



# T-VSTTA

OVC TRIBAL VICTIM SERVICES TRAINING  
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## Empowering Support: Understanding and Implementing Referral Trees in Victim Services

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A referral tree provides a road map for connecting victims and survivors with essential resources and support. Adapted specifically for the Tribal victim services field, this tool ensures timely and appropriate assistance by streamlining the referral process and fostering collaboration among service providers.

### Why Create a Referral Tree?

Victims and survivors of crime often need a number of short-term and longer term supports as they recover from victimization. The referral tree for Tribal victim services should be unique to your local area, reflecting the specific services, organizations, and resources available in your region. Each community has different strengths and support systems, so it's essential to build a referral tree that accurately represents what is accessible to victims and survivors in your location. Key benefits of a referral tree are highlighted below.

- **Streamlined Access to Services:** It ensures victims and survivors can quickly and easily access services, such as legal assistance, counseling, medical care, and financial support.
- **Comprehensive Support:** By connecting victims and survivors to a wide range of services, a referral tree addresses multiple needs, promoting overall well-being and recovery.
- **Efficient Resource Use:** Referral trees help service providers coordinate their efforts, reducing duplication, and ensuring that resources are used effectively.
- **Improved Outcomes:** With better access to comprehensive support, victims and survivors are more likely to experience positive outcomes, such as emotional healing, justice, and safety.
- **Community Collaboration:** A referral tree fosters collaboration among various community organizations, enhancing the overall response to crime and victimization.



### CONTACT INFORMATION

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Email or call to request training and technical assistance. A member of the T-VSTTA team will respond promptly.

**Web:** [ovc.ojp.gov/t-vstta/home](https://ovc.ojp.gov/t-vstta/home)

**Email:** [Support@t-vstta.org](mailto:Support@t-vstta.org)

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*This product was supported by contract number GS-00F-008DA, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.*

*The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this product are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

# Referral Tree Best Practices

There are several best practices to consider when implementing a referral tree. Follow these key practices to ensure that victims and survivors receive timely, appropriate, and comprehensive support.



## Victim-Centered Approach

**Empathy & Respect:** Always approach victims and survivors with empathy and respect. Understand their needs and provide support without judgment.

**Autonomy & Empowerment:** Empower victims and survivors by providing them with options and allowing them to make informed decisions about their care and support.



## Clear Communication

**Simple & Clear Information:** Provide information in a clear, concise, and easy-to-understand manner. Avoid jargon and complex language.

**Multiple Formats:** Offer information in various formats (e.g., printed materials, digital resources) and languages to ensure accessibility.



## Timely Referrals

**Immediate Assistance:** Ensure that victims and survivors receive immediate assistance for urgent needs, such as medical care or emergency shelter.

**Follow-Up:** Schedule follow-up contacts to check on the victim's progress and provide additional support as needed.



## Collaborations & Partnerships

**Interagency Collaboration:** Work closely with other agencies and organizations to provide comprehensive support. Establish agreements for sharing information and making referrals.

**Community Engagement:** Engage with community organizations to build a network of support services.



## Confidentiality & Safety

**Confidentiality:** Always maintain the confidentiality of victims' and survivors' information. Ensure that all staff members are trained on confidentiality protocols.

**Safety Planning:** Develop safety plans tailored to the individual needs of each victim. Ensure that victims and survivors know how to access safe spaces and emergency contacts.



## Training & Education

**Staff Training:** Provide regular training for staff on trauma-informed care, victims' and survivors' rights, and the use of the referral tree.

**Awareness Programs:** Conduct awareness programs to educate the community about available resources and support services.



## Regular Updates & Review

**Update Information:** Assign staff roles and the frequency for updating and reviewing the referral tree.

**Feedback & Improvement:** Collect feedback from victims and survivors and service providers to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.



## Provide a Warm Referral

**Warm referrals:** are crucial for building and ensuring care.

This kind of thoughtful handoff can make all the difference, helping people feel seen, respected, and more likely to stay connected to the help they need.



## Information Release Forms

**Release of Information:** Consider developing Release of Information (ROI) forms, or similar forms, that allow providers to share important details safely and respectfully.

These forms help keep the process smooth and focused on what matters most - making sure the person feels safe, supported, and cared for.