

Minnesota Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Program Standards for Victim Service Providers

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IMPACTED BY CRIME PROGRAM STANDARDS

Programs awarded crime victim services funding from the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) must show continual progress toward meeting the expectations detailed in the Program Standards.

The goal of victim services funding is to increase victims/survivors' safety, ensure access to services that meet their self-defined needs, and create consistent levels of quality services. Program services must be tailored to the needs of the populations within the funded service area(s).

When funded to serve a particular county, grantees must have a physical office location in the primary county of business that can accommodate walk-in service requests. This requirement is waived for smaller agencies (defined as "less than 3 FTEs") working remotely, as well as for adjacent counties being served remotely by larger programs. Staff working remotely must be physically available to:

- meet privately in person when requested, at a safe, confidential location; and
- accompany victims to court and for other appropriate appointments.

OJP Expectations of Funded Programs

- Commitment to Accessibility:** Provide an accessible, welcoming, and respectful service environment. Provide services in a culturally sensitive and respectful way that honors and values diverse life experiences for those seeking services, and for program staff, leadership and advisory boards.
- Commitment to Using a Trauma-informed Approach:** Provide services in a way that recognizes, understands, and responds to the effects of trauma experienced by crime victims/survivors. A trauma-informed approach emphasizes physical, mental and emotional health and safety, and helps victims/survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. Services need to be flexible to respond to the impact of different types of trauma, and on meeting victims' self-defined needs toward recovery and healing. For more information: <https://ncdvtmh.org/>
- Confidentiality:** Programs are prohibited from disclosing, revealing, or releasing personally identifying information or information collection in connection with services utilized, requested, or denied unless: (1) the service participant has signed a release of information, (2) a law mandates disclosure, or (3) a court has ordered disclosure. Releases must be unique to the individual victim/survivor and circumstances, be voluntary, and cannot be presented as routine practice.

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Definitions:

Children and Youth Impacted by Crime may include, but is not limited to, violent assault or gunshot, physical or sexual assault or neglect; child abuse imagery; sex and/or labor trafficking; and children/youth who witness violence.

Children and Youth refers to anyone 24 years or younger.

1. Services

- A. Crisis Line.** Develop their own, or be part of a larger community's 24-hour crisis line so that victims/survivors of sexual violence can speak directly to an advocate to receive assistance.
- B. General Services.** Provide services and/or referrals for victims/survivors of sexual violence which include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Crisis intervention
 - b. Personal advocacy and emotional support
 - c. Safety planning
 - d. Information and referral
 - c. Assistance in securing emergency services such as shelter, food, child care, clothing and other necessities
 - d. Transportation as necessary and appropriate
 - e. Provide information about crime victim reparations and assist with submitting claim forms
 - f. Assistance with and accompaniment to:
 - 1) Medical forensic exams
 - 2) medical appointments and procedures, when possible
 - 3) civil, criminal and/or family court activities
 - g. Assistance:
 - 1) accessing human, social, and/or family services and other public benefits programs
 - 2) accessing interpretation, translation, and culturally appropriate materials while receiving advocacy services or other activities related to the crime victimization
 - 3) understanding their rights as a victim of crime and assisting them with asserting their rights through advocacy and referral
 - 4) filing protection orders

- C. Supportive Group Interaction.** Provide regular, ongoing opportunities for youth impacted by crime and violence to participate in safe and supportive group interaction, peer support, and/or formal support group activities.

2. Staff Development

Provide training to staff and volunteers regarding the laws governing services to children/youth at risk, including but not limited to Minority Heritage Act; Family Preservation Act; Indian Children Welfare Act (ICWA); Children in Protective Services (CHIPS) and mandatory reporting. Provide a formalized orientation/training for all new employees, volunteers, and board/advisory members. Provide for ongoing training opportunities for their employees and volunteers, utilizing both in-house and outside training sources.

3. Community Education and Outreach

Provide presentations to their community about the impact of violence, the dynamics of child abuse, safety, and access to available services. Audiences may include school and youth groups, community service groups, civic organizations, special populations, or professional organizations. Increase public awareness about crime victimization and available services through planned events, distribution of brochures, contact cards and posters, media use, inclusion in community provider directories, and other online search engines and resources.

4. Systems Coordination and Partnering

Develop working relationships with other programs, services, and systems who may respond to the needs of crime victims/survivors. The goal of these relationships is to ensure the needs of victims/survivors are being met, and their rights are being upheld. Partners may include law enforcement, court services, legal representation, corrections and probation, other victim service providers, medical, education, social services, spiritual/religious representatives, etc. Activities may include training, collaborative work groups, information sharing, community provider networks, referral agreements, co-advocacy coordination, etc.

5. Confidentiality for Government-based Programs

As an employee of a governmental entity, the victim service provider must inform victims/survivors as early as possible in their service provision about any confidentiality limitations on information the victim/survivor provides to them. Crime victims/survivors will be informed that what they share may be shared with the respective government agency.