



Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services

Key Considerations Checklist

As a result of a strategic effort in 2018 to support the development of law enforcement-based direct victim services in the United States and to strengthen the capacity of these victim services and support partnerships with community-based programs, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) launched the *Law Enforcement-Based Direct Victim Services & Technical Assistance Program (LEV Program)*. As the provider of training and technical assistance for the *LEV Program*, the goal of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is to enhance the capacity of law enforcement-based victim services by providing guidance on best practices, protocols, and policies that aim to provide victims with the rights, services, and responses they need.

As a companion to this document, *Establishing or Enhancing Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – What are the key considerations?* has been developed to provide provisional guidance around topics identified as key considerations. Currently, multiple models of service provision exist in addition to variances in agency and community cultures, values, goals, service needs, and mandated responsibilities per state law (related to concerns of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of minors and elder or vulnerable adults). Through the recognition of these differences, there is also a recognized need to provide guiding information towards the standardization of common practices.

The ultimate aim of the *Law Enforcement-Based Direct Victim Services & Technical Assistance Program* is to provide guidance for agencies towards the provision of high-quality services (coordinated, collaborative, multidisciplinary, and trauma-informed) that address the broader needs and rights of all crime victims.

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Key Considerations Checklist	
Victims' Rights	
Does your state have a constitutional amendment related to victims' rights?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, are you knowledgeable about this amendment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there general provisions that apply uniquely to all victims (e.g., a general right to privacy)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you knowledgeable about the statutory victims' rights in your state?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do all rights automatically protect victims?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If no, are you knowledgeable about specific rights victims must request?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have practices in place to guide victims related to requesting specific rights?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are those rights enforceable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you established a consistent practice for informing victims of their rights?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is law enforcement required by statute to distribute victims' rights information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does this practice include conversation beyond handing out pre-printed information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there personnel assigned to have a full discussion of rights and exercising rights with victims?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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Advocacy Parameters

Personnel Hiring and Selection

Have interview questions been modified for victim services personnel applicants?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are professionals familiar with the role of victim services personnel included on the interview panel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has consideration been extended for interpretation of work history and relevance to core job duties?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have job duties been structured to align with education and training principles required for this role?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have background checks and training to facilitate access law enforcement/court records by victim services personnel been completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have selection processes been established for interns and volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Reporting Structure and Supervision Practices

Who will be the direct supervisor of victim services personnel?	
Does that person hold enough authority to make department-wide decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does that person have training/experience/understanding of the role of victim services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does that person also supervise other units/personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What are the management/supervision expectations of victim services personnel?	
Are victim services personnel expected to manage a program in addition to providing direct services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there an expectation for victim services personnel to grow/expand services and personnel within the agency?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel expected to supervise multiple personnel (other staff, student interns, volunteers)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do these expectations equate to expectations of other agency staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How are supervision practices of victim services personnel structured?	
Are there regular opportunities for conversation and dialogue around responsibilities, program growth, professional development, and performance standards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there opportunities for supervision contact beyond incidents and crisis circumstances?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the victim services supervisor have requisite knowledge about professional requirements and code of ethics for specific behavioral health degrees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the victim services supervisor have adequate credentials and experience to supervise student interns? volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Span of Responsibility

What mode of service delivery is expected for victim services personnel?	
On-call response? If yes, by phone or in the field?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Phone contact?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

	Office appointments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Letter, email or text communication?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there a specific time frame for services provided to victims?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel expected to serve more than one law enforcement agency or jurisdiction?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	If so, have formal agreements been executed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel expected to provide services to:		
	Victims of all crime types?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Those impacted by non-criminal crisis circumstances (i.e. suicide, traffic fatalities, family disputes)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has clear delineation been established between victim services and:		
	Peer Support programs and services to employees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Chaplain programs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>Ethical Approaches</i>		
Are victim services personnel prepared to engage in advocacy for victims without alienation of others?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel clear on the distinction between advocacy and activism?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have clear expectations been set related to confidentiality of victim services communication?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are the mandated reporting obligations per state law (<i>related to concerns of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of minors and elder or vulnerable adults</i>) for victim services personnel clear?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have clear expectations been set related to language access and use of interpreters?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Professional interpreters vs. family members/third parties, to include minimum ages of interpreters?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Levels of interpreters based on varying legal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Interpreters who have confidentiality or privilege through their employment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have clear expectations been set related to access to and disclosure of restricted records generated by criminal justice professionals for:		
	Other government (LE, prosecution, probation and parole, Child/Adult Protective Services) agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Community agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Victims, witnesses, and survivors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Members of the public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are all agency personnel clear that the role of victim services personnel is to recognize the interest of the person served as a primary responsibility?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has a Code of Ethics for victim services personnel been developed?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have policies and practices for victim services personnel been developed?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have policies and practices been established for referrals to other service providers?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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Documentation Practices

Location

Can victim services personnel documentation be in the same system as law enforcement personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Should a separate system be created and maintained for documentation of victim services personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Content

If a victim spontaneously discloses details about criminal events to victim services personnel that were not previously disclosed to law enforcement, how will this disclosure be handled and documented?	
Has the prosecuting attorney’s office been consulted for protocol development?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are differences between community- and system-based advocates included in protocol development?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is appropriate language being utilized in documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Access

If victim services personnel are community-based advocates:	
Have they followed their employing agency’s guidelines regarding access to documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have they advised victims of their agency’s guidelines?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there an understanding that documentation may not be accessible to personnel outside of the employing agency of the victim services personnel, including to law enforcement?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If victim services personnel are system-based advocates:	
Have victims been advised of the potentially wide access to documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
When victim safety or other concerns are present, have protocols been established to ensure victims receive services and ensure documentation abides by policy and victims’ rights, including redaction prior to disclosure?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Legal Intersections

Have protocols been developed for documentation that impacts Brady disclosures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have protocols been developed for documenting self-reported victim diagnosis information that may be sensitive and/or protected by HIPAA?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have victim services personnel received training on FERPA and developed protocols for intersections with law enforcement records?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have victim services personnel received training on the process for Open Records/FOIA requests?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have protocols been put in place for notification of the victim regarding requests for information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Subpoena Concerns

Have victim services personnel received training on the process for subpoenas?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do victim services personnel have a clear understanding between fact and expert witnesses?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Complex Documentation

Are processes related to agency complaints or concerns publicly posted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Have processes related to complaints or concerns about victim services personnel been established?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel familiar with supervisory contact, complaint or grievance processes for:		
	Officers? Detectives? Other law enforcement personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Victim services personnel (within the agency and with other agencies)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Prosecutors? Defense attorneys? Court staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Forensic nurses? Other involved professionals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there a statewide rights compliance system that can be referenced?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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Partnerships

Internal

Do crime scene personnel understand the role of and utilize victim services personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are records personnel, other professional staff, and victim services personnel familiar with respective roles?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has cross-training occurred between dispatch personnel and victim Services personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has cross-training occurred with patrol officers, detectives, sworn supervisors and victim services personnel with respect to on-scene procedures and/or protocols to ensure there is a coordinated, seamless response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are patrol officers, detectives, sworn supervisors, and victim services personnel prepared to effectively communicate and partner with each other?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have victim services personnel sought input and participation from staff members of other disciplines and divisions when developing policies and protocols?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

External

Has your agency established partnerships with other agencies that will help in meeting victims' needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have formal agreements been executed for those partnerships?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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Agency Incorporation of Victim Services

Budget Process

Have costs associated with victim services personnel been incorporated into the agency budget process? Yes No

Victim Intersection Points

Have law enforcement (both sworn personnel and professional staff) and victim services personnel received training related to trauma-informed practices? Yes No

Have victim services personnel been provided an opportunity to review initial questions asked of victims when calling for assistance? Yes No

Has training been provided to public information officers regarding victim-centered language and practices related to media releases? Yes No

Have victim services personnel been trained on the process for obtaining copies of reports for victims? Yes No

Are practices in place to minimize impact of returning property to people under sensitive circumstances? Yes No

Crisis Response Plans

Are agency personnel prepared to adequately explain the role of victim services personnel? Yes No

Are victim services personnel appropriately incorporated according to their skills and role with victims? Yes No

Has cross-training occurred between victim services personnel and other personnel in the event of dual response during crisis circumstances? Yes No

Are victim services personnel familiar with incident command protocols? Yes No

Do written crisis response plans for the agency include appropriate utilization of victim services personnel? Yes No

Culture Change

Have active steps been taken to impact culture change within the agency? Yes No

Have active steps been taken to impact culture change with community agencies? Yes No