

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

PARENTING TIME CENTER 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

- A. **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.
- B. **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/>
- C. **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.

PARENTING TIME CENTER PROGRAM STANDARDS

For funding from the MN Office of Justice Programs, Parenting Time Center (PTC) programs must follow the Program Standards detailed below, and the national Supervised Visitation Network standards: <https://www.svnworldwide.org/svn-standards#Standards1>

1. Services

Offer parenting time center (PTC) supervised visitation, monitored visitation, and supervised exchange programming to provide:

- a. a safe, non-violent environment for children to have positive interaction with parent(s) and siblings;
- b. an opportunity for non-custodial parent(s) to interact with their child(ren);
- c. a safe and neutral site for exchanges to take place; and
- d. information and referral resources to families.

2. Safety

Maintain policies and structure that provides for the safety of children, adult participants, and program staff, and follow these guidelines:

- a. The program will provide for the physical separation of adult participants. Provisions for this must include separate parking areas, separate program entrances, staggered arrival/departure times, and separate waiting areas for adult participants.
- b. Staff communication/safety equipment will be kept in working order at all times (radios, cell/cordless phones, door locks, video cameras, emergency buttons, escape rooms, intercom systems, adequate staffing, etc.).
- c. No hostile exchanges will be tolerated in the presence of a child.
- d. No visitation/exchange will occur if a participant is visibly under the influence of chemicals.
- e. Staff will remain aware of all participants, at all times, while at the program site.
- f. Regarding supervised visitation and exchanges, staff should overhear all conversations with the child, and no child should be left unattended by staff during a scheduled visit/exchange for any period of time.
- g. Policy must define “appropriate touch” and this should be discussed with each adult participant prior to the onset of services. Individual case dynamics should be reviewed to determine if contact restrictions should be increased.
- h. Policy must define how assistance is provided to children for the use of bathroom facilities. Individual case dynamics should be reviewed to determine if restrictions should be implemented.
- i. Client conduct expectations will be clearly defined to participants prior to the onset of visitations/exchanges. Staff response to problematic behaviors should be outlined in written form. Participants should be required to sign a contract for services that serves as an agreement to abide by these expectations. Staff should firmly and consistently enforce these expectations.

3. Staff Training

Paid and volunteer staff responsible for providing the direct supervision must be trained in the following areas:

- a. Listening/observation skills, non-judgmental documentation, interaction structuring, and behavior modeling
- b. Cultural sensitivity and diversity
- c. Safety procedures and de-escalation of volatile situations
- d. Substance abuse and detection
- e. Family violence and domestic violence, and the effects on children
- f. Child victimization/trauma
- g. Parenting techniques and child development
- h. CPR and basic first aid techniques, as well as blood borne pathogens and communicable disease prevention. *PTCs will ensure that, at minimum, one staff on duty will be trained in CPR and first aid techniques.
- i. Fire management/escape tactics
- j. Confidentiality, data privacy, ethics, and mandatory reporting regulations (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act)

4. Community Education and Outreach

Provide presentations to their community about crime victimization and available services. Audiences may include community service groups, civic organizations, special populations, professional organizations, or school groups. 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.

5. Collaborations

Establish collaborative relationships with the following agencies to facilitate the best service provisions to children: child protection services; child welfare, family social services, and human services; court administration; County Attorney's Office; Guardian ad Litem representatives; law enforcement; victim assistance programs and domestic violence advocacy programs; agencies providing parenting support groups and skills classes; agencies providing support services to children; counseling services; agencies working on/supporting family safety issues; other operating PTCs; and organizations that support PTC functions.

6. 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.