

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

GENERAL CRIME VICTIM SERVICES 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.

GENERAL CRIME VICTIM SERVICES PROGRAM STANDARDS

Definitions:

General crime victim: The term general crime victim includes victims/survivors of assault, robbery, burglary, theft, homicide, elder abuse, driving while impaired, criminal vehicular homicide/operation and other traffic offenses with a victim, arson, fraud, identity theft, criminal damage to property, bias motivated crimes, labor trafficking and other crime types not served by a specific program type (domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, sex trafficking).

Community-based program: A non-profit community-based organization that receives OJP funds for the provision of services to crime victims/survivors and that is not a government entity.

Government based program: A governmental entity that receives OJP funds for the provision of services to crime victims/survivors. It includes city, county, state, or tribal law enforcement, probation, corrections, or human services/social services agencies, and is not a prosecutorial agency.

1. Services

Provide information, support, and advocacy services to victims/survivors of crime whether or not the crime was reported to law enforcement and regardless of participation in the criminal justice system setting or process.

Provide services to meet crime victim/survivor needs through activities including, but not limited to:

- a. Crisis intervention and short-term emotional support
- b. Assistance in identifying needs arising from the crime
- c. Information and referral to resources as appropriate
- d. Assistance accessing interpretation, translation, and culturally appropriate materials while receiving services or other activities related to the crime victimization
- e. Assistance securing emergency services such as shelter, food, child care, clothing, transportation, and other necessities for self-sufficiency
- f. Assistance with expenses resulting from the crime and necessary for victim safety and well-being (for example, window/door/lock replacement or repair, fees to recover impounded stolen vehicle, short-term hotel stay)
- g. Advocating on behalf of victims/survivors to help meet their self-defined needs in areas including, but not limited to: housing, health, social services, safety and security issues; creditors; property repair; and in obtaining assistance from other resources/services

- h. Provide information and assistance in obtaining civil protection orders
- i. Accompaniment to appointments as appropriate and coordination of services provided by other agencies
- j. Act as a liaison and provide support as appropriate to victims/survivors involved in criminal justice or other system processes
- k. Provide information to crime victims/survivors on their rights and assist them with asserting their rights through advocacy and referral
- l. Provide information about crime victim reparations and assist with submitting claim forms
- m. Facilitate opportunities for peer support

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.

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.