

GENERAL CRIME VICTIM PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR GOVERNMENT-BASED GRANTEES

Definition: *General crime victim* means victims of crimes that include but are not limited to: assault, robbery, burglary, theft, homicide, sexual assault, domestic abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, sex and labor trafficking, DWI, criminal vehicular homicide or operation, arson, fraud and identity theft, criminal damage to property, bias/hate crime and any other crime punishable by law.

The overall goal of these standards is to ensure crime victims' rights are upheld, and to increase victims' safety and access to services that meet their self-defined needs. Program services should be relevant to the populations that exist within the community.

I. SERVICES

Program shall provide assistance to primary and secondary victims of crime which includes, but is not limited to:

- a) **Information, Advocacy and Support:** Provide case notification, support and assistance to victims throughout the entire criminal justice system process, (e.g., providing assistance and support during court proceedings, assisting with the preparation of civil protective order applications, providing information on legal resources with regard to civil actions and conciliation court, facilitating the return of property, providing guidance and assistance in filing elder and child abuse reports, providing transportation to the courthouse, etc.). Ensure crime victims understand the criminal justice process and their rights. Advocate on their behalf to ensure their rights are upheld, their voices are heard and their interests are represented. Act as a liaison with other criminal justice system personnel to ensure crime victims have the information they need and are treated with dignity and respect.
- b) **Referrals:** Discuss with and refer victims to the support services available to them from government- and community-based agencies, such as crisis intervention and safety planning, legal advocacy, emergency shelter, emergency assistance, support groups and counseling services.
- c) **Financial assistance:** Explain to victims the availability of financial assistance through restitution, crime victim reparations, and the emergency fund. Assist victims with gathering, completing and submitting the forms.

When providing services to victims of crime, the program shall clearly inform victims as early as possible in the case process about the role of the victim service staff and the confidentiality limitations on information provided by the crime victim to the victim service staff.

Note: County attorney-based programs shall maintain documentation of their policies and procedures that demonstrate compliance with their obligations to crime victims under Minnesota Statutes chapter 611A. This documentation shall include notification letters and their internal procedures for maintaining records of communication and correspondence with victims.

II. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Government-based agencies shall provide formalized new employee orientation and training to victim service staff that includes crime victim rights, information about the network of community and government resources available to crime victims, effective communication with victims and respectful response towards victims. Victim service staff shall be provided ongoing training opportunities, utilizing both in-house and outside training sources.

III. COMMUNITY EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Staff should assist with and promote government-sponsored activities that promote community and public safety and that educate the public on crime victim rights and victimization issues. Staff should conduct outreach and provide presentations in local communities to increase public awareness of victim/witness services.

IV. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & SYSTEMS CHANGE

Staff shall work to ensure the fair and sensitive treatment of victims by the criminal justice system through 1) annual training to relevant criminal justice professionals; 2) participating in monitoring, developing and updating policies and procedures that are sensitive to the rights and needs of crime victims; and 3) maintaining informal contacts and relationships with criminal justice professionals who have contact with victims of crime.

V. PARTNERING

Staff shall actively work to establish and maintain effective collaborative relationships with crime victim service providers, legal aid, law enforcement agencies, and other government agencies to better address the needs of crime victims. Partnering may involve both formal and informal avenues, including referral agreements; cooperative community training, events, and public awareness activities; cross-disciplinary trainings; culturally-specific and issue-specific workgroups; multi-disciplinary taskforces; information sharing; and community provider networks.