



# T-VSTTA

OVC TRIBAL VICTIM SERVICES TRAINING  
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## Developing Policies and Procedures on Accessibility and Safety of Services

### Overview

Policies and procedures provide a roadmap for day-to-day operations. These documents guide decision-making, clarify roles, and ensure compliance with laws and organizational practices. This guide focuses on three areas: (1) the purpose for policies and procedures about accessibility and safety of services; (2) questions to consider when drafting policies and procedures; and (3) additional resources including sample language. A callout box highlights an Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Model Standard. Victim service providers may adapt this content to address specific community and client needs.

### Policy Purpose

Ensure all victims of crime can access services and programs including individuals with disabilities and persons with limited language proficiency regardless of the program's size or scope. Prioritize the safety and security of victims receiving program services as well as staff who provide those services.

### Procedure Purpose

Outline the steps for staff to ensure victims of crime can access services, communicate with staff, and promote safety and security within the environment where survivors receive services.

### Questions to Consider

When developing policies for accessibility and safety of services, ask—

- When does the program operate? Does your program offer a hotline?
- How do eligible victims of crime access services (e.g., virtually, in-person, by phone)?
- Can clients connect with services after-hours? Which staff provide services after-hours?
- Does your program offer a language access line, interpretation, or translation services for victims with limited language proficiency, deaf, or hard of hearing?
- What physical accommodations exist for victims with disabilities to access your program's physical space or services?

#### OVC Model Standard – Program Standard 2.1

Programs can help people access their facilities through a variety of methods such as posting signs and providing directions (with consultations given to language access needs). Programs should also consider the public's access to your facility via public transportation (as available). Special consideration should be given to domestic violence and other programs that may require special safety precautions (e.g., controlled access to the building, meeting in a confidential or nontraditional location), and to programs that operate primarily through electronic or phone communications.

When developing the procedures associated with the policy, ask—

- How does your program provide support to victims who may not be able to access services during regular working hours? Who is responsible for responding to after-hours client requests and when does the follow-up happen?
- How does your program create a safe and accessible space for victims of crime? (e.g., trauma-informed interview rooms, confidential location, availability of sensory objects)
- How can deaf, hard of hearing, or clients with limited English proficiency access services? Who is responsible for ensuring language access?
- How does your program ensure the safety and well-being of victims of crime when accessing services? (e.g., safety and confidentiality during victim transportation, phone or email/text communications, and maintenance of the physical premises)

## Additional Resources

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[Program Standards for Accessibility and Safety of Services \(OVC Model Standards\)](#) provide in-depth standards of accessibility and safety of services, coordinating and collaborating with other providers in close geographical territory, and community education and outreach.

### Document Examples

[Sample Language Access Policy](#) from the (Colorado Office of Children, Youth, and Families Domestic Violence Program.

[Victim Services Program Manual](#) from the Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. lists a variety of policies and procedures for victim services providers.

[Advocate Safety Policies](#) developed from Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women from the results of a focus group with Mending the Sacred Hoop and Native advocates from Oklahoma.

[Montana Sexual Assault Information Hotline Protocol](#) for a phone line for survivors of sexual assault who completed a sexual assault exam in the state of Montana.

Tribal Victim Services Training and Technical Assistance (T-VSTTA) is a capacity-building program providing tailored, hands-on training and technical assistance to victim service providers in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. With over 100 years of combined experience in victim services, the T-VSTTA team meets you where you are, working together to build on the resilience within your community.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) funds the T-VSTTA program, which is available at no cost for grantees and potential grantees.



### 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)

**Phone:** 833-887-8820

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