



T-VSTTA

OVC TRIBAL VICTIM SERVICES TRAINING
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Developing Policies and Procedures on Screening and Intake

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 screening and intake; (2) questions to consider when drafting policies and procedures; and (3) additional resources and sample screening and intake policies and procedures. A callout box highlights an Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Model Standard. Victim service providers can adapt this content to address specific community and client needs.

Policy Purpose

Identify the victimization a client may have experienced and determine whether they are eligible for services from the victim services program through the screening and intake process.

Screening is a vital step when initial contact is made with a potential client. The screening process includes pertinent questions to determine client eligibility while remaining trauma-informed, victim-centered, and responsive to clients' self-determination to make informed choices about the services they wish to obtain.

Once client eligibility has been determined, intake procedures may begin. Intake serves as an opportunity to build trust with new clients while assessing their immediate and long-term needs. During intake, remember to share program information, provide necessary documents and forms, share data storage and protection measures information, and outline next steps. As with the screening process, providers remain trauma-informed and responsive to clients who may be triggered by sharing details about their victimization.

OVC Model Standard – Ethical Standard 3.8

The victim assistance provider does not discriminate against a victim/survivor and does not turn victims/survivors away from services due to personal biases or lack of cultural competency.

Procedure Purpose

Detail steps for conducting screening and intake to determine service eligibility and obtain the basic required information to connect them to requested services. Procedures may also identify documentation or forms (electronic or paper) to be completed, where the information is kept, and next steps discussed and agreed upon with the client. Victim services programs should aim to minimize the number of times clients have to repeat details of their victimization. The safety and wellbeing of the client is central to the intake process and victim service program. Work with clients to create a personalized safety plan with practical information about staying safe physically and emotionally.

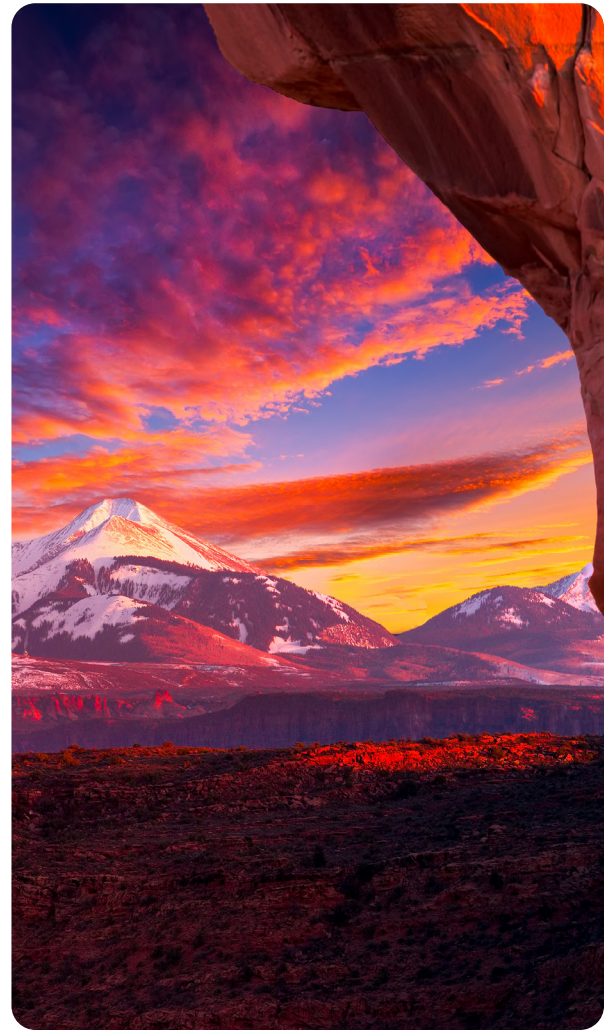
Questions to Consider

When developing a policy for screening and intake, ask—

- Does the program have an existing policy on who their program is intended to serve? (i.e., what type of crime victim, age of victim, does the victim need to be a Tribal member?)
- What trauma-informed practices does the program use to support victims of crime when they initially access services? Examples include meeting basic needs (e.g. medical care, food, rest), conducting intake in a soft room and offering grounding tools (e.g. sensory or culturally significant objects) before conducting intake.
- Does the program have an existing policy on what geographic area the client needs to live in to access program services? Can the program serve a Tribal member who lives in another state?

When developing the procedures associated with the policy, ask—

- Who is responsible for the initial screening?
- What happens once a victimization has been identified?
- What forms can staff use to assist with screening and intake?
- Where can staff find these forms?
- What happens after the intake is completed?
- What happens if you screen a person and determine the client is not eligible for your program?
- Is the screening conducted in a trauma-informed manner? (e.g., Is there a private space to conduct the screening? Do clients have a choice as to where they sit during the screening?)
- What de-escalation and grounding techniques do staff utilize to assist victims of crime when they are triggered or experiencing a trauma response?
- What exceptions does your program have to maintaining a client's confidentiality?



Additional Resources

[Program Standards for Confidentiality and Data Privacy \(OVC Model Standards\)](#) describes the importance of privacy, confidentiality, data security, and assistive technology in maintaining client privacy.

[Victim Service Provider Intake and Needs Assessment](#) is a resource offered by OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) on what to expect during the initial intake and conducting a needs assessment.

[Screening and Assessment Resources](#) offered by Center for Victim Research provide tools and tips to use during the screening and/or assessment process.

Document Examples

[Sample Intake Policy \(Hopes Doors\)](#)

[Sample Intake Form \(Puyallup Tribe of Indians\)](#)

[Shelter Screening and Intake Forms and Guidelines \(Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence\)](#)

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

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

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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.

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