

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER 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://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/4-supporting-victims/41-using-a-trauma-informed-approach/>
- 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.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER PROGRAM STANDARDS

Domestic Violence Definition: Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior and tactics used to gain and maintain power and control over others. These behaviors can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, psychological, or technological, and may be used to intimidate, isolate, threaten, frighten, humiliate, manipulate, coerce, and/or injure another. Domestic violence relationships are broader than intimate partner violence and should include: current or former spouse or former romantic, sexual, and/or dating partner; a person with whom the victim/survivor shares a child; a family member of the victim/survivor; or a person who currently lives or previously lived with the victim/survivor.

Shelter Facility Standards

- A. Facility: The facility must comply with all applicable codes, ordinances and licensing regulations of the state and/or local jurisdiction in which the facility is located.
- B. Policies: There must be written policies and procedures regarding:
 - a. Measures for securing the facility and its occupants.
 - b. Security of belongings for residents.
 - c. Provisions for food for shelter residents. Programs must ensure that culturally appropriate food is available.
 - d. Provisions of access for residents to clothing and personal hygiene items, including those that are culturally appropriate.
 - e. Available laundry facilities at no charge to the residents.
 - f. Disaster plans and procedures for meeting potential emergencies such as fire and severe weather.
 - g. Designated smoke-free and smoking common areas.
 - h. Intake and exit procedures.
 - i. Posted information on civil rights laws and how to make a civil rights complaint.

1. Services

- A. **Shelter.** Provide temporary emergency housing for victims of domestic violence and their children. Should the shelter be unable to provide housing, it will utilize the statewide Day One database on available shelter bed-space or directly contact other shelters or safe housing providers, to locate other appropriate temporary housing options.
- B. **Crisis Line.** Operate their own 24-hour crisis line so that with one call victims/survivors of domestic violence can speak directly to an advocate to make arrangements for emergency housing and transportation to safety.
- C. **General Services.** Provide services and/or referrals for victims/survivors of domestic violence which include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Crisis intervention
 - b. Emotional support

- c. Assistance in securing emergency services such as shelter, food, child care, clothing, financial assistance, medical services, and other necessities
- d. Transportation as necessary and appropriate
- e. Information and referral
- f. Assistance with and accompaniment to:
 - 1) medical appointments and procedures, when possible
 - 2) law enforcement interviews or other activities related to the investigation
 - 3) civil, criminal and/or family court activities, including but not limited to interviews, trial, and sentencing hearings
- g. Assistance:
 - 1) filing protection orders
 - 2) pursuing civil, criminal and family court remedies
 - 3) filing victim reparations claims
 - 4) accessing transitional housing resources
 - 5) accessing human, social, and/or family services and other public benefits programs
 - 6) accessing interpretation, translation, and culturally appropriate materials while receiving advocacy services or other activities related to the crime victimization

C. Supportive Group Interaction. Provide regular, ongoing opportunities for victims/survivors of domestic violence to participate in safe and supportive group interaction, peer support, and/or formal support group activities.

2. Staff Development

Provide a formalized orientation and training for 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 crime victimization, available services, the root causes of crime, and the need for social change. 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.

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.