the norms that contribute to and sustain gender-based violence.

>> Through each area is a focus on how we in our programs are organized to engage in social change advocacy. How do our policies or practices or staff development or job descriptions direct us to do our work in a way that leads to social change or conversely, reinforces an equitable status quo.

>> A little bit of background they are in a nutshell but let me turn it to Beth to talk about who was eligible to be involved in the ALC.

>> Okay. We are funded by and partnered with -- as I mentioned when we started our webinar today. Most of the applicants selected to participate our current OVW grantees. The caveat is you don't have to be a current grantee to apply. The easiest thing to remember in terms of eligibility is if you are a current grantee, obviously you are eligible to apply, but if you are not a OVW grantee, if you would be eligible to be a OVW grantee, you are eligible to apply for the advocacy learning Center. That's broken down means you would be a community-based organization, tribal or campus advocacy organization providing direct services or a state, tribal, territory or national coalition network that focuses on violence against women. That is the figuring out if you fit somewhere in that description, that would be telling of the fact he would be able to apply. The next thing we would ask you to look at is based on what Diane shared with you about the fact this isn't a traditional training, but rather an extensive course that asks you to

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reflect on and possibly change policy and practice and be willing to roll up your sleeves and figure out how to do our work. We are asking you would have the capacity as your organization putting forth the team and the team you put forth and all are willing to complete 18 months with us a pretty intensive examination and time. We will talk more about both of those and how we define that, we do ask you commit to doing this with us. We also want to ensure what you think about in terms of what makes the most sense and who would be most likely to participate in a meaningful way from your organization. We ask your team would include a front-line advocate or crisis counselor and a manager or executive director. Those are the first line of figuring out if this is something you are eligible to do and if you want to put forth an application and think about 18.-- a team. Before we move on I'm going to pause to see if we have questions. You can type your question in the Q&A box on the webinar platform or go at the top at the raise hand function and raise your hand and your phone line can be unmuted or the third way is if you are not on the Adobe connect platform and you are logged into your e-mail, you can e-mail advocacy@praxisinternational.org and would be happy to field those questions.

>> We have one question that was chatted into the Q&A.

>> The question is from seven, [Indiscernible]. Without knowing a lot than what that [Indiscernible] we would reflect you back to the eligibility criteria. If you are a community-based program, a tribal or campus advocacy -based organization within that health system and the focus on your work is ending violence against women, you may be eligible to apply. I would encourage you because this isn't a typical way or typical organization that would apply. If that doesn't articulate where you would lend, I would encourage you to e-mail advocacy@praxisinternational.org and we can explore further where you fit within your community and all of those pieces.

>> We are a national organization field offices in multiple locations, can we -- a team. Can we propose -- individuals from different field offices within our organization.

>> Yes. Your organization -- that you select. We can help you think through your team and we will talk more about team composition in a second, but there is no

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expectation all the team members work within the same division of an organization or within the same physical location of an office. Many people are set up differently. It team that makes sense for you is something we can't help you with, but Liz does have more information on composition that might help you as well.

>> Team composition, we know this is a very important factor for your applications. Again, we want to answer any questions you have about our information today. Don't be shy. Utilize the Q&A box or the hand raised to make sure your questions are answered. To dig into the team composition a little bit, first of all we want to say we recognize advocacy programs differ in size and structure. Your focus, the roles of your staff and volunteers, it can be difficult to figure out a good fit of your staff with the ALC. We recognize that. We will help you through that process but typically, teams are comprised of two or three members of your staff. We are looking for people who you feel are committed and willing and able to commit to an 18 month examination of your program and an experimentation process about rethinking and reshaping the advocacy work you do. The two or three members of your team we are looking for would be a mix of management and front-line advocates. Our intention is with in person, we have three in person events which are team would travel to. Our hope is after your core team comes to the in person events, you go back to your organization and the full purview of staff or volunteers and you share the information you have gleaned within your time at the in person event and you pass that along so there is comprehensive sharing and you all are able to take up and move through the ALC together.

>> When you submit your application and you have your team proposed, we know sometimes there may be some shifting around. It has happened previously in the ALC, teams will go to the first in person event and start to rethink the prospect of maybe a different combination of team members that would've been would have been a better fit for the ALC. If that is something that happens for your organization, it is not completely unusual and at any point as you are applying and even as you begin your course work with the ALC, we are happy to have conversations about the right fit of the ALC with your staff members and certainly connect with us about that. As I said, it is really important to us in terms

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of having a good fit between staff and ALC, we are looking for people who were really enthusiastic about advocacy and knowledgeable about all the aspects of advocacy happening within your organization, even if those individuals don't have direct experience with the advocacy happening, it is important to have a full knowledge base. It is particularly important your staff are able to attend the three types of advocacy we emphasized. Your team will be moving through individual, institutional and community or transnational advocacy throughout the curriculum. We ask you to select the team you feel like has that capacity to embrace the full range of advocacy and examination of your practices within your organization. In addition to front-line advocates as I said, we are also looking for the managers or the decision-makers within your organization so you are able to operationalize changes, potential changes within your organization. If you happen to be calling today from a coalition or network, we also are open to coalition teams participating, but again we are looking for staff who coordinate and manage or conduct the trainings by your organization.

>> My final footnote about team composition would be that the ALC is not a good fit for new advocates, if you have brand-new advocates within your organization. They are not going to benefit from the ALC, curriculum we have to offer, but we are looking particularly for advocates and managers who are experienced with advocacy. I'm happy to take questions. I don't see any hands that are raised at this point. As this is settling in a little bit, chime in within the Q&A box or raise your hand and we will unmute your line so we can answer questions directly.

>> Can I just add one thing about team composition, we think about having people put together a team of two to three and we will talk little later in more detail about this, and some organizations are very small and we recognize that. There have been cases where very small organizations have a staff of one or two need to put together a team of one or two people, and we understand that. We have a place in the application for you to explain or share -- that is okay. When you are thinking about the team composition and you can't quite make that work because you are everything to everybody in your organization, we still welcome your application. For those of you thinking about a team and have very large organizations and you struggle with how to make a team of the best three folks who are representative of your entire organization and all you offer, we have a

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cap of accepting no more than four team members per organization. The reason we do that is we have limited space available of each class at the advocacy learning center. If we accept the program with more than four people it eliminates completely another organization to be able to participate. We try to make each class relatively small so you have a lot of opportunity to grow with each other, to learn from each other, support each other and it feels like your 18 month journey is with people you get to know and you come together on a regular basis in person and over the phone and we will probably connect with you at least monthly and your classmates as well. We try to make it so you get to know everyone. You have a very small group. Those are what our limitations are. The other piece to say as Liz mentioned, we do early on in this process have programs, and say I didn't know and I put a team that isn't quite a good fit. The intended consequences is the whole team or the organization wanted to changes participated in the four day in person event. With our ability to put on an information session for you wall and take good care and time in exploring team composition with every applicant, we hope that avoids team changes as we do ask the teams commit to the team selected so we don't have much change and shift over the course of 18 months. Unfortunately, it is hard to make up the course start and to catch up for people who join late. We try our best to avoid that.

>> There is another question. Would you have any programs willing to speak to those of us who might be interested regarding the impact and value?

>> Yes, we do. We have also put some testimonials on our website that you can go to as well. Go to the Praxis international website in the advocacy page and you can listen to those testimonials. They talk specifically about what their organization gained and you can see different programs. There is also a link to the program so have participated. If you are still interested we would encourage you to e-mail and we can put you in contact with some programs to have participated in the past to talk about their experience and what they have gained from it.

>> Thank you. We have touched on it a little bit, a little more detail as you can see in this slide about what is involved in the course. It is a commitment. You are committing to a process that will lead to redesigning, reimagining the aspects of your advocacy on those three levels we described with individual women, with

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individual survivors and systems and with our communities. This is what the course is comprised of. Ultimately you end up participating in nine days of intensive in person training and included in that are ALC staff and a variety of faculty we utilize from advocacy programs and TA providers across the country. We engage in monthly critical thinking strategies. We have quarterly keynote lectures presented by thinkers and practitioners, researchers, writers and activists within the movement of gender-based violence and outside of it so we can learn from other movements as well. There is an independent study course that you would complete on your own. Then there is one virtual site visit to a model advocacy organization. A program that is working on social change issues. Again, both within and outside of the movement we are working in. We also provide two teams free individualized technical assistance as you move through the course, but particularly as you are working on strengthening your institutional advocacy and how it is we are working to improve systems responses to survivors. These are our events each person on the team commits to. You can see at the end of graduation webinar at the end where we celebrate all you have accomplished by the end of your 18 months. All of this starts out, you can see some specific dates for your classes for these events that are part of your course. These are also available, there is a lot of information on the slide, but this is available under what is required on the ALC application website. As part of this, the course kicks off with introductory webinars. We hold those two introductory webinars prior to our first in person meeting. We review some of what we talked about today, because not all the applicants will have been on this session. We also lay some of the groundwork for what we will be exploring throughout the course. All whole bunch of different dates up there but as Beth and list talked about who would be a your on your team to make sure who ever is on your team can commit to all of these dates. We want to make sure you are able to participate in all the course has to offer. Beth, anything you would add to this? Or Liz?

>> I don't think we could possibly add to that.

>> It is a little overwhelming.

>> Not to overwhelm you all, you don't have to jot notes. These dates are on the website we have, on the instruction sheet and in the application itself so you will

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have plenty of opportunity to see them. Most of what we want to make sure right now is as you are selecting which class or both classes you can apply for that you have full disclosure about the expectation of the dates you're going to commit to want to start the class, 18 months from that point forward. Nothing like filling up your calendar two years from now, but we think it is helpful to compare these classes and figure out what is best. Right now it is a very unique opportunity. To flee we roll out one class at a time every six months. We are accepting applications for two classes in a row which lends itself to giving people more choices about what it is they can plan for and commit to based on all of these being presented. It also allows you to apply and be in the applicant pool if either of these classes are open, you can check that on your application in you can be in the applicant pool to be considered for both classes if you don't have any black out dates that would not allow you to participate.

>> I was going to chime in to remind everyone all of this information we have discussed so far and I've yet to connect about, all the information is available when you download the PowerPoint. That option will be back on your screen in a few minutes. If you want to share with to have learned today with your coworkers, be sure to download the PowerPoint.

>> Thanks, Liz. I think we have already addressed this regarding staff time and the time commitment involved. I think what I would add to this for our distance learning webinars that occur, oftentimes we will ask you to spend some time with your team. We know we do have teams located in different offices so it might be a virtual meeting or an audio conference. We will say here is what we will be exploring this strategy session, and ask for your thoughts and ask you to report in which you are thinking of doing related to a particular topic. What questions have come up for you, and there will also be webinars where we ask you to directly participate to have someone from your team join us in the conversation. This gives you a little more of an idea of what it is you will be doing in the ALC. I want to invite our colleague Shelly in. She is responsible for making sure you get to the in person events and get home and in between and that you are fed and being taken care of. Shelly, what can you tell us about costs and subsidies for the ALC?

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>> First I can tell you all the course materials are free. The only expenses have to do with your long distance phone calls for the conferences, and you do need an Internet connection for the webinars. The big chunk is for the travel. As we mentioned, there are three events in the 18 months. All those events are in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. I work with you to make sure you get here and leave Minnesota and try to make your travel as painless as possible. If you are a OVW, we ask you use your grant funds, either all or part for some of the travel. If you don't have enough to cover the expenses, we will subsidize the rest. We are able to fully subsidize some programs. Beth mentioned earlier you can have a team of four, just keep in mind we are only allowed to subsidize three people from a team. If you end up with a team of four the expenses will have to come from your own agency. Once you are selected for the ALC, I had to fill out a form to get a better idea of the travel expenses. I help determine how much your flight is going to be, the transportation from your home to your airport, then we work to get a total of what it's going to be for you to come to the event and at that point we talk about subsidies if you need them or not. That is basically all I have about travel.

>> Thanks, Shelly. Again, if you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to us. This is probably the most frequently asked question, about costs and subsidies and how to plan for that. People get worried about committing to an 18 month process and how they're going to pay for it. Hopefully it was reassuring to hear it is pretty minimal in terms of the risk no course registration fee, no fees associated, just travel costs.

>> Next we're we are going to talk about the application process. It is pretty straightforward. The first thing we would suggest you do before you start the application process is download the instructions. There is a link there but the easiest way is to go directly to the Praxis international .org website and on the advocacy learning page you can download and instruction sheet from that page. It gives you all the details and recaps the informational sessions and some of the information we passed on today. It gives you the appropriate links and deadlines and team composition considerations. Eligibility requirements -- once you review your instruction sheet, the application itself is an online application. Sometimes people want to before they dive in headfirst within online application, sometimes

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it is helpful to prepare off-line and cut and paste the document or review the questions before you get there. We have also uploaded onto our website a Word document that allows you to fill it out or look at all the questions in advance. You can see the deadline, you still have time. Next month is still a long way away but we generally ask you to get it in before that time if possible. We will begin processing and those kinds of things and then Monday March 19th is when we close the application window. We hope to then give an announcement of selections. The end of April or the beginning of May is when we will let folks know if they have been selected and which class they will be selected to participate. OVW has the final say of who gets selected into each class so we present the applications and we go through process of approval for you to attend the 18 month course with us. We would take a pause to see if there are any questions. Shelly has a few more tidbits about accessibility.

>> We value making the ALC accessible to our all participants and work to make all parts accessible as possible. The application and the instructions are available via plaintext on our website. If you have an accessibility request related to completing this, you can call us at 6,516,998,000, extension 20 or e-mail us at advocacy@praxisinternational.org. Once you are accepted to the ALC, I work with you, we have an accessibility survey we have everyone fill out and it includes such things as sign language interpreters, language -- allergies to food or food issues and we have you complete that before you start the course so we are aware of any accessibility issues before you begin. Again, I am always available to talk to you about that as well.

>> Thank you, Shelly. Again, as we have been reiterating throughout today's session, if you have questions after you leave to please connect with us. The best way to do that is we would have this up on the screen at the end, the way to do that is through our advocacy e-mail. You also see our phone number up there. At the end of both of those is my colleague Kue and he will be able to respond to your question or connected with someone who can. As was mentioned, this PowerPoint is downloadable. You can see it in the materials box at the bottom of your screen the PDF if you want them to download that or print it or share it with any of your colleagues. It will also be available on our ALC Praxis website. If there is anything you want to hold onto from today's discussion. Before we say goodbye,

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I'm going to pause one more time to see if there are questions that have come up.I don't see anything right now in the Q&A box.I'm looking to see if there any hands raised.

>> It looks like we have a hand raised.

>> Do you suggest we take both courses or what do you suggest?

>> Are you asking about -- each of those is separate and it is its own course and it is the same thing. We repeat, for ease of our use we have named each class by the alphabets.We are recruiting for two classes, but they are identical. You would choose which one to apply for.

>> Thank you so much.

>> Any of the questions that have come through?

>> It is nice to hear actual voices and have real conversation.Don't be shy to raise your hand. We do have another question.How many organizations typically apply each year?

>> That is a good question. I don't know the answer to it.

>> I think we can make an educated guess.With each ALC course, we typically have two application processes per year.I bet we have something like 50 organizations that apply.I would say within a year. 50 organizations the year.Of those organizations, we end up selecting most of them, right, Shelly?

>> Probably 30 to 35 because it is generally 15 to 18 different agencies per class.Leaning toward 15 I would say.

>> Erica, if that gives you a sense.Beth is not on our webinar any longer so we can't be as definitive as Beth would be, but that is our best guess.

>> Eric about that would be a simple question. The take away is you have a pretty good chance generally the being accepted though we can't accept everyone although we are very accepting people generally. I see question from Penny.

>> I have to pause for a second to say hi, Penny.Penny's question is is they have applied before but they need to update their team member composition and they

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are wondering if it is possible to do revisions to that portion of their past application?

>> This is a little more of a complex question because we do except programs would've gone through the ALC before. If you have new team members you want to share in the experience, you have the opportunity to apply as an extended placement.Penny, we might respond to you privately unless anyone else chimes in to say they have a similar question. Oftentimes there are people on this call that have not going to the ALC.I'm getting a pause here Penny, I'm going to offer one of us will get back to you following this session.If somebody has applied before and you weren't excepted which I think is different than the question Penny has asked, we would want to connect with you also so why would encourage you to call us if you have questions about May be why your team wasn't excepted or what you could do to strength in your application so feel free to do that if that applies to any of you. Penny, I will make sure one of us gets back to you.Any other questions before we sign off?All right.I'm very grateful to all of you for joining for those of you who shared questions with us. We are excited to see the interest that is out there in the advocacy learning Center and are grateful to get to be part of this work that ultimately will put in and to gender-based violence. Thank you for joining us. You will get an evaluation link. We value your feedback. Throughout the ALC reincorporate evaluations into all of our events, including this one.Please take a minute to respond to the evaluation that will pop up when the webinar closes because we appreciate your feedback. I'd like to thank the Praxis staff for joining us here today and thank all of you for considering an application and considering joining us on this journey in the advocacy learning Center, this journey we share toward social change. Thank you everyone and have a great rest of your day.

>> [Event Concluded]