

GENERAL CRIME VICTIM PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED GRANTEEES

GOAL

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

DEFINITIONS

General crime victim: A general crime victim refers to a victim of any crime, including: assault, robbery, burglary, theft, homicide, sexual assault, domestic abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, sex and labor trafficking, DWI, criminal vehicular homicide/operation and other traffic offenses with a victim, arson, fraud and identity theft, criminal damage to property, bias motivated crimes and any other crime punishable by law. Any person defined as a "crime victim" under Minnesota Statutes section 611A.04, subd 1(b) is a "general crime victim."

Community-based grantee: A non-profit community-based organization that receives OJP funds for the provision of services to crime victims and that is not a government entity. (A government entity includes city, county, state or tribal prosecutorial, law enforcement, probation, corrections, and human services/social services agencies.)

SERVICES TO VICTIMS

The services provided by the general crime victim program should address the emotional, physical, safety and financial needs of the crime victim. Services should be provided in a supportive, empathetic and trauma-informed manner.

Services are provided whether or not the crime was reported to law enforcement and regardless of participation in any criminal justice system setting or process.

The general crime victim program shall provide victim services to primary and secondary victims of crime including, but not limited to:

Information and referral

- a. Explain the criminal justice process, including the investigatory stage, case review, prosecution process and post-conviction process.
- b. Explain the authority and discretion of criminal justice professionals, including the role of victim/witness staff and their limits on confidentiality.
- c. Explain the statutory rights afforded to crime victims.
- d. Explain to victims the availability of financial assistance through restitution, crime victim reparations and emergency funds, and provide appropriate referrals.
- e. Provide information on available legal resources and courthouse-based Self-help Centers.

- f. Provide information about civil protective orders, including the process to obtain, the relief available, and the local resources available to assist with their preparation.
- g. Provide referrals for immigrant crime victims to appropriate social service and legal resources to meet their unique needs, such as assistance with U-visa applications.

Assistance

- a. Operate or collaborate with a community partner on a 24-hour crisis line that connects crime victims directly with advocates for crisis counseling and emergency referral.
- b. Provide or connect victims to organizations that provide emergency assistance such as transportation, shelter, food and other basic necessities.
- c. Provide follow-up assistance to victims.
- d. Provide assistance to victims throughout the entire criminal justice process, including reporting the crime, during an investigation, case review, hearing/trial preparation, court accompaniment and post-conviction.
- e. Ensure victims involved in a criminal prosecution understand who to contact in the prosecutor's office and facilitate communication between victims and victim/witness staff or other appropriate person in prosecutorial agency.
- f. Assist with completing reparations claim forms.
- g. Process requests for "direct client assistance" funds distributed through the program, if applicable.
- h. Provide assistance with the preparation of civil protective order applications.
- i. Provide guidance and assistance in filing elder, vulnerable adult and child abuse reports.
- j. Assist victims who wish to limit distribution of their personal information by explaining the statutory protections and assist in making the necessary requests to law enforcement agencies and prosecutors.
- k. Provide additional assistance as appropriate, such as transportation to the courthouse and child care.

Advocacy

- a. Advocate on the behalf of victims with law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges to ensure the victims' rights are upheld, their voices are heard, their interests are represented and they are treated with dignity and respect.
- b. Act as a liaison with criminal justice system personnel, such as law enforcement officers, prosecutors and victim/witness coordinators, and probation officers to ensure crime victims have the information they need at various stages in the process and can provide information to those criminal justice system personnel.
- c. Advocate on behalf of victims to help meet their self-defined needs in areas including, but not limited to, housing, safety and security issues; creditors; property repair; and in obtaining assistance from other non-traditional resources/services.

STAFF SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

New staff: Programs shall provide formalized new employee orientation and training to victim service staff, volunteers and board/advisory members. Training shall include effective communication with victims, the provision of trauma-informed services, the provision of culturally-specific services, information about the network of community and government resources available to crime victims, crime victim rights, and data practices and confidentiality.

Professional development: Program staff shall be provided ongoing training opportunities, utilizing both in-house and outside training sources.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

Programs shall work to ensure the fair and sensitive treatment of victims within their own agency and with their community and criminal justice system partners. Their efforts with their program and outside agencies/organizations should include:

- a. Providing training and updates on crime victimization issues.
- b. Maintaining formal and informal contacts and relationships with community and criminal justice partners who have contact with victims of crime, including those working in domestic abuse and sexual assault advocacy, law enforcement, court services, legal representation, corrections, health, education, social services, and faith based organizations.
- c. Engage in efforts to identify issues and improve the response to crime victims by criminal justice, social service and advocacy systems. Examples of such efforts include monitoring and analyzing existing responses, case reviews, organizing community coordinated responses, and assisting with the review and development of effective and sensitive operational policies, procedures and practices. These systems change efforts must prioritize the needs and rights of victims, rather than institutions.

COLLABORATION

Community-based partners: Programs shall identify and be knowledgeable of other local community-based service providers who work with victims. Programs shall actively work to develop and maintain strong relationships with involved organizations and agencies to better serve victims of crime. Programs shall partner with agencies to promote cooperative service, better manage resources, and enhance the overall response to victims of crime in their community. Partnering may involve cooperative training and public awareness activities; cross-disciplinary trainings; professional memberships; culturally-specific and issue-specific workgroups; multi-disciplinary taskforces; information sharing; community provider networks; referral agreements; interagency feedback and service evaluations; technological, administrative, and programmatic resource sharing; and other creative means.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community education and outreach: Programs should conduct outreach and organize training efforts to educate the community on crime victimization issues and services available to victims. Outreach and training should address the nature and scope of victimization; crime prevention strategies; the causes and consequences of victimization; the need for improvements in the social service, criminal justice, and victim

service systems to improve the response and experience of crime victims; and the services and resources available to victims from community-based and government-based agencies.

Programs shall provide at least four in-person presentations on these topics to community service groups, civic organizations, special populations, professional organizations, or school groups.

Education collaboration: Programs should promote, collaborate on, and assist with the local community education efforts of other government agencies and community organizations that are aimed at crime prevention, assisting victims, and enhancing community and public safety.