



T-VSTTA

OVC TRIBAL VICTIM SERVICES TRAINING
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Developing Tribal Victim Services Policies and Procedures

Guide Overview

This guide serves as a resource for drafting or updating Tribal victim services program policies and procedures. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Tribal Victim Services Training and Technical Assistance (T-VSTTA) program developed this guide for Tribal victim service providers. This guide does not include all possible victim services program policies and procedures. Victim service providers may make additions and modifications, ensuring each policy and procedure addresses the specific needs of their community and clients.

Policies and Procedures Overview

Policies and procedures provide a roadmap for day-to-day program operations. Policy and procedure documents guide decision-making, reduce ambiguity, and ensure compliance with laws and program practices. Written policies document program goals, values, priorities, and behavior expectations. Written procedures explain how the policy is delivered (e.g., who will act, when to act, and what to do in a situation). Implementing clear policies and procedures better equip staff to respond to crises, provide time-sensitive services, and build trust with program clients while offering consistent high-quality care.

OVC Model Standards for Serving Victims and Survivors of Crime

OVC developed the OVC Model Standards to improve the delivery of victim-centered, trauma-informed, and healing-focused services to victims of crime. Programs can use these model standards as a foundation for developing policies and procedures aligned to their organization and community. A list of standards and regulations is in the Appendix as a reference for incorporating trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches to serving victims of crime.

Victim-centered

Placing the crime victim's priorities, needs, and interests at the center of the work with the victim; providing nonjudgmental assistance with an emphasis on client self-determination, where appropriate, and assisting victims in making informed choices; ensuring that restoring victims' feelings of safety and security are a priority and safeguarding against policies and practices that may inadvertently re-traumatize victims; ensuring that victims' rights, voices, and perspectives are incorporated. when developing and implementing system- and community-based efforts that impact crime victims.

Guidance for Drafting Policies and Procedures

Victim service providers may tailor each policy and procedure to its program. Policies and procedures reflect a program's culture, values, mandated services, and needs of clients and the community while ensuring compliance with Tribal codes, and federal and states laws. When drafting policies and procedures, consider the following—

Planning

- Consider the victim services program's mission and determine the policies and procedures to guide program activities.
- Identify relevant Tribal codes, and federal and state laws.
- Review grant funding requirements.
- Identify who will be responsible for—
 - Developing, reviewing, and approving the policies and procedures,
 - Implementing the policies and procedures; and
 - Evaluating and refining the policies and procedures.

Drafting and Reviewing

- Incorporate trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches to serving victims of crime.
- Use plain language that is clear and easy to understand.
- Include policies and procedures appropriate for the local community and culture.
- Seek input from staff, past clients, and key community members and incorporate the feedback.
- Confirm each policy is compliant with applicable Tribal codes as well as federal and state laws.
- Update the policies and procedures on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure new policies and procedures do not conflict with existing policies and procedures.

Implementation

- Obtain Tribal, victim services program leadership, and funder approval of the policies and procedures.
- Train staff and volunteers about the policies and procedures, including during onboarding.
- Seek feedback to evaluate the policies and procedures.
- Implement the policies and procedures and refine based on feedback.

Trauma-informed

Approaches delivered with an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical social and emotional impact of trauma. A trauma-informed approach recognizes signs of trauma in staff, clients, and others and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings. Trauma-informed approaches place priority on restoring the survivor's feelings of safety, choice, and control. Programs, services, agencies, and communities can be trauma-informed.

Example Policies and Procedures

Use the following six policies and procedures as a starting point for creating your own. Victim service providers may adapt the content to address community and client needs.

1. **Victim Support and Services Provided**

This example policy and procedure outlines the services available to victims of crime outlining to staff members, clients, and key partners the full spectrum of program services including program eligibility requirements and describing who can access services.

[Download](#) the guidance on *Victim Support and Services Provided* policy and procedures.

2. **Safeguarding Client Data**

Confidentiality is a central component of protecting a client's safety in seeking services and building trust with service providers. An example procedure on safeguarding client data states how the victim services program protects client data and minimizes re-traumatization during partner referrals.

[Download](#) the guidance on *Safeguarding Data* policy and procedures.

3. **Screening and Intake**

The screening and intake process helps identify the victimization a client may have experienced and determine eligibility for services. This example policy and procedure provides an overview of the guidelines for a clear and a consistent screening and intake and shares steps for how to provide an effective response to meet a client's time-sensitive needs.

[Download](#) the guidance on *Screening and Intake* policy and procedures.

4. **Accessibility and Safety of Services**

This example policy and procedure provides an overview of physical and programmatic accessibility services needs for victims of crime and outlines procedures for how programs can meet the needs of all victims of crime through accommodations and resources.

[Download](#) the guidance on *Accessibility and Safety of Services* policy and procedures.

5. **Victims' Rights**

Victims of crime have rights afforded to them by Tribal codes and local, state, and federal law, including crime victim compensation programs. This example policy and procedure provides an overview of upholding and respecting victims' rights.

[Download](#) the guidance on *Victims' Rights* policy and procedures.

6. **Client Referrals**

Victims of crime require a wide array of comprehensive services to support their healing journey. This example policy and procedure highlights the importance of having a comprehensive network of partners to provide client services and procedures for the client referrals process.

[Download](#) the guidance on *Client Referrals* policy and procedures.

Appendix: OVC Model Standards and Federal Guidelines and Regulations

The example policies and procedures reference several federal laws, regulations, and OVC Model Standards. Reviewing these guidelines and regulations when developing policies and procedures ensure compliance with common U.S. Department of Justice and OVC grant requirements. The table below shares a description and link to the OVC Model Standards and federal guidelines.

OVC Model Standard and Federal Guideline	Purpose	Related Model Standards/ Statutes and Regulations
Confidentiality – Required Reporting of Actual or Potential Breach of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)	To ensure that grantees and subgrantees have written procedures in place to respond in the event of an actual or imminent breach of PII.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 CFR 200.1 -- Definitions • OMB M-17-12 • OMB Circular A-130 • Program Standards 1.3-1.5 • Program Standards 2.4 & 2.5 • Program Standard 3.5 • Program Standards 4.1-4.5 • Competency Standard 1.1 • Competency Standard 4.1 • Ethical Standard 1.1 • Ethical Standard 3.1 • Ethical Standards 4.1 & 4.2
Determination of Suitability to Interact with Participating Minors	To ensure the suitability of individuals to interact with minors (individuals under the age of 18) in grant-funded activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OJP Award Condition • Program Standards 1.2-1.5 • Program Standard 3.5 • Program Standards 4.1 & 4.2 • Competency Standard 1.1 • Ethical Standard 1.1
Data on Performance and Effectiveness	To ensure grantees collect and maintain data that measures the performance and effectiveness of work that utilizes grant funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.6 Government Performance and Results Act • OMB Circular A-11 Section 200.4 • GPRM Modernization Act of 2010 • PUBL352.PS (congress.gov) • Program Standards 1.3-1.5 • Program Standard 2.5 • Program Standards 4.1-4.6 • Program Standard 5.21 • Competency Standard 1.1 • Ethical Standard 1.1 • Ethical Standard 5.1

OVC Model Standard and Federal Guideline	Purpose	Related Model Standards/ Statutes and Regulations
Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination	All victims of crime, regardless of sex/gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, employment status have a right to non-discrimination when accessing victim services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFR: 28 CFR Part 38 -- Partnerships with Faith-Based and Other Organizations • CFR: 28 CFR Part 42 -- Nondiscrimination; Equal Employment Opportunity • CFR: 28 CFR Part 54 -- Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities • Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 • Program Standards 1.2-1.5 • Program Standards 2.2 & 2.3 • Competency Standard 1.1 • Competency Standard 5.2 • Ethical Standard 1.1 • Ethical Standard 2.3 • Ethical Standard 3.1 • Ethical Standard 3.8 • Ethical Standard 4.3 • Ethical Standard 5.1
Language and Disability Accommodations	Grantees and subgrantees should consider accessibility of services to persons with language barriers and/or disabilities (as defined by the Office of Justice Programs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Standards 1.3-1.5 • Program Standard 2.1 • Program Standard 3.5 • Program Standard 4.2 • Competency Standard 1.1 • Competency Standard 2.1 • Competency Standard 3.1 • Competency Standard 4.1 • Competency Standard 5.2 • Ethical Standard 1.1

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.

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.